

Braintree Open Space Study



**Community and Stakeholder Consultation
Summary (Final)**

2016 – 2033

1. Overview

The *Community and Stakeholder Needs Assessment* is a supporting document to the main Braintree District Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities strategy (2015). It provides consultation findings from various stakeholders and provides findings that feed into the main report.

The report is made up of 5 main sections:

- General Community Consultation
- Sports - Indoor and Outdoor (non-pitch)
- Parks, green spaces, countryside, and rights of way
- Children and Young People - play and youth facilities
- Neighbouring local authorities; locality areas; and town and parish councils

The consultation and research programme was undertaken from July to November 2015. In summary, questionnaire surveys were undertaken as below:

- An online survey utilising the District Council's People's Panel
- A survey of town and parish councils
- Local groups and organisations' survey
- Survey of sports national governing bodies and local sports clubs.

In addition to the above a series of one to one stakeholder interviews was undertaken; and existing consultation findings, strategy documents and other relevant material were reviewed.

2. General Community Consultation

This section provides consultation findings that cover all aspects of open space, informal sport and outdoor recreation provision. It provides a useful overview across all these aspects rather than simply from groups and organisations with specific interests in just one aspect of open space and active recreation. This contrasts, for example, with the other sections of the report which supply findings from individuals, groups and organisations with specific interests in individual elements of open space, informal sport and recreation.

The section provides findings from the Citizen's Panel/Household survey and Public Health stakeholders.

Quantity

Open Space

- Over 60% suggest a shortfall of: facilities for teenagers; informal open spaces - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc. and wildlife areas/nature reserves.
- Following this, other aspects where there was considered to be an overall shortfall by a majority were: country parks, countryside and woodlands; footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths; allotments; and artificial turf pitches.
- A clear majority thought that overall there *are* enough grass playing field; parks, gardens and recreation grounds; and areas for water recreation.
- Smaller majorities think that in general there is no need for additional play areas, tennis courts and bowling greens.

Built Facilities

- A clear majority of households reported that overall there are currently enough of all of the various kinds of indoor sport and leisure facilities; most notably in relation to swimming pools and gym/health and fitness facilities (80% think that there are enough). 78% also suggest there are enough sports and leisure centres.
- The two kinds of facility where significant numbers of respondent households believe that overall there is a need for more are specialist indoor sports facilities such as indoor bowls and tennis centres (36%); and village halls/community sports centres (28%).

Quality

Open Space

For all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they were of average or better quality (though the most common rating tended to be only "average"). However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality as noted below.

- 48% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor.
- The quality of tennis courts and bowling greens - and artificial turf pitches - was rated as poor or worse by at least 35% of respondents.
- In contrast some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated relatively highly in terms of quality. These include: parks and recreation grounds (56% rate quality in general as being good or very good); country parks/countryside/woodlands (48% similarly); and play areas (48%).

Built Indoor Facilities

- In broad terms respondent households tended to view the quality of indoor sports and recreation provision as being good.
- The indoor facilities most commonly regarded as being of good or very good quality are the sport and leisure centres (68%); gym/health and fitness facilities (68%); and swimming pools (67%).
- The quality of specialist sports centres was not rated as highly as pools and leisure centres (only 36% being rated as good or very good). Similarly for village halls and community sports centres (44%).

Access

Open Space

- There is great variance in respondent households willingness to spend time travelling to different types of facility and open space.
- a majority (53%) of users are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to visit a wildlife area/nature reserve. Significant numbers are also willing to travel that long to visit other kinds of open spaces/facilities, for example: tennis courts and bowling greens (46%); country parks, countryside and woodlands (46%); areas for water recreation (44%); and artificial turf pitches (42%).
- In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, allotments, and informal open space areas - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc).

Built Facilities

- In relation to indoor sports and recreation facilities respondents are more likely than not to drive to all facilities except village halls and community sports centres; most notably in the cases of specialist sports facilities and swimming pools.
- Walking is the preferred mode of travel for a clear majority of respondent households accessing village halls and community sports centres (69%).
- For a small but significant minority access by cycling is important. For example, 12% prefer to cycle to their local gym; and 3% make use of the bus/other transport mode.

Priorities and other issues

- In relation to open space and outdoor facilities the category highlighted by the largest number of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision was better footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision (60%).
- 72% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route to open spaces and facilities was improved. 76% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.
- Other notable high priorities for improvement noted by significant numbers were for country parks, accessible countryside/woodlands, and nature reserves/wildlife areas (at least 47%); parks/gardens/local recreation grounds (45%); informal open spaces (44%); and children's play areas/ facilities for teenagers (35%/33%).
- Access to areas for water recreation also scored quite highly as a priority need (a combined high/medium priority choice for 68% of households - 42% medium/26% high).
- Providing opportunities for physical activity by developing and maintaining appropriate facilities such as sports and leisure centres, parks and open spaces is very important in relation to promoting better public health and reducing health inequalities.
- Some sectors of the community face particular barriers to access such as disabled people; children and young people; households in the more isolated rural areas and those in the more deprived urban wards of the study area.

3. Sports - Indoor and Outdoor (non-pitch)

This section provides an overview of consultee responses on the main indoor and outdoor (non-pitch) sports - tennis, athletics, bowls and netball. It does not report on consultation undertaken in relation to the associated Playing Pitch Study¹. The chapter contains feedback from Braintree District Council officers, officers from Active Essex (the County Sport and Physical Activity Partnership) and relevant governing bodies. It also incorporates findings from surveys of sports clubs and secondary schools/colleges.

To understand the District Council perspective on sports facilities interviews were held with the Leisure Contract Officer and the Parks and Open Spaces Manager. Meetings were also held with Active Essex and Active Braintree.

3.1 Key Findings - Outdoor (non-pitch) sports and active recreation

General points and observations

Range of sports and recreation activities making use of open space

¹ The playing pitch study provides a detailed analysis of the supply of and demand for the pitch sports facilities - football, cricket, rugby and hockey; conducted in line with the Sport England methodology.

In general, the amount of activity detailed demonstrates the range of outdoor sport and recreation taking place in the Braintree District Council area and the value of the open space facilities and resources which are used. All the trends suggest that use of outdoor space for health and fitness activities is growing – and there is tremendous scope for the greater linking and development of outdoor resources to serve this market (see below).

Growing importance of linkages between health and fitness and sport.

With changes in public health management and revenue streams, linking fitness, sport and health can access new areas of funding; moreover the advantages to community health in increasing fitness levels is now receiving political support. Many initiatives and opportunities are possible: e.g. the idea of linking sports sites with trim trails, outdoor fitness equipment etc (using sports facilities as a base and green infrastructure and open space as resources). Associated with this, there is rapidly growing activity and demand for 'individual fitness activities' - walking, running and cycling, using existing facilities and open space resources.

Schools and Colleges

Many of the Secondary Schools and Colleges have a range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities but the degree of community use is varied. There are differing management arrangements and levels of commitment to ongoing use. Securing greater and more reliable/consistent access to school and college facilities would be of significant value to local clubs and the wider community.

Maintaining a rural network of facilities

Recreation Grounds, tennis courts, multi use games areas and bowling greens are important sports facilities in rural areas. Maintaining these facilities with quality surfaces and ancillary facilities can be difficult; financial support is often required. Comments from clubs emphasise the ongoing issues of sourcing finance for upgrades to changing facilities and maintaining good quality grounds.

Sports Specific Points

Tennis

- Braintree District is not a priority area currently for the regional LTA. This means it will not be a priority in relation to securing LTA funding for facility improvements.
- Most tennis facilities are provided via local tennis clubs.
- Public Tennis courts are available at a small number of sites including Great Notley Country Park, Braintree & Bocking Public Gardens, Witham Leisure Centre and Halstead Leisure Centre. There are a number of additional courts in some of the parishes.
- Earls Colne Golf and Country Club supply tennis courts including indoor tennis provision within a "dome" type facility.
- There are 13 tennis clubs noted in the District Council's Community Mapping database.
- Stakeholders have not identified a need for additional tennis courts in Braintree District.
- The reported quality of club facilities varies quite considerably for example Silver End and Gosford report many aspects of quality as being unsatisfactory whereas Braintree rate quality aspects as being either good or at least adequate.
- Individual clubs have various plans and aspirations to improve their own facilities.
- Braintree Tennis Club notes that their site is owned by the District Council and that it is earmarked for development. They add "until we know that we will be moving (and when this is likely to happen) we are reluctant to invest all our funds in improvements needed at the current site".

Athletics

- England Athletics believe that that overall there are sufficient facilities for athletics in Braintree District.
- They note that the athletics track at Tabor High School/Braintree Leisure Centre (the base for Braintree and District Athletics Club) is the most important facility in Braintree District.
- Stakeholders highlight the likely need in the medium term for improvements to the track at Braintree Leisure Centre.
- The Braintree and District Athletics Club specifically highlights a need for improvement to general athletic facilities: the state of the track; lighting and equipment such as starting blocks.
- The club also aspires to a club house facility; a small stand to host spectators; and a toilet facility at the track rather than in the main sport centre.
- There are opportunities in building on the recreational running strategy to increase number of new runners through new Run England 3-2-1 routes or trails in local parks.

Bowls

- Essex was a priority "hot spot" area for bowls and Active Essex worked in partnership with the Bowls Development Alliance from 2013-15 to increase participation levels. The BDA funding has ended however meaning Active Essex no longer have the capacity to provide the level of support and programme delivery that clubs received over this period.
- On the Active Essex club data base there are 8 outdoor clubs registered in Braintree District (some clubs are privately owned). There are also a number of other clubs and greens in the parishes. There are no District Council managed greens but Mill Lane Bowls Club in Witham lease their facilities from the Council.
- Broadly speaking stakeholders indicate that there appear to be sufficient outdoor greens to meet current demand via the local clubs and parish facilities.
- In general the quality of facilities and access to them are good/adequate, though some clubs have plans and aspirations for improvements.
- Active Essex note that a lot of the clubs do not have wheel chair access to both the green and the pavilion restricting the number of disabled people playing the sport. (Sport England targets for the BDA is to increase disabled people 16-54 years playing bowls)
- A number of bowling clubs are sustaining (some even increasing) their current levels of membership but a challenge for all of them is attracting new members, particularly younger players.
- There is potential for club development and increased membership given the age demographic of the District Council area.

Netball

- Netball England is currently conducting a facilities audit which may feed into a facilities strategy.
- The most important facilities for netball in Braintree District are Braintree Leisure Centre and Braintree College.
- Netball England would like to see more netball in the north of Essex. There is a lack of adult and junior netball opportunities in Braintree District. The few junior clubs that exist are at capacity.
- Stakeholders indicate a potential need for additional good quality outdoor floodlit courts; and better access to quality indoor courts provided at a reasonable cost.

- Netball leagues currently tend to run on a central venue league basis. Colchester and Chelmsford are the nearest so teams may travel to these centres to play. It is not clear that there is enough demand for a main netball centre in Braintree District.

Other (non-pitch) outdoor sports/active recreation

- The Active Braintree programme includes active recreation as well as sport. One current project is aimed at encouraging more people to walk regularly (The Walkabout Group). The rights of way network is an important "facility". Securing and promoting good links in the rights of way network between town and country is important.
- Cycling is another important aspect of active recreation. The Council supports a number of led recreational cycle rides. There is also a district cycling map – highlighting traffic free cycle routes. The further development of safe cycling routes should be considered.
- The Braintree BMX Club provides an excellent track that attracts riders from a wide catchment.
- Health benefits – GP referral could be extended to many forms of active recreation. Many more people take part in informal active recreation than play formal sports.

3.2 Indoor Sports - Key Findings

Facility Overview

- Fusion Lifestyle manage 4 main indoor facilities on behalf of Braintree District Council: Braintree Leisure Centre and Braintree Swimming and Fitness; Halstead Leisure Centre and Witham Leisure Centre.
- There are also indoor sports hall and squash facilities at Earls Colne Recreation Club (Trust managed).
- Broadly speaking the quality of the indoor pools and leisure centres is good, with new and recently refurbished facilities.
- Additional sports hall and swimming pool facilities are managed by local secondary schools and colleges. The extent of community use of these education based facilities is varied. There is potential for them to offer more time and access to community clubs and individuals.
- There are no purpose-built indoor bowls and tennis facilities² within the District though such facilities exists in adjacent authority areas. Neither sports governing body indicates the need for such facilities within the District.
- There is some natural migration of facility use between residents of Braintree and neighbouring districts (particularly from outlying areas) linked to specialist or preferred facilities.
- Council officers note that existing levels of provision are broadly meeting demand and the growth in participation currently being experienced.

Sports Specific issues and observations (based on NGB and club responses)

- Badminton: Badminton is generally well provided for in Essex - within a range of schools and sports centres across the County. In Braintree District, the provision of badminton courts generally appears to meet demand and court quality is quite good; though the club playing at Braintree Leisure Centre indicate the availability of courts when needed is limited.
- Basketball: Basketball competitions for all playing age groups take place within Essex, the main venues in Braintree District being schools and sports centres. Basketball is not played at elite level in Braintree District. There is not a suitable sports hall including safe run-off areas and spectator seating to attract a premier basketball franchise. There are no NGB plans to expand the sport

² There is an inflatable "dome" type indoor tennis facility at Earls Colne Golf and Country Club.

significantly in Braintree in the future in view of the larger facility provision elsewhere in the County.

- **Boxing:** Boxing shows frequently take place within hotel or social club premises environments, such as in Billericay and Basildon for example. Need and demand for a boxing venue has not been identified in Braintree District by the Amateur Boxing Association.
- **Indoor Bowls:** this takes place either at a purpose built indoor bowling centre; or as short mat bowls/carpet bowls requiring less space (but needing storage). The latter is played in community halls and sports centres for example. This the basis of provision, meeting demand in Braintree District. There is no current demand identified for additional indoor rinks in Braintree District given the proximity to purpose built facilities in adjacent areas such as the Falcon Bowling and Social Club in Chelmsford.
- **Futsal:** In Braintree District Essex Futsal club's main venue is Notley School sports hall in Braintree. They also play at various other locations mainly using school and college sports halls. There has been no demand expressed for additional facility provision in Braintree linked to Futsal though the need for improvements to facilities have been raised by Essex Futsal.
- **Judo and Martial Arts:** Clubs are variously accommodated within halls around the District where important criteria are ownership and storage of mats. There is no regional centre for Essex nor purpose built Dojo; but there has been no demand expressed for a purpose built Dojo within Braintree District during the consultation process. Some clubs suggest a need for improvements at their individual club venues; and Halstead Boxing & Martial Arts club have recently received Sport England funding to improve their facilities.
- **Squash and Racketball:** The NGB recognises the ageing population and fall away from the sport in recent years and is focusing its strategy on bringing in younger participants through schools and outreach programmes working with Sport England; whilst also focusing on the 18-40 age-groups to get people back into squash. Squash court provision in Braintree would currently seem to meet demand with no plans identified to increase the number of courts.
- **Swimming :** The regional governing body acknowledges the level of provision in Braintree District in terms of its three 25m pools as meeting demand for casual swimming and competition. While recognising the lack of diving facilities in Braintree, the ASA would not support strategic specialist provision in Braintree. High quality diving facilities (springboards to 3m, platforms to 10m, movable floors) are provided in Southend, Cambridge and Luton (no movable floor). There is also provision at the Riverside Ice and Leisure Centre in Chelmsford.
- **Table Tennis:** There has been a decline in popularity of the sport in recent years across Essex with the exception of Southend where the sport remains buoyant. The NGB stated view is that "there does not appear to be a motivational strategy in place to increase the sport's popularity and quality of venues in the Braintree area".
- **Indoor Tennis:** The Lawn Tennis Association confirms that there are no current plans/strategic need for additional indoor tennis centre in Braintree District. Air domes or lightweight structures may offer may offer alternative opportunities for outdoor tennis clubs in the future, subject to planning consents and funding. There is one such facility at Earls Colne Golf and Country Club.
- **Trampolining:** The Bramston Flyers club highlights a specific need for access to a sports hall in/near Witham with a clearance of 8 metres, storage space for two trampolines and an overhead rig.
- **Volleyball:** Volleyball was stronger in Essex in the 1980's. Over time clubs have merged and/or folded but there has been some growth in the last few years. There are currently 10 clubs in Essex fielding 21 teams in the Essex leagues. Floor fixings for the volleyball net are frequently not provided in sports halls and this should be part of the specification for future provision where this occurs. There were no other issues identified for Braintree in the consultation process.

4. Parks, green spaces, countryside and rights of way

This section covers consultation responses and findings in relation to non-sporting recreational open spaces, including parks and gardens, natural green spaces, countryside and water recreation, allotments, recreations grounds and rights of way.

Consultation undertaken for this section included key stakeholder interviews and surveys, plus a survey of relevant (non sports) groups and organisations.

4.1 Key Findings - Parks and green spaces

Overview and Context

- Natural England stress the need to take into account the ANGst standard as a starting point for developing a standard for natural and semi natural green space. Variations from this standard should be justified.
- The Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard (WAS - endorsed by Natural England) provides guidance on access to Woodland, which should be taken into consideration.
- The Essex Wildlife Trust published an access to Natural Greenspace Analysis document in 2009, which lays out standards of access that should be expected. GIS layers and datasets are available to facilitate the development of future greenspace strategic planning.
- The emerging Braintree District Council Tree Strategy will provide an important tool to help develop future woodland access for residents.
- Many stakeholders and community groups have noted that the transfer of maintenance and management of parks and green space to parish councils/community organisations can be a positive step in maintaining quality standards.

Quantity

- A majority of People's Panel respondents thought that overall there were enough parks, gardens and recreation grounds (59%) and areas for water recreation (59%) to meet local need.
- In contrast a majority of Panel respondents thought that overall there were not enough footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (58%); country parks, accessible countryside and woodlands (59%); wildlife areas and nature reserves(62%); allotments (55%); and informal open spaces (62%).

Quality

General Observations:

- Various kinds of green spaces were rated highly in terms of quality by the People's Panel. These include: parks and recreation grounds (56% rate quality in general as being good or very good); and country parks/countryside/woodlands (48%).
- Council budgetary reductions noted by stakeholders suggests the focus is primarily to manage and maintain the current quality standards rather than develop and improve them.
- Reported examples of good quality provision in the district include the Flitch Way cycle route, and the Discovery Centre in Great Notley.
- High satisfaction levels are recorded with parks and recreation grounds and natural open space provision.

Community Groups Survey

- Wildlife areas proved the highest rating typology with 71% of the groups are happy with the provision (rating them as good or very good)
- Local Parks and Country Parks also score highly with 41% and 47% respectively rating them good or very good.
- The quality of allotment provision was rated poor or inadequate by 78% of respondents expressing a view on the typology, similarly 80% of respondents expressing a view on Water Recreation provision.
- The ratings of footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths are not considered high with 65% rating them only adequate, or poor. Litter, connectivity and maintenance were highlighted as issues.

Access

- Improvements to the cycle network in Braintree proposed by Sustrans would facilitate access to important visitor sites such as the Discovery Centre where access and parking has already been noted as an issue.
- There is limited access to bridleways for the horse-riding community; – examples of problems with connectivity of bridleways in areas such as Great Notley Country Park are proposed projects for improvement.
- Interpretation and access work being undertaken on the Hoppit Mead nature reserve are an example of best practice, using local knowledge to create interactive and exciting information trails.
- PROW examples of newly launched walks demonstrate effective and creative ways of developing and funding new publicly accessible routes.

General Comments

- There is a wealth of well-researched and reported data and action plans regarding parks and open spaces in Braintree.
- The devolution of management of parks, allotments and other sites to Parish Councils/community organisations is referred to by a number of key stakeholders and community interest groups in a positive light.
- The process of writing management plans for all key Local Nature Reserve Sites by the planning and sustainable development team demonstrates good long term planning for sustaining key wildlife and nature sites.
- The need for good, safe cycle access to open spaces is highlighted as a priority by stakeholders, including Natural England and Sustrans.

5.0 Children and young people

This section provides feedback and information relating to play and youth facilities. It considers information and views provided by various stakeholders including Braintree District Council, Essex County Council, Play England and play and youth organisations across the district.

5.1 Key Findings - Children and Young People

Quantity

- Youth play provision is generally considered underprovided for across the District with 66% of the 2015 People's Panel survey answering that there were not enough facilities for older children and teenagers.

- Play and youth organisations also highlight a shortage of teenage provision. A shortage of youth shelters/informal hangouts and teen facilities are particularly notable with 53% of respondents stating there were not enough of such facilities.
- 53% of People's Panel respondents thought there were enough play areas for younger children (12 and under).
- 47% of play/youth organisations respondents were happy with the quantity of formal equipped playgrounds for younger children (under 13's). They believe that informal and natural open spaces suitable for play are not so well provided for with 44% stating there is not enough.
- The play/youth organisations suggest that outdoor informal sport provision is the least well catered for with 47% of respondents considering there to be not enough provision for the under 12s.
- Survey comments note a requirement for informal sports facilities suitable for younger children (e.g. FISAs - Family Inclusive Sports Areas) and also increased provision for toddlers – (under 5's).

Quality

- In general residents are happy with the quality of play areas across the District (48% of the People's Panel respondents rated them as being very good or good - only 8% rated them as poor or very poor). The rating for parks is also high (56% rating them as very good or good).
- Children's play areas and local parks also scored the highest satisfaction levels with local groups - almost 50% rated them as either good, or very good).
- 'Other open spaces' and 'natural green spaces' were considered to be 'adequate' by 41% of group respondents – and 16% rated them as good.
- In contrast only 17% of People's Panel respondents rated the quality of youth facilities as being good or very compared - 48% rated them as poor or very poor.
- There were also much lower levels of satisfaction overall with outdoor youth facilities from the play and youth organisations with 28% of respondents rating them poor and a further 6% - very poor.
- Stakeholders generally, however, considered the provision of skate park facilities in particular as being of a reasonable quality.
- Natural and adventure play spaces are considered the top priority for investment and improvement by a majority of play/youth organisation respondents, followed by recognised spaces for young people to meet outdoors.

Access

- Organisational respondents noted the difficulty with access to local provision in some more rural areas – citing poor public transport, long walks or general inaccessibility as barriers to access.
- Disability groups have identified a range of access needs, which should be taken into consideration as part of any new playground design and installation; along with guidance recommended by Play England.
- The Discovery Centre acts as a 'destination site' with users making journeys to reach the site from across the district.
- The costs of parking may prove an access barrier to users of the Discovery Centre / Great Notley Country Park with a £3 charge levied.

Other Issues / General Observations

- The emphasis made by Essex County Council youth workers on teens needing 'social spaces' is fully supported by the survey findings with the highest priority for improvements being places to meet outdoors rather than any more formal play provision.

- The emphasis on dedicated teenage spaces comes from all respondents to the community groups survey – not just those working with teenagers.
- The Play England campaign for Natural Play, and the National Trust emphasis on outdoor activity is supported through the findings of this study with respondents keen to see more provision of this type.
- Play England supply good practice guidance on play space design (Design for Play), Managing Risk in Play Provision and recommend Inclusion by Design by the Kids organisation for specific guidance on play space design principles for disabled children.

6. Neighbouring authorities, locality areas and town/parish councils

This section provides information and feedback from neighbouring local authorities, locality managers and local parish and town councils. It is important to consult with neighbouring local authorities under the "duty to co-operate" requirement.

6.1 Key Findings Neighbouring Local Authorities – Cross Boundary Issues

The variety of documents and strategies in place (and their relevance to current planning policy) is considerable, embracing green infrastructure studies, open space strategies, and sport, recreation and play strategies. The approach adopted by each authority is very much locally derived.

It is noteworthy that few strategies currently appear to look in depth at cross boundary issues or identify networks of green infrastructure or open space which cross local authority boundaries; and officers highlight a relatively small number of specific cross border issues and plans (with the notable exception of Basildon).

It is also notable that many authorities are currently involved with commissioning new open space related studies or updating previous strategies that are out of date.

There is scope for neighbouring local authorities to work more together to make the most of accessible natural green space resources and to develop some common themes and agendas. It is suggested that much could be learnt in regard to best practice by better sharing of information between authorities and ensuring that local authority strategies afford some importance to considering developments and proposals in neighbouring authorities.

Town/Parish Councils

General Overview

- The individual town/parishes are very different in relation to size, demographics, geography, needs and demand/aspirations. It is important that the study takes this variation into account.
- All of the parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and facilities.
- 9 of the 11 local councils reported that there was a need for additional or improved open space, sport, play and recreation facilities within their town or parish.
- Most of the parishes were not aware if there was scope for greater community use of outdoor sport and recreation spaces at local schools but two of the parishes (Bromfield and Great Waltham) highlighted potential for community use (see below).
- The sector of the community most commonly identified as being poorly served in relation to their needs were young people/teenagers.

Common areas of concern

For the parish councils, the areas of most common concern are:

- The need for more and better access to footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths.
- The need for additional Multi-use games areas/tennis courts in some parishes (primarily MUGAs).
- Not enough areas for teenagers e.g. skateparks, shelters etc. and the quality of existing play areas.
- Winter pitches for football and rugby - need for more and improvements in quality.

Quality considerations

The quality factors most commonly deemed to be of a high priority as regards recreational public open spaces are that:

- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained
- They should be safe and secure for those using them
- They should be easy to get to for all members of the community
- There should be adequate opportunities for dog walking and freedom from dog fouling
- They should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.

It is also thought important by most parish councils that public open spaces should be easy to get around by all members of the community.

Detailed responses on open space typologies

Many of the parish councils provided detailed responses relating to aspects of quantity and quality of the various elements of open spaces surveyed. These responses can be found in the associated excel spreadsheet.

7. Concluding remarks

The survey work, stakeholder consultation, desk-based research and group sessions have highlighted a wide range of issues of value to the wider Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facility Study. There is a strong degree of consistency across the various sources on key areas of local need and aspiration from which we can be confident that the findings are robust and reliable, providing a strong evidence base to be combined with the detailed facilities audit.

Braintree Open Space Study



Community and Stakeholder Consultation

2016 – 2033

Final Report

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
ABA	Amateur Boxing Association
ANGst	Accessible Natural Green Space Standard
ASA	Amateur Swimming Association
ATP	Artificial Turf Pitch (3G ATP is third generation ATP)
BDA	Bowls Development Alliance
BNCA	Black Notley Community Association
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
EWT	Essex Wildlife Trust
FACE	Families Acting for Change Essex
GIS	Geographical Information System
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
NCN	National Cycle Network
NE	Natural England
NGB	National Governing Body
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NT	National Trust
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance 17: Sport and Recreation
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
WAsT	Woodland Accessible Standard
YEA	Young Essex Assembly

Acknowledgments

Many individuals, groups and organisations have provided information, views and support in preparing this study. Input from these stakeholders is fundamental to the report, and provides the basis for the evidence in supporting the standards, options and recommendations in relation to open space, sport and recreation facilities. The study has been carried out by Ethos Environmental Planning in conjunction with associates Leisure and the Environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

This is one of 4 reports provided within the overall *Braintree District Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Strategy* (2015). It provides consultation findings from various stakeholders and feeds into other aspects of the study as explained below.

1.1 Study Overview

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to set out policies to help enable communities to access high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation. These policies need to be based on a thorough understanding of local needs for such facilities and opportunities available for new provision.

In view of the above, in 2014 Braintree District Council appointed Ethos Environmental Planning to produce a new recreational strategy for the complete portfolio of its open spaces, sports pitches and outdoor/ indoor facilities. The document needs to assess the current provision and provide a comprehensive needs assessment to inform the decision making process up to 2033.

The brief for the study highlighted that the overall aims are:

- To audit existing indoor /outdoor leisure facilities and open spaces within the Braintree District.
- To assess these facilities in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility
- To develop and provide a strategy determining the actions and resources required to guide the Councils decision making up until 2033. This is to include a Playing Pitch Strategy, Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy and an Open Spaces Strategy.
- To highlight areas where there is sufficient or over provision and identify areas where there are deficiencies in either the quantity and/or quality of provision
- To provide a robust and comprehensive evidence base to enable the Council to develop planning policies as part of future Local Plan, sufficient to withstand scrutiny at an Examination in Public
- To provide information to enable the Council to justify collecting developer contributions and inform the Council on the distribution of developer contributions to sports and open spaces.
- Identify strategies for the delivery of required provision and enhancement and to inform future decisions about the provision and funding of recreational facilities
- To provide a needs assessment and provide a comprehensive set of recommendations for local standards and alternative approaches to securing provision where applicable to be adopted by the Council. Review current standards in the adopted Core Strategy and how these have helped new development and Parishes/Town Councils provide more open space provision and improve quality of existing provision.
- To provide guidance on converting standards into developer contributions.

In delivering the brief Ethos have focussed on three key elements:

- An Indoor Sports Facilities audit, assessment and strategy
- A Playing Pitch and outdoor sports audit, assessment and strategy
- An Open Spaces audit, assessment and strategy

As such the overall outcome of the study will comprise of three main reports drawing upon an evidence base comprised of:

- Consultation and engagement with all relevant key stakeholders, agencies and organisations as well as the wider community and general public.
- A detailed audit of all facilities within the scope of the study.
- Analysis and assessment of the adequacy of current and future facility provision based on recommended methodologies such as Sport England's "Assessing Needs and Opportunities" national planning guidance.

1.2 The Community and Stakeholder Needs Assessment

This report makes a "cross cutting" contribution to the overall study providing evidence that will be used in all three of the main study reports (where it will be combined with, for example, other evidence, findings and assessments completed in the audit and analysis process).

Undertaking comprehensive consultation and engagement with all relevant stakeholders and the wider community is an essential part of the overall process. It is a requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework and is needed to ensure that the study is robust in relation to recommended national guidance such as that recommended by Sport England.

The report examines local need for a wide range of different kinds of open space, sport, and recreation facilities. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques including a review of consultation findings from relevant play, sports, leisure and open space studies. It outlines the community consultation and research process that has been undertaken as part of the study as well as the main findings.

The report is made up of 5 main sections:

- General Community Consultation
- Sports - Indoor and Outdoor (non-pitch)
- Parks, green spaces, countryside, and rights of way
- Children and Young People - play and youth facilities
- Neighbouring local authorities; and town and parish councils

At the end of each section there is a short summary of the key findings.

The consultation and research programme was undertaken from February to June 2015¹. The extent of the research reflects the breadth and diversity of the study and a consequent need to engage with as wide a cross section of the community and stakeholders as possible².

In summary, questionnaire surveys were undertaken as below:

- An online survey utilising the District Council's People's Panel
- A survey of town and parish councils
- Local groups and organisations' survey
- Survey of sports national governing bodies and local sports clubs.

In addition to the above a series of one to one stakeholder interviews was undertaken.

Each section provides additional detail on the consultation process relevant to that section.

¹ Full detail of the timeframe for individual elements of the programme can be found in Appendix 1.

² It should be noted that this report provides consultation evidence in the form of the observations and views/opinions sourced from many different organisations, individuals and studies. On occasion the views and observations expressed by individuals and groups may not be consistent with each other, nor are such individual contributions necessarily accurate or up to date.

The result of this consultation and other analyses will help amongst other things to inform the content of the recommended local standards as appropriate. This will be explained further in the three main reports.

It also helps the study to understand stakeholder and local people's appreciation of open space, sport and recreation facilities, and the wider green infrastructure and the values attached by the community to the various forms of open spaces and facilities. This appreciation will have clear implications for the way in which open space, sport and recreation facilities are treated and designated in the Braintree District Local Plan, as will be highlighted in the three main reports.

2 GENERAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

This section provides consultation findings that covered all aspects of open space, sport and recreation facility provision. In this sense it provides a useful overview across all these aspects rather than simply from groups and organisations with specific interests in just one aspect of sport and active recreation. This contrasts, for example, with the other sections of the report which supply findings from individuals, groups and organisations with specific interests in individual elements of open space, sport and recreation.

This section also includes reference to general research findings from the general public that have a wide scope across typologies; and engagement with public health stakeholders who have an interest running across all aspects of recreation facility provision, whatever activity that may be (in relation to encouraging an increase in physical activity - with associated health benefits).

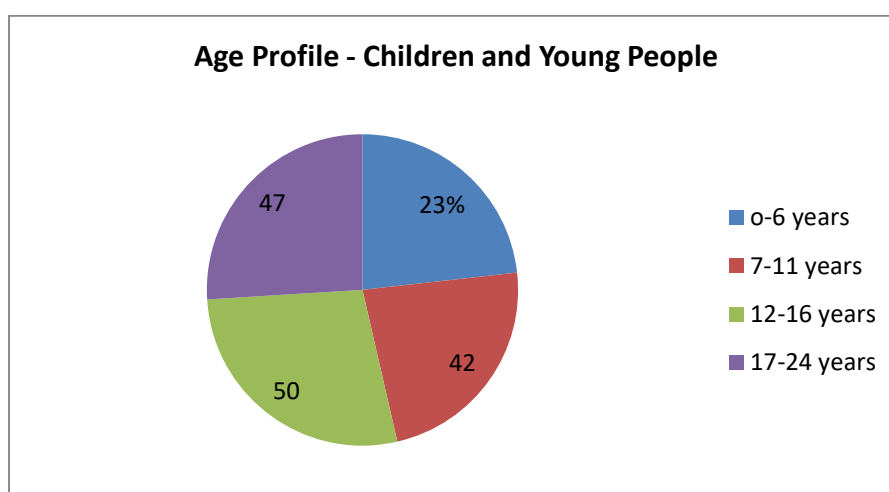
2.1 People's Panel Household Survey

2.1.1 Introduction

The open space, indoor and outdoor sports and recreational facilities study needs to secure a general understanding of how residents of Braintree District currently make use of the various kinds of open space, sport and recreation facilities; in particular whether they think there are enough of such facilities; what they think of the quality of those facilities; how accessible they are; and what kind of facilities they think are priorities for future development and improvement. A good way of securing this general overview is to secure responses from a broad cross section of Braintree District households.

An online questionnaire survey was therefore distributed through the District Council's People's Panel³. Respondents were asked to respond to provide a view on behalf of their household, rather than simply as individuals. 350 surveys were completed. The total number of people represented through the household survey was 868 and the average household size of the households was 2.48 - slightly higher than the national average (2.4) and that of Braintree District as a whole (2.42).

Just over 35% of households who responded had children (representing household views on behalf of just over 181 children and young people) with ages well spread across the age range:



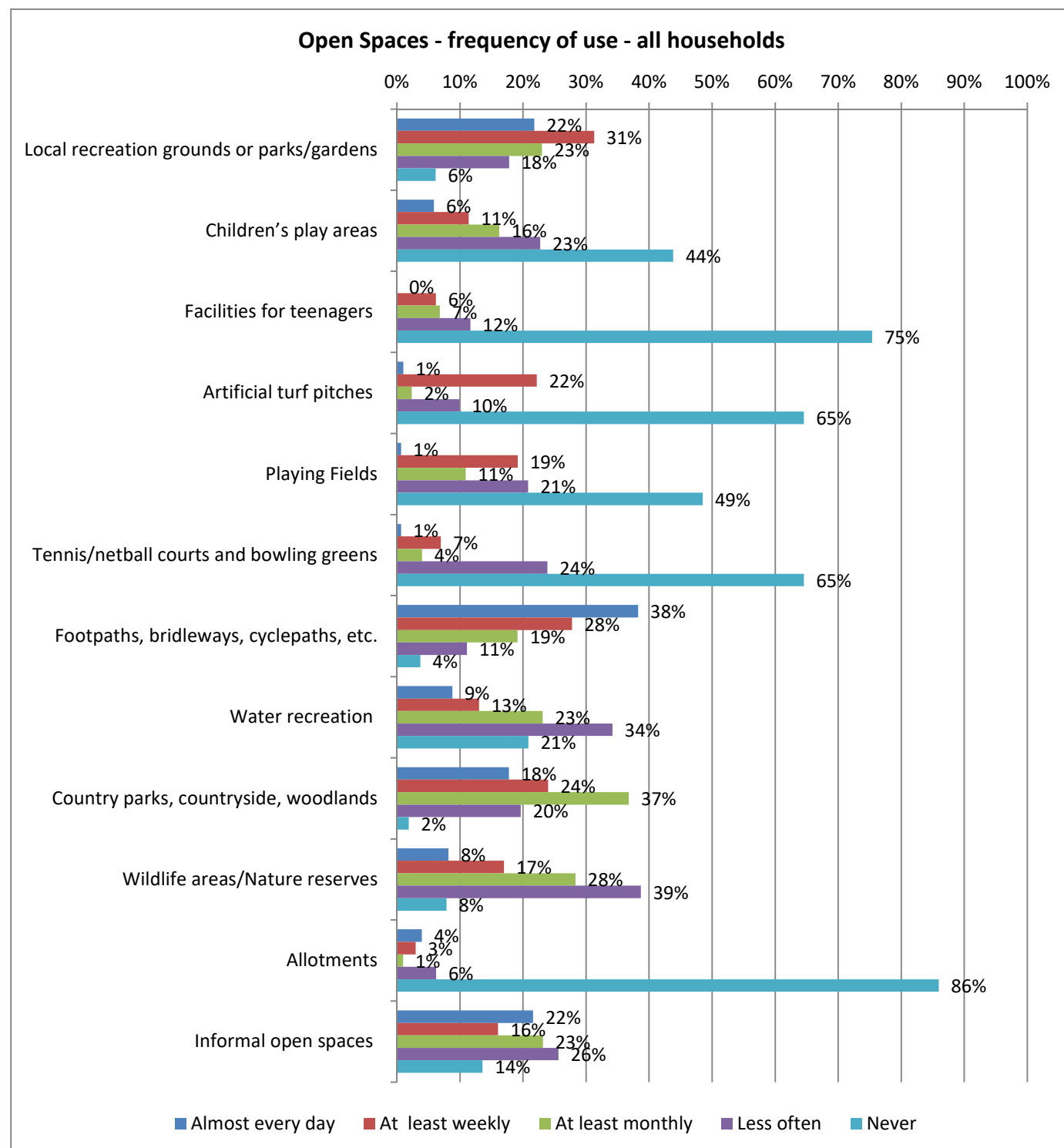
³ The Braintree District Council People's Panel is an ongoing group of Braintree residents from all areas of the district, representing all age groups (over 16) and backgrounds. The Council consults with this group to gather opinions on Council services and to enable local people to have a direct influence on how services are developed and improved.

The full questionnaire is included in Appendix 2 and the following provides some of the key findings⁴.

2.1.2 Frequency of use - All households

Respondents were asked to state how often they visited or used each of the following types of open space, sport and recreation facilities within study area, and the results are shown on the charts below:

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities



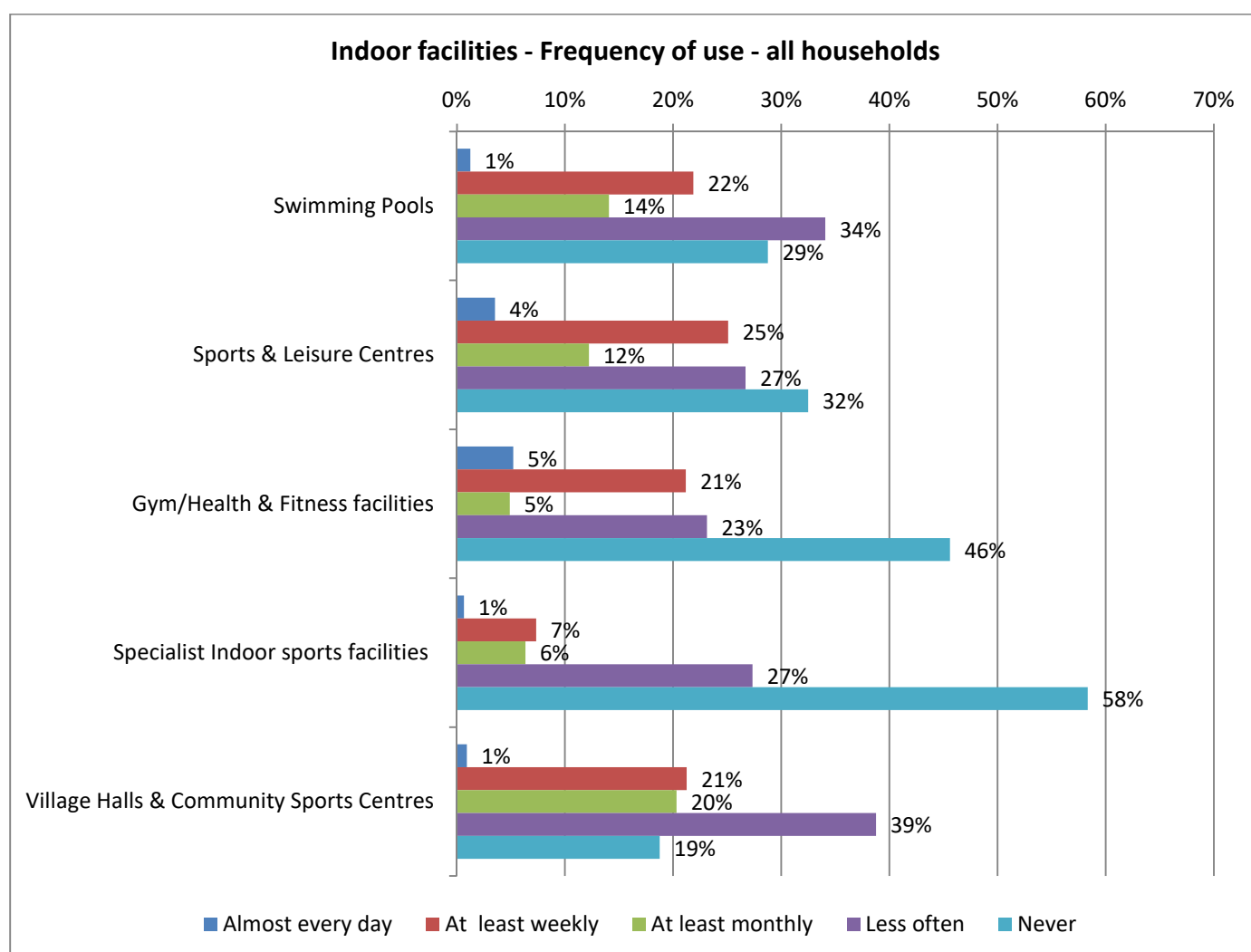
⁴ The findings are further considered - in detail - in three main reports; along with consideration of regional and national participation frequencies from sources such as Sport England's Active people survey.

As can be seen, it is the District's footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths that are most commonly used by most households at least monthly (85%); followed by country parks, countryside and woodlands (79%); and local parks, gardens and recreation grounds (76%). These open space facilities are also by far the most frequently used facility on both a weekly and daily basis e.g. 64% use rights of way at least weekly (of which 38% make use almost every day). 53% visit parks, gardens and recreation grounds at least weekly (22% of which visit almost every day).

Other spaces used at least weekly by at least 25% of households (including those who are more frequent users) are informal open spaces (for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc.); and wildlife areas/nature reserves.

Play areas and areas for water recreation also fairly frequently used but by fewer households. At least 33% use them on a regular basis - at least monthly (including those who are more regular users).

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities⁵



42% of respondent households use village halls/community sports centres at least monthly.

⁵ Sports and Leisure Centres are the main public indoor centres including a dedicated 4 badminton-size sports hall and often a wider range of gym/sports facilities. Community Sports Centres and Village Halls are commonly managed by parish councils and trusts having smaller halls e.g. 1 to 3 badminton court sized. Gym/Health and fitness facilities do not include a dedicated sports hall and are commonly private sector managed.

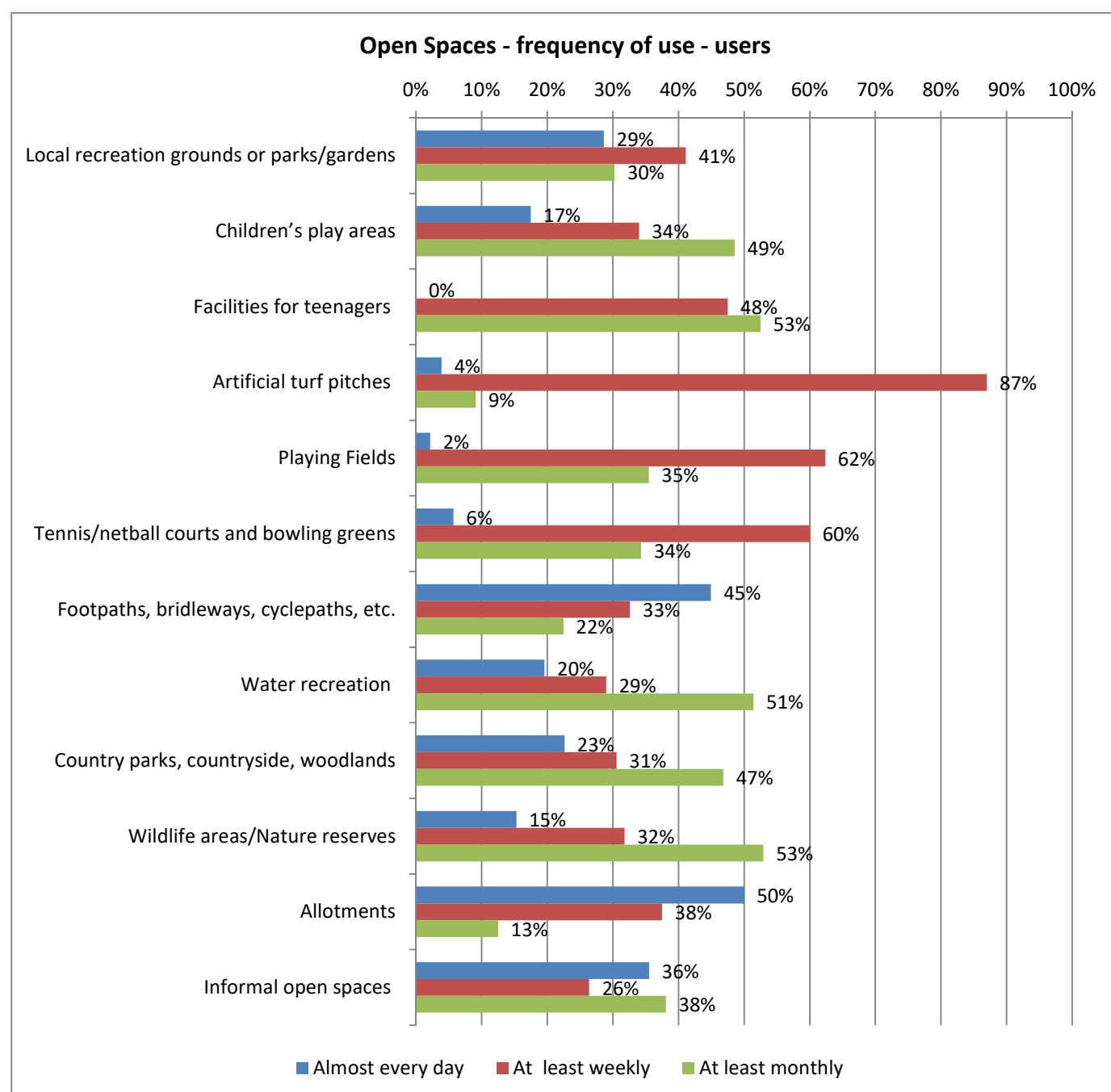
Sport and Leisure Centres are used regularly by significant numbers (41% of households report using them at least monthly - many more regularly); as are the District's swimming pools (37%) and gym/health and fitness facilities (31%).

These facilities are also the most frequently used on both a weekly and daily basis. For example, 29% of households use sports and leisure centres at least weekly (including more regular users); and around 26% use gym/health and fitness facilities almost daily. 22% make use of Village Halls and community sports centres at least weekly.

2.1.3 Frequency, regularity and times of use - Regular Users

It is interesting to look at the frequency with which regular users of facilities visit them as for some facilities this is not immediately obvious from looking at the overall figures.

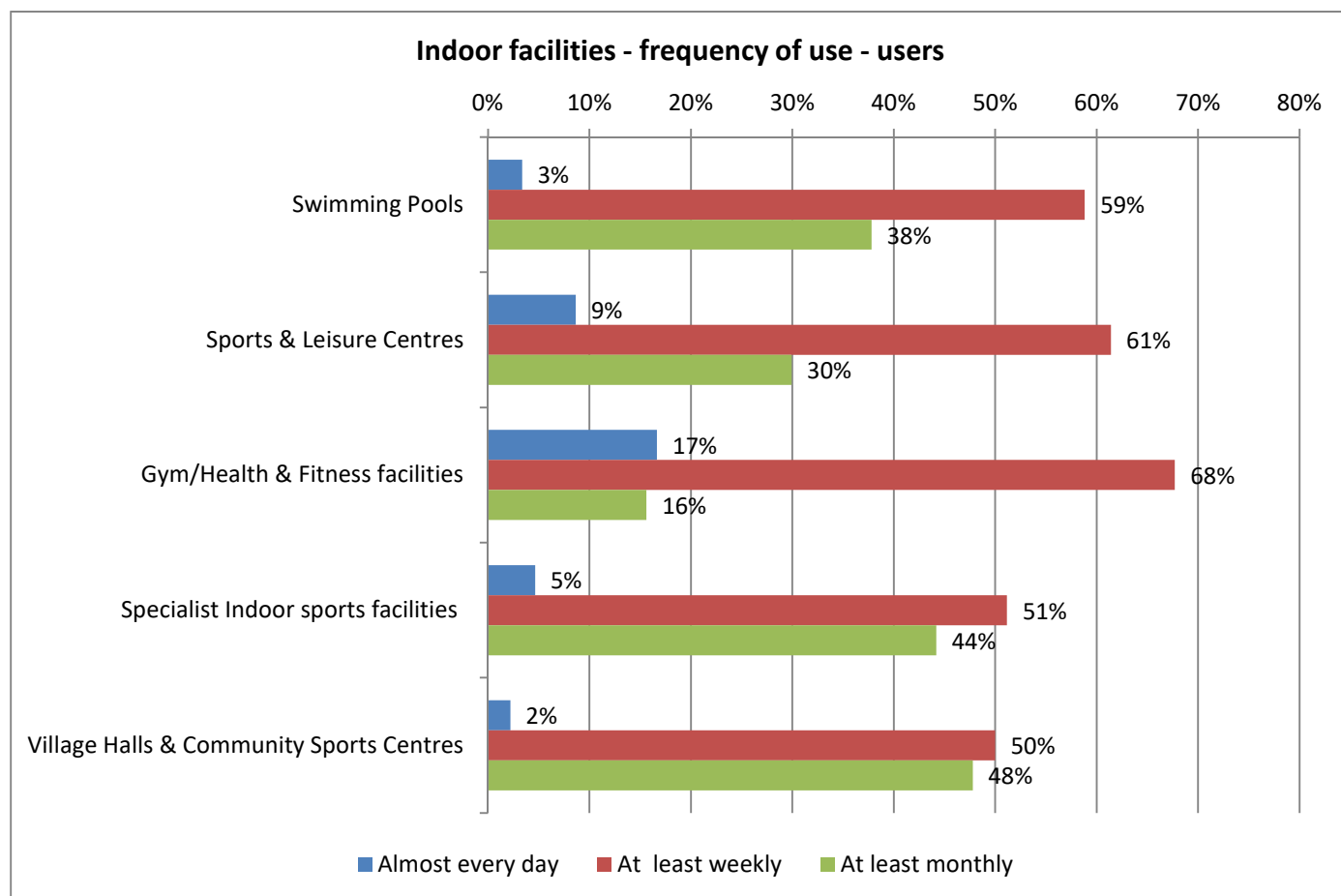
Open Space and Outdoor Facilities



This shows, for example, that many users of outdoor sports facilities use them at least weekly (91% for artificial-turf pitches, of which 4% use them nearly every day); 68% for grass pitches (2% nearly daily); and 66% for tennis courts and bowling greens (6% nearly daily).

88% of allotment holders visit their allotment at least weekly (of which 50% visit almost every day).

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities

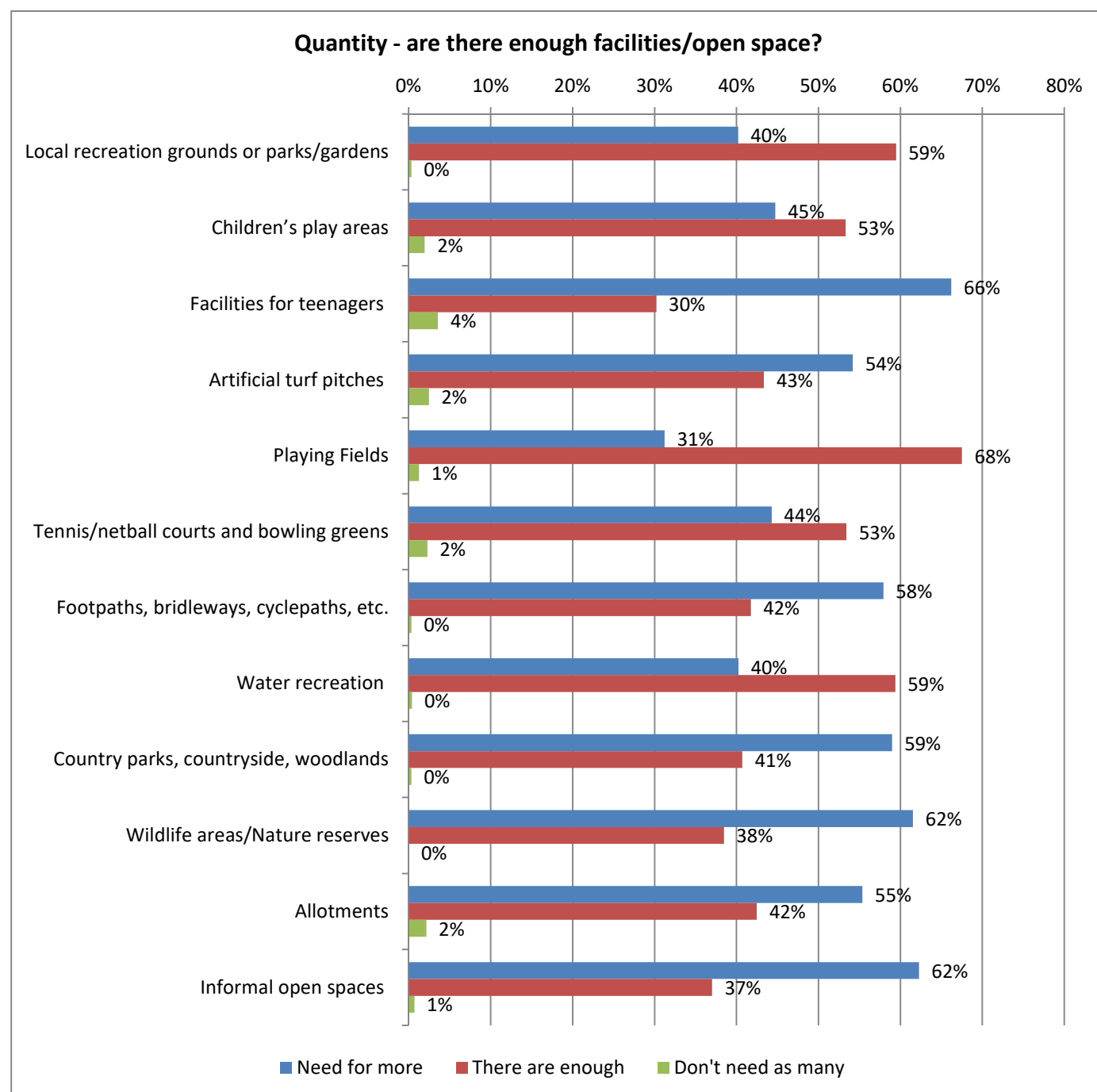


In terms of indoor facilities the most frequently visited by regular users (at least weekly) are the gym/health and fitness facilities (85% use these at least weekly of which 17% make use almost every day). Sports/leisure centres are used at least weekly by 70% - of which 9% visit nearly every day; and for swimming pools 62% - of user households visit at least weekly (of which 3% make use nearly every day).

2.1.4 Quantity of open space, sport and recreation facilities

Residents were asked if they needed more, the same or fewer of different types of open space and recreational facilities. Findings are illustrated in the chart below and will influence the “quantity” component of local standards as appropriate (this will be explained further in the 3 main reports).

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

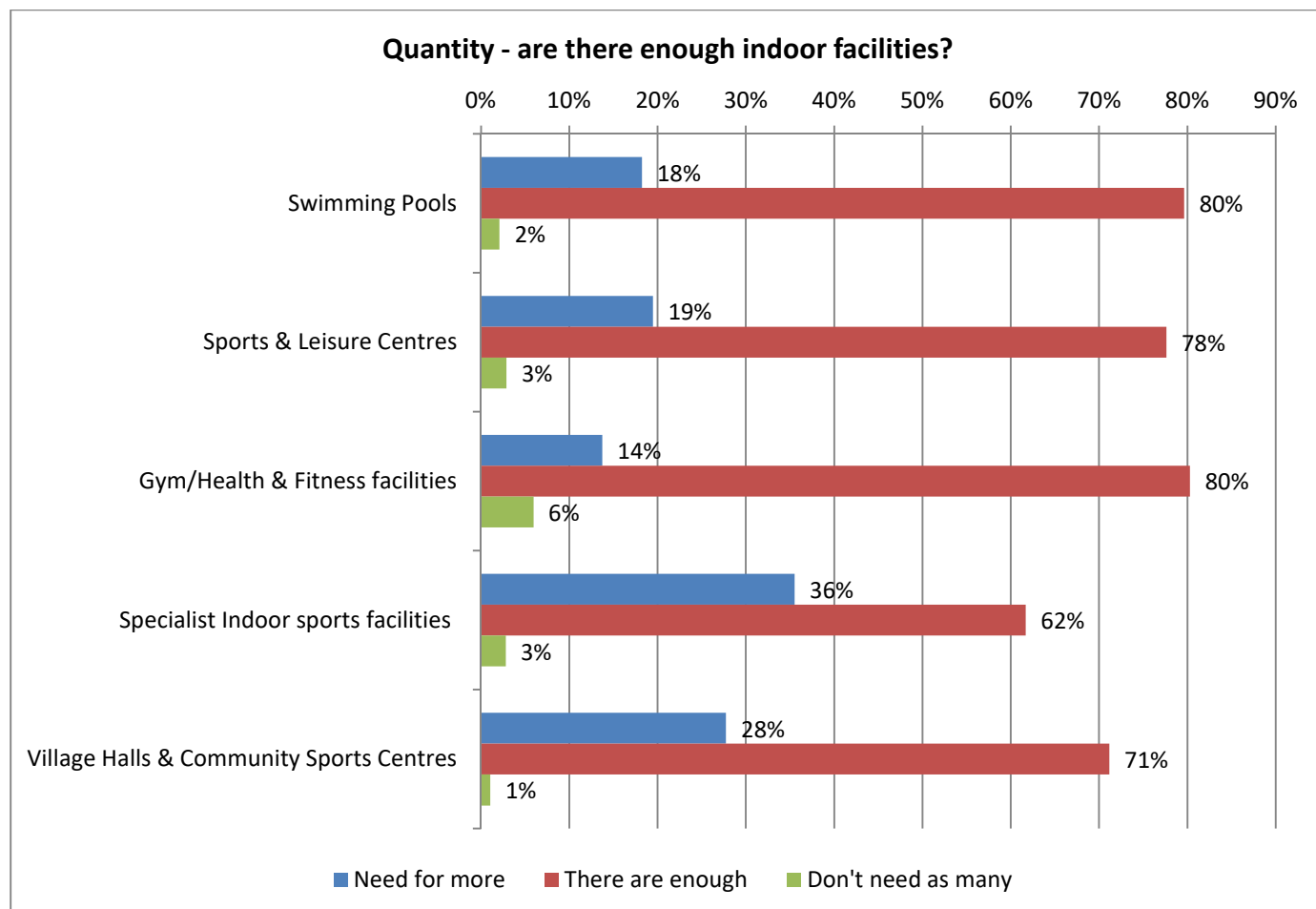


There are a number of open space typologies that respondents suggest there is a general need for more. Over 60% suggest a shortfall of facilities for teenagers (66%); informal open spaces - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc. (60%) and wildlife areas/nature reserves.

Following this, other aspects where there was considered to be an overall shortfall by a majority were: country parks, countryside and woodlands (59%); footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths (58%); allotments (55%); and artificial turf pitches (54%).

A clear majority thought that overall there are enough grass playing fields (68%); parks, gardens and recreation grounds (59%); and areas for water recreation (59%). Smaller majorities think that in general there are enough play areas, tennis courts and bowling greens.

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



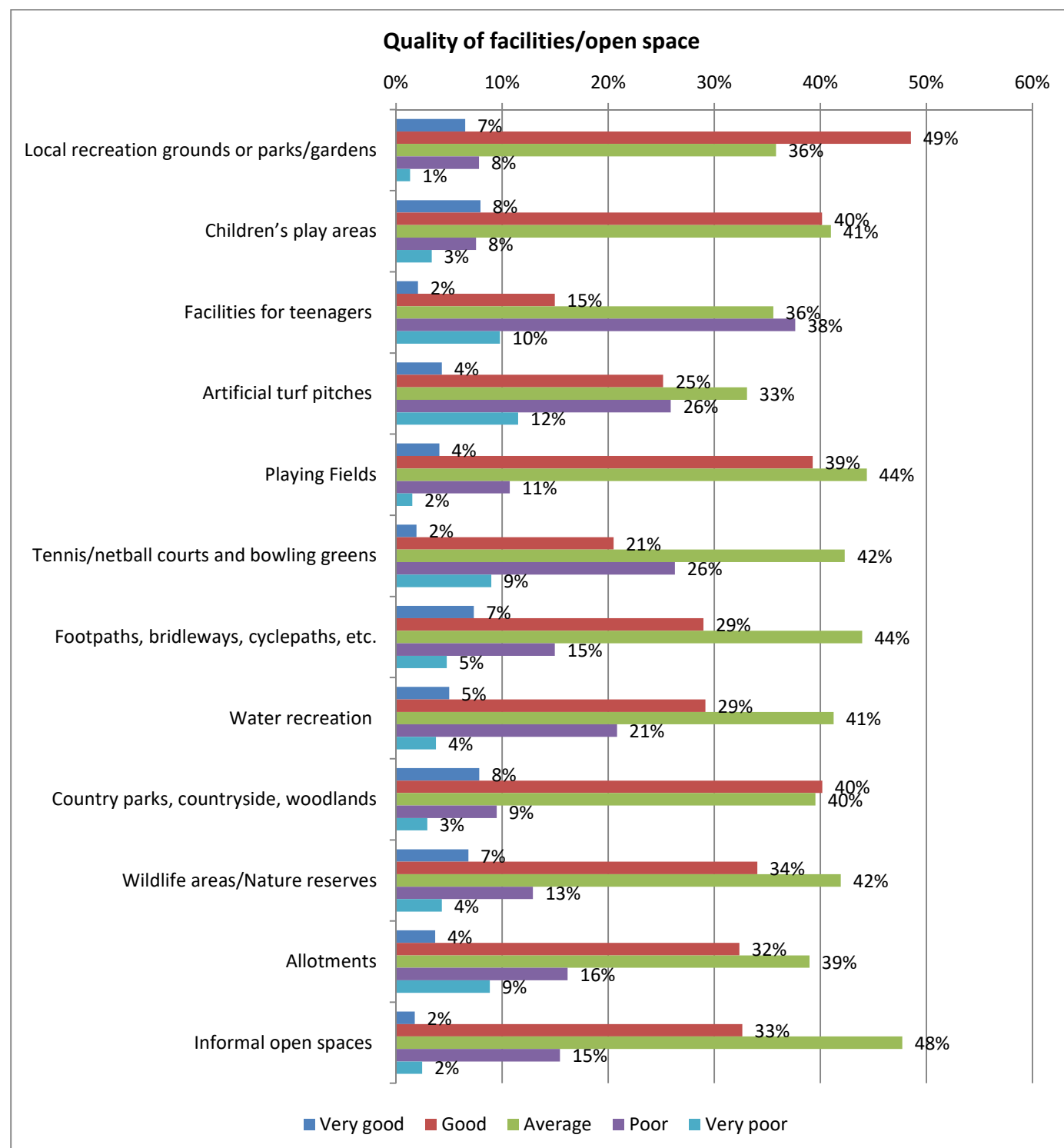
A clear majority of households reported that overall there are currently enough of all of the various kinds of indoor sport and leisure facilities; most notably in relation to swimming pools and gym/health and fitness facilities (80% think that there are enough). 78% also suggest there are enough sports and leisure centres.

The two kinds of facility where significant numbers of respondent households believe that overall there is a need for more are specialist indoor sports facilities such as indoor bowls and tennis centres (36%); and village halls/community sports centres (28%).

2.1.5 Quality of open space, sport and recreation facilities

Respondents were asked how they rated various types of facilities in the study area in terms of quality. The responses of those expressing an opinion on specific categories of facility are illustrated below:

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

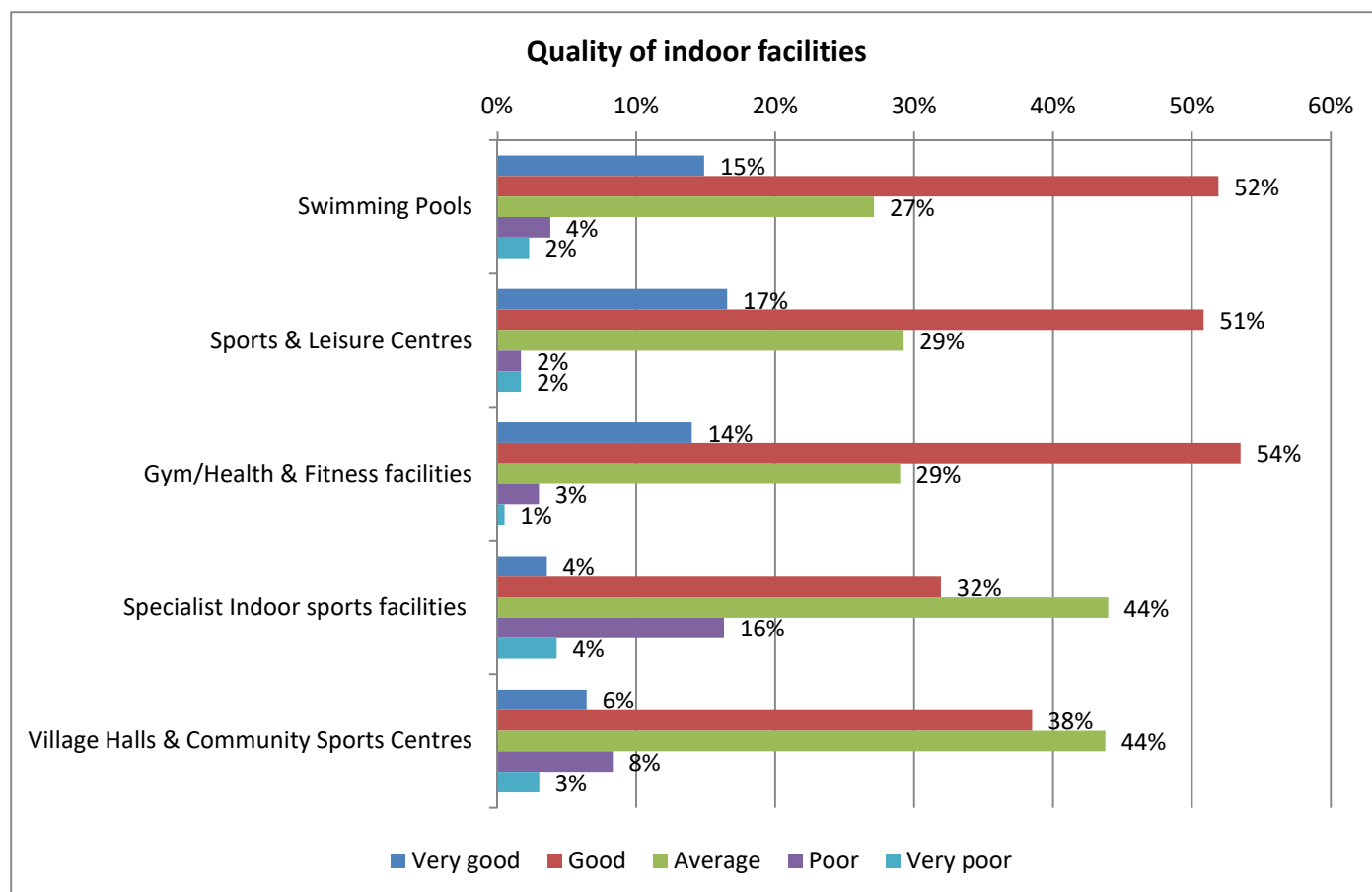


For all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they were of average or better quality (though the most common rating tended to be only "average"). However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality as noted below.

48% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor. The quality of tennis courts and bowling greens - and artificial turf pitches - was rated as poor or worse by at least 35% of respondents.

In contrast some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated relatively highly in terms of quality. These include: parks and recreation grounds (56% rate quality in general as being good or very good); country parks/countryside/woodlands (48% similarly); and play areas (48%).

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



In broad terms respondent households tended to view the quality of indoor sports and recreation provision as being good.

The indoor facilities most commonly regarded as being of good or very good quality are the sport and leisure centres (68%); gym/health and fitness facilities (68%); and swimming pools (67%).

The quality of specialist sports centres was not rated as highly (36% being rated as good or very good). Similarly for village halls and community sports centres (44%).

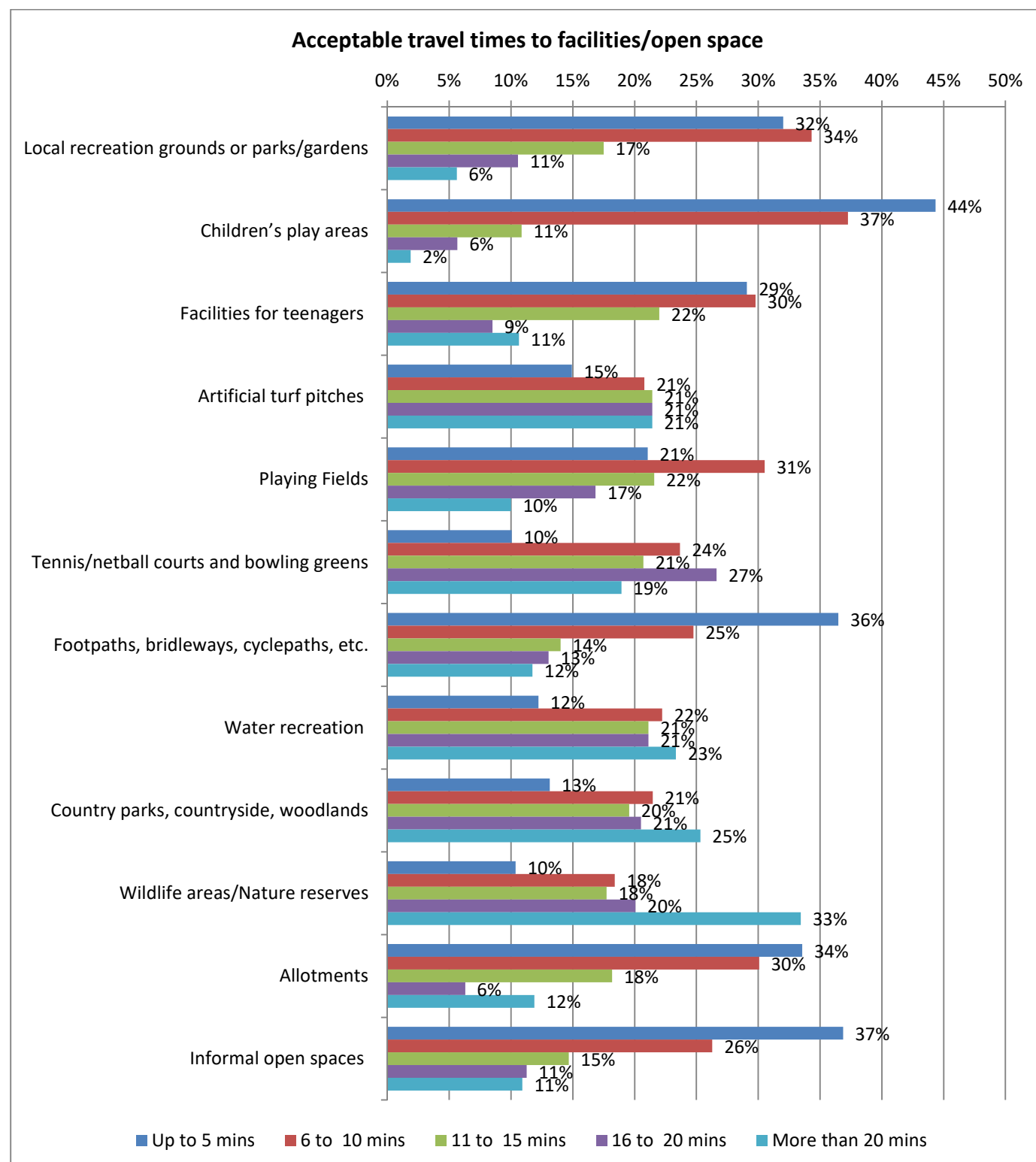
The detailed findings regarding quality will be useful in relation to the determination of the “quality” aspect of local standards.

2.1.6 Access Issues (Geographical)

An important component of this study is to develop and recommend a series of local standards of provision for different types of open space, sport and recreation opportunity. The following provides a means to gauge people's willingness to travel to use different types of opportunity (which might be by car, foot, bike, public transport etc). Where appropriate, these results will feed into the determination of the "access" element of local standards.

In looking at the travel times in the first set of charts below it should be noted that these do not specify the mode of preferred travel (this is covered by the next set of charts).

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

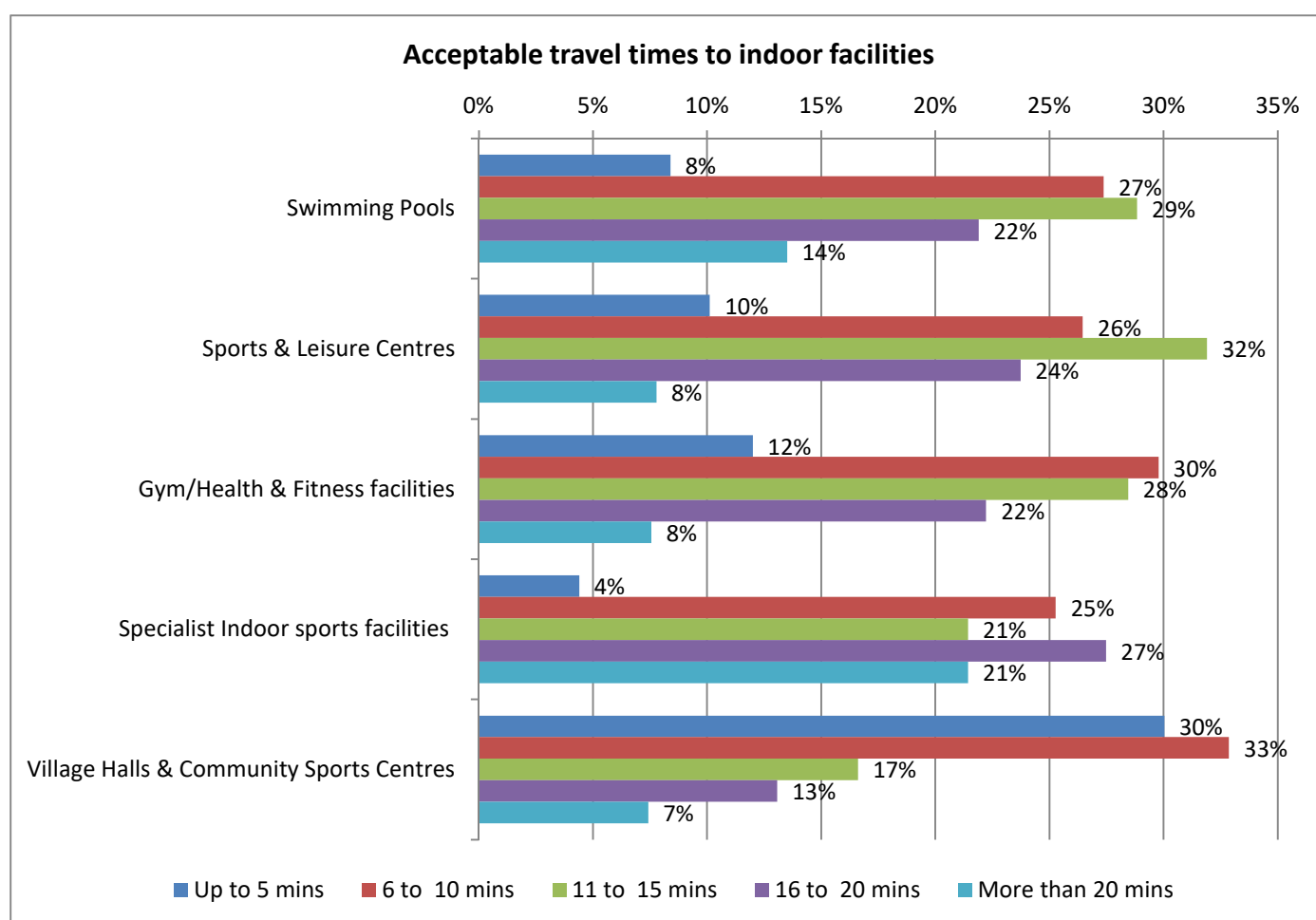


It can be seen that where respondent households make use of the opportunities identified a majority (53%) of users are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to visit a wildlife area/nature reserve. Significant numbers are also willing to travel that long to visit other kinds of open spaces/facilities, for example: tennis courts and bowling greens (46%); country parks, countryside and woodlands (46%); areas for water recreation (44%); and artificial turf pitches (42%).

In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, allotments, and informal open space areas - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc).

- 81% of users would expect play areas to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 44% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 66% of users would expect local parks/recreation grounds to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 32% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 64% of users would expect allotments to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 34% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



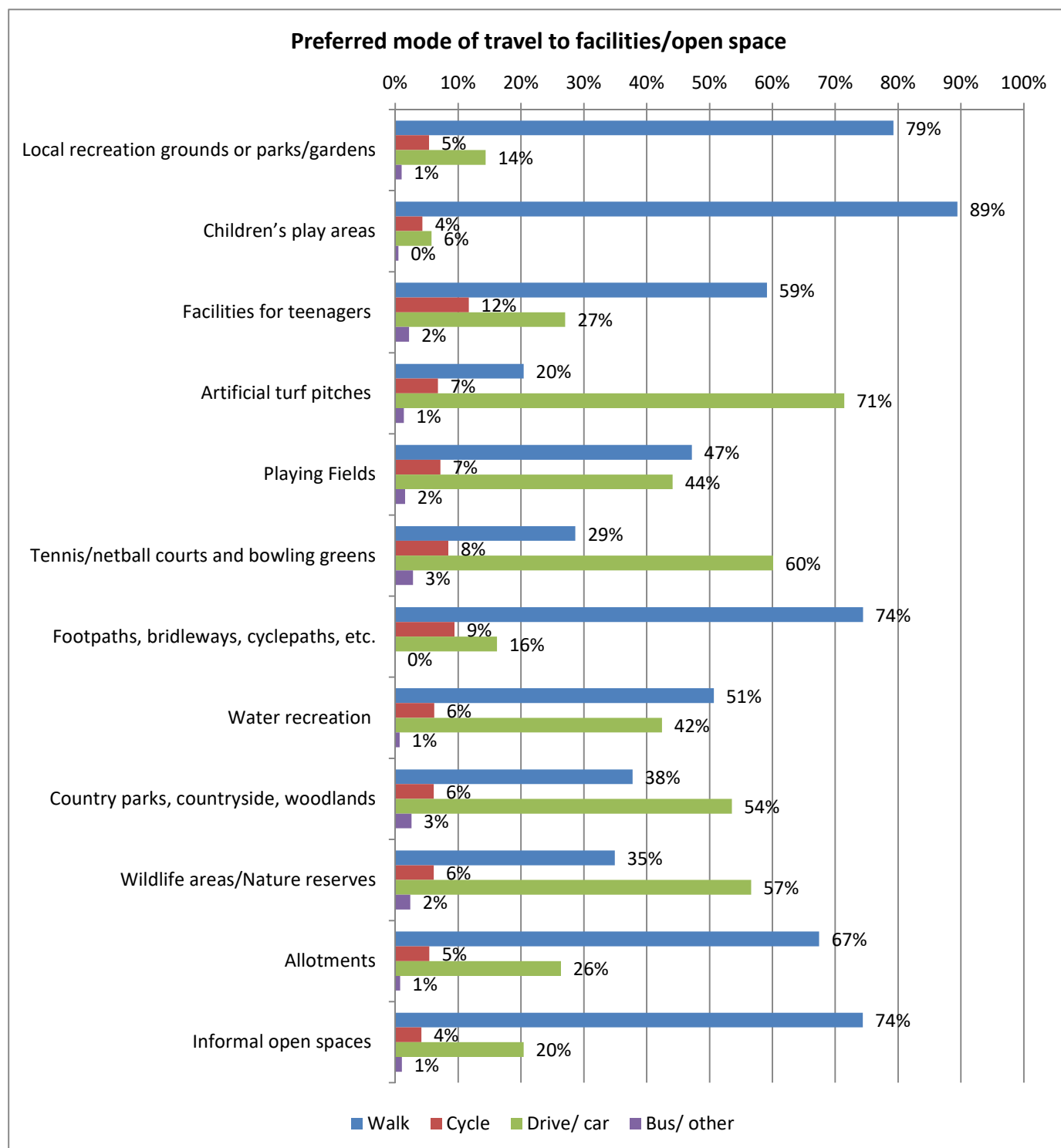
Where households make use of the opportunities identified nearly half (48%) of users are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to use some facilities such as specialist indoor sports facilities.

In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, some indoor facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used. For example 63% of users of village halls and community sports centres would not wish to travel more than 10 minutes, of which 30% would expect to travel 5 minutes or less.

It is clear from the above that for both indoor and outdoor facilities there is great variance in respondents' apparent willingness to spend time travelling to different types of opportunity⁶. In drawing up the "access" element of specific local standards for different kinds of open space/facility it is clearly very important to take careful note of all of these findings (combined with the preferred mode of travel options discussed below).

An accompanying question asked what mode of transport respondents were likely to use to get to such opportunities (where they would use them).

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

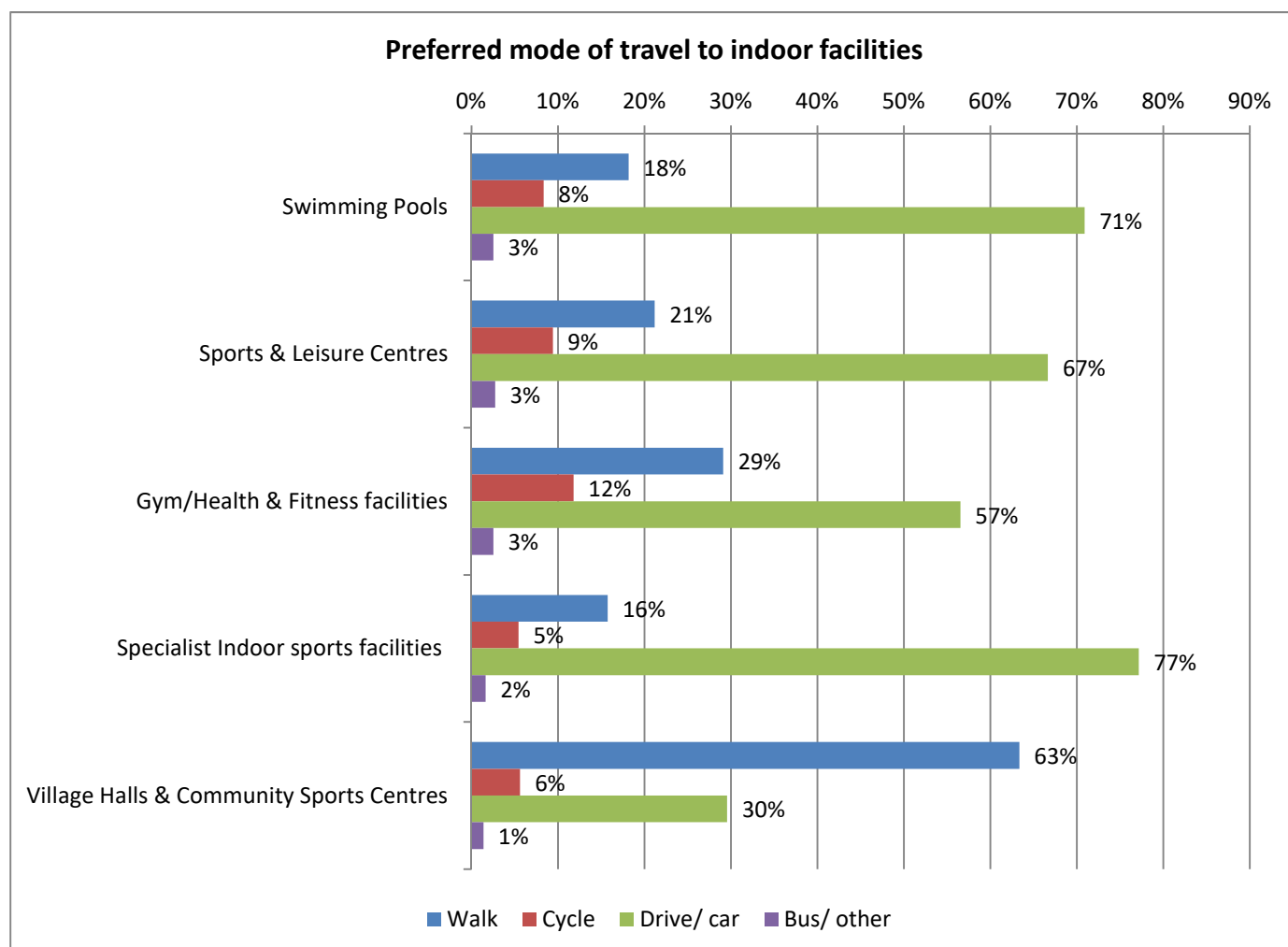


⁶ This is likely to be dependent on where in the District the respondent is. For example, residents in north of District are likely to have to travel further to use facilities due to their location.

Respondents are more likely than not to drive to many open spaces and outdoor facilities most notably artificial turf pitches (71%); tennis courts and bowling greens (60%); and wildlife areas/nature reserves (57%).

However, walking and cycling are the norm. most notably for facilities such as play areas (93%); parks and recreation grounds (84%); footpaths/bridleways and cycle paths (83%); and informal open spaces - for dog walking, picnics, hobbies etc (78%).

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



In relation to indoor sports and recreation facilities respondents are more likely than not to drive to all facilities except village halls and community sports centres; most notably in the cases of specialist sports facilities and swimming pools.

Walking and cycling are the preferred mode of travel for a clear majority of respondent households accessing village halls and community sports centres (69%).

For a small but significant minority access by cycling is important. For example, 12% prefer to cycle to their local gym; and 3% make use of the bus/other transport mode.

It is not of course surprising that in broad terms walking is the predominant mode of travel to facilities such as local parks, children's play areas, recreation grounds, and other informal recreation areas. In contrast, motorised transport is more common for larger and more specialised facilities such as swimming pools, leisure centres, and nature reserves which may be some distance removed from many potential users. It is however of great importance when it comes to drawing up the access element of local standards in terms of whether access thresholds should primarily be provided in terms of walking, cycling or drive times.

The main implications for deriving access standards are that, in general, walk times would be more appropriate for:

- Parks/gardens/recreation grounds
- Informal open space
- Play areas for children
- Teenage facilities
- Allotments
- Rights of way
- Village halls/community centres

Based on the above drive times would, in general, be more appropriate for:

- Swimming pools and leisure centres
- Specialist sports facilities
- Gym/health and fitness facilities
- Artificial turf pitches
- Tennis courts and bowling greens
- Country parks, woodlands, nature reserves etc.

From the findings above it is less clear for some facilities e.g. grass playing fields and areas for water recreation which may be the more appropriate transport mode upon which to base access thresholds.

The above are broad conclusions and will be considered in detail in the 3 main reports. For example, drive times may be more appropriate for the strategic access element of a standard for "destination" parks in the main towns.

Equally, for example, there is need to consider standards for different types of youth facility. For example planning for skate park provision in the main towns may be best served by aiming for a strategic supply of high quality facilities that may need to take into account proximity to public transport routes, cyclepaths and such like. The provision of youth shelters may need a much more locally based, demand led, strategy.

The 3 main reports will also discuss in detail the way different typologies should be treated in relation to spatial planning standards. For example, recommendations for rights of way may not be focused on specific quantity or distance/time threshold standards.

Importance of Footpath/cycle access

Residents were asked if they would cycle or walk further or more often if the quality of their journey by foot or bike to a nearby open space or facility was improved.

- 72% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved
- 76% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.

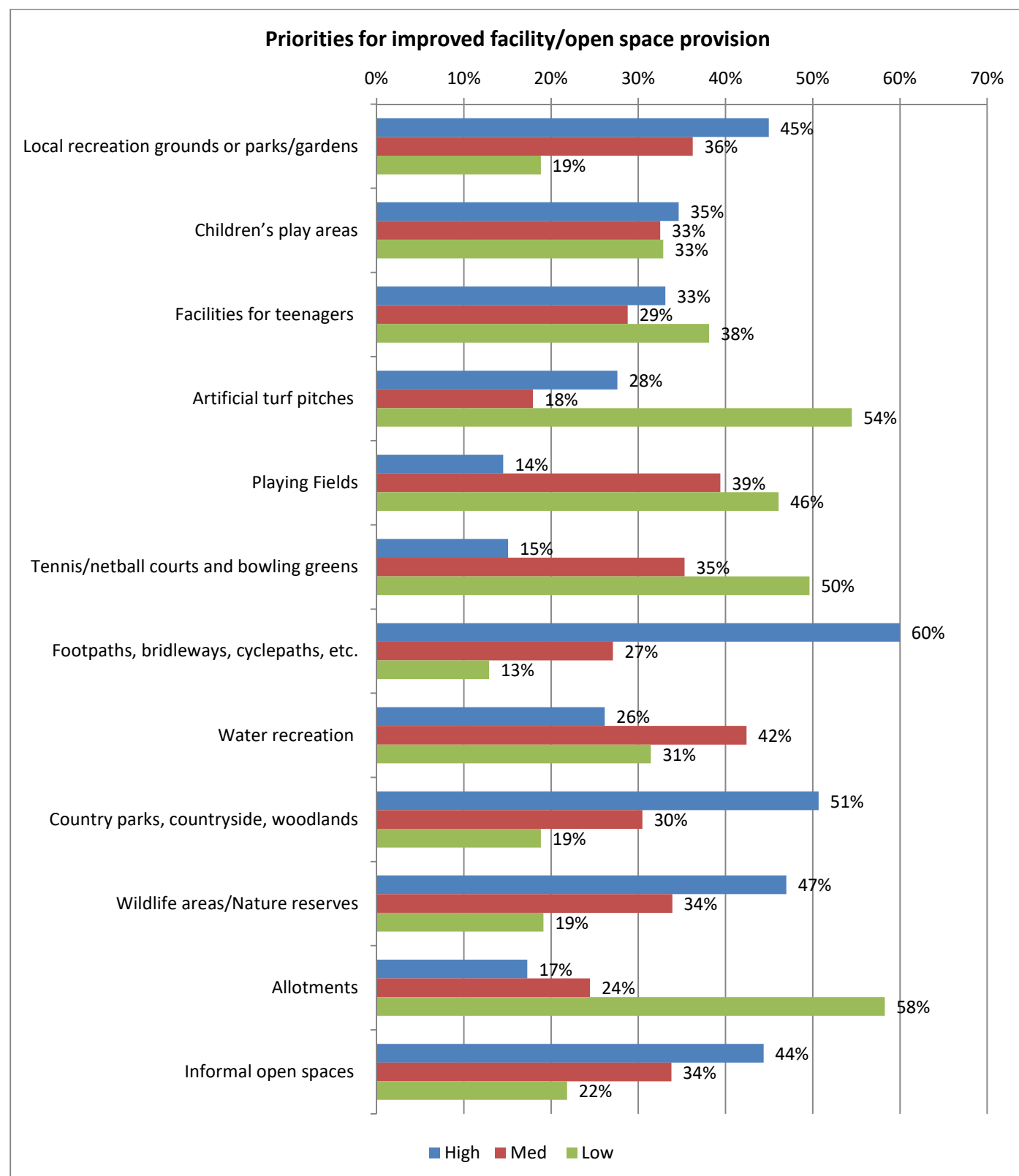
This is a significant finding in terms of illustrating the potential benefit of ensuring good foot and cycle path access to facilities.

The detailed findings from this section will be used when drawing up the access elements of relevant standards for different kinds of open space elsewhere in the study.

2.1.7 Key Issues and priorities for improvement

Households were also asked what their priorities for improvement in provision were. Findings are illustrated on the table below. Respondents were asked to rate the need for new or improved facilities by indicating priorities at three levels - high, medium or low.

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

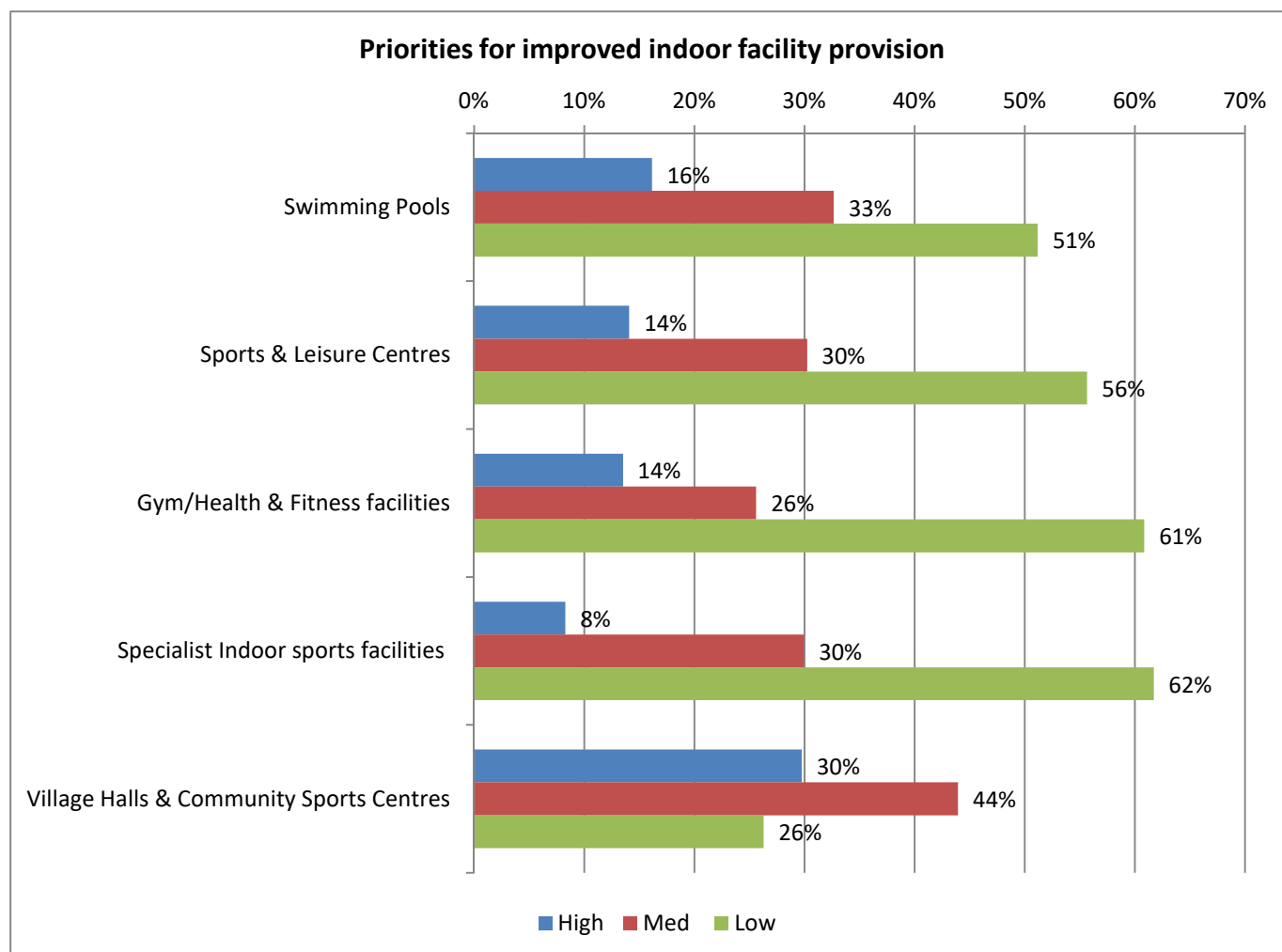


In relation to Open Space and Outdoor Facilities the category highlighted by the largest number of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision was better footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision (60%).

Other notable high priorities for improvement noted by significant numbers were for country parks, accessible countryside/woodlands, and nature reserves/wildlife areas (at least 47%); parks/gardens/local recreation grounds (45%); informal open spaces (44%); and children's play areas/ facilities for teenagers (35%/33%).

Access to areas for water recreation also scored quite highly as a priority need (a combined high/medium priority choice for 68% of households - 42% medium/26% high).

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



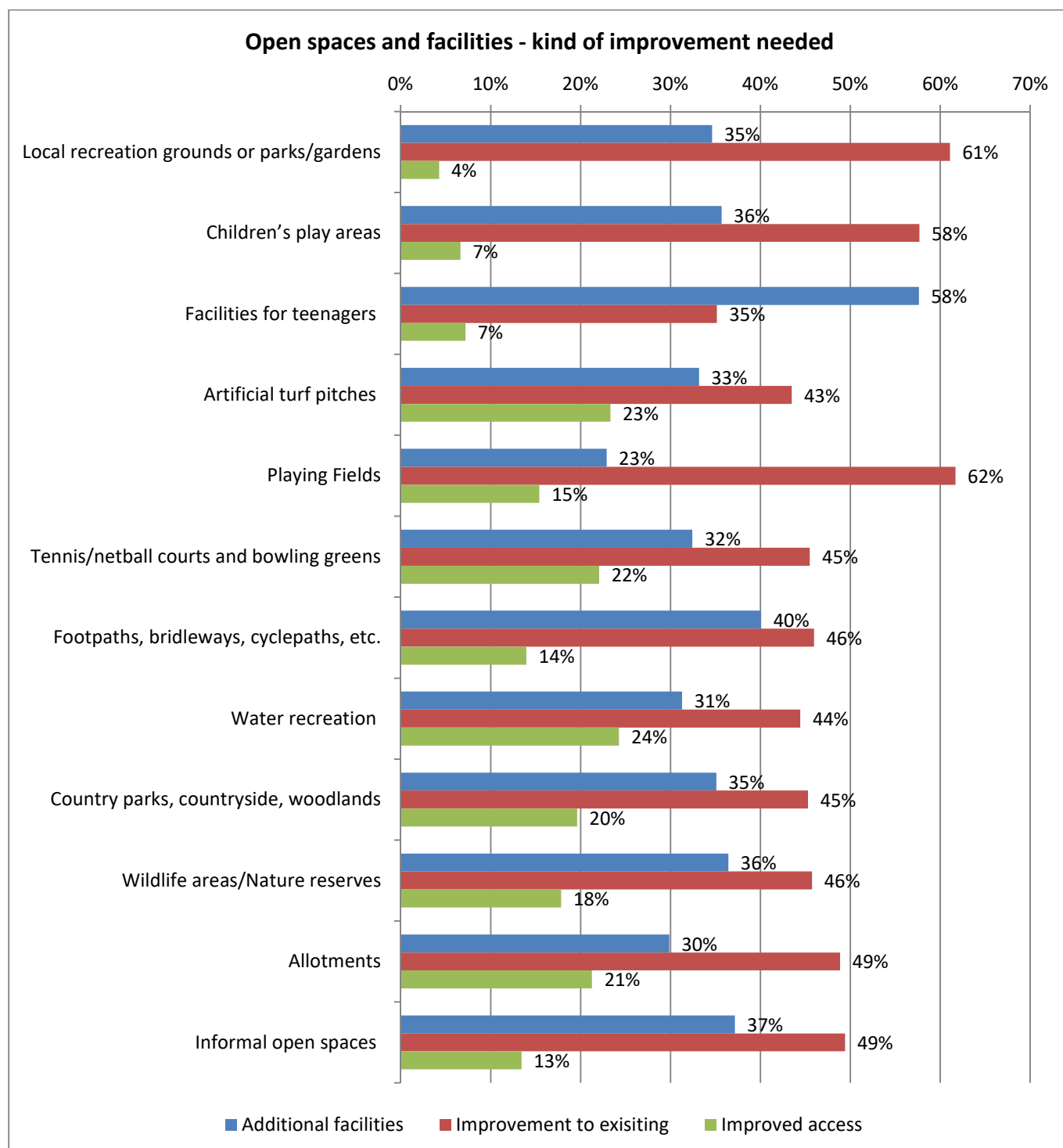
For indoor sports and leisure facilities in general, fewer households highlighted high priority needs. Village halls and community sports facilities had the highest level of high/medium priority need score (73% - of which 30% noted a high priority need)

Following this, improvement to swimming pool provision was noted by 49% as a high/medium priority need (16% high/33% medium priority).

Kind of Improvement Needed

Associated questions asked households to indicate whether the kind of priority need was primarily for more facilities, improved quality of existing, or improved access. In relation to the priorities noted above these findings are shown in the charts below:

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

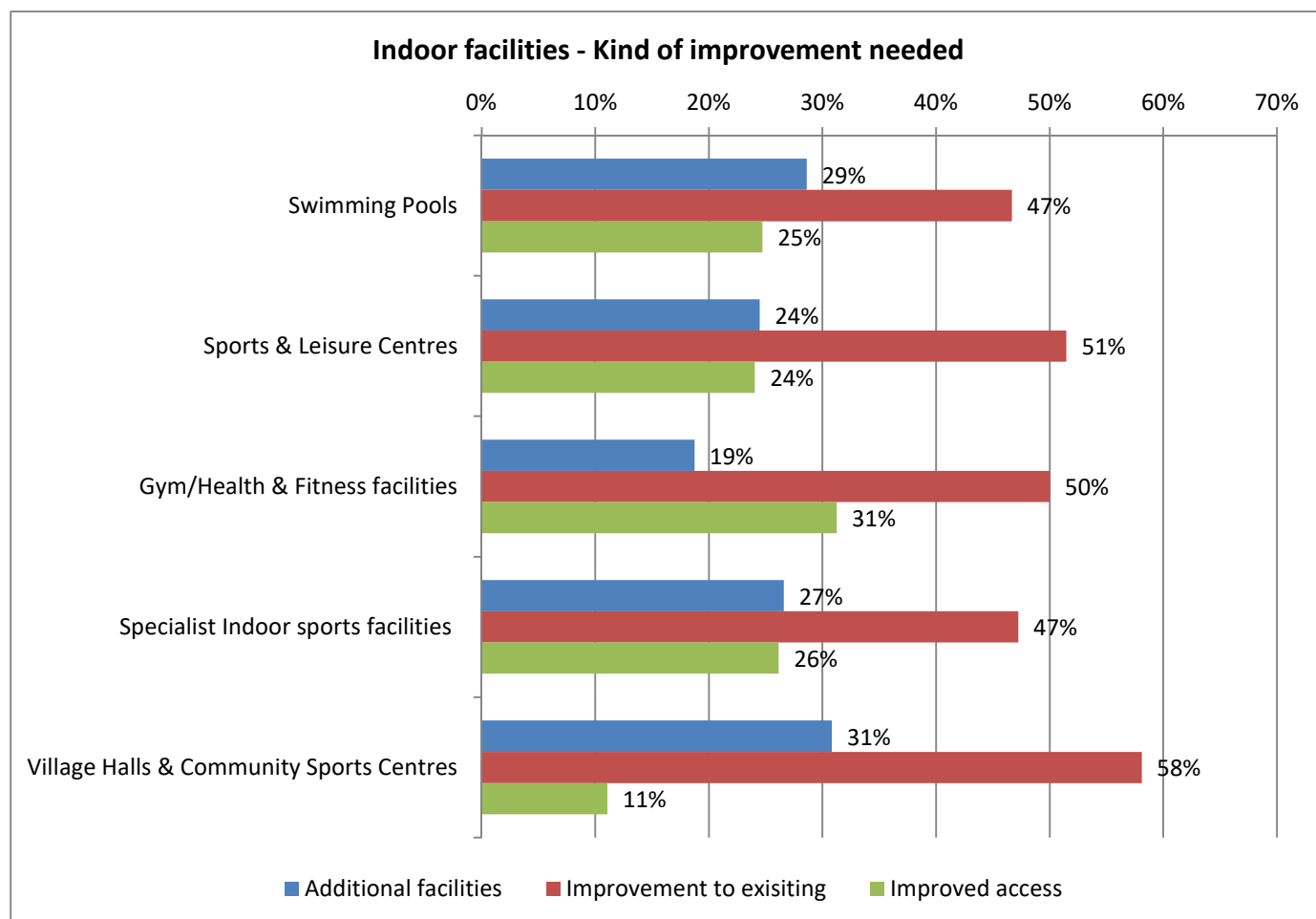


From this it can be seen that:

- In the main households tended to suggest that improvements to existing open space facilities rather than new provision was most needed.
- The only category where it is clear cut that the primary need identified is for more facilities is provision for teenagers (58%).

- For other typologies quality improvements to existing provision is the more common kind of improvement need suggested e.g. grass playing fields (62%); parks, gardens and recreation grounds (61%) and children's play areas (58%).
- Improved access is particularly significant for some categories e.g. access to country water recreation; artificial turf pitches and tennis courts/bowling greens (around 22%).

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



From this it can be seen that:

- In general, for all the typologies of indoor sport and leisure facilities more households highlight the primary need being improvements to existing facilities rather than for additional facilities/improved access.
- In relation to village halls and community sports centres it is particularly clear cut that improvements to existing provision, rather than providing additional facilities or improved access, is the more common kind of improvement suggested (58%). This is also the case for sports and leisure centres and gym/health and fitness centres though to a lesser extent (around 50%).
- 31% of households suggest a need for more village halls and community sports centres; 29% more swimming pools; and 27% for additional specialist sports centres e.g. indoor tennis and bowls.
- Improved access is quite significant for significant numbers of households for gym/health and fitness facilities (31%).

2.2 Stakeholder Views - Public Health

2.2.1 Introduction - the general value of sport, leisure and physical activity to health

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have pointed out that "physical activity is not only fun and enjoyable, it is essential for good health, helping to prevent or manage over 20 conditions and diseases. This includes heart disease, diabetes, some cancers and obesity. It can also help improve people's mental health and wellbeing."

NICE Local Authority Briefing - Public health

Supporting people of all ages to be more physically active can help local authorities meet their new public health responsibilities. Specifically, it will impact on a range of indicators identified in the public health and the adult social care outcomes frameworks including:

- use of green space for exercise/health reasons
- child development
- excess weight in children and adults
- proportion of physically active and inactive adults
- self-reported wellbeing and health-related quality of life
- falls and injuries in the over-65s
- mortality from cardiovascular diseases (including heart disease and stroke), cancer and respiratory diseases.

Providing opportunities for physical activity by developing and maintaining appropriate facilities such as sports and leisure centres, parks and open spaces is therefore very important in relation to promoting better public health. Public Health services nationally therefore tend to have an interest in all aspects of active recreation facility provision; and this is reflected in the views of the service in Braintree District and Essex.

2.2.2 Braintree District Council Public Health and Protection Services

In relation to the development of the 3 main reports e.g. in respect of their statements of policy and the development of future strategy, it is important to understand to what extent open space, sport and recreation provision is valued by public health services. This is because there may be potential to secure public health funding for recommended facility improvements. It is also useful to understand how public health services are structured in Braintree and Essex.

The Braintree District Council Health and Wellbeing Programme Manager was therefore contacted who provided the following information and key points:

Braintree District Council Health and Wellbeing Service - overview and key points

Overview

- The County Council has a statutory role for Public Health (supported by funding previously allocated to the NHS for this purpose).
- The District Council has no statutory role but many services have important links with health e.g. Leisure, Parks, Environmental Health etc, Planning, Housing etc. The District Council Public Health and Wellbeing Services has strategic links with all of these services and provides a direct route to the statutory Public Health service.

- The Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) covers Chelmsford, Braintree and Maldon districts. The County Council sit on this board to represent a public health interest.
- The District Council chairs a local Braintree Health and Wellbeing Panel which has direct links with the CCG.
- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) ⁷ shows that health and wellbeing statistics for the Braintree District are generally better than the national average. There are still however areas that are of concern and need to be addressed.

Key points

- The *Braintree District Health and Wellbeing Prospectus 2015-20* outlines the priorities for the District Council over the next 5 years.
- The Health and Wellbeing Panel has developed a Health and Wellbeing Programme under the “Livewell” banner and there are five strategic themes that will guide the work of the Panel and its partners in improving health and wellbeing across the district.
- One of these 5 priorities is **Be Well**. *People of all ages, shapes, sizes and abilities can benefit from being physically active. We will encourage more people to undertake regular physical activity, which will in turn produce longer term health benefits.*
- Another relevant priority is **Age Well**. *Plan now for the future, for a healthier retirement. We will endeavour to encourage people to look at improving their health and wellbeing now, to be able to lead a better quality of life in the future. We will also encourage and provide opportunity for our elderly population to be more active during their retirement years.*
- The other most relevant priority in relation to open spaces is **Eat Well**. *Healthy eating means consuming the right type and quantity of food from all food groups in order to lead a healthy life. We will raise awareness across the district about healthier eating.* This could have relevance in relation to planning for allotment provision, for example.
- The District Council Health and Wellbeing Service also supports the principles set out in *Public Health and Landscape - Creating healthy places*⁸ which shows how important open spaces are in relation to promoting health and wellbeing.

2.2.3 Active Essex

Active Essex is the County Sport and Physical Activity Partnership. It is hosted by Essex County Council and has support from Sport England. Active Essex are also commissioned by the County Council Public Health services to deliver health and wellbeing programmes.

A meeting was held with Active Essex and key general points highlighted as being of relevance to this study are noted below⁹:

General

- Active Essex see this study as a key strategic opportunity to plan for an improved infrastructure across Braintree District and the wider area for all kinds of sport, leisure and active recreation.

⁷ The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) looks at the current and future health and care needs of local populations to inform and guide the planning and commissioning of health, well-being and social care services within a local authority area.

⁸ Landscape Institute Position Statement (2013)

⁹ Active Essex also highlighted a number of points in relation to facilities for individual sports that are noted in Section 3 of this report.

- In particular it is an opportunity to ensure that all proposals moving through the planning process take into account infrastructure for sport, leisure and active recreation and that appropriate measures are taken in relation to CIL and S106 arrangements.
- When appropriate this should also recognise the importance of investment in "ageing stock" and securing funding to improve existing provision (as well as the need for new facilities). Sustainability is a key consideration.

Public Health

- Staying active can help people lead a healthier and happier life. Physical activity is probably the most effective way of losing weight. It can also cut the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers.
- Physical activity can boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing the risk of stress, depression, dementia and Alzheimer's.
- Active Essex have been commissioned by the County Council's Public Health service to promote and deliver programmes of activity to improve health and wellbeing. The aim is to increase physical activity, particularly in priority areas re health inequality.
- Initiatives supported include *Let's get Going*, Park Run, and GP referral schemes.
- Promoting regular and frequent participation in active recreation, such as walking, cycling and outdoor play, are just as important as sports in relation to health benefits. The "facility" infrastructure for these kinds of physical activity needs to be considered alongside provision for sports.

2.2.4 The Braintree Access Group

In relation to public health equitable access to opportunities for active recreation is an important issue. We therefore contacted the local Access Group which is convened and supported by the District Council. The Access group covers issues concerning physical access to facilities by disabled people and meets every two months. A meeting was held with the District Council convenor followed by a discussion with an active group member with an interest in open space issues.

The Access Group have not covered open spaces, sport and recreation as a general theme in their work but over the years have been involved in a number of cases of looking at the need to improve access to such facilities such as:

- Braintree Swimming pool - attempts to resolve issues relating to pool temperature for the benefit of disabled swimmers.
- Braintree Leisure Centre - looking at car parking issues and use of the lift.
- Access to the countryside e.g. at nature reserves and more generally in relation to access to paths - such as replacement of stiles with wheelchair accessible kissing gates.
- The group also provides advice in relation to plans for new facilities e.g. access to Witham Leisure centre.
- The group has not looked specifically at access to play areas and youth facilities.

A local Access Group member added the following observations in relation to open space issues:

- Ideally the Access Group should be involved at the earliest opportunity in relation to the planning and design of sports and recreation facilities and in relation to open space issues.

- Legally all kinds of sport, recreation and play facilities should be accessible to disabled people. For many kinds of sport, recreation and play facilities there are official specifications and good practice guidelines aimed at maximising access opportunities. These should be identified and used for all new facility provision; and in relation to potential improvements and refurbishments.
- Factors of importance regarding use of swimming pools by disabled people include: ensuring a satisfactory pool and poolside temperature; providing grab rails in changing rooms; having sufficient large changing rooms with suitable showering facilities and toilets; providing hoist equipment; and arranging radar key entry to specialist changing facilities - to ensure they are available for the disabled people who need them most rather than the public in general (who can use any changing rooms).
- The disabled swimming club at the Braintree Leisure Centre pool used to be about 30 strong, but folded because issues regarding pool temperature could not be resolved. This means that many disabled swimmers go to Sudbury and other pools.
- Key issues for access to parks and green spaces include:
 - provision and maintenance of paths within open spaces. This includes the surface of the paths and encroaching vegetation.
 - Ensuring the routes to the main access points for open spaces are themselves accessible e.g. dropped kerbs, paths from car parks being suitably surfaced and maintained.
 - Ensuring gates and access points are suitable for wheelchairs.
 - Access to country paths and rights of way - provide kissing gates wherever possible; and in particular on planned routes where wheelchair accessible kissing gates would allow for a complete route to be followed e.g. a circular route on a decent surface.
 - Provide and promote good information on the level of access available and any barriers that may prevent access so that disabled people can assess the level of difficulty that may be faced.
- The Flitch Way is an example of where disabled access has been well planned for. Access paths to Bradford Meadows is another good example. The development of more of such pathways would be welcomed.
- Access to many outdoor recreation activities can be successfully planned for e.g. provision of platforms to enable wheelchair users to participate in angling (and well surfaced paths to such platforms).

2.3 General Community - Key Findings

This section provides consultation findings from Braintree households and stakeholders expressing a view on all aspects of open space, sport and recreation facility provision (rather than groups and organisations with a specific interest in one or two specific typologies).

Quantity

Open Space

- Over 60% suggest a shortfall of: facilities for teenagers; informal open spaces - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc. and wildlife areas/nature reserves.
- Following this, other aspects where there was considered to be an overall shortfall by a majority were: country parks, countryside and woodlands; footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths; allotments; and artificial turf pitches.
- A clear majority thought that overall there *are* enough grass playing field; parks, gardens and recreation grounds; and areas for water recreation.
- Smaller majorities think that in general there is no need for additional play areas, tennis courts and bowling greens.

Built Facilities

- A clear majority of households reported that overall there are currently enough of all of the various kinds of indoor sport and leisure facilities; most notably in relation to swimming pools and gym/health and fitness facilities (80% think that there are enough). 78% also suggest there are enough sports and leisure centres.
- The two kinds of facility where significant numbers of respondent households believe that overall there is a need for more are specialist indoor sports facilities such as indoor bowls and tennis centres (36%); and village halls/community sports centres (28%).

Quality

Open Space

For all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they were of average or better quality (though the most common rating tended to be only "average"). However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality as noted below.

- 48% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor.
- The quality of tennis courts and bowling greens - and artificial turf pitches - was rated as poor or worse by at least 35% of respondents.
- In contrast some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated relatively highly in terms of quality. These include: parks and recreation grounds (56% rate quality in general as being good or very good); country parks/countryside/woodlands (48% similarly); and play areas (48%).

Built Indoor Facilities

- In broad terms respondent households tended to view the quality of indoor sports and recreation provision as being good.
- The indoor facilities most commonly regarded as being of good or very good quality are

the sport and leisure centres (68%); gym/health and fitness facilities (68%); and swimming pools (67%).

- The quality of specialist sports centres was not rated as highly as pools and leisure centres (only 36% being rated as good or very good). Similarly for village halls and community sports centres (44%).

Access

Open Space

- There is great variance in respondent households willingness to spend time travelling to different types of facility and open space.
- a majority (53%) of users are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to visit a wildlife area/nature reserve. Significant numbers are also willing to travel that long to visit other kinds of open spaces/facilities, for example: tennis courts and bowling greens (46%); country parks, countryside and woodlands (46%); areas for water recreation (44%); and artificial turf pitches (42%).
- In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, allotments, and informal open space areas - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc).

Built Facilities

- In relation to indoor sports and recreation facilities respondents are more likely than not to drive to all facilities except village halls and community sports centres; most notably in the cases of specialist sports facilities and swimming pools.
- Walking is the preferred mode of travel for a clear majority of respondent households accessing village halls and community sports centres (69%).
- For a small but significant minority access by cycling is important. For example, 12% prefer to cycle to their local gym; and 3% make use of the bus/other transport mode.

Priorities and other issues

- In relation to open space and outdoor facilities the category highlighted by the largest number of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision was better footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision (60%).
- 72% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route to open spaces and facilities was improved. 76% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.
- Other notable high priorities for improvement noted by significant numbers were for country parks, accessible countryside/woodlands, and nature reserves/wildlife areas (at least 47%); parks/gardens/local recreation grounds (45%); informal open spaces (44%); and children's play areas/ facilities for teenagers (35%/33%).
- Access to areas for water recreation also scored quite highly as a priority need (a combined high/medium priority choice for 68% of households - 42% medium/26% high).
- Providing opportunities for physical activity by developing and maintaining appropriate facilities such as sports and leisure centres, parks and open spaces is very important in relation to promoting better public health and reducing health inequalities.
- Some sectors of the community face particular barriers to access such as disabled people; children and young people; households in the more isolated rural areas and those in the more deprived urban wards of the study area.

3 SPORTS - INDOOR AND OUTDOOR (NON-PITCH)

3.1 Introduction and overview

This section provides an overview of consultee responses on the main indoor and outdoor (non-pitch) sports - tennis, athletics, bowls and netball. It does not report on consultation undertaken in relation to the associated Playing Pitch Study¹⁰. The chapter contains feedback from Braintree District Council officers, officers from Active Essex (the County Sport and Physical Activity Partnership) and relevant governing bodies. It also incorporates findings from surveys of sports clubs.

Findings from this section will be taken forward in the *Playing Pitch Study and Outdoor Sports* main report (along with additional consultation findings from the Playing Pitch Study process); and the *Built Facilities* main report.

To understand the District Council perspective on sports facilities interviews were held with the Leisure Contract Officer and the Parks and Open Spaces Manager. Meetings were also held with Active Essex and Active Braintree. The feedback from these interviews is included in the appropriate sections below.

The section is structured in two parts - Indoor Sports and Outdoor Sports (non-pitch) - preceded by a short overview of School and College facilities and the work of Active Braintree.

School and College Facilities

Many secondary schools and colleges in the District Council area have a range of both indoor and outdoor facilities with varying degrees of community use. It is therefore useful to have an understanding of these facilities and school issues prior to consideration of the more detailed consultation responses covered in parts one and two.

School and Colleges Survey

A survey of secondary schools and colleges in the District was undertaken. The survey gathered information on indoor and outdoor facilities; and the current and potential extent of community use. It also asked about any plans or aspirations for facility development. We received responses from:

- Maltings Academy
- The New Rickstones Academy
- Alec Hunter Academy
- Edith Borthwick School
- Honywood School
- Ramsey Academy
- Hedingham School
- Notley High School

Details can be found in an associated excel spreadsheet, but it is useful to see at the outset views on community use of school sports facilities and which schools currently have plans and aspirations for facility development as noted below:

¹⁰ The playing pitch study provides a detailed analysis of the supply of and demand for the pitch sports facilities - football, cricket, rugby and hockey; conducted in line with the Sport England methodology.

Community Use

All of the schools who responded reported that they had links with local sports clubs; and that they provided community use of some or all of their sports facilities, to varying degrees, as summarised below:

School	Community Use
Maltings Academy	All facilities (indoor and outdoor) are offered to the wider community.
The New Rickstones Academy	Indoor - the sports hall and dance studio have community use. The school field is also available for community use. Formal community/dual use agreement.
Alec Hunter Academy	All our indoor facilities are available for community use - every evening and weekend. Outdoor - the tennis courts are available in the evening. Adopted school policy.
Edith Borthwick School	The school hall is used for assorted activities by a holiday club - summer holidays. Field and outside areas also used by holiday club - summer holidays. Adopted school policy. The holiday club is run for pupils attending the school and run primarily by staff from the school.
Honywood School	Facilities are used by the village football teams, badminton club, netball club, cricket club, and basketball club. Adopted school policy. The facilities we have are adequate at best at the moment for sport. We can't open our pitches up more to other users as they would be destroyed. Ideally if all secondary schools in the NW Essex District had artificial-turf pitches this would be a viable option.
Ramsey Academy	We currently have a formal joint use agreement with Halstead Leisure Centre, who use our facilities after 5.00pm . Therefore there is limited opportunity to extend the use of our facilities beyond this time.
Heddingham School	Indoor community use - the sports hall and gym - for football, dance and fitness. Outdoors - the MUGA and grass field let for football and rugby training and matches at all levels. Adopted school policy.
Notley High School	Indoor community use : 5 court hall fully booked evenings and all day Saturday (not open on Sunday); 3 court hall used one evening per week and on Saturday morning; the gymnasium used 4 nights per week and on Saturday morning. Outdoors - pitches only used for school weekday and occasional weekend matches; Field used for training every Saturday morning (BTYFC). Adopted school policy - all users are contracted with the school on annual agreement; or casual use (outdoor facilities).

All the schools confirmed that they did not anticipate any reduction in community use in the foreseeable future. A number of schools noted that they had some additional capacity to offer greater community use of some of their facilities.

Responses were not received from Tabor Academy or Braintree College but the Leisure Contract officer summarised the community use of their facilities as below:

Tabor Academy

Braintree Leisure Centre - a key dual use sports facility - is based at the Tabor Academy site and its use is governed by a formal community use agreement between the school and the District Council. It is managed by Fusion Leisure. The majority of the facilities are in very good condition bar the athletics track where there may be a need to repair/replace the track in the medium term (5-8 years).

The College has a large 6 court sized sports hall which is available for community use.

Plans and Aspirations

A number of schools highlighted specific plans and aspirations for sports facility improvements as noted below:

School	Facility plans and aspirations
Maltings Academy	Scope for the possibility of a cricket strip being added the field. Scope for an Athletics cage for throwing events. Scope for removable rugby posts on the back field or on the grounds next to the artificial turf pitch.
The New Rickstones Academy	Better outdoor hard play surface.
Alec Hunter Academy	Not aware of any plans.
Edith Borthwick School	New site opening September 2015 will incorporate a better indoor multi-purpose hall but also outdoor facilities which will hopefully include an all-weather, fenced sports area for assorted sports.
Honywood School	Improvements we would like to make are to the outdoor hardcourt area and provision of a floodlit artificial-turf pitch to assist in all- weather sport that could be offered.
Ramsey Academy	No plans.
Hedingham School	None specifically highlighted.
Notley High School	Changing rooms and facilities for the 3 court hall (desired) Canopy or cover of some form for tennis courts and floodlights (desired) Dance studio in 5 court hall (costs known but not progressed yet).

Active Braintree

A meeting was held with the Chairman of Active Braintree, John Wood. Active Braintree was re-launched in 2013. It is a dynamic, strategic sport and active recreation development network for the District, well supported by the District Council. Active Braintree delivers its programme in line with an annually reviewed work plan (securing funding from Active Essex through a bidding process; and direct from its member organisations for specific projects).

Active Braintree has links with the Braintree Health and Wellbeing panel and recognises the significant value that increasing participation sport and active recreation can make to people's health and wellbeing.

Examples of projects Active Braintree is involved with are:

- Inter-community games (for young people)
- The Walkabout group - to encourage more older people to walk regularly.
- Cycling projects (led cycle rides)
- Rural Activities project - for women and girls
- A local sports awards scheme (individuals and clubs/organisations).
- Sports club conferences and training programmes

Indoor Facility observations:

- Important to look at district-wide supply and demand modelling e.g. via the Sport England Facility Planning model.
- In general the facilities run by Fusion Leisure in Braintree District on behalf of the District Council are of good quality and well maintained. There has been considerable investment over recent years to improve the facilities.
- The Witham facilities, though adequate currently, may need increasing in the future to match projected demand through housing growth. E.G. additional sports hall space and squash courts.
- It is important to consolidate ongoing community use of school facilities in Witham.
- Braintree seems fairly well served but detailed analysis of supply and demand is needed to make a useful assessment.
- Earls Colne Recreation club has a good supply of both indoor and outdoor facilities but it is difficult to assess whether it is sustainable in the long term.

Outdoor facilities

- Tennis - there are a number of tennis clubs and a limited number of public and parish court facilities. Active Braintree is not aware of any specific needs or demand for additional courts.
- Bowls - mostly provided by individual clubs and Active Braintree is not aware of any particular need or aspirations for improvements. Some clubs are proactively aiming to recruit new members - e.g. Witham BC recently organised a “have a go” open day. Without such initiatives there is a danger of bowls clubs becoming unsustainable.
- Netball - appears to be quite strong in Braintree District with reports from some clubs of a need to improve the quality of and access to courts. Netball courts often “double” with tennis as regards use.
- Athletics - there is a strong club in Braintree with access to a track. The club may well have specific plans and aspirations for improvements.
- Pitch sports - not aware of current levels of supply and demand. This should become clear once the playing pitch study is complete.

Part 1 Outdoor Sports (non-pitch)

This section supplies feedback from the national governing bodies (NGBs) of individual sports, sports clubs, Active Essex and Braintree District Council.

3.3 Tennis

3.3.1 The NGB - The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)

General

- The LTA has a national Facility Strategy that is available via the LTA website
- When a Local Authority becomes a priority area the LTA completes a full technical audit of facility stock.
- Braintree District is not a priority area at the moment for the regional LTA.
- Essex LTA did not highlight any specific priority facility needs or aspirations.

Facility supply

- When an area becomes a priority area the LTA completes a full technical audit of facility stock. As Braintree is not a priority area this has not been undertaken.
- Summary details of clubs and facilities can be found via a search on the LTA website.

Demand and participation issues

The LTA's Participation Strategy 2013 - 17 places particular emphasis on the following:

- Priority areas: working with partners in priority areas to develop bottom up tennis development plans to offer more opportunities for people to play tennis.
- Parks: maximising the use of park sites to increase regular participation through the development of local authority and partnerships with other providers.
- Clubs: Driving participation in clubs by supporting 'traditional' clubs to keep more people playing tennis through optimised programming and consumer offers.
- Disability: To inspire and engage more disabled people in tennis, and develop a stronger infrastructure and tennis network for disabled players.
- Young People: 14-25 yrs will benefit from adapted product offers, more after school provision, including satellite clubs, as well as a significant expansion of the varied tennis options for FE and HE students, already trialled in 2011-13.
- Talent: to support, and continuously improve, tennis' talent ID and development structures.

3.3.2 Braintree District Council

- Most tennis facilities are provided via local tennis clubs such as Braintree, Castle Hedingham and Halstead.
- Public Tennis courts are available at a small number of sites including Great Notley Country Park, Braintree and Bocking Public Gardens, Witham Leisure Centre and Halstead Leisure Centre.
- Earls Colne Golf and Country Club supply tennis courts including indoor tennis provision within a "dome" type facility.
- Braintree Tennis Club has been involved in discussions about possible relocation.

- Tennis and MUGAs - if provided via developer contributions relating to new housing development it is important that ongoing management and sustainability measures are agreed.
- In broad terms it seems that in most areas Multi-Use Games Areas are needed more than dedicated tennis courts - providing facilities for both tennis and a wider range of sports.

3.3.3 Active Essex

- Braintree District is not a priority area for the regional LTA.
- There are a considerable number of tennis courts across the District - mostly based at clubs. For example Braintree Tennis Club has its own grass, artificial turf pitch and hard courts. There are also clubs at Earls Colne with courts, Gosfield and Hedingham. Essex Golf and Country Club (near Earls Colne) has indoor courts (dome facility). Not aware of a club at Witham.
- Some of the Leisure Centres have public courts and there are a few courts on some parks sites.
- Braintree is not a priority area for the LTA. In Essex the LTA is currently focussed on Southend which has secured funds for facility investment and Chelmsford is next.

3.3.4 Club responses

Responses were received from four local tennis clubs - Castle Hedingham, Gosfield, Braintree, and Silver End.

- Membership ranges from 20 (Silver End) up to 120 (Braintree). Only Castle Hedingham report an overall membership increase over the past three years; though both Castle Hedingham and Braintree note an increase in junior membership (as a result of successful coaching initiatives).
- All of the clubs bar Silver End have active junior sections with links to local schools.
- The reported quality of club facilities varies quite considerably for example Silver End and Gosford report many aspects of quality as being unsatisfactory whereas Braintree rate quality aspects as being either good or at least adequate.
- The most commonly highlighted aspect of quality rated less than satisfactory are changing and shower facilities (no better than adequate for all clubs). Gosfield and Castle Hedingham rate their changing and shower facilities as being poor.
- All of the clubs think that the quality of their facilities provides good value for money to their playing membership.
- All of the clubs would like to increase activity by attracting more members, to develop more competitive games, increase the numbers of teams etc.
- Common barriers to club development are: a shortage of good quality outdoor facilities and a lack of external funding (e.g. governing bodies).

Plans and aspirations for individual clubs and other comments are noted below:

Club	Plans, aspirations and other comments
Gosfield	Floodlighting of courts-this has already been identified but not funded. Improved signage of club-in progress Improve storage. Improve disabled access from car park to clubhouse. Improve landscaping.
Braintree	Improve courts add floodlights to increase opportunities for play and coaching. Improved access - drive is full of potholes. Improve clubhouse decor to attract new membership. Our land is owned by the council and is earmarked for development. Until we know that we will be moving and when this is likely to happen we are reluctant to invest

	all our money in the current facilities. However, it has now got to the stage where our court surfaces need replacing and in the absence of any information on timescale we have had to commit to get this done.
Silver End	New tennis courts needed.
Castle Hedingham	<p>Changing facilities improved.</p> <p>Floodlighting is the main priority this year with the courts needing resurfacing in the near future.</p> <p>Members want to play in the evenings throughout the year and to be able to offer other clubs evening fixtures. With floodlighting we could extend the season run more teams attract more members and join other leagues.</p> <p>Grants are available but the process for applications seems very difficult, time consuming and with very little chance of success.</p>

Further detail of responses can be found in the full Excel Consultation Spreadsheet.

3.3.5 Summary

The following are the key findings and issues to emerge:

- Braintree District is not a priority area currently for the regional LTA. This means it will not be a priority in relation to securing LTA funding for facility improvements.
- Most tennis facilities are provided via local tennis clubs.
- Public Tennis courts are available at a small number of sites including Great Notley Country Park, Braintree & Bocking Public Gardens, Witham Leisure Centre and Halstead Leisure Centre. There are a number of additional courts in some of the parishes.
- Earls Colne Golf and Country Club supply tennis courts including indoor tennis provision within a "dome" type facility.
- There are 13 tennis clubs noted in the District Council's Community Mapping database.
- Stakeholders have not identified a need for additional tennis courts in Braintree District.
- The reported quality of club facilities varies quite considerably for example Silver End and Gosford report many aspects of quality as being unsatisfactory whereas Braintree rate quality aspects as being either good or at least adequate.
- Individual clubs have various plans and aspirations to improve their own facilities.
- Braintree Tennis Club notes that their site is owned by the District Council and that it is earmarked for development. They add "until we know that we will be moving (and when this is likely to happen) we are reluctant to invest all our funds in improvements needed at the current site".

3.4 Athletics/Running

3.4.1 The NGB: England Athletics

General

- There is no relevant athletics facility strategy and currently Braintree District does not feature in any specific NGB plans for facility development.
- The NGB works with Braintree and District Athletics Club with satellite clubs. It is one of their priority areas to attract new athletes and runners.
- Currently there is no NGB funding potentially available to support the delivery of athletics facility priorities in Braintree District.

Facility supply, issues and observations

- The NGB view is that overall there are sufficient facilities for athletics in Braintree District.
- The athletics track at Tabor High School in Panfield Lane is the most important facility in Braintree District. It is well located to meet needs. Access to the facilities is good and England Athletics note that they have a good working partnership with the club (and leisure provider - Fusion).
- The up keep of the track and equipment is needed to enable the growth of the club.

Demand and participation issues

- Braintree and District Athletics Club have 341 members to date. It is very important in the area as the club has the capacity to increase members in both running and track and field areas.
- Performance programmes - the track is used for coach education and local workshops.
- Recreational running is another area that is part of the NGB strategy and this can link into the club.

Other issues and observations

- There are many opportunities in building on the recreational running strategy to increase number of new runners through new Run England 3-2-1 routes or trails in local parks - also giving that link to the local club.

3.4.2 Braintree District Council

- The Braintree and District Athletics Club (based at Tabor Academy in Braintree) is a strong and growing club. It is the main club in the District.
- There may be a need to repair/replace the Athletics track at Tabor Academy in the medium term (5-8 years).

3.4.3 Active Essex

- There is a track and club at Tabor Academy (Braintree and District Athletics Club). There are also clubs in Halstead and Witham but running mainly.
- The track at the Academy may need improving in the medium term and it has been reported that there is a need for specialist equipment for some activities.
- It is doubtful if there would be enough demand for another track. The NGB have not expressed any plans and aspirations for additional facilities.

- Chelmsford Sport and Athletics Centre has excellent facilities and the club is strong, so it is possible that elite athletes and perhaps others may travel from Braintree District to Chelmsford.

3.4.4 Club and network responses

Clubs

Responses were received from Braintree and District Athletics Club and Mid Essex Casuals.

Braintree and District Athletics Club

General

- The club is based at the Braintree Leisure Centre/Tabor Academy. Current membership is 300 and this has increased over the last 3 years, a trend that they think will continue.
- The club has an active junior section and links with Tabor Academy.
- The club rates the general quality of the facility as being simply "adequate", as they do for "equipment and storage"; but many aspects are rated highly e.g. changing and showering facilities are rated as very good.
- The club wishes to expand its activities - to increase membership; improve access to running to non-runners; and increase the level of competition.
- The main barrier noted for development is shortage of personnel to run/coach teams and/or administer the club.

Plans and Aspirations

- The club specifically highlights a need for improvement to general athletic facilities: the state of the track; lighting and equipment such as starting blocks.
- They aspire to a club house facility; a small stand to host spectators; and a toilet facility at the track rather than in the main sport centre.

Mid Essex Casuals

General

- The club has 100 members and offers opportunities for running - trail, road, and cross country.
- Membership has increased over the past 3 years "because we are a friendly and informal club that welcomes runners of all abilities and ages. We also charge very little to be a member or to enter races for us". They anticipate further growth in membership in the future.
- The club does not use one specific venue as they use various locations to host trail and cross country races.
- The main barriers noted to development are a shortage of good quality outdoor facilities/resources and the cost of hiring/using facilities.

Other Points

The club makes the following additional point:

"Essex Councils should be encouraging clubs to put on cross country and trail races in the local country parks as the health benefits to residents are immense. Yet, this year we have seen some venues putting their fees up so much that some races are in danger of being scrapped

(Great Notley). Surely the costs to councils and governments of maintaining country parks and allowing races to be held on them are less than having to pay for the long term care of people who don't live healthy life styles? Making it more and more difficult for events to be held will see less events being put on, meaning less people take part, meaning the health of the local residents could deteriorate, and the long term costs of health care will go up".

Further detail of responses can be found in the full Excel Consultation Spreadsheet.

3.4.5 Summary

- England Athletics believe that overall there are sufficient facilities for athletics in Braintree District.
- They note that the athletics track at Tabor High School/Braintree Leisure Centre (the base for Braintree and District Athletics Club) is the most important facility in Braintree District.
- Stakeholders highlight the likely need in the medium term for improvements to the track at Braintree Leisure Centre.
- The Braintree and District Athletics Club specifically highlights a need for improvement to general athletic facilities: the state of the track; lighting and equipment such as starting blocks.
- The club also aspires to a club house facility; a small stand to host spectators; and a toilet facility at the track rather than in the main sport centre.
- There are opportunities in building on the recreational running strategy to increase number of new runners through new Run England 3-2-1 routes or trails in local parks.

3.5 Outdoor Bowls

3.5.1 Bowls England, the Bowls Development Alliance and Active Essex

Plans and Strategies - Priority Areas etc

The overall aim of the Bowls England strategy is stated as: "in conjunction with Affiliated Clubs and County Associations we will:

- Promote the sport of outdoor flat green bowls
- Recruit new participants to the sport of outdoor flat green bowls
- Retain current and future participants within the sport of outdoor flat green bowls
- The key themes of Promote, Recruit, Retain will underline all of our work during the course of this Strategic Plan".

Bowls England has identified the following strategic priorities for the period to 31st March 2017.

1. To increase participation in the sport of outdoor flat green bowls
2. To support County Associations and Clubs
3. To provide strong leadership and direction

In 2012 Bowls England through the *Bowls Development Alliance*¹¹ (BDA) identified 5 "hot spot" areas in the country for the roll out of an "intensive recruitment and investment programme from 2013 - 2015.

Essex was a priority "hot spot" area and Active Essex worked in partnership with the Bowls Development Alliance to increase participation levels in the sport of bowls. This phase of the programme has ended meaning there is no longer funding specifically allocated for Essex.

Active Essex reported that overall this has been a successful initiative in the County and clubs have been actively engaged. It remains a challenge however for bowls club to retain and increase membership as it is predominantly viewed as a sport for older people. Attracting younger members is a priority for clubs.

Facility Supply

- On the Active Essex club data base there are 8 outdoor clubs registered in Braintree District (some clubs are privately owned). There are a number of additional clubs and parish greens.
- Broadly speaking there appear to be sufficient outdoor greens to meet current demand via a the local clubs and parish facilities.
- Active Essex's overview as regards quality is that generally facilities tend to be in good condition with regards to the maintenance of the greens, however the club houses/pavilions are often needing more repairs as leases come to an end and clubs are trying to survive.
- The only initiative that Active Essex is aware of aimed at improving facilities is via the Sport England Inspired Facilities funding.

¹¹ The BDA is the body for Bowls England (flat green outdoor) and English Indoor Bowling Association (flat green indoor) working together to grow the sport of bowls.

- Access: Active Essex note that a lot of the clubs do not have wheel chair access to both the green and the pavilion restricting the number of disabled people playing the sport. (Sport England targets for the BDA is to increase disabled people 16-54 years playing bowls)

Demand Issues

- As Essex has a high population of over 55's and the added health benefits to continue to be active throughout adulthood it is important to continue to support the clubs within the community.
- Bowls England recognises that the trend of a reducing number of affiliated members year-on-year is the biggest single issue facing the sport of flat green bowls.
- Whilst the board of Bowls England is keen for this trend to be reversed, it must also be realistic enough to recognise that the trend may not be reversed within the term of this Strategic Plan. It does however wish to focus its efforts on increasing participation, by both current and future participants, and success in this area can be achieved by all parties working together - Bowls England, County Associations and Clubs.
- There are a number of bowling clubs in the District that are sustaining their current levels of membership but a challenge for all is attracting new members, particularly younger players.

Summary/conclusions

- The English Bowls Association in its Whole Sport Plan sets out that over the next four years, it will target those over 55 and disabled participants aged 16+.
- The BDA is delivering a range of products through the "Hot Spots" initiative and the packages under the 'Play Bowls' brand to attract more people into the sport, including roadshows, play bowls days and other specialist health, age, business and community projects as appropriate.
- Active Essex worked with the Bowls Development Alliance to promote the sport of Bowls across the county from 2013 to 2015 (including Braintree District). However, The BDA funding has ended and meaning Active Essex no longer have the capacity to continue to provide the level of support and programme delivery that clubs have benefited from over this period.
- There is potential for club development and increased membership given the age demographic of the District Council area.

3.5.2 Braintree District Council

- No apparent demand for additional greens - most are managed by individual bowls clubs.
- Mill Lane Bowls Club (Witham): facilities are leased from the Council.
- The Bowls Development Alliance (BDA) previously identified Essex as a priority area for Bowls development (2013-15) and Active Essex acted as their agent for delivery of programmes over this time. The initiative has ended.

3.5.3 Mill Lane Bowls Club (Witham)

An individual response was received from Mill Lane Bowls Club:

- The club currently has 61 members and reported an increase in playing membership over the last 3 years. They note "we have more members due to the relaxed way we run the club; and we have had open days and a stall in our local supermarket promoting our sport".
- The club does not have a junior section "but the local Venture Scouts have had 2 evenings at our club, for coaching and a game of bowls".
- The club rate many aspects of their facility as being no better than adequate in terms of quality. Lighting and car parking facilities are rated as poor.
- Barriers to club development are: a shortage of good quality indoor facilities; a lack of financing (internal and external); access difficulties for members (cost, lack of public transport etc); and a lack of parking.

The club was also provided with an opportunity to provide additional comments as noted below:

- "We would like a larger club house, in which we could play short mat bowls 12 months of the year. Also we used to park at Bramston sports centre, which has been fenced off by the council".
- "We have 2 teams in the North West Bowling Association but due to lack of room in the club house that is the limit".
- "We took the club out of council management 3 years ago and have improved the facility and increased the membership; but the loss of parking and the size of the club house will stop the club expanding further".

Further detail of responses can be found in the full Excel Consultation Spreadsheet.

3.5.4 Summary

- Essex was a priority "hot spot" area for bowls and Active Essex worked in partnership with the Bowls Development Alliance from 2013-15 to increase participation levels. The BDA funding has ended however meaning Active Essex no longer have the capacity to provide the level of support and programme delivery that clubs received over this period.
- On the Active Essex club data base there are 8 outdoor clubs registered in Braintree District (some clubs are privately owned). There are also a number of other clubs and greens in the parishes. There are no District Council managed greens but Mill Lane Bowls Club in Witham lease their facilities from the Council.
- Broadly speaking stakeholders indicate that there appear to be sufficient outdoor greens to meet current demand via the local clubs and parish facilities.
- In general the quality of facilities and access to them are good/adequate, though some clubs have plans and aspirations for improvements.
- Active Essex note that a lot of the clubs do not have wheel chair access to both the green and the pavilion restricting the number of disabled people playing the sport. (Sport England targets for the BDA is to increase disabled people 16-54 years playing bowls)
- A number of bowling clubs are sustaining (some even increasing) their current levels of membership but a challenge for all of them is attracting new members, particularly younger players.
- There is potential for club development and increased membership given the age demographic of the District Council area.

3.6 Netball

3.6.1 The NGB - Netball England

Overview

- Netball East Region is one of 9 Regions within England Netball. It develops and facilitates the delivery of all aspects of netball within the region.
- Working together with the counties Netball East deliver netball throughout the region including competition, coaching, finance, officiating, performance and membership. They run the regional league and the performance development programme in the region.
- The Regional Unit together with the County Netball Development Officers are responsible for Club Development including the Club Action Planning Scheme (CAPS) and developing new junior clubs, working with further and higher education, communication and marketing, education and training, competition, finance and increasing participation.
- The development of netball facility projects is largely reliant on the sourcing of capital grants from external agencies/associations. England Netball has very limited capital funding that is reserved for national and regional priority projects.

Facilities issues and observations

- The NGB note a "couple" of suitable venues, though there is a huge limitation of outdoor courts with no floodlights. They have also had issues gaining access to facilities due to a lack of availability.
- The most important facilities for netball in Braintree District are Braintree Leisure Centre and Braintree College. Braintree Youth Netball Club have used Braintree Leisure Centre for many years.
- The NGB note that they have always found the schools to be easily accessible in terms of contact but often availability is an issue; particularly with Braintree Leisure Centre being the only venue with outdoor floodlit courts.

Demand Issues and observations

- In terms of development The NGB would like to see more netball in the north of Essex. There is a lack of adult and junior netball opportunities in Braintree District. This is a priority for the NGB.
- Netball is popular in Braintree, however, and the few junior clubs that exist are at capacity. Braintree Youth Netball have about 100 members affiliated to England Netball.
- Performance programmes: delivered through local clubs and the local league in Chelmsford. The regional academy has been held at Braintree College in the past and they often use the College for regional screening. The NGB has a good link with the college who host a lot of our UKCC coaching courses.

Opportunities/challenges

- The current challenge is a lack of junior netball provision and opportunities for casual adult netballers to play. This is partly due to lack of appropriate outdoor facilities, as indoor is often too expensive, but also a lack of a coaching workforce in Braintree.

3.6.2 Braintree District Council

- Netball seems to be quite strong in Braintree town (adult and youth) - mainly played at Braintree Leisure Centre and the College.
- Netball is also played in Halstead and Witham Leisure Centres.

- Currently, overall, there are probably enough facilities/courts to meet demand in Braintree District.

3.6.3 Active Essex

- England netball is currently conducting a facilities audit which may well feed into a facilities strategy. Up to now there does seem to have been much investment for facilities by the NGB in Essex.
- Braintree College have a good indoor facility and teams also use the Braintree Leisure Centre.
- In general, sports halls can be used if they are available.
- There are hard, floodlit courts suitable for netball in Braintree and Halstead.
- As far as Active Essex is aware there is only one senior club registered with Netball England and a couple of junior clubs in district.
- Netball leagues tend to run on a central venue league basis. Colchester and Chelmsford are the nearest so teams may travel to these centres to play. It is not clear that there is enough demand for a main netball centre in Braintree District.

3.6.4 Club Responses

Responses were received from 2 netball clubs - Braintree Youth Netball Club and Kelvedon Netball Club (youth). Some key points were:

- Both clubs reported that their playing membership has increased over the past 3 years. Braintree Youth have 95 members and Kelvedon have 30 (at capacity). Braintree Youth are a clubmark club and accredited.
- Braintree Youth play at the Braintree Leisure Centre and Kelvedon at Honywood School, Coggeshall. Braintree Youth also use facilities at Alec Hunter Academy, (indoors and out).
- Braintree Youth rate facilities at Braintree Leisure Centre highly in terms of quality other than "equipment and storage" which they highlight as being very poor. Kelvedon rate the general quality of the facilities at Honywood School as being poor and "equipment and storage" as very poor.
- Both clubs note that barriers to club development are: a shortage of good quality indoor facilities; a shortage of suitable training facilities; and a shortage of personnel to run/coach teams and/or administer the club.
- In addition, for Braintree Youth the cost of hiring/using facilities is noted as a barrier. For Kelvedon a lack of funding (internal and external) is a barrier.

Facility improvement needs/other observations

Braintree Youth

- Seats are needed for parents to sit on when waiting for their children
- We need more netball courts as we are growing every year. We started with 2 teams now have 11 teams and get an extra one every year.
- Volunteers are hard to find.
- Indoor facilities are available but they are too expensive - maybe they could be cheaper for young children.

Kelvedon

- New netball posts are desperately needed, plus the court is old and needs re-surfacing. We need more members for school years 9 and 10 and would love indoor courts for all year round usage.
- Indoor facilities in the area within a reasonable price range for two courts.

Further detail of responses can be found in the full Excel Consultation Spreadsheet.

3.6.5 Summary

- Netball England is currently conducting a facilities audit which may well feed into a facilities strategy. Active Essex note that there does seem to have been much investment for facilities by the NGB in Essex over recent years.
- The most important facilities for netball in Braintree District are Braintree Leisure Centre and Braintree College.
- Netball England would like to see more netball in the north of Essex. There is a lack of adult and junior netball opportunities in Braintree District. The few junior clubs that exist are at capacity.
- Stakeholders indicate a potential need for additional good quality outdoor floodlit courts; and better access to indoor courts provided at a more reasonable cost.
- Netball leagues currently tend to run on a central venue league basis. Colchester and Chelmsford are the nearest so teams may travel to these centres to play. It is not clear that there is enough demand for a main netball centre in Braintree District.

3.7 Other outdoor sports/active recreation

Braintree District Council

- Active Braintree - re-launched in 2013 and supported by the District Council. It is now a strong and well organised group with an annual sports development work plan (funding secured from Active Essex). This year about £8k was provided direct to the network with an additional £10k approximately (governed by Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with individual network organisations).
- The Active Braintree programme includes active recreation as well as sport. One current project is aimed at encouraging more people to walk regularly (The Walkabout Group). The rights of way network is an important "facility" in this respect.
- Cycling is another aspect of active recreation that it is important to consider. The Council supports a number of led recreational cycle rides. There is also a district cycling map - highlighting traffic free cycle routes.
- The Braintree BMX Club provides an excellent track that attracts riders from a wide catchment.

Active Essex

- Much of Braintree district is very rural so plenty of opportunities for walking, cycling, and running have developed over the District. The network of footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths is a key asset for active recreation.
- Notably there is Great Notley Country Park and the Flitch Way. Notley is a strategic destination park with excellent facilities and a new high ropes course. Flitch Way is a multi-use path/linear country park running through 15 miles of countryside along the former Bishop's Stortford to Braintree railway.
- In terms of planning securing and promoting good links in the rights of way network between town and country is very important.
- Health benefits - GP referral could be extended to many forms of active recreation. Many more people take part in informal active recreation than play sports.

Archery

A response was received from *Braintree Bowmen and Junior Bowmen Archery Club* who use facilities at Blake End Craft Centre and at Gosfield Independent School.

- The club has a membership of around 100 which has increased over the last 3 years, The club report that this is due to improved facilities and greater involvement with the local community.
- The quality of their facilities are generally rated highly with no specific needs for improvements identified.
- The club provides schools with coaching, have a go sessions and support for history lessons covering medieval history.
- The club wishes to expand its activities through Increased membership, and greater involvement with schools to engage more youngsters in the sport
- Barriers to club development are access difficulties for members (cost, lack of public transport etc.) and a shortage of personnel to run/coach teams and/or administer the club.

3.8 Outdoor (non-pitch) sports and active recreation: Key Findings

General points and observations

Range of sports and recreation activities making use of open space

In general, the amount of activity detailed demonstrates the range of outdoor sport and recreation taking place in the Braintree District Council area and the value of the open space facilities and resources which are used. All the trends suggest that use of outdoor space for health and fitness activities is growing - and there is tremendous scope for the greater linking and development of outdoor resources to serve this market (see below).

Growing importance of linkages between health and fitness and sport.

With changes in public health management and revenue streams, linking fitness, sport and health can access new areas of funding; moreover the advantages to community health in increasing fitness levels is now receiving political support. Many initiatives and opportunities are possible: e.g. the idea of linking sports sites with trim trails, outdoor fitness equipment etc (using sports facilities as a base and green infrastructure and open space as resources). Associated with this, there is rapidly growing activity and demand for 'individual fitness activities' - walking, running and cycling, using existing facilities and open space resources.

Schools and Colleges

Many of the Secondary Schools and Colleges have a range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities but the degree of community use is varied. There are differing management arrangements and levels of commitment to ongoing use. Securing greater and more reliable/consistent access to school and college facilities would be of significant value to local clubs and the wider community.

Maintaining a rural network of facilities

Recreation Grounds, tennis courts, multi use games areas and bowling greens are important sports facilities in rural areas. Maintaining these facilities with quality surfaces and ancillary facilities can be difficult; financial support is often required. Comments from clubs emphasise the ongoing issues of sourcing finance for upgrades to changing facilities and maintaining good quality grounds.

Sports Specific Points

Tennis

- Braintree District is not a priority area currently for the regional LTA. This means it will not be a priority in relation to securing LTA funding for facility improvements.
- Most tennis facilities are provided via local tennis clubs.
- Public Tennis courts are available at a small number of sites including Great Notley Country Park, Braintree & Bocking Public Gardens, Witham Leisure Centre and Halstead Leisure Centre. There are a number of additional courts in some of the parishes.
- Earls Colne Golf and Country Club supply tennis courts including indoor tennis provision within a "dome" type facility.
- There are 13 tennis clubs noted in the District Council's Community Mapping database.
- Stakeholders have not identified a need for additional tennis courts in Braintree District.
- The reported quality of club facilities varies quite considerably for example Silver End

and Gosford report many aspects of quality as being unsatisfactory whereas Braintree rate quality aspects as being either good or at least adequate.

- Individual clubs have various plans and aspirations to improve their own facilities.
- Braintree Tennis Club notes that their site is owned by the District Council and that it is earmarked for development. They add "until we know that we will be moving (and when this is likely to happen) we are reluctant to invest all our funds in improvements needed at the current site".

Athletics

- England Athletics believe that that overall there are sufficient facilities for athletics in Braintree District.
- They note that the athletics track at Tabor High School/Braintree Leisure Centre (the base for Braintree and District Athletics Club) is the most important facility in Braintree District.
- Stakeholders highlight the likely need in the medium term for improvements to the track at Braintree Leisure Centre.
- The Braintree and District Athletics Club specifically highlights a need for improvement to general athletic facilities: the state of the track; lighting and equipment such as starting blocks.
- The club also aspires to a club house facility; a small stand to host spectators; and a toilet facility at the track rather than in the main sport centre.
- There are opportunities in building on the recreational running strategy to increase number of new runners through new Run England 3-2-1 routes or trails in local parks.

Bowls

- Essex was a priority "hot spot" area for bowls and Active Essex worked in partnership with the Bowls Development Alliance from 2013-15 to increase participation levels. The BDA funding has ended however meaning Active Essex no longer have the capacity to provide the level of support and programme delivery that clubs received over this period.
- On the Active Essex club data base there are 8 outdoor clubs registered in Braintree District (some clubs are privately owned). There are also a number of other clubs and greens in the parishes. There are no District Council managed greens but Mill Lane Bowls Club in Witham lease their facilities from the Council.
- Broadly speaking stakeholders indicate that there appear to be sufficient outdoor greens to meet current demand via the local clubs and parish facilities.
- In general the quality of facilities and access to them are good/adequate, though some clubs have plans and aspirations for improvements.
- Active Essex note that a lot of the clubs do not have wheel chair access to both the green and the pavilion restricting the number of disabled people playing the sport. (Sport England targets for the BDA is to increase disabled people 16-54 years playing bowls)
- A number of bowling clubs are sustaining (some even increasing) their current levels of membership but a challenge for all of them is attracting new members, particularly younger players.
- There is potential for club development and increased membership given the age demographic of the District Council area.

Netball

- Netball England is currently conducting a facilities audit which may feed into a facilities

strategy.

- The most important facilities for netball in Braintree District are Braintree Leisure Centre and Braintree College.
- Netball England would like to see more netball in the north of Essex. There is a lack of adult and junior netball opportunities in Braintree District. The few junior clubs that exist are at capacity.
- Stakeholders indicate a potential need for additional good quality outdoor floodlit courts; and better access to quality indoor courts provided at a reasonable cost.
- Netball leagues currently tend to run on a central venue league basis. Colchester and Chelmsford are the nearest so teams may travel to these centres to play. It is not clear that there is enough demand for a main netball centre in Braintree District.

Other (non-pitch) outdoor sports/active recreation

- The Active Braintree programme includes active recreation as well as sport. One current project is aimed at encouraging more people to walk regularly (The Walkabout Group). The rights of way network is an important "facility". Securing and promoting good links in the rights of way network between town and country is important.
- Cycling is another important aspect of active recreation. The Council supports a number of led recreational cycle rides. There is also a district cycling map - highlighting traffic free cycle routes. The further development of safe cycling routes should be considered.
- The Braintree BMX Club provides an excellent track that attracts riders from a wide catchment.
- Health benefits - GP referral could be extended to many forms of active recreation. Many more people take part in informal active recreation than play formal sports.

Part 2 Indoor Sports

This section provides information and feedback received from Braintree District Council Officers, Sports/Leisure Centre Managers, individual sports national governing bodies, and sports clubs.

3.9 Built Facilities - Review and Issues¹²

The observations and issues identified are linked to built sports facility provision and location. They are not based upon a financial appraisal of current operations or management arrangements.

The following facilities are operated by Fusion Lifestyle (contract commenced September 2012), a social enterprise Leisure Trust, on behalf of Braintree District Council. Fusion operates the first four facilities listed below (plus Witham Sports Ground) according to the agreed objectives of an Annual Service Plan. These objectives include partnership working linked to the Council's Sport and Community Development function¹³.

3.9.1 Built Facilities - Overview

Consultations were held with Lee Crabb, Head of Environmental Services, and Joby Humm, Leisure Services Manager; and with Mark Johnson, Greg Sambridge and Adam Golding responsible for managing the sports and leisure centres for Fusion Lifestyle.

Lee Crabb, Head of Environmental Services, commented that:

- Built sports facilities and playing pitches within Braintree District play a very important role in promoting healthy life styles across all age groups.
- Existing levels of provision are broadly meeting demand and growth in participation currently being experienced.
- More recent refurbishments and especially the new leisure centre provision in Witham have improved the quality and access to the District's sports and leisure offering; further improvements planned, such as synthetic turf pitches will widen the scope of opportunity.

Joby Humm, Leisure Services Manager, commented that:

- The spread of indoor sports facilities across the District broadly meets demand in the main.
- Improvements and refurbishments, assisted by capital input from Fusion Lifestyle, have had a significant impact on increasing public use and on user satisfaction.
- Improvements and extensions to fitness gyms have been well received as well as the Fusion Choice leisure card/membership offer, resulting in greater use and income generation.
- The new Witham Leisure Centre (opened in 2014) is a great asset in Braintree District replacing the ageing Bramston Sports Centre.
- Joint Use arrangements for facility use with education establishments (Tabor Academy/Braintree Leisure Centre, Ramsey Academy/Halstead Leisure Centre) are

¹² The full Built Facilities Report is informed by this consultation report; and also applies Sport England's need and demand assessment tools. Together these are applied to arrive at local standards of provision linked to typology, quantity, quality and accessibility.

¹³ A Built Sports Facilities Condition/Fit for Purpose Matrix has also been produced for the Council's leisure centres providing ratings for guidance purposes.

working well through Fusion Lifestyle, seeking to optimise community use of the facilities.

- Built sports facility provision across the District contributes significantly in meeting the Council's objective of improving healthy activity options and increasing levels of participation for its residents
- This is also assisted by the Council's sport development function under the management of Fusion Lifestyle who are able to drive participation amongst the range of age groups through their marketing resources.
- There is some natural migration of facility use by residents of Braintree and neighbouring districts, particularly from outlying areas, linked to specialist or preferred facilities.

a) Local authority leisure centres

Braintree Leisure Centre - Sports hall, gym, studio, ATP, netball/tennis, 400m track (with shot put and javelin cages)

Issues/features identified

This is a Joint Use centre with Tabor Academy

- The building was completed in late 1980s/early 90s and was recently refurbished internally; forthcoming maintenance/development includes eventual replacement of the athletics track within some 5-8 years
- The extended fitness gym is divided to accommodate both school and public use.

Braintree Swimming and Fitness (formerly Braintree Swimming Centre) - 25m x 8 lane (17m) pool, leisure/learner pool, 250+ seats, fitness gym (30 stations), exercise studio.

Issues/features identified

- Building completed in 2008
- Limited catering through vending operation
- Fitness Gym has c.30 stations plus multi-function equipment
- The centre has c.1200 members (Fusion Choice allowing multi-site access)
- Main swimming club is Braintree and Bocking Swimming Club; there are c.1500 people enrolled at the centre's swim school.
- A good location, with considerable adjacent footfall, for possible location of additional dry facilities, although not built on Council land.

Halstead Leisure Centre - 25m x 5 lane swimming pool, freeform learner pool, 5 badminton court size sports hall, c.55 station gym, dance studio, spinning studio (12 x cycles), exercise studio, squash courts, Artificial Turf Pitch (school games and football), Multi-Use Games Area, Creche

Issues/features identified

- A Joint Use centre with Ramsey Academy; the public have daytime use of the pool and the gym and all facilities after 5 p.m.
- A mixed age building, originally built in the 1970s with the swimming pool and fitness suite added in the early 2000s; the fitness gym opened in 2013; replacement of pool filters is progressing.
- Ageing sports hall shows evidence of insulation boards to improve environmental conditions; Granwood floor.
- It is intended that the existing sand-based ATP is replaced to strengthen its use as a hockey facility.

- The Swimming Club (Dolphins) attracts some 650 members per week.
- The catering area is adjacent to the Reception area is serviced by vending machines.

Witham Leisure Centre - 25m x 8 lane pool, learner pool, 2 x squash courts gym (c. 55 stations plus multi-function equipment), studio, multi-purpose hall, artificial turf pitch.

Issues/features identified:

- A new leisure centre, completed and opened in 2014.
- Particularly well appointed and spaciouly designed, meeting the user requirements of participants and spectators alike.
- Includes a combined heat and power (CHP) unit for added efficiency.
- A strong swimming school.
- Maltings Academy has a protected bookings agreement at Witham Sports Ground nearby (including use of the ATP).

b) Earls Colne Recreation Club

Also of particular significance is the Earls Colne Recreation Club on the Halstead Road (A1124) (2 squash courts, 2 x badminton court size sports hall, fitness suite. 4 x macadam tennis courts, sports ground (football, cricket). This is privately operated.

c) School and College Facilities

Education based sports facilities include:

- Maltings Academy - close to the Witham Leisure Centre and STP
- The New Rickstones Academy - sports hall, dance studio
- Alec Hunter Academy - 4 court badminton sports hall; Gym.
- Honywood School - sports hall
- Ramsey Academy - joint use of Halstead Leisure Centre (see above)
- Hedingham School - sports hall, gym
- Notley High School - 5 badminton court sports hall, 3 badminton court hall, gymnasium
- Tabor Academy - joint use of Braintree Leisure Centre (see above)
- Braintree College - 6 badminton court sports hall

As noted earlier in the report, all the above secondary schools/colleges allow community use of their indoor sports facilities (to varying degrees). There are no firm plans for additional indoor facilities.

d) Neighbouring Local Authority Facilities

Important built sports facilities are provided within neighbouring boroughs which attract use by residents of Braintree District now and in the future due to:

- location and accessibility
- special interest activities, or
- ambience and personal preference.

Similarly, residents of neighbouring boroughs utilise facilities provided within Braintree District.

Significant neighbouring facilities offering multi-activity sports halls, fitness gyms, swimming pools, include:

- Colchester Leisure World (east)
- Maldon, Blackwater Leisure Centre (south east)
- Chelmsford, Riverside Ice and Leisure Centre (south east)
- Harlow Sports Centre (south west)
- Great Dunmow Leisure Centre (west)
- Haverhill Leisure Centre (north west)
- Saffron Waldon, Lord Butler Fitness and Leisure Centre (north west)
- Sudbury Sport Centre (north east).

3.10 National Governing Bodies (NGBs)

Sport NGB's included here are: Badminton, Basketball, Bowls (indoor), Boxing, Cricket (indoor), Gymnastics, Judo, Netball, Squash, Swimming, Table-Tennis, Tennis (indoor), and Volleyball.

The following notes provide an overview of how Regional Governing Bodies of Sport view their sport and its development in the context of Braintree District.

Badminton

- Badminton is generally well provided for in Essex within a range of schools and sports centres across the County. William Edward School in Grays provides an 8 court sprung floor badminton centre for example. There is a new 8 court sports hall at the St. John Payne School in Chelmsford;
- Other significant regional centres for badminton competition and recreational use are at Basildon Sports Village (6 courts) and Redbridge Sports Centre (20 courts);
- Essex possesses the infrastructure for the development of badminton within a County Badminton Network (CBN); improved access to better facility provision and effective sports development programmes are a critical focus for the Network going forward;
- In Braintree District, the provision of badminton courts within the Council's leisure centres generally meets demand. No current under provision has been identified and users advise that they are satisfied with the quality of provision.

Essex Basketball

- Competitions for all playing age groups take place within Essex, the main venues in Braintree District being schools and sports centres;
- Basketball is not played at elite level in Braintree District. There is not a suitable sports hall including safe run-off areas and spectator seating to attract a premier basketball franchise;
- There are no plans to expand the sport significantly in Braintree in the future in view of the larger facility provision already in the County.

Amateur Boxing Association (ABA)

- Boxing shows frequently take place within hotel or social club premises environments, such as in Billericay and Basildon for example;
- Need and demand for a boxing venue has not been identified in Braintree District by the ABA.

Essex Indoor Bowling Association

- Indoor bowling takes place either at a purpose built indoor bowling centre which may be owned and operated by a Club, or as short mat bowls/carpet bowls requiring less space

(but needing storage). The latter is played in community halls and sports centres for example. This the basis of provision, meeting demand in Braintree District;

- There are 17 indoor bowling centres spread across Essex totalling 105 indoor rinks; while these accommodate current demand, membership is generally experiencing a decline in most clubs;
- The challenge for the sport is to both recruit and retain membership across the young and elderly, the one to replace the other; there is no current demand identified for additional indoor rinks in Braintree District;
- There is one major indoor bowling centre nearby (in Chelmsford) namely The Falcon Bowling and Social Club, Springfield (8 indoor rinks plus social facilities). This is a very successful club attracting players from up to 20/30 minutes drive, but is currently experiencing a decline in membership levels.

Essex Football Association (Indoor football)

- There are 23 3G (third generation) artificial grass pitches of various dimensions registered with the Essex FA for club/league matchplay. Of these, there is only one covered 3G pitch in Colchester. There are no known plans for further covered 3G pitches in Essex and funding can be prohibitive. It is now permissible for FA league matches to be played on a 3G pitch, subject to specification.
- Futsal is a growing form of 5v5 indoor football promoting speed and personal skills, encouraging participation and feed into the traditional outdoor game. It is the FIFA and UEFA accredited version of 5v5 indoor football. This requires a sports hall (approximately one basketball court size).
- There has been no demand expressed for specific facility provision in Braintree linked to Futsal. It is played however at the Riverside Ice and Leisure Centre and at Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford.
- Futsal competitions are limited when played within a single sports hall and ideally require two halls of suitable dimensions so that competition games can be played in parallel.

British Gymnastics

- Gymnastics clubs tend to be accommodated either within local sports centres or within their own leased and sometimes purpose built premises; the latter arrangement may occur due to growth and to secure greater independence of their activities; growth in this sport may require additional facilities in the future.
- Clubs within Braintree District are the Gyrus Olympic Gymnastics Club (seeking a new home following the replacement Bramston Sports Centre in Witham), the TT Club (gymnastics and other activities for all ages) located in a number of school and other premises in Braintree, and the Dynamix Gymnastic Club (Notley School premises).
- Major clubs outside Braintree District are the Colchester School of Gymnastics and the South Essex Gymnastics Club in Basildon.

British Judo Association

- Judo clubs are variously accommodated within halls around the region where the important criteria are ownership and storage of mats. There is no regional centre for Essex nor purpose built Dojo. There are no plans or sufficient demand at the current time from individual clubs.
- A Dojo of regional significance could be included economically within a multi-sports facility and would accommodate a main club (adults and juniors), other martial arts clubs, aerobics classes and yoga for all ages.
- There has been no demand expressed for a purpose built Dojo within Braintree District during the consultation process.

East Essex Netball

- Netball is very strong in Essex with major leagues played in Chelmsford and Basildon for example. These having been established, there would not be an option for league facilities (eg.10 outdoor courts/indoor court) being established in Braintree and supported by England or East Sussex Netball.
- There is however a well established Adult and a Junior Club (over 200 members) which train in Braintree (at Braintree Leisure Centre), playing their league matches and competitions in Chelmsford and Basildon.
- A Regional Netball Academy for some 20 talented athletes takes place at Braintree College each year.

Essex Squash and Racketball Association

- Essex County is developing its own strategy for the development of Squash and Racketball; whilst part of the wider strategy being developed with Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Middlesex.
- The NGB recognises the ageing population and fall away from the sport in recent years and is focusing its strategy on bringing in younger participants through schools and outreach programmes working with Sport England, whilst also focusing on the 18-40 age-groups to get people back into squash. Racketball is also the focus for women's programmes, ageing squash players and new players.
- Squash court provision in Braintree would currently seem to meet demand with no plans identified to increase the number of courts.

Amateur Swimming Association (London and South East Region)

- The regional governing body acknowledges the level of provision in Braintree District in terms of its three 25m pools as meeting demand for casual swimming and competition.
- While recognising the lack of Diving facilities in Braintree, the ASA would not support strategic specialist provision in Braintree. High quality diving facilities (springboards to 3m, platforms to 10m, movable floors) are provided in Southend, Cambridge and Luton (no movable floor). There is also provision at the Riverside Ice and Leisure Centre in Chelmsford which should be retained as part of any future development.

Essex Table-Tennis Association and the Braintree Table Tennis League

- Table Tennis may be played in schools, sports centres and village halls.
- There has been a decline in popularity of the sport in recent years across Essex with the exception of Southend where the sport remains buoyant.
- The stated view is that "there does not appear to be a motivational strategy in place to increase the sport's popularity and quality of venues in the Braintree area, and likewise across the County"
- The main table-tennis venues in Braintree are Rayne Village Hall (west of Braintree) Black Notley (south), and Earl's Colne (east); there are 9 clubs currently in Braintree fielding some 30 teams in the Braintree League; the Chelmsford league is stronger.
- There is no expressed demand identified for new table-tennis facilities in Braintree district, although the League has been looking for a suitable headquarters which could include the creation of a new club.
- The sport would like recognition and promotion through the Braintree District Leisure Strategy in view of its benefits to young people especially and its contribution to physical fitness and health.

Lawn Tennis Association - Eastern Region

- The LTA confirms that there are no current plans for an additional indoor tennis centre in Braintree District.
- Chelmsford has been identified by the LTA Essex Region as a priority for indoor tennis, and there is no apparent strategy involving Braintree District.
- There is a spread of indoor courts in Essex including at:
 - Frinton Lawn Tennis Club (2)
 - Colchester - Essex Golf and Country Club (6)
 - Billericay - Lawn Tennis Club (2 - Airdome)
 - Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre (4)
 - Harlow Tennis Club (4+1mini)
 - Redbridge Tennis Club (8)
 - The Connaught Club, Chingford (2 + 2 Airdome)
 - Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre (4)
 - David Lloyd Centres in Chigwell, Romford, Southend, Basildon.
- Air domes or lightweight structures may offer alternative opportunities for outdoor tennis clubs in the future, subject to planning consents and funding. There is one such facility at Earls Colne Golf and Country Club.
- There is not strategic demand or plan for indoor tennis in Braintree, although there may be local demand expressed by local tennis centres.

England Volleyball Association

- Volleyball was stronger in Essex in the 1980's. Over time clubs have merged and/or folded but there has been some growth in the last few years. There are currently 10 clubs in Essex fielding 21 teams in the Essex leagues.
- Floor fixings for the volleyball net are frequently not provided in sports halls and this should be part of the specification for future provision where this occurs.
- There were no other issues identified for Braintree in the consultation process.
- Active Essex, the County Sports Partnership, is majoring on distribution of National Lottery legacy funding for sports programmes and the improvement of facilities where appropriate. The 'Sportivate' national scheme to encourage greater participation in sport and physical activities is fully embraced by Braintree District Council through the work of Fusion Leisure, its leisure centres operator.

3.9.3 Indoor Sports Clubs

Survey responses were also received from Braintree Swimming Club; Witham Dolphins Swimming Club; Riverside Sub-aqua Club; Braintree Badminton Bods; Essex Futsal; Halstead Boxing and Martial Arts; Keiryu Practical Karate; Bramston Flyers Trampoline Club; Dimensions Trampoline Club; Black Notley Community Association Table Tennis Club; and Rayne Table Tennis Club.

Points raised are provided in the table below.

Sport	Observations and issues
Badminton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Braintree Badminton Bods have 10 members and play at the Braintree Leisure Centre. Membership has been stable over the last 3 years.• The club is satisfied with the overall quality of the Leisure Centre but note that availability of courts when needed is poor.• The club suggests a need to improve lighting for racquet sports and "better training for staff. The current staff tend to show no real enthusiasm".

Futsal (indoor football)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex Futsal have around 100 members and membership has increased over the last 3 years. The club has an active junior section and has worked with schools and colleges. They would like to develop these areas further. • The club's main venue is Notley School sports hall in Braintree. They also play at various other locations mainly using school and college sports halls. • The club does not rate the facilities for futsal at Notley School very highly. Most aspects are rated as no better than adequate. Availability of hall space when needed; and facilities for disabled people are rated as poor. The club would also like there to be some kind catering facilities available (food and drink). • The club would like to run more sessions; attract more players and parents; and cater for boys, girls able and disabled young players. • Barriers to development are: a shortage of good quality indoor and outdoor facilities/resources; a shortage of specialist equipment; the cost of hiring/using facilities; a lack of external funding (e.g. governing bodies); and a shortage of personnel to run/coach teams and/or administer the club. • The club adds "we have developed the game of Futsal for past 5 years with little or no support from the County FA or others. Equipment costs, coaching fees and hire of facilities has absorbed most of monies received".
Martial Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halstead Boxing & Martial Arts (Unit 5 Factory Lane West, Halstead) and Keiryu Practical Karate (Silver End Village Hall) both have memberships of around 100 and report an increase over the last 3 years. Keiryu also use New Rickstones Academy and Blackwater Leisure Centre (Maldon) for training. • Both have active junior sections and links with local schools. • Halstead generally rate their facilities as good (some aspects only adequate) other than facilities for disabled people - which they say are poor. They would like to have better female and disabled facilities, more floor space, and better heating. • Keiryu are less happy with their main facility rating many aspects as poor, for example, equipment and storage, lighting and car parking. They add that "the Silver End venue is dated, and the condition of the floors is poor"; but also note that "improvements seem to be ongoing, with new windows and repair to the interior walls". • Halstead aim to attract more members following new building works funded by Sport England (project to start May 2015). Keiryu wish to attract more members - junior and senior; and they are considering establishing another club. • Barriers to development for Keiryu are: a shortage of good quality indoor facilities; a shortage of suitable training facilities; the cost of hiring/using facilities; a lack of funding (internal and external); and access difficulties for members (e.g. cost, lack of public transport).
Swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braintree and Witham Dolphins swimming clubs (memberships of over 200 and 150 respectively) both report that membership has increased over the last 3 years. Riverside Sub-aqua Club has a membership of 18 which has decreased over that time. • The two swimming clubs have active junior sections. Neither has direct links with schools, but Braintree say "we would very much welcome a link, particularly at primary school level to attract swimmers at an early age". Riverside sub-aqua offer diving sessions to any organisations that would like to attend. Currently they provide sessions for the scouts on a Saturday evening. • In general Braintree Swimming Club and Riverside Sub Aqua Club both rate

	<p>the pool facilities at Braintree Leisure Centre quite highly, though some aspects are only rated as adequate. An exception is equipment and storage (poor for Braintree Swimming Club).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witham Dolphins are very satisfied with the overall quality of the pool at Witham sports centre with the exception of car parking which they rate as poor. • Both swimming clubs aim to attract more members. Braintree Swimming Club would like to get more pool time and Witham Dolphins would like to run more galas. Riverside Sub Aqua would like to expand its activities by getting younger members involved. • Braintree Swimming Club note that one key barrier for them is "restrictions on pool time. i.e the pool is open to the public and not available for any more hours than we currently book". • Witham Dolphins note barriers to development as being "a lack of qualified officials; and the difficulty in finding training courses to enable volunteers to become qualified. This means we can't run more galas".
Table Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Notley Community Association (BNCA) and Rayne Table Tennis Clubs both have a membership of around 50 which has been stable over the last 3 years. Black Notley have an active junior section. Both play at their local community/village hall. • BNCA are generally happy with the quality of facilities used; Rayne less so but they note that it is "not possible to improve as the site is limited". • The main barrier to club development for Rayne Table Tennis Club is a shortage of good quality indoor facilities. • BNCA note "we run on a tight budget, which would be made easier by more members. There are no specific barriers, just, like other sports, getting people away from their computer screens".
Trampolining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bramston Flyers and Dimensions Trampoline Clubs (memberships of 20 and 70 respectively) both report that membership has increased over the last 3 years. Dimensions has an active junior section and links with local schools. • Dimensions use Braintree Leisure Centre but Bramston Flyers are looking for a venue currently. They note "when the Sports Centre in Witham was due to close we contacted Maltings Academy to ask about using their sports facilities but they were not interested". • Bramston Flyers need a sports hall with a clearance of 8 metres, storage space for two trampolines and an overhead rig. • Dimensions are generally happy with the quality of facilities at Braintree Leisure Centre but note that availability when needed is poor. They would also need better trampolines; and more storage for their own equipment/ trampolines. • Both clubs would like to expand activities. For Bramston a new venue is essential; for Dimensions they would like to be able to run more sessions. • Both the clubs highlight the need for good quality indoor facilities; a shortage of specialist equipment; the cost of hiring/using facilities; and a shortage of personnel to run/coach teams and/or administer the club. Dimensions add "the volunteers and committee we currently have are not able to commit any more time. We need more help!"

3.11 Indoor Sports: Key Issues and observations

Facility Overview

- Fusion Lifestyle manage 4 main indoor facilities on behalf of Braintree District Council: Braintree Leisure Centre and Braintree Swimming and Fitness; Halstead Leisure Centre and Witham Leisure Centre.
- There are also indoor sports hall and squash facilities at Earls Colne Recreation Club (Trust managed).
- Broadly speaking the quality of the indoor pools and leisure centres is good, with new and recently refurbished facilities.
- Additional sports hall and swimming pool facilities are managed by local secondary schools and colleges. The extent of community use of these education based facilities is varied. There is potential for them to offer more time and access to community clubs and individuals.
- There are no purpose-built indoor bowls and tennis facilities¹⁴ within the District though such facilities exists in adjacent authority areas. Neither sports governing body indicates the need for such facilities within the District.
- There is some natural migration of facility use between residents of Braintree and neighbouring districts (particularly from outlying areas) linked to specialist or preferred facilities.
- Council officers note that existing levels of provision are broadly meeting demand and the growth in participation currently being experienced.

Sports Specific issues and observations (based on NGB and club responses)

- Badminton: Badminton is generally well provided for in Essex - within a range of schools and sports centres across the County. In Braintree District, the provision of badminton courts generally appears to meet demand and court quality is quite good; though the club playing at Braintree Leisure Centre indicate the availability of courts when needed is limited.
- Basketball: Basketball competitions for all playing age groups take place within Essex, the main venues in Braintree District being schools and sports centres. Basketball is not played at elite level in Braintree District. There is not a suitable sports hall including safe run-off areas and spectator seating to attract a premier basketball franchise. There are no NGB plans to expand the sport significantly in Braintree in the future in view of the larger facility provision elsewhere in the County.
- Boxing: Boxing shows frequently take place within hotel or social club premises environments, such as in Billericay and Basildon for example. Need and demand for a boxing venue has not been identified in Braintree District by the Amateur Boxing Association.
- Indoor Bowls: this takes place either at a purpose built indoor bowling centre; or as short mat bowls/carpet bowls requiring less space (but needing storage). The latter is played in community halls and sports centres for example. This the basis of provision, meeting demand in Braintree District. There is no current demand identified for additional indoor rinks in Braintree District given the proximity to purpose built facilities in adjacent areas such as the Falcon Bowling and Social Club in Chelmsford.

¹⁴ There is an inflatable "dome" type indoor tennis facility at Earls Colne Golf and Country Club.

- **Futsal:** In Braintree District Essex Futsal club's main venue is Notley School sports hall in Braintree. They also play at various other locations mainly using school and college sports halls. There has been no demand expressed for additional facility provision in Braintree linked to Futsal though the need for improvements to facilities have been raised by Essex Futsal.
- **Judo and Martial Arts:** Clubs are variously accommodated within halls around the District where important criteria are ownership and storage of mats. There is no regional centre for Essex nor purpose built Dojo; but there has been no demand expressed for a purpose built Dojo within Braintree District during the consultation process. Some clubs suggest a need for improvements at their individual club venues; and Halstead Boxing & Martial Arts club have recently received Sport England funding to improve their facilities.
- **Squash and Racketball:** The NGB recognises the ageing population and fall away from the sport in recent years and is focusing its strategy on bringing in younger participants through schools and outreach programmes working with Sport England; whilst also focusing on the 18-40 age-groups to get people back into squash. Squash court provision in Braintree would currently seem to meet demand with no plans identified to increase the number of courts.
- **Swimming :** The regional governing body acknowledges the level of provision in Braintree District in terms of its three 25m pools as meeting demand for casual swimming and competition. While recognising the lack of diving facilities in Braintree, the ASA would not support strategic specialist provision in Braintree. High quality diving facilities (springboards to 3m, platforms to 10m, movable floors) are provided in Southend, Cambridge and Luton (no movable floor). There is also provision at the Riverside Ice and Leisure Centre in Chelmsford.
- **Table Tennis:** There has been a decline in popularity of the sport in recent years across Essex with the exception of Southend where the sport remains buoyant. The NGB stated view is that "there does not appear to be a motivational strategy in place to increase the sport's popularity and quality of venues in the Braintree area".
- **Indoor Tennis:** The Lawn Tennis Association confirms that there are no current plans/strategic need for additional indoor tennis centre in Braintree District. Air domes or lightweight structures may offer alternative opportunities for outdoor tennis clubs in the future, subject to planning consents and funding. There is one such facility at Earls Colne Golf and Country Club.
- **Trampolining:** The Bramston Flyers club highlights a specific need for access to a sports hall in/near Witham with a clearance of 8 metres, storage space for two trampolines and an overhead rig.
- **Volleyball:** Volleyball was stronger in Essex in the 1980's. Over time clubs have merged and/or folded but there has been some growth in the last few years. There are currently 10 clubs in Essex fielding 21 teams in the Essex leagues. Floor fixings for the volleyball net are frequently not provided in sports halls and this should be part of the specification for future provision where this occurs. There were no other issues identified for Braintree in the consultation process.

4 PARKS, GREEN SPACES, COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY

4.1 Introduction

This section covers consultation responses and findings in relation to non-sporting recreational open spaces, including parks and gardens, natural green spaces, countryside and water recreation, allotments, recreations grounds and rights of way.

Consultation undertaken for this section included key stakeholder interviews and surveys, plus a survey of relevant (non sports) groups and organisations.

The information and findings from this section will be taken forward in the Open Space Assessment main report.

This section is comprised of seven main sections:

- Review of policy and strategy
- Key Stakeholders - strategic context and overview
- Parks, gardens and recreation grounds
- Allotments
- Natural green space - e.g. wildlife areas, nature reserves and woodlands
- Water recreation
- Footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths.

There is a summary of key points and issues at the end of the section.

4.2 Review of policy and strategy - Braintree District Council

This section provides a brief overview of relevant district council policy documents, helping provide a well established framework and context for future open space planning.

4.2.1 The Community Vision for Braintree District: *One District - One Vision: A Strategy for People and Places in the Braintree District to 2025*

Long term plans and priorities for the Braintree District are set out in this document, produced by the Local Strategic Partnership. It brings together community priorities into one overall vision and framework for the future of the District as follows:

- *To promote accessibility for all*
- *To create a clean and green environment and address climate change*
- *To achieve a prosperous local economy*
- *To enable everyone to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle*

Corporate Priorities

Key corporate priorities are set out for 2012 - 2016 and have a specific green space angle - with 'a better place' strand identifying the following key initiatives:

- Keeping our district clean and tidy
- Protecting our environment
- Providing green space for everyone to enjoy

4.2.2 Green Space Strategy 2008

Standards for access, quality, quantity and accessibility of open space are set out in the 'Braintree Green Space Strategy 2008'.

Green space is divided into the following typologies:

- Parks and Urban Green Space
- Amenity Green Spaces
- Sports and Recreation Facilities
- Natural and Semi-natural Green Spaces
- Green Corridors
- Children's Play Space

Amongst a range of key aims and objectives, aspirations include *'Informing future planning, management and maintenance policies for green spaces, including the emerging Local Development Documents for the period 2021 and beyond'*.

The strategy provides a solid framework of established standards and aspirations for green space in the district.

Quantity Analysis:

The analysis of quantity provision was broken down into rural and urban areas as well as the key Braintree sub-areas comprised of Braintree, Halstead and Witham. Examples of figures demonstrating the proposed quantity standard and current surplus or deficit in Hectares - can be seen in the table below:

QUANTITY STANDARDS FOR PARKS AND GARDENS AND AMENITY GREEN SPACE				
Area	Parks and Gardens Proposed Standard	Surplus or deficit in hectares	Amenity Green Space Proposed Standard	Surplus or deficit in hectares
Total Urban Braintree	1.2	+21.29	0.80	-22.84
Total Urban Halstead	1.2	-10.88	0.80	-4.83
Total Urban Witham	1.2	-25.02	0.80	+14.53
Total Urban Areas	1.2	-14.61	0.80	-13.03
Total Rural Braintree	1.2	-16.41	0.80	-6.15
Total Rural Halstead	1.2	+12.99	0.80	-5.06
Total Rural Witham	1.2	-18.01	0.80	-5.89
Total Rural Area	1.2	-21.43	0.80	-17.10
District Totals / average	1.2	-36.04	0.80	-30.13

In 2008 overall public perception of these figures seemed to differ from this analysis, however. For example, a majority of consultation respondents (59%) considering that current provision of parks and gardens is 'about right' and 47% of respondents also confirming provision of amenity green space is 'about right'.

The 2008 Quantity Standards will be reviewed in the 2015 Open Spaces Study.

Accessibility Standards

Accessibility standards were derived from the household and user surveys, which asked people to state their expected mode of travel and journey time.

Recommendations were:

Typology	Distance (in minutes walking)	Distance (in metres)
Parks and Gardens	12.5 minutes	1km
Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space	15 minutes	1.2km
Green Corridors	15 minutes	1.2km
Amenity Green Space	5-10 minutes	400 - 800 metres

The 2008 Accessibility Standards will be reviewed in the 2015 Open Spaces Study.

Quality:

The measure of quality was considered subjective in the 2008 strategy - and a series of headings agreed on which the measure of quality can be taken:

- Welcoming Place
- Health, Safety and Security
- Clean and Well-maintained
- Culture, Heritage and Community Use.

Additional aspirations to achieve green flag status are noted.

More detailed breakdowns by typology including site-specific assessments and commentaries are available in the document.

The 2008 Quality Standards will also be reviewed in the 2015 Open Spaces Study.

4.2.3 Braintree District Council Open Spaces Action Plan 2015

This subsequent document is a detailed list of outline proposals for the provision and enhancement of open space in Braintree District. *‘The purpose of the document is to enable Council officers to demonstrate where financial contributions being sought from developers under the Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document will be spent’.*

The plan is reviewed annually and details key information on ownership and management, improvements and new infrastructure required. The document is currently referred to with a view to informing future planning considerations.

4.3 Key Stakeholders - strategic context and overview:

This section includes general comments from the key stakeholders consulted.

Responses specific to individual typologies from the stakeholders consulted will be noted under each of the focused topic headings.

4.3.1 Braintree District Council - Parks and Green Spaces Manager - Nick Day

The role of the Parks and Green Spaces Manager includes:

- Policy and development for parks and green spaces
- Practical management and maintenance
- Liaison with planners in relation to open spaces impacts/needs generated through development
- Facilities managed include parks, play areas/youth facilities, sports grounds, allotments, and natural green spaces

The District Council also provides open space maintenance services for around 40 schools and 5 town/parish councils across the District.

Quality

It is considered that budgetary restrictions over recent years means that the main priority for parks and green spaces services has been to manage and maintain existing facilities and open spaces to a good standard rather than to develop and improve provision.

Quantity / Funding

Any new facilities, and improvements to existing facilities tend to arise from new developments and the implementation of S106 agreements.

Devolution of Management

Current practice with new developments is to ensure that the ongoing management and maintenance of open space provision is taken on locally e.g. by the developer, local council or community organisation, rather than by the District Council.

The District Council is also supportive in general of local open space facilities being owned/managed by town and parish councils or other appropriate trusts and organisations.

Open Spaces - plans and aspirations

The 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Strategy included an action plan for new and improved facilities/open spaces. There was a review of this plan in 2010, by which time a number of projects had been completed. The most up-to-date plans and aspirations can be found in the 2015 Open Spaces Action Plan, which also includes proposals from town and parish councils and other groups and organisations.

4.3.2 Natural England (Jonathan Bustard - Lead Advisor, sustainable land use team)

Natural England provides conservation advice for statutory designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to SSSI owners and occupiers. These may be private individuals or local authorities.

Standards of provision

Natural England have proposed standards for provision of natural green space, the Accessible Natural Green Space (ANGSt) standard. These standards recommend that everyone, wherever they live, should have accessible natural green space:

- Of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home
- At least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home
- One accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- One accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- Statutory local Nature Reserves at a minimum level of one hectare per thousand population

Natural England suggest that these standards should be a target to achieve; and particularly that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural green spaces of at least two hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes from home).

Natural England has produced an ANGSt analysis of the adequacy of open space provision for the whole of Essex, with further details set out for each district. This identifies how closely this provision aligns with the Accessible Natural Green Space Standard. The ANGSt is available to use as a suggested and aspirational measure.

Key points raised by Natural England via the lead advisor (Sustainable Land use team) are noted below:

Access and Quality

- Natural England supports design for outdoor spaces that, through an integrated Ecosystem Approach to land management, deliver multiple benefits to people and wildlife
- Natural England supports better access to green spaces close to where people live
- Evidence shows that over two thirds of visits taken in England are close to home (68% within 2 miles) and that participation in visits over the previous week by residents of each region is likely associated with the amount of locally available green space
- Natural England supports designs that seek to achieve this through increasing the amount of green spaces and improving the quality of green spaces that communities have access to
- Natural England supports strategies for green space and green infrastructure provision that are accompanied by sustainable management mechanisms to ensure high quality provision for communities into the future
- It is important that good, safe cycle access is provided to open spaces, with good linkages between each space. Secure cycle locking areas are important with provision of 'Sheffield stand' type facilities recommended

Sport and Recreation in environmentally sensitive areas

The Council should note that whilst as a general principle Natural England supports public access to the natural environment for a wide range of reasons, there are occasions where the sensitivity of the special wildlife interest of SSSIs and other designated sites requires carefully designed solutions to conserve this interest and safeguard undisturbed areas as may be appropriate. Here the principles of 'honeypot' areas to absorb the majority of recreational pressures can sacrificially relieve damaging and disturbing impacts in more sensitive locations. The provision of an appropriate amount of green infrastructure for new developments, and an increase the existing provision in areas of shortfall can appropriately serve this purpose.

Natural England would be pleased to explore specific sites in more detail, and discuss how the

Council's Open Space Strategy can contribute positively towards nature conservation objectives for the District.

The importance of Biodiversity in multi-functional open spaces (e.g. allotments, informal and amenity green space)

Natural England have noted a number of relevant publications and relevant guidance on the topic above, with a view to future planning considerations.

It is considered that 'A multi-functional approach, which recognises the value of nature and the services that ecosystems deliver, delivers sustainable ways of improving the quality of people's lives and delivering economic benefits.'

4.3.3 The National Trust (Sarah Barfoot - Community Engagement Manager)

The National Trust Community Engagement Manager confirmed that they have no regional sites in the Braintree area and therefore unable to input into the study in any detail. Details below outline their national strategic plans.

Strategic Policy and Framework

On a national level the Trust has produced a number of key reports on children's play and other general guidance, which influence their work in Essex and across the country.

The National Trust planning stance covers key planning principles focused on safeguarding wildlife, the landscape and natural environment.

Sport and Recreation in environmentally 'sensitive areas'

If the definition of sensitive areas is that of conservation value then the Trust are constantly managing these conflicts and the need to strike a balance between access and conservation. New recreation areas would alleviate the capacity issues and impact on nationally significant sites and aid the health and wellbeing opportunities in the area.

The importance of bio-diversity in multi-functional open spaces

This is a key topic for the Trust as a conservation charity, who champion landscape-scale connectivity in the future. The Trust manages its sites on a multi-functional level with the charitable ethos of balancing conservation and access for all.

4.3.4 English Heritage (Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge - Principal Historic Environment Planning Adviser)

A general response was received on behalf of English Heritage, outlining changes to internal structuring and strategic emphasis in terms of the historic environment:

English Heritage separated into two organisations as of 1 April 2015, with the planning, designation and regulatory functions of EH now being performed by Historic England. The historic properties are now managed by a new charity with the name English Heritage Trust.

In terms of Historic England's perspective on the open space study, they do not have any studies or research directly relevant to this topic, and do not manage or use any land within Braintree District. However, in terms of open space and recreation, they would like to stress the importance of the historic environment:

- Open spaces can be heritage assets in their own right, for example a registered park and garden, scheduled monument or historic footway, or form part of the significance of

heritage assets such as the grounds of a listed building or important green spaces within conservation areas

- Open space can provide the setting to heritage assets, which in turn contributes to their significance. In terms of recreation and access, heritage assets require careful management to ensure that harm does not occur through excessive or inappropriate use

Historic England hopes that the proposed study recognises the importance of the historic environment as a component of open spaces, and identifies those open spaces that have heritage interest.

4.3.5 Community Organisations Survey (non-sports): overview

An online survey was set up for local organisations with an interest in green spaces (non-sporting). Full responses were received from 20 organisations with varied interests including rambling, allotments, friends of groups, birdwatching and conservation volunteers.

Detailed comments from the groups will be found in the typology based sections 4.4 to 4.8 below.

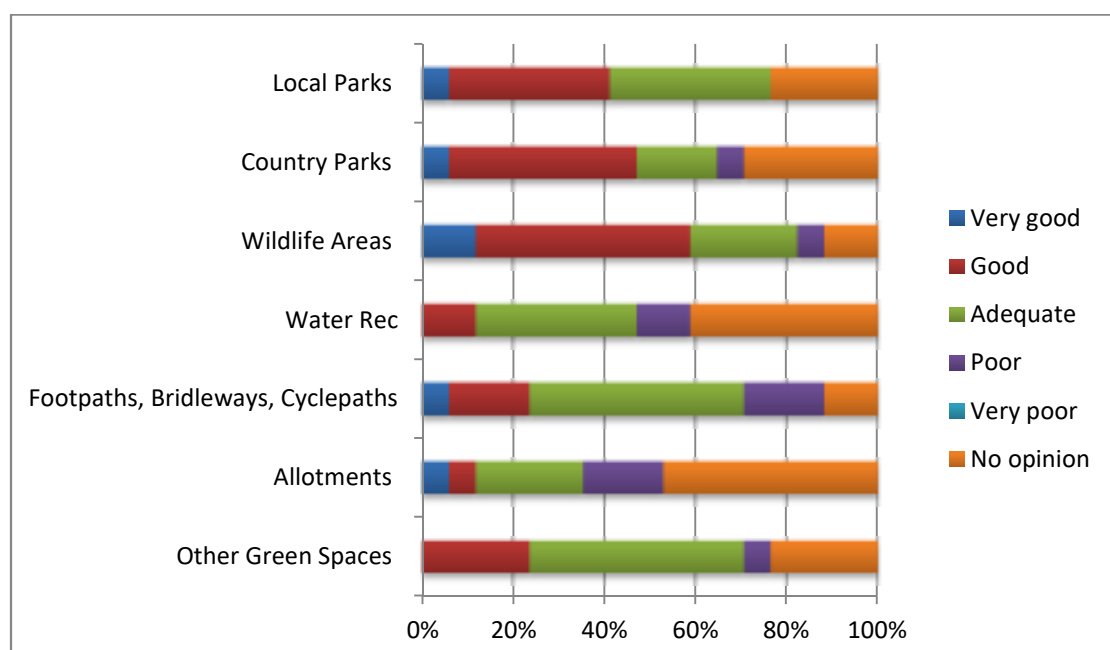
Quantity

- 71% of respondents felt their organisations didn't make direct use of open space. Of these 67% felt there was enough open space and recreational facilities to meet their needs. The remaining 33% felt there was inadequate provision
- Organisations who felt there was inadequate provision include White Colne Parish Council, The Essex Bat Group, Witham Tree Group and Friends of the Riverwalk and Witham allotments, reflecting a spectrum of interests and geographies.

Quality

The general views of these local community organisations as regards the overall quality of the different types of (non-sporting) green spaces in Braintree are summarised in the chart and information below:

Quality of Green Space (non sports)



- 71% of the groups are happy with the provision of Wildlife Areas in the district (rating them as good or very good) indicating a significant proportion of satisfied users.
- Local Parks and Country Parks also score highly with 41% and 47% respectively rating them good or very good.
- There were limited views on allotment provision with 47% expressing no opinion, however of the remainder, satisfaction was low with 78% rating them as poor or adequate.
- Footpaths, Bridleways and Cyclepaths and Other Green Spaces primarily had adequate scores.

Access

Respondents were asked whether their group faced any access issues in relation to open space and recreational facilities:

- Access issues are not noted as significant by most of the groups with only 24% of groups reporting that they suffer access issues to open space and recreational facilities

Of those that did report access issues, these are focused around:

a) Footpaths

- Maintenance and management of footpaths; *'Often finger posts & way markers are missing. Often paths are overgrown with brambles & nettles etc. & the organiser needs to try & clear the path, or find a way round.'*
- Disability access to footpaths, including problems with kissing gates

b) Access to privately owned/wider areas of open space

- Essex Bat Group note that bats forage over a wide area and access to suitable sites can be difficult
- Molly's Wood and Orchard note the arrangements with a private landowner to access the site

Sport and Recreation in sensitive areas

The question posed was: *'Should we have more or less areas for activities that are noisy? If so, where should they go? Is countryside or wildlife damaged by sport and recreational activity?'*

The following points were raised by respondents:

- More areas for less noisy activities. Green areas in new developments, and a green belt to preserve the limits of the towns - Witham and Braintree
- We all have to work together, don't we? Communication and compromise is the key
- We now have enough recreation areas for sport certainly not requiring more
- Green lanes are being ruined by off road vehicles; making deep ruts, which fill with water when it rains and cause great difficulties for walkers
- Wildlife is damaged by sporting activities and some wildlife by dog walkers

4.4 Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds

4.4.1 Braintree District Council

Parks and open Spaces Manager

- Generally speaking the quality of the 11 main District Council parks/recreational open spaces is good. Provision is quite well spread with no obvious gaps
- Many parish councils also manage local recreation grounds
- Great Notley Country Park is managed by Essex County Council and is a “destination” park with a wide catchment. It has excellent facilities including a 3G sports pitch and play areas. A recent development is a high ropes course
- There is a general need to improve signage and information in the local parks/open spaces

Landscape Services Team Supervisor

Braintree is a rural district; as such there is no single identity and character in relation to its parks and open spaces. Good examples of parks and open spaces in the area include:

- Weavers Park and Public Gardens, which run along the River Brain
- 3 linear parks which offer good wildlife corridors and access to Local Nature Reserves; and a well used bike route (Flich Way)

4.4.2 The Woodland Trust

Trees are an important part of parks. We would like to ensure that tree cover is maintained or expanded.

An important publication from the Forestry Commission, *The Case for Trees in development and the urban environment* (Forestry Commission, July 2010), sets out ‘*The multiple value of trees for people and places - increasing green space and tree numbers is likely to remain one of the most effective tools for making urban areas more convivial*’, and lists (on p.10) the benefits as -

- Climate change contributions
- Environment advantages
- Economic dividends
- Social benefits

Old individual trees are also an important part of our cultural and landscape heritage: ancient, veteran and notable trees resonate with the history of the landscape and form markers in the lives of individual people and communities. Ancient trees also have a special conservation value, supporting many species of epiphytes, invertebrates and fungi, whilst also providing a habitat for other animals including owls, woodpeckers, other hole nesting birds and bats. In addition, trees make a significant contribution to the urban environment both in visual terms and in helping to abate air pollution and create oxygen.

It is important that there is no further avoidable loss of ancient trees through development pressure, mismanagement or poor practice.

4.4.3 Essex Bridleways

- Many local parks provide footpaths and cycle way. Bridleways are multi-user tracks for walkers, cyclists, riders and people with mobility problems. These are section of society who are vulnerable road users
- We would like to see Bridleways incorporated into every new Country Park that is planned in the district
- We wish to see the bridleway that passes through the Great Notley Country Park extended to create circular routes so users can enter the park, ride a circular route and then leave by the same exist they used to enter the park.

4.4.4 Community Organisations Survey (non-sports): Parks and Gardens

General

- They are well cared for and used but could be improved
- Excessive local building and future plans could impact to the detriment of parks and recreation grounds
- They are all OK and well looked after
- We are happy to work in partnership with Braintree Parks and Leisure to make these areas fit for all (Halstead in Bloom)
- Our local recreation ground is maintained by our local parish council who are trustees of the land. It is well looked after but use by organised sports groups on the MUGA is lacking i.e. tennis coaching, basketball and netball teams, football training etc.
- We need more local facilities for teenagers in parks and better access for the disabled

Country Parks

- If population is to rise as stated we need to ensure more provision to maintain current parks and ensure more preserved. Make more of Cressing Temple as a Country Park
- We only know of one but yes there could be more but since we live in a rural area this is not a problem for us as we are surrounded by beautiful countryside and a brilliant footpath network maintained by a group of local footpath enthusiasts
- There is one magnificent country park on the edge of town. As a recreational area it is adequate for such purposes. The Hoppit Mead Nature Reserve has more functions including the actual wild places and is closer to the heart of town

Potential Development

The following response was received from CLABRAG - the action group representing residents of Braintree North, Bocking and High Garret.

Proposed garden villages

As well as the necessary infrastructure there must also be provision of playing fields (there could well be hundreds of children to provide for), footpaths, cycleways etc. Every effort should be made to encourage more walking and playing sports etc. thus making people healthier.

With volume housing it is essential to have well-maintained open spaces, benches, trees etc. that add so much to local communities.

4.5 Allotment Provision

4.5.1 Overview

Allotment provision in Braintree comes under the remit of both parish and district council, with Braintree District Council managing 12 sites across the district.

The Braintree District Council Asset Management Plan 2013-16 identifies the current position and proposals in relation to allotments for 2014 and 2015:

The council will devolve management to a local level through Local Allotment Associations, or Parish / Town councils, in support of our policy to provide services at a local level. This will be implemented over the next year. The Council will look to increase opportunities to create additional allotments to be managed at local level e.g. new sites in Church Lane, Braintree and Cut Throat Lane, Witham.

The management of the district allotments are further identified as a milestone action at the end of the plan - detailed below:

Action Points	Milestones	Expected Benefits	By Whom
Allotments	Explore opportunities to transfer sites to parish and allotment associations by March 2015	Reduced running costs and devolved local management	Head of Operations

The Braintree Green Spaces Strategy (September 2008) makes no specific recommendations for accessibility to Allotments. A household survey undertaken did however include questions around quantity and access (including anticipated travel times) to allotments with expected travel times being 15 minutes in urban areas, and 11.5 minutes in rural.

As part of the consultation, adequacy of existing provision was rated by 36% of respondents, as 'about right' a further 38% expressed no opinion.

4.5.2 Stakeholder feedback

Braintree District Council - Parks and Green Spaces Manager

- The District Council manages 12 allotment sites within the district with over 236 plots in active cultivation
- There is strong demand for plots - nearly every site has a waiting list
- There is a need for more sites/additional plots to meet demand
- The quality of existing sites is good

4.5.3 Community Survey

Comments and issues from community survey respondents included:

Respondent	Comments
Friends of the Riverwalk & Witham Allotments	Only one area in Witham, many more used to exist.

Witham Tree Group	Witham needs more allotment sites. Provision is very poor, we use the Hatfield Peveral sites as the Witham site in Cut Throat Lane is poor and not well sited.
Friends of Witham's River Walk and Nature Reserves	There is only one allotment site in Witham in the north of the town. Need for sites in south and west.
Hoppit Mead Nature Reserve Volunteers	No there are not enough allotment facilities. The two closest seem to be well maintained. Perhaps new-builds should have allotment provisions especially affordable housing areas.
Molly's Wood and Community Orchard	We have one allotment in Sible Hedingham, which is owned and managed, through our local church. It is not used to its best advantage with some plots looking overgrown, unused and unkempt. There have been requests for a Parish Council owned allotment as part of a S106 agreement but this has not been forthcoming and attempts by the PC to find a suitable plot in the village have not been successful. I think the church-owned allotments could be divided into smaller areas and tenants not maintaining them asked to vacate their plots for other more enthusiastic people to take up.
Essex Bat Group	In Rayne they are very well maintained.
White Colne Parish Council	Our allotments are well maintained and are at present full. We keep a waiting list if necessary.
CLABRAG: the action group representing residents of Braintree North, Bocking and High Garret	We are not sure that the younger generation would be interested in gardening! If all the land in an allotment site is not cultivated it can look very scruffy.
Great Bardfield Allotment Group	This is a successful example of a privately-run allotment group, using land donated by a local couple after a plea was written in the local village magazine for allotment space. All the plots are utilised by local residents and the tenants meet all costs and maintenance bills.

4.6 Natural green space, wildlife areas and woodlands

4.6.1 Natural England

There are 4 SSSI's partly or wholly in the Braintree Council boundary, and further details can be found on the Natural England website which also gives details of National and Local Nature Reserves.

Specific comments on sites are laid out below:

- **Chalkney Wood SSSI** - the woodland is part owned by Forestry Commission, and part by Essex County Council. As such it is both in active woodland management, and promoted as a visitor attraction. The site therefore has some resilience to public access. The woodland managers hold more information about visitor-carrying capacity, and what the current visitor pressures are
- **Bovingdon Hall Woods SSSI** - these woodlands are in private ownership, and therefore unlikely to be relevant to the current study
- **Belcher's & Broadfield Woods SSSI** - these woodlands are managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust and are a nature reserve. They can be expected to have a degree of visitor resilience. The EWT holds further information on visitor-carrying capacity
- **Glemsford Pits SSSI** - this site is largely in private ownership, and therefore unlikely to be relevant to the current study

4.6.2 Woodland Trust (Ellie Henderson - Regional and Local Government Officer)

Overview

The Woodland Trust would like to see trees and woodlands featuring strongly in this document.

Woods make particularly outstanding green spaces for public access because of the experience of nature they provide, their visual prominence alongside buildings, which offers balance between the built and natural worlds, their low maintenance costs and their ability to accommodate large numbers of visitors.

Woodland and related activities can also be valuable in promoting social inclusion. Woodland activities, such as tree planting, walking and woodland crafts can provide a forum for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds to come together to learn about and improve their local environment. The Woodland Trust launched a Community Woodland project in 2002, which supports over 200 local groups, which have a shared focus on protecting and caring for a wood in their area.

Woods and Health

The Government's **Independent Panel on Forestry** recommends '*Government and other woodland owners to give as many people as possible ready access to trees and woodlands for health and well-being benefits - this means planting trees and woodlands closer to people and incentivising more access to existing woodlands.*' (Defra, Final Report, 2012).

Forest Research Report on Benefits of Green Infrastructure (October 2010)

Trees and woods are vital to the health of people in the UK. There is a strong correlation between the quality of the natural environment where people live and their wellbeing. Increasing tree and woodland cover can be seen to reduce the impacts of poor air quality, mitigate some of the effects of a warming climate, particularly in urban areas, and increase

opportunities for people to adopt a healthy lifestyle - see the Forestry Commission's publication *Benefits of green infrastructure* (Report by Forest Research, October 2010).

More native trees and woods could save millions of pounds in healthcare costs in a time of constrained public expenditure. Around £110bn is spent each year in the UK on healthcare, equal to 8.5% of all income. It has been estimated (Natural England, *Our Natural Health Service*, 2009) that if every household in England had good access to quality green space, it could save around £2.1bn annually in health care costs and woodland can be a major contributor to this saving.

Trees further improve air quality through the absorption of particulates from vehicle emissions and other sources - such that it has been estimated that doubling the tree cover in the West Midlands alone would reduce mortality as a result of poor air quality from particulates by 140 people per year. (Stewart, H., Owen S., Donovan R., MacKenzie R., and Hewitt N. (2002). *Trees and Sustainable Urban Air Quality*. Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Lancaster University).

Government response to Independent Panel on Forestry Report (January 2013)

England's trees, woods and forests are a vital national asset providing multiple economic, social and environmental benefits.

To achieve this, everything we do must be focused on achieving the following key objectives, in priority order:

- Protecting the nation's trees, woodlands and forests from increasing threats such as pests, diseases and climate change
- Improving their resilience to these threats and their contribution to economic growth, people's lives and nature
- Expanding them to increase further their economic, social and environmental value

Woodlands have value across many sectors of the economy and society.

Access Standards to Woodland

The Woodland Trust believes that proximity and access to woodland is a key issue linking the environment with health and well-being provision.

Recognising this, the Woodland Trust has researched and developed the Woodland Access Standard (WASt) for local authorities to aim for, encapsulated in our *Space for People* publication. We believe that the WASt can be an important policy tool complementing other access standards used in delivering green infrastructure for health benefits.

The WASt is complementary to Natural England's ANGST+ and is endorsed by Natural England. The Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard recommends:

- *that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size*
- *that there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people's homes.*

Braintree comparison to access standards

Applying this standard in Braintree, with a comparison against Essex County Council gives the following figures (see table below). It shows that Braintree exhibits below average access to both woodland size categories. This presents an excellent opportunity for creating more accessible woodland to improve health and well-being opportunities for sustainable communities

and neighbourhoods. The data used can be supplied free of charge by the Woodland Trust both in map and in numerical/GIS form.

Accessibility to Woodland in Essex using the Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard:

		Braintree	Chelmsford	Essex
Accessible woods	% population with access to 2ha+ wood within 500m	0.8	11.5	15.3
	% population with access to 20ha+ wood within 4km	25.8	61.1	62.0

Space for People is the first UK-wide assessment of any form of green space. The full ***Space for People*** report can be found on the Woodland Trust's website.

Good Practice

The Woodland Trust would like long-term woodland provision to increase for the people of Braintree. We also offer free community tree packs and free school tree packs, which can help increase access to new small woods.

The Woodland Trust works in partnership with many local authorities on woodland creation projects and would be happy to have a discussion on this.

4.6.3 Braintree District Council

Council management overview:

- The District Council manages about 11 areas of natural green space including local nature reserves, woodlands and river walks
- The Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are managed in line with site-specific management plans

Landscape Services Team:

The key focus of the team is tree management with a specific health and safety remit.

The draft Braintree District Council Tree Strategy has been produced and is currently in the process of being taken to public and stakeholder consultation. (May 2015)

Key objectives

- Confirm and justify the Council's approach to the protection and management of trees
- Provide guidance on the important and protection of trees in the consideration of planning applications
- Promote good practice in the management of trees throughout the district
- Provide advice and support on the planting and maintenance of trees in the district

General Points

- It is estimated that canopy cover across the district is approximately 18% of total land areas, comparing to a national average of approximately 8% (although provides no specific breakdown in terms of woodland and street tree differentiation)

- The strategy includes a 5 year action plan which identifies opportunities (in line with the Council's corporate objectives) to increase canopy cover, use biodiversity offsetting to provide new tree planting where new development has meant the loss of tree cover, increasing public involvement through the current tree warden scheme and actively promoting National Tree week - amongst other priorities
- The strategy includes proposals to develop a community woodland (including an appraisal of possible sites)

A final timetable for consultation and approval has not been confirmed - but it is recommended that when the tree strategy is complete and adopted, this forms an important strategic benchmark for woodland aspirations in Braintree District.

Tree warden project

As part of the National Tree Council Scheme - Braintree District has a network of approximately 70 active tree wardens, - one in each parish. The role is to act as the eyes and ears for tree officers and support with tree work applications for parish council. Braintree District Council delivers one of the most established and longest running schemes in the country with 20 + years of involvement.

Planning and Sustainable Development Team (Community Landscape Officer - Amanda Turburville)

The planning and sustainable development team has the remit of improving green space for people and wildlife, covering community development and facilitation for green space groups, leading working group parties and supporting the network of 'friends of' groups across the district.

Current Projects and Focus:

- Extensive work to develop habitat management plans for all key LNR's has been undertaken, including detailed action plans and deliverables for long term improvements
- Similar management plan development work is now underway for most woodland sites although some are under review
- Management guidance plans are also written and available on smaller sites

Quality

Examples of good practice:

Hoppit Mead Nature Reserve:

- Hoppit Mead Nature Reserve was designated 2 years ago by Natural England and is an excellent example of high quality LNR provision
- A full public consultation programme was undertaken as part of the process of application in June 2013 and a subsequent management plan for 2013 - 2022 was agreed
- An active 'Friends of Hoppit Mead' volunteer group has been established

Other examples of good local nature reserve provision include:

- Bocking Blackwater Nature Reserve (large open space behind a housing estate)
- Halstead River Walk - a separate public consultation has been completed in March 2015, and ambition to become LNR designated

Quantity

- There is a continued pressure on house building in the area and subsequent provision must be considered

Access

- It is the intention to link green spaces across the district and extend wildlife corridors as part of Hoppits Mead
- There is a woodland user group and forest school at Hoppit Mead but currently no disability access
- Interpretation project work is being undertaken on Hoppit Mead, The John Ray Trust and local museum are undertaking a project to interpretation the history and management of the site through art, sculptures and other more tactile methods - rather than simple information boards

4.6.4 Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) (Mark Iles - Biodiversity Coordinator)

Essex Wildlife Trust manages a number of Nature reserve sites within the LA boundary, which have management plans and offer public access and volunteering opportunities. The Trust highlighted the following points:

Data sets:

In 2009 EWT published their 'Analysis of Accessible Natural Greenspace Provision for Essex', which has useful information relating to this consultation. The GIS layers are available.

Through the 'Catchment Based Approach' (CaBA) EWT are hosting the Combined Essex Catchment, which seeks to deliver a more inclusive and holistic approach to the management of the water environment and resource.

For more information please refer to document 'Analysis of Accessible Natural Greenspace Provision for Essex, including, Southend on Sea and Thurrock Unitary Authorities', available from EWT.

Other points highlighted were:

- Changes in management could reduce costs and provide additional wildlife habitat and an improved user experience
- Biodiversity should be a key component within the open spaces strategy. Information and assistance is available via the Essex Biodiversity Project
- *Living Landscapes Initiative*: EWT with partners have identified a number of 'Living Landscapes' within the Essex area. These are aspirational and provide a framework for EWT and partners to develop a long-term vision for an area, which develops its value for wildlife conservation, sustainable economy and community access

4.6.5 Essex Bridleways

- Many bridleways have rough verges and hedges, which encourages wild life. Riders are able to observe wild life at a close distance, as the animals are less afraid of horses

4.6.6 Community Organisation Survey

Respondents' views in relation to Wildlife Areas, Nature Reserves and Woodlands are noted below - with generally positive feedback and comments:

Quality and Access

- We have magnificent countryside around us, the River Colne riverside walk, 2 water mills, and many footpaths shown on a comprehensive footpath maps of both Castle and Sible Hedingham
- Some natural areas are well looked after but others are not
- Most are easy to reach
- Generally they are good
- The Witham River walk is well maintained by Witham Town Council
- There are some nature reserves in the area but more required. Those we have such as Whetmead Local Nature Reserve require more investment and management

Site Specific

- Coggeshall Pieces, which we manage, is well used and people appreciate our efforts
- Coggeshall Pieces is looked after by volunteers with assistance from Braintree District Council
- The Halstead River walk is managed by Braintree District Council with assistance from Halstead in Bloom. A 'friends of' group has been planned for 3/4 years now and hopefully will come into being soon
- The Hoppit Mead Nature Reserve Volunteers are working hard to improve this important site and more on site information and interpretation is envisaged subject to the availability of finance. The area contains many different species some of which are rare and have historical significance

In the context of development

- If population is to rise as stated, there is a need to ensure additional provision; and to maintain what we have

the

Site-specific comments in the context of development have also been made by Braintree North, Bocking and High Garret action group.

Dorewards Farm

With its network of public footpaths that cover the land between Broad Road and Bocking Village we see people walking all day long. Dog walkers, shoppers, school children, people going to work - all taking advantage of the open space and enjoying the landscape views across to the famous windmill. There will be strong opposition to any proposed development in this idyllic area.

Straits Mill/Highfield Stile

- All the various landowners have offered their land for development
- The site has woodland, many other trees, the River Blackwater running through it, a large pond. It's adjacent to the Blackwater Nature Reserve
- The area just beyond Convent Lane up to around the Anglia Water Board Works (i.e. the lower fields incurring a flood risk) would make a wonderful nature park - a true wildlife area. There are footpaths and a bridleway. The horse riding fraternity would welcome extensions to existing bridleways and this could be possible. It would benefit families,

particularly children and would encourage people to walk. Local schools could also benefit by studying the wildlife, trees, flowers etc

- The upper reaches of the site towards the A131 could be left to the developers
- The Council would need to compulsorily purchase the land to provide the wildlife nature park with, hopefully, a contribution from the developers

4.7 Water Recreation

4.7.1 Woodland Trust

In this section on water, it is worth pointing out that trees and woodlands can deliver a major contribution to resolving a range of water management issues. They offer opportunities to make positive water use change whilst also contributing to other objectives, such as biodiversity, timber and green infrastructure, the Woodland Trust publication '*Woodland actions for biodiversity and their role in water management*' is available on the Trust's website.

Trees and woodland are very well placed to contribute to the emerging agenda of water risk management in the light of a changing climate.

4.7.2 Environment Agency (Graham Steel - Sustainable Places Planning Officer)

The following publications were forwarded for consideration by the Environment Agency, which are available on the organisations website:

- Draft River basin Management Plan Combined Essex Catchment
- Riverside ownership: rights and responsibilities

No further comment or site-specific information was given.

4.7.3 Community Organisations Survey

General comments on water recreation from respondent are noted below:

- There are some nice rivers such as the Brain and Blackwater but these need more protection from development
- It would be lovely if there could be some sort of recreational feature on the river Colne, other than fishing, which is well catered for
- The entire stretch of waterway through the Reserve and onwards to Black Notley is in need of more regular maintenance by the appropriate authority

Site-specific comments - Heddingham Riverside Walk

- We are exceedingly lucky to have the River Colne running through our village and the beginning of a Heddingham Riverside Walk, which will eventually run from Alderford Mill to the bridge over the river going towards Castle Heddingham. This has been very slow in developing and is the subject of S106 payments. We feel the walk should have been completed by the developers before they commenced building

Please note a late reply is expected from Braintree Angling and will updated in due course.

4.8 Footpaths, Cycling and Equestrian provision

4.8.1 Essex County Council - Public Rights of Way Department (Gary White, PROW and Records Manager)

Overview

Our duty is to protect and maintain the network of Public Rights of Way. A map showing the network can be seen via the Essex County Council website where various other information and policies can be found.

There are different classifications of paths: Footpaths - for walkers; bridleways - for walkers, horse riders and cyclists; and restricted byways - for the above users plus non-motorised vehicles; and byways - for all users including motor vehicles.

The main challenge is to manage our budget as efficiently as possible with the aim of keeping the network in good condition; cutting grass and vegetation; maintaining surfaces; replacing bridges where necessary; providing good signage; ensuring obstructions are quickly dealt with; and removing unlicensed stiles and structures for ease of access. For the first time in 2014 a sub-contractor was used to undertake the PROW vegetation clearance, which was successful. Nonetheless, there will be scope for improvement in 2015 and efficiency improved by programming and clear digitised cutting maps and schedules.

We process diversion orders where necessary. This is usually at the request of the landowner, and they have to cover the costs. But there are a number of long-term problems, which are not of the landowners' making, which await publicly funded diversion orders. Examples would be: where bridges have had to be moved, where "dead-ends" or indeterminate routes exist for some historical reason, where ground conditions have had an adverse effect, etc.

Braintree has second highest number of PROW out of the 12 Districts in the County and is generally well served with some continuous links in the local network. Byways, although forming less than 3% of the network are the source of much complaint and ongoing matters of vehicular access in the countryside.

Future Projects

In response to the questions regarding specific projects and plans for the future - 'part of the Braintree to Takeley disused railway line known as the Flitchway beginning at Rayne Station, which is owned by ECC. The first section from Rayne station is not a designated PROW; the remainder has been created as a bridleway and is a very popular horse riding and cycling route'.

Examples of Best Practice

'The most recent promoted walk to be created in the county is the Magna Carta walk by local historians and takes in PROW network from Yeldham through to Caste Hedingham, the official opening being in May 2015.

4.8.2 Sustrans - Kris Radley - Area Manager

Overview

The National Cycle Network is a series of safe, traffic-free lanes and quiet on-road routes that connect to every major city and passes within a mile of 55 per cent of UK homes. It now stretches 14,200 miles across the length and breadth of the UK. As well as NCN1, NCN16 runs through the district linking Witham with Braintree¹⁵. We continue to work with Essex County Council, Braintree District Council and other interested parties in improving the NCN with the district boundary.

Strategic Planning and access requirements

In a national strategic policy context - Sustran's 'Get Britain Cycling' Report includes a number of recommendations and aspirations; particularly relevant are

- A statutory requirement that cyclists' and pedestrians' needs are considered at an early stage of all new development schemes, including housing and business developments as well as traffic and transport schemes, including funding through the planning system

Local Issues

Braintree District has a number of good cycle routes and walking provision however there is still room for improvement.

Routes towards the rural communities to the north of the district are much needed as well as improved provision within the towns of Witham and Braintree. With the ever increasing population of the district (and the developments to meet that need underway) it is imperative that the District Council work with Sustrans and Developers to ensure that measures are in place to allow the public to choose sustainable travel for more of their everyday journeys. This can be achieved by improving PROW and developing new strategic shared use provision.

In Witham NCN16 links Spa Road with Blunts Hall Road. A short section of this route is still footpath and needs upgrading to bridleway to make it an option for cyclists.

Potential Projects

- NCN16 provides a fantastic traffic free route from Braintree train station to the borders of the district near Great Dunmow following the Flitch Way. It would be great to see the development of the cycling and walking network to improve access links to this facility and surface improvements along its length
- NCN16 also heads out from Braintree town centre via St Johns Avenue, Tortoiseshell Way, London Road and Queensborough Lane to The Discovery Centre. This is a mixed route of on-road and traffic-free provision and provides a great opportunity to promote sustainable travel options for visitors and residents to access The Discovery Centre. It would be great to see improvements to signing along this entire route

¹⁵ National Route 16 of the National Cycle Network is currently in two sections. The first section connects Stansted and Braintree and will continue to Witham. The second section will connect Basildon with Shoeburyness, near Southend-on-Sea.

4.8.3 Essex Bridleways Association (Braintree Representative Amanda French)

Strategic Policy and Context

Detailed input was received from two representatives of the Essex Bridleways Association with emphasis on the strategic policy underpinning the rights and requirements of equestrian activity. Key points are summarised below:

Safety

- Concerns are identified over the increase in speed and volume in traffic, the disjointed nature of equestrian rights of way and the lack of safe places to ride
- Horse-riding is an important part of daily recreational life, especially in rural areas, however the standard of facilities to accommodate equestrians either crossing or riding the trunk roads is of variable standards. Heavy traffic and excess speed can give rise to grave danger and discouragement for horses and their riders

Access

- The Public Rights of Way Improvements Plan (PROWIP) states there needs to be a particular focus on the provision of bridleways. This is specifically identified in the plan as being needed in the Essex area
- The Highways Agency Strategic Plan for sustainable transport identifies horses as a sustainable mode of transport and notes: '*The Highways Agency now has a clear remote to operate, maintain and improve its network for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrian to increase accessibility and promote integration.*'

Braintree Specific

The Braintree District is sadly lacking in bridleways, forcing horse riders onto increasingly busy fast roads. The planned development in the district will make this situation even worse, and it is therefore vital that bridleways [multiuser tracks] are planned from the outset in every new development and every reasonable sized piece of public open space so that, long term, a safe off road network can be established.

Key local concerns:

- We wish to see a linked, safe off road network of bridleways (multi-user tracks) throughout the Braintree District to enable vulnerable users (walkers, cyclists, horse riders and the disabled) to avoid having to use fast, busy dangerous roads
- The current network of bridleways is very fragmented, so horse riders often have to ride on dangerous fast roads to move from one bridleway to another. Many areas have no bridleways at all. We would like to see a safe off road network planned for the district
- An example of improving connectivity of existing bridleways is noted in the Country Parks section of the study

Good Practice

Our services are free and we would gladly welcome the opportunity of working with you to create new bridleways in the future. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

4.8.4 Natural England

- Design for open spaces should include elements that enable communities to access their local green spaces, along permanent green corridors using non-motorised means of transport. For those visitors from further afield, some means of public transport to the natural environment linking sites with rail or bus stations and local overnight stay provision, will provide opportunities for eco-tourism. Good cycle links to open spaces from railway stations allow a rail/ bicycle travel option
- Green infrastructure provided for access delivers, along with hedges, verges and trees, a wildlife corridor linking areas specially managed for their conservation value. This will promote increased biodiversity and ensure wildlife is able to adapt to changes in climate
- Tree planting will provide shade and reduction in the heat island effect associated with anticipated increased temperatures, whilst green spaces, rivers, streams and swales, and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems provide effective flood risk management
- Open spaces providing a setting for sport, recreation, and outdoor play, encourages the use of the outdoors for health reasons and contributes toward Local Authority targets under the Public Health Outcomes framework 1.16
- Natural England supports mechanisms for managing and addressing issues of access alongside conservation objectives such that access to the natural environment is encouraged
- Dedicated cycle paths must be of good quality and reasonable width to allow safe passage (2m width minimum recommended). They must link places people want to go, not end abruptly halfway between destinations as is common. Shared use paths with pedestrians should be avoided to reduce potential conflict. Good provision for pedestrians must also be provided. Cycle paths should have priority over side roads to ensure smooth passage and avoid stop- start riding, which will put people off
- Footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths must be well maintained and in the case of cycle paths, swept regularly

4.8.5 Braintree District Council

Parks and Green Spaces Manager

General Comments

- Green corridors and rights of way are mainly the responsibility of the County Council
- Paths, green corridors etc. can be provided for as part of the recreational open space planned in relation to new developments e.g. included in S106 developments
- Flitch Way is a great example. It is a linear country park passing through fifteen miles of countryside along the former Bishop's Stortford to Braintree railway

Landscape Services Manager

- Riverside Walks are a large focus and feature of Braintree Open Spaces and good examples include Halstead, Witham, Braintree and Sible Hedingham

4.8.6 Community Organisations Survey

General Comments

- If the population is to rise as stated need to ensure better provision to maintain current pathways and ensure more are created. Join up country parks with walkways
- We are well blessed with attractive footpaths and we also have bridleways. There will be a cycle path created in Sible Hedingham once the Bloor Homes development is completed in the village but we do not have any others. Links by public transport to other towns are not brilliant especially to Sudbury or north to Haverhill and Cambridge. A new daily bus service to Sudbury is being implemented for a 6 month trial basis funded from a S106 payment. Prior to that you could only go by bus to Sudbury on Thursdays and Saturdays. This is the first improvement in public transport to Sudbury in nearly 50 years! The Parish Council have worked hard to get this service laid on
- Need for more designated cycle ways and more bridleways in the area

On footpaths

- Essex County Council Footpath support has been lacking in the past couple of years
- Good network but many paths are not well maintained. Help fund local maintenance of paths
- The River Walk which is looked after by the Witham Town council is fantastic however footpaths and alleys leading to it need more regular litter picking and weed control. There is a need for some more litterbins, which are emptied on a regular basis as often over flowing with rubbish being blown away in the wind
- All are of sufficient quality
- It would be lovely to be able to reach villages by public transport for the start of our walks. At the moment we try to car share but this is not good environmentally. In some cases there is only one bus a week!
- On footpaths I think that Sible Hedingham Parish Council would like more contact and support from Essex County Council staff with any footpath issues, which seem to have deteriorated in recent years
- We have an active footpath group of walkers who meet twice a week, once in Sible Hedingham and once in Castle. Footpaths are well signposted and monitored by our local Footpaths committee

On cycling

Community groups made a number of comments on cycling provision - comments focused on the maintenance, infrastructure and connectivity of the routes:

- Braintree District Council promotes cycle ways in urban areas but seems to think that rural roads are 'too dangerous' for walking/cycling. Those of us who live in the country beg to differ!
- The cycleway network needs improving and joining up. Blackwater Rail Trail is badly maintained and underused
- We have no cycle paths in the village and a lack of pavements on busy lanes. (White Colne)

On bridleways

- We wish to see a linked, safe off-road network of bridleways (multi-user tracks) throughout the Braintree District to enable vulnerable users (walkers, cyclists, horse riders and the disabled to avoid having to use fast, busy dangerous roads

- The current network of bridleways is very fragmented, so horse riders often have to ride on dangerous fast roads to move from one bridleway to another. Many areas have no bridleways at all. We would like to see a safe off road network planned for the District
- Braintree District is sadly lacking in bridleways, forcing horse riders onto increasingly busy fast roads. The planned development in the district will make this situation even worse, and it is therefore vital that bridleways (multiuser tracks) are planned from the outset in every new development and every reasonable sized piece of public open space so that, long term, a safe off-road network can be established

4.9 Parks and Green Spaces: Key Findings

Overview and Context

- Natural England stress the need to take into account the ANGst standard as a starting point for developing a standard for natural and semi natural green space. Variations from this standard should be justified.
- The Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard (WAS - endorsed by Natural England) provides guidance on access to Woodland, which should be taken into consideration.
- The Essex Wildlife Trust published an access to Natural Greenspace Analysis document in 2009, which lays out standards of access that should be expected. GIS layers and datasets are available to facilitate the development of future greenspace strategic planning.
- The emerging Braintree District Council Tree Strategy will provide an important tool to help develop future woodland access for residents.
- Many stakeholders and community groups have noted that the transfer of maintenance and management of parks and green space to parish councils/community organisations can be a positive step in maintaining quality standards.

Quantity

- A majority of People's Panel respondents thought that overall there were enough parks, gardens and recreation grounds (59%) and areas for water recreation (59%) to meet local need.
- In contrast a majority of Panel respondents thought that overall there were not enough footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (58%); country parks, accessible countryside and woodlands (59%); wildlife areas and nature reserves(62%); allotments (55%); and informal open spaces (62%).

Quality

General Observations:

- Various kinds of green spaces were rated highly in terms of quality by the People's Panel. These include: parks and recreation grounds (56% rate quality in general as being good or very good); and country parks/countryside/woodlands (48%).
- Council budgetary reductions noted by stakeholders suggests the focus is primarily to manage and maintain the current quality standards rather than develop and improve them.
- Reported examples of good quality provision in the district include the Flitch Way cycle route, and the Discovery Centre in Great Notley.
- High satisfaction levels are recorded with parks and recreation grounds and natural open space provision.

Community Groups Survey

- Wildlife areas proved the highest rating typology with 71% of the groups are happy with the provision (rating them as good or very good)
- Local Parks and Country Parks also score highly with 41% and 47% respectively rating them good or very good.
- The quality of allotment provision was rated poor or inadequate by 78% of respondents expressing a view on the typology, similarly 80% of respondents expressing a view on Water Recreation provision.

- The ratings of footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths are not considered high with 65% rating them only adequate, or poor. Litter, connectivity and maintenance were highlighted as issues.

Access

- Improvements to the cycle network in Braintree proposed by Sustrans would facilitate access to important visitor sites such as the Discovery Centre where access and parking has already been noted as an issue.
- There is limited access to bridleways for the horse-riding community; - examples of problems with connectivity of bridleways in areas such as Great Notley Country Park are proposed projects for improvement.
- Interpretation and access work being undertaken on the Hoppit Mead nature reserve are an example of best practice, using local knowledge to create interactive and exciting information trails.
- PROW examples of newly launched walks demonstrate effective and creative ways of developing and funding new publicly accessible routes.

General Comments

- There is a wealth of well-researched and reported data and action plans regarding parks and open spaces in Braintree.
- The devolution of management of parks, allotments and other sites to Parish Councils/community organisations is referred to by a number of key stakeholders and community interest groups in a positive light.
- The process of writing management plans for all key Local Nature Reserve Sites by the planning and sustainable development team demonstrates good long term planning for sustaining key wildlife and nature sites.
- The need for good, safe cycle access to open spaces is highlighted as a priority by stakeholders, including Natural England and Sustrans.

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Introduction

This section provides feedback and information relating to play and youth facilities. It considers information and views provided by various stakeholders including Braintree District Council, Essex County Council, Play England and play and youth organisations across the district.

The section is structured into four main parts:

- Review of Policy and Strategy
- Youth and Play - key stakeholders
- Local play and youth organisations
- Access for disabled children

There is a summary of key points and issues at the end of the section.

5.1 Review of Policy and Strategy

5.1.1 Braintree District Council

Braintree District Play Strategy - 2007-2011

The Braintree District Play Strategy was undertaken to determine the standards of quality and access required for children's play provision across Braintree District.

Previous consultation

The work was underpinned through consultation with over 4,000 children and young people conducted through a variety of mediums, including Essex County Youth Service, children attending Braintree District Council summer programmes, dedicated focus groups, facilitated questionnaires and relevant youth organisations.

Identified priorities from the consultation

- More facilities for younger teenagers aged 11-13
- More and better maintained play equipment in parks and other local, free to use public spaces
- Continued consultation and action with children and young people
- A change of attitude by adults, to children's play
- The need for the development of imaginative play for all ages
- Specific opportunities for vulnerable groups

The responses were translated into an action plan of priority improvement works.

Green Space Strategy 2008 and Open Space Action Plan Update 2015

Standards for access, quality and quantity of children's play equipment were set out in the 'Braintree Green Space Strategy 2008.

Children's play spaces are defined as:

‘Equipped play areas, skateboard areas and teenage shelters and other spaces with the primary purpose of providing opportunities for play and social interaction involving children and young people.’

The aim is to provide accessible, well-designed, high quality play areas that provide a safe environment in which children of all ages and abilities develop their imagination and have fun. Any equipment included is to be safe, well-designed and well maintained.

Quantity Analysis

In 2008 the analysis of quantity provision was broken down into rural and urban areas as well as key Braintree districts. The quantity standard across all local areas - both urban and rural is not met - with notable under-provision in urban Braintree.

Children's Play Provision						
Area	Areas (Ha)	Hectares per 1,000 population	Proposed Standard	Current surplus or deficit	Surplus or deficit in hectares	
Total Urban Braintree	3.39	0.07	0.20	-0.13	-5.97	
Total Urban Halstead	2.34	0.20	0.20	0.00	-0.04	
Total Urban Witham	3.25	0.13	0.20	-0.07	-1.73	
Total Urban Areas	8.98	0.11	0.20	-0.09	-7.75	
Total Rural Braintree	1.30	0.08	0.20	-0.12	-2.08	
Total Rural Halstead	2.81	0.11	0.20	-0.09	-2.11	
Total Rural Witham	1.30	0.08	0.20	-0.12	-1.91	
Total Rural Area	5.41	0.09	0.20	-0.11	-6.10	
District Totals / average	14.39	0.10	0.20	-0.10	-13.85	

Consultation in 2008 agreed with this under-provision in urban areas - 55% of respondents from urban areas (during public consultation) consider there is insufficient play provision. 51% from rural areas felt that provision was ‘about right’.

The 2015 Open Spaces study will review this quantity standard.

Accessibility Standards

Accessibility standards were derived from the household and user surveys, which asked people to state their expected mode of travel and journey time.

Recommendations were:

‘For children’s play provision it is recommended that toddler / junior equipped play areas should be within a 5 minute walking distance and teenage provision should be within 10 minutes walking distance’.

Children's Play Provision Access Standards

- Toddler / Junior - 5 minutes walk (400 metres)
- Teenage - 10 minute walk (800 metres)

The 2015 Open Spaces study will review this accessibility standard.

Quality

The measure of quality is considered subjective in the strategy - and a series of heading agreed on which the measure of quality can be taken these are:

- Welcoming Place
- Health, Safety and Security
- Clean and well-maintained
- Culture, heritage and community use

Additional aspirations to achieve green flag status are noted.

The 2015 Open Spaces study will suggest a new quality standard based on Green Flag and Play England guidance.

5.1.2 Essex County Council

Essex Children and Young People's plan 2009 - 2011

Priorities and outcomes for young people in this plan were

- Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being
- Narrow the gap

Indicators of success included the proportion of 'physically active children' in Essex.

Previous Consultation

As part of the consultation process - comments from young people were noted in the document including:

- *'A significantly greater proportion of young people in Essex say they go to the park, playground or sports club than children do nationally'*

Comments relating to safety included:

- *'The main reasons children and young people feel unsafe are because of teenagers hanging around their local area'*
- *'Children and young people don't want teenagers hanging around because it intimidates younger children'*

Partners covered a range of statutory and third sector organisations

5.1.3 Play England

Play England have some broad observations about overall policy direction and advice on local standards as summarised below.

Quantity

Play England recommend provision of a range of play spaces in all urban environments:

- A Doorstep spaces close to home
- B Local play spaces - larger areas within easy walking distance
- C Neighbourhood spaces for play - larger spaces within walking distance
- D Destination/family sites; accessible by bicycle, public transport and with car parking

They emphasise that play spaces do not just mean formal play areas. While these are included play spaces cover all areas of public open spaces that are "playable" e.g. spaces that are accessible, safe, appropriate for play and where play use is welcomed and encouraged.

They also point out the need for standards for smaller settlements and rural areas where the doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination hierarchy is unlikely to be appropriate.

Quality

Play England would like the Play England Design Guide *Design for Play* to be referenced and added as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Play England have developed a *Quality Assessment Tool* that can be used to judge the quality of individual play spaces. They recommend that local authorities consider adopting this as a means of assessing the quality of play spaces in the local area.

Access

Access is the key element for Play England as referred to in the Quantity section - a range of doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination play spaces with appropriate catchments. Disability access is also an important issue for Play England and they would like local authorities to adopt the KIDS publication *Inclusion by Design* as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Priorities

Play England have a guidance document: *Better Places to Play through Planning*. The publication gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space. It also shows how provision for better play opportunities can be promoted in planning policies and processes; giving detail of how local development frameworks and planning control can be utilised in favour of child-friendly communities. They recommended that local authorities adopt this guidance generally in terms of play and spatial planning.

Nature Play Initiative

By Nature Play, Play England simply mean children exploring and enjoying the natural environment through their freely-chosen play. As well as simply enjoying playing outdoors and discovering green spaces near their homes, nature play can include planting and growing vegetables, fruit and flowers; cooking outdoors; playing with the elements or making camps and dens with natural materials.

Play England have recently published a series of nature play activity 'recipes'. The cards provide activities to explore nature and help children experience the benefits of connecting with the natural environment through play.

5.1.4 Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust highlight that woods are important spaces for informal play.

*"As highlighted in the **Public Health White Paper** (Healthy Lives, Healthy People; Nov 2010), there are tremendous opportunities for native woodland to contribute positively towards delivering improved mental and physical health. Research shows that woodland can provide benefits for air quality, urban heat island cooling, physical exercise provision and relief from mental illness".*

5.1.5 National Trust

On a national level the Trust has produced a number of key reports on children's play and other general guidance, which influence their work in Essex and across the country.

Reports reflect the increasing need to re-engage children with the outdoors have been published - Natural Childhood report and reconnecting Children with Nature - a nationwide campaign '50 things to do before you're 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ ' has been established and a 'kids council' recruited to help influence future plans and programmes.

5.2 Youth and Play - Key Stakeholders

5.2.1 Young People - consultative groups

Young Essex Assembly (YEA)

The Young Essex Assembly is an elected youth council for Essex, which facilitates discussion and input of the views of young people into local government.

It covers 10 key districts in Essex, including Braintree, and is made up of 75 young people aged 11-19, elected for a period of 2 years; there are 7 elected members for the Braintree District.

Their role is to represent young people in the county and campaign to make a positive difference to their lives. As part of the YEA members will be listened to by the county council, and by other groups working with or for young people. A representative from the Assembly completed the online survey on behalf of the Braintree elected representatives.

Braintree 'Our Generation'

This is a scheme for 16-24 years olds who live in the Braintree area to help influence changes to the district in the future.

Young people can apply on line via a short application and then be contacted once or twice a year to complete surveys, which will be fed back to key council staff, members and the Council leader and Chief Executive.

5.2.2 Braintree District Council

Parks Service Manager - Nick Day

Play Areas

- The Council manages 45 play areas across the District and over recent years all have been refurbished to a good standard
- There are no funds currently available for further improvements/refurbishments, other than via S106 contributions. There are still a small number of new play areas to be provided through S106 agreements

Youth facilities /skate parks

- There are good skate parks In Witham, Braintree and Silver End
- The skate park in Halstead at Ramsey Road is in need of improvement /replacement. Discussions are underway with the Town Council to resolve this issue and the park may be transferred to the Town council (this may help to secure grants to improve/replace it)
- The skate park at Meadowside, Braintree has been particularly successful with good community engagement
- In general terms the District Council's preference for new skate parks is for below ground concrete construction rather than metal
- A number of parish councils also have aspirations for new/improved skate park facilities
- Outdoor gyms are also located at Braintree - Meadowside playing field and Witham - Playing field, Spa Road. There is potential for expanding this provision

Current Consultation

As part of a new post an audit of youth provision has been commissioned to be undertaken by the Community Safety Team.

The objective is to identify gaps in services for young people across the Braintree District Council in areas such as health, well-being, social issues, mental health provision etc.

Private and public organisations, service providers, third sector organisations and Parish Councils are just some of the organisations have been contacted across the Braintree District to provide feedback and enable a full mapping process to be undertaken.

The report is due to be presented to the portfolio holder in summer/autumn 2015.

5.2.3 Essex County Council Youth Service

Essex County Council Youth Service - Lucy Wilson

General Comments

- Key requirements for young people is somewhere to go where they are comfortable, warm and ideally have access to facilities such as drinks and snacks: social spaces where young people feel comfortable

Examples of good practice

- Skate Park in Witham is a popular place to meet with young people across the area.
- Admirals' Park in Chelmsford (outside the Braintree District Council boundary) is a popular spot combining a good large park with skate provision, space to kickabout and good transport access. Young people often visit it at the weekend.
- Witham also has a good range of children's play equipment.
- The Flitch Way offers a good, well managed and maintained cycle route popular with families.
- The Great Notley Garden Village baseball courts provide a very well used provision for young people as a central meeting point

Discovery Centre

- The Discovery Centre is managed by Essex County Council and part of the wider Great Notley Country Park, Great Notley Village
- The Discovery Centre offers an excellent range of activities and large amount of outdoor open space for children and young people of all ages to enjoy with a variety of paid for and free activities
- It offers different activities and levels of involvement making it an excellent 'destination site'. People will travel to visit the site
- Access is possible via public transport - and parking charges are cited as a barrier to access at £3. Charging for some of the activities provided is also considered to be expensive by users

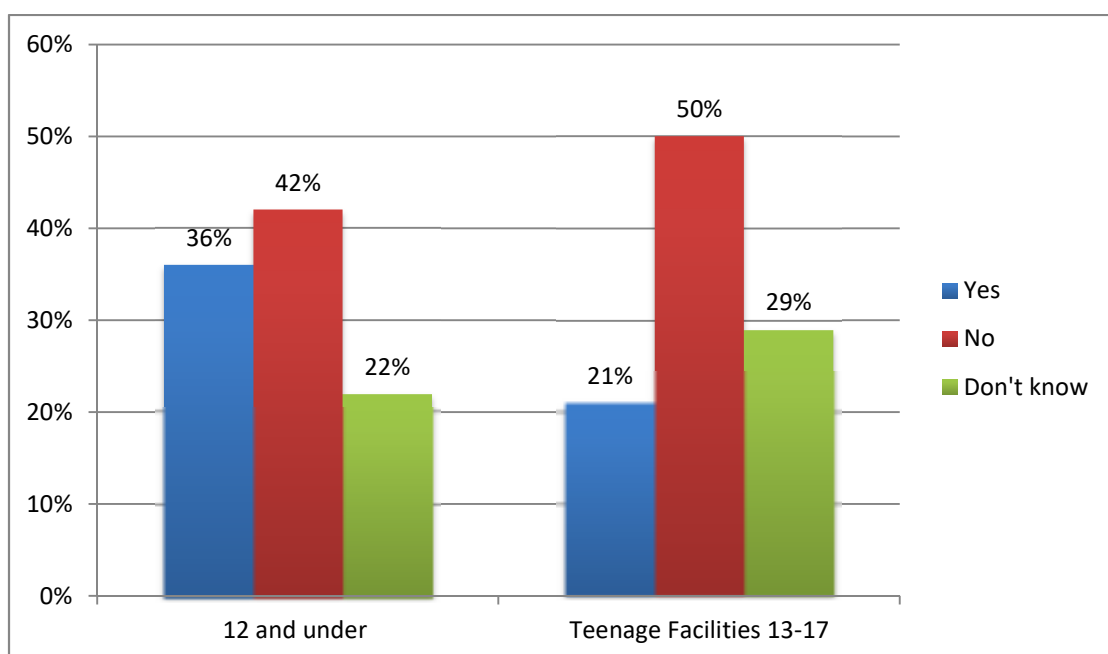
5.3 Views from Local Play and Youth Organisations

Play and Youth Organisations Survey

Local play and youth organisations were surveyed via an online questionnaire. Responses were received from 32 groups. 75% reported that they make direct use of outdoor play equipment or areas of open space. Some of the main findings are noted below.

Quantity

Groups were asked whether they thought there were enough play facilities for children aged 12 and under, and youth facilities for teenagers. Top-level responses are summarised in the charts below:



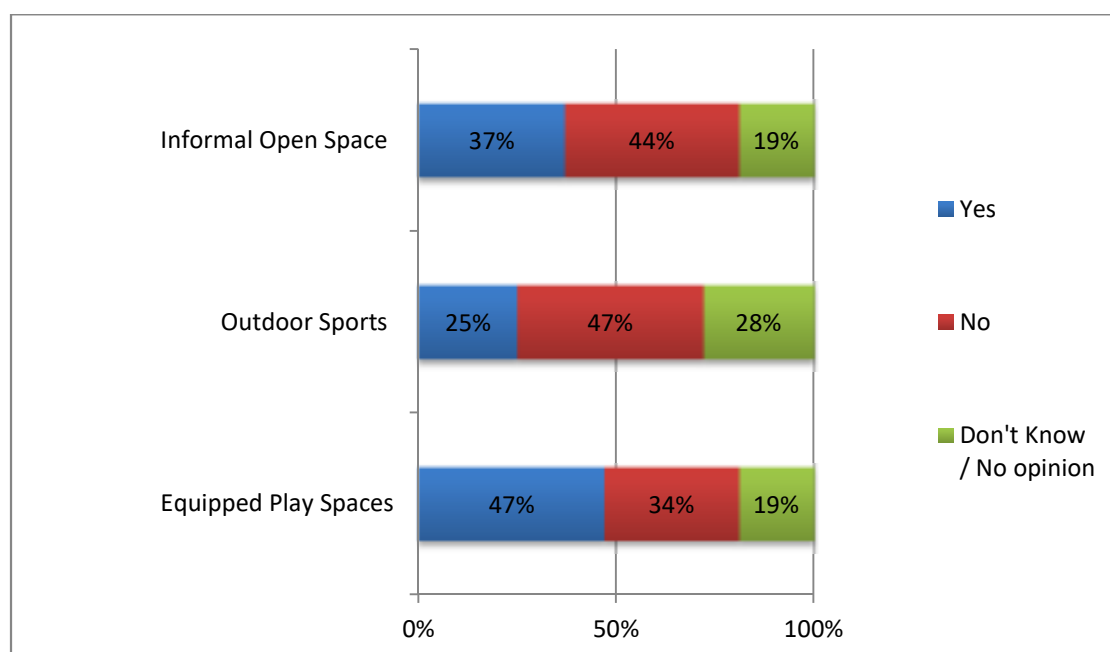
It is clear that children and youth play provision is generally considered underprovided for - with 42% of respondents answering that there were not enough facilities for under 12s and 50% answering similarly regarding teenage facilities.

In more detail, respondents were asked for their views on provision for the different age ranges:

Types of provision for children (12 and under)

For children aged 12 and under the survey asked for views on whether there are enough of the following types of open space and outdoor sports facilities for children.

For children aged 12 or under - do you think there are enough of the following types of open spaces and outdoor sports facilities for children?



Responses show that

- 47% of respondents felt that there was adequate provision of 'formal' equipped playgrounds for children of 12 years and under
- The provision of open space areas for informal and natural play are considered less well provided for with 44% answering that there were not enough
- Outdoor sport provision is considered the least well catered for with 47% of respondents considering there to be not enough provision for this age range and only 25% answering yes, there was adequate provision. 28% of respondents did not know

Detailed below are other comments on the provision for under 12s when asked the following question:

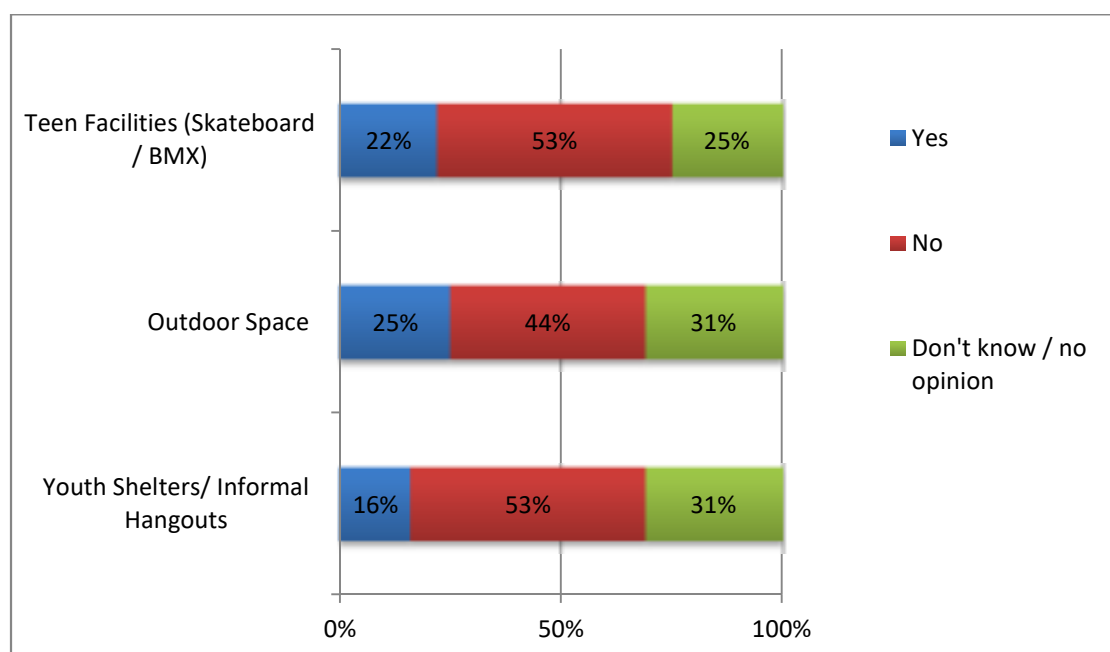
'If you don't think there are enough of any of the above facilities/open space areas, why not / what would you like to see more of?

Organisation	Comments
Witham Boys Brigade (2nd. Witham Boys' Brigade)	Sports facilities are expensive, so more outdoor would help. I'm talking about Witham area, which is somewhat well equipped, but not for all the young people / children in the town. There are none I can see serving the newest housing areas
Great Notley Football Club	Additional AWP surfaces for football, we have 240 children within the club
Ridgewell Baby and Toddler Group	Better range and more equipment for play. We need a MUGA or a Fisa for our families to engage the community and to give our youngsters chance to go to a sports facility and take up sporting and healthy activities from a young age. There is no public transport and nothing within walking distance
4Children (Family Centre)	I am unaware of any multi use games areas for under 12
Acorn Children's Centre	The quality and variety of spaces varies across the towns and villages we cover. There does seem to be a lack of informal and natural areas for play such as wooded areas that can be accessed easily

The Salvation Army	Children's play areas seemed to be widely spread and therefore for some streets and roads it is a long walk to there nearest play space. This is the case especially as you go out to the villages around Braintree
Braintree BMX Cycle Race Club	Larger, more exciting areas. Tree walks, indoor play etc
5th Braintree Guides/Gails Childcare	There are enough but always room for more
Goldingham Drive Community Pre-school	The play area near the hall is often messy with broken equipment so we are unable to use it, we would like to be able to access a fenced off area for informal and natural play
St Peters Nursery	We spend a lot of time exploring the fields and areas around the school, but more investment in encouraging forest school type play areas would be great
Legend Explorer Scout Unit	Coggeshall could be with a better public football area such as a enclosed 5-a-side pitch
Little chestnuts pre-school	Well equipped parks
Little explorers	There is very little in Kelvedon for the under 5's. The play equipment is aimed at older children and what is available to the under 5's is very old and provides little to their development. There is nowhere is Kelvedon for natural play
Witham BB	Safe cycling areas
Grace Carey (Childminder)	Well there's lost of fields and footpaths, but no official public area for 'forest school' kind of play
Kiddy Winks	The local open space is just a field with a small park area. There is no open ended equipment, a story space or willow tunnels would be amazing
J C Childminding	There is a need for all of the above
Highwood House Nursery Ltd	Equipped play spaces
Izzy Wizzy childcare	I would like to see more play areas suited for under 4's

Provision of facilities for teenagers:

Similarly for teenagers, groups were asked whether there were enough of various types of open spaces and sports facilities for young people as noted in the table below:



- From the results above it is very clear that the quantity of youth and teenage provision for 13-19 year olds is not considered satisfactory
- This is slightly more notable regarding youth shelters / informal hangouts and teen facilities where 53% of respondents in both categories felt there weren't enough facilities in parks
- 44% of respondents reported that there wasn't enough outdoor space and 31% didn't know, or have an opinion
- Responses are relatively consistent across all types of facility, although dissatisfaction with the provision of youth shelters and informal hangouts are the most notable

Respondents when asked the question gave additional feedback:

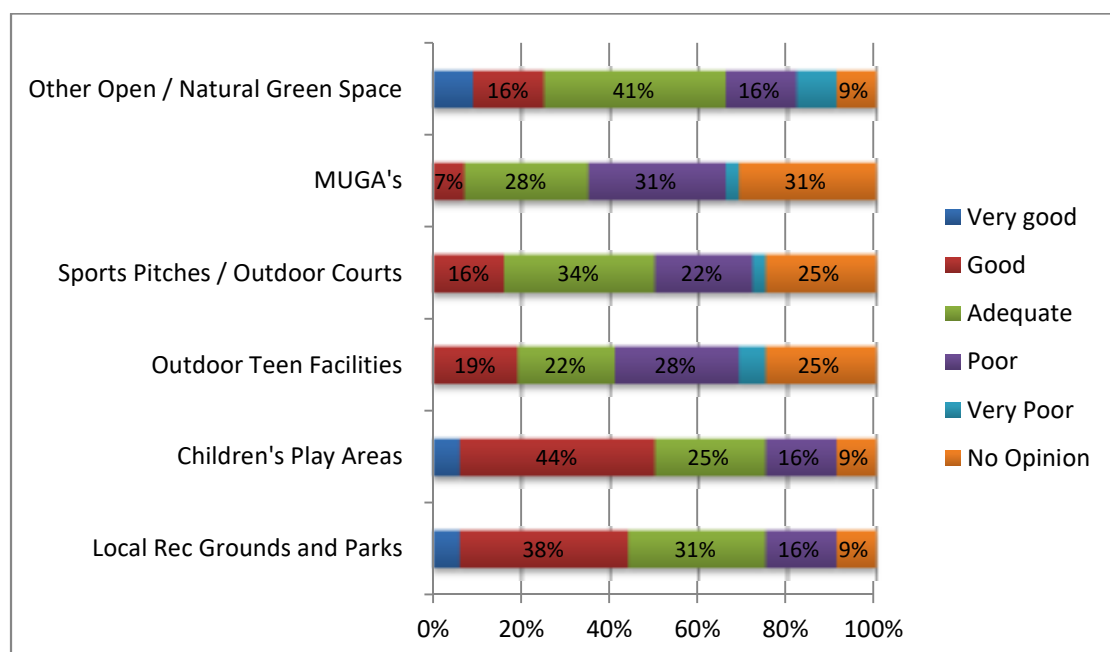
'If you don't think there are enough of any of the above facilities/open space areas, why not / what would you like to see more of?'

Organisation	Comment
Young Essex Assembly	Clubs, shelters and small park play spaces
Witham Boys Brigade (2nd. Witham Boys' Brigade)	Witham has good facilities but not enough
Ridgewell Baby and Toddler Group	There are no sporting facilities within reach without a car - no public transport and nothing within walking distance. We need a Family Inclusive Sports Area (FISA) or a MUGA to give them chance to take up and practise a sport rather than watching TV or playing consoles
4Children (Children's Centre)	Facilities in the rural areas around the Braintree are limited
Acorn Children's Centre	I would like to see more of all of these facilities across the area
Braintree BMX Cycle Race Club	More places to gather and play sport. Basketball, football, bike tracks etc
5th Braintree Guides/ Gails Childcare	My teenagers would benefit form dedicated spaces to hang out now that they are too old for the play parks

Goldingham Community school	Drive Pre-school	We need all kinds of spaces and facilities. If there were more areas for the older children perhaps they would not mess up the areas for the younger children in our area
St Peters Nursery		More tennis courts would be great
Legend Explorer Scout Unit		There are spaces for Teenagers to hand out. But I do not think they are suited for them or people living close by
Little chestnuts pre-school		Sports facilities basket ball nets goals
The Park preschool		Youth club adult run activities
Little explorers		It all comes down to money
Witham BB		Youth shelters would need constant managing. Sports facilities are always well used
Childminder - Melissa Wilson		Something more in Gt Notley so the youths don't congregate at Tesco!
Absolute Angels Ltd		Skate/BMX park nearby might be good
Grace Carey		Skateboard/scooter areas would be very popular
J C Childminding		All of various kinds of facilities/spaces for children and young people are needed
Highwood Nursery Ltd	House	Need all the different kinds of spaces and facilities
Izzy Wizzy childcare		There a not really any teenage spaces the Maltings Lane end of Witham

Quality

We asked for views on the overall quality of open space and outdoor facilities of general interest to children and young people and responses are illustrated on the chart below:



- Braintree's local parks and recreation grounds, and children's play areas scored the highest satisfaction levels with local groups, with just short of 50% satisfied with the overall quality (rating quality as either good, or very good)

- ‘Other open spaces and natural green spaces were considered to be ‘adequate’ by 41% of respondents - and 16% rating them good
- There were much lower levels of satisfaction with outdoor youth facilities and skate parks with 28% of respondents rating them poor and a further 6% - very poor. 22% of respondents rated them as good and 25% of respondents did not know - or have a specific opinion on teen facilities’
- In a similar vein, MUGA provision was rated adequate by 28% and poor by a further 31% identifying clear levels of dissatisfaction
- The view on sports pitches and outdoor courts was more mixed, though a greater proportion rated them good or adequate (16% and 34% accordingly) 31% of respondents did not have a pinion on provision

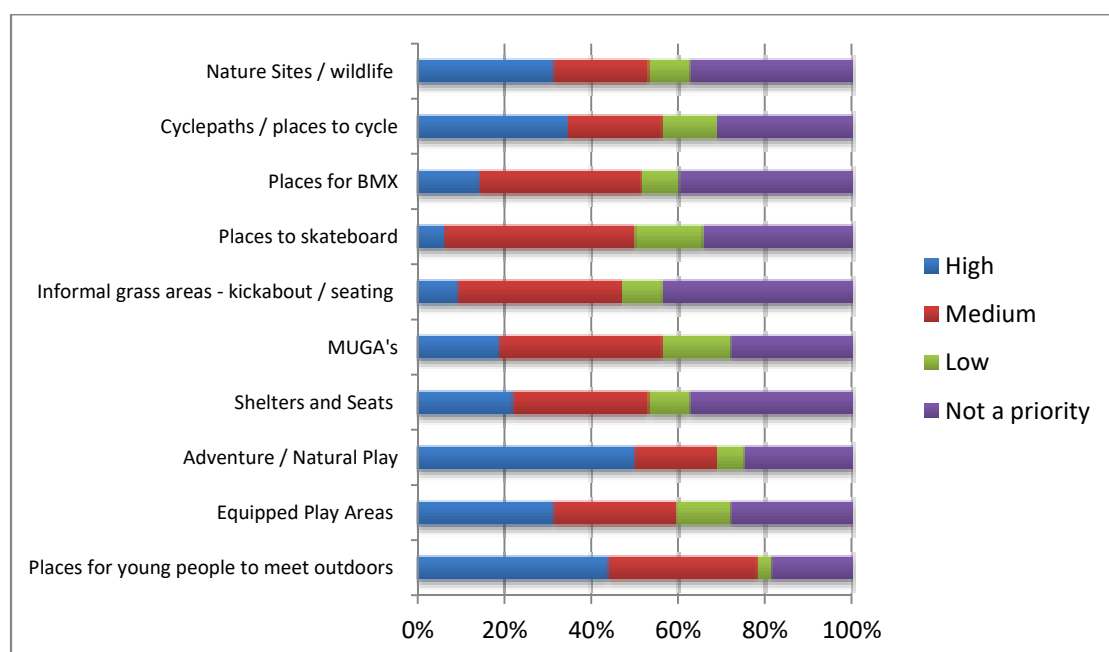
An option to add specific observations and comments was given and these are noted below:

Group	Comment
Ridgewell Baby and Toddler Group	Ridgewell needs an improved park and a FISA ¹⁶ /MUGA to help social health and emotional well-being and build a stronger community. We have a lot of residents who would like to do sport but who are prevented as we have no facilities and no public transport to get to facilities. Our nearest sporting facilities are a 15 minute drive (Haverhill) or Braintree (25mins)
4Children (Children’s Centre)	The facilities are generally good however these can be central
Izzy Wizzy childcare	The play area off Gershwin Boulevard is really unsuitable for under 3’s, would love an additional climbing slide for them
Witham BB	Litter is a huge issue
Goldingham Drive Community Pre-school	A multi-use games area/natural green space that was fenced off would be fantastic for the children to play in, explore/grow things and burn off some energy in a safe environment

Priorities for improvement

Respondent’s views on priorities for new or improved provision of play and youth facilities are shown on the chart below:

¹⁶ Family Inclusive Sports Area



- The most commonly highlighted high priority for improved provision is 'adventure / natural play' with 50% of respondents making it their top priority
- Following this - the emphasis on natural play continues with 31% of respondents identifying natural sites and wildlife as top priority and a further 22% medium
- Teen facilities including provision for BMX, places to skate and MUGA's do not feature as a high priority with the respondent, however places for young people to meet out of doors are identified as a priority with 78% identifying it as a high or medium priority

A further comment focused on a future project aspiration:

"I am on a committee called Ridgewell Hall and Playing Field Improvement project, which has just completed a community consultation, to establish sporting and play facility requirements. We have a plan and quotes and now need to obtain planning permission for a MUGA / FISA and funds for a MUGA/FISA and play equipment to cover a range of skills for all ages. We are just applying for grants to try to secure this ambitious project for our village and surrounding villages to benefit from".

5.4 Access to Play and Youth Provision for Disabled Children

Information below relates to the issue of improvements for disabled young people to facilities, part of a valuable research study undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Disabled teenagers' experiences of access to inclusive leisure (Joseph Rowntree Foundation - Pippa Murray -2008)

Leisure is a key area in paving the way towards full community inclusion and participation. It takes on an additional significance for disabled young people when barriers to full participation in education and employment result in them having more time for leisure pursuits whilst simultaneously experiencing greater difficulty in accessing leisure services, activities, and pastimes. This research project consulted with over 100 disabled teenagers to uncover their experience of 'inclusive leisure'. The teenagers said that:

- Disabled young people felt that their experiences at school/college strongly affected their access to friends and leisure outside school
- Many young disabled people described their lives being tainted with the experiences of isolation, loneliness and exclusion
- Whereas professionals viewed inclusive leisure as a means of learning life skills, increasing independence and/or self-esteem, young people focused on friendships and fun
- Whilst wanting to participate in ordinary, mainstream leisure activities, disabled young people welcomed the opportunity to meet with each other in order to share their mutual experience
- Lack of appropriate support (such as transport, personal assistance, and support to facilitate and/or interpret communication) was a major barrier to the participation of disabled young people in ordinary leisure activities. This was particularly apparent for disabled young people with complex impairments and high support needs
- Beyond the specific experience of exclusion due to impairment, the interests and concerns of disabled young people are no different from those of non-disabled teenagers

Stakeholder Views

FACE (Families Acting for Change Essex) undertook an audit in 2010 of play provision for disabled children. Whilst the findings are from respondents across the county, it is clear that opinion and requirements for provision can be applied across the area. Examples of best practice are also given.

FACE is an organisation keen to engage with and advise local authorities and parish councils in ensuring their play provision helps meet the needs and requirements of disabled children.

Findings are based on 70 responses to a questionnaire circulated amongst families of children with additional needs.

Key Findings

Access:

- Improvements to infrastructure such as gates, pathways and space around equipment is important to enable wheelchair / buggy access
- Accessible parking close to the site is important
- Improved information as to equipment available at each play space (web based)

Quality:

- Safety surfacing and fencing is important to prevent slips - and vulnerable children getting out of the park area
- Handrails, and equipment at the right height for use by children with additional needs

Suggestions for improvement / new facilities:

- Sensory feedback equipment - noises, touches, scents, reflections
- Accessible swings- open net swings, high back swings, and wheelchair accessible swings
- Accessible slides- wider possibly with ramped access or wider steps
- Tunnels that could accommodate a wheelchair possibly with mirrors inside

An example of good provision in Braintree is Great Notley Park.

5.5 Children and Young People Key Findings

Quantity

- Youth play provision is generally considered underprovided for across the District with 66% of the 2015 People's Panel survey answering that there were not enough facilities for older children and teenagers.
- Play and youth organisations also highlight a shortage of teenage provision. A shortage of youth shelters/informal hangouts and teen facilities are particularly notable with 53% of respondents stating there were not enough of such facilities.
- 53% of People's Panel respondents thought there were enough play areas for younger children (12 and under).
- 47% of play/youth organisations respondents were happy with the quantity of formal equipped playgrounds for younger children (under 13's). They believe that informal and natural open spaces suitable for play are not so well provided for with 44% stating there is not enough.
- The play/youth organisations suggest that outdoor informal sport provision is the least well catered for with 47% of respondents considering there to be not enough provision for the under 12s.
- Survey comments note a requirement for informal sports facilities suitable for younger children (e.g. FISAs - Family Inclusive Sports Areas) and also increased provision for toddlers - (under 5's).

Quality

- In general residents are happy with the quality of play areas across the District (48% of the People's Panel respondents rated them as being very good or good - only 8% rated them as poor or very poor). The rating for parks is also high (56% rating them as very good or good).
- Children's play areas and local parks also scored the highest satisfaction levels with local groups - almost 50% rated them as either good, or very good).
- 'Other open spaces' and 'natural green spaces' were considered to be 'adequate' by 41% of group respondents - and 16% rated them as good.
- In contrast only 17% of People's Panel respondents rated the quality of youth facilities as being good or very compared - 48% rated them as poor or very poor.
- There were also much lower levels of satisfaction overall with outdoor youth facilities from the play and youth organisations with 28% of respondents rating them poor and a further 6% - very poor.
- Stakeholders generally, however, considered the provision of skate park facilities in particular as being of a reasonable quality.
- Natural and adventure play spaces are considered the top priority for investment and improvement by a majority of play/youth organisation respondents, followed by recognised spaces for young people to meet outdoors.

Access

- Organisational respondents noted the difficulty with access to local provision in some more rural areas - citing poor public transport, long walks or general inaccessibility as barriers to access.
- Disability groups have identified a range of access needs, which should be taken into consideration as part of any new playground design and installation; along with guidance recommended by Play England.
- The Discovery Centre acts as a 'destination site' with users making journeys to reach the

site from across the district.

- The costs of parking may prove an access barrier to users of the Discovery Centre / Great Notley Country Park with a £3 charge levied.

Other Issues / General Observations

- The emphasis made by Essex County Council youth workers on teens needing ‘social spaces’ is fully supported by the survey findings with the highest priority for improvements being places to meet outdoors rather than any more formal play provision.
- The emphasis on dedicated teenage spaces comes from all respondents to the community groups survey - not just those working with teenagers.
- The Play England campaign for Natural Play, and the National Trust emphasis on outdoor activity is supported through the findings of this study with respondents keen to see more provision of this type.
- Play England supply good practice guidance on play space design (Design for Play), Managing Risk in Play Provision and recommend Inclusion by Design by the Kids organisation for specific guidance on play space design principles for disabled children.

6. NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES AND TOWN/PARISH COUNCILS

6.1 Introduction

This section provides information and feedback from neighbouring local authorities and local parish and town councils. It is important to consult with neighbouring local authorities under the "duty to co-operate" requirement. This places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to "engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters".

The need to consult and engage with local parish and town councils arises from the fact that many parish and town councils are responsible for the management of open spaces, play areas and recreation grounds; and the local councils also tend to have a good understanding of local needs and priorities in relation to local sport, play and recreation facilities.

The information and findings of this section will be taken forward, as appropriate, in the three main reports - the *Open Space Assessment*, the *Playing Pitch Strategy and Outdoor Sports Assessment* and the *Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities Assessment*.

6.2 Neighbouring authorities - Cross boundary issues

Overview - Braintree District Council

Braintree shares boundaries with 7 other planning authorities: Chelmsford City Council; Babergh District Council; St Edmundsbury Borough Council; Uttlesford District Council; Colchester Borough Council; Maldon District Council; and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

We therefore contacted forward planning officers in these authorities to check if they had identified any cross border issues that they thought should be taken into account.

Comments and observations from officers of the neighbouring authorities are provided below¹⁷:

Babergh District Council

OS Aspect	Notes/update on relevant studies	Comments and observations - cross border issues ¹⁸
Green Infrastructure	Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy- April 2008 Green Infrastructure Strategy (West Babergh) Aug 2012 Green Infrastructure Framework for Babergh District Aug 2012	Green Infrastructure Framework for Babergh 2012 identifies deficiencies around Sudbury-see section 5.3 of this study. http://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Uploads-BDC/Economy/Strategic-Planning-Policy/LDF/Evidence_Studies/GIFramework-Aug2012.pdf Potential opportunities for future provision in Sudbury identified in Fig 14b.
Open Space/PPG17 study	Babergh Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy - Sept 2010	
Sport, Recreation & Playing Pitch Strategy	Joint Mid Suffolk and Babergh Sports Facility and Playing Pitch Strategy currently work in progress - estimated completion November 2015	None known as yet but these will be identified through Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy which is currently work in progress.

¹⁷ The officer responses were collected via an emailed pro-forma.

¹⁸ These issues will be taken forward and considered in the 3 main reports (as appropriate).

OS Aspect	Notes/update on relevant studies	Comments and observations - cross border issues
Green Infrastructure	Not undertaken. Our current open space assessment will start to pick up on this.	Ethos are working on this on Chelmsford's behalf. Once we have a draft we will be in a position to share anything with Braintree DC.
Open Space/PPG17 study	Open Space/PPG17 study (2005). Existing evidence base for current Local Plan, new study underway for new Plan.	Ethos are working on this on Chelmsford's behalf. Once we have a draft we will be in a position to share anything with Braintree DC.
Sport/ Recreation Strategy	<i>Be Moved: Sports & Arts Strategy for Chelmsford 2012-2016</i> covers Sport & Recreation along with other Leisure and Arts activities and facilities.	Ethos are working on this on Chelmsford's behalf. Once we have a draft we will be in a position to share anything with Braintree DC.
Playing Pitch Study	Playing Pitch Study (2005). Existing evidence base for current Local Plan, new study underway for new Plan.	Ethos are working on this on Chelmsford's behalf. Once we have a draft we will be in a position to share anything with Braintree DC.
Parks & Green Spaces Strategy	Parks & Green Spaces Strategy 2004 - 2014. To be updated following completion of Ethos Open Spaces Assessment.	Ethos are working on this on Chelmsford's behalf. Once we have a draft we will be in a position to share anything with Braintree DC.
Other relevant strategy documents	Allotment Strategy (2012) Equipped Play Area Development Strategy (2012) Tree Management Policy (2011 - updated 2013) Chelmsford Biodiversity Action Plan (2013 -2018) Policy for events in Parks & Green Spaces (2011) Nature Conservation Reference Guide - A Review of Wildlife Sites (2005). EECOS appointed by Planning Service to update	Possibly some wildlife sites that cross boundaries (to be confirmed).
Other Comments	<p>Many of our residents use the Notley County Park which is a great resource. This also provides a cycle link onto Flitch Way which is used by many residents and is a strategic cycle route in the area. Many of our residents also use the Freeport complex for leisure (swimming/bowling etc).</p> <p>LDF policy on riverside walks seeks to extend network, including links to PROW.</p> <p>We are seeing increasing demands for new recreational facilities in terms of so called extreme sports, notably skate parks (none on CCC land in north of area); BMX tracks (only parks one in Baddow, many riders use the Braintree competition track) and a call for Parkour and basketball courts - recent contact suggests basketball is one of fastest growing UK sports and second biggest globally, but is poorly provided for).</p> <p>Chelmsford City Racecourse is on the border of the districts and has just gained a licence to host racing events.</p> <p>A degree of crossover and catchment sharing for specialist or local facilities must be recognised, especially for those living on/around authority borders. Provision of some sport /recreation needs for residents in the South West of Braintree is probably satisfied by provision in Chelmsford and vice versa.</p>	

OS Aspect	Notes/ update on relevant studies	Comments and observations - cross border issues
Green Infrastructure	<p>Haven Gateway GI Strategy 2008. It did not cover Braintree.</p> <p>Colchester GI Strategy Oct (2011)</p>	<p>The Colchester GI strategy did not cover Braintree district but it did identify some projects in Zones 1 (Dedham Vale and Stour Valley), Zone 2 (Northern Farmland Zone), Zone 3. (Colne Valley) and Zone 6 (Southern Farmland) where there is potential to link projects cross border with any GI schemes identified in the new Braintree studies http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/13329/New-Evidence-Base-Documents</p> <p>More broadly speaking, This depends on the location of new growth in Braintree. If growth is proposed around Marks Tey on the Colchester/ Braintree border then GI provision would need to be considered.</p>
Open Space/PPG17 study	<p>(2007) Covers period to 2021. The PPG 17 study focused solely on Colchester. This will have to be updated before 2021 http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/13330/Evidence-Base-Documents - please see document CBC/EB/040</p>	<p>This depends on the location of new growth in Braintree. If growth is proposed around Marks Tey on the Colchester/ Braintree then open space provision would need to be considered.</p>
Parks/Green Space Strategy	<p>(2008) This has not been updated or modified since 2008 and is Colchester focused.</p>	<p>This depends on the location of new growth in Braintree. If growth is proposed around Marks Tey on the Colchester/ Braintree border then park provision would need to be considered.</p>
Sport/ Recreation strategy	<p>May 2015 - Covers 10 year period</p>	<p>This new study assessed needs for indoor and outdoor sport and leisure facilities in Colchester. It will be complete by the end of May but did not consider cross boarder issues. It is not available publically yet.</p>
Playing Pitch Study	<p>March 2008 - updated as part of the new Sport/Recreation strategy 2015 and covers a 10 year period. This new study assessed needs for outdoor pitch provision Colchester. It will be complete by the end of May but did not consider cross broader issues. It is not available publically yet.</p>	<p>This depends on the location of new growth in Braintree. If growth is proposed around Marks Tey on the Colchester/ Braintree border then playing pitch provision would need to be considered.</p> <p>This document includes a standard for playing pitch provision which will be updated in line with emerging Sport England guidance.</p>
Play /Youth Strategy	<p>2007 - Minor modifications in 2012. This is not a living document and it has not been thoroughly reviewed since its adoption in 2007. Available on request if needed.</p>	<p>Not a cross border issue but play area provision would need to be factored into new development.</p>

Maldon District Council

OS Aspect	Notes/update on relevant studies	Comments and observations - cross border issues
Green Infrastructure	09/2011 - Study only, not a strategy. Vision and concept of GI links not included. Wider linkages of leisure facilities and the district's unique leisure offers (e.g. sailing) to be included. Pre-dates NPPF and potentially needs updating to meet policy. GI study is underpinned by the Landscape Character Assessment - however the LCA is out-of-date.	We are currently formulating potential GI strategies and would be interested in discussing further.
Open Space/PPG17 study	2010 - Included in GI study.	
Sport/recreation strategy and playing pitch study	2010 - Sport England have changed some of their preferred modelling since publication.	
Play /Youth Strategy	2007-10 - expired and therefore needs updating but still used and part of evidence base.	

South Cambridgeshire District Council

OS Aspect	Notes/update on relevant studies	Comments and observations - cross border issues
Green Infrastructure	2011 Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy Produced by Cambridgeshire Horizons for the county.	The Strategic Area 6 - Cambridge and the surrounding area shows potential links to the surrounding areas to the south east of the district. No specific projects to the SE - just for your authority to be aware of the GI Strategy.
Open Space/PPG17 study	2013 - Recreation Study Audit and Assessment of Need for Outdoor Playspace and Informal Open Space in South Cambridgeshire Update 2013 Produced by South Cambs DC	No specific cross border issues identified.
Parks/Green space/ Countryside	See above recreation study / Green Infrastructure Strategy	No specific cross border issues identified.
Sport/Recreation strategy	See above recreation study	Not aware of any issues.
Playing Pitch Study	Consultants (4global) are currently preparing such a strategy for South Cambs DC , Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council	Issues may arise from this study.
Any other relevant studies/strategies?	2013 - Major Facilities Sub Regional Facilities in the Cambridge Area Produced by South Cambs DC jointly with Cambridge City	Not aware of any issues.

	2008 - Cambridge Community Stadium: Feasibility Study Produced by Cambridgeshire Horizon - 2013 study updates this.	
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St Edmundsbury Borough Council (awaiting response).

OS Aspect	Notes/update on relevant studies	Comments and observations - cross border issues

Uttlesford District Council

OS Aspect	Notes/update on relevant studies	Comments and observations - cross border issues
Open Space/PPG17 study	2014 - Open Space, Sport Facility and Playing Pitch Strategy	The strategy should be used to help in planning for provision cross boundary.
Sport/Recreation strategy	2015 - Out on consultation at the moment.	The strategy should be used to help in planning for provision cross boundary.

6.3 Town and Parish Councils

6.3.1 General Overview

Within Braintree District there are 55 parish/town councils. Surveys were sent to all parish councils together with two reminders to chase responses as needed¹⁹. In total 33 parish councils responded. If we did not receive a parish council response we reviewed the latest parish plan (where available) in relation to identified sport/recreation issues and plans/aspirations.

The survey covered issues relating to the quantity, quality and accessibility of various types of open space, sport and recreation facilities. There was also an opportunity for the local councils to highlight any priorities they might have for new or improved provision.

We received responses from the following town/parish councils:

- Alhamstone and Lamarsh
- Ashen
- Black Notley
- Borley
- Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary
- Castle Hedingham
- Coggeshall
- Cressing
- Earls Colne Parish Council
- Feering
- Gosfield
- Great Bardfield
- Great Maplestead
- Great Notley
- Great Saling
- Great Yeldham
- Halstead TC
- Hatfield Peverel
- Helions Bumpstead
- Kelvedon
- Little Yelden
- Panfield
- Rayne
- Ridgewell
- Rivenhall Parish Council
- Shalford
- Sible Hedingham
- Silver End
- Stambourne
- Steeple Bumpstead
- Stisted
- Toppesfield
- Witham TC

Some broad findings from the survey were that:

- 27 of the 33 town/parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and facilities.
- 28 of the 33 local councils who responded noted that there was a need for additional or improved open space, sport, play and recreation facilities within their town or parish.
- 11 of the parishes did not think there was scope for greater community use of outdoor sport and recreation spaces at local schools; and 14 were not sure. However, eight of the parishes highlighted potential for community use (see below).
- The sector of the community most commonly identified as being poorly served in relation to their needs were young people/teenagers.

The suggested potential for greater community use of school facilities is noted below:

Cressing	It is the aspiration of Cressing Parish Council to have a mixed use games area for the Parish - this could be community use at the school site.
Earls Colne	The local primary school has a school field and outdoor swimming pool both of which could be utilised by the community in school

¹⁹ To ensure responses from Witham and Halstead Town Councils and the 6 larger parish councils - Coggeshall, Earls Colne, Hatfield Peverel, Kelvedon, Sible Hedingham and Silver End - telephone reminders were also made.

	holidays/evenings/weekends but due to maintenance issues and health and safety this is not currently the case
Gosfield	We have two private schools in Gosfield, one with extensive grounds and one County Primary. It could be possible for use by the community where additional outdoor sports facilities are required.
Great Maplestead	Possible use of school playing field
Hatfield Peverel	The school swimming pool could be utilised by the village during the summer holidays. Solar panels could be installed as an option to heat the pool benefitting the children and community.
Kelvedon	The village school - St Mary's is an academy and the Head does not allow external groups use its facilities. The school has the only pool in the village and access to this is difficult. The younger children used to play on the school pitches and there used to be carpet bowls in the school hall but all of these activities stopped when the new head took over.
Rayne	The school at Rayne already utilises the Nature Reserve, which includes three ponds and a dipping platform, and this could be extended to other schools.
Rivenhall	Children's safe play area in Rivenhall End, which is part of Rivenhall Parish.
Silver End	The youth football teams already have use of the school field however this is currently out of use due to building works. It would be ideal to expand on this.
Steeple Bumpstead	Community use of school football pitch already happening. The school also have a swimming pool which is not available for community use.
Toppesfield	Yes, the Community would welcome the use of the playing fields within the school for events and shows.

Quality factors - open space provision

We asked the parish councils to highlight what they thought, in general, were high priorities as regards qualitative factors of recreational open spaces.

The quality factors most commonly deemed to be of a high priority as regards recreational public open spaces are that:

- They should be easy to get to (and get around) for all members of the community.
- They should be safe and secure for those using them.
- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained. They should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.
- They should provide a contribution to biodiversity and wildlife.

It is also thought important by many parish councils that there should be good footpath and cycleway links to and between public open spaces; and that there should be adequate opportunities for dog walking (and freedom from dog fouling).

Other aspects of quality specifically highlighted were:

- Providing a variety of equipment to suit all ages.
- Providing facilities for a youth shelter.
- The balance of the use of the open space against the disturbance it may cause to people living nearby.
- Providing trees and flower beds to create a pleasing environment in which to visit and relax.
- Infrastructure support on public transport, the police and other services. In rural villages support is not always what it should be.

The table below provides a summary of responses from the parish councils that responded:

Parish Councils	Winter pitches - football/rugby	Cricket pitches	Tennis courts/ Multi Use Games Areas	Bowling greens	Children's play areas	Teenage facilities (e.g. skateparks)	Allotments	Parks, rec. grounds, village greens etc.	Wildlife areas, nature reserves	Footpath/bridleway/ cycleways/riverwalks
Alphamstone and Lamarsh					1			1		
Ashen	1				1	1		1	1	1
Black Notley						1	1			
Borley										
Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary				1					1	
Castle Hedingham	1		1		1	1	1	1		
Coggeshall										
Cressing			1							
Earls Colne				1		1		1		1
Feering					1	1				1
Gosfield		1	1						1	1
Great Bardfield			1		1	1			1	1
Great Maplestead										
Great Notley						1	1			
Great Saling							1			
Great Yeldham	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Halstead TC			1			1				
Hatfield Peverel	1		1		1	1		1	1	1
Helions Bumpstead					1					1
Kelvedon			1	1						
Little Yelden					1	1				
Panfield	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1
Rayne										
Ridgewell			1		1					
Rivenhall					1		1			
Shalford						1				
Sible Hedingham						1				
Silver End										
Stamborne										
Steeple Bumpstead		1	1		1	1				1
Stisted					1	1				

Toppesfield		1	1	1	1					
Witham TC							1			
TOTALS:	5	5	12	6	15	16	8	7	6	9

The above table covers issues of quantity, quality and access for a range of facilities. For parish/town councils in Braintree District the aspects of most common concern are:

- Not enough areas for teenagers e.g. skateparks, shelters etc. and the quality of existing play areas.
- The need for additional Multi-use games areas/tennis courts in some parishes (primarily MUGAs).
- Other commonly identified areas of concern relate to a lack of allotment plots; the need for improvements to village greens and recreation grounds; and improvements to footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths.

6.3.2 Parish specific issues (survey)

Unmet needs and aspirations for improvement

As part of the survey we also asked the open questions "are you aware of any particular groups within your community whose needs are not currently met" and "if you have, or are aware of, any specific projects, plans and aspirations for improving open space and outdoor recreation facilities in the Parish please tell us". Individual town/parish responses are shown in the table below.

Parish Council

Parish Council	Groups in parish whose needs not being met	Current plans and known aspirations
Alphamstone and Lamarsh	There is a 'want' for an open space for a play area - it has not been decided whether this would just be a playing field area or a playground with equipment but would incorporate a village green type area.	The parish council are being given access to a piece of land to rent (in some way - yet to be decided), as a village green/play area of some kind, in the next year. There isn't a Village Design Statement or Parish Plan at the moment. Lamarsh Village Hall are wanting to purchase land behind the hall for additional car parking.
Ashen	There is an identified requirement for more recreational facilities for older children and young adults as well as more exercise equipment for adults	The parish plan is presently under consideration and will be reported following consultation.
Black Notley	We recently received a request for a skate ramp.	Considering the need for the skate park.
Borley	No	The village wants to continue to maintain the Village Green as an area that encourages wildflowers and wildlife so people can enjoy it as an area of natural beauty.
Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary	Ladies netball and outdoor bowls players.	Bures is well catered for re good footpaths, riverwalks although more wildlife areas could be provided around the river areas. On the Suffolk side of the village the open space to the rear of Beaumont Close is to be taken over as a parish community project to improve the area - planting of bulbs, creating wildlife area, bat and bird boxes
Castle Hedingham	Families with small children. Young people - informal green area needed for ball games etc. Play equipment on the current	Castle Hedingham Parish Council does not own any land, but leases the current Recreation Field at New Park from Hedingham Castle. This lease has expired and cannot be renewed. The Parish Council still continues

	recreation field is urgently in need of updating. As it becomes unsafe, it is removed and not replaced. Until the lease situation on the land is resolved, the Parish Council is unable to update the equipment.	to make the lease payments. The priority for the Parish Council is to secure the tenure on this land, or to identify another open space in the parish suitable for a Recreation Field. The Parish Council has money set aside for new play equipment if the situation can be resolved.
Coggeshall	No specific sectors highlighted.	No specific plans highlighted.
Cressing	No specific sectors highlighted.	The community hall association are making plans in consultation with the Parish Council to redevelop the community hall.
Earls Colne	No specific sectors highlighted.	The Parish Council would wish to provide more public open space for families/young people to be able to play ball games/picnic etc. Currently there is no public open space in the Village. Possible housing development off Station Road - public consultation exhibition to take place on 14th May in Village Hall. Parish Council would be wishing to gain public open space from this development should it come to fruition.
Feering	Children and young people.	See typology comments in table below.
Gosfield	Ladies netball team and junior football. (These needs could be met on the village playing field, but would need substantial investment to make it possible).	Cycle paths as part of improving leisure and tourist facilities has been discussed. Management of the Nature Reserve is under review, with particular emphasis on improving footpaths, especially in winter, and accessibility and condition of the ponds for fishing. Installation of a zip-wire on the playing field is under discussion, and the provision of a netball court too.
Great Bardfield	Young people have limited equipment Older people have none - funding applications have been unsuccessful to address this	Need for a sports pavilion/community building to ensure existing playing fields get adequate and appropriate use and encourage use by all ages all need was identified in the Parish Plan and subsequent Village Design Statement See typology comments also.
Great Maplestead	No specific sectors highlighted.	No specific plans highlighted.
Great Notley	A proposal has been made by some residents to upgrade the RAFT area to provide an improved wheeled sport area for teenagers and will be considered by the Parish council over coming months.	There is a wish to progress the issue of obtaining an allotment site. The issue of an improved Skate park will be considered soon
Great Saling	Please refer to the Parish Plan.	Please refer to the Parish Plan.
Great Yeldham	No specific groups identified - but there is a general need for improvements to leisure and open spaces.	Great Yeldham Parish Plan identifies the need to provide allotments and improve leisure facilities including new tennis courts, improve leisure facilities such as multi sports equipment, pool table, darts and table tennis. Install Zip Wire at the Recreation Ground.
Halstead TC	Not aware of any.	A Community Centre has been designed and plans will be submitted for planning approval in 2-3 weeks time.
Hatfield Peverel	New community park in Wickham Bishops Road for walking fishing wildlife and family leisure. A running track for joggers on the Strutt Memorial Recreational Ground would be a safer option than on the roads	Community park, Wickham Bishops Lane; skate park on recreational ground; youth club; network of quiet lanes around village for cyclists and pedestrians. With the closure of the Sportsman pub in Nounsley the green open space (and earlier climbing frames and apple trees) is no longer available as a play area for residents within the vicinity. There is a good local support network for the pub to be reopened as a community facility and local social hub
Helions Bumpstead	None identified.	No specific plans highlighted.
Kelvedon	Older persons sport activities and keep fit equipment to go in the park. Construction of a sports shed - to allow netball, basketball,	We are about to start work on our Neighbourhood Plan and as part of this we probably need a large and high sports shed to facilitate basketball, badminton etc. Plus being under cover for winter and evening use.

	carpet bowls and 5 a side football to be played indoors.	As part of the sports shed we would also like to move the Parish Council office into this new facility and have the Council Chamber there. We would also move the football pavillion into the same footprint to provide modern and clean changing rooms and showers. We currently have no public toilets and these could be included in the design.
Little Yeldham	Children and young people lack any facilities at North End.	No specific plans identified.
Panfield	Village Football team is not secure as land belongs to Greene King who are notorious for selling off assets for building. Also Football team use John Barr playing field for practice - this is on a muddy slope and the goalposts are old and insecure. There is not much for very small children.	Maintain Panfield's green, open countryside surrounding, separating it from Braintree (no development on Towerlands) and emphasizing its separate identity - Village Design Statement. Enhance/augment play equipment provision especially for younger children. Register village green and enhance. Panfield Football team organiser is currently seeking funding for purchase of The Bell Field for the village's future sport and recreation.
Rayne	There is a well established Petanque Club that utilises the Swan PH's grounds, and the future of the PH is in doubt at present.	The key focus is on the maintenance and upkeep of what we have and where possible extending/expanding their use.. The Parish Council, other organisations and many volunteers work hard to maintain all we have in the village. All Saints Church in the village is seeking funds to expand the flexibility and use of the church.
Ridgewell	We have a project in progress to enhance the play equipment, especially for toddlers and also to install a Multi Use Games Area; all subject to grant funding being obtained.	Project to improve the hall and playing field facilities in progress following Parish Plan Refresh 2010 which established the need to ensure the hall is sustainable for the future.
Rivenhall	People requiring allotments	Rivenhall Playing Field Association which manages the Village Hall.
Shalford	There are no facilities for older children as the play area is designed for ages 3 to 10 but there is space to install a MUGA for older children and exercise equipment for older adults.	The Parish Council does not own or control any facilities or open spaces. There is space for the installation of a MUGA at the Shalford Village Hall recreation ground; and the need for such a facility is on the Braintree Council Open Spaces Action Plan
Sible Hedingham	No specific sectors highlighted.	See information provided for the Braintree Council Open Spaces Action Plan. Also the Village Design Statement.
Silver End	Once the drainage on the Broadway field is completed this should solve training and march issues. There continues to be issues with parking for visitors as the village hall has no parking facilities.	See Parish Plan for needs, aspirations, plans etc.
Stambourne	None identified	The parish plan showed the importance of the playing field for the village and for more clubs etc to use it. The PC has suggested that anyone wanting to start a sports team or club can come forward.
Steeple Bumpstead	No	The Parish Plan suggests that current facilities should be maintained but there is no particular desire for more facilities.
Stisted	Children and young people.	See typology table below.
Toppesfield	We would welcome bowling provision for older people.	We have a Playing Fields Group that has a clear remit from the Parish Council around improving facilities for all.
Witham TC	Witham Town Football Club are endeavouring to build a training area for youth team coaching.	See typology table below.

The detailed parish responses relating to aspects of quantity and quality of the various elements summarised in the table in 6.2.1 above are provided below:

Parish	Need for new/improved provision and typology specific comments
Alphamstone and Lamarsh	New facilities needed: play area/village green.
Ashen	<p><i>Winter pitches:</i> The newly drained and re-sown junior football pitch needs further improvement and equipment to be used for competitive sport .</p> <p><i>Play areas:</i> The access to the play area is across un-surfaced grass which can be waterlogged and difficult to access - a surfaced access is required.</p> <p><i>Youth facilities:</i> There is a need for further facilities for teenagers.</p> <p><i>Parks/village greens:</i> The Waver is in need of considerable maintenance and restoration including dredging and the removal of a substantial tree and replacement of the railings along the Street.</p> <p><i>Wildlife areas, nature reserves:</i> The orchard area needs further improvement and removal of invading ash and other species together with management for nature conservation purposes.</p> <p><i>Paths/Rights of way:</i> The footpaths need continuing maintenance; the green way to Ridgewell from Ashen has been damaged and is deeply rutted so that it is effectively impassable on horse or by cycle or on foot; this needs repair of the surface and some physical control on access to prevent misuse in the future</p>
Black Notley	<p><i>Youth facilities:</i> We are aware of a request for a skatepark and are currently investigating the idea.</p> <p><i>Allotments:</i> We wish to make improvements to the allotments.</p>
Borley	No need identified for new or improved facilities.
Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary	<p><i>Bowling Greens:</i> We currently have indoor bowls but no outdoor bowls</p> <p><i>Outdoor Courts:</i> Ladies netball is not catered for in the village.</p> <p><i>Wildlife areas, nature reserves:</i> Riverbank areas of sports ground and the Essex side riverbank areas could be improved as wildlife areas.</p>
Castle Hedingham	<p><i>Winter pitches:</i> needed - no existing facilities</p> <p><i>Cricket pitches:</i> Hedingham Castle owns the Cricket ground at Sudbury Hill which is used by the Cricket Club under an informal arrangement.</p> <p><i>Tennis courts:</i> Castle Hedingham Tennis Club at St James Street is well supported.</p> <p><i>Multi-Use Games Areas:</i> No multi-use games area.</p> <p><i>Bowling Greens:</i> Green at Sheepcot Road.</p> <p><i>Play areas:</i> In a poor state but cannot be renewed as the Parish Council is unable to renew the lease on the land.</p> <p><i>Teenage facilities:</i> None existing.</p> <p><i>Allotments:</i> 9 allotments behind the Rising Sun in Nunnery Street have now been sold to a private landowner following the sale of the pub by Greene King. No other allotments available in the parish.</p> <p><i>Churchyards:</i> Closed churchyard at St Nicholas' Church, Falcon Square is maintained by the Parish Council.</p> <p><i>Parks/village greens:</i> need a new location for the Recreation Ground at New Park, or security of tenure in the existing location.</p>
Coggeshall	No specific issues raised or comments supplied. Parish Plan available but over 10 years old (2003).
Cressing	<i>Multi-Use Games Area/tennis court:</i> The Parish Council have discussed the wish to have such a facility.
Earls Colne	<p><i>Winter pitches and cricket pitches:</i> provided by Earls Colne Recreation Club (members only).</p> <p><i>Tennis courts/MUGAs:</i> Earls Colne Recreation Club and Essex Golf & Country Club - provide courts (both members only).</p> <p><i>Bowling Greens:</i> None - provision would be welcomed</p> <p><i>Play Areas:</i> Good facilities owned by Parish Council/Greenfields Housing and Millennium Green - all is good order.</p> <p><i>Youth facilities:</i> Provision of teenage facilities needed - no skate park at present.</p> <p><i>Allotments:</i> Good provision already in place</p> <p><i>Churchyards:</i> Good provision already in place although the Cemetery is likely to become</p>

	<p>full in next 2-3 years.</p> <p><i>Parks/village greens:</i> a development is likely off Station Road and the Parish Council are seeking to gain public open space of some 2.5 acres - there will be a need to provide some play park equipment and employ a further community worker if this should come to fruition.</p> <p><i>Wildlife areas, nature reserves:</i> Good provision.</p> <p><i>Paths/Rights of way:</i> Good provision - however, the maintenance of public footpaths is a problem for us as Highways Authority have reduced the number of visits per year to 2.</p>
Feering	<p><i>Play Areas:</i> The Council is aware that it will need to replace the multi play equipment in due course as the timbers within are quite rotten. They have spent money on repairs this year.</p> <p><i>Youth Facilities:</i> The Council will also be looking to replace its skatepark. Braintree District Council looked to raise funding for a replacement in 2014 which would have been added to S106 monies, but the Parish Council was unsuccessful in its bid to raise sufficient funds and the S106 money went towards part of the Rafted Path on Footpath 17 instead. We have recently been found liable for two claims on the skatepark and Councillors would in the future like to replace it with a more modern style that is not metal, as it is still a cause for concern.</p> <p><i>Paths/Rights of way:</i> Councillors would also like to renew the old part of the Rafted Path, so that it is in keeping with the new part replaced last year.</p>
Gosfield	<p><i>Cricket:</i> cricket nets needed.</p> <p><i>Tennis courts/MUGAs:</i> a MUGA would improve options for all round sport</p> <p><i>Wildlife areas, nature reserves:</i> maintenance of Nature Reserve is needed.</p> <p><i>Paths/Rights of way:</i> way-marked cycle tracks needed.</p>
Great Bardfield	<p><i>Tennis courts/MUGAs:</i> need for improvements/new provision - none specific highlighted.</p> <p><i>Play Areas and youth facilities:</i> we are currently trying to upgrade a very sad playground and provide outdoor equipment for older children up to late teens. There is little else in the village and limited transport means it is essential to provide some outdoor activities</p> <p><i>Wildlife areas, nature reserves:</i> need for improvements - none specific highlighted.</p> <p><i>Paths/Rights of way:</i> need for improvements - none specific highlighted.</p>
Great Maplestead	No specific issues raised or comments supplied. Village Design Statement available (2014).
Great Notley	<p><i>Youth Facilities:</i> to improve the existing skate park area</p> <p><i>Allotments:</i> a need and a call for allotments has been demonstrated in this parish and a site for allotments has been sought for some time. There is an informal understanding that when the Skyline 2 business park is developed an area will be set aside for allotments for this parish.</p>
Great Saling	<i>Allotments:</i> The Parish would like some allotments.
Great Yeldham	<p><i>Winter pitches:</i> Improve quality.</p> <p><i>Cricket pitches:</i> none.</p> <p><i>Tennis courts/MUGAs:</i> New facility based at the Sports and Recreation ground</p> <p><i>Bowling greens:</i> none</p> <p><i>Play areas:</i> improve quality - would like to increase the size and provide additional play equipment</p> <p><i>Youth facilities:</i> improve quality of existing skateboard park and provide facilities i.e. multi sports equipment/area, zip wire</p> <p><i>Allotments:</i> provide allotments - the village currently does not have any allotments</p> <p><i>Churchyards:</i> improve parking facilities - none currently available in the burial grounds</p> <p><i>Recreation Grounds:</i> improve cycle/footpath access and signage to Sports and Recreation Ground</p> <p><i>Wildlife areas, nature reserves:</i> none.</p>
Halstead TC	<p><i>Tennis courts/MUGAs:</i> No public tennis courts</p> <p><i>Youth facilities:</i> skate park at Ramsey Road Playing Field needs replacement.</p>
Hatfield Peverel	<p><i>Winter pitches:</i> rugby pitch evidenced by the neighbourhood development plan.</p> <p><i>Tennis courts/MUGAs:</i> the MUGA pitch could be used as a tennis court if nets were provided.</p> <p><i>Play areas:</i> existing older play equipment could be replaced with more up to date play equipment. additional facilities needed ie goal posts at Nounsley play area. Provision of disabled access.</p> <p><i>Youth facilities:</i> a skate park was evidenced by the workshop held at the junior school 2015 and also in the village plan 2006.</p> <p><i>Parks/village greens:</i> the acquisition of the community park in Wickham Bishops Lane by the parish council for use as a country park.</p> <p><i>Wildlife areas, nature reserves:</i> the duck pond area landscaped to improve conditions for flora and fauna and wildlife, and made into a pleasant environment to visit which was</p>

	<p>evidenced by the junior school workshop 2015. The PC has started work on planting the pond with new vegetation. More work is required for the whole area. Provision of information board</p> <p><i>Paths/Rights of way:</i> the provision of a safe for children footpath/cycle way to the football and bowling clubs in Wickham Bishops Road referred to in the 2006 village plan and evidenced by junior school workshop 2015</p> <p><i>Other:</i> Canoe access to the River at Nounsley Ford would be useful.</p> <p>There have been many complaints by children and adults regarding dog fouling. Claims have been made that open spaces are becoming unusable. This is evidenced in the school and adult contacts made in connection with the Neighbourhood Development Plan</p>
Helions Bumpstead	<p><i>Play areas:</i> The Children's Play Equipment requires replacing.</p> <p><i>Paths/Rights of way:</i> Footpaths require mowing more frequently than once per year.</p>
Kelvedon	<p><i>Tennis courts/MUGAs:</i> MUGA to go on the hard play area.</p> <p><i>Bowling greens:</i> older residents might appreciate this.</p> <p><i>Wildlife areas, nature reserves:</i> make up some paths on Brockwell Meadow to allow wheelchair access to the nature reserve.</p> <p><i>Other:</i> Disabled fishing positions on the River Blackwater.</p>
Little Yelden	<p><i>Play areas and youth provision:</i> children and young people lack any facilities at North End.</p>
Panfield	<p><i>Winter pitches:</i> currently no winter pitch for football team.</p> <p><i>Cricket pitches:</i> currently none; would be nice to have one.</p> <p><i>Tennis courts/MUGAs:</i> Currently no courts.</p> <p><i>Bowling Greens:</i> currently none .</p> <p><i>Play areas:</i> John Barr play equipment needs updating/expanding - little provision for smaller children.</p> <p><i>Youth facilities:</i> currently none.</p> <p><i>Allotments:</i> additional fencing needed; water supply needed (currently negotiating S106 funding).</p> <p><i>Parks/village greens:</i> village green in process of being registered - demarcation posts/additional bench/planting will be needed</p> <p><i>Wildlife areas, nature reserves:</i> wildlife area at rear of Thistledown; currently fine; small wildlife area next to allotments currently fine.</p> <p><i>Paths/Rights of way:</i> Panfield Parish Council asked for a cycleway /footpath linking Panfield with the new housing development in Panfield Lane. It is currently far too dangerous to cycle/walk into Braintree .</p>
Rayne	<p><i>Winter pitches:</i> Football pitches - various football teams use pitches at Shalford or Felstead. No rugby in the Parish.</p> <p><i>Tennis courts/MUGAs:</i> an outdoor gym is being installed on the playing fields and a local farm offers the use of tennis courts for the benefit of charity</p> <p><i>Bowling Greens:</i> None in the village.</p> <p><i>Play areas:</i> Already in place with a good level of equipment but the cost of maintenance is always an issue.</p> <p><i>Youth facilities:</i> Skate ramp and BMX Track already in place.</p> <p><i>Allotments:</i> There are allotments in the village on Church land .</p> <p><i>Parks/village greens:</i> Oak Meadow and Village Green in place.</p> <p><i>Wildlife areas, nature reserves:</i> Nature Reserve with three ponds in place.</p> <p><i>Paths/Rights of way:</i> The Flitch Way is a key part of the village.</p>
Ridgewell	<p><i>Tennis courts/MUGAs:</i> need for improvements/new provision - none specified.</p> <p><i>Play areas:</i> need for improvements/new provision - none specified.</p>
Rivenhall	<p><i>Play areas:</i> None exist in Rivenhall End, part of Rivenhall Parish .</p> <p><i>Allotments:</i> None currently available within Rivenhall Village.</p>
Shalford	<p><i>Youth facilities:</i> installation of a MUGA with hard play surface, basket ball net and goal posts.</p> <p><i>Other:</i> installation of outdoor exercise equipment for adults.</p>
Sible Hedingham	<p>No specific issues raised or comments supplied. Parish Plan available (updated 2008). Village Design Statement available (2010). Request from PC for Open Spaces Action Plan (2015) also to be taken into account.</p>
Silver End	<p><i>Winter pitches:</i> the youth football teams already have use of the school field however this is currently out of use due to building works. Would be ideal to expand on this. Once the drainage on the Broadway Field is completed this should solve training and match issues.</p> <p><i>Other:</i> there continues to be issues with parking for visitors as the village hall has no parking facilities.</p> <p>Request from PC for Open Spaces Action Plan (2015) also to be taken into account.</p>
Steeple Bumpstead	<p><i>Winter pitches:</i> already provided</p>

	<p><i>Cricket pitches:</i> not available</p> <p><i>Tennis courts/MUGAs:</i> small area already available, could be improved</p> <p><i>Bowling Greens:</i> Bowls club in existence</p> <p><i>Play areas:</i> already available, needs regular maintenance and improvements</p> <p><i>Youth facilities:</i> none</p> <p><i>Allotments:</i> managed by Braintree District Council</p> <p><i>Churchyards:</i> closed churchyard with responsibility handed to PC/ Braintree District Council .</p> <p><i>Recreation Grounds:</i> playing field maintained by SBPC</p> <p><i>Wildlife areas, nature reserves:</i> amenity meadow.</p> <p><i>Paths/Rights of way:</i> we have an extensive network of footpaths which are regularly used by a significant proportion of the residents. Currently Essex CC provide some financial assistance towards cutting these but this has been reduced in recent years. The footpaths are the major amenity resource within the village and it is imperative that these are maintained. Any further reduction in funding from Essex CC will only result in a stealth tax on the parishioners of Steeple Bumpstead.</p>
Stisted	<p><i>Play areas:</i> We have just completed an upgrade to our existing play equipment but we are still looking to provide fencing to surround the area for added safety and to prevent dogs from fouling the area.</p> <p><i>Youth facilities:</i> within the village we do not have specific facilities for teenagers. Although not something that it currently causing an issue this may be something we need to address at a future date.</p>
Toppesfield	<p><i>Cricket pitches:</i> we have charity cricket matches and rely on the use of a football pitch which is quite dangerous.</p> <p><i>Tennis courts/MUGAs:</i> tennis Courts were mentioned in our Parish Plan.</p> <p><i>Bowling greens:</i> a great fitness provision for our older generation within the community</p> <p><i>Play areas:</i> we are developing these as part of our plans.</p>
Witham TC	<p><i>Play areas:</i> Witham Town Council has no public play areas.</p> <p><i>Parks:</i> Braintree District Council to re-generate the Witham Town Park (project under consideration).</p> <p><i>Allotments:</i> Land in the LDF off Blunts Hall Road for allotments.</p> <p><i>Other:</i> possibility of liaising with Witham Rugby Club to annex land for an Athletics Track.</p>

Parish Councils - other comments

Finally, the survey also provided the opportunity to raise any other issues or to make other points. The table below provides individual town/parish responses made:

Parish	Issues and other comments
Great Bardfield	Rural areas are neglected and funding has to come from a diminishing precept.
Hatfield Peverel	The parish council are in the process of formulating a neighbourhood development plan which will include the aspirations and needs as regards open space and recreational facilities. The parish council would welcome the opportunity to discuss the questionnaire with Braintree District Council as part of that process. Also, discussions are nearing completion with Essex County Council regarding the transfer of land at the former Dannatts Quarry in Wickham Bishops Lane for the proposed community park.
Rayne	We would like to stress the effort (and cash) needed to maintain all our Village open space features.
Witham TC	Any outdoor provision should include a litter and cleanliness maintenance programme.

6.3.3 Parish Specific Issues (other sources)

For the larger parish councils that did not respond (or no specific needs or aspirations highlighted) relevant parish plans and information from the 2015 Open Spaces Action Plan was reviewed. Information and observations of relevance to the open space, sports and recreational facilities study are noted below:

Parish	Issues/observations re sport, play and recreation facilities
Coggeshall	<p><i>Open Spaces Action Plan (2015):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Mews, off Stoneham Street: improvements to existing boundary planting and seating.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monksdown: improvements to litter bins and seating; new provision of improved disability access. • Amenity Green space, Jaggards Road - improved litter bins (existing). • Vicarage Field: improvements to existing: site renovation, interpretation, more litter bins, dog bins and seating. Provide new Cycle and disability parking <p><i>Parish Plan (2003)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the main survey over 60% agreed that there were sufficient open spaces. • Only 25% felt that their recreational needs were being met. • 58% of young people thought that facilities for them were insufficient, with an emphasis on a lack of skateboard facilities.
Sible Hedingham	<p><i>Open Spaces Action Plan (2015):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of land to extend the Sible Hedingham riverside walk. • Fronting Swan Street - Premdor land to be transferred to SHPC for POS (Public Gardens currently proposed by SHPC). • Provision of children's play area within Premdor development site. • Purchase of land to provide allotments (to be allocated). • Grays Hall meadow (existing) - establish small garden area around existing pond • Alderford brook - open up and clear out brook. • Birds Green Village Green - purchase land. • High Street Green Village Green - purchase land. • Grays Hall Village Green - purchase land. • The 2nd Premdor Development - provide public open space, access to the riverside walk, provision for allotments. • Former cinema, Swan Street - as part of the redevelopment provide green open space • Oxford Meadow - improve existing litter bins, dog waste bins and seating. New provision of cycle and disability parking • Brook Meadow - improvements to planting, signage/information boards, railings, better equipment. • Christmas Field - improvements - dog waste bin, seating. • Premdor Site - new allotments; provision of river walk. • Coopers yard, Swan Street - as part of the redevelopment provide green open space • Willow Ground - improve condition to facilitate public access and then maintain as a public open space. Retain existing use as a commercial willow growing ground. Transfer of land to Sible Hedingham Parish Council ownership from Essex CC. <p><i>Parish Website:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly's Wood & Community Orchard - this is a ten acre site off Hulls Mill Lane which is being managed for wild life and the fruits of an orchard. The next proposed project is to re-establish a wildlife pond on the south corner of the site.
Silver End	<p><i>Open Spaces Action Plan (2015):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Ground (improvements to existing) - surface improvements; grass and hard surface tennis courts x 4; surface improvements to multi-surface; signage/information boards; litter and dog waste bins. New provision of cycle and disabled parking, facilities for young people. • Silver Street Sports Ground - new provision of signage/information boards. Improvements to cycle and disability parking. Graffiti/vandalism/ASB problem. • Temple Lane - new allotments (big demand).

6.4 Neighbouring Local Authorities; and Town/Parish Councils - Observations and key issues

Neighbouring Local Authorities - Cross Boundary Issues

Section 6.1 above briefly reviewed feedback from neighbouring Local Authorities in relation to the status of their open space strategies/associated studies and any cross border issues of significance. The variety of documents and strategies in place (and their relevance to current planning policy) is considerable, embracing green infrastructure studies, open space strategies, and sport, recreation and play strategies. The approach adopted by each authority is very much locally derived.

It is noteworthy that few strategies currently appear to look in depth at cross boundary issues or identify networks of green infrastructure or open space which cross local authority boundaries; and officers highlight a relatively small number of specific cross border issues and plans (with the notable exception of Basildon).

It is also notable that many authorities are currently involved with commissioning new open space related studies or updating previous strategies that are out of date.

There is scope for neighbouring local authorities to work more together to make the most of accessible natural green space resources and to develop some common themes and agendas. It is suggested that much could be learnt in regard to best practice by better sharing of information between authorities and ensuring that local authority strategies afford some importance to considering developments and proposals in neighbouring authorities.

Town/Parish Councils

General Overview

- The individual town/parishes are very different in relation to size, demographics, geography, needs and demand/aspirations. It is important that the study takes this variation into account.
- All of the parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and facilities.
- 9 of the 11 local councils reported that there was a need for additional or improved open space, sport, play and recreation facilities within their town or parish.
- Most of the parishes were not aware if there was scope for greater community use of outdoor sport and recreation spaces at local schools but two of the parishes (Bromfield and Great Waltham) highlighted potential for community use (see below).
- The sector of the community most commonly identified as being poorly served in relation to their needs were young people/teenagers.

Common areas of concern

For the parish councils, the areas of most common concern are:

- The need for more and better access to footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths.
- The need for additional Multi-use games areas/tennis courts in some parishes (primarily MUGAs).

- Not enough areas for teenagers e.g. skateparks, shelters etc. and the quality of existing play areas.
- Winter pitches for football and rugby - need for more and improvements in quality.

Quality considerations

The quality factors most commonly deemed to be of a high priority as regards recreational public open spaces are that:

- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained
- They should be safe and secure for those using them
- They should be easy to get to for all members of the community
- There should be adequate opportunities for dog walking and freedom from dog fouling
- They should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.

It is also thought important by most parish councils that public open spaces should be easy to get around by all members of the community.

Detailed responses on open space typologies

Many of the parish councils provided detailed responses relating to aspects of quantity and quality of the various elements of open spaces surveyed. These responses can be found in the associated excel spreadsheet.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The survey work, stakeholder consultation, desk-based research and group sessions have highlighted a wide range of issues of value to the wider Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facility Study. There is a strong degree of consistency across the various sources on key areas of local need and aspiration from which we can be confident that the findings are robust and reliable, providing a strong evidence base to be combined with the detailed facilities audit.

The following table summarises where the information and findings from the *Community and Stakeholder Consultation* report will be taken forward in the three main reports - the *Open Space Assessment*; the *Playing Pitch Strategy and Outdoor Sports Assessment*; and the *Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities Assessment*.

Community and Stakeholder Consultation Section	Open Space Assessment	Playing Pitch Strategy and Outdoor Sports Assessment	Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities Assessment
2: General Community Consultation	✓	✓	✓
3: Part 1 - Sports - Indoor			✓
3: Part 2 - Sports - Outdoor (non-pitch)		✓	
4: Parks, green spaces, countryside	✓		
5: Children and young people	✓		
6: Neighbouring Local Authorities and parish/town councils	✓	✓	✓

Braintree Open Space Study



2016 – 2033

Final Report



Braintree Open Space Study

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
ANGSt	Accessible Natural Green Space Standard
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
DPD	Development Plan Document
FIT	Fields In Trust (originally known as the 'National Playing Fields Association')
FISA	Family Inclusive Sports Area
GI	Green Infrastructure
GIST	Green Infrastructure Strategy
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
LAP	Local Area for Play
LEAP	Local Equipped Area for Play
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NEAP	Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area
NEWP	Natural Environment White Paper
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
WASSt	Woodland Access Standard

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This Open Space Study is one of four reports provided within the overall *Braintree District Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Study (2015)*. The reports comprise:

- Part 1: Open Space Study;
- Part 2: Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Study (Needs Assessment);
- Part 3: Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Action Plan (Part D of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment);
- Part 4: Built Sports and Recreation Facilities Study (Needs Assessment).

The four reports are all informed by the Local Needs Assessment Report (Consultation Report) which provides details of the consultation undertaken as part of the study.

The study has been undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning to inform the Council's decision making process up to 2033.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. It requires local planning authorities to set out policies to help enable communities to access high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation. These policies must be based on a thorough understanding of the local needs for such facilities and opportunities available for new provision.

The study has been carried out in-line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (*Para 73 and 74*). Since the adoption of the NPPF, there have been major changes to national planning policy. Open space assessment has primarily been affected by the omission of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG 17) from the new national policy framework. Whilst the government has not published anything specifically to replace this document (it does signpost the Sport England guidance for sports facilities assessments¹), there is however, still a clear reference made in the new guidance to the principles and ideology established within PPG17. As such the underlying principles of this study have been informed by the former guidance provided in '*Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation*', and its Companion Guide '*Assessing Needs and Opportunities*', which is a tried and tested methodology and takes a consistent approach with many other local authorities.

¹ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities>

1.2 Scope of Study and Objectives

1.2.1 Overall Aim of the Study

The aims of the study are to provide a robust assessment of needs and deficiencies in open spaces in order to establish local provision standards and create an up to date evidence base which can be maintained to aid implementation of the policies and the provision of open spaces during the new Local Plan period.

The brief for the study highlighted that the overall aims are:

- To audit existing indoor /outdoor leisure facilities and open spaces within the Braintree District.
- To assess these facilities in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility
- To develop and provide a strategy determining the actions and resources required to guide the Councils decision making up until 2033. This is to include a Playing Pitch Strategy, Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy and an Open Spaces Strategy.
- To highlight areas where there is sufficient or over provision and identify areas where there are deficiencies in either the quantity and/or quality of provision
- To provide a robust and comprehensive evidence base to enable the Council to develop planning policies as part of future Local Plan, sufficient to withstand scrutiny at an Examination in Public
- To provide information to enable the Council to justify collecting developer contributions and inform the Council on the distribution of developer contributions to sports and open spaces.
- Identify strategies for the delivery of required provision and enhancement and to inform future decisions about the provision and funding of recreational facilities
- To provide a needs assessment and provide a comprehensive set of recommendations for local standards and alternative approaches to securing provision where applicable to be adopted by the Council. Review current standards in the adopted Core Strategy and how these have helped new development and Parishes/Town Councils provide more open space provision and improve quality of existing provision.
- To provide guidance on converting standards into developer contributions.

1.2.2 Scope of Study and Objectives

This study covers all forms of public open space (with the exception of outdoor sports facilities) as referred to in Annex A of the PPG17 Companion Guide. Indoor Facilities are not included.

Indoor sports facilities and outdoor sports and playing pitches are covered in two separate reports:

- Indoor Sports Facilities Study
 - Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Study
-

In order to deliver the aims of the open space study, the following objectives will be met:

- Evaluate the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, identifying any specific needs or deficiencies;
- Identify mechanisms to meet future needs including recommendations for appropriate standards of provision by new development;
- Provide a robust and comprehensive evidence base to underpin the development and implementation of detailed planning policies, and facilitate the future management of open space and recreational assets;
- To provide information to justify the collection of developer contributions towards open space.

1.3 Structure of the report

The open space study follows the five key stages as summarised below:

- Step 1 – Identifying Local Needs
- Step 2 – Audit of Existing Open Space Assets
- Step 3 – Setting Local Standards
- Step 4 – Applying Local Standards
- Step 5 – Drafting Policy Recommendations

1.4 The Study Area

1.4.1 Overview of Braintree

Braintree District is a rural district in the north of Essex and is the second largest district (by area) in the county. Just over half of the residents live in the three main towns of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, with the remainder living in the attractive rural areas, where there are about 60 villages, including six larger service villages (Coggeshall, Earls Colne, Hatfield Peverel, Kelvedon, Sible Hedingham and Silver End). The District lies between the regional growth centres of Chelmsford, Colchester and Cambridge and is close to Stansted Airport and the M11, the Haven Ports and is about 45 minutes journey time by rail from London. Braintree is the main market town in the District and provides employment, town centre retail provision and community services.

Many of the towns and villages in the District have historic centres which are protected as conservation areas, and some historic villages and towns, including Finchingfield, Castle Hedingham and Coggeshall are visitor attractions.

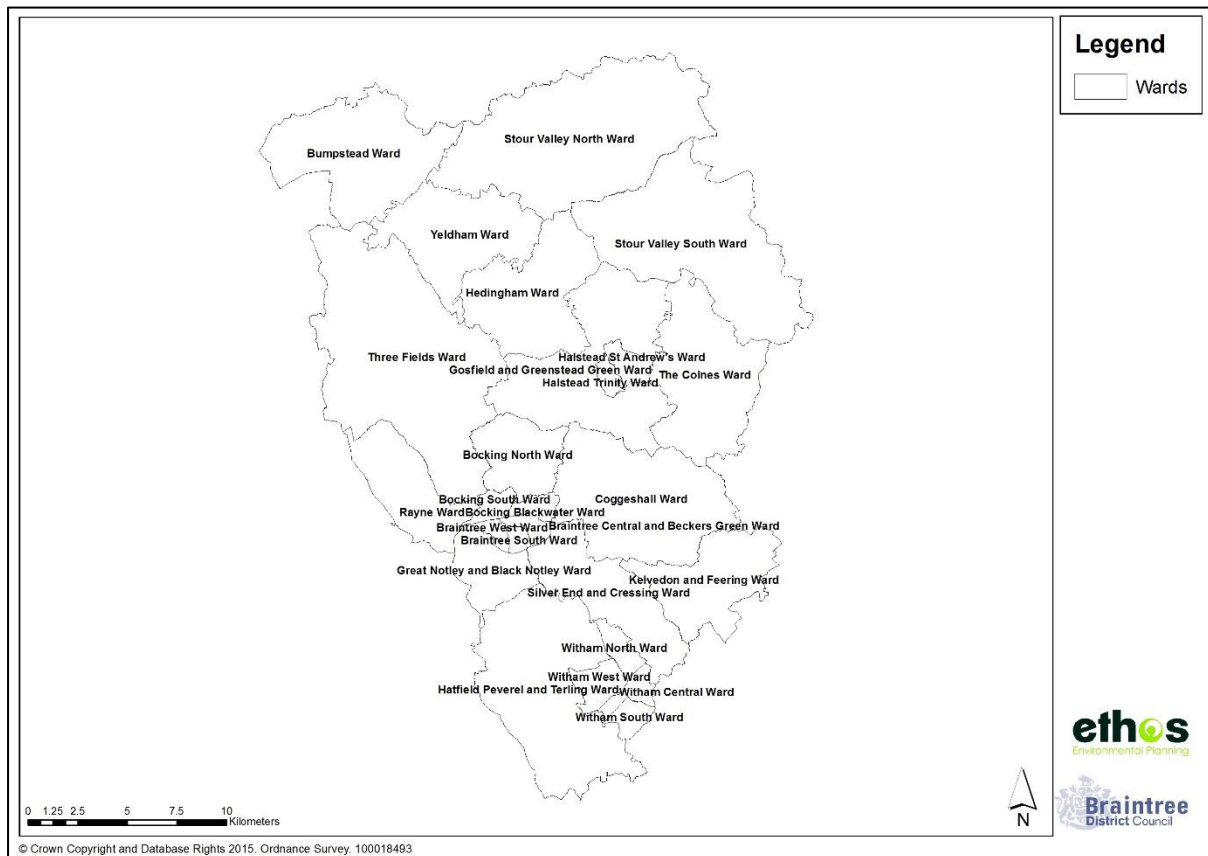
Braintree's extensive tracts of countryside are some of the most attractive and highest quality landscape in the region consisting of farmland plateaux, river valleys and wooded farmland.

1.4.2 Administrative Boundaries

In order to analyse the current provision and future requirements for open space across Braintree, Wards have been used as the geographical areas (as shown in figure 1). This was agreed by the project steering group as the most effective way to analyse provision and for use in the local plan and housing allocations assessment.

These boundaries are the basis for collating census data across the council area. Of particular relevance to this study are population statistics (Census, 2011), which have been used as the basis for much of the current and future assessment of need for open space.

Figure 1 *Ward Boundaries*



1.4.3 Population Statistics

Table 1 Ward population statistics (Census 2011)

NAME	Population 2011
Bocking Blackwater Ward	10,240
Rayne Ward	2,774
Stour Valley South Ward	2,936
Witham South Ward	6,080
Bocking North Ward	5,165
Kelvedon and Feering Ward	5,622
Yeldham Ward	2,760
Halstead Trinity Ward	6,235
Bumpstead Ward	2,955
Braintree Central and Beckers Green Ward	9,245
Three Fields Ward	5,555
Halstead St Andrew's Ward	5,670
Stour Valley North Ward	2,745
Braintree West Ward	6,105
Silver End and Cressing Ward	6,252
The Colnes Ward	5,811
Witham Central Ward	6,000
Great Notley and Black Notley Ward	8,974
Witham West Ward	6,995
Witham North Ward	6,665
Bocking South Ward	6,305
Coggeshall Ward	5,898
Gosfield and Greenstead Green Ward	2,645
Hatfield Peverel and Terling Ward	5,952
Hedingham Ward	5,195
Braintree South Ward	5,755

2.0 METHODOLOGY

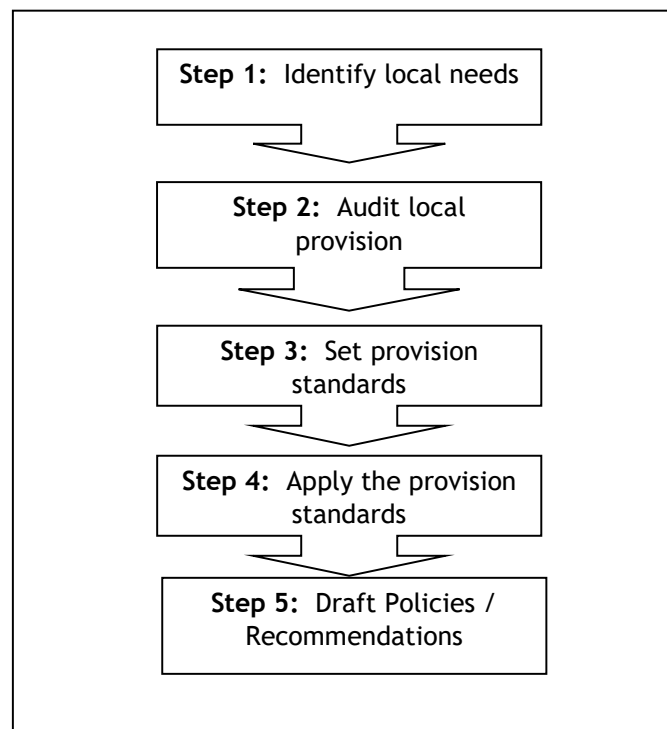
2.1 General

The starting point for this study has been the guidance in Section 8 of the NPPF, which adheres to but has superseded PPG17. The new policy gives clear recommendations for the protection of and appropriate provision for open space, however it does not provide any detailed guidance on how to conduct an open space assessment. It is therefore both logical and acceptable to reference the guidance for assessment provided in the former PPG17 and its Companion Guide. PPG17 placed a requirement on local authorities to undertake assessments and audits of open space, sports and recreational facilities in order to:

- identify the needs of the population;
- identify the potential for increased use;
- establish an effective strategy for open space/sports/recreational facilities at the local level.

The Companion Guide to PPG17 recommended an overall approach to this kind of study as summarised below:

Figure 3 Summary of methodology



Within this overall approach the Companion Guide suggests a range of methods and techniques that might be adopted in helping the assessment process. Where appropriate, these methods and techniques have been employed within this study and are explained at the relevant point in the report. In addition, they are summarised in the paragraphs below.

2.2 Identifying Local Need (Step 1)

The report examines identified local need for various types of open space, sports and recreational opportunities. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques as well as a detailed review of existing consultation data and other relevant documentation. The report details the community consultation and research process that has been undertaken as part of the study as well as the main findings. The findings of this assessment are summarised in this document and full details are provided at appendix 1.

2.3 Audit of Existing Open Space Assets (Step 2)

2.3.1 Defining the scope of the audit

In order to build up an accurate picture of the current open space and play provision in Braintree, an initial desktop audit of the open space asset was carried out, this included:

- analysis of existing GIS data held by Braintree District Council;
- desktop mapping of open space from aerial photography;
- questionnaires to town and parish councils;
- liaison with council officers.

Following this, site visits were undertaken by Ethos at 390 sites to assess the existing and potential quality issues with sites. The quality audit drew on criteria set out in the 'Green Flag Award²', and sites were given an 'existing', 'potential' and 'gap' quality score. The audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach. However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snap-shot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a sites existing and potential quality rather than a full asset audit. Clearly, local communities may have aspirations which are not identified in the quality audit, but it is hoped that these can be explored further through site management plans and neighbourhood/parish plans as appropriate.

2.3.2 Approach to mapping

As part of the audit process, sites were mapped into their different functions using a multi-functional approach to mapping. The advantage of the multi-functional approach is that it gives a much more accurate picture of the provision of open space. This is more advantageous than the primary typology approach which tends to result in an over assessment of provision, and which can significantly impact decisions on quantity standards. The differences in approach are demonstrated in figures 4 and 5.

² <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/judges/judging-criteria>

Figure 4 Primary approach to open space mapping

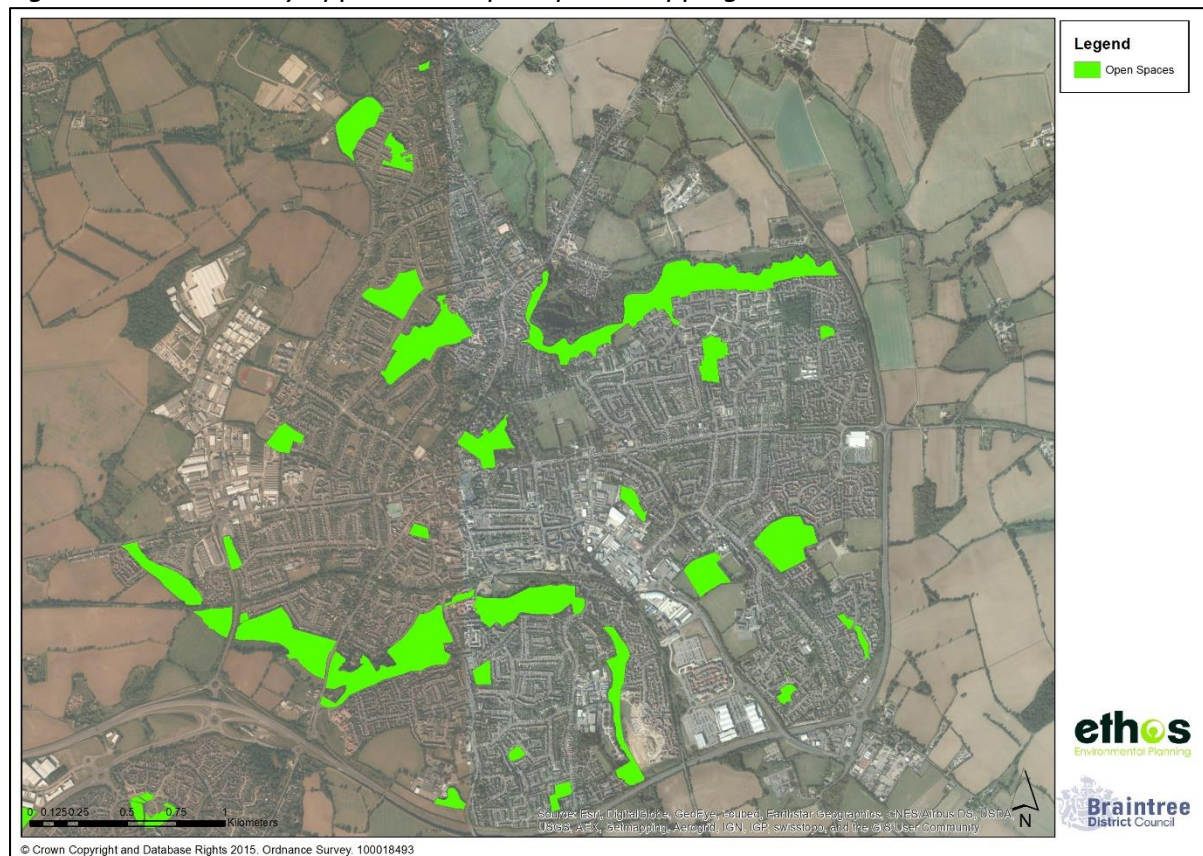
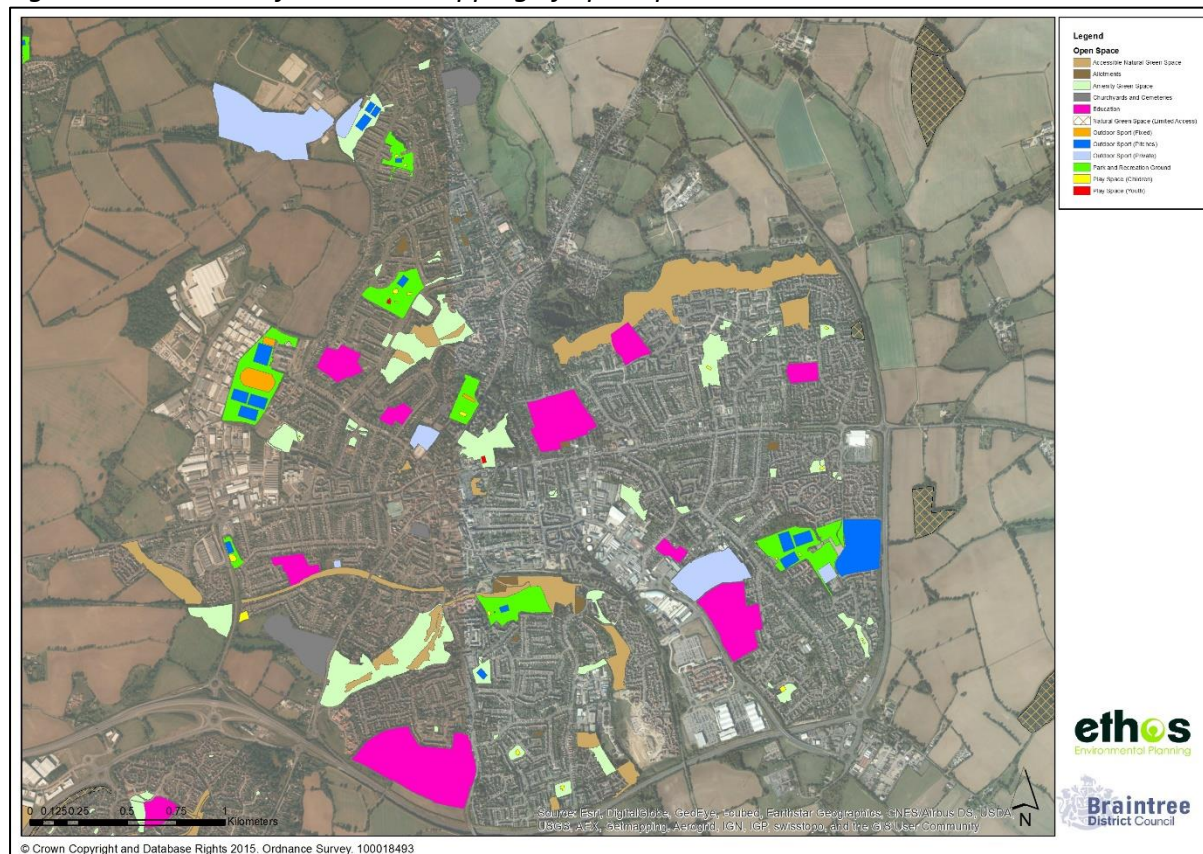


Figure 5 Multi-functional mapping of open space



2.4 Set and Apply Provision Standards (Steps 3 and 4)

Local provision standards have been set, with three components, embracing:

- quantity;
- accessibility;
- quality.

Quantity

The GIS database and mapping has been used to assess the existing provision of open space across the study area. The existing levels of provision are considered alongside findings of previous studies, the local needs assessment and consideration of existing and national standards or benchmarks. The key to developing robust local quantity standards is that they are locally derived, based on evidence and most importantly achievable. Typically, standards are expressed as hectares per 1000 people. The recommended standards are then used to assess the supply of each type of open space across the study area.

Access

Evidence from previous studies, the needs assessment and consideration of national benchmarks are used to develop access standards for open space. Typically, standards are expressed as straight line walk times. A series of maps assessing access for different typologies are presented in the report.

Quality

Quality standards have been developed drawing on previous studies, national benchmarks and good practice, evidence from the needs assessment and the findings of the quality audits. The quality standards also include recommended policies to guide the provision of new open space through development in the future.

2.5 Drafting Policy Recommendations (Step 5)

This section outlines higher level strategic options which may be applicable at town, parish community area board and study area wide level. The strategic options address five key areas:

1. Existing provision to be protected;
 2. Existing provision to be enhanced;
 3. Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
 4. Identification of areas for new provision;
 5. Facilities that may be surplus to requirement.
-

3.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This section sets out a brief review of the most relevant national and local policies related to the study, which have been considered in developing the methodology and findings of the study. Policies and strategies are subject to regular change, therefore the summary provided in this section was correct at the time of writing. Braintree District Council reserve the right to change and update this section as policies change.

3.1 Introduction

The policy overview will include analysis of the councils' existing strategies and policies. It also includes a review of other strategies of relevance at national and local levels and assesses their implications for the provision of open space, sport and recreation opportunities.

The PPG17 companion guide identified the importance of understanding the implications of existing strategies on the study. Specifically, before initiating local consultation, there should be a review of existing national, regional and local plans and strategies, and an assessment of the implementation and effectiveness of existing planning policies and provision standards.

3.2 National Strategic Context

3.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The NPPF must be adhered to in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF contains the following references that relate to green infrastructure and open spaces:

- **Para 17 - Achieving Sustainable Development - Core Planning Principles:** Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking.
 - **Para 58** - Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area.
Para 73 - Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.
 - **Para 75** - Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.
-

- **Para 99** - Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape.
- **Para 109** - The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

3.2.2 Green Infrastructure

The concept of green infrastructure (GI) is now firmly embedded in national policy with the NPPF requiring local planning authorities to set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure. It defines green infrastructure as *'a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities'*.

The district has a wide range of existing green infrastructure assets such as open spaces, parks and gardens, allotments, woodlands, street trees, fields, hedges, lakes, ponds, meadows and grassland playing fields, as well as footpaths, cycleways and waterways. However, the concept of GI looks beyond existing designations, seeking opportunities to increase function and connectivity of assets to maximise the benefits for the community.

3.2.3 The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (2011)

The white paper³ recognised that a healthy natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It sets out how the value of nature can be mainstreamed across our society by facilitating local action; strengthening the connections between people and nature; creating a green economy and showing leadership in the EU and internationally.

3.2.4 Sport England Strategy 2012-17 (creating a sporting habit for life)

The 2012-17 Youth and Community Strategy for Sport England was launched in January 2012⁴. It describes how Sport England will invest over £1 billion of National Lottery and Exchequer funding over five years into four main areas of work;

- 1) National Governing Body (NGB) 2013-17 funding;
- 2) facilities;
- 3) local investment; and
- 4) the 'School Games'.

The overall ambition is to increase the number of people who play sports regularly and reduce the number of young people who stop playing when they finish school. Funding for governing bodies will be tied to their own specific participation targets.

³ <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.sportengland.org/media/130949/DCMS-Creating-a-sporting-habit-for-life-1-.pdf>

3.3 Local Context

3.3.1 Braintree New Local Plan

At a Full Council meeting on 30th June 2014, Councillors took the decision not to submit the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for examination, but instead to begin work immediately on a new Local Plan which will set out the Council's strategy for future development and growth up to 2033. The work completed on the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan and the comments which have been received will be rolled forward into the new Local Plan.

The New Local Plan will include all major planning policy for the District in a single document and will need to meet the requirements of the NPPF. Once complete it will replace both the Core Strategy (2011) and the Local Plan Review (2005).

The draft local plan has been published which shows the majority of growth being directed toward Braintree, Witham, and Halstead. It also includes options for growth at new settlements.

This open space study has been undertaken to help inform the new Local Plan.

3.3.2 Core Strategy (2011-2026)

Part of the Council's statutory Local Development Framework, the Core Strategy was adopted in September 2011. This is the principal document that sets out the overall spatial vision and objectives, spatial strategy, core policies and how the strategy will be implemented and monitored up to 2026.

The vision for the Braintree District is that by 2026 a more sustainable future will have been secured for all the people and places in Braintree District. The three towns will be thriving with regenerated town centres and new growth delivered. The key service villages will have provided local housing, jobs and services, with regeneration taking place on identified sites. All development in the District will have been built to the highest design and energy efficiency standards, which will have enhanced historic towns and villages and minimised the impact on the local and global environment.

The aims of the Core Strategy reflect those in the Sustainable Community Strategy. In order to deliver these, the strategy identifies twelve key objectives which reflect and underpin the vision and aims for Braintree District. These objectives form the basis for the policies set out in this Core Strategy.

The council's preferred overall Spatial Policy Statement for the Braintree District for the period up to 2026 is set out as follows:

'To preserve and enhance the character of the rural heartland of the Braintree District, its countryside and villages, by supporting development that is needed to make settlements and the rural economy more sustainable and protect and enhance the natural environment.'

To concentrate the majority of new development and services in the Main Towns of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, at new Growth Locations at Braintree and Witham and in the Key Service Villages’.

Proposed housing Growth: Policy LPP:16

The Proposed Growth Locations are shown on figure 6 and summarised in figure 7.

Figure 6 Key Diagram: Housing Growth

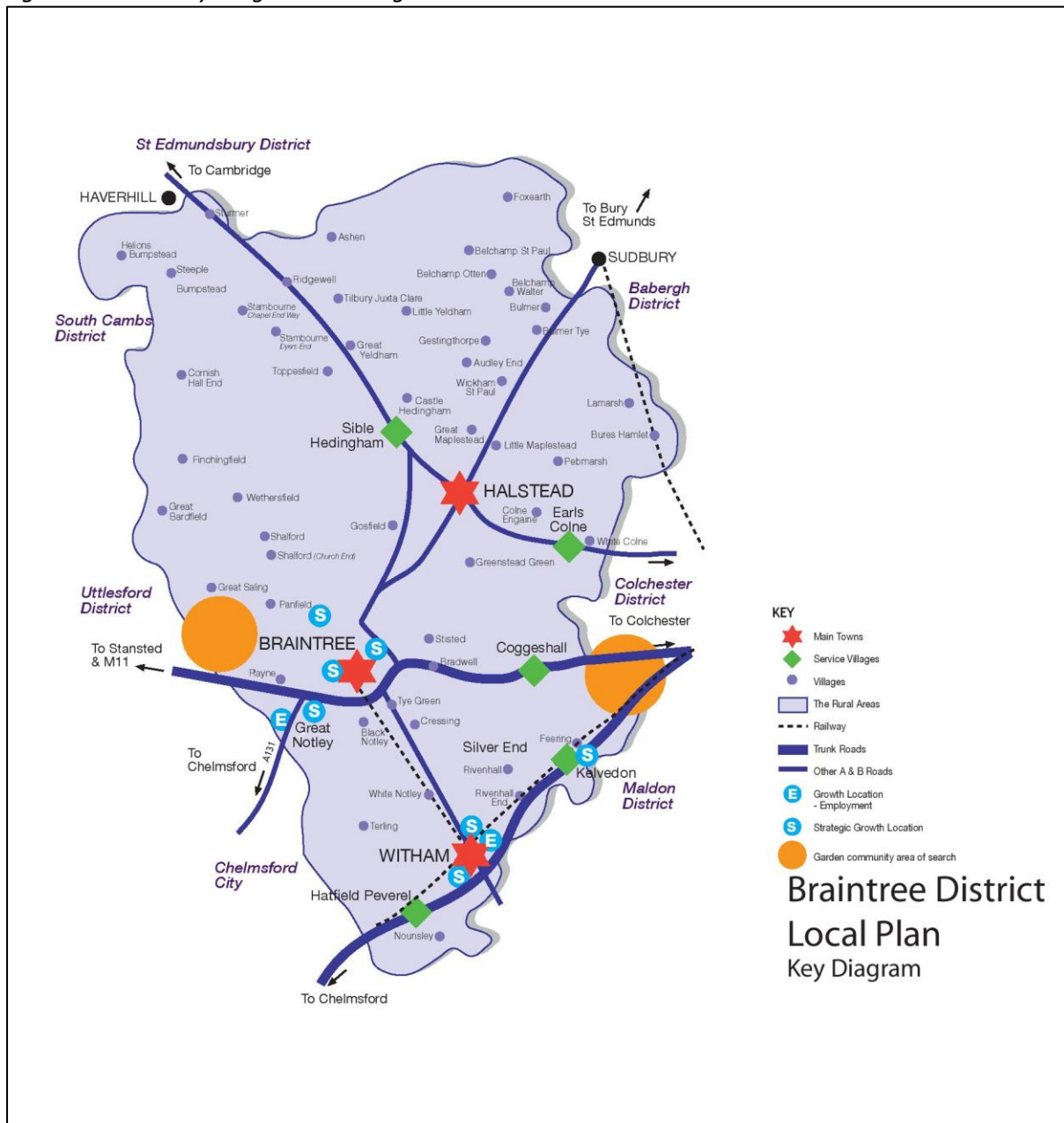
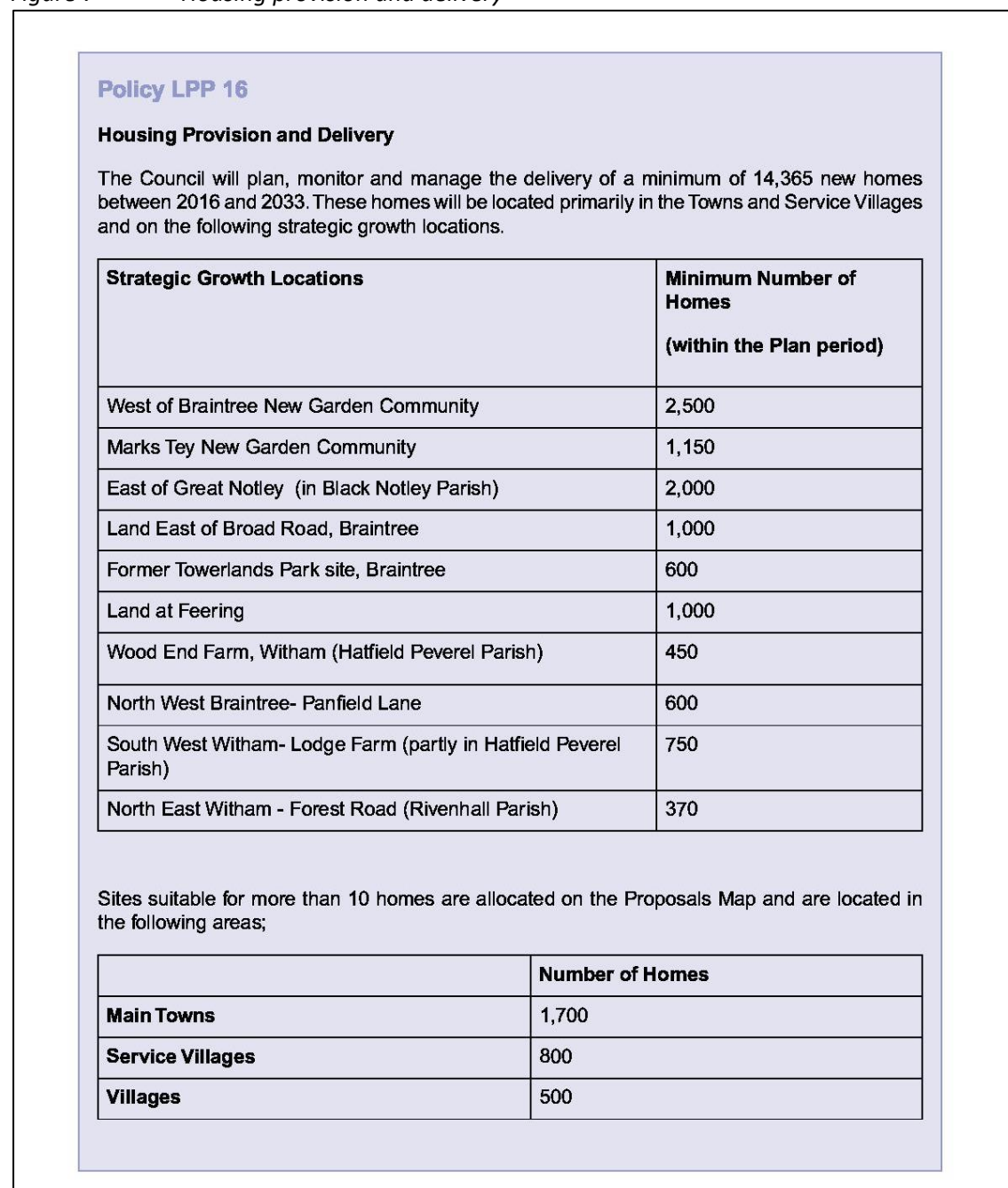


Figure 7 Housing provision and delivery

**Policy CS10: Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

The Council will ensure that there is a good provision of high quality and accessible green space, including allotments and publicly accessible natural green space, to meet a wide range of recreation, outdoor sport and amenity needs in District by:

- Retaining existing sports facilities, green spaces, allotments, and open space used for amenity, recreation or sport unless:

- they are no longer required to meet identified needs in the long term (through the Braintree Green Spaces Strategy);
 - alternative replacement provision of equal or greater community benefit is provided elsewhere as part of the development;
 - There is an identified surplus in an open space, or sports or recreational facility, in which case development of part of the site may be allowed to secure the re-use of the remainder, to meet an identified deficit in another type of open space, or sport or recreational facility.
 - The use can be shown not to be economically viable.
- Requiring new development to make appropriate provision (taking into consideration surpluses and deficiencies and condition of the different open space typologies within the vicinity of the site) for publicly accessible green space or improvement of existing accessible green space in accordance with the following standards (derived from the 2008 Green Space Strategy):

	Hectares per thousand people
Parks and gardens	1.2 ha in the main towns and key service villages
Outdoor sports provision	2.0 ha
Amenity greenspaces	0.8ha
Provision for children and young people	0.2ha
<u>Total</u>	<u>4.2ha</u>

(There is also a requirement for a provision of 0.23 ha/1000 for allotments identified in the SPD).

- Investigating through future Local Development Documents, the potential to remedy existing deficiencies in provision and quality of green spaces, outdoor sports and children's play facilities in the areas of greatest deficiency in accordance with the Council's adopted standards other Council open space and leisure strategies and other relevant legislation;
- Seeking to maintain, improve and expand the network of green corridors and its links with neighbouring districts and broaden the range of opportunities for recreational pursuits within the corridors, including the identification of sites of accessible natural greenspace where appropriate.

3.3.3 One District – One Vision: A Strategy for People and Places in the Braintree District to 2026

Long term plans and priorities for the Braintree District are set out in this sustainable community strategy, produced by the Local Strategic Partnership with the earlier stages of the Core Strategy. It brings together community priorities into one overall vision and framework for the future of the District as follows:

- *To promote accessibility for all*
- *To create a clean and green environment and address climate change*
- *To achieve a prosperous local economy*
- *To enable everyone to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle*

Corporate Priorities

Key corporate priorities are set out for 2012 – 2016 and have a specific green space angle – with ‘a better place’ strand identifying the following key initiatives:

- Keeping our district clean and tidy
- Protecting our environment
- Providing green space for everyone to enjoy

3.3.4 Green Space Strategy (2008)

This strategy sets out standards for quality, quantity and accessibility of open space in Braintree.

Green space is divided into the following typologies:

- Parks and Urban Green Space
- Amenity Green Spaces
- Sports and Recreation Facilities
- Natural and Semi-natural Green Spaces
- Green Corridors
- Children’s Play Space

Amongst a range of key aims and objectives, aspirations include *‘Informing future **planning, management and maintenance policies** for green spaces, including the emerging Local Development Documents for the period 2021 and beyond’*.

The strategy provides a solid framework of established standards and aspirations for green space in the district.

Quantity Analysis

The analysis of quantity provision was broken down into rural and urban areas as well as the key Braintree sub-areas comprised of Braintree, Halstead and Witham. Examples of figures demonstrating the proposed quantity standard and current surplus or deficit in Hectares are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Quantity Standards set out within Green Space Strategy (2008)

QUANTITY STANDARDS FOR PARKS AND GARDENS AND AMENITY GREEN SPACE				
Area	Parks and Gardens Proposed Standard	Surplus or deficit hectares	Amenity Green Space Proposed Standard	Surplus or deficit hectares
Total Urban Braintree	1.2	+21.29	0.80	-22.84
Total Urban Halstead	1.2	-10.88	0.80	-4.83
Total Urban Witham	1.2	-25.02	0.80	+14.53
Total Urban Areas	1.2	-14.61	0.80	-13.03
Total Rural Braintree	1.2	-16.41	0.80	-6.15
Total Rural Halstead	1.2	+12.99	0.80	-5.06
Total Rural Witham	1.2	-18.01	0.80	-5.89
Total Rural Area	1.2	-21.43	0.80	-17.10
District Totals / average	1.2	-36.04	0.80	-30.13

Table 4 below has been extracted from the strategy and compares existing provision of green space with household survey responses on the adequacy of provision to form the basis of a proposed quantity standard where appropriate. The quantity of existing green space provision was measured against current population (2004 estimates).

Table 4 Braintree Green Space Strategy (2008) – table comparing existing provision with household survey responses and benchmarking with local authorities.

Typology	Current provision in Braintree	Adequacy of existing provision	Comparison with Other Local Authorities			Proposed Braintree Local Standard
			Local Authority	Current provision	Local Standard	
Parks and gardens	Urban 1.21 Rural 2.76	The majority of respondents (59%) consider that current provision is "about right". Over a third consider that there is too little.	Cherwell	Urban 0.48 Rural 0.69	Urban 0.60 Rural 0.70	1.20 (urban areas and rural settlements with a population of over 3,800)
			Maidstone	Urban 2.27 Rural 0.00	Urban 2.30	
			Newark & Sherwood	1.90	0.60 - 0.80	
			Harborough	0.25	0.50	
			Chelmsford	3.15	2.00	
			Thurrock	0.43	0.70	
Natural & semi-natural greenspaces	Urban 2.09 Rural 34.22	The majority of respondents (53%) consider that current provision is "about right", although 40% considered that there was not enough.	Cherwell	Urban 0.65 Rural 3.20	Urban 0.56 Rural 0.70	2.00
			Maidstone	15.83	No standard set	
			Newark & Sherwood	No information	No standard set	
			Harborough	No information	No standard set	
			Chelmsford	14.78	2.00	
			Thurrock	10.32	2.00	
Green Corridors	Urban 1.28 Rural 0.36	The majority of respondents (59%) consider that current provision is "about right", although one third thought that there was too little.	Cherwell	No information	No standard set	NS
			Maidstone	779m length	No standard set	
			Newark & Sherwood	No information	No standard set	
			Harborough	No information	No standard set	
			Chelmsford	0.13	0.20	
			Thurrock		NS	
Outdoor sports provision	Urban 1.98 Rural 2.15	A small majority of respondents (44%) considered that there was not enough sports provision.	Cherwell	Urban 1.46 Rural 3.62	Urban 1.50 Rural 3.62	2.00
			Maidstone	Urban 1.37 Rural 2.61	Urban 1.40 Rural 2.70	
			Newark & Sherwood	2.06	2.50	
			Harborough	5.21	0.57	
			Chelmsford	2.16	1.25	
			Thurrock	1.05	Urban 1.00-1.30 Rural 2.30	

Typology	Current provision in Braintree	Adequacy of existing provision	Comparison with Other Local Authorities			Proposed Braintree Local Standard
			Local Authority	Current provision	Local Standard	
Amenity green space	Urban 0.78 Rural 0.83	The majority of respondents (47%) felt that there was sufficient amenity greenspace, although nearly 40% felt that there was not enough.	Cherwell	Urban 0.42 Rural 0.59	Urban 0.50 Rural 0.60	0.80
			Maidstone	Urban 0.65 Rural 0.79	Urban 0.70 Rural 0.80	
			Newark & Sherwood	0.60	0.60	
			Harborough	0.77	0.90	
			Chelmsford	0.81	0.81	
			Thurrock	0.42	0.80	
Children's play provision	Urban 0.13 Rural 0.09	55% of respondents from urban areas consider that there is insufficient play provision whilst 51% from rural areas felt provision is "about right".	Cherwell	Urban 0.05 Rural 0.10	Urban 0.09 Rural 0.12	0.20
			Maidstone	Urban 0.12 Rural 0.09	Urban 0.12 Rural 0.09	
			Newark & Sherwood	0.36	0.75	
			Harborough	0.12	0.30	
			Chelmsford	0.12	0.30	
			Thurrock	1 eqpt. for 33 children (5-16)	1 eqpt. for 33 children (5-16)	
Allotments	Urban 0.46 Rural 0.38	Whilst most people (38%) had no opinion, 36% of respondents felt considered that provision is "about right".	Cherwell	Urban 0.13 Rural 0.44	Urban 0.15 Rural 0.44	NS
			Maidstone	Urban 0.21 Rural 0.18	Urban 0.21 Rural 0.18	
			Newark & Sherwood	0.22	0.50	
			Harborough	0.29	0.35	
			Chelmsford	0.32	0.30	
			Thurrock	0.25	15 plots	
Cemeteries and Burial grounds	Urban 0.17 Rural 0.69	The vast majority of respondents felt that provision was "about right".	Cherwell	No information	No standard set	NS
			Maidstone	Urban 0.56 Rural 0.49	Urban 0.66 Rural 0.59	
			Newark & Sherwood	No information	No standard set	
			Harborough	No information	No standard set	

Accessibility Standards

Accessibility standards were derived from the household and user surveys, which asked people to state their expected mode of travel and journey time. The recommendations are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Accessibility Standards set out within Green Space Strategy (2008).

Typology	Distance (in minutes walking)	Distance (in metres)
Parks and Gardens	12.5 minutes	1km
Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space	15 minutes	1.2km
Green Corridors	15 minutes	1.2km
Amenity Green Space	5-10 minutes	400 – 800 metres
Children's Play Space (Toddler/Junior Provision)	5 minutes	400m
Children's Play Space (Teenage)	10 minutes	800m

Quality

The measure of quality was considered subjective in the 2008 strategy – and a series of headings agreed on which the measure of quality can be taken:

- Welcoming Place
- Health, Safety and Security
- Clean and Well-maintained
- Culture, Heritage and Community Use.

Additional aspirations to achieve green flag status are noted.

More detailed breakdowns by typology including site-specific assessments and commentaries are available in the document.

3.3.4 Braintree District Council Open Spaces Action Plan (2015)

This document is a detailed list of outline proposals for the provision and enhancement of open space in Braintree District. *'The purpose of the document is to enable Council officers to demonstrate where financial contributions being sought from developers under the Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document will be spent'.*

The plan is reviewed annually and details key information on ownership and management, improvements and new infrastructure required. The document is currently referred to with a view to informing future planning considerations.

3.3.5 Braintree District Play Strategy (2007–2011)

The Braintree District Play Strategy was undertaken to determine the standards of quality and access required for children's play provision across Braintree District.

Identified priorities from the consultation:

- More facilities for younger teenagers aged 11-13
- More and better maintained play equipment in parks and other local, free to use public spaces
- Continued consultation and action with children and young people
- A change of attitude by adults, to children's play
- The need for the development of imaginative play for all ages
- Specific opportunities for vulnerable groups

The responses were translated into an action plan of priority improvement works.

4.0 LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT (STEP 1)

4.1 Overview

The *Community and Stakeholder Needs Assessment* is a supporting document to the main Braintree District Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities strategy (2015). It provides consultation findings from various stakeholders and provides findings that feed into the main report.

The report is made up of 5 main sections:

1. General Community Consultation
2. Sports - Indoor and Outdoor (non-pitch)
3. Parks, green spaces, countryside, and rights of way
4. Children and Young People - play and youth facilities
5. Neighbouring local authorities and town and parish councils

The consultation and research programme was undertaken from July to November 2015. In summary, questionnaire surveys were undertaken as below:

- An online survey utilising the District Council's People's Panel
- A survey of town and parish councils
- Local groups and organisations' survey
- Survey of sports national governing bodies and local sports clubs.

In addition to the above a series of one to one stakeholder interviews was undertaken; and existing consultation findings, strategy documents and other relevant material were reviewed.

4.2 General Community Consultation

This section provides consultation findings that cover all aspects of open space, informal sport and outdoor recreation provision. It provides a useful overview across all these aspects rather than simply from groups and organisations with specific interests in just one aspect of open space and active recreation. This contrasts, for example, with the other sections of the report which supply findings from individuals, groups and organisations with specific interests in individual elements of open space, informal sport and recreation. The section provides findings from the Citizen's Panel/Household survey and Public Health stakeholders.

4.2.1 Quantity

- Over 60% suggest a shortfall of: facilities for teenagers; informal open spaces - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc. and wildlife areas/nature reserves.
 - Following this, other aspects where there was considered to be an overall shortfall by a majority were: country parks, countryside and woodlands; footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths; allotments; and artificial turf pitches.
-

- A clear majority thought that overall there *are* enough grass playing field; parks, gardens and recreation grounds; and areas for water recreation (e.g. fishing, sailing etc.).
- Smaller majorities think that in general there is no need for additional play areas, tennis courts and bowling greens.

4.2.2 Quality

For all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they were of average or better quality (though the most common rating tended to be only "average"). However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality as noted below.

- 48% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor.
- The quality of tennis courts and bowling greens - and artificial turf pitches - was rated as poor or worse by at least 35% of respondents.
- In contrast some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated relatively highly in terms of quality. These include: parks and recreation grounds (56% rate quality in general as being good or very good); country parks/countryside/woodlands (48% similarly); and play areas (48%).

4.2.3 Access

- There is great variance in respondent households willingness to spend time travelling to different types of facility and open space.
- a majority (53%) of users are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to visit a wildlife area/nature reserve. Significant numbers are also willing to travel that long to visit other kinds of open spaces/facilities, for example: tennis courts and bowling greens (46%); country parks, countryside and woodlands (46%); areas for water recreation (44%); and artificial turf pitches (42%).
- In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, allotments, and informal open space areas - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc).

4.2.4 Priorities and other issues

- In relation to open space and outdoor facilities the category highlighted by the largest number of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision was better footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision (60%).
- 72% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route to open spaces and facilities was improved. 76% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.
- Other notable high priorities for improvement noted by significant numbers were for country parks, accessible countryside/woodlands, and nature reserves/wildlife areas (at least 47%); parks/gardens/local recreation grounds (45%); informal open spaces (44%); and children's play areas/ facilities for teenagers (35%/33%).

- Access to areas for water recreation also scored quite highly as a priority need (a combined high/medium priority choice for 68% of households - 42% medium/26% high).
- Providing opportunities for physical activity by developing and maintaining appropriate facilities such as sports and leisure centres, parks and open spaces is very important in relation to promoting better public health and reducing health inequalities.
- Some sectors of the community face particular barriers to access such as disabled people; children and young people; households in the more isolated rural areas and those in the more deprived urban wards of the study area.

4.3 Key Findings - Outdoor (non-pitch) sports and active recreation

4.3.1 General points and observations

Range of sports and recreation activities making use of open space

In general, the amount of activity detailed demonstrates the range of outdoor sport and recreation taking place in the Braintree District Council area and the value of the open space facilities and resources which are used. All the trends suggest that use of outdoor space for health and fitness activities is growing – and there is tremendous scope for the greater linking and development of outdoor resources to serve this market (see below).

Growing importance of linkages between health and fitness and sport.

With changes in public health management and revenue streams, linking fitness, sport and health can access new areas of funding; moreover the advantages to community health in increasing fitness levels is now receiving political support. Many initiatives and opportunities are possible: e.g. the idea of linking sports sites with trim trails, outdoor fitness equipment etc (using sports facilities as a base and green infrastructure and open space as resources). Associated with this, there is rapidly growing activity and demand for ‘individual fitness activities’ - walking, running and cycling, using existing facilities and open space resources.

Schools and Colleges

Many of the Secondary Schools and Colleges have a range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities but the degree of community use is varied. There are differing management arrangements and levels of commitment to ongoing use. Securing greater and more reliable/consistent access to school and college facilities would be of significant value to local clubs and the wider community.

Maintaining a rural network of facilities

Recreation Grounds, tennis courts, multi use games areas and bowling greens are important sports facilities in rural areas. Maintaining these facilities with quality surfaces and ancillary facilities can be difficult; financial support is often required. Comments from clubs emphasise

the ongoing issues of sourcing finance for upgrades to changing facilities and maintaining good quality grounds.

4.3.2 Sports Specific Points

Tennis

- Braintree District is not a priority area currently for the regional LTA. This means it will not be a priority in relation to securing LTA funding for facility improvements.
- Most tennis facilities are provided via local tennis clubs.
- Public Tennis courts are available at a small number of sites including Great Notley Country Park, Braintree & Bocking Public Gardens, Witham Leisure Centre and Halstead Leisure Centre. There are a number of additional courts in some of the parishes.
- Earls Colne Golf and Country Club supply tennis courts including indoor tennis provision within a "dome" type facility.
- There are 13 tennis clubs noted in the District Council's Community Mapping database.
- Stakeholders have not identified a need for additional tennis courts in Braintree District.
- The reported quality of club facilities varies quite considerably for example Silver End and Gosford report many aspects of quality as being unsatisfactory whereas Braintree rate quality aspects as being either good or at least adequate.
- Individual clubs have various plans and aspirations to improve their own facilities.
- Braintree Tennis Club notes that their site is owned by the District Council and that it is earmarked for development. They add "until we know that we will be moving (and when this is likely to happen) we are reluctant to invest all our funds in improvements needed at the current site".

Athletics

- England Athletics believe that that overall there are sufficient facilities for athletics in Braintree District.
 - They note that the athletics track at Tabor High School/Braintree Leisure Centre (the base for Braintree and District Athletics Club) is the most important facility in Braintree District.
 - Stakeholders highlight the likely need in the medium term for improvements to the track at Braintree Leisure Centre.
 - The Braintree and District Athletics Club specifically highlights a need for improvement to general athletic facilities: the state of the track; lighting and equipment such as starting blocks.
 - The club also aspires to a club house facility; a small stand to host spectators; and a toilet facility at the track rather than in the main sport centre.
 - There are opportunities in building on the recreational running strategy to increase number of new runners through new Run England 3-2-1 routes or trails in local parks.
-

Bowls

- Essex was a priority "hot spot" area for bowls and Active Essex worked in partnership with the Bowls Development Alliance from 2013-15 to increase participation levels. The BDA funding has ended however meaning Active Essex no longer have the capacity to provide the level of support and programme delivery that clubs received over this period.
- On the Active Essex club data base there are 8 outdoor clubs registered in Braintree District (some clubs are privately owned). There are also a number of other clubs and greens in the parishes. There are no District Council managed greens but Mill Lane Bowls Club in Witham lease their facilities from the Council.
- Broadly speaking stakeholders indicate that there appear to be sufficient outdoor greens to meet current demand via the local clubs and parish facilities.
- In general the quality of facilities and access to them are good/adequate, though some clubs have plans and aspirations for improvements.
- Active Essex note that a lot of the clubs do not have wheel chair access to both the green and the pavilion restricting the number of disabled people playing the sport. (Sport England targets for the BDA is to increase disabled people 16-54 years playing bowls)
- A number of bowling clubs are sustaining (some even increasing) their current levels of membership but a challenge for all of them is attracting new members, particularly younger players.
- There is potential for club development and increased membership given the age demographic of the District Council area.

Netball

- Netball England is currently conducting a facilities audit which may feed into a facilities strategy.
- The most important facilities for netball in Braintree District are Braintree Leisure Centre and Braintree College.
- Netball England would like to see more netball in the north of Essex. There is a lack of adult and junior netball opportunities in Braintree District. The few junior clubs that exist are at capacity.
- Stakeholders indicate a potential need for additional good quality outdoor floodlit courts; and better access to quality indoor courts provided at a reasonable cost.
- Netball leagues currently tend to run on a central venue league basis. Colchester and Chelmsford are the nearest so teams may travel to these centres to play. It is not clear that there is enough demand for a main netball centre in Braintree District.

Other (non-pitch) outdoor sports/active recreation

- The Active Braintree programme includes active recreation as well as sport. One current project is aimed at encouraging more people to walk regularly (The Walkabout Group). The rights of way network is an important "facility". Securing and promoting good links in the rights of way network between town and country is important.

- Cycling is another important aspect of active recreation. The Council supports a number of led recreational cycle rides. There is also a district cycling map – highlighting traffic free cycle routes. The further development of safe cycling routes should be considered.
- The Braintree BMX Club provides an excellent track that attracts riders from a wide catchment.
- Health benefits – GP referral could be extended to many forms of active recreation. Many more people take part in informal active recreation than play formal sports.

4.4 Parks, green spaces, countryside and rights of way

This section covers consultation responses and findings in relation to non-sporting recreational open spaces, including parks and gardens, natural green spaces, countryside and water recreation, allotments, recreations grounds and rights of way.

Consultation undertaken for this section included key stakeholder interviews and surveys, plus a survey of relevant (non sports) groups and organisations.

4.4.1 Overview and Context

- Natural England stress the need to take into account the ANGst standard as a starting point for developing a standard for natural and semi natural green space. Variations from this standard should be justified.
- The Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard (WAS - endorsed by Natural England) provides guidance on access to Woodland, which should be taken into consideration.
- The Essex Wildlife Trust published an access to Natural Greenspace Analysis document in 2009, which lays out standards of access that should be expected. GIS layers and datasets are available to facilitate the development of future greenspace strategic planning.
- The emerging Braintree District Council Tree Strategy will provide an important tool to help develop future woodland access for residents.
- Many stakeholders and community groups have noted that the transfer of maintenance and management of parks and green space to parish councils/community organisations can be a positive step in maintaining quality standards.

4.4.2 Quantity

- A majority of People's Panel respondents thought that overall there were enough parks, gardens and recreation grounds (59%) and areas for water recreation (59%) to meet local need.
 - In contrast a majority of Panel respondents thought that overall there were not enough footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (58%); country parks, accessible countryside and woodlands (59%); wildlife areas and nature reserves (62%); allotments (55%); and informal open spaces (62%).
-

4.4.3 Quality

General Observations:

- Various kinds of green spaces were rated highly in terms of quality by the People's Panel. These include: parks and recreation grounds (56% rate quality in general as being good or very good); and country parks/countryside/woodlands (48%).
- Council budgetary reductions noted by stakeholders suggests the focus is primarily to manage and maintain the current quality standards rather than develop and improve them.
- Reported examples of good quality provision in the district include the Flitch Way cycle route, and the Discovery Centre in Great Notley.
- High satisfaction levels are recorded with parks and recreation grounds and natural open space provision.

Community Groups Survey

- Wildlife areas proved the highest rating typology with 71% of the groups are happy with the provision (rating them as good or very good)
- Local Parks and Country Parks also score highly with 41% and 47% respectively rating them good or very good.
- The quality of allotment provision was rated poor or inadequate by 78% of respondents expressing a view on the typology, similarly 80% of respondents expressing a view on Water Recreation provision.
- The ratings of footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths are not considered high with 65% rating them only adequate, or poor. Litter, connectivity and maintenance were highlighted as issues.

4.4.4 Access

- Improvements to the cycle network in Braintree proposed by Sustrans would facilitate access to important visitor sites such as the Discovery Centre where access and parking has already been noted as an issue.
- There is limited access to bridleways for the horse-riding community; – examples of problems with connectivity of bridleways in areas such as Great Notley Country Park are proposed projects for improvement.
- Interpretation and access work being undertaken on the Hoppit Mead nature reserve are an example of best practice, using local knowledge to create interactive and exciting information trails.
- PROW examples of newly launched walks demonstrate effective and creative ways of developing and funding new publicly accessible routes.

4.4.5 General Comments

- There is a wealth of well-researched and reported data and action plans regarding parks and open spaces in Braintree.
-

- The devolution of management of parks, allotments and other sites to Parish Councils/community organisations is referred to by a number of key stakeholders and community interest groups in a positive light.
- The process of writing management plans for all key Local Nature Reserve Sites by the planning and sustainable development team demonstrates good long term planning for sustaining key wildlife and nature sites.
- The need for good, safe cycle access to open spaces is highlighted as a priority by stakeholders, including Natural England and Sustrans.

4.5 Children and young people

This section provides feedback and information relating to play and youth facilities. It considers information and views provided by various stakeholders including Braintree District Council, Essex County Council, Play England and play and youth organisations across the district.

4.5.1 Quantity

- Youth play provision is generally considered underprovided for across the District with 66% of the 2015 People's Panel survey answering that there were not enough facilities for older children and teenagers.
- Play and youth organisations also highlight a shortage of teenage provision. A shortage of youth shelters/informal hangouts and teen facilities are particularly notable with 53% of respondents stating there were not enough of such facilities.
- 53% of People's Panel respondents thought there were enough play areas for younger children (12 and under).
- 47% of play/youth organisations respondents were happy with the quantity of formal equipped playgrounds for younger children (under 13's). They believe that informal and natural open spaces suitable for play are not so well provided for with 44% stating there is not enough.
- The play/youth organisations suggest that outdoor informal sport provision is the least well catered for with 47% of respondents considering there to be not enough provision for the under 12s.
- Survey comments note a requirement for informal sports facilities suitable for younger children (e.g. FISAs - Family Inclusive Sports Areas) and also increased provision for toddlers – (under 5's).

4.5.2 Quality

- In general residents are happy with the quality of play areas across the District (48% of the People's Panel respondents rated them as being very good or good - only 8% rated them as poor or very poor). The rating for parks is also high (56% rating them as very good or good).
- Children's play areas and local parks also scored the highest satisfaction levels with local groups - almost 50% rated them as either good, or very good).

- 'Other open spaces' and 'natural green spaces' were considered to be 'adequate' by 41% of group respondents – and 16% rated them as good.
- In contrast only 17% of People's Panel respondents rated the quality of youth facilities as being good or very compared - 48% rated them as poor or very poor.
- There were also much lower levels of satisfaction overall with outdoor youth facilities from the play and youth organisations with 28% of respondents rating them poor and a further 6% - very poor.
- Stakeholders generally, however, considered the provision of skate park facilities in particular as being of a reasonable quality.
- Natural and adventure play spaces are considered the top priority for investment and improvement by a majority of play/youth organisation respondents, followed by recognised spaces for young people to meet outdoors.

4.5.3 Access

- Organisational respondents noted the difficulty with access to local provision in some more rural areas – citing poor public transport, long walks or general inaccessibility as barriers to access.
- Disability groups have identified a range of access needs, which should be taken into consideration as part of any new playground design and installation; along with guidance recommended by Play England.
- The Discovery Centre acts as a 'destination site' with users making journeys to reach the site from across the district and beyond.
- The costs of parking may prove an access barrier to users of the Discovery Centre / Great Notley Country Park with a £3 charge levied.

4.5.4 Other Issues / General Observations

- The emphasis made by Essex County Council youth workers on teens needing 'social spaces' is fully supported by the survey findings with the highest priority for improvements being places to meet outdoors rather than any more formal play provision.
- The emphasis on dedicated teenage spaces comes from all respondents to the community groups survey – not just those working with teenagers.
- The Play England campaign for Natural Play, and the National Trust emphasis on outdoor activity is supported through the findings of this study with respondents keen to see more provision of this type.
- Play England supply good practice guidance on play space design (Design for Play), Managing Risk in Play Provision and recommend Inclusion by Design by the Kids organisation for specific guidance on play space design principles for disabled children.

4.6 Neighbouring authorities, locality areas and town/parish councils

This section provides information and feedback from neighbouring local authorities, locality managers and local parish and town councils. It is important to consult with neighbouring local authorities under the "duty to co-operate" requirement.

4.6.1 Key Findings Neighbouring Local Authorities – Cross Boundary Issues

The variety of documents and strategies in place (and their relevance to current planning policy) is considerable, embracing green infrastructure studies, open space strategies, and sport, recreation and play strategies. The approach adopted by each authority is very much locally derived.

It is noteworthy that few strategies currently appear to look in depth at cross boundary issues or identify networks of green infrastructure or open space which cross local authority boundaries; and officers highlight a relatively small number of specific cross border issues and plans (with the notable exception of Basildon – see the full Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report for details).

It is also notable that many authorities are currently involved with commissioning new open space related studies or updating previous strategies that are out of date.

There is scope for neighbouring local authorities to work more together to make the most of accessible natural green space resources and to develop some common themes and agendas. It is suggested that much could be learnt in regard to best practice by better sharing of information between authorities and ensuring that local authority strategies afford some importance to considering developments and proposals in neighbouring authorities.

4.6.2 Town/Parish Councils

General Overview

- The individual town/parishes are very different in relation to size, demographics, geography, needs and demand/aspirations. It is important that the study takes this variation into account.
- All of the parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and facilities.
- 9 of the 11 local councils reported that there was a need for additional or improved open space, sport, play and recreation facilities within their town or parish.
- Most of the parishes were not aware if there was scope for greater community use of outdoor sport and recreation spaces at local schools but two of the parishes (Bromfield and Great Waltham) highlighted potential for community use (see below).
- The sector of the community most commonly identified as being poorly served in relation to their needs were young people/teenagers.

Common areas of concern

For the parish councils, the areas of most common concern are:

- The need for more and better access to footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths.
- The need for additional Multi-use games areas/tennis courts in some parishes (primarily MUGAs).
- Not enough areas for teenagers e.g. skateparks, shelters etc. and the quality of existing play areas.
- Winter pitches for football and rugby - need for more and improvements in quality.

Quality considerations

The quality factors most commonly deemed to be of a high priority as regards recreational public open spaces are that:

- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained
- They should be safe and secure for those using them
- They should be easy to get to for all members of the community
- There should be adequate opportunities for dog walking and freedom from dog fouling
- They should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.

It is also thought important by most parish councils that public open spaces should be easy to get around by all members of the community.

Detailed responses on open space typologies

Many of the parish councils provided detailed responses relating to aspects of quantity and quality of the various elements of open spaces surveyed. These responses can be found in the associated excel spreadsheet.

4.7 Concluding remarks

The survey work, stakeholder consultation, desk-based research and group sessions have highlighted a wide range of issues of value to the wider Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facility Study. There is a strong degree of consistency across the various sources on key areas of local need and aspiration from which we can be confident that the findings are robust and reliable, providing a strong evidence base to be combined with the detailed facilities audit.

5.0 AUDIT OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE ASSETS

5.1 General approach

This section sets out the proposed typologies which will have standards developed or have been included within the quantitative or access analysis. The typologies of open space have drawn on guidance provided within PPG17, and through discussions with the project Steering Group. The agreed list of typologies are seen to be locally derived and appropriate for the type and range of open spaces that exist within Braintree. The following typologies are proposed:

Table 6 Braintree typologies

Typologies with standards	Typologies mapped but no standards ⁵
Formal provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments • Amenity Green Space (>0.15ha) • Park and Recreation Grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoor sports space (Pitches) - Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed) - Outdoor Sports Space (Private) • Play Space (Children) • Play Space (Youth) • Natural Green Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education sites • Churchyard and Cemetery

5.1.1 Allotments



Allotments provide areas for people to grow their own produce and plants. It is important to be clear about what is meant by the term 'Allotment'. The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 obliged local authorities to provide sufficient allotments and to let them to persons living in their areas where they considered there was a demand.

⁵ An explanation for not developing standards for these typologies is outlined in the following sections

The Allotment Act of 1922 defines the term ‘allotment garden’ as:

“an allotment not exceeding 40 poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family”

(n.b. 40 Poles equals 1,210 square yards or 1,012 square metres. A Pole can also be known as a Rod or Perch.)

The Allotments Act of 1925 gives protection to land acquired specifically for use as allotments, so called Statutory Allotment Sites, by the requirement for the need for the approval of Secretary of State in event of sale or disposal. Some allotment sites may not specifically have been acquired for this purpose. Such allotment sites are known as “temporary” (even if they have been in use for decades) and are not protected by the 1925 legislation.

5.1.2 Amenity Green Space



The category is considered to include those spaces open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out nor managed for a specific function such as a park, public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat. These areas of open space will be of varied size, but are likely to share the following characteristics:

- Unlikely to be physically demarcated by walls or fences.
- Predominantly lain down to (mown) grass.
- Unlikely to have identifiable entrance points (unlike parks).
- They may have shrub and tree planting, and occasionally formal planted flower beds.
- They may occasionally have other recreational facilities and fixtures (such as play equipment or ball courts).

Examples might include both small and larger informal grassed areas in housing estates and general recreation spaces. They can serve a variety of functions dependent on their size, shape, location and topography. Some may be used for informal recreation activities, whilst others by themselves, or else collectively, contribute to the overall visual amenity of an area.

It should be noted that sites <0.15ha were not mapped or included within the quantity analysis or quality audit.

5.1.3 Park and Recreation Grounds



This typology brings together the function of Parks and Recreation Grounds and Outdoor Sports Space as identified in the former PPG17 typology. The distinction between the two typologies in the study area is blurred, with very few formal gardens and many parks and/or outdoor sports space having multi-functions used for both informal and formal recreation. The consultation undertaken indicated that people refer to their local park or rec, and communities do not make a distinction between outdoor sports space and parks and recreation grounds. Therefore, for the study an overarching typology for Park and Recreation Grounds has been used comprising three elements:

- **Park and Recreation Ground.** This comprises the general open space surrounding play areas, sports facilities etc. used for general recreation.
- **Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches).** This comprises publicly accessible sports pitches (including football and rugby).
- **Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed).** This comprises all other non-pitch based provision including publicly accessible tennis courts and bowling greens.

Parks and Recreation Grounds take on many forms, and may embrace a wide range of functions including:

- Play space of many kinds
- Provision for a range of formal pitch and fixed sports
- Provision of outdoor gyms and fitness trails
- Informal recreation and sport
- Providing attractive walks and cycle routes to work
- Offering landscape and amenity features
- Areas of formal planting
- Providing areas for 'events'
- Providing habitats for wildlife
- Dog walking

The multi-functional approach to mapping has provided detail to the range of functions that exist within parks and recreation grounds, with all outdoor sport and play facilities being mapped (see section 2.3.2). This has meant that more accurate assessment of these facilities can be undertaken.

The recommended standards for this typology (set out in Section 6 below) are intended to provide sufficient space. The Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy deals with some of the detail i.e. supply of pitches and how they will be laid out.

5.1.4 Play Space (Children and Youth)



It is important to establish the scope of the study in terms of this kind of space. Children and young people will play/'hang out' in almost all publicly accessible "space" ranging from the street, town centres and squares, parks, playing fields, "amenity" grassed areas etc. as well as the more recognisable play and youth facility areas such as equipped playgrounds, youth shelters, BMX and skateboard parks, Multi-use Games Areas etc. Clearly many of the other types of open space covered by this study will therefore provide informal play opportunities.

To a child, the whole world is a potential playground: where an adult sees a low wall, a railing, kerb or street bench, a child might see a mini adventure playground or a challenging skateboard obstacle. Play should not be restricted to designated 'reservations' and planning and urban design principles should reflect these considerations.

The study has recorded the following:

- **Children's Play Space** – Areas of play that cater for the needs of children up to and around 12 years. Play Areas are an essential way of creating safe but adventurous places for children of varying ages to play and learn. The emphasis in play area management is shifting away from straightforward and formal equipment such as slides and swings towards creating areas where imagination and natural learning can flourish through the use of landscaping and natural building materials and the creation of areas that need exploring.
- **Youth Play Space** - informal recreation opportunities for, broadly, the 13 to 16/17 age group, and which might include facilities like skateboard parks, basketball courts and

‘free access’ Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). In practice, there will always be some blurring around the edges in terms of younger children using equipment aimed for youths and vice versa.

Teenagers should not be ignored, it is important to create areas for ‘hanging out’ such as shelters and providing them with things to do such as bike ramps. Currently recognisable provision for teenagers is few and far between.

5.1.5 Outdoor Sport (Private)

Outdoor sports space with limited public access (e.g. private sports grounds), have also been recorded and mapped where known. Private sport space makes up an important part of outdoor sports provision across the District, and forms an important part of the community facilities. The private sports spaces have been mapped separately to publicly accessible sites, to determine exact provision of the different types of provision.

5.1.6 Churchyards

The District has many churches and cemeteries and these provide significant aesthetic value and space for informal recreation such as walking and relaxing. Many are also important in terms of biodiversity, particularly closed churchyards. Their importance for informal recreation, aesthetic value and contribution towards biodiversity must be acknowledged, and as such, investment in their upkeep, maintenance and quality is an important factor. Churchyards and Cemeteries have been identified and mapped where known, however, no quantity or access standard for provision have been set, as it is outside the scope of this study to make recommendations related to requirements for new provision.

However, the quality of churchyards can be influenced by this study, particularly closed churchyards which have become the responsibility of the Local Authority. This reflects the priorities established through consultation, which identifies the need to provide and improve open spaces. Churchyards can provide important open space, particularly closed churchyards, where the ownership is often transferred to the local authority to manage and maintain.

5.1.7 Education

Many schools and colleges have open space and sports facilities within their grounds. This may range from a small playground to large playing fields with several sports pitches. More often than not, public access to these spaces is restricted and in many cases forbidden. Nevertheless, many of the sports facilities are used by local people on both an informal and formal basis.

Sports clubs may have local informal arrangements with a school to use their pitches, and in some cases more formal ‘dual-use’ agreements may be in place. School grounds can also contribute towards the green infrastructure and biodiversity of an area.

Quantity and access standards have not been proposed for education sites. This is because they are not openly accessible to the public and whilst important to the local community,

there is less opportunity for the District Council to influence their provision and management. However, their existence is still an important factor of local provision, and as such they will be subject to the same policy considerations as publicly accessible space. The Braintree playing pitch strategy also considers opportunities to encourage schools to sign up to legal agreements for community use.

5.1.8 Natural Green Space



For the purpose of this study, natural and semi-natural green space covers a variety of partly or wholly accessible spaces including meadows, woodland and copses all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and wildlife value, but which are also open to public use and enjoyment.

Research elsewhere (Natural England) and the local consultation for this study have identified the value attached to such space for recreation and emotional well-being. A sense of 'closeness to nature' with its attendant benefits for people is something that is all too easily lost in urban areas. Natural Green spaces can make important contributions towards local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and can also raise awareness of biodiversity values and issues. Some sites will have statutory rights or permissive codes allowing the public to wander in these sites. Others may have defined Rights of Way or permissive routes running through them. For the remainder of sites there may be some access on a managed basis.

Natural Green Spaces can form important 'green corridors' for both wildlife and people, especially when linked with the public rights of way network, cycle paths and rivers etc. These spaces form an important part of the Green Infrastructure of an area, and can be important in delivering ecosystem services and attracting visitors across administrative boundaries.

Many natural spaces may not be 'accessible' in the sense that they cannot be entered and used by the general community, but they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity. Although such spaces are not the subject of standards developed by this study, their value is recognised.

5.2 Existing provision of open space

5.2.1 Provision across the District

The following table shows the average existing provision of open space in hectares and ha/1000 population across the District.

Table 7 Summary of existing provision of open space across the District

Typology	Existing Provision (Ha)	Existing Provision (Ha/1000)
Allotments	31.19	0.21
Amenity Green Space	135.32	0.92
Park and Recreation Ground (Combined)	124.04	0.85
<i>Park and Recreation Ground</i>	<i>101.33</i>	<i>0.69</i>
<i>Outdoor Sport (Pitches)</i>	<i>21.65</i>	<i>0.15</i>
<i>Outdoor Sport (Fixed)</i>	<i>1.06</i>	<i>0.01</i>
Outdoor Sport (Private)	66.73	0.46
Play Space (Children)	7.96	0.05
Play Space (Youth)	1.77	0.01
Accessible Natural Green Space	414.77	2.83
Education	109.03	0.74
Churchyards and Cemeteries	54.92	0.37

5.2.2 Provision in Wards

Quantity Statistics

The following tables shows the average existing provision of open space in hectares (table 8) and ha/1000 population (table 9) for each of the wards in the District.

Table 8: Existing provision of open space (hectares) in wards

Ward	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (Combined)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Education	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Bocking Blackwater Ward	0.4	25.31	10.01	7.83	0.1	0.08	1.94	3.99	0
Bocking North Ward	1.28	18.14	4.58	1.25	0.13	0.01	0	2.32	2.98
Bocking South Ward	0.86	7.57	7.71	1.24	0.12	0.11	1.88	4.09	0.18
Braintree Central and Beckers Green Ward	0.26	2.9	4.91	13.72	0.13	0.01	0.38	9.51	0.55
Braintree South Ward	1.17	3.91	4.14	0	0.12	0.01	8.35	0	0
Braintree West Ward	0	12.52	0.68	0.49	0.3	0	13.72	17.72	5.21
Bumpstead Ward	0.74	6.55	4.21	0.33	0.26	0.03	3.73	0.71	2.3
Coggeshall Ward	2.92	2.06	3.84	16.31	0.47	0.03	46.49	8.59	4.5
Gosfield and Greenstead Green Ward	0.39	0.47	4.38	3.73	0.3	0.01	85.12	15.06	2.25
Great Notley and Black Notley Ward	0.22	9.18	5.22	0	1.74	0.06	50.92	4.64	0.5
Halstead St Andrews Ward	5.7	0.94	4.83	0	0.08	0	24.99	0.82	4.86
Halstead Trinity Ward	1.17	1.34	3.18	1.6	0.22	0.08	6.48	0.77	0.53
Hatfield Peverel and Terling Ward	4.1	6.86	5.51	7.62	0.36	0.06	19.41	1.84	3.61
Heddingham Ward	0.87	4.93	2.11	3.31	0.14	0.16	67.97	6.9	2.52
Kelvedon and Feering Ward	1.84	1.59	3.73	3.6	0.82	0.16	5.27	2.32	2.89
Rayne Ward	1.96	0.86	4.33	0	0.05	0.03	45.88	1.23	1.16
Silver End and Cressing Ward	0.59	2.9	9.64	1.19	0.19	0.1	7.68	11.91	1.53
Stour Valley North Ward	1.24	3.64	3.39	0	0.18	0.01	2.86	0.89	4.1
Stour Valley South Ward	2.36	1.64	5.46	1.15	0.07	0.01	0.62	0.31	2.8
The Colnes Ward	0.79	3.12	4.76	0	0.5	0.01	85.14	1.76	2.56
Three Fields Ward	0.46	7.49	11.99	2.21	0.73	0.02	6.21	1.5	3.94
Witham Central Ward	0	8.18	0	9.71	0.19	0	33.93	6.4	0.88
Witham North Ward	1.51	2.66	5.87	0	0.05	0.04	22.5	11.65	2.58
Witham South Ward	0	8.63	0	0	0.02	0	15.65	2.2	0
Witham West Ward	0	13.97	6.39	13.41	0.3	0.24	27.26	6.4	0
Yeldham Ward	0.63	1.52	5.98	0	0.39	0.51	0	0.67	2.52

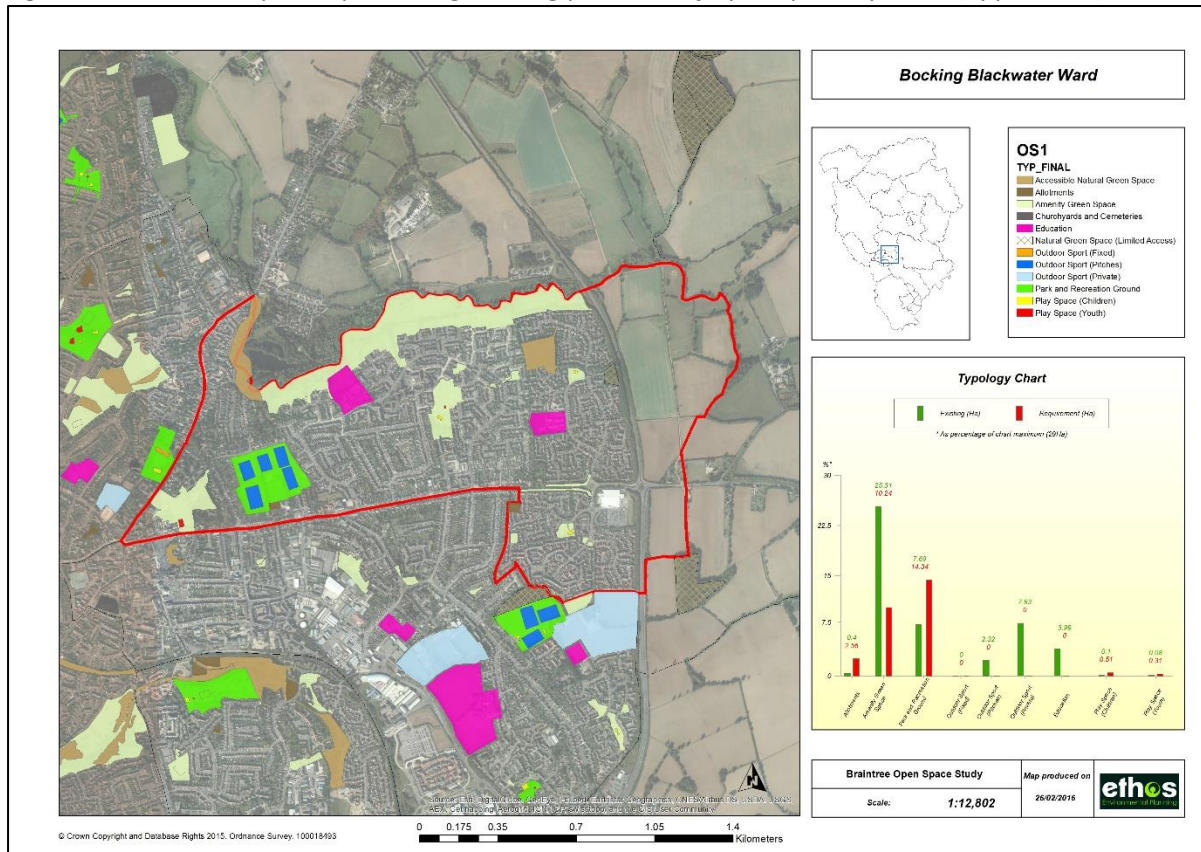
Table 9: Existing provision of open space (ha/1000 population) in wards

Ward	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (Combined)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Education	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Bocking Blackwater Ward	0.04	2.47	0.98	0.76	0.01	0.01	0.19	0.39	0
Bocking North Ward	0.25	3.51	0.89	0.24	0.03	0	0	0.45	0.58
Bocking South Ward	0.14	1.2	1.23	0.2	0.02	0.02	0.3	0.65	0.03
Braintree Central and Beckers Green Ward	0.03	0.31	0.53	1.48	0.01	0	0.04	1.03	0.06
Braintree South Ward	0.2	0.68	0.72	0	0.02	0	1.45	0	0
Braintree West Ward	0	2.05	0.11	0.08	0.05	0	2.25	2.9	0.85
Bumpstead Ward	0.25	2.22	1.42	0.11	0.09	0.01	1.26	0.24	0.78
Coggeshall Ward	0.5	0.35	0.65	2.77	0.08	0.01	7.88	1.46	0.76
Gosfield and Greenstead Green Ward	0.15	0.18	1.66	1.41	0.11	0	32.18	5.69	0.85
Great Notley and Black Notley Ward	0.02	1.02	0.58	0	0.19	0.01	5.67	0.52	0.06
Halstead St Andrews Ward	1.01	0.17	0.85	0	0.01	0	4.41	0.14	0.86
Halstead Trinity Ward	0.19	0.21	0.51	0.26	0.04	0.01	1.04	0.12	0.09
Hatfield Peverel and Terling Ward	0.69	1.15	0.92	1.28	0.06	0.01	3.26	0.31	0.61
Hedingham Ward	0.17	0.95	0.41	0.64	0.03	0.03	13.08	1.33	0.49
Kelvedon and Feering Ward	0.33	0.28	0.67	0.64	0.15	0.03	0.94	0.41	0.51
Rayne Ward	0.71	0.31	1.56	0	0.02	0.01	16.54	0.44	0.42
Silver End and Cressing Ward	0.09	0.46	1.55	0.19	0.03	0.02	1.23	1.9	0.24
Stour Valley North Ward	0.45	1.33	1.23	0	0.07	0	1.04	0.32	1.49
Stour Valley South Ward	0.8	0.56	1.86	0.39	0.02	0	0.21	0.11	0.95
The Colnes Ward	0.14	0.54	0.81	0	0.09	0	14.65	0.3	0.44
Three Fields Ward	0.08	1.35	2.16	0.4	0.13	0	1.12	0.27	0.71
Witham Central Ward	0	1.36	0	1.62	0.03	0	5.66	1.07	0.15
Witham North Ward	0.23	0.4	0.88	0	0.01	0.01	3.38	1.75	0.39
Witham South Ward	0	1.42	0	0	0	0	2.57	0.36	0
Witham West Ward	0	2	0.91	1.92	0.04	0.03	3.9	0.91	0
Yeldham Ward	0.23	0.55	2.17	0	0.14	0.18	0	0.24	0.91

Maps showing provision by Ward

Appendix 2 provides a map for each of the Wards within the District showing the provision of open space. An example map is shown in figure 8.

Figure 8 Example map showing existing provision of open space by ward (appendix 2)



6.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS

6.1 Introduction

Following the completion of the assessment of local needs and the audit of provision (the first two steps of this study), new standards of provision for open space are proposed below. The following section explains how the standards for the Braintree District have been developed, and provides specific information and justification for each of the typologies where standards have been proposed.

The standards for open space have been developed in-line with the new NPPF. Standards comprise the following components:

- **Quantity standards:** These are determined by the analysis of existing quantity, consideration of existing local and national standards and benchmarks and evidence gathered from the local needs assessment. It is important that quantity standards are locally derived and are realistic and achievable. The recommended standards need to be robust, evidence based and deliverable through new development and future mechanisms of contributions through on site provision, Section 106 and when developed, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- **Accessibility standards:** These reflect the needs of all potential users including those with physical or sensory disabilities, young and older people alike. Spaces likely to be used on a frequent and regular basis need to be within easy walking distance and to have safe access. Other facilities where visits are longer but perhaps less frequent, for example country parks, can be further away. Consideration is also given to existing local or national standards and benchmarks
- **Quality standards:** The standards for each form of provision are derived from the quality audit, existing good practice and from the views of the community and those that use the spaces. Again, quality standards should be achievable and reflect the priorities that emerge through consultation.

The standards that have been proposed are for **minimum guidance levels of provision**. So, just because geographical areas may enjoy levels of provision exceeding minimum standards does not mean there is a surplus, as all such provision may be well used.

6.1.1 Review of Braintree Green Space Strategy (2008)

The previous Green Space Strategy (2008) adopted a primary typology approach to mapping. While this was in line with the PPG177 guidance at the time, the NPPF now requires 'local' standards, and as such, a more detailed approach has been adopted for this current study using multifunctional mapping (see section 2.3.2). The result of this is that the previous quantitative assessment is significantly different to the current approach. Key differences are:

- Equipped play areas within large parks were not mapped at all, whereas smaller sites

with an equipped area surrounded by amenity space were mapped wholly as play space. This is likely to have resulted in an over-calculation of the quantity of equipped play space, and an underestimation of the amount of amenity green space.

- In addition, no distinction was made between private sports and public sports grounds. This will have resulted in an over-calculation of the quantity of publicly accessible sports and recreational facilities.
- Rather than recording individual pitches, whole sites were mapped as sport and recreation, which will have contributed towards the over-calculation of sports and recreational facilities, and a possible under-calculation of amenity space.
- Many sites were also mapped as informal parks, whereas the current study has identified these as amenity green space due to the fact that they do not contain the multiple facilities that parks generally have. This is likely to have resulted in an under-calculation of amenity green space and an over-calculation of parks.

6.2 Allotments

Table 10 Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.25 ha/1000 population	480m (10 minutes' straight line walk time)

Existing national or local standards

National standards for allotments and other such open spaces are difficult to find. The closest thing to such standards appears to be those set out by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). These are as follows:

- Standard Plot Size = 330 sq yards (250sqm)
- Paths = 1.4m wide for disabled access
- Haulage ways = 3m wide
- Plotholders shed = 12sqm
- Greenhouse = 15sqm
- Polytunnel = 30sqm

The Braintree Green Space Strategy (2008) did not recommend quantity or access standards for allotments, although the subsequent SPD recommends a standard of 0.23ha/1000.

Braintree District Council work on a minimum size for each plot as being 125sqm with a minimum number of plots per site being 10.

Quantity standard for allotments

Quantity:

- 86% of all respondents from the household survey 'never' use allotments, meaning this is the least used type of open space;

- The existing average level of provision across the study area is 0.21 ha/1000;
- The household survey identified 55% of people felt there should be more allotments, however, 42% felt there are enough;
- Other consultation identified several areas where there are long waiting lists and an unmet demand for allotments;
- Discussions with Council Officers highlight the need to at least maintain existing levels of provision, and ensure new development provides allotments;
- The propensity for higher density new housing with smaller gardens is likely to increase demand;
- Recognition of an aging population and the health and wellbeing benefits associated with gardening;
- A minimum standard of 0.25 ha/1000 is therefore recommended for analysing existing provision and for new provision.

Access standard for allotments

- Responses received in relation to acceptable travel times to allotments from the household survey identified a mix in responses, with 34% wanting allotments within 5 minutes, 30% within 10 minutes and the remaining 40% more than 11 minutes;
- This suggests that people do not want to travel to far to reach their allotment and the majority of people are prepared to travel no more than 10 minutes' walk time;
- It is considered that the availability of allotments is more important than having them very close to home, nevertheless there is some demand for facilities relatively nearby. Therefore, a standard of no more than 10 minutes' walk time (480 metres straight line walk) is proposed.

Quality standards for allotments

Few comments were received in relation to the quality of allotments, furthermore the information gathered in relation to allotments is more difficult to assess in comparison to other types of open space. The reason for this is twofold: Firstly, the number of people who actually use allotments is very low compared to the numbers who use other types of open space and, therefore specific comments related to the quality of allotments are less frequent; Secondly, the majority of allotments sites are locked, and the quality audit only allows for assessment against key criteria such as the level of cultivation and general maintenance, which is less comprehensive than the assessments of other open space.

For allotments, a number of general recommendations are made in relation to quality, which should include the following:

- Well-drained soil which is capable of cultivation to a reasonable standard.
 - A sunny, open aspect preferably on a southern facing slope.
 - Limited overhang from trees and buildings either bounding or within the site.
 - Adequate lockable storage facilities, and a good water supply within easy walking distance of individual plots.
 - Provision for composting facilities.
-

- Secure boundary fencing.
- Good access within the site both for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Good vehicular access into the site and adequate parking and manoeuvring space.
- Disabled access.
- Toilets.
- Notice boards.

6.3 Amenity Green Space

Table 11 Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.0 ha/1000 population for sites > 0.15ha	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time

Existing national or local standards

There is no national guidance suggesting a standard for the provision of Amenity green space. The Fields in Trust (FIT) 'Six Acre Standard' proposes casual or informal playing space should be provided within housing areas as part of the overall standard. This is equivalent to 0.4 – 0.5 ha/1000 population of informal space for play.

The Braintree Green Space Strategy (2008) set a standard of 0.8ha/1000 people, which was based on the current provision in urban areas and the results from the household survey (47% thought there were enough and 40% thought there were not enough). However, as already discussed (under section 6.1.1), the provision of amenity green space would have been underestimated. The accessibility standard recommended was 5-10 minutes walking (400-800m).

Quantity standard for Amenity green space

- Existing average level of provision in the study area is 0.92 ha/1000 population (for sites greater than 0.15 ha in size);
- The household survey identified that 62% of people felt there was a need for more informal open space areas, whilst 37% felt there were enough;
- Provision varies greatly with some areas having no provision or falling well below the average, and others far exceeding it;
- Whilst people have identified the need for additional informal spaces, the current average levels of provision are high, and already exceed national standards. It is considered that a standard which exceeds the current average will not be achievable through new development, therefore, the aim should be to address shortfall in areas with identified deficiencies;
- Considering the above factors, a minimum standard of 1.0 ha/1000 is recommended for analysing existing provision and for new provision;
- For developments larger than 100 units, the minimum size of a space that will be considered acceptable and count towards open space provision is recommended to be 0.15 ha in size (about the size of a mini football pitch). This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity spaces which have no real recreation function. Any spaces below

this size will be acceptable in terms of their visual amenity, but would not count towards the required level of provision. Developments smaller than 100 units will accept smaller size spaces proportional to the size of the development.

- It is recommended that this provision is considered in tandem with provision of natural green space in new development, and the natural green space standard reflects this (section 6.6).

Access standard for amenity green space

- Consultation identified people want spaces relatively close to home (37% less than 5 mins, and 26% less than 10 mins), and that they access these spaces by foot (74%);
- Therefore, a recommended standard of 480 metres (10 minutes' walk time).

Quality standards for amenity green space

The audit of provision as well as the consultation has identified the importance attached by local people to open space close to home. The value of 'amenity green space' must be recognised especially within housing areas, where it can provide important local opportunities for play, exercise and visual amenity that are almost immediately accessible. On the other hand, open space can be expensive to maintain and it is very important to strike the correct balance between having sufficient space to meet the needs of the community for accessible and attractive space, and having too much which would be impossible to manage properly and therefore a potential liability and source of nuisance. It is important that amenity green space should be capable of use for at least some forms of public recreation activity.

It is therefore recommended that in addition to the minimum size threshold identified above, that all amenity green space should be subject to landscape design, ensuring the following quality principles:

- Capable of supporting informal recreation such as a kickabout, space for dog walking or space to sit and relax;
- Include high quality planting of trees and/or shrubs to create landscape structure and biodiversity value;
- Include paths along main desire lines (lit where appropriate);
- Be designed to ensure easy maintenance.

6.4 Park and Recreation Grounds

Table 12 Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.4 ha/1000 population for public and private provision	480 metres (10 minutes' straight line walk time)

Existing national and local policies

Fields in Trust (FIT), previously known as the National Playing Fields Association promoted the Six Acre Standard of 2.4 hectares (6 acres) per 1000 persons, but with a specific provision of 1.6-1.8 hectares per 1000 persons of outdoor sports space (and 0.8 hectares per 1000 people for children's play of which around 0.3 hectares should be equipped provision). The new FIT 'Benchmark Standards for Outdoor Sport and Play' also suggest similar overall levels of provision as a guide to local authorities, although FIT does accept the importance of developing locally researched standards.

The Braintree Core Strategy recommends a quantity standard of 1.2ha/1000 people for parks (in urban areas and rural settlements over 3000 people) and 2.0ha/1000 people for outdoor sports, resulting in a combined standard of 3.2ha/1000 people in urban areas and rural settlements over 3000 people, or 2.0ha/1000 people outside of this. These figures are significantly higher than the national average, and there are concerns over their deliverability and sustainability around delivering these quantity standards. As already discussed under section 6.1.1, the provision of parks and outdoor sports is likely to have been over-calculated, due to the way in which the sites were categorised and mapped e.g. no distinction between private sports grounds and public sports grounds. The new quantity standard recommended is based on up-to-date and detailed mapping and consultation results.

The access standards recommended in the 2008 GSS was 12.5 minutes walking (1km) for parks and 10-15 minutes driving (4-6km) for outdoor sports. The recent consultation carried out identifies that people want parks and recreation grounds close by, and the new access standard reflects this.

Quantity of park and recreation grounds

- Existing average level of provision in the study area is 0.85 ha/1000;
- There is an additional 0.46 ha/1000 of private sports space which includes a variety of uses (excluding Golf Clubs);
- The household survey identified the following in relation to this typology:
 - 59% of people felt there was enough local parks and recreation grounds;
 - 53% felt there were enough tennis courts and bowling greens;
- A proposed standard of 1.4 ha/1000 population is proposed for public and private parks and recreation grounds.
- It should be reiterated that this standard is intended to provide sufficient space. The Outdoor Sport and Playing Pitch Strategy deals with some of the detail i.e. supply of pitches and how they will be laid out.

Access standard for park and recreation grounds

- 32% of people want facilities within 5 minutes of home, with a further 34% within 10 minutes;
 - 92% of people walk to these facilities;
-

- A standard of 480 metres (10 minutes' walk time) is recommended.

Quality standards for park and recreation grounds

This type of provision was identified as the highest priority for improvement within the study area. National guidance relevant to this typology is provided in the 'Green Flag' quality standard for parks which sets out benchmark criteria for quality open spaces. For outdoor sports space, Sport England have produced a wealth of useful documents outlining the quality standards for facilities such as playing pitches, changing rooms, MUGAS and tennis courts plus associated ancillary facilities. The Rugby Football Union have provided guidance on the quality and standard of provision of facilities for rugby, and the England and Wales Cricket Board have provided guidance for cricket facilities. It is recommended that the guidance provided in these documents is adopted by the District councils, and that all new and improved provision seeks to meet these guidelines.

6.5 Play Space (children and youth)

Table 13 Summary of quantity and access standards

Typology	Quantity Standard	Access Standard
Children's Play Space	0.05 ha/1000 population	• 480m (10 minutes' straight line walk time)
Youth Play Space	0.03 ha/1000 population	• Youth Provision – 600m (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time)

Existing National and Local Policies

The FIT guidance recommends provision of 0.8 hectares per 1000 people for children's play of which around 0.3 hectares should be equipped provision. These standards have been criticised in recent years because they are often seen as undeliverable, and can result in a proliferation of play areas that can be difficult to maintain, as well as setting unrealistic aspirations in urban areas where insufficient land is available to provide facilities, especially higher density development on brownfield sites. An additional problem is that the current FIT guidance does not specifically cover the needs of most teenagers within the 'Standard Youth Provision'.

Standards for access, quality and quantity of children's play equipment were set out in the 'Braintree Green Space Strategy (GSS) 2008. Children's play spaces are defined as:

'Equipped play areas, skateboard areas and teenage shelters and other spaces with the primary purpose of providing opportunities for play and social interaction involving children and young people.'

The GSS recommends a quantity standard of 0.2ha/1000 people for children and young people. As already discussed (Section 6.1.1) the provision figure for play areas is likely to have been over-calculated as the typology covers whole sites, rather than just the equipped play area itself. 55% of respondents from urban areas thought there was insufficient play provision, whilst 51% from rural areas felt provision was 'about right'. There are concerns

about the deliverability and sustainability around delivering this quantity standard. The standards recommended within this study are based on up-to-date information.

Quantity standards for play

- Current average levels of provision of children's play space is 0.05 ha/1000 population, for youth space this is 0.01 ha/1000 population;
- The household survey identified that 53% of people felt there was sufficient children's play space, in contrast only 30% of people felt there was sufficient youth facilities, with 66% of people identifying a need for more;
- It is therefore recommended that existing levels of children's play facilities are maintained with a standard of 0.05 ha/1000, however, there is an increase in facilities for young people with a standard of 0.03 ha/1000.
- It should be reiterated that these are minimum standards for equipped provision and do not include the need for surrounding playable space as recommended by Play England⁶ i.e. this surrounding playable space will need to be provided in addition to the quantity standard.

Access standards for play

- The household survey identified that for children's play space 44% of people want facilities within 5 minutes and a further 37% within 10 minutes. For teenage facilities 29% of people wanted facilities within 5 minutes, with a further 30% willing to travel up to 10 minutes and 22% up to 15 minutes;
- 89% of people walk to children's facilities, the figure for teenage facilities is less with 59% walking, the rest using other modes (car, bus, bike).

In light of these findings, the following access standards are recommended:

- Children's provision – 480m (10 minutes' straight line walk time), and
- Youth Provision – 600m (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time).

Quality standards for play

Play England are keen to see a range of play spaces in all urban environments:

- A** Door-step spaces close to home
- B** Local play spaces – larger areas within easy walking distance
- C** Neighbourhood spaces for play – larger spaces within walking distance
- D** Destination/family sites – accessible by bicycle, public transport and with car parking.

Moving forward, Play England would like their new Design Guide; '*Design for Play*' to be referenced and added as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in standard configuration. Play England have also developed a '*Quality Assessment Tool*' which can be used to judge the quality of individual play spaces. It has been recommended that both Council's consider adopting this as a means of assessing the quality of play spaces in their

⁶ Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces

District. Play England also highlight a potential need for standards for smaller settlements and rural areas where the doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination hierarchy is unlikely to be appropriate.

Disability access is also an important issue for Play England and they would like local authorities to adopt the KIDS⁷ publication; *'Inclusion by Design'* as an SPD. Their most recent guidance document, *'Better Places to Play through Planning'* gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space and is considered as a background context for the standards suggested in this study.

The consultation also identified the potential for Family Inclusive Sports Areas (FISA), these are typically new or adapted multi-use games areas which provide a range of facilities and play options, as suggested for the whole family. Braintree is yet to have a FISA within its provision, but consideration should be given to this in seeking new provision in the future.

6.6 Natural Green Space

For Natural Green Space, there are a number of national standards recommended by Natural England and the Woodland Trust, which are summarised below.

6.6.1 Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt)

- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometre of home;
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home.

6.6.2 Local standards

For this purpose of this study, it is recommended that the analysis should include both the Natural England ANGSt and the Woodland Trust standards to identify current levels of provision and gaps.

It is also recommended that local standards are adopted for providing new levels of provision through new development. It is recommended that this provision is considered in tandem with provision of amenity green space in new development. The aim would be to provide guidance for development to provide amenity/natural green spaces which have both a recreational value and biodiversity value through native planting. There should be a move away from providing numerous small amenity grass area, to providing fewer, larger amenity/natural spaces in new development. This is reflected in the natural green spaces standards below:

⁷ KIDS, is a charity which in its 40 years, has pioneered a number of approaches and programmes for disabled children and young people. KIDS was established in 1970 and in 2003, KIDS merged with KIDSACTIVE, previously known as the Handicapped Adventure Play Association.

Table 14 Summary of natural provision standards

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)		Access standard
	For assessing current and future provision	Requirement from new development	
Natural Green Space	ANGSt	1.0 to include natural and amenity green space ⁸ .	ANGSt

Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) are excluded from this recommended standard, and would be expected to be provided in addition.

6.6.4 Quality of natural and semi-natural green space

Satisfaction levels with the quality of natural green space are above average, with over 60% of people in the household sample survey rating their quality as good or very good. Consultation results also highlight the value attached to certain attributes of open space, in particular:

- Good maintenance and cleanliness
- Ease of access
- Lack of antisocial behaviour, noise etc.

This suggests that the provision of new or improved open space cannot be considered in isolation from the means of maintaining such space, perceptions of antisocial behaviour, and ease of access from within the surrounding environment.

The shape and size of space provided should allow for meaningful and safe recreation. Provision might be expected to include (as appropriate) elements of woodland, wetland, heathland and meadow, and could also be made for informal public access through recreation corridors. For larger areas, where car borne visits might be anticipated, some parking provision will be required. The larger the area the more valuable sites will tend to be in terms of their potential for enhancing local conservation interest and biodiversity. Wherever possible these sites should be linked to help improve wildlife value as part of a network.

In areas where it may be impossible or inappropriate to provide additional natural green space consistent with the standard, other approaches should be pursued which could include (for example):

⁸ For developments larger than 100 units, the minimum size of a space that will be considered acceptable and count towards open space provision is recommended to be 0.15 ha in size (about the size of a mini football pitch). This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity/natural green spaces which have no real recreation or biodiversity function. Any spaces below this size will be acceptable in terms of their visual amenity, but would not count towards the required level of provision. Developments smaller than 100 units will accept smaller size spaces proportional to the size of the development.

- Changing the management of marginal space on playing fields and parks to enhance biodiversity.
- Encouraging living green roofs as part of new development/ redevelopment.
- Encouraging the creation of mixed species hedgerows.
- Additional use of long grass management regimes.
- Improvements to watercourses and water bodies.
- Innovative use of new drainage schemes / Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- Use of native trees and plants with biodiversity value in high quality soft landscaping of new developments.

The above should in any event be principles to be pursued and encouraged at all times. Further guidance in this regard should be included in appropriate SPDs.

6.7 Summary of open space standards

Table 15 Summary of open space standards

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)	Access standard
Allotments (and Community Gardens)	0.25	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Amenity Green Space	1.0 (see standard for Natural Green Space).	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Parks and Recreation Grounds (public and private)	1.4	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Children)	0.05	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Youth)	0.03	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Natural Green Space	1.0 to include natural and amenity green space for new provision	ANGSt for analysing existing provision
Churchyards and Cemeteries	None, but sites mapped and quantity analysed	None
Education	None, but sites mapped and quantity analysed	None
Total for new provision	2.73ha/1000	

7.0 APPLYING LOCAL STANDARDS

7.1 Introduction

This part of the report uses the recommended standards to analyse provision across the study area. This section provides an overview of provision across the District and individual Wards, with more detailed maps provided in appendix 2 and 3. This section includes:

Quantity analysis

The quantity of provision is assessed using the recommended quantity standards for each of the typologies where a quantity standard has been developed. Recommended standards are expressed as hectares of open space per 1000 people.

The quantity assessment looks at the existing levels of provision, then uses the recommended standard to assess the required level of provision. From this a calculation is made of the supply, which will either be sufficient or insufficient. Within this section, levels of provision are provided by ward.

For each typology, a table showing quantity analysis is shown, it provides:

- Existing provision (hectares);
- Required provision against the standards (hectares);
- Surplus or deficiency of Supply (hectares);

Access analysis

This section of the report provides analysis of the recommended access standards for each typology across the study area. The maps and analysis in this section are intended to be indicative, providing an overall picture of provision and highlighting any key issues across the study area.

However, the key to access analysis, is understanding the picture at a more localised level, therefore, maps showing local access provision by ward are included in appendix 3.

Quality analysis

This section of the report makes analysis of each typology across the study area – it highlights any common themes or issues that have arisen from the quality audit.

7.2 Application of quantity standards

7.2.1 Current supply against the Braintree standards

Table 16 shows the existing provision of open space in hectares for each typology for each of the Wards. The figures for 'Park and Recreation Grounds (Combined)' include a combination of the following typologies:

- Park and Recreation Ground;
- Outdoor Sport (Pitches);
- Outdoor Sport (Fixed);
- Outdoor Sport (Private).

This reflects the standard of 1.4 ha/1000 which covers both public and private facilities.

Table 16: Required provision of open space in urban analysis areas (hectares)

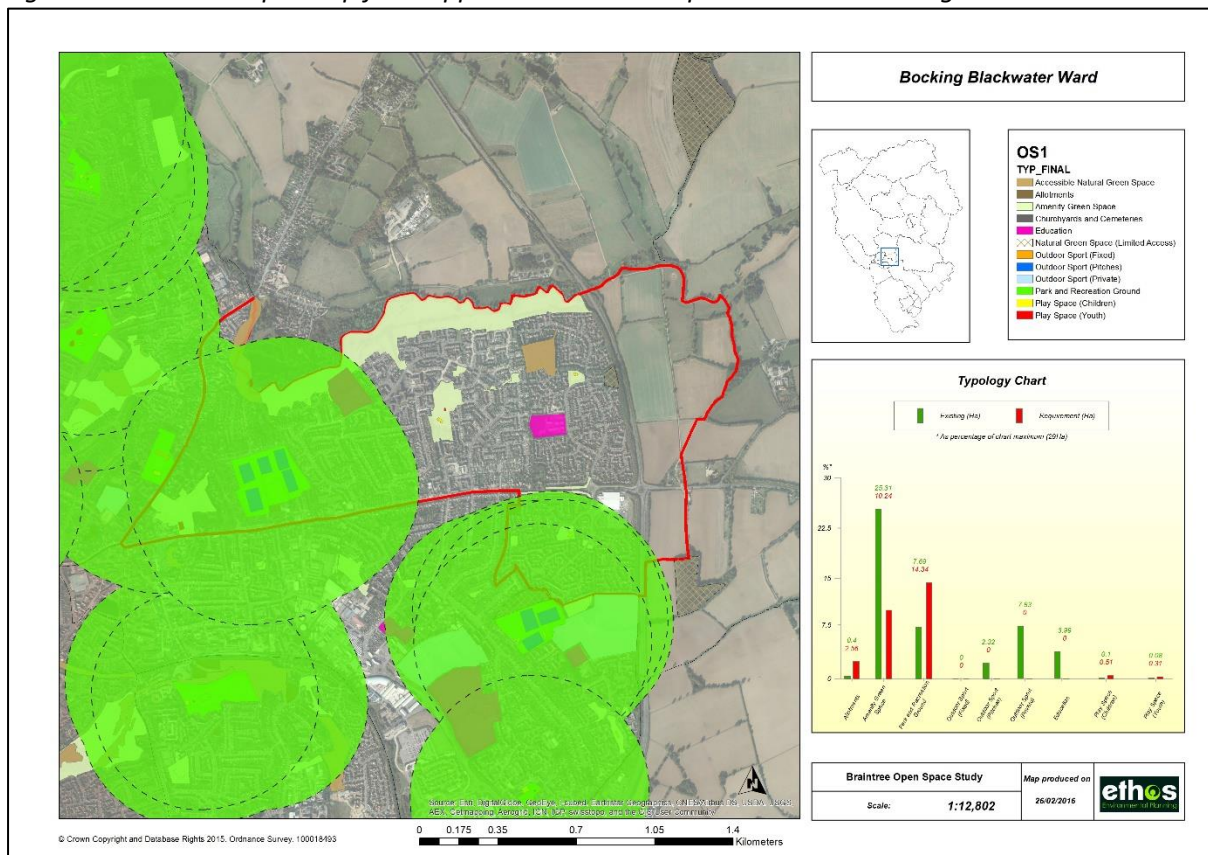
Ward	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (Public & Private Combined)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space
Bocking Blackwater Ward	-2.16	15.07	3.50	-0.41	-0.23	1.94
Bocking North Ward	-0.01	12.98	-1.40	-0.13	-0.14	0.00
Bocking South Ward	-0.72	1.27	0.12	-0.20	-0.08	1.88
Braintree Central and Beckers Green Ward	-2.05	-6.34	5.69	-0.33	-0.27	0.38
BraintreeSouthWard	-0.27	-1.84	-3.92	-0.17	-0.16	8.35
Braintree West Ward	-1.53	6.41	-7.38	-0.01	-0.18	13.72
Bumpstead Ward	0.00	3.60	0.40	0.11	-0.06	3.73
Coggeshall Ward	1.45	-3.84	11.89	0.18	-0.15	46.49
Gosfield and Greenstead Green Ward	-0.27	-2.17	4.41	0.17	-0.07	85.12
Great Notley and Black Notley Ward	-2.02	0.21	-7.34	1.29	-0.21	50.92
Halstead St Andrews Ward	4.28	-4.73	-3.11	-0.20	-0.17	24.99
Halstead Trinity Ward	-0.39	-4.90	-3.95	-0.09	-0.11	6.48
Hatfield Peverel and Terling Ward	2.61	0.91	4.80	0.06	-0.12	19.41
Hedingham Ward	-0.43	-0.27	-1.85	-0.12	0.00	67.97
Kelvedon and Feering Ward	0.43	-4.03	-0.54	0.54	-0.01	5.27
Rayne Ward	1.27	-1.91	0.45	-0.09	-0.05	45.88
Silver End and Cressing Ward	-0.97	-3.35	2.08	-0.12	-0.09	7.68
Stour Valley North Ward	0.55	0.90	-0.45	0.04	-0.07	2.86
Stour Valley South Ward	1.63	-1.30	2.50	-0.08	-0.08	0.62
The Colnes Ward	-0.66	-2.69	-3.38	0.21	-0.16	85.14
Three Fields Ward	-0.93	1.94	6.42	0.45	-0.15	6.21
Witham Central Ward	-1.50	2.18	1.31	-0.11	-0.18	33.93
Witham North Ward	-0.16	-4.00	-3.46	-0.28	-0.16	22.50
Witham South Ward	-1.52	2.55	-8.51	-0.28	-0.18	15.65
Witham West Ward	-1.75	6.98	10.01	-0.05	0.03	27.26
Yeldham Ward	-0.06	-1.24	2.12	0.25	0.43	0.00

Table 16 shows that provision varies across wards and typologies, with some meeting the standards and some falling below. There is insufficient youth provision across the majority of wards (with the exception of Witham West Ward and Yeldham Ward), whereas natural green space is in sufficient supply across all wards. Park and Recreation Grounds (Public and Private Combined) are in sufficient supply across over half of the wards, whereas all other typologies (with the exception of natural green space) are insufficient across the majority of wards. This will be an important consideration when determining the need for on-site open space in allocated housing sites.

7.3 Application of access standards

This section provides an overview of access to different types of open space typologies across the whole study area. The maps are intended to provide an overview and are for illustrative purposes only. More detailed maps by Ward are provided for each typology within appendix 3 (see example at figure 9).

Figure 9 Example map from appendix 3: access to parks and recreation grounds



7.3.1 Access to open space across the District

Figure 10 Access to allotments (480 metres)

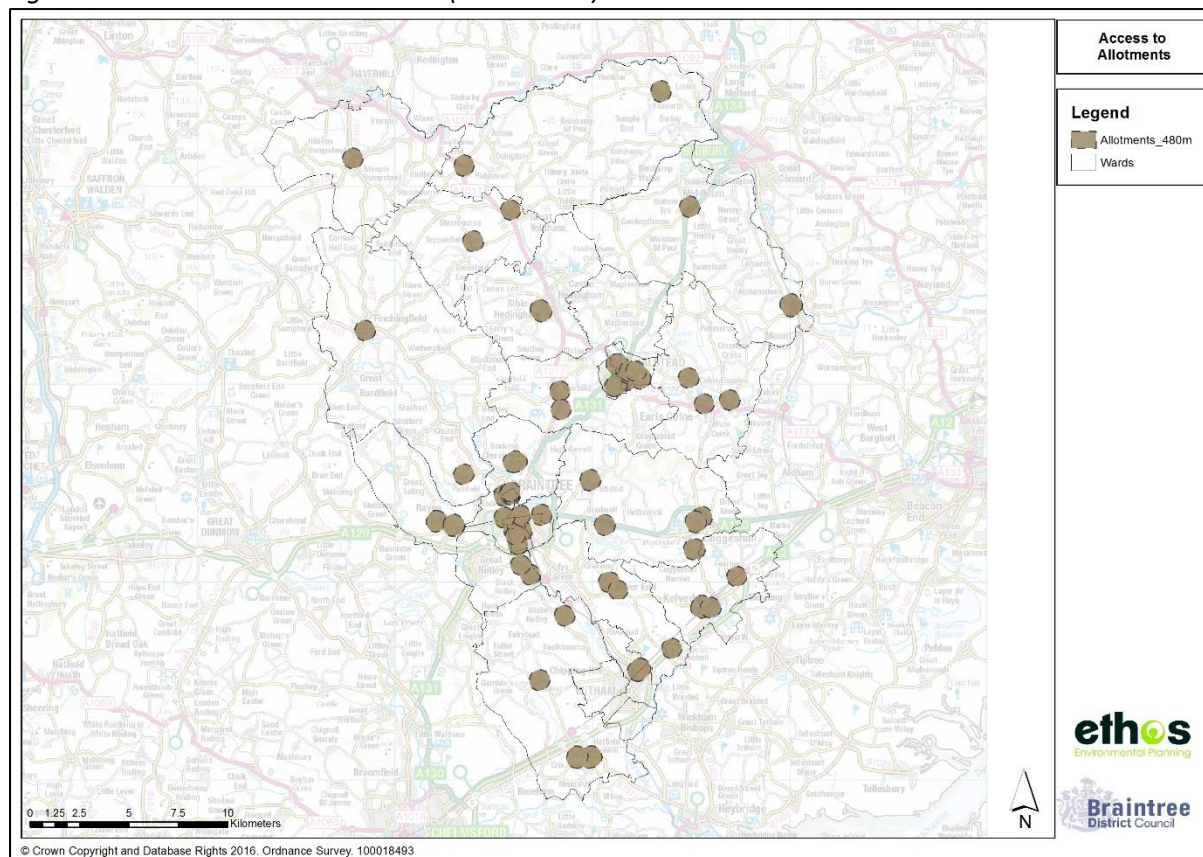


Figure 11 Access to amenity green space (480 metres)

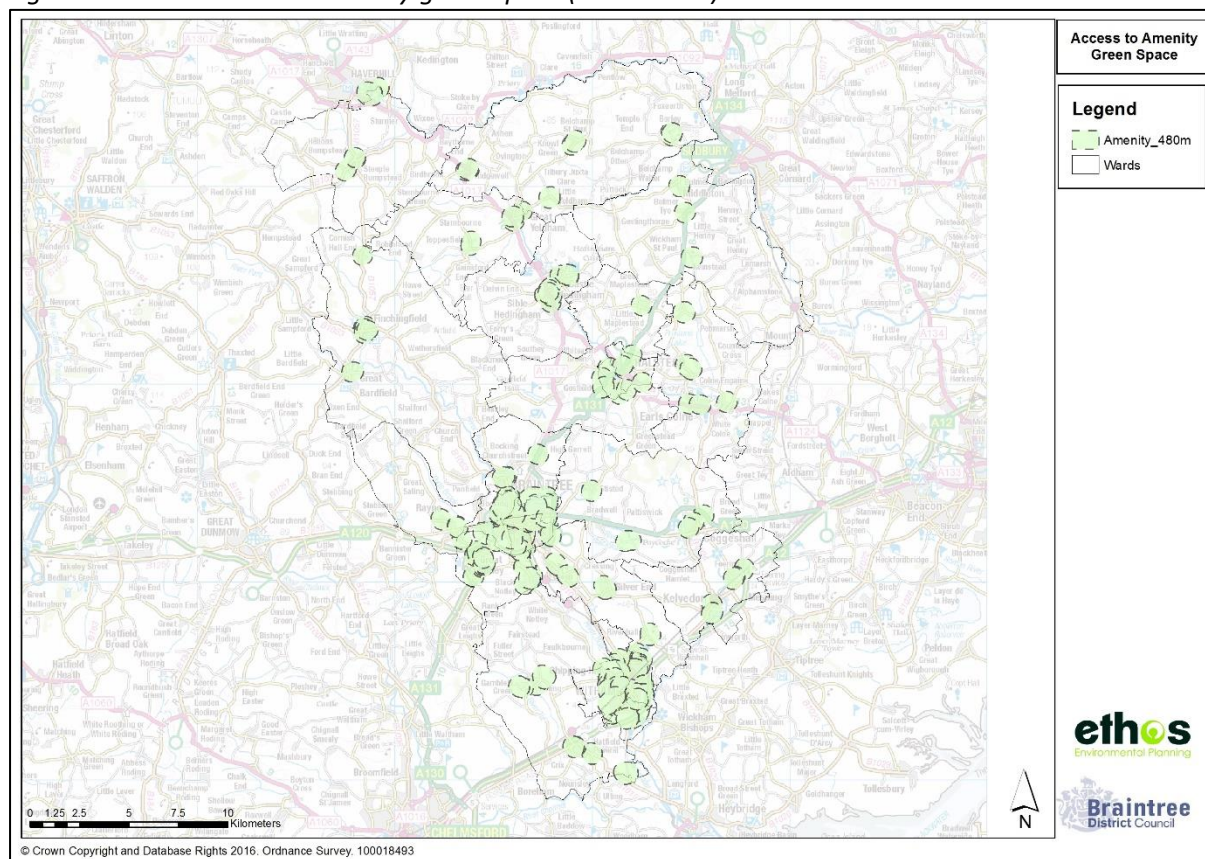


Figure 12 Access to parks and recreation grounds (480 metres)

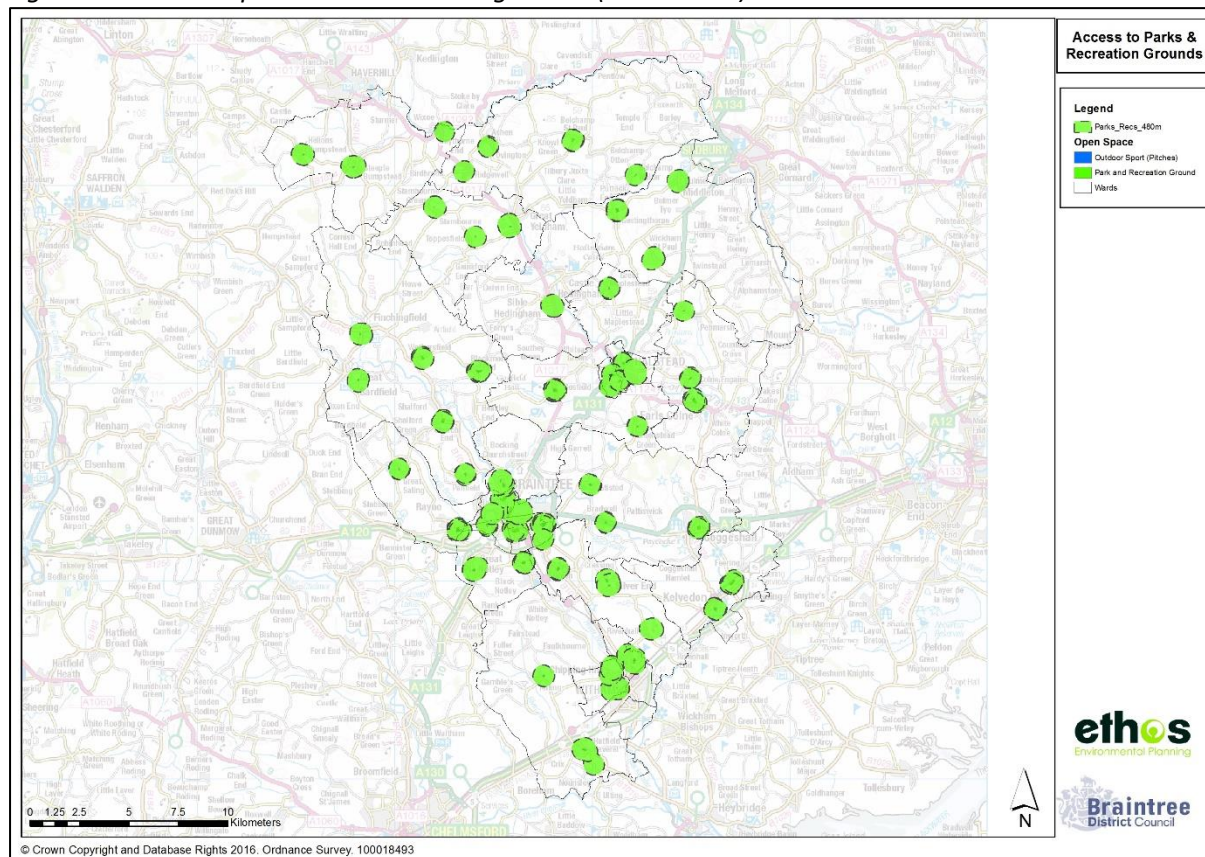


Figure 13 Access to children's play space (480 metres)

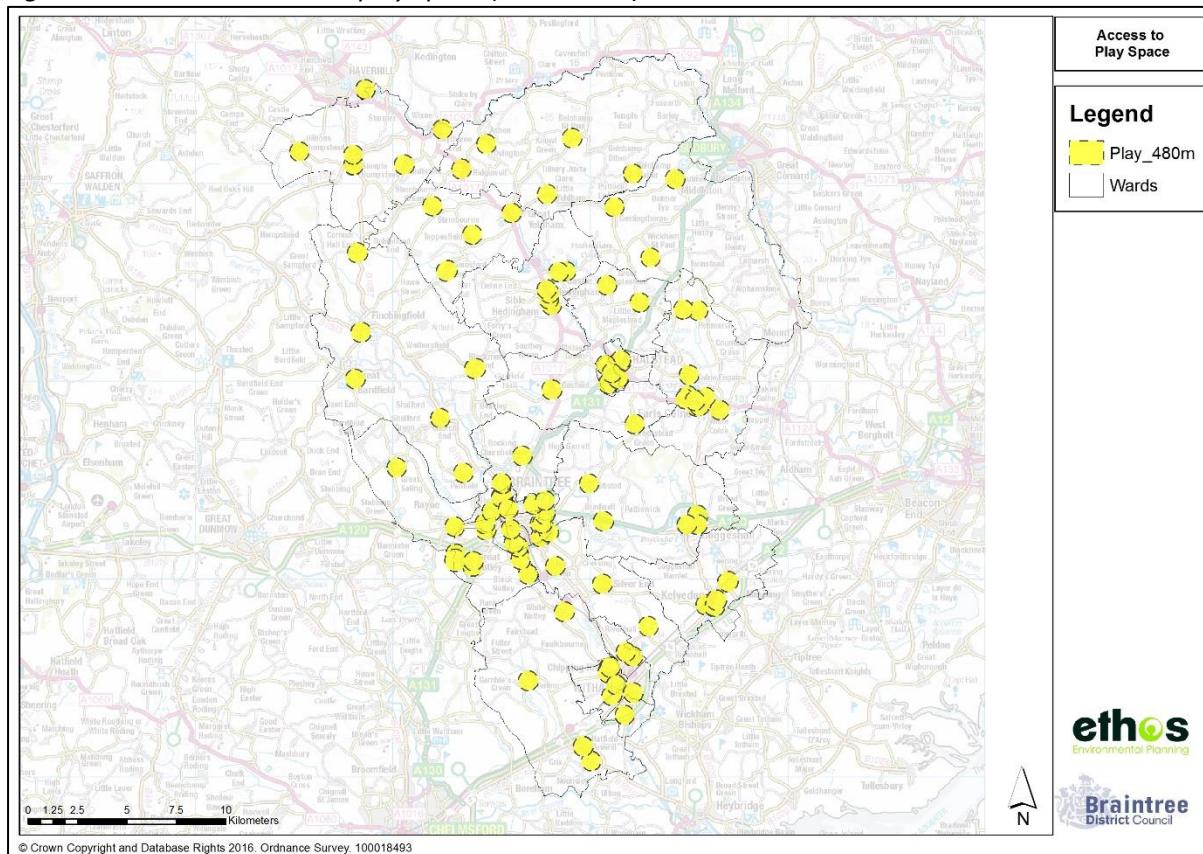
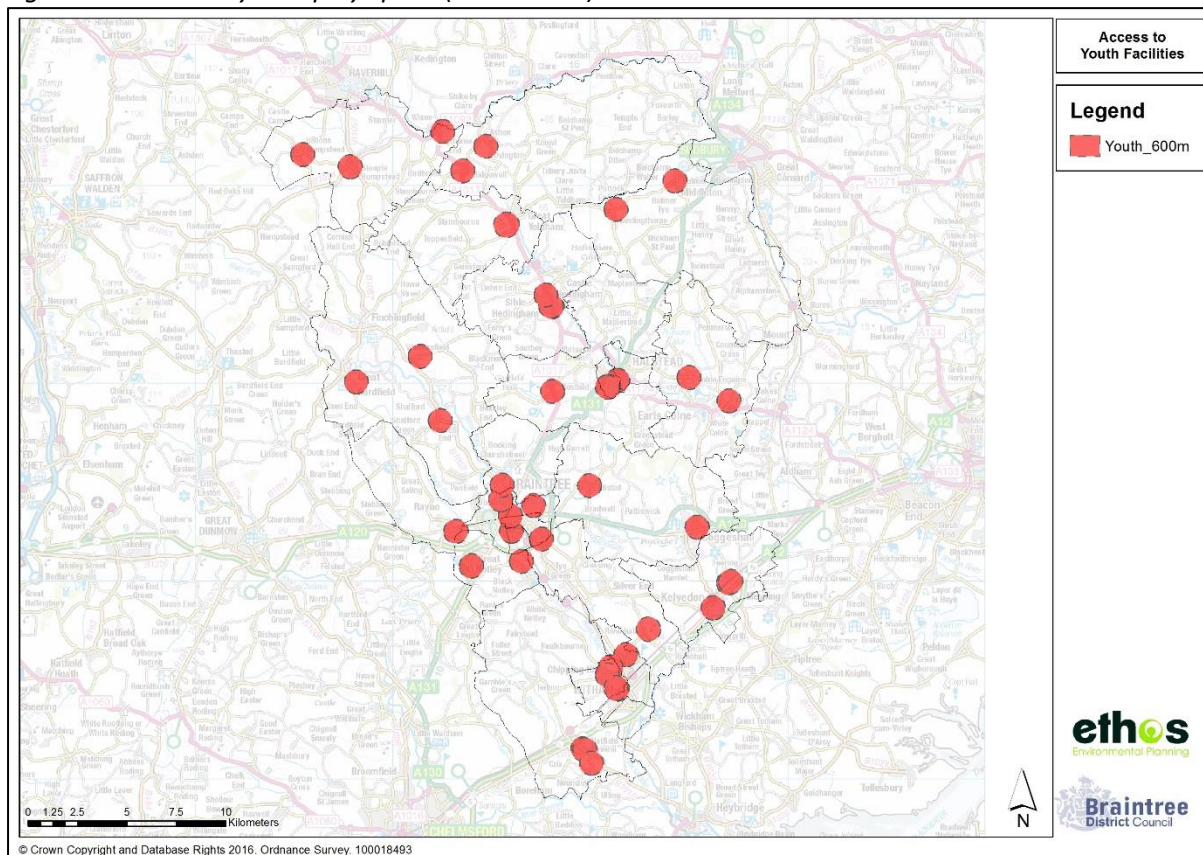


Figure 14 Access to youth play space (600 metres)



7.3.2 Application of standards (natural green space)

This section looks at the application of standards for natural green space.

Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGST)

The ANGST are:

- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometre of home;
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home;

Figure 15 Access to 20 ha site within 2km

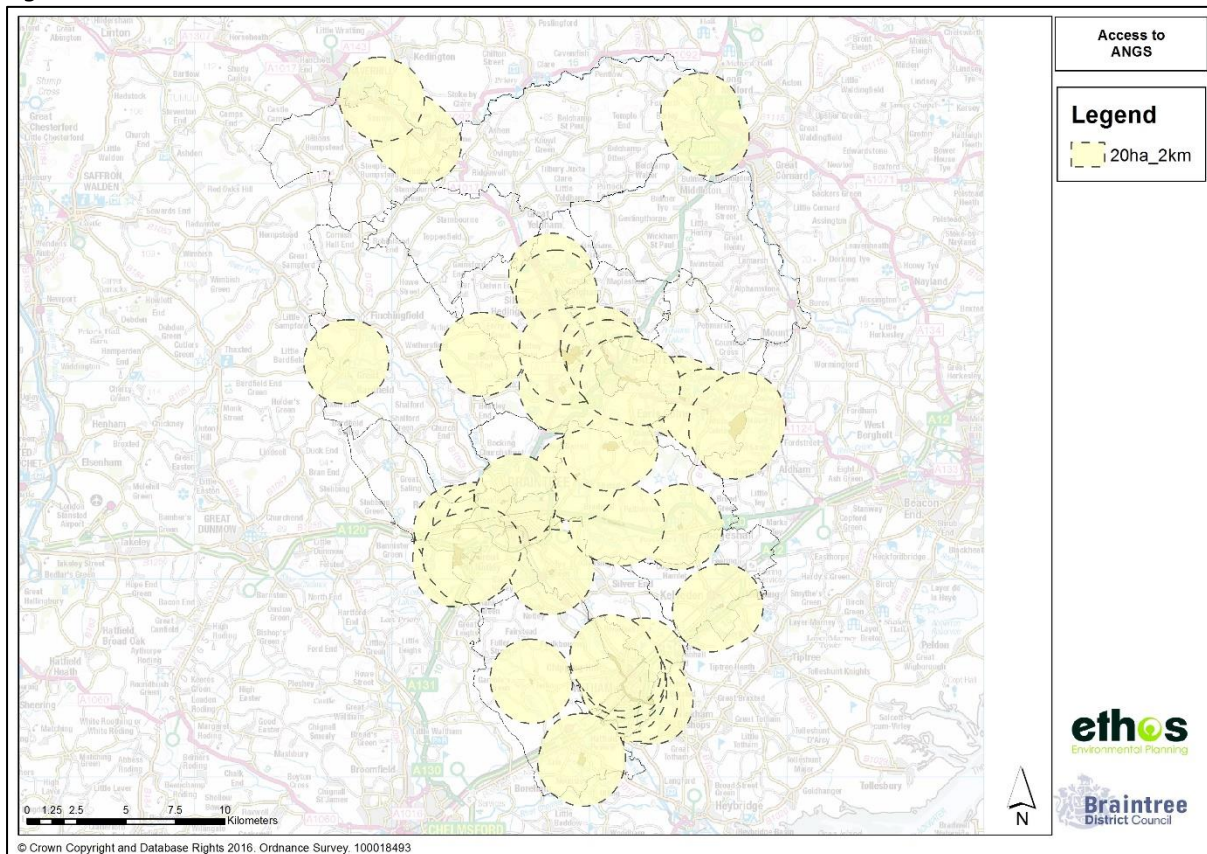


Figure 16 Access to 100 ha site within 5 km

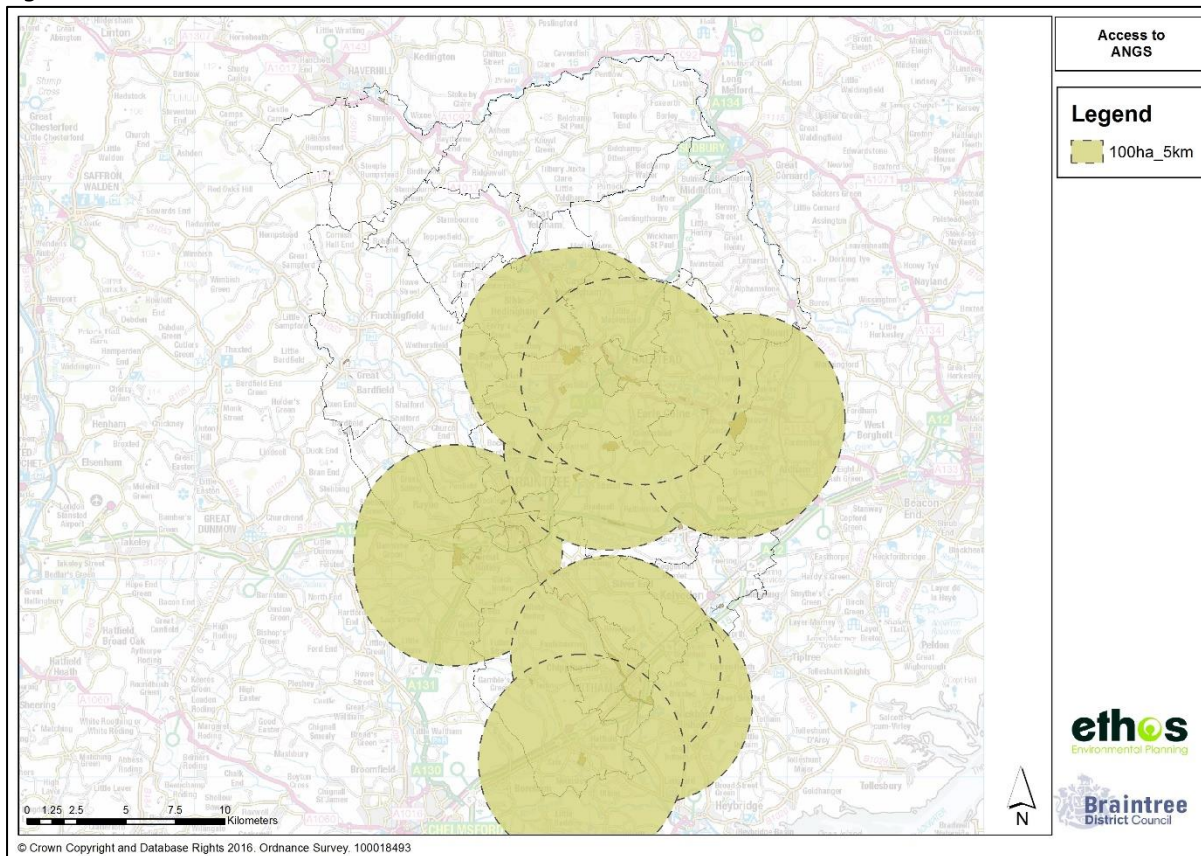


Figure 17 Access to 500 ha site within 10 km

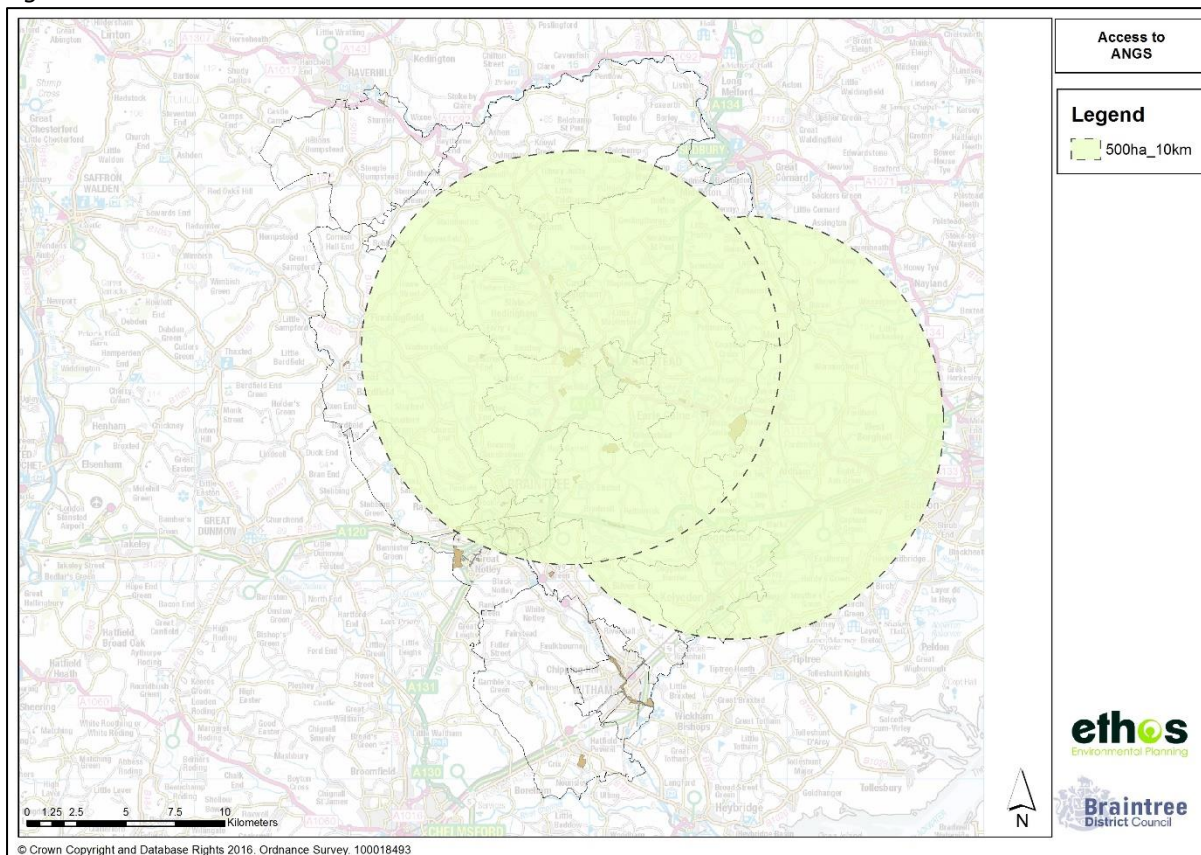


Table 17 Summary of access issues for natural green space

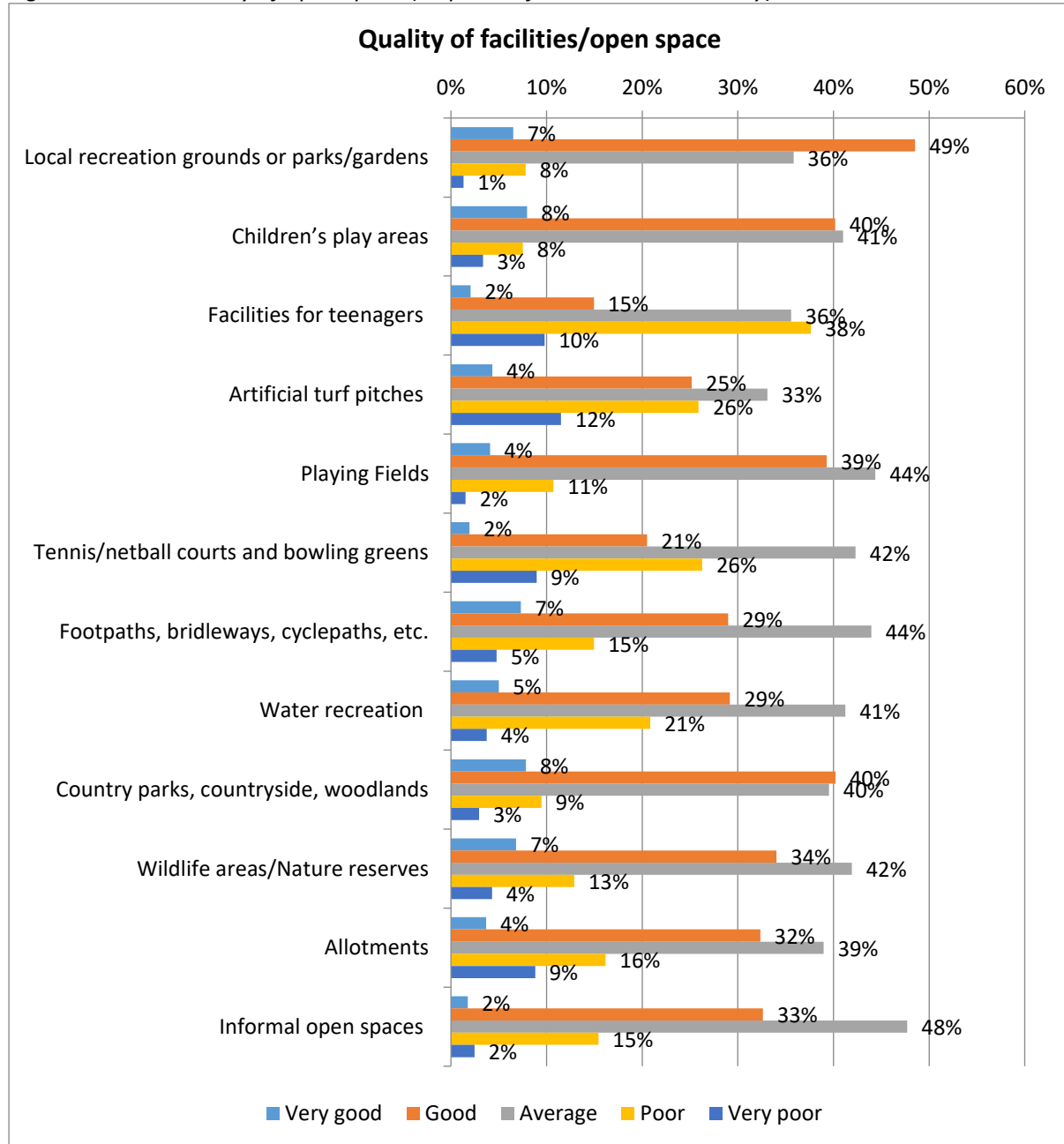
Standard	Key access Issues
ANGST:	
at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home	Access is generally better in the southern part of the District. Access is overlapping in a number of wards, and some wards have very limited access/no access.
one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home	Good access across the more southerly wards (although gaps in Kelvedon and Feering Ward and Coggeshall Ward). No access in Bumpstead Ward, Stour Valley North Ward and Yeldham Ward. Limited access in Three Fields Ward and Stour Valley South Ward.
one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home	Generally good access across the majority of the District, although gaps in the north, south and west. A small number of wards have no access.

7.5 Application of quality standards

7.5.1 Quality of open space – consultation key findings

Respondents were asked how they rated various types of facilities in the study area in terms of quality. The responses of those expressing an opinion on specific categories of facility are illustrated below:

Figure 18 Quality of open space (responses from household survey)



For all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they were of average or better quality (though the most common rating tended to be only "average").

However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality - 48% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor. The quality of tennis courts and bowling greens, and artificial turf pitches, were rated as poor or worse by at least 35% of respondents.

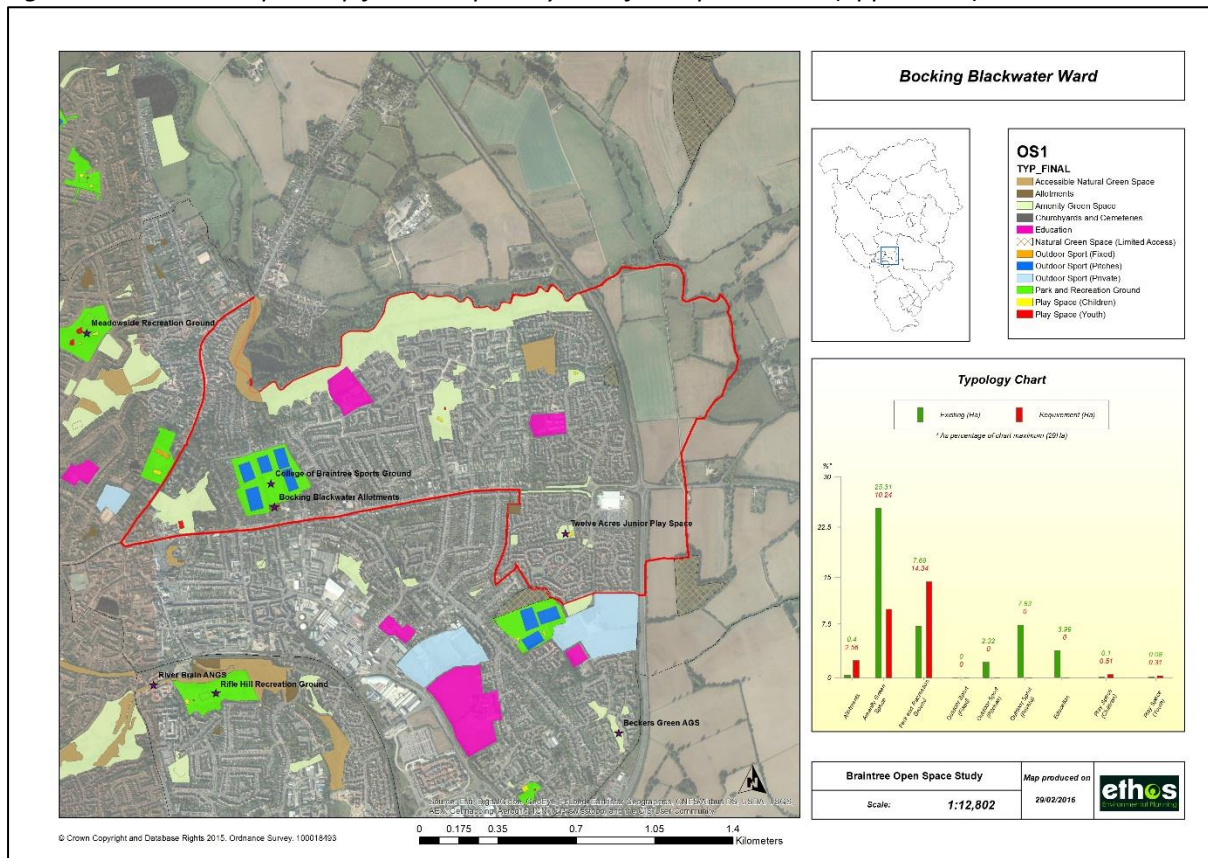
In contrast some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated relatively highly in terms of quality. These include: parks and recreation grounds (56% rate quality in general as being

good or very good); country parks/countryside/woodlands (48% similarly); and play areas (48%).

7.5.2 Quality of open space – audit findings

The quality audit was undertaken at 390 sites across the study area. The details on the sites audited are provided in a quality audit database which has been provided as an electronic document as part of this study. For each of the wards within the District, a map showing priority sites for improvement has been produced (see appendix 5). Each map is based on the quality audit database (appendix 4), and shows those sites which had ‘potential for improvement’. An example maps is shown at figure 19.

Figure 19 Example map from the priority sites for improvement (appendix 5)



8.0 STRATEGIC OPTIONS, POLICY & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out strategic options and policy recommendations for open space within Braintree. It draws on all the previous steps of the study to bring together informed recommendations, and addresses a number of specific requirements of the study brief.

8.1 Strategic Options

8.1.1 Introduction

The strategic options address four key areas:

- 1) Existing provision to be protected;
- 2) Existing provision to be enhanced;
- 3) Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
- 4) Identification of areas for new provision;
- 5) Facilities that may be surplus to requirement.

8.1.2 Delivering Strategic Options

Since the adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012, the planning environment is still in a state of change and flux.

The abolition of regional spatial strategies, and the move towards localism, puts more focus on local authorities to work with local communities to make decisions and deliver services, rather than relying on national or regional guidance. This will clearly impact how some of the recommendations in this study will be delivered.

Whilst the Local Authority will have an important role in delivering open space, sport and recreation facilities, their role may move from that of 'deliverer' to 'facilitator'. The aim will be to work with community organisations to make local decisions about how facilities and services will be provided. Organisations such as residents groups, voluntary organisations, sports clubs and societies will all have a key role in this.

One of the emerging priorities from localism is for there to be much more local decision making with regards to planning, and for local communities to develop neighbourhood plans. Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities within neighbourhood plans, the information provided within this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision of open space.

The following sections, consider the key issues for open space in the study area, and the recommendations that emerge need to be taken in context with the Localism Act and consider how they can fit into local decision making. With this agenda still relatively new, the following sections serve to highlight issues, but do not necessarily resolve how they may be delivered.

8.2 Existing provision to be protected

The starting point of any policy adopted by the Council should be that all open space should be afforded protection unless it can be proved it is not required.

Existing open space or sport and recreation facilities which should be given the highest level of protection by the planning system are those which are either:

- Critically important in avoiding deficiencies in accessibility, quality or quantity and scored highly in the value assessment; **or**
- Of particular nature conservation, historical or cultural value.

The quantity analysis, summarised in table 16 (section 7.2.1) shows that in every ward, there is a deficiency in at least one typology of open space. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

Open Space Policy Recommendations (protecting open space):

- | | |
|------------|---|
| OS1 | The distribution of open space varies across the study area, however, there are identified shortages of at least 1 typology of open space in all Wards. It is therefore recommended that priority is placed on protecting those open spaces where there is an existing shortfall of supply as highlighted in the area profiles. |
| OS2 | Sites which are critical to avoiding deficiencies, or making existing deficiencies worse, in quality, quantity or access should be protected unless suitable alternative provision can be provided which would compensate for any deficiencies caused. |
| OS3 | Sites which have significant nature conservation, historical or cultural value should be afforded protection, even if there is an identified surplus in quality, quantity or access in that local area. |
| OS4 | The importance of privately managed spaces (e.g. sports grounds) as a community facility has been highlighted in this study. Therefore, it is recommended the above policies apply to both public and private open space protection. |

8.3 Existing provision to be enhanced

In areas where there is a quantitative deficiency of provision but no accessibility issues then increasing the capacity of existing provision may be considered. Alternatively, in areas where facilities or spaces do not meet the relevant quality standards, qualitative enhancements will be required.

This includes those spaces or facilities which:

- Are critically important in avoiding deficiencies in diversity, accessibility or quantity, **but**
- Scored poorly in the quality or value assessment.

Those sites which require enhancement are identified within the quality audit that was undertaken. Some of the key observations related to site enhancement include:

1. The importance of providing high quality provision and maintenance of formal facilities such as Parks and Recreation Grounds and Play Space.
2. The need for additional and improved facilities for young people.
3. The role of private sports spaces to some local communities and the need to provide opportunity for investment.
4. The need to ensure high quality open spaces are designed and provided through new development where feasible.
5. The importance of rights of way and natural green space within the Study area, and the need to maintain and enhance provision for biodiversity.
6. The role of open space in contributing to wider initiatives and strategies, for example providing background information for the Braintree green infrastructure strategy.
7. Extending and enhancing the network of green infrastructure including the connectivity between sites and improved accessibility to existing sites.

Section 7.5.2 provides a summary of the sites which have been identified as having 'potential for improvement' as identified within the quality audit (appendix 3). The following recommendations are made in relation the quality of open space:

Open Space Policy Recommendations (enhancing open space):

- | | |
|------------|--|
| OS5 | Where new housing development is allocated, on site provision will be required in areas where there are identified deficiencies of open space (see decision making process figure 18). However, consideration will also be given to improving existing open spaces within the ward the development is located. Priority should be given to those sites identified as having 'potential to improve' as detailed in the quality audit, and highlighted in section 7.5.2. |
| OS6 | Future LDPD's and Neighbourhood Plans should consider the opportunities for creating and enhancing a network of both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike in both urban and rural areas. Creative application of the amenity |

OS7	green space/natural green space components of the proposed overall standard in respect of new development should be explored.
	The study makes recommendations for improving the quality of open space across the study area. However, a long term strategy for achieving improvements is required which could be delivered through a Green Space Strategy, neighbourhood plans and be considered within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
OS8	Priorities for improvement include the enhancement of the rights of way network and improving youth play space. Improvement to rights of way will be co-ordinated through the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
OS9	Management plans should be developed for the main parks and recreation grounds. These priorities could be considered in neighbourhood plans and by the local community.

8.4 Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space

In some areas it may be possible to make better use of land by relocating an open space or sport and recreation facility, especially if this will enhance its quality or accessibility for existing users, or use land which is not suitable for another purpose. This needs to be determined at a local level, considering the quality, quantity and access to facilities at neighbourhood level and in some cases across the study area.

Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities within neighbourhood plans, the information provided within this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision or replacement of open space, sport and recreation facilities. Some settlements may seek a consolidation of facilities on a single site, such as a new sports hub.

These decisions could include the spatial and investment plans for green space, and set the foundations for green space provision (e.g. for the next 20 years). They should outline where different types of facilities and space - such as children's playgrounds, sports pitches, young people's facilities etc. are to be located. It will also identify if any green space is no longer needed and its disposal or re use can be used to fund improvements to other spaces.

Each plan should apply the standards and policies set out in this study and ensure that the significant investment anticipated for green spaces is prioritised with the help of stakeholders and communities. The standards agreed in this study can determine a minimum level of quality and quantity of green space provision and the maximum distance people should have to travel to access different types of green space.

This study provides information on the existing supply of different types of open space, an analysis of access and identifies local issues related to quality. It will act as a good starting point for feeding into neighbourhood plans in consultation with the local community.

In determining opportunities for re-location or re-designation of open space, the quantity and access provision have been considered at a ward level, and some general observations made for each ward.

Table 18 Opportunities for 're-designating open space'

NAME	Current provision	Opportunities
Bocking Blackwater Ward	Shortfall of allotments, play space (children) and play space (youth). Sufficient amenity green space, park and recreation ground (public and private combined) and natural green space.	Large amenity green space could potentially accommodate allotments, children's and youth play space to meet these shortfalls in provision and access.
Bocking North Ward	Shortfall across the majority of typologies with the exception of amenity green space and natural green space.	Little opportunity, although Grove Field amenity green space could potentially accommodate children's and/or youth play space which would also reduce gaps in access.
Bocking South Ward	Shortfall of allotments, play space (children) and play space (youth).	Bradford Meadows amenity green space could potentially accommodate allotments. Tabor Field park and rec currently has no youth provision – if installed at this site it would also improve access. Access to children's play is good, so existing facilities could be expanded to improve provision.
Braintree Central and Beckers Green Ward	Shortfall across the majority of typologies with the exception of park and recreation ground (public and private combined) and natural green space.	King George Playing Fields could potentially accommodate youth provision to address the shortfall in provision and gap in access. Although there are areas where provision of amenity green space overlaps, there is a shortfall in this typology, and therefore no opportunity to accommodate other shortfalls e.g. allotments or children's play space.
Braintree South Ward	Shortfall across all typologies with the exception of natural green space.	Limited opportunities. Potential to install natural children's play within natural green space to the east of the ward to improve access and provision.
Braintree West Ward	Shortfall across the majority of typologies with the exception of amenity green space and natural green space.	River brain amenity green space could potentially be upgraded to a park and rec (although it overlaps in access with the only other park in this ward). This amenity green space could also potentially accommodate youth play space and allotments to address these shortfalls in provision and access. The large amenity green space/natural green space to the east of this site also has the potential to accommodate youth play space, children's play space and/or allotments.

NAME	Current provision	Opportunities
Bumpstead Ward	Sufficient across all typologies with the exception of youth play space.	Little opportunity. East Town Park in the north of the ward could potentially accommodate youth play space.
Coggeshall Ward	Sufficient across the majority of typologies. Shortfall of amenity green space and youth play space.	Little opportunity.
Gosfield and Greenstead Green Ward	Shortfall of allotments, amenity green space and youth play space. Sufficient park and recreation ground (public and private combined), children's play space and natural green space.	Little opportunity. Potential to accommodate youth provision at Great Maplestead Playing Fields and/or Burton's Green Rec.
Great Notley and Black Notley Ward	Shortfall of allotments, park and recreation ground (public and private combined) and youth play space. Sufficient amenity green space, children's play space and natural green space.	Provision of amenity green space is generally overlapping and a number of sites could potentially accommodate (larger sites) or be re-designated (smaller sites) as youth play space and/or allotment. Little opportunity to create new park and recs. Although sufficient supply of children's play space, removal of facilities would result in access gaps.
Halstead St Andrews Ward	Sufficient supply of allotments and natural green space. Shortfall in all remaining typologies.	Little opportunity. Could install natural children's play equipment within natural green space. Overlap in access provision of allotments.
Halstead Trinity Ward	Shortfall across all typologies except natural green space.	Little opportunity. Potential to install natural children's play or food growing within natural green space on the western edge of the ward.
Hatfield Peverel and Terling Ward	Sufficient supply across all typologies except youth play space.	Potential for Fairstead Road amenity green space to accommodate youth play space.
Hedingham Ward	Shortfall across the majority of typologies except youth play space and natural green space.	Little opportunity.
Kelvedon and Feering Ward	Shortfall of amenity green space, park and recreation ground (public and private combined) and youth play space. Sufficient supply of allotments, children's play space and natural green space.	Little opportunity.
Rayne Ward	Shortfall of amenity green space, children's play space and youth play space. Sufficient allotments, park and recreation ground (public and private combined) and natural green space.	Great Saling Playing Field could potentially accommodate youth play area (no provision/access within this area of the ward). Generally good access to children's play areas and amenity green space within settlement areas despite shortfall in quantity.
Silver End and Cressing Ward	Shortfall across the majority of typologies except park and	There are a number of parks and recs that could potentially accommodate children's

NAME	Current provision	Opportunities
	recreation ground (public and private combined) and natural green space.	and youth play space in order to address the shortfall (including access gaps).
Stour Valley North Ward	Sufficient supply across the majority of typologies except park and recreation ground (public and private combined) and youth play space.	In areas where amenity green space overlaps in access, there may be potential to accommodate youth play space.
Stour Valley South Ward	Shortfall of amenity green space, children's play space and youth play space.	Little opportunity. Potential to reduce access gaps (and improve quantity provision) by installing youth (e.g. at The Green Park and Rec) and children's play space (e.g. at Old Church Lane).
The Colnes Ward	Shortfall across the majority of typologies except children's play space and natural green space.	Overlap in access provision of children's play space could provide opportunities for alternative uses.
Three Fields Ward	Sufficient supply across the majority of typologies with the exception of allotments and youth play space.	Potential for a number of park and recs to accommodate youth play space. Although sufficient provision of park and rec and children's play space, removal of facilities would result in gaps in access. Where amenity green space overlaps in access, they could provide opportunities for alternative use e.g. allotments or youth play space.
Witham Central Ward	Shortfall of allotments, children's play space and youth play space.	Amenity green space could be used to accommodate youth play space and children's play space. There are a number of areas where amenity green space overlaps in access and could provide opportunities for alternative use e.g. allotments.
Witham North Ward	Shortfall across all typologies except for natural green space.	Little opportunity. Natural children's play could be installed in natural green space to improve access/provision.
Witham South Ward	Shortfall across the majority of typologies except for amenity green space and natural green space.	There are a number of areas where amenity green space overlaps in access and could provide opportunities for alternative use or accommodate use e.g. allotments, children's play space, youth play space or even upgrade to park and rec.
Witham West Ward	Sufficient supply across the majority of typologies, with the exception of allotments and children's play space.	There are a number of areas where amenity green space overlaps in access and could provide opportunities for alternative uses e.g. allotments. Although there is sufficient supply of youth play space, removal of facilities would create gaps in access.

NAME	Current provision	Opportunities
Yeldham Ward	Sufficient supply across the majority of typologies, with the exception of allotments and amenity green space.	Although there is sufficient supply parks and recs, children's and youth play space, removal of facilities would create gaps in access.

Open Space Policy Recommendations (relocating open space):

OS10	Work with a neighbourhood plan group to develop a neighbourhood plan which incorporates green space planning.
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8.5 Identification of areas for new provision

New provision will be required where there is a new development and a planned increase in population, and/or an existing deficiency in supply or access to facilities exists. Section 7 outlines the existing situation with regards to supply and access to open space. As discussed, neighbourhood plans would form a good mechanism to determine exactly where new provision is required, however, this study can be used as the basis for decision making, as follows:

Quantity

Within the study report, for each typology, there is an identified 'sufficient supply' or 'under supply' for each of the Wards. If an area has an existing under supply of any typology, there may be need for additional provision. This could be delivered through developing a new site (for example as part of a housing development), acquiring land to extend the site or changing the typology of an existing space (which may be in over supply).

The supply statistics should be used as part of the decision making process in development management to determine if a new development should provide facilities on-site or enhance existing provision through developer contributions.

The use of the quantity statistics should not be in isolation, and considered alongside the access standards.

Access

This study considers how access to different types of open space varies across wards against the proposed standards. The maps in section 7 (and Appendix 3) show where there are deficiencies and potential over supply of facilities. This information can be used alongside the quantity statistics to determine if new provision or improved accessibility is required in an area. For example, if a new development is proposed, the maps should be consulted to determine if there is an existing gap in provision of a particular typology which could be met by the development.

Therefore, even though the quantity statistics may identify a sufficient supply of a particular typology, there may be gaps in access, and thus a new facility may still be required.

Delivering new provision

There are a number of opportunities for delivering new facilities through new development – developer contributions and to a lesser extent through capital and grant funding.

New development, Section 106, CIL and developer contributions

Braintree Council will be considering the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in the latter part of 2016, therefore, this section has been written to inform decisions related to open space and CIL. It is expected that this section of the report would be updated once the CIL is adopted.

Many community needs and aspirations will have a call on this levy. This open space study clearly identifies that there are needs for new and /or enhanced open space provision, particularly where new development is planned.

Outside of S106 (or CIL), new development will also be required to provide on-site open space in line with the standards outlined in this study. Whilst not all developments will be of a size that will generate the requirement for on-site open space (see table 22), when considering future housing numbers for Braintree, there will be many that will. This study should be used to make local decisions about where and when new on-site provision will be required.

Capital and grant funding

Although the availability of capital and grant funding has diminished in recent years, nevertheless funding does become available for providing facilities for open space, sport and recreation. National and governing bodies for individual sports should be consulted where new infrastructure is required, such as changing rooms and sports pitches. Environmental grants and stewardship schemes are available for managing natural green space. As neighbourhood plans are developed and open space priorities are established within these, funding requirements will be identified and delivery through grant funding can be considered.

Requirements for open space from new housing

Section 7.2.1 outlines the variation in supply of different typologies of open space across wards. As identified, every ward has a shortfall in at least one typology of open space, therefore, the starting point for new housing is to assume that some form of on-site open space provision would be required.

The Braintree Local Plan has set out broad figures and locations for housing within the plan period (see section 3.3.2, figures 6 and 7). This identifies an increase of 14,365 houses within towns, villages and strategic growth areas. Using these figures, this number of dwellings would result in an increase in population of 33,039 people (assuming an average household

occupancy of 2.3 people per dwelling). The total amount of open space required for this increased growth is summarised in table 19.

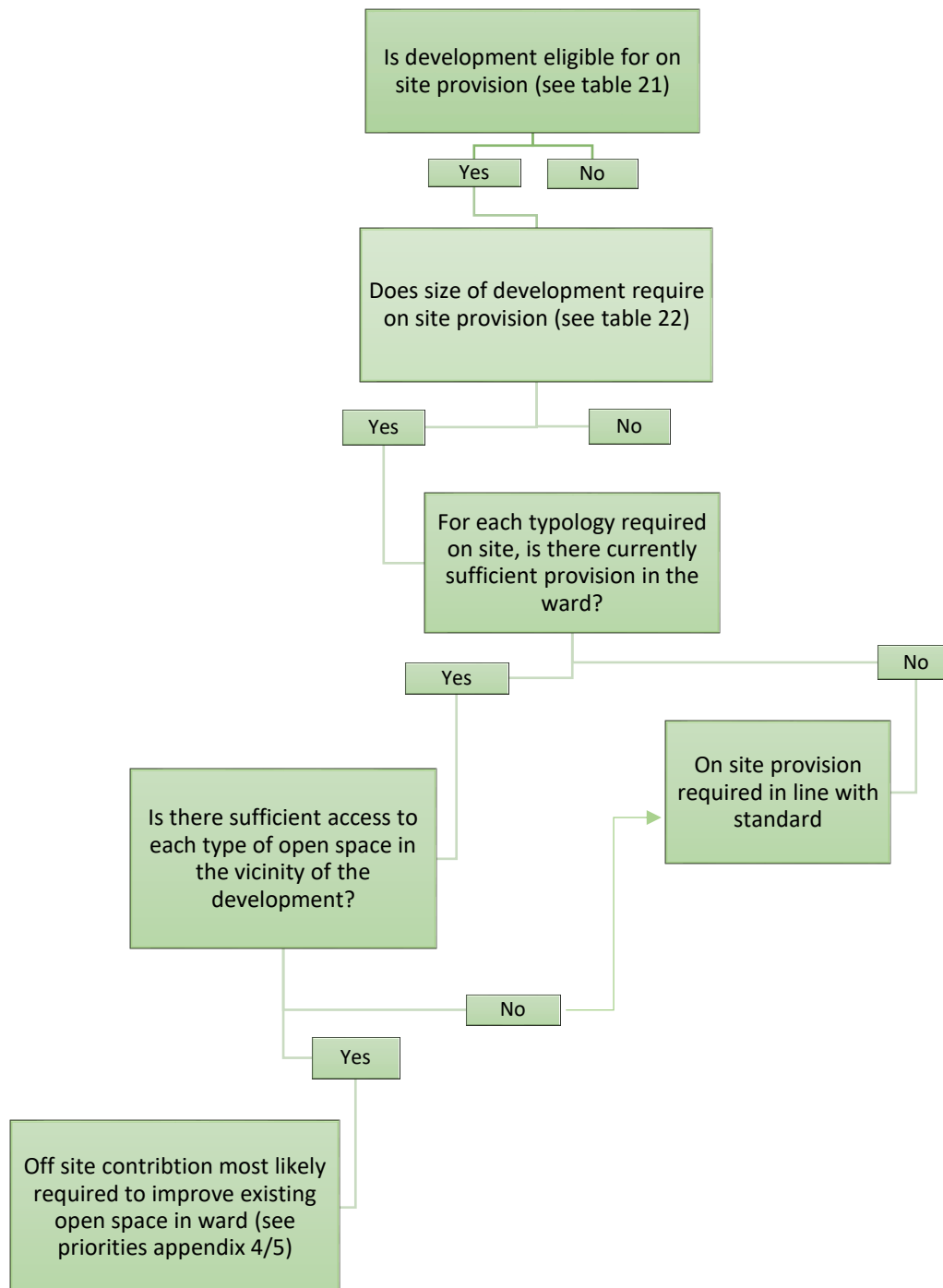
Table 19 Total amount of open space required for increased population growth (33,039 people)

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)	Required open space (ha) for 33,039 people
<i>Allotments</i>	<i>0.25</i>	<i>8.26</i>
<i>Amenity and Natural Green Space</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>33.04</i>
<i>Parks and Recreation Grounds (public and private)</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>46.25</i>
<i>Play Space (Children)</i>	<i>0.05</i>	<i>1.65</i>
<i>Play Space (Youth)</i>	<i>0.03</i>	<i>0.99</i>
Total		90.20

Decision making process for on/off site provision

Figure 20 shows an example flow chart/decision making process to help developers/council officers determine the need for on/off-site provision of open space. This is only a guide and requirements will be determined on a case by case basis using the standards and assessment within this study. This should be determined through pre-application discussions with the council.

Figure 20 Decision making process for on/off site provision of open space



Open Space Policy Recommendations (new provision of open space):**OS11**

New provision of open space will be required as part of new development in towns where housing is allocated in the local plan where there are existing deficiencies in quantity or access to open space and/or where the new development will result in deficiencies.

Where on-site provision is required, it should be provided in line with the proposed open space standards.

On site provision of amenity and natural green space may be required on developments as part of the green infrastructure and good design principles, even in areas where there is already sufficient quantity and access to open space.

Where on-site provision is deemed impractical, or not required e.g. for small sites, consideration will be given to opportunities for off-site provision and/or improvements, including through pooling of S106 contributions.

Improvements to existing open space will be considered first in the ward within which the development is located, then in open spaces in neighbouring wards. Priority sites requiring improvements will be identified using the ranking scores from the quality audit and also from site management plans and the councils own knowledge of their sites.

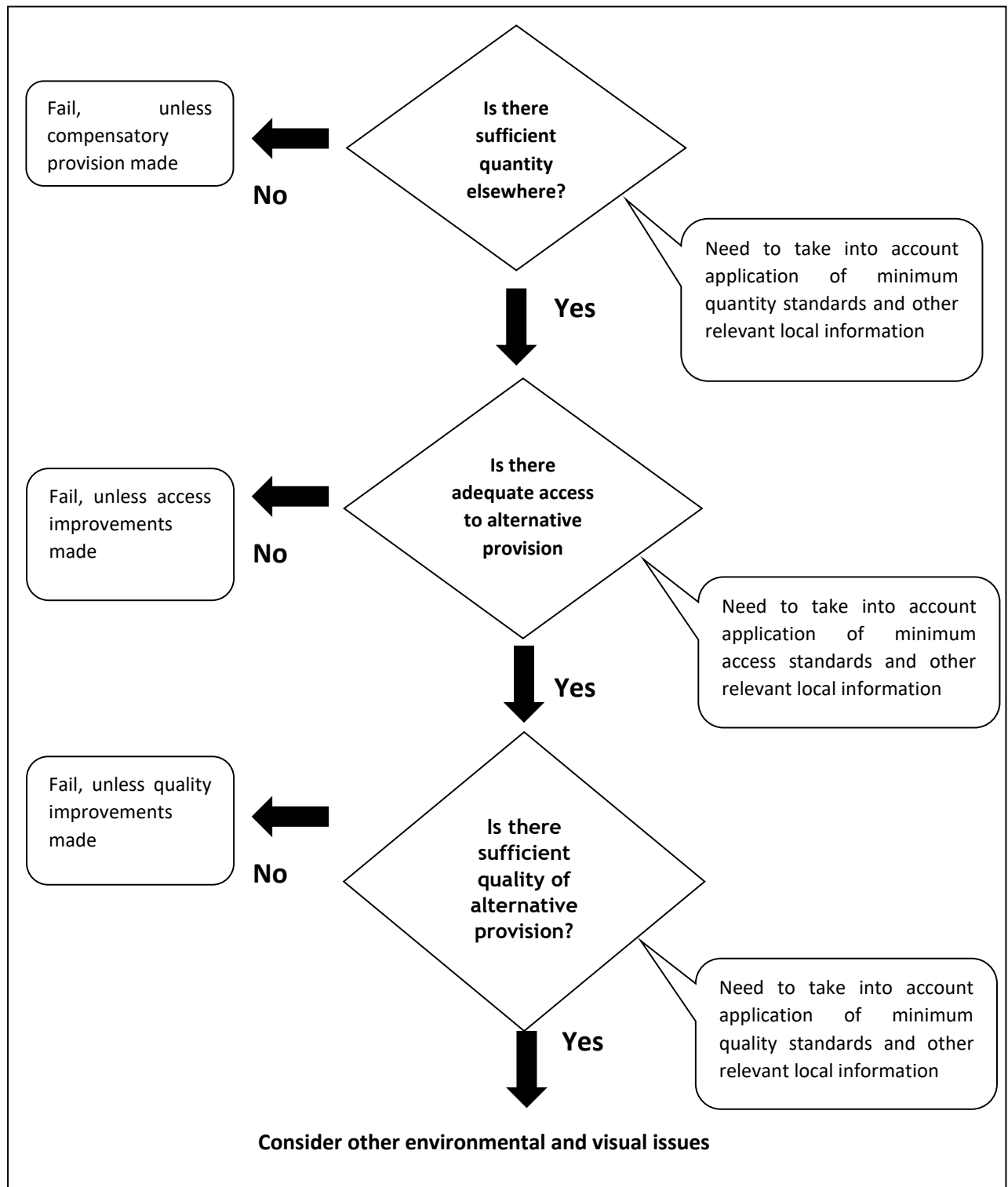
8.6 Facilities that are surplus to requirement

In addition to the strategic options outlined above, consideration should also be given to facilities that are surplus to requirement. There are important issues to resolve in terms of getting the correct balance of open space across the study area before any disposal can be contemplated. Whilst there is under provision relative to the minimum standards in several areas, there are other areas where provision compares favourably with the standards. However, it is once again emphasised that the proposed standards are for *minimum* levels of provision. Factors to be taken into account before any decision to release open space for alternative uses can be taken include:

- The local value and use of a given open space - as it may be a locally popular resource.
- Whether future local development/population growth might generate additional demands for open space.
- Whether there is a demonstrable need for some other type of open space within the locality that a given space (subject to a change of management regime) would be well placed to meet.
- Other non-recreational reasons that suggest a space should be retained (which might include ecological and visual reasons).

Figure 21 suggests an outline of the decision process that should be followed before the development of an open space can be seriously contemplated.

Figure 21: Outline decision making process in relation to sanctioning (re)development of open space



Q. Is there sufficient quantity?

A. If the minimum quantitative standard for amenity green space is exceeded in a defined geographical area, the relative provision of other forms of open space must then be considered. (Amenity green space can in principle be converted into other forms of open space where the need arises). If a) provision meets the minimum quantitative standard; b) there is no significant local information suggesting a need to retain the site; and, c) there is not a perceived lack of other forms of open space. The next question can be addressed.

Q. Is there adequate access to alternative provision?

A. Within the defined geographical area there may be good overall provision of amenity green space relative to the quantity standard, but is it in the right place and can it be easily reached? Applying the accessibility component of the minimum standards will help to answer this question. If other similar open space cannot be easily reached, the site's disposal for other uses may be unacceptable.

Q. Are other accessible and similar opportunities elsewhere of sufficient quality?

A. If it can be demonstrated that alternative opportunities are sufficient both in quantity and accessibility, there may still exist issues with the quality of these alternative provisions. The quality component of the proposed standards may indicate that certain improvements to alternative opportunities must be made which should be funded and secured before development is sanctioned.

Even if these three tests are passed there may be other reasons for the site to remain as open space. For example, it may have value as a natural habitat or be visually important. Such considerations are important, but beyond the scope of this report.

8.7 Developer Contributions

This section draws on the policy recommendations in the previous section and outlines a process for calculating developer contributions for on-site provision and recommendations for management and maintenance procedures and costs.

8.7.1 Developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy

This section sets out higher level strategic recommendations and recommends an approach to developer contributions which can be used to inform policy for on-site contributions and to inform the feasibility for any off site investment proposed (through CIL or other external funding mechanisms).

1) Capital cost of providing open space

In order to calculate developer contributions for facilities, a methodology has been adopted which calculates how much it would cost the Local Authority to provide them. These costs have been calculated using local information, and have also been benchmarked against other Local Authorities costs for providing facilities. A summary of the costs are outlined in table 20 below.

Contributions towards the provision or improvement of open space are calculated using the capital cost of provision. The same charges apply to both provision of new facilities and the upgrading/improvement of existing facilities, which more often than not includes new provision. Contribution per person is therefore taken to be a reasonable measure of that impact, irrespective of whether new provision or improvement of existing facilities is required. The calculated costs have drawn on the standards of provision for urban areas, as this is where the majority of proposed growth is planned.

Table 20 Costs for providing open space

Typology	Standard msq per person	Cost of provision (msq)	Contribution per person
Allotments	2.5	£ 30.00	£ 75.00
Amenity and Natural Green Space	10	£ 15.00	£ 150.00
Parks and Recreation Grounds (public)	14	£ 72.00	£ 1,008.00
Play Space (Children)	0.5	£ 170.00	£ 85.00
Play Space (Youth)	0.3	£ 170.00	£ 51.00
			£ 1,369.00

This shows that it costs £1,369 per person to provide new open space to meet the Braintree standard for open space. These calculations are to be used to calculate developer contributions based on dwelling size (table 21) for on-site provision and where feasible any off site projects. Braintree use a figure of 1.2 persons per bedroom which is based on average household size (2.4) and average number of bedrooms (2.9) from the 2011 census data.

Table 21 Costs of providing open space based on dwelling size

Dwelling Size	Household Size	Open Space Contribution (household size X 1369)
1	1.2	£1642.80
2	2.4	£3285.60
3	3.6	£4928.40
4	4.8	£6571.20
5	6.0	£8214.00

2) Maintenance of open space

If a development is required to provide open space on-site, the developer would be expected to set out, manage and maintain the open space in perpetuity through a management company. It is expected that a management plan for the open space would be submitted and approved by the council as a planning condition. BDC will not adopt open space. In some cases, the management of a new open space may be considered for adoption by a parish council, in this case a commuted sum would be payable to the parish council, in line with the figures outlined in table 22. The figures have been calculated from average unit rates for maintenance of different types of open space, drawn from standard rates (Spons).

Table 22 Maintenance sums payable for open space

Typology	Cost/m ² per annum
Play Space (Children's and Youth Provision)	£4.59
Parks & Recreation Grounds	£4.59
Amenity and Natural Green Space	£0.62
Allotments	£0.13

3) Eligible types of development for on-site provision

Table 23 outlines the type of housing that will be considered eligible for making contributions towards open space to meet the needs of future occupants.

Table 23 Eligible types of residential development

Category	Open Market Housing / Flats	Affordable Housing	Housing for the active elderly	Permanent mobile homes (inc. Gypsy and Travellers)
Play Space	✓	✓	×	✓
Outdoor Sports Space	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parks and Gardens	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amenity Open Space	✓	✓	✓	✓
Natural Green Space	✓	✓	✓	✓
Allotments	✓	✓	✓	✓

- Tourist accommodation, other institutional uses, care homes, specialist accommodation and annex accommodation will also contribute;

- Employment floorspace would be expected to provide amenity open space and natural green space only. This would be provided in line with the standards (1.0 ha/1000) using current guidance from the council for employment density figures.

4) **Thresholds for provision**

The required open space, sport and recreation facilities can be provided by on-site provision, or through CIL/S106 (if included in adopted policy). Where facilities are to be provided on-site, the Council will expect the developer to design and build the provision to the satisfaction of the Council.

The decision on whether facility provision is to be on-site, off-site or both depends on the following considerations:

- The scale of the proposed development and site area;
- The suitability of a site reflecting, for example, its topography or flood risk;
- The existing provision of facilities within the neighbourhood and/or the sub area;
- Other sites in the neighbourhood where additional provision is proposed;
- Existing access to facilities within the neighbourhood and/or sub area.

Table 23 provides a guide to assess which scales of housing generate a need for facilities in the categories listed to be provided on-site. For developments 20 – 49 dwellings the minimum size of amenity green space or parks, sports and recreation grounds is 0.15Ha.

Table 23 *Requirement for open space, sport and recreation facilities on site*

Type of Provision	1-19 dwellings	20-49 dwellings	50-99 dwellings	100+ dwellings	250+ dwellings
Allotments	X	X	X	X	✓
Amenity/Natural Green Space	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parks Sports and Recreation Grounds	X	X	X	X	✓
Play Space (children)	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Play Space (Youth)	X	X	X	X	✓

KEY: ✓ on-site provision normally sought
X off-site provision normally required

Where a development falls below the minimum threshold for on-site provision, a financial contribution in line with table 21 would be required.

Braintree Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Study (2016)



Built Sports and Recreation Facilities Study (Needs Assessment)

Final January 2017



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Appendices

Appendix 1	Active People Surveys notes
Appendix 2	Market Segmentation notes
Appendix 3	Sport England report for swimming pools in Braintree

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Expanded
ANOG	Assessment of Needs and Opportunities Guide
APP	Active People Power
APS	Active People Survey
FPM	Facility Planning Model
H&FS	Health & Fitness Suites
MS	Market Segmentation
NGB	National Governing Body (of sport)
SFC	Sports Facility Calculator

1. INTRODUCTION

Description of report

1.1. This report considers the provision of built sports and active recreation facilities for the community. This is one of four reports provided within the overall **Braintree Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Study** (2016). The reports comprise:

- Part 1: Open Space Study;
- Part 2: Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment;
- Part 3: Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy and Action Plan; and,
- Part 4: Built Sports and Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment and Strategy.

1.2. The four reports are all informed by the Local Needs Assessment Report (Consultation Report) which provides details of the consultation undertaken as part of the study.

Study Overview

1.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to set out policies to help enable communities to access high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation. These policies need to be based on a thorough understanding of local needs for such facilities and opportunities available for new provision.

1.4. In view of the above, in 2014 Braintree District Council appointed Ethos Environmental Planning, in association with Leisure and the Environment, to produce a new open space, indoor and outdoor sports and recreational facilities audit and assessment- a needs assessment and strategy to inform the decision making process up to 2033.

1.5. Overall aims of the study are:

- To audit existing indoor/outdoor leisure facilities and open spaces within the Braintree District (*irrespective of ownership and extent of existing public access, including school playing fields.*)
- To assess these facilities in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility
- To develop and provide a strategy determining the actions and resources required to guide the Councils decision making up until 2033. This is to include a Playing Pitch Strategy, Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy and an Open Spaces Strategy.
- To highlight areas where there is sufficient or over provision and identify areas where there are deficiencies in either the quantity and/or quality of provision
- To provide a robust and comprehensive evidence base to enable the Council to develop planning policies as part of future Local Plan, sufficient to withstand scrutiny at an Examination in Public
- To provide information to enable the Council to justify collecting developer contributions and inform the Council on the distribution of developer contributions to sports and open spaces.
- Identify strategies for the delivery of required provision and enhancement and to inform future decisions about the provision and funding of recreational facilities

- To provide a needs assessment and provide a comprehensive set of recommendations for local standards and alternative approaches to securing provision where applicable to be adopted by the Council. Review current standards in the adopted Core Strategy and how these have helped new development and Parishes/Town Councils provide more open space provision and improve quality of existing provision.
- To provide guidance on converting standards into developer contributions.

1.6. There are three key elements to the study:

- An Open Space Assessment
- A Playing Pitch Strategy and Outdoor Sports Assessment
- A Built Sports and Recreation Facilities Assessment (**This report**)

1.7. As such the overall outcome of the study comprises three main reports drawing upon an evidence derived from:

- Consultation and engagement with all relevant key stakeholders, agencies and organisations as well as the wider community and general public.
- A detailed audit of all facilities within the scope of the study.
- Analysis and assessment of the adequacy of current and future facility provision based on recommended methodologies such as Sport England's "Assessing Needs and Opportunities" national planning guidance.

Built Sports and Recreational Facilities Assessment

1.8. The Built Sports and Recreation Facilities Assessment also:

- Identifies all key indoor sports facilities currently available to the community
- Identifies the demand for these facilities by local people
- Evaluates what local people think about the quality of facility provision
- Identifies existing and predicted deficiencies/surpluses (including potential demand for indoor extreme sports)
- Identifies recommendations for future areas of investment and delivering improvements.

Methodology

1.9. As set out the indoor sport and leisure provision assessment has adopted the Sport England 'Assessment of Needs and Opportunities Guide' (ANOG) methodology, which advocates a broad approach to be undertaken looking at supply and demand and considering need in terms of:

- **Quantity** - what facilities there are in the area, how many?

- **Quality** – how good are they in terms of condition and being *'fit for purpose'*? ¹
- **Accessibility** - where they are located.
- **Availability** - how available are they? (The degree of 'availability' is analogous to the level of 'Community Use' (see references and the text box, below).

1.10. ANOG states that it is only by understanding all these elements together and their inter-relationship that you can form a rounded view of the supply and demand for facilities in an area. As also advocated by ANOG, extensive consultation has been undertaken to inform the analysis. Questionnaire surveys were undertaken as below:

- A sample household survey.
- A Survey of national governing bodies of sport and local clubs.
- A survey of parish/town councils.
- A Local groups and organisations survey
- Discussions were also undertaken with key Braintree District officers and leisure centre staff.

1.11. The report is made up of 11 main sections:

- Section 2 provides context for the study in respect of planned change within the local authority, and an analysis of the characteristics of the population that have a relevance to planning for sport and recreation. Key policies of other stakeholders are also noted.
- Sections 3 to 10 provide an assessment of provision for different facilities/activities, based on a consideration of their quantity, quality and accessibility, and availability for 'community use'. The term 'Community' Use is central to this study and is defined below. At the end of each section there is a short summary in respect of key findings, issues and options.
- Section 11 considers the impact of future planned population change on those facilities/activities considered in the sections 3 to 11. As appropriate it outlines some potential standards of provision for key facilities, and other appropriate recommendations to help meet both existing and future demand for facilities.

What is community use?

1.12. At its simplest 'community use' is a term that is used to describe the extent to which a given sport or recreation facility is available for use by members of the general community- either on a pay-as-you go informal basis, or as part of an organised club or group.

1.13. In practice, the above definition of community use will include a wide range of management regimes whose admission policies will span informal 'pay-as-you-go' access, by the general community; and, through to use by organised clubs and groups by booking or longer-term agreements

¹ All the principal community sports halls and leisure centres were visited as part of the study process. Relevant leisure centre managers, operators, as well as local authority officers were also interviewed. As is made clear in the accompanying consultation report, an assessment of residents' perceptions of quality formed a core component of consultation. Certain facilities (primarily commercial and some education venues) were difficult to access with time and resources available.

etc. Whether, individual facilities are considered to be available for significant community use depends of several factors, including:

- Type of facility (and whether its size and design might be of use to the community at large, or at least significant groups within the community).
- The cost of using facilities, and whether these might generally be considered to be affordable.
- The times and days of availability (times of most demand for the general community are likely to be in the evenings and at the weekends, as well as during mid-week lunchtime (a popular for people at work).
- The extent to which such use by the community is 'assured' over the longer-term.

1.14. In terms of utility for the general community different facilities will therefore have diverse value by nature of because of their varying scale, location, and management/pricing policies. This is not to deny the importance of other smaller provision for local clubs and groups, as well as those residents who prefer to pay for access to private/commercial facilities.

1.15. As described in later sections Sport England Facility Planning Modelling (FPM) has been used to inform this report. The way the FPM modelling works is that it attributes value via the hours, age, management, accessibility etc of a site and converts this in to visits.

2. CONTEXT

General

2.1. This section includes important contextual information about Braintree local authority relevant to the analysis contained in this report. It considers:

- A brief review of the policies and priorities of the local authority, as well as other key stakeholders and that have relevance to planning for sport and recreation within the local authority.
- The current demographic character of the local authority, and how it is likely to change in the coming years, up to 2031.
- A review of the particular characteristics of the adult population in respect of how this influences people's inclination to take part in sport and active recreation.

2.2. An understanding of the local strategic context, population and sports participation trends is essential in order to ensure that facility provision is tailored to the characteristics, profile and aspirations for the local area.

Policies

2.3. Below is a review of key policies that impact upon the preparation of this assessment and strategy.

National Level

2.4. The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** clearly establishes the requirement that local plans ensure that there is proper provision of community and cultural facilities to meet local needs. The NPPF's expectations for the development of local planning policy for sport and physical activity/recreation, is set out in paragraphs 73 and 74 which require there to be a sound (i.e. up-to-date and verifiable) evidence base underpinning policy and its application. Paragraph 73 indicates that: *'Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.'*

2.5. Paragraph 74 states that: *'Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:*

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

2.6. Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation. This cross-government strategy seeks to address flatlining levels of sport participation and high levels of inactivity in this country. Through this strategy, government is redefining what success in sport means, with a new focus on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In future, funding decisions will be made on the basis of the outcomes that sport and physical activity can deliver.

2.7. It is government's ambition that all relevant departments work closer together to create a more physically active nation, where children and young people enjoy the best sporting opportunities available and people of all ages and backgrounds can enjoy the many benefits that sport and physical activity bring, at every stage in their lives.

2.8. Government is reaffirming its commitment to Olympic and Paralympic success but also extending that ambition to non-Olympic sports where it will support success through grassroots investment in those sports, and by sharing UK Sport's knowledge and expertise. The strategy outlines what is expected of the sector to deliver this vision, and how the government will support it in getting there.

2.9. Public investment into community sport is to reach children as young as five as part of a ground-breaking new this new strategy. The move will see Sport England's remit changed from investing in sport for those aged 14 and over to supporting people from five years old right through to pensioners, in a bid to create a more active nation.

2.10. Investment will be targeted at sport projects that have a meaningful, measurable impact on how they are improving people's lives – from helping young people gain skills to get into work, to tackling social inclusion and improving physical and mental health.

2.11. Funding will also be targeted at groups who have low participation rates to encourage those who do not take part in sport and physical activity to get involved. This includes supporting women, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people. Sport England will set up a new fund in 2016 to get inactive people physically active and will support and measure participation in sport and wider physical activity going forward.

2.12. Sport England Strategy – 'Towards and Active Nation' 2016-2021. In response to the Government's strategy, Sport England's new strategy vision is that that everyone in England, regardless of age, background or ability, feels able to take part in sport or activity. Sport England's new vision and its supporting aims will therefore contribute to achieving the government's. Key features of the new Strategy are:

- Dedicated funding to get children and young people active from the age of five, including a new fund for family based activities and offering training to at least two teachers in every secondary school in England to help them better meet the needs of all children, irrespective of their level of sporting ability.
- Working with the sport sector to put customers at the heart of everything they do, and using the principles of behaviour change to inform their work.
- Piloting new ways of working locally by investing in up to 10 places in England – a mix of urban and rural areas.
- Investing up to £30m in a new volunteering strategy, enabling more people to get the benefits of volunteering and attracting a new, more diverse range of volunteers.
- Helping sport keep pace with the digital expectations of customers – making it as easy to book a badminton court as a hotel room.

- Working closely with governing bodies of sport and others who support people who already play regularly, to help them become more efficient, sustainable and diversify their sources of funding.

2.13. With respect to the final bullet point (above) a projected 38% of Sport England controlled investment will be directed through the National Governing Bodies of Sport. This is the largest of Sport England's funding programmes.

2.14. National Governing Body (NGB) 2013-17 funding. NGB 2013-17 funding is the centrepiece of Sport England's strategy with over £450 million to be invested in work with NGBs. Young people (14-25 years old) will benefit from 60% of this investment. Programmes will include helping young people move from school sport into club sport and working with universities and colleges to create more sporting opportunities for students. Additional funding will be available to governing bodies that are successfully increasing participation.

Local Level

Spatial planning

2.15. The current adopted Braintree district development plan is made up of a number of documents, including the Local Plan Review 2005 and the Core Strategy 2011.

2.16. The development plan sets out what, where, when, and how development will be managed in the District for the next 15 years. The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development (growth)

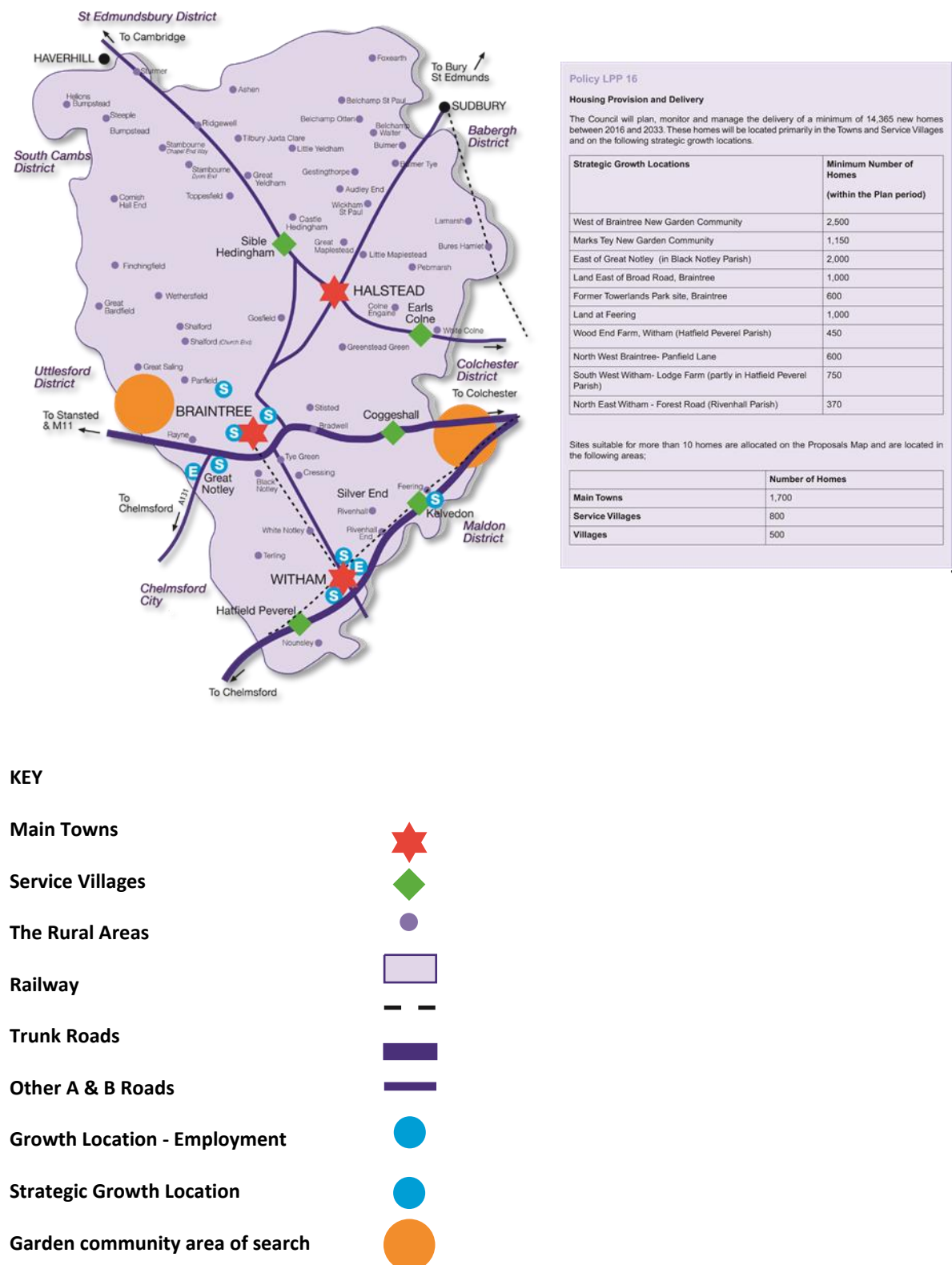
2.17. Work has begun on a new Local Plan. The new Local Plan will include all major planning policy for the District in a single document. Once complete it will replace both the Core Strategy (2011) and the Local Plan Review (2005).

2.18. One of the main requirements in the NPPF is for local authorities to significantly boost their supply of housing and this applies across the Country. A document called a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) helps the Council work out how many houses are needed and of what type. It estimates this need to be between 761 to 883 new homes per year. A range of housing need requirements was considered by the Council in September 2014 and further evidence on whether this is achievable will be collected before a decision on a precise number as part of the draft Plan to be published in Autumn 2015.

2.19. The Council will need to look at some new large sites. An indication of the potential location and scale of new housing is provided in **Figure 3.1**. Looking at the potential spatial distribution of the planned growth, there will be important implications for the planning of new and improved sports facilities to reflect the needs of new residents.

2.20. The Local Plan is not just about new homes but must ensure that housing growth is supported by infrastructure, jobs and community facilities. The Council will be working with key stakeholders such as the NHS, education and highways authorities to ensure that vital community facilities such as schools, GP surgeries and roads and public transport links are in place to support existing residents as well as new communities. Open spaces and community facilities will also be protected and new spaces and facilities will be supported.

Figure 2.1: Indicative location and scale of new development in the Plan period



Braintree Sustainable Community Strategy

2.21. The Sustainable Community Strategy, 'One District-One Vision A Strategy for People and Places in the Braintree District to 2026' was produced as a joint draft document with the earlier stages of the Core Strategy by the Braintree Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Braintree District Council. Usually published separately, but brought together into one overall framework for the future of the District, which it was hoped would be more logical and easier for everyone to understand. The LSP is a non-statutory body that brings together the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, working at a local level. The LSP's aim is to improve the social, economic and environment well-being of the people and communities of the Braintree District, now and for generations to come.

2.22. Local Development Documents will be a key delivery tool for the Sustainable Community Strategy, seeking to achieve the communities' ambitions for the future by implementing the guiding principles of the Sustainable Community Strategy:

- To promote accessibility for all
- To create a clean and green environment and address climate change
- To achieve a prosperous local economy
- To enable everyone to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle

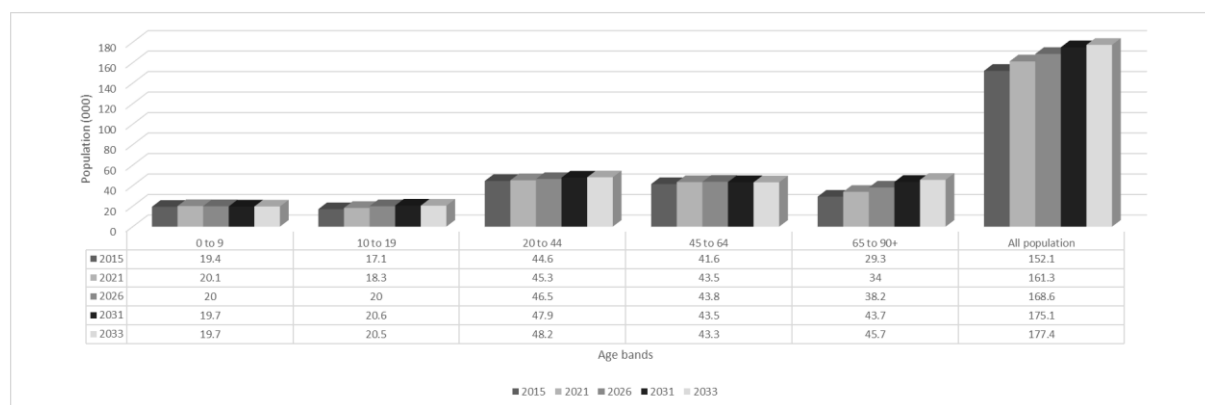
Population

2.23. As at 2015 Braintree District was estimated to have a population of 152,100.² The same projections calculate that by the year 2033 the population will have increased to 177,400 This figure is itself only based upon previous trends, and does not necessarily take into account the impact of planned new residential growth yet to be determined.

2.24. This growth will affect the local demography in different ways. **Figure 2.2** shows the impact it is likely to have on general age cohorts within the population.

² Table 2b: 2010-based Subnational Population Projections by sex and quinary age

Figure 2.2: Changing local population and age structure



Source: Table 2b: 2010-based Subnational Population Projections by sex and quinary age

2.28 The most noteworthy feature of the above changes is that whilst there is an overall growth in the population generally, the biggest numerical increases are in the oldest age groups and especially within those in the post retirement age groups.

2.29 Generally speaking, it is the younger adult age groups between 16 and 45 years of age that have the greatest propensity to participate in sports and active recreation. Whilst these age groups will continue to grow within the local authority it is clear that the greater percentage of the overall population growth will come from within the older age groups, and this will have implications for the way in which sport and recreation facilities are planned.

2.30 The current uncertainty about future housing allocations and growth means it is inappropriate to speculate on the location of major new planned growth at this time. However the requirement for large allocations to meet the projected requirement for new homes, means that a lot of additional future demand for new or improved built facilities will be focussed on specific geographic areas.

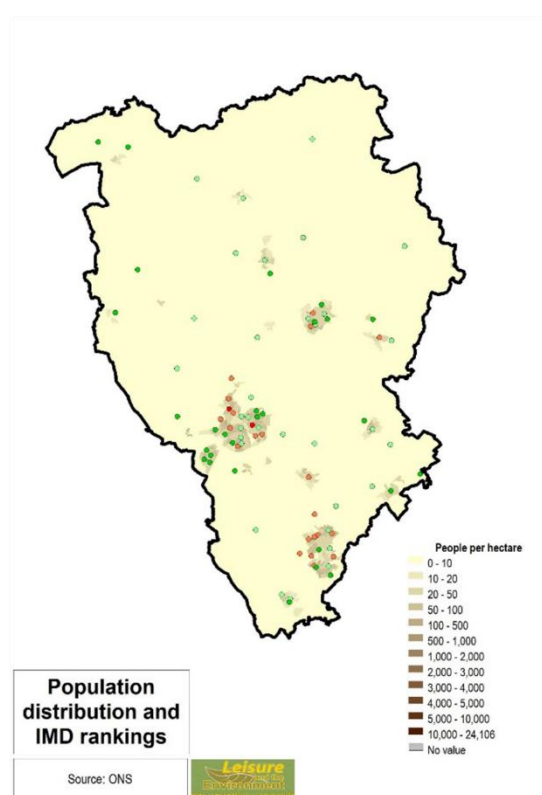
2.31 **Figure 2.3** below shows the overall distribution of population within the local authority (and is based on population data available from the Census Output Area level from the 2011 census).

Affluence and deprivation

2.32 Also shown on **Figure 2.3** is a traffic light colour scheme reflecting the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) scores for the locality. All of the approximately 34,500 Census Super Output Areas (SOAs) within England and Wales have been categorised into one of four quartiles based on their ranking in the most recent available government IMD at the time of this study. The red light represents SOAs in the highest ranked (most deprived) quartile whilst, the dark green light represents those in the lowest ranked (most affluent) quartile.

2.33 Much of the local authority area might be considered quite well off compared with most other parts of the country. There are, however, parts of the urban areas that fall within the least affluent two quartiles. Research has shown that there is a high correlation between levels of deprivation, and participation levels in sport and recreation.

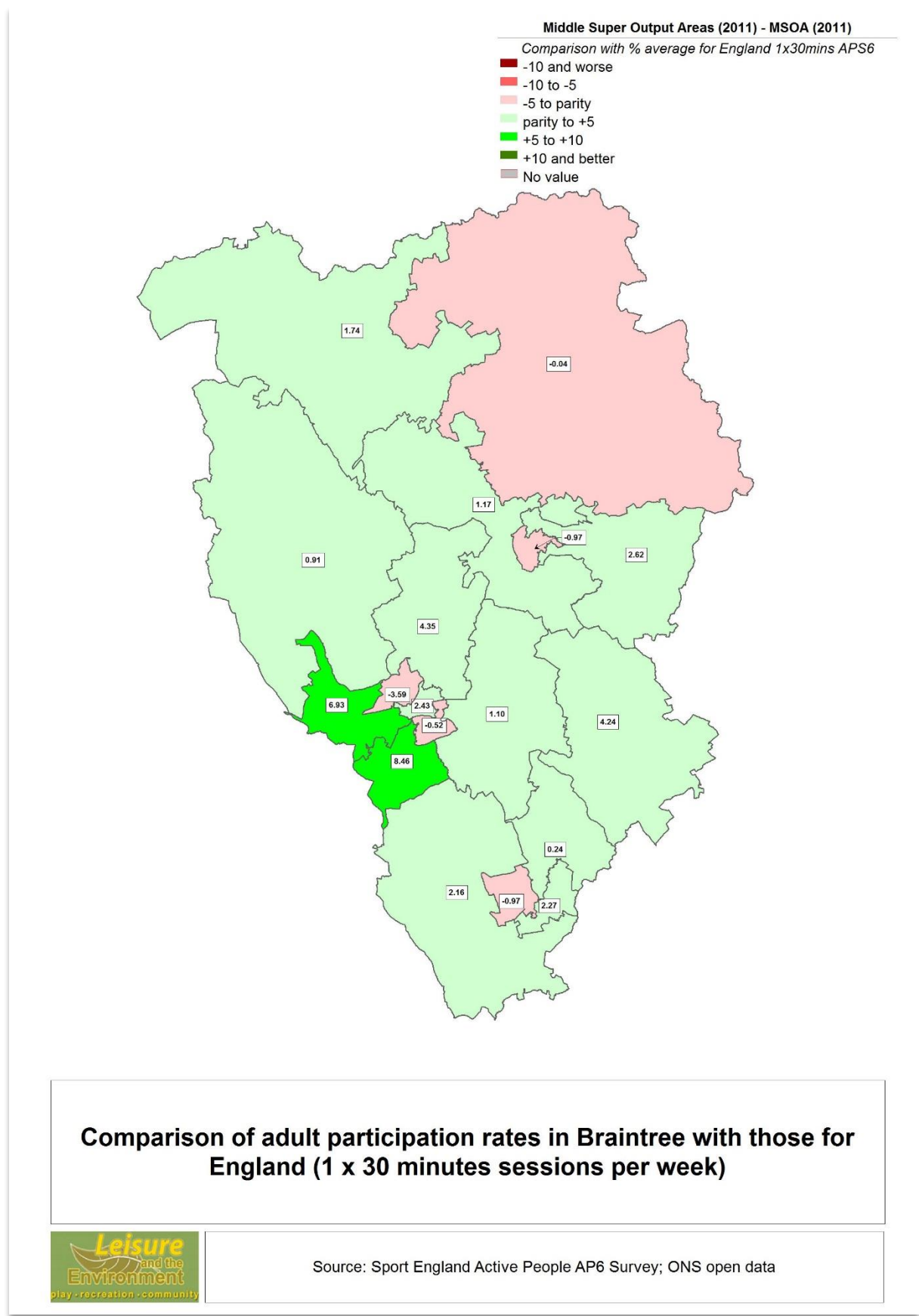
Figure 2.3: Population distribution and deprivation



Local participation levels in sport and active recreation

2.34. The Sport England Active People surveys have now been running for several years. Further details of the Active People Surveys (APS) are contained in **Appendix 1**. Essentially, the analysis is based on a regular sample survey of participation by the adult public aged 16 years and over. The sequence of surveys has now reached Active People year eight (AP8). Data have been released by Sport England allowing for mapping of participation rates to a local Census Middle Super Output Area. The results of this mapping are shown on the following **Figure 2.4**.

Figure 2.4: Participation in sport and active recreation by the adult population (at least 1 x 30 minutes/week)



2.35. Consistent with the relatively high levels of affluence enjoyed by local residents, rates of regular participation in sport and active recreation are generally higher, and often significantly higher, than the national averages for England. To reinforce the point made earlier about the correlation between deprivation and participation, it should be noted that one geographical area where participation rates appear lower than those for England as a whole is that where, (as shown on **Figure 2.2**), levels of measured deprivation are highest (in parts of Braintree urban area itself). Sometimes areas of lower participation might be explained by a higher incidence of elderly people, who will not be so inclined to take part in sport and active recreation.

2.36. It should also be noted that some of the areas where participation appears to be *highest* are in areas where there is relatively good access to sports facilities (such as Braintree urban area itself), which suggests that ease of access to appropriate facilities will help increase participation.

Propensity to participate in sport and active recreation

2.37. Sport England have developed a Market Segmentation analysis for adults over the age of 16 years. The adult population has been divided into 19 separate demographic groups within four overall categories are (A, B, C, D) each embracing one of four age groups within the adult population (A being the youngest, and D being the oldest). A full explanation of the 19 demographic groups is contained within **Appendix 2**. Each of the 19 age groups has been given a personalised title. The overall breakdown of the local authority's population is shown in the **Figure 2.5** below. It will be seen that, numerically, the most dominant categories are Tim, Philip, Roger & Joy, and Elaine³. Although, these groups are not the youngest within the adult population their characteristics yield a greater propensity to take part in sport and active recreation compared with some other groups.

³ 'Tim: Settling Down Males'. Sporty male professionals, buying a house and settling down with partner.

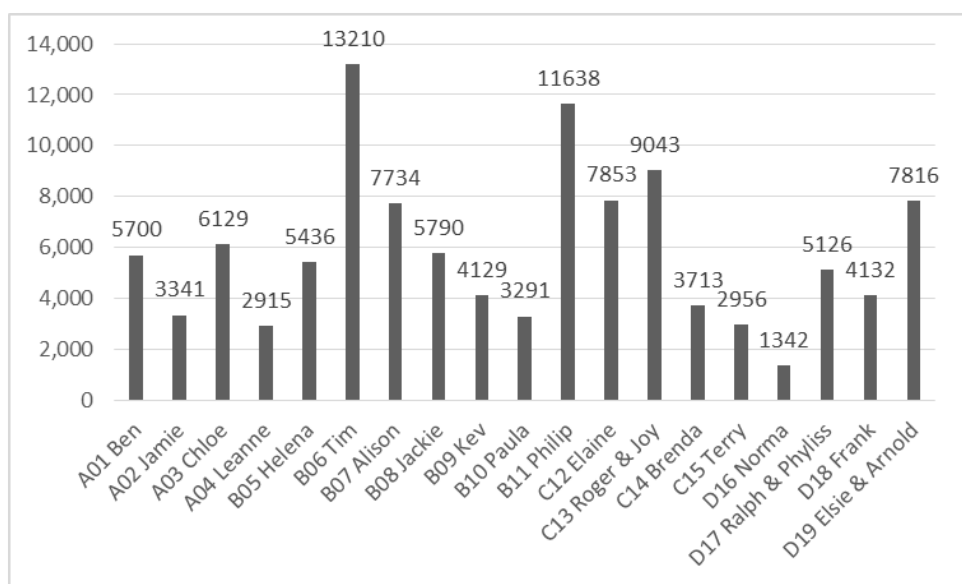
'Philip: Comfortable Mid-life Males'. Mid-life professional, sporty males with older children and more time for themselves.

'Elaine: Elaine Empty Nest Career Ladies'. Mid-life professionals who have more time for themselves since their children left home. Full-time job and owner-occupier, married.

'Roger & Joy: Early Retirement Couples'. Free-time couples nearing the end of their careers. Full-time job or retired, married.

'Elsie & Arnold: Retirement Home Singles'. Retired singles or widowers, predominantly female, living in sheltered accommodation.

Figure 2.5: Numerical breakdown of adult population by Sport England Market Segmentation

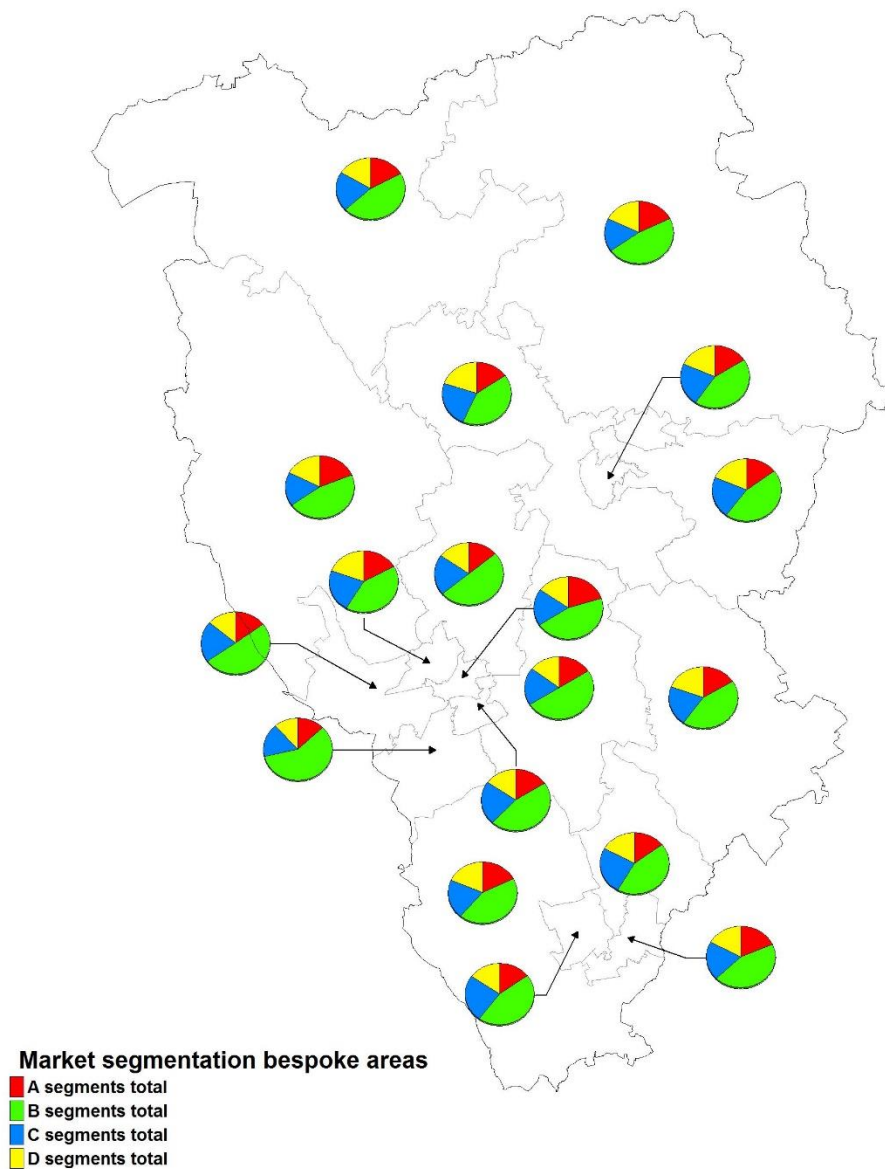


2.38. Figure 2.6 below combines the 19 different groups into the four overall categories (A, B, C, D) and displays them as pie charts for each of the Middle Super Output Areas (MSOAs) contained within the local authority. This provides a geographical representation of the dominance of particular categories throughout the local authority.

2.39. As the population involves the relative size for each of these four categories will change over time within any given area.

2.40. This changing and ageing demographic will have implications for participation in sport and active recreation. Precisely what these changes will be cannot be pre-judged. The natural demographic trends need also to be weighed against the impact of planned new development which may not increase local populations significantly, but also change local demographic profiles.

Figure 2.6: Distribution of overall Sport England Market Segmentation Categories within the local authority



Comparison of Market Segmentation overall A,B,C,D categories by MSOA



Source: Sport England Market Segmentation Data; ONS open data

Issues

2.42. The production of this report is therefore timely. The character of the local authority's population continues to change and this has a profound effect on the types of sport, play and leisure activity appealing to local people.

2.43. Many 'conventional' sports and facilities are seeing a decline in popularity- and in some cases participation and use is unlikely to return up to former levels. Other activities (sometimes derivatives of traditional sports) are becoming increasingly popular, and may appeal to sections of the population who for whatever reason would not or could not take part in traditional forms of sport. In a modern, fast-moving world income, time, and social media also help dictate what people can and do with their free-time.

2.44. The Council is working in a financially challenging environment- this brings challenges, but it also presents a clear opportunity for reviewing the Council's leisure service and facilities it operates.

2.45. Similarly many agencies, groups and organisations have shared aspirations in respect of the 'health agenda' and great potential exists for collaboration between public and voluntary sectors, as well as social and commercial enterprises to realise these aspirations

2.46. The various factors considered above suggest that the following will be the major determinants in the demand for sports and active recreation into the foreseeable future within the local authority:

- A growing population, which may be further accentuated by planned new residential growth that has not yet been statutorily allocated, but which may well result in the development of two significant new communities in the east and west of the District.
- The strong representation within the local population of some adult age groups with characteristics that make them more likely to take part in sport and active recreation;
- Generally high existing levels of regular participation compared with the national averages, which suggest that any further growth in participation levels will develop an already strong base.

2.47. The relative affluence of the population facilitates relatively high levels of participation within the local population. However, there are geographical pockets within the urban areas that exhibit quite high levels of economic and social deprivation, and where the levels of participation in sport and active recreation may be depressed as a consequence. Improving prospects for participating should be a priority for the local authority and its partners in these areas, with the consequent health and economic benefits.

3. INDOOR SWIMMING POOLS

3.1 General

3.1. This section considers the provision of swimming facilities within the local authority with respect to its quantity, quality, and accessibility and availability (for community use). Issues and options for swimming provision will then be summarised. Swimming as an activity will cover not just casual swimming by members of the public, but also race swimming, synchronised swimming, and water polo etc. Pools can also be used as training venues for canoeing and sub-aqua, although the utility of conventional pools for such activities is limited.

3.2 Quantity

3.2. Background research indicates a considerable number of swimming pools within the Braintree local authority area. However, many of these will only be partly available for use by the general community, if at all.

Existing provision (general)

3.3. **Figures 3.1 and 3.2** show the location of all known swimming pools within the Braintree local authority, as well as major swimming pool provision within neighbouring local authority areas which it is possible that Braintree residents might use. The pools in green text are those that are included in Sport England's assessment of strategic supply of and demand for hall space within the local authority, as explained later in this section, and included as Appendix 2 of this report. Further information on the key indoor provision within the District is provided as **Endnote 3**.

Figure 3.1: Location of known swimming pools

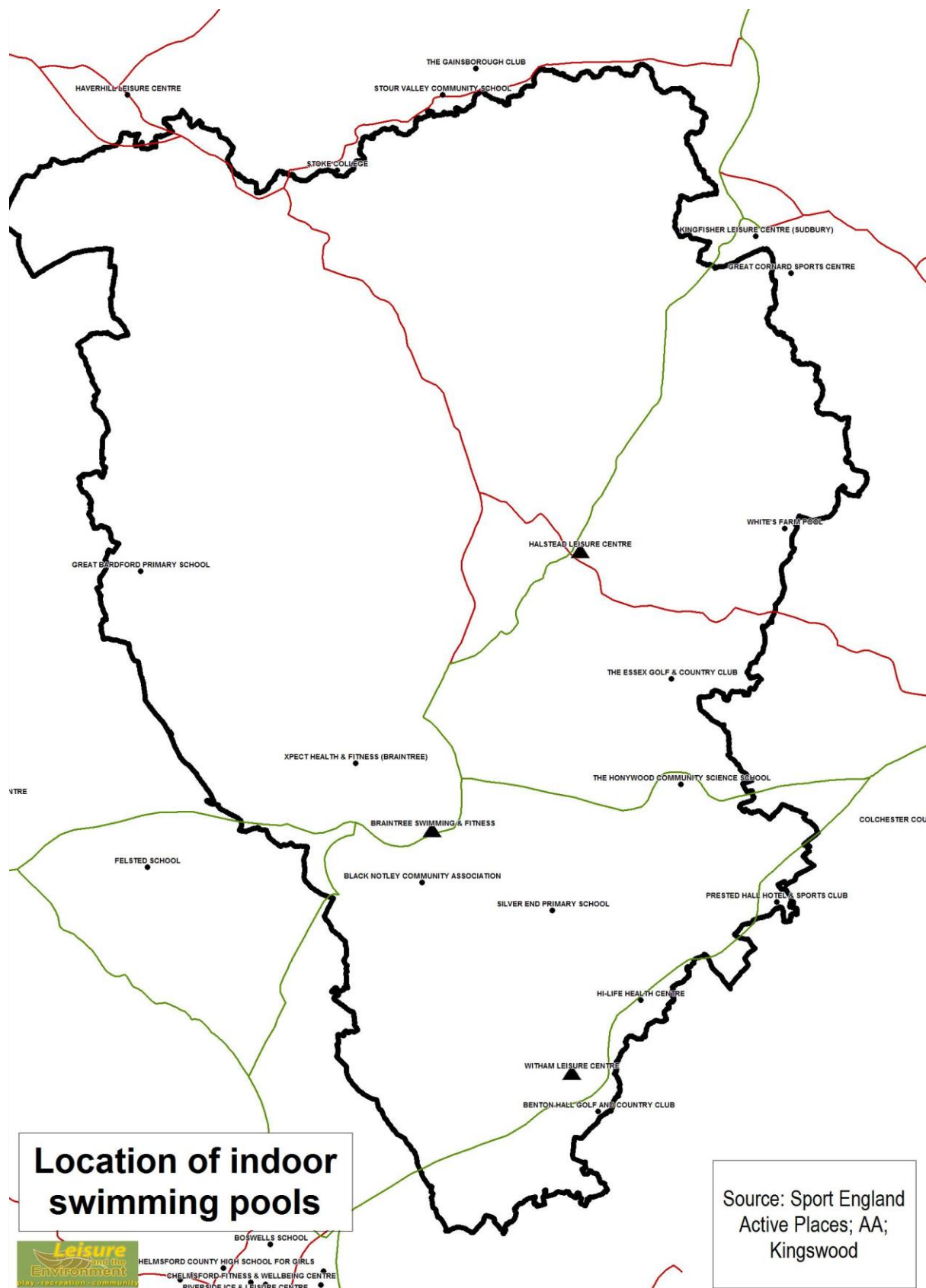


Figure 3.2: Description of known pools

Name	Facility Sub Type	Access Type
BENTON HALL GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB	Main/General	Registered Membership use
BLACK NOTLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION	Lido	Pay and Play
BRAINTREE SWIMMING & FITNESS	Learner/Teaching/Training	Pay and Play
BRAINTREE SWIMMING & FITNESS	Main/General	Pay and Play
BRAINTREE SWIMMING & FITNESS	Leisure Pool	Pay and Play
GREAT BARDFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL	Lido	Private Use
HALSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE	Learner/Teaching/Training	Pay and Play
HALSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE	Main/General	Pay and Play
HI-LIFE HEALTH CENTRE	Learner/Teaching/Training	Pay and Play
PRESTED HALL HOTEL & SPORTS CLUB	Main/General	Registered Membership use
SILVER END PRIMARY SCHOOL	Lido	Private Use
THE ESSEX GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	Main/General	Registered Membership use
THE HONYWOOD COMMUNITY SCIENCE SCHOOL	Learner/Teaching/Training	Pay and Play
WHITE'S FARM POOL	Learner/Teaching/Training	Pay and Play

Name	Facility Sub Type	Access Type
WITHAM LEISURE CENTRE	Main/General	Pay and Play
WITHAM LEISURE CENTRE	Learner/Teaching/Training	Pay and Play
XPECT HEALTH & FITNESS (BRAINTREE)	Main/General	Registered Membership use

Availability/community use (See the end of Section 1 for an explanation of this term)

3.4. It will be noted that the above comprises a range of provisions covering local authority, education, commercial, and membership facilities. In essence only a proportion will be available for the general community to use. It is the local authority provision at Braintree, Witham, and Halstead that has greatest value, by nature of its scale, location, and management/pricing policies. This is not to deny the importance of other provision for local clubs and groups, as well as those residents who prefer to pay for access to commercial pool space.

3.5. The following facilities are those judged by Sport England to be available for community use in respect of a supply/demand modelling exercise conducted in Braintree to aid this report (discussed later in this section).

Figure 3.3: Swimming pools in Braintree local authority considered to offer community use

Name	Facility Sub Type	Lanes	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Pool area sqm	Pool length	Pool width
BENTON HALL GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB	Main/General	2	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	162	18	9
BRAINTREE SWIMMING & FITNESS	Learner/Teaching/Training	0	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	91	13	7
BRAINTREE SWIMMING & FITNESS	Main/General	8	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	437.5	25	17.5
BRAINTREE SWIMMING & FITNESS	Leisure Pool	0	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	108	12	9
HALSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE	Learner/Teaching/Training	0	Pay and Play	Community school	Trust	50	10	5
HALSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE	Main/General	5	Pay and Play	Community school	Trust	250	25	10
PRESTED HALL HOTEL & SPORTS CLUB	Main/General	6	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	240	20	12
WITHAM LEISURE CENTRE	Main/General	6	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	325	25	13
WITHAM LEISURE CENTRE	Learner/Teaching/Training		Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	169	13	13
XPECT HEALTH & FITNESS (BRAINTREE)	Main/General	3	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	160	20	8

3.6. In terms of availability to the community and the range of facilities, the above will yield varying opportunities. The list includes those facilities that might be considered to be ‘general pools’, as opposed to pools (for example) designed for learners and toddlers, and bespoke diving pools. These other types of pool clearly have great value to small sections of the general community, but do not have a wider utility.

3.7. Outdoor pools are also excluded from this list, as they have limited utility for most people except for the warmer months.

3.8. Those pools which are most significant in respect of community access and use are the local authority-controlled facilities at Braintree, Witham, and Halstead. Other facilities are found primarily on school sites and at commercial venues.

3.9. Other pools not identified in **Figure 3.3**, will be small outdoor pools located at primary schools, as well as private membership and commercial facilities.

3.10. The total amount of usable water space yielded by the pools listed in the table is estimated to be 1,992.5 sqm. The biggest contributions in this regard are made by the three local authority-controlled facilities - between them they account for approximately **1,430.5 sq.m**, or around **72%** of usable water space by the community. It is very important to note that provision at other facilities listed does not necessarily provide for assured use by the general community, in the sense that such use is not guaranteed for the longer-term.

Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) (See Endnote 1 for an explanation)

3.11. The model has been run by Sport England for the Braintree local authority area. It is included as **Appendix 3**. Its overall conclusions are that although there are small pockets of the local authority which have higher levels of unmet demand compared to the majority of the local authority, there do not appear to be sufficient levels of unmet demand to warrant additional swimming pool provision. Overall satisfied demand is high at around 90%.

3.12. Beyond the data collected for local facilities, other data underlying the model are derived from supply, demand, and usage patterns developed over the years from national surveys and, as such, the analysis does not necessarily reflect particular local circumstances. *The conclusions of the modelling exercise conducted for this study should not therefore be considered in isolation from other local research and evidence.*⁴

3.13. The scale of unmet demand in Braintree local authority is estimated to be 9%. The areas of highest unmet demand are located within Braintree, Witham and some of the other smaller settlements. All of the unmet demand is due to residents being located outside the catchment areas for pools, with no unmet demand due to a lack of capacity. Most of the unmet demand is due to a lack of access to a car (74%).

3.14. The overall used capacity of facilities is, at an estimated 64.50%, below the Sport England recommended ‘comfort level’ of 70% used by Sport England in the FPM. However, this used capacity varies across the sites. The public facilities at Braintree and Halsted (Braintree Swimming and Fitness

⁴ More detailed Sport England modelling (not available to this assessment) can take into account the fact that the supply of and demand for major community sports facilities cannot be considered within the local authority in isolation from neighbouring areas, and the location and nature of provision in adjacent local authorities can therefore also be factored into calculations of overall supply.

and Halsted Leisure Centre) are operating at 83% and 96% respectively, according to the FPM calculations. Discussions with centre managers and local authority officers do not suggest there to be any immediate issues in terms of peak time availability of these pools. However, the reprogramming of both facilities should be investigated to ensure that best use is made of the hours of community use in the peak period.

3.15. The population of the local authority creates a demand for 9,600 visits per week in the peak period (vwpp). The water space equivalent of this demand is 1,593 sq.m (including the comfort factor). This figure ensures that any 'target' figure includes additional space so to make sure that the new facilities are not going to be 100% of their theoretical capacity. The percentage of the population without access to a car in Braintree is lower than the figures for Essex and the regional average. This reflects the rural character of Braintree local authority area.

3.16. The calculations used in the FPM were based on researched assumptions, which are explained in **Appendix 3**.

3.17. The FPM report identified the following estimated usage of each facility in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.4: Estimated capacity use of keys pool

Name	Capacity used (%)
Benton Hall Golf and Country Club	39%
Braintree Swimming and Fitness (x3 pools)	83%
Halsted Leisure Centre (x2 pools)	96%
Prested Hall Hotel and Sports Club	43%
Witham Leisure Centre (x2 pools)	63%
Xpect Health and Fitness (Braintree)	92%

3.19. As can be seen from the above table, the crude average 69% usage of total capacity average for the local authority masks a considerable variation across the 6 facilities considered in the FPM analysis. The most heavily used is estimated to be the Halstead Leisure Centre at 96%, whilst the least used is estimated to be Benton Hall Golf and Country Club pool at 39%.

3.20. There is a spatial element to the FPM analysis: the analysis does not simply involve aggregating demand within the local authority and comparing it with the capacity of swimming pools within the local authority to meet that demand. Importantly, the FPM also takes into account the ability of residents to access a swimming pool by either car, walking, cycling, or public transport. This travel might include trips across local authority boundaries to use facilities in neighbouring areas.

3.21. The FPM report concludes that there is a very low level of ‘unmet demand’ amongst local residents for access to swimming facilities. The unmet demand is generated by residents not lying within a defined drive time catchment of any of the facilities considered within the report, or else qualifying facilities in neighbouring local authority areas.

3.22. It was noted earlier that the most valuable contribution towards the current provision, both in scale and weight of community use are the three local authority pools. Combined, these account for 72% of the existing water space in community use (1,430 sqm). The ‘gap’ between this figure and the SFC figure of 1,595 sq.m (as well as the ‘actual’ figure of 1,992 sq.m) is ‘bridged’ by provision at membership clubs. This is an important point- by their nature, the three local authority facilities are those which have ‘access for the general community’ as their driving ethos. The motivation of other facilities included in Figure 3.3 are primarily to generate an acceptable level of commercial profit, based on attracting patronage willing to pay for a particular type of swimming experience.

3.23. There are clearly synergies between provision in different sectors- for example, provision at commercial venues may help to alleviate pressure at local authority facilities, whilst also offering their customers an environment within which they feel more comfortable.

3.24. Beyond the three local authority facilities, there are not known to be any controlling policies, or legal agreements obliging providers to offer an acceptable level of general community use/availability. The three local authority facilities are those which have 'access for the general community' as their driving ethos. The motivation of other facilities within the local authority are primarily to meet the needs of pupils; or, to generate an acceptable level of commercial profit, based on attracting patronage willing to pay for a particular type of swimming experience. Commercial facilities have less value in this regard due to the fact that they generally have membership-only structures, and the fees are often higher than those available at local authority facilities and are, therefore, only available to lower numbers of residents.

The views of local residents

3.25. In respect of swimming pools, the household survey conducted as part of this study highlighted the following:

- Swimming pools are used regularly by significant numbers (22% of households report using them at least weekly; and 14% at least monthly). However, respondents suggested that only 1% used a pool every day; and, 63% said they used pools less often, or never.
- The survey responses, however, also suggest that most people consider there to be sufficient swimming pools within the Braintree local authority to meet existing needs, with 80% of respondents stating this view. (18% felt that there were not enough pools; and 2% considered there to be too many).

Key stakeholders

Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) (London and South East Region)

3.26. The regional governing body acknowledges the level of provision in Braintree District in terms of its three 25m pools as meeting demand for casual swimming and competition.

3.27. While recognising the lack of Diving facilities in Braintree, the ASA would not support strategic specialist provision in Braintree. High quality diving facilities (springboards to 3m, platforms to 10m, movable floors) are provided in Southend, Cambridge and Luton (no movable floor). There is also provision currently at the Riverside Ice and Leisure Centre in Chelmsford.

Swimming Clubs

3.28. Braintree and Witham Dolphins Swimming Clubs (memberships of over 200 and 150 respectively) both report that membership has increased over the last 3 years. Riverside Sub-aqua Club has a membership of 18 which has decreased over that time.

3.29. The two swimming clubs have active junior sections. Neither has direct links with schools, but Braintree say "we would very much welcome a link, particularly at primary school level to attract swimmers at an early age". Riverside sub-aqua offer diving sessions to any organisations that would like to attend. Currently they provide sessions for the scouts on a Saturday evening.

3.30. Both swimming clubs aim to attract more members. Braintree Swimming Club would like to get more pool time and Witham Dolphins would like to run more galas. Riverside Sub Aqua would like to expand its activities by getting younger members involved.

3.31. Braintree Swimming Club note that one key barrier for them is "restrictions on pool time i.e. the pool is open to the public and not available for any more hours than we currently book". Witham Dolphins note barriers to development as being "a lack of qualified officials; and the difficulty in finding training courses to enable volunteers to become qualified. This means we can't run more galas".

3.32. Local club's difficulty in securing more 'pool-time' might be addressed through re-scheduling some public swimming and other activity sessions, as suggested in paragraph 3.14.

Quality of provision

3.33. The quality of provision local has been boosted in recent years by the development of the new facility at Witham, allied to improvements at the two older local authority pools. The views of residents and key stakeholders obtained through the consultation process, are considered in the following paragraphs.

Household survey

3.34. While 67% of respondent user households rated the quality of swimming pools as being good or very good, 6% highlighted the quality of swimming pools as being either poor or very poor, and 27% as simply "average".

3.35. Respondents suggested that improvements to the quality of existing pools is largely considered to be a 'Low' priority (51% of respondents considered this to be the case).

Key Stakeholders

The Braintree Access Group

3.36. Factors of importance regarding use of swimming pools by disabled people include: ensuring a satisfactory pool and poolside temperature; providing grab rails in changing rooms; having sufficient large changing rooms with suitable showering facilities and toilets; providing hoist equipment; and arranging radar key entry to specialist changing facilities - to ensure they are available for the disabled people who need them most rather than the public in general (who can use any changing rooms).

3.37. The disabled swimming club at the Braintree Leisure Centre pool used to be about 30 strong, but folded because issues regarding pool temperature could not be resolved. This means that many disabled swimmers go to Sudbury and other pools.

Local Clubs

3.38. In general Braintree Swimming Club and Riverside Sub Aqua Club both rate the pool facilities at Braintree Leisure Centre quite highly, though some aspects are only rated as adequate. An exception is equipment and storage (poor for Braintree Swimming Club).

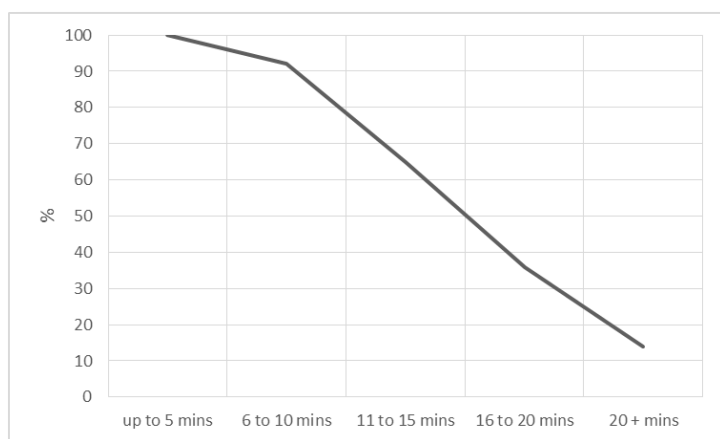
3.39. Witham Dolphins are generally satisfied with the overall quality of the pool at Witham sports centre with the possible exception of car parking, for unspecified reasons.

Accessibility

Household survey

3.40. The household survey indicated that the majority of users were prepared to travel between 11-15 minutes to get to a swimming pool with the 75 percentile likely to be at the lower end of this range, and the most popular mode of being by car. See **Figure 3.4** below.

Figure 3.4: Preparedness to travel to a swimming pool

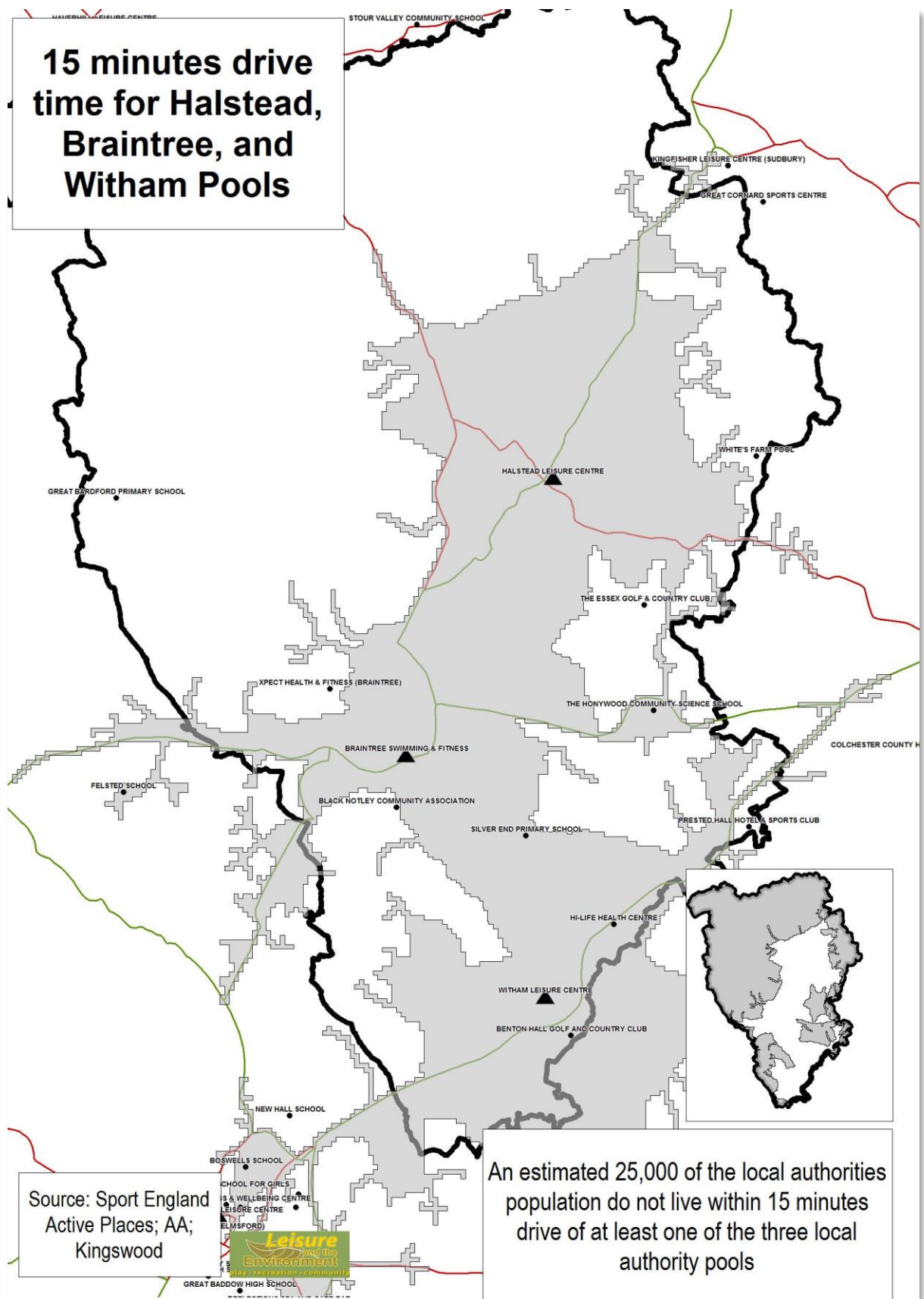


FPM report/what is an acceptable drivetime to a pool

3.41. The FPM analysis discussed earlier in this section has a spatial element based on 20 minute drive or walk time catchments, centred on facilities considered in the analysis (i.e. the 10 pools listed in Figure 3.2, and appropriate pools in neighbouring areas). The 20 minute catchment is based on data obtained from previous national research by Sport England, which concluded that a 20 minute drive time represented 90% of the user catchment on average for swimming pools. However, the same research indicated that around 60 per cent of users were only prepared to travel up to 10 minutes. The household survey conducted as part of this study suggests that an appropriate compromise for Braintree might be a 15 minute catchment by foot or car. Travel by car is by far the most significant mode of transport to swimming pools,

3.42. If 15 minutes is adopted as a travel time to swimming pools acceptable to 75% of the population, the resultant catchments of local authority-controlled pools at Braintree, Halstead, and Witham are shown on the **Figure 3.5**. The catchments are based on assumed average speeds for different classes of roads. The maps show that on the basis of these assumed average speeds significant geographical areas are not covered by the catchments of the three local authority swimming pools. The estimated population within the local authority falling outside the catchment has been calculated to be c. 25,000.

Figure 3.5: 15 minute drive catchments for Braintree, Halstead and Witham local authority pools



3.44. If non-local authority pools not in secured community use were to be included on **Figure 3.5** the extent of the exclusion zone would be reduced. However, as most of this other provision is also located in the southern half of the local authority the coverage would not be extended greatly.

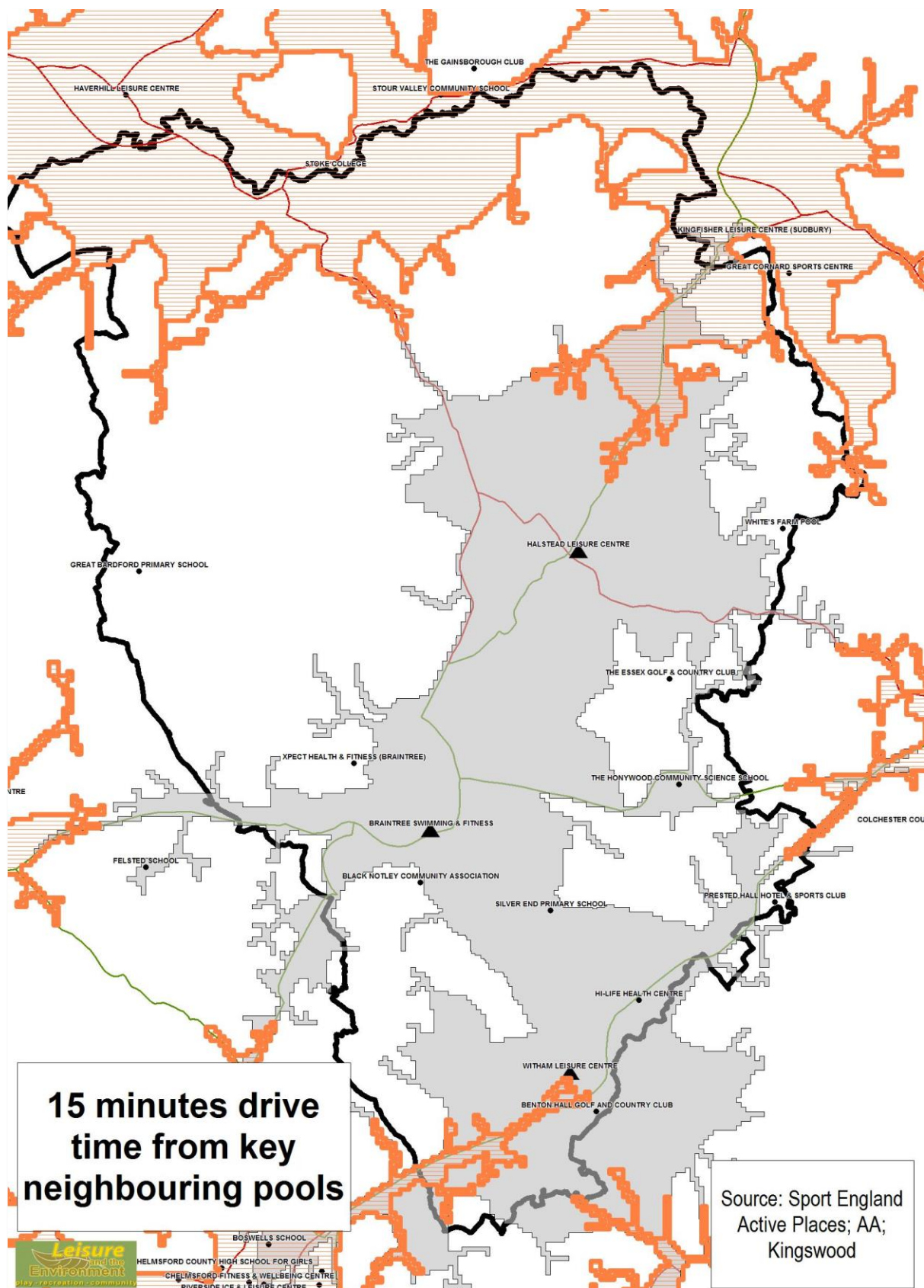
3.45. It is very conceivable that those residents excluded from the estimated catchments used in Figure 3.5 might find it easier to use swimming facilities in neighbouring areas. The following are likely to be the closest significant provision of an appropriate kind outside the Braintree local authority.

Figure 3.6: Selected pools in neighbouring areas

Name	Facility Sub Type	Lanes	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Pool area sqm
BLACKWATER LEISURE CENTRE	Leisure Pool	4	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	250
COLCHESTER LEISURE WORLD	Main/General	6	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Local Authority (in house)	312.5
GREAT DUNMOW LEISURE CENTRE	Main/General	6	Pay and Play	Foundation School	Commercial Management	325
HAVERHILL LEISURE CENTRE	Main/General	6	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	300
KINGFISHER LEISURE CENTRE (SUDBURY)	Leisure Pool	6	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	500
RIVERSIDE ICE & LEISURE CENTRE	Main/General	6	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Local Authority (in house)	416.25

3.46. If their 15 minute catchments were also superimposed on a map, they would reduce the size of the ‘exclusion zone’ and its resident population (see **Figure 3.7**), although it would not be eliminated entirely. This pre-supposes that the capacity exists at these neighbouring venues to absorb the potential demand generated by these residents.

Figure 3.7: 15 minute drive catchments from major pools in neighbouring areas.



Summary of key issues

3.47. The existing supply of community swimming pools space appears sufficient to meet current demand, based on all available evidence.

3.48. There are likely problems in relation to ease of access to an existing pool for some part of the local authority, due to distance and the availability of transport, especially in rural areas. It may be difficult to offer a solution to this in a cost-effective way. However, access to pools in neighbouring local authorities may ease the problem, to an extent.

3.49. Predicted population growth will justify additional provision, addressed further in Section 11.

3.50. However, the proposed focus of much planned new development on two new communities (east and west of Braintree) will generate demand for swimming that is not easily met either by existing community pools inside or neighbouring Braintree District. (See Figure 3.7).

4. SPORTS HALLS

General

4.1. This section considers the provision of sports halls within the local authority with respect to their quantity, quality, and accessibility. Issues and options for sports hall provision will then be summarised.

4.2. Sports halls can accommodate a diverse range of sports and recreational activities. They are flexible spaces that can be used for activities that include basketball, badminton, indoor football, table tennis, gymnastics, netball, and a host of training activities.

Quantity

4.3. Background research indicates a considerable number of sports halls within the Braintree local authority area. However, many of these will only be partly available for use by the general community, if at all. They will also be of varying sizes, and therefore utility, for general and specialist use by the community.

Existing provision (general)

4.4. **Figure 4.1** and **Figure 4.2** show the location and describe all the most significant sports halls in the Braintree local authority, as well as major provision within neighbouring local authority areas which it is possible that Braintree residents might use. The map itself only identifies the provision of 'main halls' with a level of community use, and a size big enough to accommodate at least 3 badminton courts- this size, appropriately configured, is big enough to host activities such as basketball and 5-a-side football. The map does not show smaller activity halls, of which there are several. Activity halls are better suited to supporting activities such as keep fit, and martial arts which do not require the space or the ceiling height needed by some other sports.

4.5. A full list of provision (both main and activity halls) is provided in **Figure 4.2**. The halls in green text are those that are included in Sport England's assessment of strategic supply of and demand for hall space within the local authority, as explained later in this section, and included as Appendix 2 of this report. Further information on the key indoor provision within the District is provided as **Endnote 3**.

Figure 4.1: Location of principal sports halls

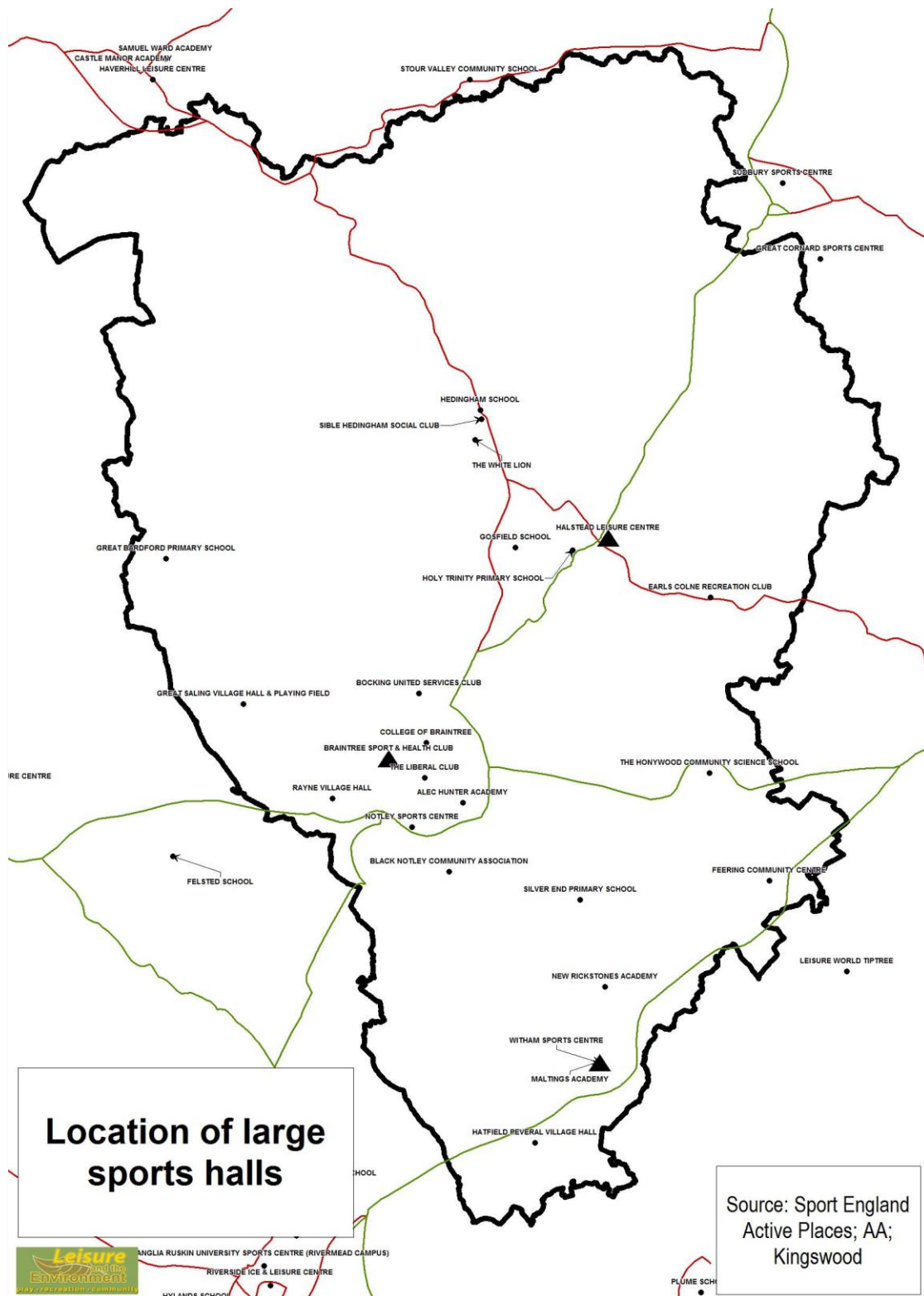


Figure 4.2: Known sports halls (main halls and activity halls)

Name	Facility Type	Facility Sub Type	Badminton courts	Access Type
ALEC HUNTER ACADEMY	Sports Hall	Main	4	Sports Club / Community Association
ALEC HUNTER ACADEMY	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	0	Sports Club / Community Association
BLACK NOTLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	1	Pay and Play
BOCKING UNITED SERVICES CLUB	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	0	Sports Club / Community Association
BRAINTREE SPORT & HEALTH CLUB	Sports Hall	Main	5	Pay and Play
BRAINTREE SPORT & HEALTH CLUB	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	0	Pay and Play
COLLEGE OF BRAINTREE	Sports Hall	Main	6	Private Use
EARLS COLNE RECREATION CLUB	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	2	Pay and Play
FEERING COMMUNITY CENTRE	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	1	Sports Club / Community Association
GOSFIELD SCHOOL	Sports Hall	Main	4	Sports Club / Community Association
GREAT BARDFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	0	Sports Club / Community Association
GREAT SALING VILLAGE HALL & PLAYING FIELD	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	1	Pay and Play
HALSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE	Sports Hall	Main	4	Pay and Play
HATFIELD PEVERAL VILLAGE HALL	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	1	Pay and Play
HEDINGHAM SCHOOL	Sports Hall	Main	3	Sports Club / Community Association

Name	Facility Type	Facility Sub Type	Badminton courts	Access Type
HOLY TRINITY PRIMARY SCHOOL	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	0	Pay and Play
MALTINGS ACADEMY	Sports Hall	Main	4	Sports Club / Community Association
NEW RICKSTONES ACADEMY	Sports Hall	Main	4	Sports Club / Community Association
NOTLEY SPORTS CENTRE	Sports Hall	Main	3	Sports Club / Community Association
NOTLEY SPORTS CENTRE	Sports Hall	Main	5	Pay and Play
NOTLEY SPORTS CENTRE	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	1	Sports Club / Community Association
RAYNE VILLAGE HALL	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	0	Pay and Play
RAYNE VILLAGE HALL	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	0	Pay and Play
SIBLE HEDINGHAM SOCIAL CLUB	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	0	Pay and Play
SILVER END PRIMARY SCHOOL	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	0	Private Use
THE HONYWOOD COMMUNITY SCIENCE SCHOOL	Sports Hall	Main	3	Sports Club / Community Association
THE HONYWOOD COMMUNITY SCIENCE SCHOOL	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	1	Sports Club / Community Association
THE HONYWOOD COMMUNITY SCIENCE SCHOOL	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	2	Sports Club / Community Association
THE LIBERAL CLUB	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	0	Sports Club / Community Association
THE WHITE LION	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	0	Pay and Play
WITHAM SPORTS CENTRE	Sports Hall	Main	4	Pay and Play

Availability/community use (See the end of Section 1 for an explanation of this term)

4.6. It will be noted that the list comprises a range of provisions covering local authority, education, commercial, and membership facilities. In essence only a proportion will be available for the general community to use.

4.7. In terms of utility for the general community it is the local authority provision at Braintree, Halstead, and Witham; and, the school-based Notley Sports Centre, that have greatest value by nature of scale, location, and management/pricing policies. This is not to deny the importance of other provision for local clubs and groups. In this regard there is very significant school provision, as well community recreation centres and sports and social clubs. There are two new ‘academy’ schools in Witham (The Maltings and Rickenstones), both of which have 4-court sports halls that are available for community use.

4.8. Determining which of the facilities listed in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 offer a significant level of community use is therefore a matter of judgement. At the very local level even the smallest sports halls can offer good opportunities for local communities. However, it will be the larger facilities of three or more badminton courts in size that offer the most diverse opportunities for the greatest number of potential users. The following are the facilities judged by Sport England to be available for community use in respect of a supply/demand modelling exercise conducted in Braintree to aid this report (discussed later in this section). The list represents the larger halls within the local authority, and reflect the provision shown on Figure 4.1. The exception to this is the Rickenstones Academy sports hall, which was not included in the Sport England analysis, and is commented upon in later paragraphs. The large 6-court sports hall at the College of Braintree is excluded from this list on the basis that it is recorded in the Sport England records as being for ‘private use’, albeit that the College does have some record of allowing community use of its hall: this is discussed again shortly.

Figure 4.3: Sports halls in Braintree local authority considered to offer significant community use

Name	Facility Type	Facility Sub Type	Badminton courts	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built
ALEC HUNTER ACADEMY	Sports Hall	Main	4	Sports Club / Community Association	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	1960
ALEC HUNTER ACADEMY	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	0	Sports Club / Community Association	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	1960
BRAINTREE SPORT & HEALTH CLUB	Sports Hall	Main	5	Pay and Play	Community school	Trust	1992
GOSFIELD SCHOOL	Sports Hall	Main	4	Sports Club / Community Association	Other Independent School	School/College/University (in house)	1998
HALSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE	Sports Hall	Main	4	Pay and Play	Community school	Trust	1974

Name	Facility Type	Facility Sub Type	Badminton courts	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built
HEDINGHAM SCHOOL	Sports Hall	Main	3	Sports Club / Community Association	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	1965
MALTINGS ACADEMY	Sports Hall	Main	4	Sports Club / Community Association	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	2011
NOTLEY SPORTS CENTRE	Sports Hall	Main	5	Pay and Play	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	1974
NOTLEY SPORTS CENTRE	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	1	Sports Club / Community Association	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	1974
THE HONYWOOD COMMUNITY SCIENCE SCHOOL	Sports Hall	Main	3	Sports Club / Community Association	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	1960

Name	Facility Type	Facility Sub Type	Badminton courts	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built
THE HONYWOOD COMMUNITY SCIENCE SCHOOL	Sports Hall	Activity Hall	2	Sports Club / Community Association	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	1998
WITHAM SPORTS CENTRE	Sports Hall	Main	4	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Community Organisation	2010

4.9. In terms of access for the general public and the range of facilities, the above will yield varying opportunities.

4.10. Facilities on education sites will be dominated by curricular activity. However, there will be use of the halls by organised clubs and societies in the evenings and at weekends. Notable examples of this include Notley and Braintree College.

4.11. There are estimated to be the equivalent of 59 badminton courts hosted in the various sports halls across the local authority. The majority of these courts will be located in the larger halls – principally, those with four or more courts. 39 courts (66% of the total stock) are in the sports halls listed in Figure 4.3.

4.12. Only 13 of the 59 courts overall are controlled by the directly by local authority (representing 22% of the total stock). This local authority controlled provision is offered within the Braintree, Halstead, and Witham Leisure Centres. Provision at other facilities listed does not necessarily provide for assured access by the general community, in the sense that such use is not guaranteed for the longer-term.

Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) (See End Note 1 for an explanation of the FPM)

4.13. The model has been run by Sport England for the Braintree local authority area. Its overall conclusions are that the level of unmet demand in the district is 4.5 badminton courts (the equivalent of just over 1 standard size sports hall). However, the modelling does not identify any geographical areas where unmet demand is significantly higher than elsewhere in the local authority. There are therefore no obvious locations where new facilities would meet this unmet demand.

4.14. The above only provides a ‘global’ view of provision and does not take account of the location, nature and quality of facilities in relation to demand; how accessible facilities are to the resident population (by car and on foot); nor does it take account of facilities in adjoining local authorities or cross-boundary movements which are likely to have an impact for some residents of Braintree District. This wider picture regarding the adequacy of provision is covered in more detailed FPM modelling. The views of local residents, as well as key interest groups such as local clubs and governing bodies of sport are covered later in this section, and provide a much greater understanding of the local situation in respect of specific needs.⁵

4.15. The model estimates that the scale of unmet demand in Braintree DC is 9.70% (or 984 vpwpp not currently being met). This translates to unmet demand equating to 4.50 courts (with the recommended Sport England comfort factor, as discussed below, included).

4.16. Due to the rural nature of the district the majority of the unmet demand is due to residents living outside the catchment area of a sports hall.

4.17. The facilities appear to be located in the correct locations to meet the majority of demand. However, all but one of the facilities are operating at 99% or 100% of capacity and most of the sports hall stock is old.

4.18. The Sport England report recommends the following:

⁵ More detailed Sport England modelling (not available to this assessment) can take into account the fact that the supply of and demand for major community sports facilities cannot be considered within the local authority in isolation from neighbouring areas, and the location and nature of provision in adjacent local authorities can therefore also be factored into calculations of overall supply.

- The potential to increase the hours of community use the existing sports halls are available in the peak period (in particular the facilities Gosfield and Hedingham) to meet unmet demand.
- Refurbishment and extension of some of the older facilities to meet some of unmet demand (for example The Honywood Community Science School which the model suggests is currently under-used, and other older facilities which are given lower weight in the model (Alec Hunter Humanities College and Hedingham School)).
- Reprogramming to make better use of the existing sports halls.
- Reviewing the excluded facilities to determine whether they could provide additional capacity for certain activities e.g. exercise classes.
- Further local FPM modelling if any new sports halls are proposed.

4.19. In addition it would be worth reviewing the actual availability of the College of Braintree facility, as well as that the Rickenstones Academy in Witham, to establish whether there is any spare capacity and, if so, whether community use arrangements could be formalised/confirmed. With regard to Rickenstones Academy, conversations with staff suggest that availability in respect of ‘spare capacity’ to provide for community groups only exists on Sunday mornings.

4.20. The Sport England Facilities Planning Model is designed to include a ‘comfort factor’⁶ and assumes that usage of a sports hall over 80% of capacity is busy; sports halls will be operating at an uncomfortable level above that percentage.

4.21. The total used capacity of Braintree DC’s sports halls is 7,482 (visits per week per population) vpwpp and this represents an average usage of 84.40% of overall capacity of halls used across the local authority. Overall the sports halls are operating at quite a high level of 4.4% above the ‘Sports Hall full’ Sport England comfort level of 80% of used total capacity.

4.22. Even the local authority-wide average of 84.40% hides significant variation: all of the sports halls are operating at 100% or 99% of used capacity except the The Honywood Community Science School which is only operating at 32%.

4.23. The Honywood Community Science School has a main hall and 2 activity halls and is available for 32.5 hours pwpp. The underuse of the facility is likely to be due to the rural location of the sports hall and the age of the facility which was built 55 years ago (with one activity hall built in 1998) and has never been refurbished. This is evidenced by the model attributing only a 24.5% attractiveness weighting to these facilities.

4.24. There is a spatial element to the FPM analysis: the analysis does not simply involve aggregating demand within the local authority and comparing it with the capacity of sports halls within the local authority to meet that demand. Importantly, the FPM also takes into account the ability of residents

⁶ There is a need to take account of a range of activities that take place within sports halls which have different numbers of users and space requirements e.g. singles badminton may have significantly less participants per court space than fitness classes. To account for these factors the notion of a ‘comfort factor’ is applied by the FPM.

The FPM builds in a comfort factor to the modelling and suggests that a figure around 80% indicates that a sports hall is operating at an uncomfortably busy level.

The ‘comfort level’ of 80% is less than the theoretical capacity of 100%. This is because it would be almost impossible (and in any event undesirable) to utilise facilities to their full capacity during every available hour, given the management implications as well as the unattractive environment this would present for users.

to access a facility either car, walking, cycling, or public transport. This travel might include trips across local authority boundaries to use facilities in neighbouring areas.

4.25. It was also noted earlier that only 13 of the 59 courts are owned by the local authority (representing 22% of the total stock). This local authority provision is located at the three main facilities in Braintree, Halstead, and Witham. Local authority facilities are those which have 'access for the general community' as their driving ethos. The motivation of other facilities included in Figure 4.3 is primarily to meet the needs of pupils.

4.26. There are clearly synergies between provision in different sectors- provision at schools (when not required for curricular use) will benefit clubs that might otherwise struggle to find sufficient time and space for their needs at local authority venues.

4.27. As the primary motivations of education providers are not the same as those of the local authority, it is always possible that changing curricular demands might reduce the availability of facilities for outside clubs and groups. However, all the schools responding to a school survey conducted as part of this study, confirmed that they did not anticipate any reduction in community use in the foreseeable future. In fact, some schools noted that they had some additional capacity to offer greater community use of some of their facilities.

4.28. Beyond the three local authority facilities, there are not known to be any controlling policies, or legal agreements obliging providers to offer an acceptable level of general community use, although procedures and Braintree College and the two academy schools at Witham should be clarified.

Views of residents

4.29. In respect of sports halls, the household survey conducted as part of this study highlighted the following:

- Sports and leisure centres are used regularly by significant numbers (57% of households report using them at least monthly - many more regularly).
- Sports/leisure centres are used at least weekly by 44% - of which 7% visit nearly every day
- The majority of respondents (78%) considered there to be enough sports halls and leisure centres to meet demand. However, the survey registered a perceived need for additional specialist indoor facilities (which can often be housed in suitably designed sports halls- 36%)

Views of key stakeholders

Braintree District Council (Environment and Leisure Services)

4.30. The following summaries the principal views of relevant local authority officers:

- Built sports facilities and playing pitches within Braintree District play a very important role in promoting healthy life styles across all age groups.
- Existing levels of provision are broadly meeting demand and growth in participation currently being experienced.
- More recent refurbishments and especially the new leisure centre provision in Witham have improved the quality and access to the District's sports and leisure offering; further improvements planned, such as synthetic turf pitches will widen the scope of opportunity.

- The spread of indoor sports facilities across the District broadly meets demand in the main.
- Improvements and refurbishments, assisted by capital input from Fusion Lifestyle, have had a significant impact on increasing public use and on user satisfaction.
- The new Witham Leisure Centre (opened in 2014) is a great asset in Braintree District replacing the ageing Bramston Sports Centre.
- Joint Use arrangements for facility use with education establishments (Tabor Academy/Braintree Leisure Centre, Ramsey Academy/Halstead Leisure Centre) are working well through Fusion Lifestyle, seeking to optimise community use of the facilities.
- Built sports facility provision across the District contributes significantly in meeting the Council's objective of improving healthy activity options and increasing levels of participation for its residents
- This is also assisted by the Council's sport development function under the management of Fusion Lifestyle who are able to drive participation amongst the range of age groups through their marketing resources.
- There is some natural migration of facility use by residents of Braintree and neighbouring districts, particularly from outlying areas, linked to specialist or preferred facilities.

National Governing Bodies (NGBs)

4.31. As stated at the beginning of this section, sports halls can accommodate a range of different sports and recreational activities, and many of these can be conducted both indoors and outdoors. The consultation undertaken as part of this study has received comments from a range of stakeholders having an interest in activities that can be conducted within sports halls. The following paragraphs summarise these comments.

4.32. *Badminton:* Badminton is generally well provided for in Essex within a range of schools and sports centres across the County. William Edward School in Grays provides an 8 court sprung floor badminton centre for example. There is a new 8 court sports hall at the St. John Payne School in Chelmsford.

4.33. Other significant regional centres for badminton competition and recreational use are at Basildon Sports Village (6 courts) and Redbridge Sports Centre (20 courts).

4.34. Essex possesses the infrastructure for the development of badminton within a County Badminton Network (CBN); improved access to better facility provision and effective sports development programmes are a critical focus for the Network going forward.

4.35. In Braintree District, the provision of badminton courts within the Council's leisure centres generally meets demand. No current under provision has been identified and users advise that they are satisfied with the quality of provision.

4.36. *Basketball:* Competitions for all playing age groups take place within Essex, the main venues in Braintree District being schools and sports centres.

4.37. Basketball is not played at elite level in Braintree District. There is not a suitable sports hall including safe run-off areas and spectator seating to attract a premier basketball franchise.

4.38. There are no plans to expand the sport significantly in Braintree in the future in view of the larger facility provision already in the County.

4.39. *Essex Football Association (Indoor football):* There are 23 3G (third generation) artificial grass pitches of various dimensions registered with the Essex FA for club/league matchplay. Of these, there is only one covered 3G pitch in Colchester. There are no known plans for further covered 3G pitches in Essex and funding can be prohibitive. It is now permissible for FA league matches to be played on a 3G pitch, subject to specification.

4.40. Futsal is a growing form of 5v5 indoor football promoting speed and personal skills, encouraging participation and feed into the traditional outdoor game. It is the FIFA and UEFA accredited version of 5v5 indoor football. This requires a sports hall (approximately one basketball court size).

4.41. There has been no demand expressed for specific facility provision in Braintree linked to Futsal. It is played however at the Riverside Ice and Leisure Centre and at Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford.

4.42. Futsal competitions are limited when played within a single sports hall and ideally require two halls of suitable dimensions so that competition games can be played in parallel.

4.43. *British Gymnastics:* Gymnastics clubs tend to be accommodated either within local sports centres or within their own leased and sometimes purpose built premises; the latter arrangement may occur due to growth and to secure greater independence of their activities; growth in this sport may require additional facilities in the future.

4.44. Clubs within Braintree District are the Gyrus Olympic Gymnastics Club (seeking a new home following the replacement Bramston Sports Centre in Witham), the TT Club (gymnastics and other activities for all ages) located in a number of school and other premises in Braintree, and the Dynamix Gymnastic Club (Notley School premises).

4.45. Major clubs outside Braintree District are the Colchester School of Gymnastics and the South Essex Gymnastics Club in Basildon.

4.46. *British Judo Association:* Judo clubs are variously accommodated within halls around the region where the important criteria are ownership and storage of mats. There is no regional centre for Essex nor purpose built Dojo. There are no plans or sufficient demand at the current time from individual clubs.

4.47. A Dojo of regional significance could be included economically within a multi-sports facility and would accommodate a main club (adults and juniors), other martial arts clubs, aerobics classes and yoga for all ages.

4.48. There has been no demand expressed for a purpose built Dojo within Braintree District during the consultation process.

4.49. *East Essex Netball:* Netball is very strong in Essex with major leagues played in Chelmsford and Basildon for example. These having been established, there would not be an option for league facilities (eg.10 outdoor courts/indoor court) being established in Braintree and supported by England or East Sussex Netball.

4.50. There is however a well-established Adult and a Junior Club (over 200 members) which train in Braintree (at Braintree Leisure Centre), playing their league matches and competitions in Chelmsford and Basildon.

4.51. A Regional Netball Academy for some 20 talented athletes takes place at Braintree College each year.

4.52. *Essex Table-Tennis Association and the Braintree Table Tennis League:* Table Tennis may be played in schools, sports centres and village halls.

4.53. There has been a decline in popularity of the sport in recent years across Essex with the exception of Southend where the sport remains buoyant.

4.54. The stated view is that "there does not appear to be a motivational strategy in place to increase the sport's popularity and quality of venues in the Braintree area, and likewise across the County"

4.55. The main table-tennis venues in Braintree are Rayne Village Hall (west of Braintree) Black Notley (south), and Earl's Colne (east); there are 9 clubs currently in Braintree fielding some 30 teams in the Braintree League; the Chelmsford league is stronger.

4.56. There is no expressed demand identified for new table-tennis facilities in Braintree district, although the League has been looking for a suitable headquarters which could include the creation of a new club.

4.57. The sport would like recognition and promotion through the Braintree District Leisure Strategy in view of its benefits to young people especially and its contribution to physical fitness and health.

4.58. *England Volleyball Association:* Volleyball was stronger in Essex in the 1980's. Over time clubs have merged and/or folded but there has been some growth in the last few years. There are currently 10 clubs in Essex fielding 21 teams in the Essex leagues.

4.59. Floor fixings for the volleyball net are frequently not provided in sports halls and this should be part of the specification for future provision where this occurs.

4.60. There were no other issues identified for Braintree in the consultation process.

4.61. Active Essex, the County Sports Partnership, is majoring on distribution of National Lottery legacy funding for sports programmes and the improvement of facilities where appropriate. The 'Sportivate' national scheme to encourage greater participation in sport and physical activities is fully embraced by Braintree District Council through the work of Fusion Leisure, its leisure centres operator.

Indoor Sports Clubs

4.62. Relevant survey responses were also received from Braintree Badminton Bods; Essex Futsal; Bramston Flyers Trampoline Club; Dimensions Trampoline Club; Black Notley Community Association Table Tennis Club; and Rayne Table Tennis Club.

4.63. Points raised are provided below.

Sport	Observations and issues
Badminton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braintree Badminton Bods have 10 members and play at the Braintree Leisure Centre. Membership has been stable over the last 3 years. • The club is satisfied with the overall quality of the Leisure Centre but note that availability of courts when needed is poor. • The club suggests a need to improve lighting for racquet sports and "better training for staff. The current staff tend to show no real enthusiasm".
Futsal (indoor football)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex Futsal have around 100 members and membership has increased over the last 3 years. The club has an active junior section and has worked with schools and colleges. They would like to develop these areas further. • The club's main venue is Notley School sports hall in Braintree. They also play at various other locations mainly using school and college sports halls. • The club does not rate the facilities for futsal at Notley School very highly. Most aspects are rated as no better than adequate. Availability of hall space when needed; and facilities for disabled people are rated as poor. The club would also like there to be some kind catering facilities available (food and drink). • The club would like to run more sessions; attract more players and parents; and cater for boys, girls able and disabled young players. • Barriers to development are: a shortage of good quality indoor and outdoor facilities/resources; a shortage of specialist equipment; the cost of hiring/using facilities; a lack of external funding (e.g. governing bodies); and a shortage of personnel to run/coach teams and/or administer the club. • The club adds "we have developed the game of Futsal for past 5 years with little or no support from the County FA or others. Equipment costs, coaching fees and hire of facilities has absorbed most of monies received".
Table Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Notley Community Association (BNCA) and Rayne Table Tennis Clubs both have a membership of around 50 which has been stable over the last 3 years. Black Notley have an active junior section. Both play at their local community/village hall. • BNCA are generally happy with the quality of facilities used; Rayne less so but they note that it is "not possible to improve as the site is limited". • The main barrier to club development for Rayne Table Tennis Club is a shortage of good quality indoor facilities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BNCA note "we run on a tight budget, which would be made easier by more members. There are no specific barriers, just, like other sports, getting people away from their computer screens".
Trampolining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bramston Flyers and Dimensions Trampoline Clubs (memberships of 20 and 70 respectively) both report that membership has increased over the last 3 years. Dimensions has an active junior section and links with local schools. • Dimensions use Braintree Leisure Centre but Bramston Flyers are looking for a venue currently. They note "when the Sports Centre in Witham was due to close we contacted Maltings Academy to ask about using their sports facilities but they were not interested". • Bramston Flyers need a sports hall with a clearance of 8 metres, storage space for two trampolines and an overhead rig. • Dimensions are generally happy with the quality of facilities at Braintree Leisure Centre but note that availability when needed is poor. They would also need better trampolines; and more storage for their own equipment/trampolines. • Both clubs would like to expand activities. For Bramston a new venue is essential; for Dimensions they would like to be able to run more sessions. • Both the clubs highlight the need for good quality indoor facilities; a shortage of specialist equipment; the cost of hiring/using facilities; and a shortage of personnel to run/coach teams and/or administer the club. Dimensions add "the volunteers and committee we currently have are not able to commit any more time. We need more help!"

Quality of provision

Views of local residents

4.64. The Household survey highlighted that of those responding, the estimated quality of local sports halls was perceived to be: 'Very Good' (17%); 'Good' (52%); 'Average' (29%); 'Poor/Very Poor' (4%).

4.65. In terms of being a priority for improvement the responses suggested that 14% of respondents rated the priority to be 'High'; 30% to be 'Medium'; 56% to be 'Low'.

Views of key stakeholders

Braintree District Council (Environmental Services and Leisure Services)

- Built sports facilities and playing pitches within Braintree District play a very important role in promoting healthy life styles across all age groups.

- More recent refurbishments and especially the new leisure centre provision in Witham have improved the quality and access to the District's sports and leisure offering.
- Improvements and refurbishments, assisted by capital input from Fusion Lifestyle, have had a significant impact on increasing public use and on user satisfaction.
- Improvements and extensions to fitness gyms have been well received as well as the Fusion Choice leisure card/membership offer, resulting in greater use and income generation.
- Halstead Leisure Centre: Ageing sports hall shows evidence of insulation boards to improve environmental conditions; Granwood floor.

4.66. *England Volleyball:* Floor fixings for the volleyball net are frequently not provided in sports halls and this should be part of the specification for future provision where this occurs.

Clubs

4.67. *Essex Futsal:* The club does not rate the facilities for futsal at Notley School very highly. Most aspects are rated as no better than adequate. Availability of hall space when needed; and facilities for disabled people are rated as poor. The club would also like there to be some kind catering facilities available (food and drink).

4.68. Barriers to development are: a shortage of good quality indoor and outdoor facilities/resources; a shortage of specialist equipment; the cost of hiring/using facilities; a lack of external funding (e.g. governing bodies); and a shortage of personnel to run/coach teams and/or administer the club.

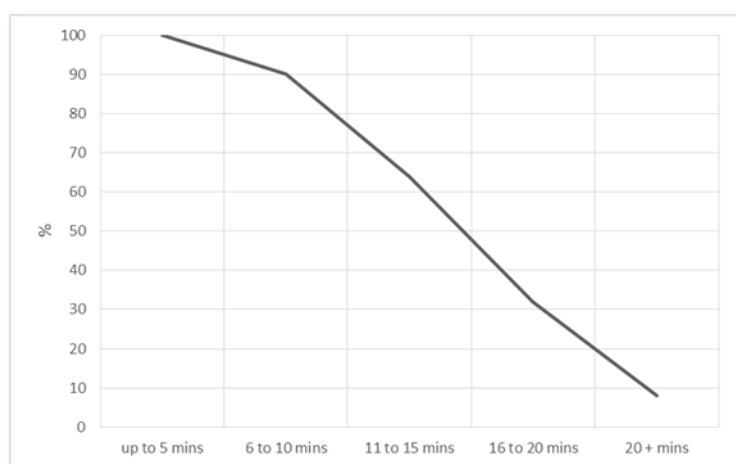
4.69. *Black Notley Community Association (BNCA) and Rayne Table Tennis Club:* The main barrier to club development for Rayne Table Tennis Club is a shortage of good quality indoor facilities.

4.70. BNCA are generally happy with the quality of facilities used; Rayne less so but they note that it is "not possible to improve as the site is limited".

Accessibility

4.71. The household survey indicated that the majority respondents used sports halls on a regular basis, and the majority were prepared to travel up to 11 to 15 minutes to use such facilities, with the most popular mode being by car. The following **Figure 4.4** shows that the 75 percentile falls at the lower end of this range.

Figure 4.4: Preparedness to travel to sports halls

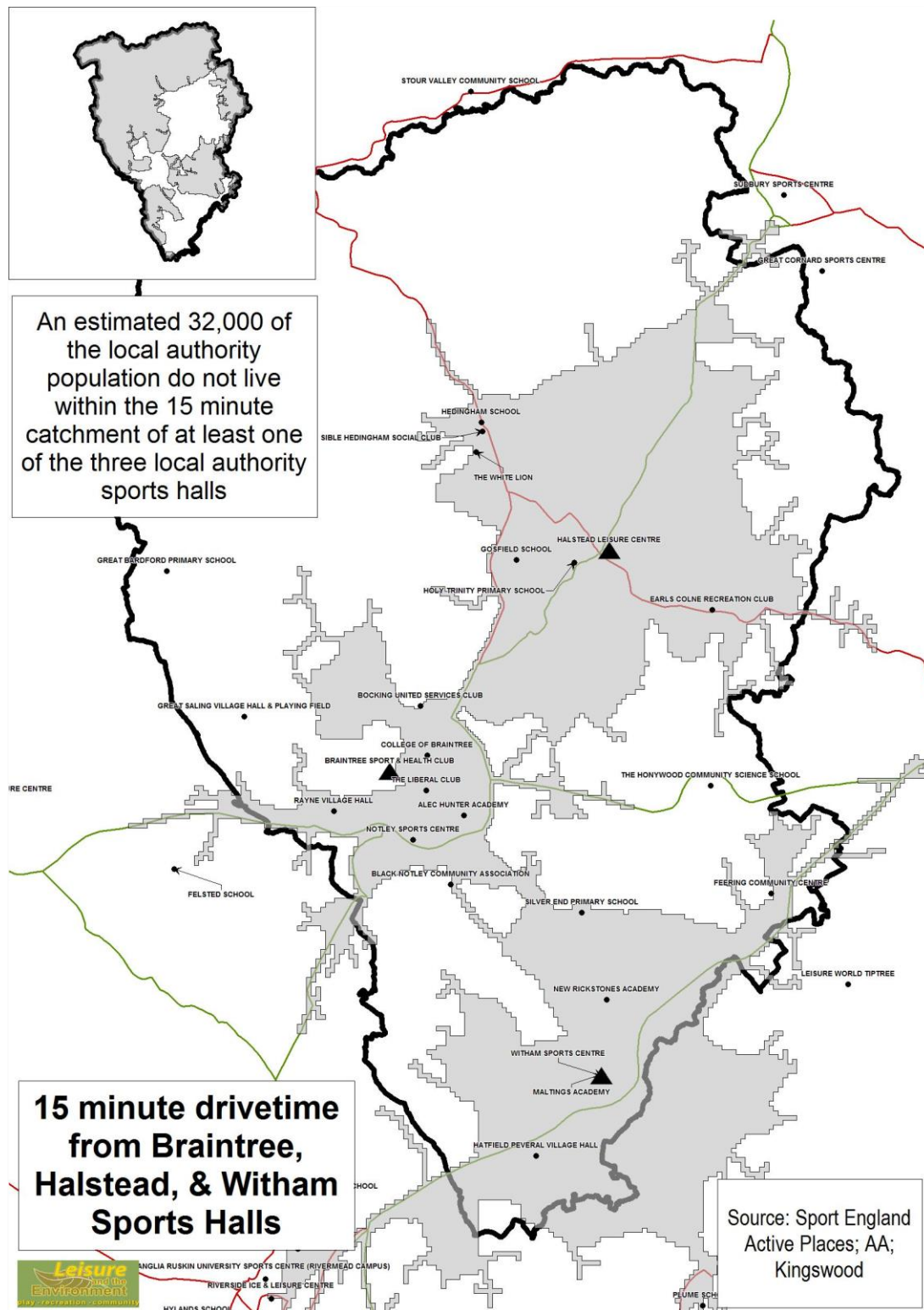


FPM report/what is an acceptable drivetime to a sports hall?

4.72. The FPM analysis discussed earlier in this section has a spatial element based on 20 minute drive or walk time catchments, centred on facilities considered in the analysis (i.e. the sports halls listed in Figure 4.3 and appropriate halls in neighbouring areas). The 20 minute catchment is based on data obtained from previous national research by Sport England, which concluded that a 20 minute drive time represented 90% of the user catchment on average for sports halls. However, the same research indicated that around 60 per cent of users were only prepared to travel up to 10 minutes. The household survey conducted as part of this study suggests that an appropriate compromise for Braintree might be a 15 minute catchment by foot or car. Travel by car is by far the most significant mode of transport to sports halls, and a 11-15 minute drive catchment would roughly equate with the 50%-75% quartile response provided by the household survey.

4.73. If 15 minutes is adopted as a travel time to sports halls acceptable to most of the population, the resultant catchments of the Braintree, Halstead, and Witham facilities are shown on the **Figure 4.5**. The catchments are based on assumed average speeds for different classes of roads. The map shows that on the basis of these assumed average speeds significant geographical areas are not covered by the combined catchment of the four key local authority controlled sports halls. The estimated population within the local authority falling outside the catchment has been calculated to be c. 32,000

Figure 4.5: 15-minute drive catchments for key local authority controlled sports halls



4.74. If non-local authority sports halls not in secured use were to be included on Figure 4.5 the extent of the exclusion zone would be reduced.

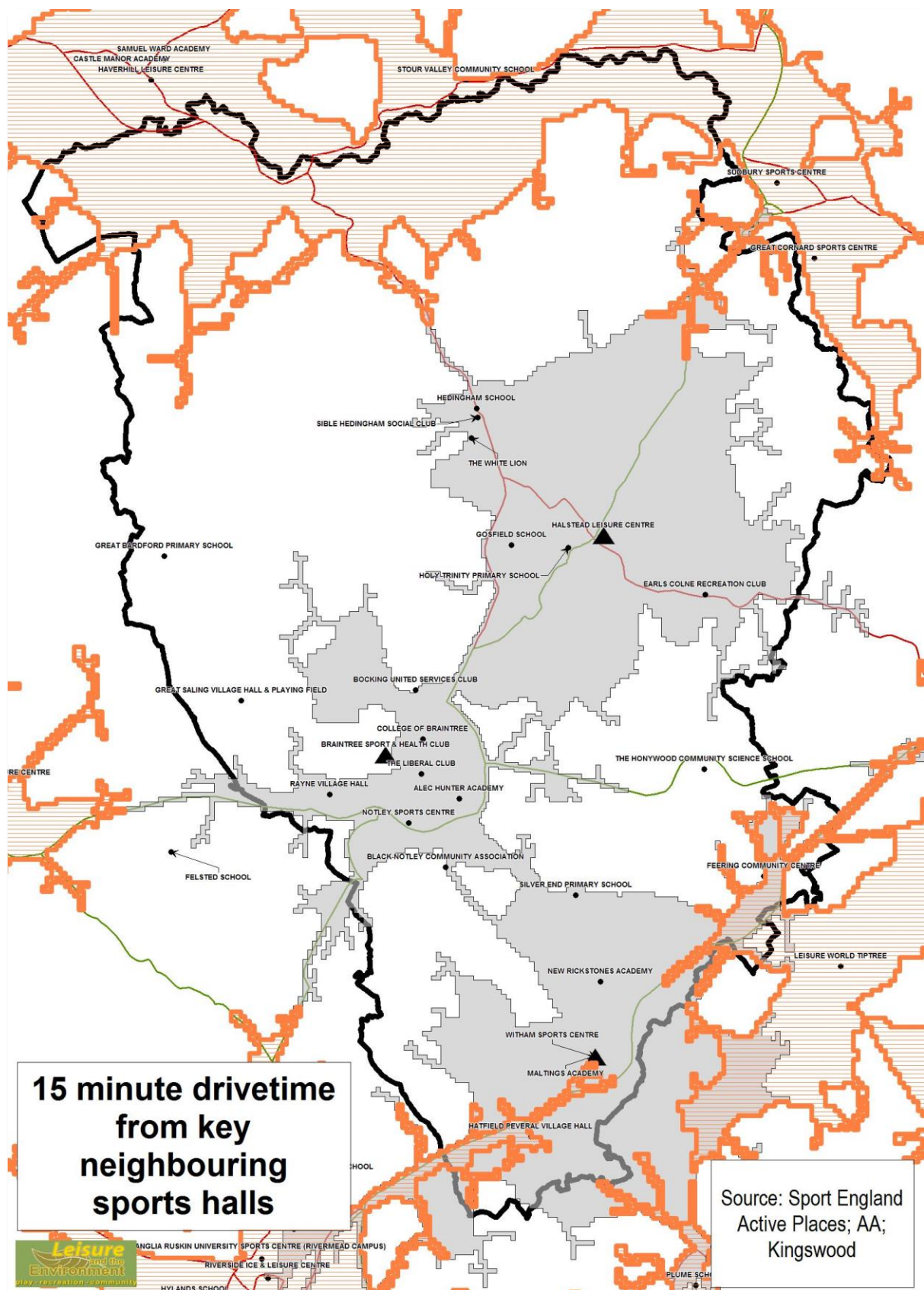
4.75. It is very conceivable that those residents excluded from the estimated catchments used in Figure 4.5 might find it easier to use facilities in neighbouring areas. The following are likely to be the closest significant provision of an appropriate kind outside the Braintree local authority:

Figure 4.5: Selected sports halls in neighbouring areas

Name	Badminton courts	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type
ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY SPORTS CENTRE (RIVERMEAD CAMPUS)	4	Pay and Play	Higher Education Institutions	School/College/University (in house)
BLACKWATER LEISURE CENTRE	4	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust
COLCHESTER LEISURE WORLD	6	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Local Authority (in house)
GREAT CORNARD SPORTS CENTRE	5	Pay and Play	Academies	School/College/University (in house)
GREAT DUNMOW LEISURE CENTRE	4	Pay and Play	Foundation School	Commercial Management
HAVERHILL LEISURE CENTRE	5	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust
LEISURE WORLD TIPTREE	4	Pay and Play	Foundation School	Local Authority (in house)
LORD BUTLER FITNESS & LEISURE CENTRE	4	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Commercial Management
STOUR VALLEY COMMUNITY SCHOOL	3	Sports Club / Community Association	Miscellaneous Education	School/College/University (in house)
SUDBURY SPORTS CENTRE	5	Pay and Play	Academies	Trust

4.76. If their 15-minute catchments were also superimposed on a map, they would reduce the size of the 'exclusion zone' and its resident population (see **Figure 4.6**), although it would not be eliminated entirely. This pre-supposes that the capacity exists at these neighbouring venues to absorb the potential demand generated by these residents.

Figure 4.6: 15 minute drive catchments from key sports halls in neighbouring areas.



4.77. Seen in this light the potential role of facilities at schools such as Hedingham and Honywood, to 'plug' some of the geographical gaps in rural areas is apparent.

Summary of key issue

4.78. The existing supply of community sports halls is not quite sufficient to meet current estimated demand, although the unmet demand is not focussed on any particular geographic area.

4.79. Upgrading and better use of older (education) provision might help in meeting the unmet existing demand, as well as projected future demand.

4.80. Population change will lead to significant additional demand for sports hall space, which will not be met by existing provision in its entirety.

4.81. Predicted population growth will justify additional provision, addressed further in Section 11.

4.82. However, the proposed focus of much planned new development on two new communities (east and west of Braintree) will generate demand for access to sports halls that is not easily met either by existing facilities inside or neighbouring Braintree District. (See Figure 4.6).

4.83. There are likely problems in relation to ease of access sports halls in some parts of the local authority, due to distance and the availability of transport, especially in rural areas. Better opportunities to access some of the older, rural, sports hall provision based on school sites might alleviate this problem.

4.84. The actual availability and community use status of facilities at Braintree College, and the Maltings and Rickenstones Academies in Witham require investigation.

5. HEALTH & FITNESS SUITES

General

5.1. Health and Fitness suites (H&FS) is a term used here to cover indoor facilities with a range of equipment designed to help with aerobic and anaerobic health, fitness and training regimes. They can be found as standalone venues, or often as part of a larger sports and leisure complex such as council leisure centres and commercial 'health spas' etc.

5.2. These activities are noteworthy as they tend to have high participation rates amongst both women and men. Many are run on a commercial club basis, and those in local authority leisure venues can help to cross-subsidise other facilities.

Quantity

Existing provision (general)

5.3. **Figure 5.1** and **Figure 5.2** show the location of and describe all the known H&FS. As will be seen, the provision is spread over various sectors, with the local authority and commercial sectors providing the major facilities.

Community use/availability

5.4. It will be noted that the list comprises a range of provisions covering local authority, education, commercial, and membership facilities. In essence only a proportion will be available for the general community to use in the way in which this term was defined in Section 1. For example, some of the commercial/registered membership venues may be cost-prohibitive for certain sections of the community.

Figure 5.1: Health & Fitness Provision

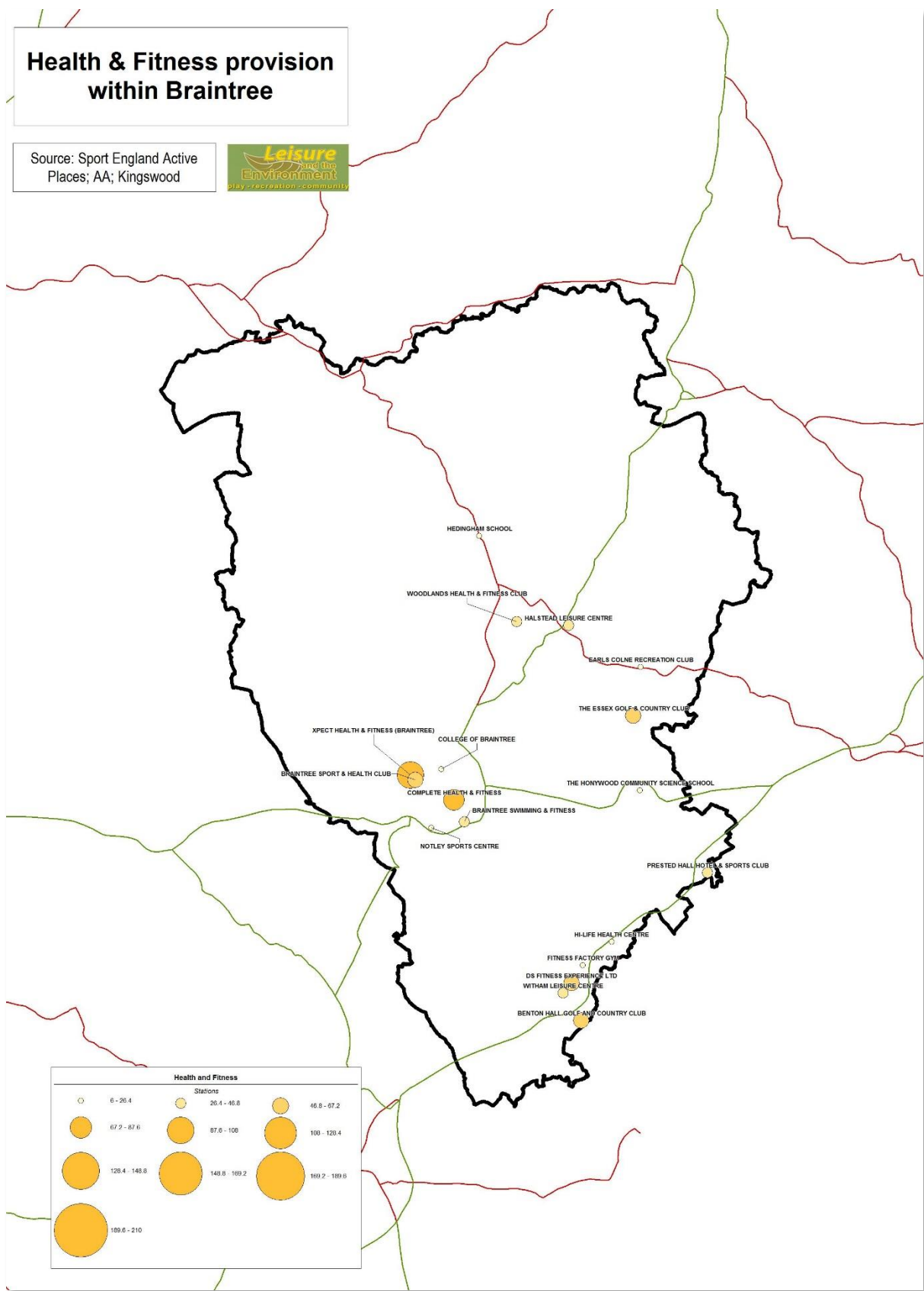


Figure 5.2: Health & Fitness Provision

Name	Stations	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Refurbished
BENTON HALL GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB	60	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	2006	No
BRAINTREE SPORT & HEALTH CLUB	60	Pay and Play	Community school	Trust	1992	Yes
BRAINTREE SWIMMING & FITNESS	30	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	2014	No
COLLEGE OF BRAINTREE	8	Private Use	Further Education	School/College/University (in house)	1997	Yes
COMPLETE HEALTH & FITNESS	70	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2014	No
DS FITNESS EXPERIENCE LTD	48	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2012	No
EARLS COLNE RECREATION CLUB	12	Pay and Play	Community Organisation	Community Organisation	2010	No
FITNESS FACTORY GYM	17	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2011	No
HALSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE	36	Pay and Play	Community school	Trust	2004	Yes
HEDINGHAM SCHOOL	14	Private Use	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	2007	No

Name	Stations	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Refurbished
HI-LIFE HEALTH CENTRE	19	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	1996	Yes
NOTLEY SPORTS CENTRE	13	Pay and Play	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	1974	No
PRESTED HALL HOTEL & SPORTS CLUB	32	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2000	Yes
THE ESSEX GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	50	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	1991	Yes
THE HONYWOOD COMMUNITY SCIENCE SCHOOL	12	Private Use	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	1998	No
WITHAM LEISURE CENTRE	45	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	2014	No
WOODLANDS HEALTH & FITNESS CLUB	29	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	2003	Yes
XPECT HEALTH & FITNESS (BRAINTREE)	93	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2003	Yes

The views of local residents (*Household survey*)

5.5. Of those residents responding to the household survey:

- 5% stated that they used Gym, H&FS facilities almost every day
- 21% at least weekly
- 5% at least monthly
- 68% less often or never
- Only 14% of respondents to the household survey suggested that there was a need to improve the stock of H&FSs locally. 86% of respondents considered there to be enough of such facilities, and that if there were to be improvements they should be to the existing stock.

Active People Surveys (APS) and Market Segmentation (MS) (See End Note 3 and Appendix 1 for further explanation)

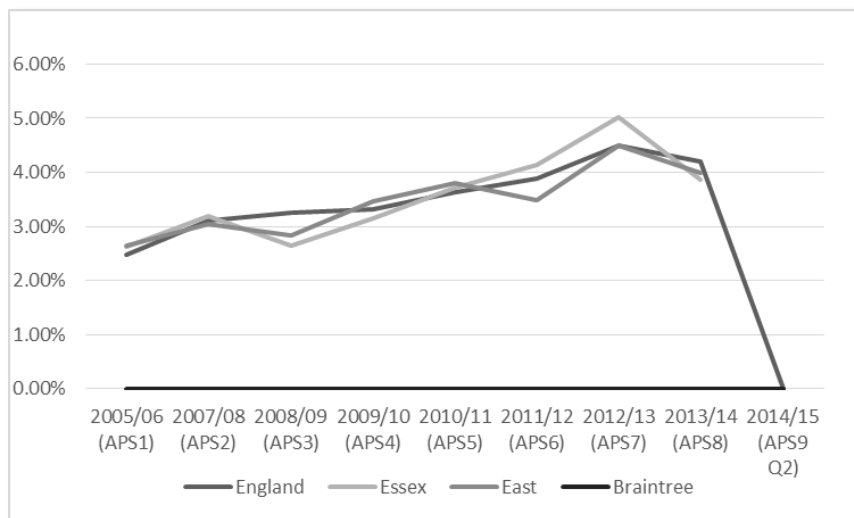
5.6. The two main activities assessed as part of the Active People Surveys (APS) that impinge most on the development of H&FSs are gym, and fitness and conditioning. The APS results are not always available at the local authority level due to the inadequate size of data samples in some situations. This has been the case for all years in Braintree in respect of Fitness Conditioning. However, where the data are available for the County, it shows that participation levels hover around the national figure. For Gym activities, there are three 'local readings' for Braintree. If: a) the Essex readings were used as a surrogate for Braintree for Fitness Conditioning; and, b) the available Braintree readings were used for Gym-based activity,

5.7. Then it would suggest that:

- Between 4 and 5% of the adult population took part in Fitness Conditioning each week (between 4,952 and 6,190 adults); and,
- Between 8 and 10% of the adult population took part in Gym-based activity at least once a week (between 9,900 and 12,380 adults). ⁷

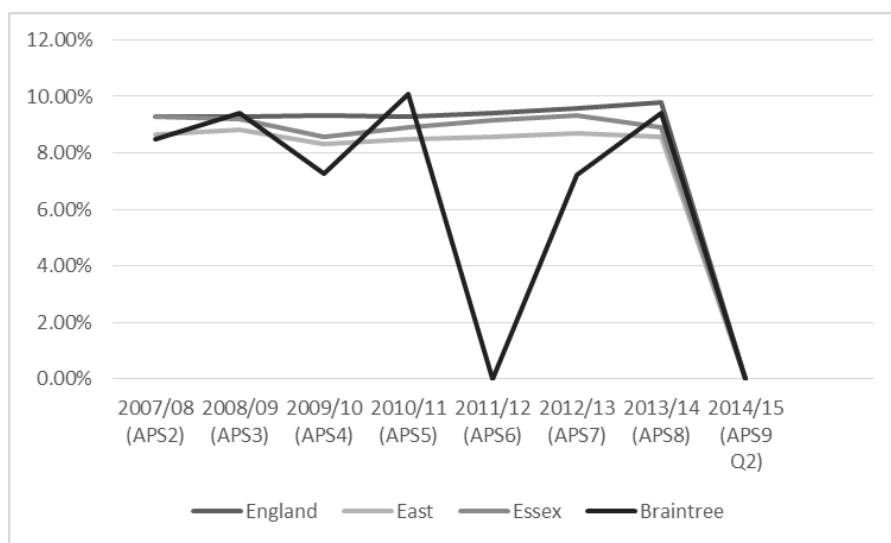
⁷ 2010-based Subnational Population Projections by sex and quinary age

Figure 5.3: Participation of at least 1 x 30 minute session/week (% of adult population) in Fitness Conditioning activities



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

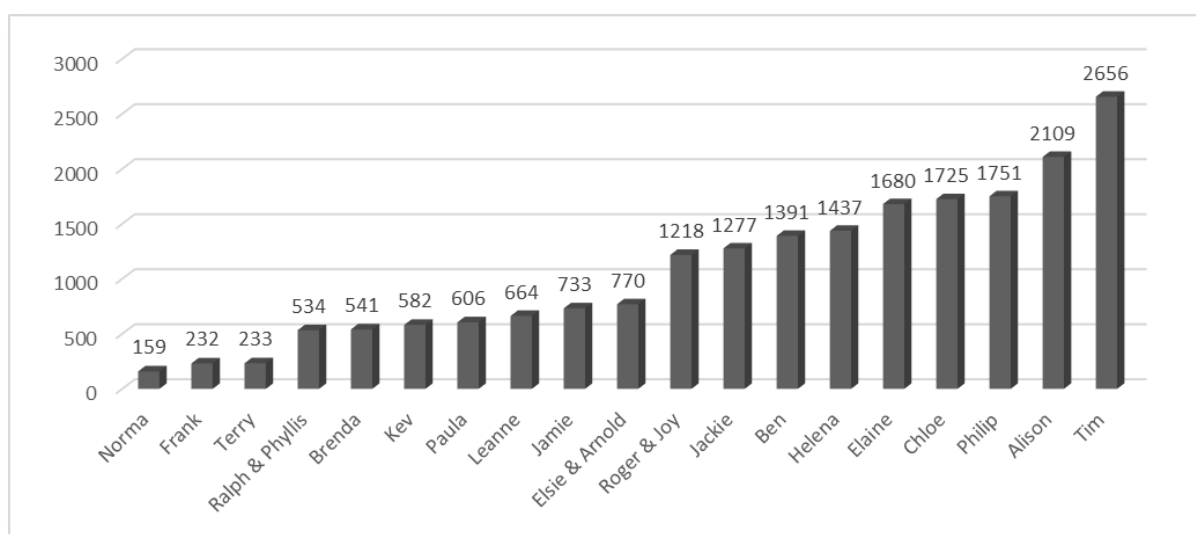
Figure 5.4: Participation of at least 1 x 30 minute session/week (% of adult population) in Gym based activities.



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

5.8. Perhaps one of the reasons for this high rate of participation is a strong presence in the local authority of those Market Segments which, although over 25, still have a strong desire to take part in sport and physical recreation. **Figure 5.4** shows the numerical expression of the percentage of overall Sport England adult Market Segments likely to take part in the given activities, within the local authority.

Figure 5.4: Numerical representation of Sport England (adult) Market Segments in Braintree



5.9. Tim, Alison, Chloe, Elaine, Helena, Philip, Ben all have high counts. In fact, if the above numbers of those with a potential to participate are compared with the APS figures earlier it suggests that participation in the activities concerned may already be close to or even exceeding that which might be predicted from using Market Segmentation data.

Views of key stakeholders

Braintree District Council (Leisure)

5.10. There are H&FS facilities at all three of the local authority-controlled leisure centres, and the facility at Witham is considered to have made a substantial contribution to the improvement of the local stock of facilities.

5.11. Improvements and extensions to fitness gyms have been well received as well as the Fusion Choice leisure card/membership offer, resulting in greater use and income generation.

Local clubs

5.12. The consultation exercise conducted as part of this study has not revealed any clubs making comments specifically in relation to the quantity, quality or access to H&FSs. However, gyms in particular are used for training for a variety of sports covered by this report- gymnastics and athletics will be a case in point. Many other sports, such as football and rugby will use such facilities.

Quality

5.13. The consultation conducted as part of this study did not reveal any specific issues with respect to the quality of H&SF. However, the results of the household survey suggested the following:

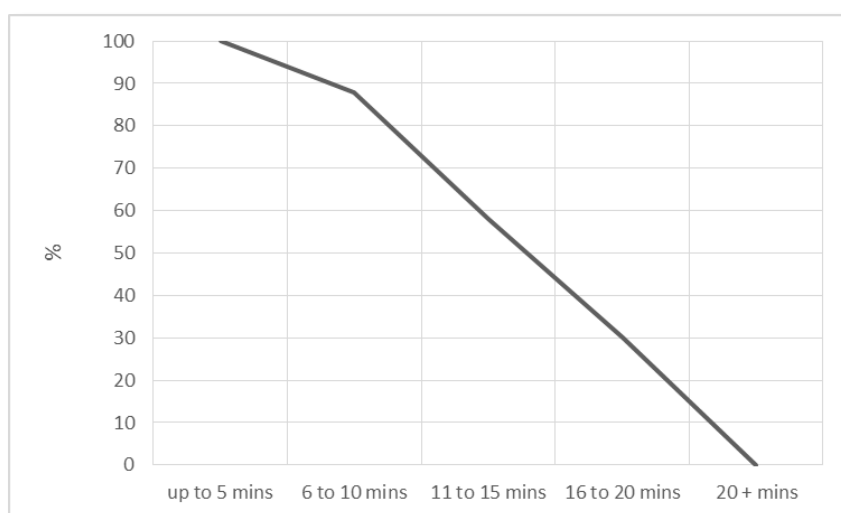
- 68% of respondents considered that the quality of facilities were either very good or good;
- 29% thought that the quality was average; and,
- Only 4% per cent considered the quality to be poor or very poor.

5.14. It will be seen from Figure 5.2 that many of the H&FSs in the local authority have, if not built recently, been refurbished. The nature of the health and fitness market is such that it is sensitive to any depreciation in the quality of facilities given that the technology involved in modern health and fitness suites evolves rapidly, as does consumer perception of what they require.

Accessibility

5.15. Responses to the household survey indicate that the majority of respondents would be prepared to travel at least 10 to 15 minutes to use a health and fitness centre, and as shown in **Figure 5.5** the 75% percentiles lies somewhere around 10 minutes.

Figure 5.5: Preparedness to travel to gym/health & fitness facilities



5.16. The main mode of transport is by car, although a significant number of trips by foot might be anticipated in the urban areas. However, in a predominantly rural area the car will always be a very important mode of transport.

The Future

5.17. Between 2015 and 2033 the population of the local authority is projected to increase from an estimated 152,100 to 177,400 (excluding any growth that might be attributed to local development allocations yet to be determined). This would mean an increase of 25,000 people. Assuming that the demographic profile of this additional population is broadly the same as the existing, the following might be assumed:

- The MS data (Figure 5.4) estimated that it is likely that in the order of 20,000 adults potentially are taking part in gym and fitness related activities;
- As a percentage of the current population this is 13.1%; and.
- 13.1% of the predicted population change between 2015 and 2033 is 3,275 adults.

This is the membership level that might be expected of a large Gym and Health and Fitness facility, albeit that the increase in demand will be spread over a large geography.

Issues and options

5.18. Given the popularity of H&FS and associated activities within the local authority, it will be important for sufficient provision to be made to accommodate an increase in demand from a growing population.

5.19. Predicted population growth will justify additional provision, addressed further in Section 11.

5.20. However, the proposed focus of much planned new development on two new communities (east and west of Braintree) will generate demand for access to sports halls that is not easily met either by existing facilities inside or neighbouring Braintree District. (See Figure 4.6).

5.21. H&FS are clearly very popular facilities, given the local demographic profile; data that exists show that local participation rates in activities using these facilities is high. Furthermore such facilities appeal strongly to both genders.

5.22. The sector is dominated by local authority commercial/membership provision: although commercial provision is good from the standpoint of consumer choice and taking pressure off council resources and facilities, they can be expensive and therefore cost-prohibitive for some potential users. Given the attractiveness of such facilities local authority provision should ensure that its own facilities are designed and managed with options to make them available to those locally who would like to access such facilities, but cannot afford commercial club subscriptions. The Council's fitness facilities attract a wider spectrum of the population and their pay and play options are more inclusive. Schemes such as GP referral programmes will also potentially be available in Council facilities, but not in others.

6. INDOOR BOWLS

General

6.1. Bowls can be played either outdoors or indoors. Whilst most provision continues to be outdoors using traditional turf rinks, there are also a large number of indoor facilities using artificial surfaces, which are available for play throughout the year and in the evenings. It is these indoor facilities that are the subject of this section. There are other varieties of indoor bowls that take place in venues like village halls and community centres, using portable mats. These, again, are also outside the scope of this section.

6.2. However, there can be expected to be some cross-over between indoor and outdoor bowls in terms winter and summer activity (for example), and this needs to be taken into account in trying to assess demand for provision.

Quantity

6.3. There is no indoor bowling venue in the local authority. The only other known indoor bowls venues within the vicinity of the local authority are in Chelmsford, Colchester, and Uttlesford local authorities.

Views of local residents

6.4. To re-emphasise, there are no indoor bowls facilities in the local authority, and the question asked in the household survey related to specialist facilities in general, and did not therefore focus specifically on indoor bowls. However, respondents to the household survey conducted as part of this study indicated that:

- 8% would use specialist facilities at least weekly;
- 6% around once a month; and,
- 85% less often or never.

Views of key stakeholders

National Governing Bodies of Sport

6.5. *Essex Indoor Bowling Association:* Indoor bowling takes place either at a purpose built indoor bowling centre which may be owned and operated by a Club, or as short mat bowls/carpet bowls requiring less space (but needing storage). The latter is played in community halls and sports centres, for example.

6.6. There are 17 indoor bowling centres spread across Essex totalling 105 indoor rinks; while these accommodate current demand, membership is generally experiencing a decline in most clubs;

6.7. The challenge for the sport is to both recruit and retain membership across the young and elderly, the one to replace the other; there is no current demand identified for indoor rinks in Braintree District;

6.8. There is one major indoor bowling centre nearby (in Chelmsford) namely The Falcon Bowling and Social Club, Springfield (8 indoor rinks plus social facilities). This is a very successful club attracting players from up to 20/30 minutes drive, but is currently experiencing a decline in membership levels.

6.9. Views of local clubs: There are no indoor bowls clubs within the local authority, and no outdoor bowls clubs responding to the questionnaire survey, expressed comments about the adequacy of indoor bowls provision in the area.

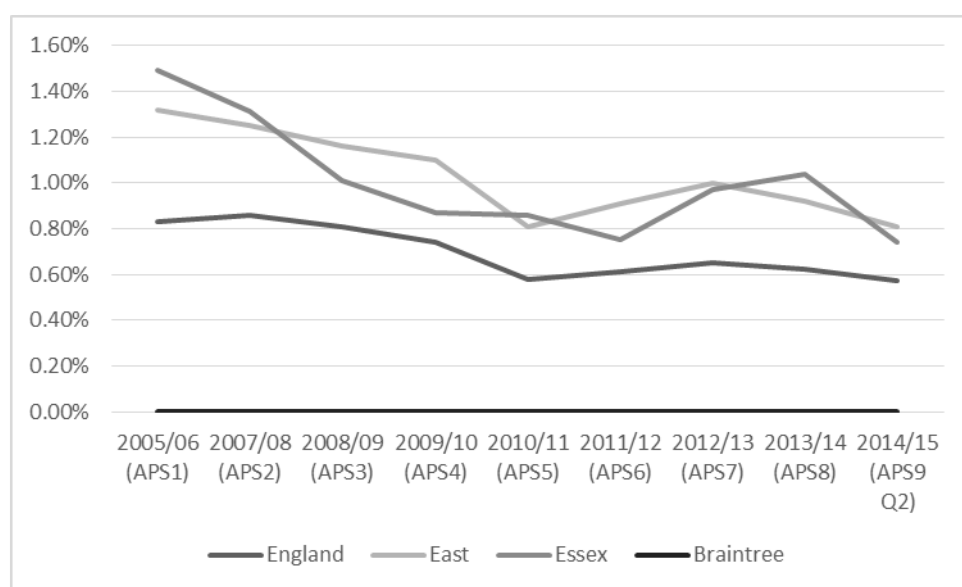
Active People Surveys (APS) and Market Segmentation (MS) (See End Note 3 and Appendix 1 for further explanation)

6.10. The following **Figure 6.1** illustrates the trends for adult participation in all forms of bowls in terms of percentage of adults who play at least once a week, based on Sport England Active People data. Given the small data samples, Braintree could not be included. Estimates for Essex and the region appear to be above the average for England although, based on the evidence, participation rates at national, regional and county levels have all declined in recent years.

6.11. Using the most recent participation rate at county level and applying it to Braintree (0.74%) in the order of 916 adults within the local authority participating in bowls (outdoor and indoor) at least once a week.

6.12. Bowls is traditionally a sports played by older members of the population. Given a generally ageing population within the local authority it might be expected that, rather than declining, rates of participation should be improving. The fact that they are not suggests other reasons contributing to the decline in the popularity of the sport.

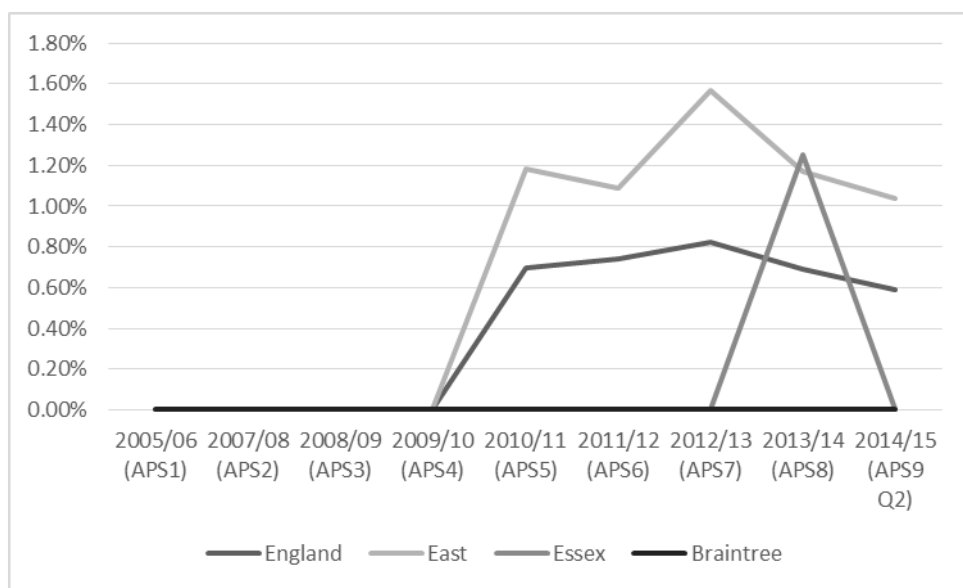
Figure 6.1 Participation of at least 1 x 30 minute session/week (% of adult population) in bowls (indoor and outdoor)



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

6.13. However, if the Active People Survey data for just indoor flat green bowls are examined, the picture is markedly different. (See **Figure 6.2** below). The most recent figure available for Essex (there are none for Braintree) suggests 1.25% of the adult population took part in indoor bowls at least once a week. (i.e. over 1,500 adults). This figure is actually higher than the 'all bowls' estimate offered earlier. This might be explained by the infrequency of the sampling available for indoor bowls, although it might also possibly indicate that participation in indoor bowls is far more popular (using this measure) than that in outdoor flat green bowls within Essex: presumably the nature of the facility offered allows for a much more intense and extended period of use compared to the outdoor turf greens. This has to be caveated through with a reminder that there are no indoor facilities within the local authority, and that any participants would need to be using facilities elsewhere.

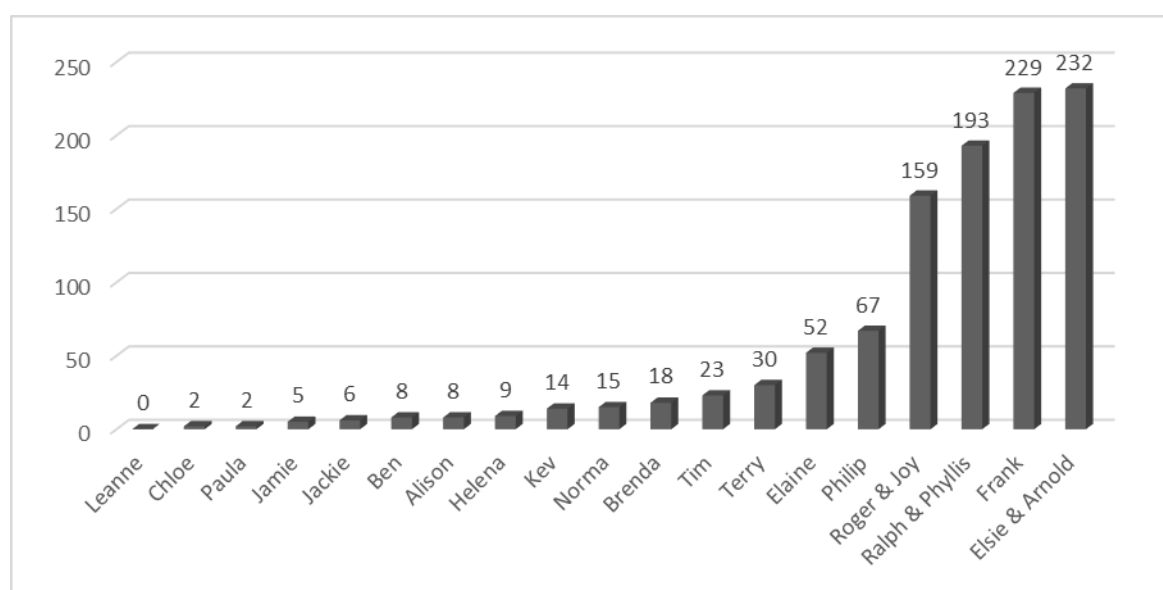
Figure 6.2: Participation of at least 1 x 30 minute session/week (% of adult population) in indoor bowls



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

6.14. **Figure 6.3** shows the numerical expression of the percentage of overall Sport England adult Market Segments likely to take part in the given activities.

Figure 6.3: Numerical representation of Sport England (adult) Market Segments in Braintree likely to play bowls



6.15. Bowls as a sport is somewhat limited in its appeal outside the older demographic groups, and, as can be seen from the above figure, those Segments most likely to play are the post retirement Roger & Joy, Frank, Elsie & Arnold, and Ralph & Phyllis. Even when the above figures are added up it suggests that local participation (based on the Essex rates in Figure 6.1) are already around what might be expected.

The Sports Facility Calculator

6.16. The Sport Facility Calculator (SFC- see End Note 2 for a description and advice on its use) is a Sport England planning tool which helps to estimate the amount of demand for key community sports facilities that is created by a given population. The SFC helps with quantifying the demand side of the facility provision equation. The participation data used to calculate a 'desirable' level of provision are similar to those used in the FPM (see End Note 1).

6.17. If used sensibly and in conjunction with other analysis, the SFC helps to develop a rounded view of the desirable level of provision for a given facility type within a local authority area.

6.18. The SFC estimates that a desirable level of provision for indoor bowls facilities in the local authority could be the following:

Figure 6.4: SFC estimate for a desirable level of indoor bowls provision in Braintree local authority

Rinks	Venues (6 rinks)	Visits per week peak period
10.91	1.82	1,702

6.19. This figure is slightly higher than the 1,500 weekly ‘plays’ estimated for Essex residents, using Active People Survey data. It suggests that there may be scope for one indoor bowls facility within the local authority. However, other local evidence and opinion does not suggest this to be the case currently.

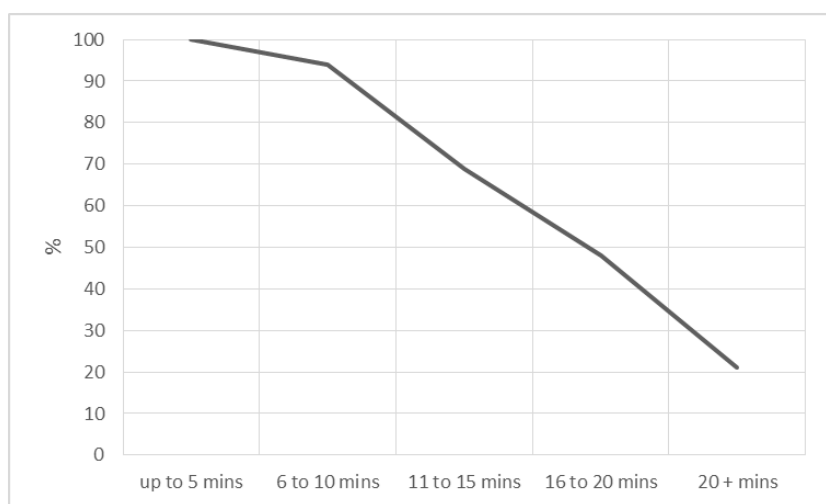
Quality

6.20. As there are no indoor bowls facilities within the local authority, there is no report to be made on the assessed quality of such facilities.

Accessibility

6.21. The findings of the household survey suggests that respondents the majority of respondents would be prepared to travel between 11 to 15 plus minutes to access a specialist indoor sports facility (of which Indoor bowls facilities are one type). The 75 percentile is likely to be within the lower end of this range. See **Figure 6.5**. Most trips will be made by car.

Figure 6.5: Preparedness to travel



6.22. Using a 15 minute drivetime, only small portions of the catchments of neighbouring indoor bowls facilities within adjoining local authorities are likely to impinge upon Braintree local authority.

The Future

6.23. Between 2015 and 2033 the population of the local authority is projected to increase from an estimated 152,100 to 177,400 (excluding any growth that might be attributed to local development allocations yet to be determined). This would mean an increase of 25,000 people. Assuming that the demographic profile of this additional population is broadly the same as the existing, the following might be assumed:

- The MS data (Figure 6.3) estimated that it is likely that in the order of 1,072 adults potentially are taking part in bowls in the District;
- As a percentage of the current population this is 0.7%; and.
- 0.7% of the predicted population change between 2015 and 2033 is 175 adults.

6.24. This certainly in itself does not warrant additional provision.

Issues and options

6.25. Although the Sport England SFC estimates that there may be a theoretical demand for an indoor bowls facility within the local authority, this does not appear to be evidenced by local opinion.

6.26. Planned and natural population change within the local authority will increase the demand for access to indoor bowls facilities, but only marginally.

6.27. In circumstances where a local club or other non-local authority interest identified a willingness to pursue the development of an indoor bowls facility, the need for such a facility might be reconsidered, given that data suggest that a theoretical demand might exist.

7. INDOOR TENNIS

General

7.1. Lawn tennis can be played on a variety of surfaces, both indoors and outdoors. In this section it is only the provision of indoor tennis facilities that is being considered directly, although there will be some crossover in participants playing both indoors and outdoors.

7.2. Indoor tennis facilities require a significant amount of space; the space required for a single court is around of the equivalent of a 4-badminton court sports hall. They tend to be provided as part of a larger leisure complex, and usually on a commercial or club basis.

Quantity

7.3. There is only one bespoke indoor tennis facility in the local authority, which is located at the Essex Golf & Country Club, between Braintree and Colchester. The nearest alternative facilities are located in Colchester.

Figure 7.1: Indoor tennis facilities within the local authority

Name	Facility Type	Facility Sub Type	Number	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Refurbished
THE ESSEX GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	Indoor Tennis Centre	Airhall	3	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	1991	No
THE ESSEX GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	Indoor Tennis Centre	Traditional	3	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	1991	Yes

7.4. The above facility therefore has three traditional indoor courts, and 3 outdoor courts that are covered by an airhall.

Views of local residents

7.5. Indoor tennis facilities are considered to be a specialist indoor sports facility. Respondents to the household survey conducted as part of this study indicated that:

- 8% would use specialist facilities at least weekly;
- 6% around once a month;
- 85% less often or never; and,

- 36% of respondents considered there to be insufficient specialist facilities; 62% considered there to be enough; 3% considered there to be too many.

7.6. It should be stressed that the responses received did not relate specifically to indoor tennis facilities.

View of key stakeholders

Lawn Tennis Association - Eastern Region

7.7. The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) confirms that there are no current plans for an additional indoor tennis centre in Braintree District. Although, Chelmsford has been identified by the LTA Essex Region as a priority for indoor tennis, and there is no apparent strategy involving Braintree District.

7.8. There is a spread of indoor courts in Essex including at:

- Frinton Lawn Tennis Club (2)
- Colchester - Essex Golf and Country Club (6)
- Billericay - Lawn Tennis Club (2 - Airdome)
- Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre (4)
- Harlow Tennis Club (4+1mini)
- Redbridge Tennis Club (8)
- The Connaught Club, Chingford (2 + 2 Airdome)
- Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre (4)
- David Lloyd Centres in Chigwell, Romford, Southend, Basildon.

7.9. Air domes or lightweight structures may offer may offer alternative opportunities for outdoor tennis clubs in the future, subject to planning consents and funding. There is one such facility at Earls Colne Golf and Country Club.

7.10. There is not strategic demand or plan for indoor tennis in Braintree, although there may be local demand expressed by local tennis centres.

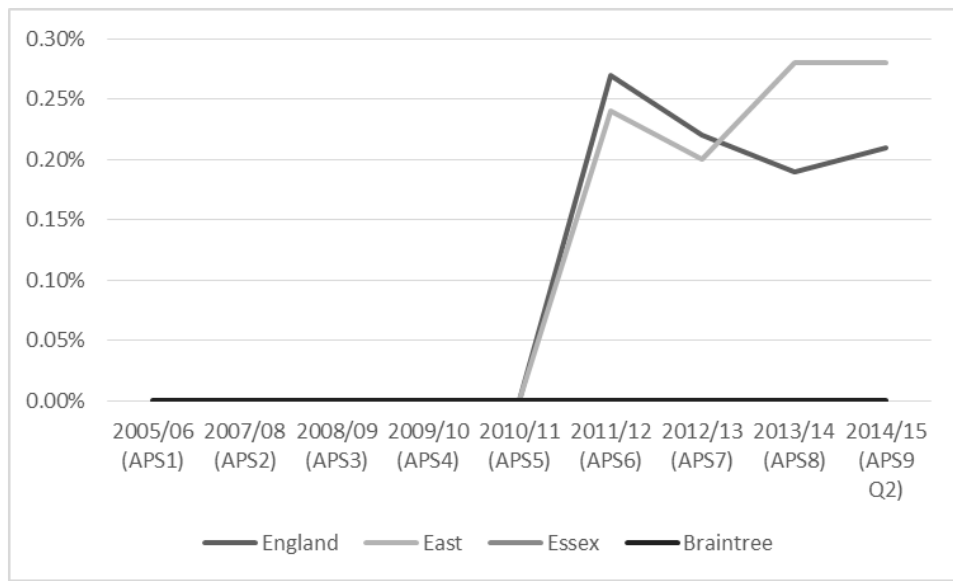
Active People Surveys (APS) and Market Segmentation (MS) (See End Note 3 and Appendix 1 for further explanation)

7.11. The following **Figure 7.1** illustrates the trends for adult participation in indoor tennis in terms of percentage of adults who play at least once a week. The data is sourced from Sport England's Active People surveys. Given the small data samples, it was inappropriate to include Essex or Braintree as areas this table.

7.12. The estimates for the East of England appear similar or just above the average for England, although based on the evidence participation rates at national and regional have declined in recent

years. If the most recent regional participation rate (0.28%) is applied to the Braintree local authority adult population in the order of 346 adults within the local authority would be participating in indoor tennis at least once a week.

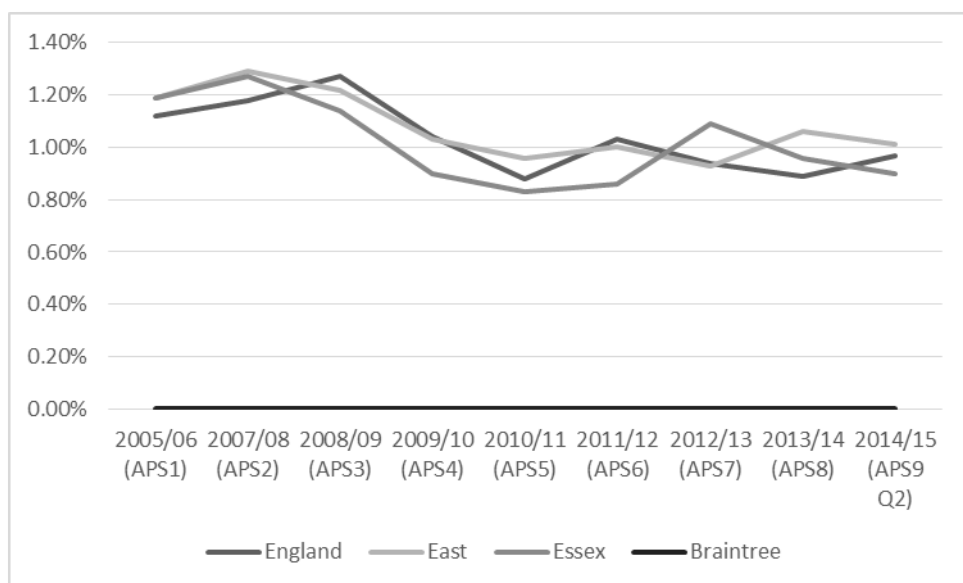
Figure 7.1: Participation of at least 1 x 30 minute session/week (% of adult population) in indoor tennis



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

7.13. However, if all forms of tennis (both indoor and outdoor) are included in the analysis a further data set is available that includes measurements for Essex, as well as the regional and national levels. The data sample for Braintree would still be too small for it to be included. It will be seen that national, regional, and county trends and follow each other closely. (See **Figure 7.2**). If the most recent participation estimate for Essex (0.9%) is applied to Braintree, it suggests that around 1,114 adults would be taking part in some form of tennis (either or both indoor and outdoor) at least once a week.

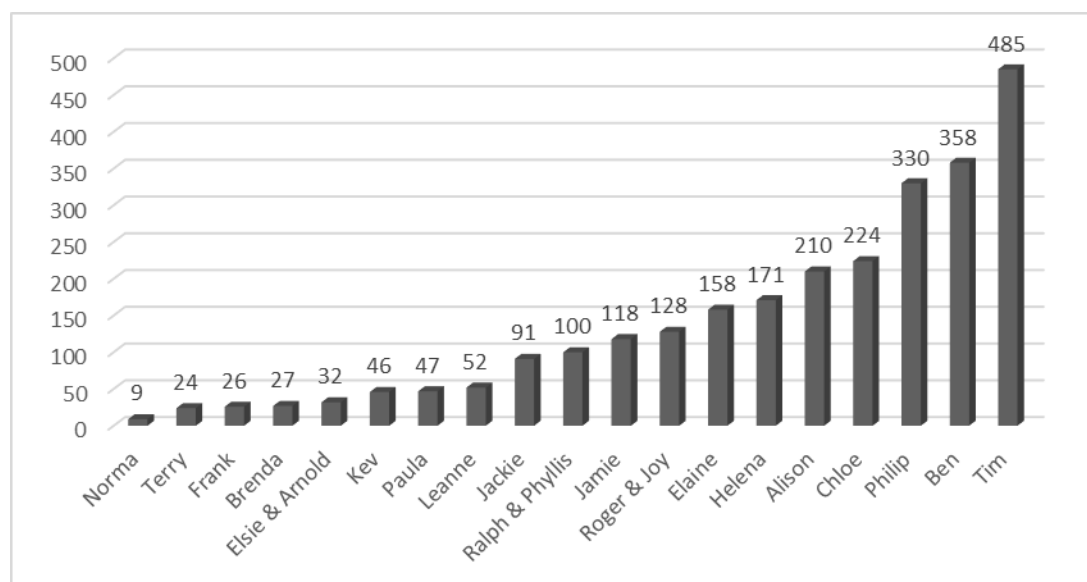
Figure 7.2: Participation in tennis (indoor and outdoor) by adults at least once/week



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

7.14. Figure 7.3 shows the numerical expression of the percentage of overall Sport England adult Market Segments likely to take part in the given activities.

Figure 7.3: Numerical representation of Sport England (adult) Market Segments in Braintree likely to play tennis



7.15. As will be seen, groups including Tim, Ben, Philip, Chloe, Alison, Helena are all well represented. If just these groups alone came close to achieving their potential participation rates, the total number of regular tennis players amongst the adult population within Braintree would be significantly above that recorded through the Active People Surveys alone. This indicates that there might be scope to 'grow' participation in (indoor) tennis, if the facilities existed.

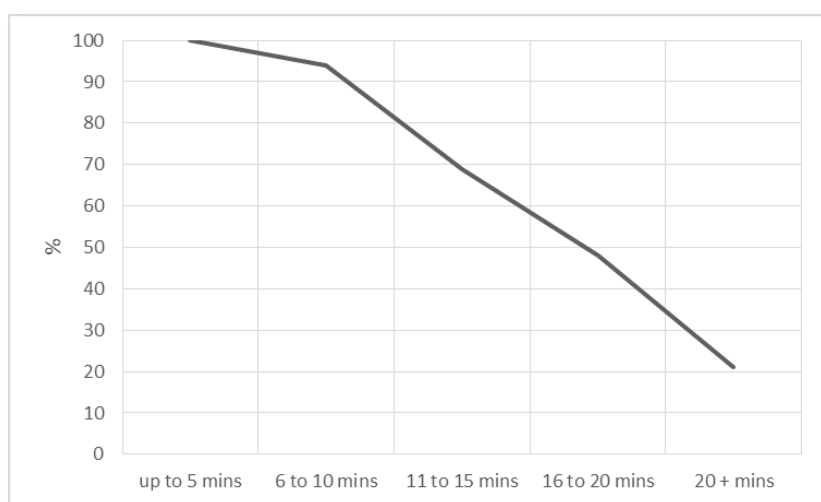
Quality

7.16. The only existing indoor facility (Essex Golf & Country Club) is widely acknowledged to be of high quality, and is well-maintained.

Accessibility

7.17. The findings of the household survey suggests that respondents the majority of respondents would be prepared to travel between 11 to 15 plus minutes to access a specialist indoor sports facility (such as an indoor tennis venue). The 75 percentile is likely to be within the lower end of this range. See Figure 7.4. Most trips will be made by car.

Figure 7.4: Preparedness to travel



7.18. A 15-minute catchment surrounding the Essex Golf & Country Club at Earls Colne would only cover part of the central/eastern part of Braintree local authority. The corresponding catchments of facilities elsewhere do not impinge significantly into the Braintree local authority, for them to be of particular benefit to Braintree residents.

Plans

7.19. The only plans currently known for the improvement of indoor tennis provision in the local authority are those of the Notley High School which has expressed a desired to cover and light some or all of its outdoor courts.

The Future

7.20. Between 2015 and 2033 the population of the local authority is projected to increase from an estimated 152,100 to 177,400 (excluding any growth that might be attributed to local development allocations yet to be determined). This would mean an increase of 25,000 people. Assuming that the demographic profile of this additional population is broadly the same as the existing, the following might be assumed:

- The MS data (Figure 7.3) estimated that it is likely that in the order of 2,636 adults potentially are taking part in tennis in the District;
- As a percentage of the current population this is 1.73%; and.
- 1.73% of the predicted population change between 2015 and 2033 is 432 adults.

This additional demand would further fuel a demand for an indoor venue, albeit that the increase in demand will be spread over a large geography.

Issues and options

7.21. Braintree local authority hosts one indoor tennis facility. Although this is an excellent facility, its location and membership status may not make it accessible to the majority of Braintree residents.

7.22. It is likely that demand will be increased by future natural and planned population growth.

7.23. Under the circumstances, the best compromise approach to achieving a relatively inexpensive indoor facility might be to resurface and cover over existing courts, and a school venue might be the optimal location for such a scheme (such as at Notley High School).

8. ATHLETICS

General

8.1. This section covers facilities required for participating in activities collectively known as track and field. However, running takes place off-track and is also referenced.

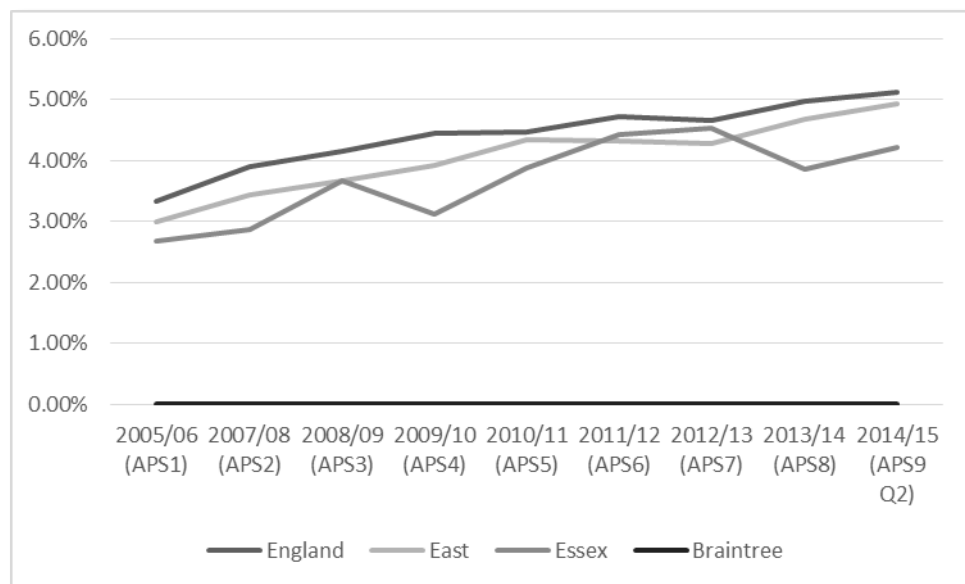
Quantity

8.2. There is one dedicated athletics track in the local authority, and this is the facility at Tabor High School that is owned by the school, and managed through a trust. It is an 8-lane 400 metre track which is floodlit. Other than school use, it is the home of Braintree and District Athletics Club

Active People Surveys (APS) and Market Segmentation (MS) (See End Note 3 and Appendix 1 for further explanation)

8.3. The APS data are not available for athletics in the Braintree local authority due to the small size of the sample data. However, the figure below shows the comparative adult participation rates in all forms of the athletics (including off track running) for Essex, the eastern region, and England. Although Essex participation levels appear to lag behind those for the region and England as a whole, all three have shown an overall increase over the years of the APS. If the latest APS participation figure Essex (4.22%) is applied to Braintree it suggests that around 5,224 adults take part in some form of athletics at least once a week. In all likelihood the frequency of participation would be higher than once a week for most, given the nature of athletic training and competition.

Figure 8.1: Participation in Athletics (including off-track running) by adults at least once/week

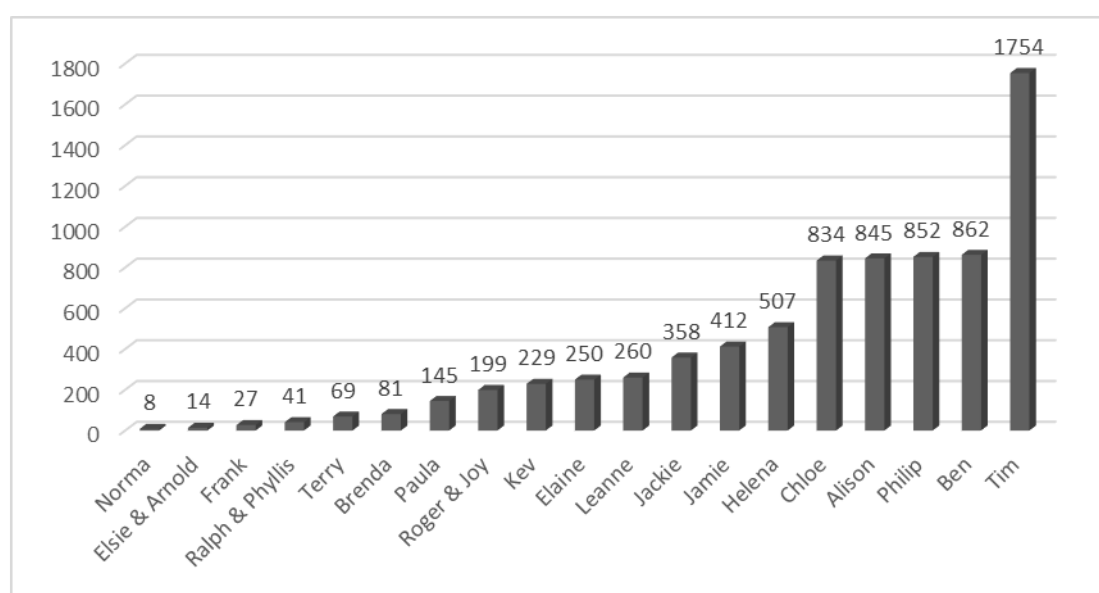


Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

8.4. Figure 8.2 shows the numerical expression of the percentage of overall Sport England adult MS likely to take part in the given activities.

8.5. If the totals for each of the principal segments are aggregated it suggests that there may be scope for some increase in participation, when compared with the participation estimates provided by the Active People Surveys. However, the difference between 'existing' and 'potential' levels is not huge.

Figure 8.2: Numerical representation of Sport England (adult) Market Segments in Braintree likely to take part in athletics



Views of stakeholders

England Athletics (EA)

8.6. EA's view is that overall there are sufficient facilities for athletics in Braintree District. The athletics track at Tabor High School in Panfield Lane is the most important facility in Braintree District. It is well located to meet needs. Access to the facilities is good and England Athletics note that they have a good working partnership with the club (and leisure provider - Fusion).

8.7. Braintree and District Athletics Club have 341 members to date. It is very important in the area as the club has the capacity to increase members in both running and track and field areas.

8.8. Performance programmes - the track is used for coach education and local workshops.

8.9. Recreational running is another area that is part of the NGB strategy and this can link into the club.

8.10. There are considered to be many opportunities in building on the recreational running strategy to increase number of new runners through new Run England 3-2-1 routes or trails in local parks - also giving that link to the local club.

8.11. There is no relevant athletics facility strategy and currently Braintree District does not feature in any specific NGB plans for facility development. The NGB works with Braintree and District Athletics Club with satellite clubs. It is one of their priority areas to attract new athletes and runners.

8.12. Currently there is no NGB funding potentially available to support the delivery of athletics facility priorities in Braintree District.

Active Essex

8.13. It is doubtful if there would be enough demand for another track. The NGB have not expressed any plans and aspirations for additional facilities. Chelmsford Sport and Athletics Centre has excellent facilities and the club is strong, so it is possible that elite athletes and perhaps others may travel from Braintree District to Chelmsford.

Club and network responses

8.14. Responses were received from Braintree and District Athletics Club and Mid Essex Casuals.

8.15. *Braintree and District Athletics Club:* The club is based at the Braintree Leisure Centre/Tabor Academy. Current membership is 300 and this has increased over the last 3 years, a trend that they think will continue.

- The club has an active junior section and links with Tabor Academy.
- The club wishes to expand its activities - to increase membership; improve access to running to non-runners; and increase the level of competition.
- The main barrier noted for development is shortage of personnel to run/coach teams and/or administer the club.

8.16. *Mid Essex Casuals:* The club has 100 members and offers opportunities for running - trail, road, and cross country.

- Membership has increased over the past 3 years "because we are a friendly and informal club that welcomes runners of all abilities and ages. We also charge very little to be a member or to enter races for us". They anticipate further growth in membership in the future.
- The club does not use one specific venue as they use various locations to host trail and cross country races.
- The main barriers noted to development are a shortage of good quality outdoor facilities/resources and the cost of hiring/using facilities.

8.17. The club makes the following additional point:

8.18. "Essex Councils should be encouraging clubs to put on cross country and trail races in the local country parks as the health benefits to residents are immense. Yet, this year we have seen some venues putting their fees up so much that some races are in danger of being scrapped (Great Notley). Surely the costs to councils and governments of maintaining country parks and allowing races to be held on them are less than having to pay for the long term care of people who don't live healthy life styles? Making it more and more difficult for events to be held will see less events being put on, meaning less people take part, meaning the health of the local residents could deteriorate, and the long term costs of health care will go up".

Quality of facilities

Views of key stakeholders

Braintree District Council

8.19. There may be a need to repair/replace the Athletics track at Tabor Academy in the medium term (5-8 years).

Active Essex

8.20. The track at the Academy may need improving in the medium term and it has been reported that there is a need for specialist equipment for some activities.

England Athletics

8.21. The up keep of the track and equipment is needed to enable the growth of the club.

This Clubs

Braintree and District Athletics Club: The club rates the general quality of the facility as being simply "adequate", as they do for "equipment and storage"; but many aspects are rated highly e.g. changing and showering facilities are rated as very good.

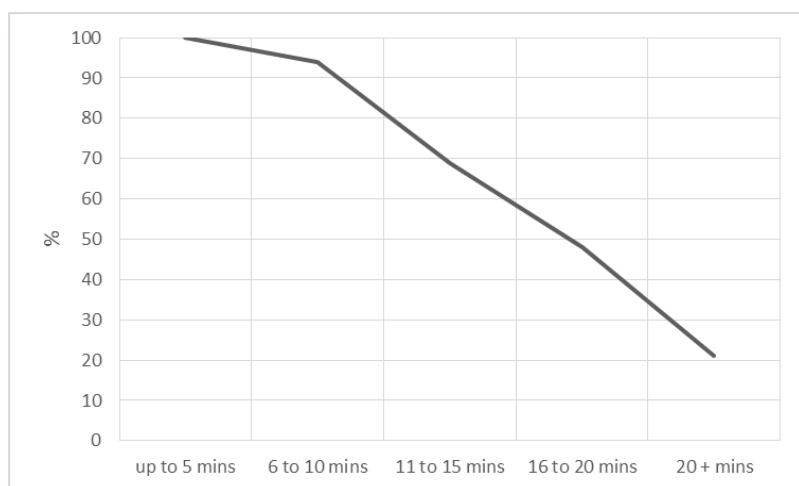
8.22. The club specifically highlights a need for improvement to general athletic facilities: the state of the track; lighting and equipment such as starting blocks.

8.23. They aspire to a club house facility; a small stand to host spectators; and a toilet facility at the track rather than in the main sport centre.

Accessibility

8.24. The findings of the household survey suggests that respondents the majority of respondents would be prepared to travel between 11 to 15 plus minutes to access a specialist indoor sports facility. The 75 percentile is likely to be within the lower end of this range. See **Figure 8.3**. Most trips will be made by car.

Figure 8.3: preparedness to travel to a specialist sports facility



8.25. However, given the cost of providing full-scale athletics tracks, and the resultant ‘scarcity’ of such facilities, it would be unrealistic to apply the 15 minute travel time as a standard. The local authority is very fortunate to have such a facility within its area, given the relatively sparse population.

Future plans

8.26. Other than the previously mentioned aspirations to improve facilities at the Tabor Academy track, Witham Town Council has suggested a possibility to provide an athletics track through annexing land from the local rugby club.

8.27. As mentioned EA suggests the potential for providing 3-2-1 routes for the benefit of casual off-track runners. This

Issues and Options

8.28. The evidence provided in this section does not suggest a need for additional bespoke athletics tracks within the local authority. However, an increased population will accentuate demand for access to bespoke facilities, as well as safe off-track running opportunities.

8.29. Between 2015 and 2033 the population of the local authority is projected to increase from an estimated 152,100 to 177,400 (excluding any growth that might be attributed to local development allocations yet to be determined). This would mean an increase of 25,000 people. Assuming that the demographic profile of this additional population is broadly the same as the existing, the following might be assumed:

- The MS data (Figure 8.2) estimated that it is likely that in the order of 7,747 adults potentially taking part in athletics within the local authority in some way (on or off-track, and including road running);
- As a percentage of the current population this is 5.09%; and.
- 5.09% of the predicted population change between 2015 and 2033 is 1,272 adults.

8.30. Although this will not justify an additional full-scale track, it warrants the maintenance and upgrade of the existing facility at Tabor School; and, potentially consideration of a satellite venue of some description.

8.31. Discussions should be held with Witham Town Council to clarify their stated desire to develop an 'athletics track' highlighted through the consultation.

8.32. It is not appropriate to offer a standard for inclusion in the statutory development plan to guide athletics provision in future years. However, it is appropriate to suggest how improvements to provision can be made to help meet increased demand over the future years.

8.33. First of all it will be important that the needs of the existing Braintree Athletics Club can be met through the desired improvements in respect of a clubhouse and ancillary facilities.

8.34. Secondly, the success of the club in attracting new members in conjunction with planned population change will increase pressures and wear and tear on the existing track. Measures should be put in place so that funding can be made available for the maintenance and eventual overhaul of the track and ancillary facilities.

8.35. Off-track there are already events for road runners without being committed to a club, or necessarily competing. However, there may be scope for providing some way-marked routes based on the Run England 3-2-1 scheme.

9. STUDIOS

General

9.1. The provision of more flexible studio and activity spaces as opposed to more formal sports hall is an increasingly important element of any local provision, meeting the increasing need for more flexible physical activity programmes as opposed to formal sport opportunities. Such spaces can be used to accommodate a range of sports and recreation activity. However, they are most commonly used for dance and aerobics sessions.

Quantity

9.2. The following **Figures 9.1 and 9.2** detail local provision of studios as recorded on the Sport England Active Places Power database. Provision in neighbouring local authorities is also shown on the map.

9.3. It will be seen that provision covers various sectors including local authority, private, commercial, club, and education. These sectors afforded by a variety of access opportunities ranging from pay and play (such as those found in the Council's leisure centres) to up-market commercial club facilities.

9.4. As noted in section one, although these different types of provision will meet varying needs, it is those facilities available on a pay and play basis that meet the widest needs of local residents.

Figure 9.1: Studios within Braintree local authority

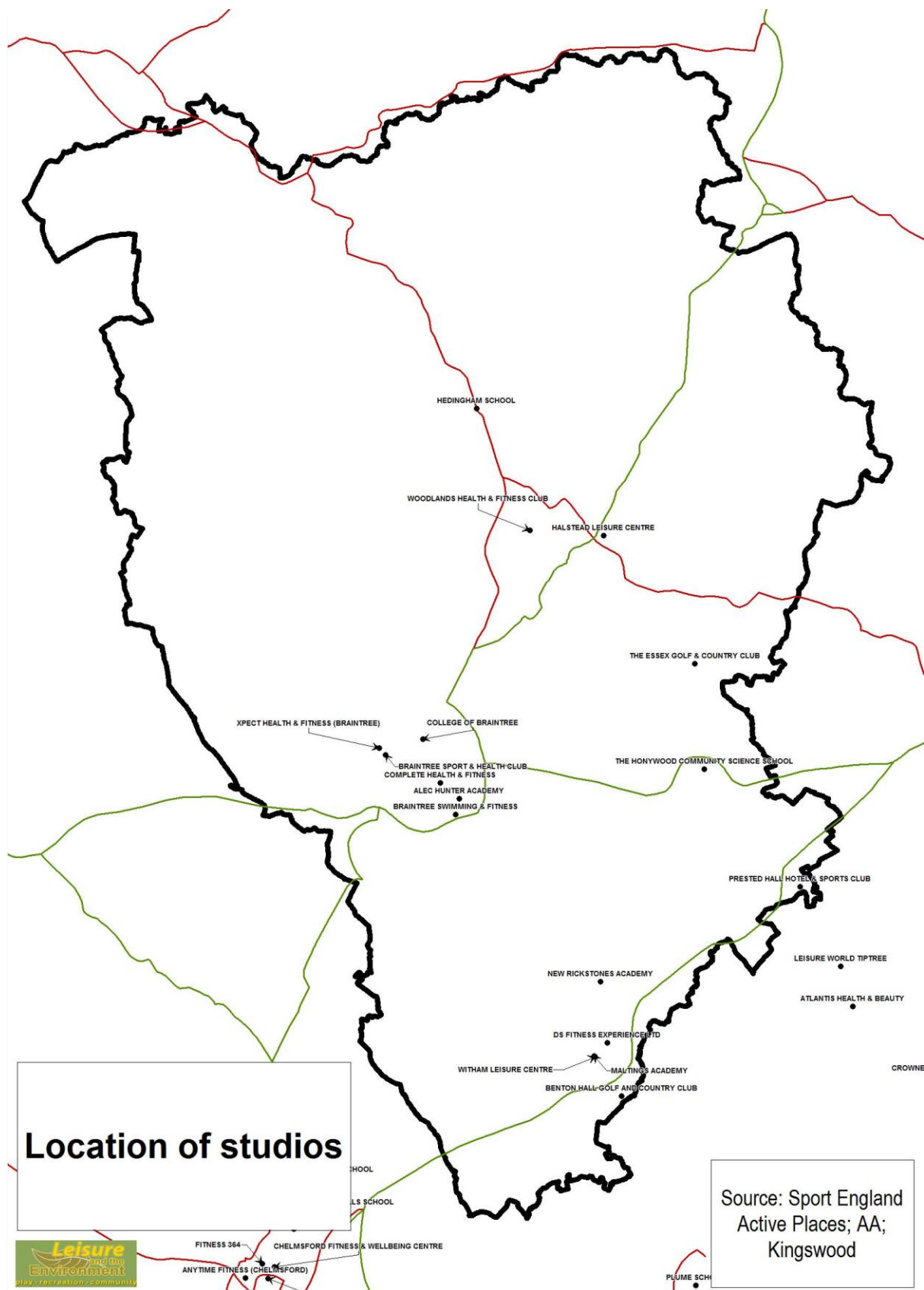


Figure 9.2: Studios within Braintree local authority (list)

Name	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Refurbished
ALEC HUNTER ACADEMY	Sports Club / Community Association	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	1960	No
BENTON HALL GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	2006	No
BENTON HALL GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	2006	No
BRAINTREE SPORT & HEALTH CLUB	Pay and Play	Community school	Trust		Yes
BRAINTREE SPORT & HEALTH CLUB	Pay and Play	Community school	Trust	1992	Yes
BRAINTREE SWIMMING & FITNESS	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	2014	If No you as an overflow from Boreham and serious financial have our pitch are
COLLEGE OF BRAINTREE	Private Use	Further Education	School/College/University (in house)	1997	No

Name	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Refurbished
COMPLETE HEALTH & FITNESS	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2014	No
DS FITNESS EXPERIENCE LTD	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2012	No
HALSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE	Pay and Play	Community school	Trust	1974	Yes
HEDINGHAM SCHOOL	Sports Club / Community Association	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	2007	No
MALTINGS ACADEMY	Private Use	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	2011	No
NEW RICKSTONES ACADEMY	Sports Club / Community Association	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	2003	No
PRESTED HALL HOTEL & SPORTS CLUB	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	2004	No
THE ESSEX GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	1991	Yes
THE ESSEX GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	1991	Yes
THE HONYWOOD COMMUNITY SCIENCE SCHOOL	Sports Club / Community Association	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	2010	No

Name	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Refurbished
WITHAM LEISURE CENTRE	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	2014	No
WITHAM LEISURE CENTRE	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	2014	No
WOODLANDS HEALTH & FITNESS CLUB	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	2003	No
XPECT HEALTH & FITNESS (BRAINTREE)	Registered Membership use	Commercial	Commercial Management	2003	No

Views of local residents

9.5. Studios are a sub type of a genre of facilities known as gym and health and fitness facilities.

9.6. Of those residents responding to the household survey:

- 5% stated that they used Gym, H&FS facilities almost every day
- 21% at least weekly
- 5% at least monthly
- 68% less often or never
- Only 14% of respondents to the household survey suggested that there was a need to improve the stock of H&FSs locally. 86% of respondents considered there to be enough of such facilities, and that if there were to be improvements they should be to the existing stock

Other relevant views expressed

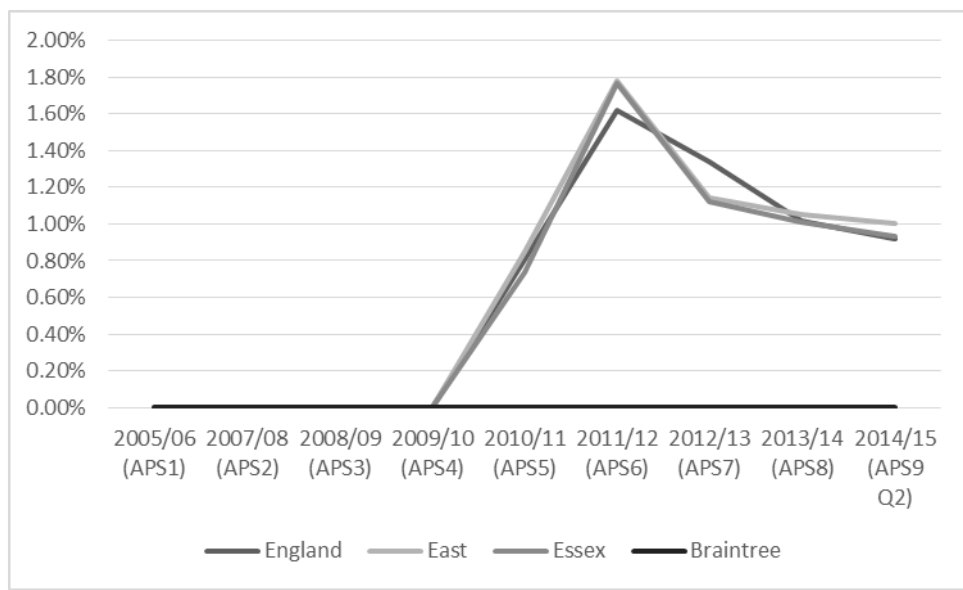
9.7. Although the consultation did not highlight any specific views relating to studio facilities certain martial arts and interests, such as the British Judo Association, and local clubs indicated the importance of facilities like these in catering for martial arts and in the context of a mixed programme of activities covering many other sports and recreation pursuits.

Active People Surveys (APS) and Market Segmentation (MS) (See End Note 3 and Appendix 1 for further explanation)

9.8. As stated earlier, the principal activities using studio space tend to be 'exercise movement and dance', and the 'aerobics'.

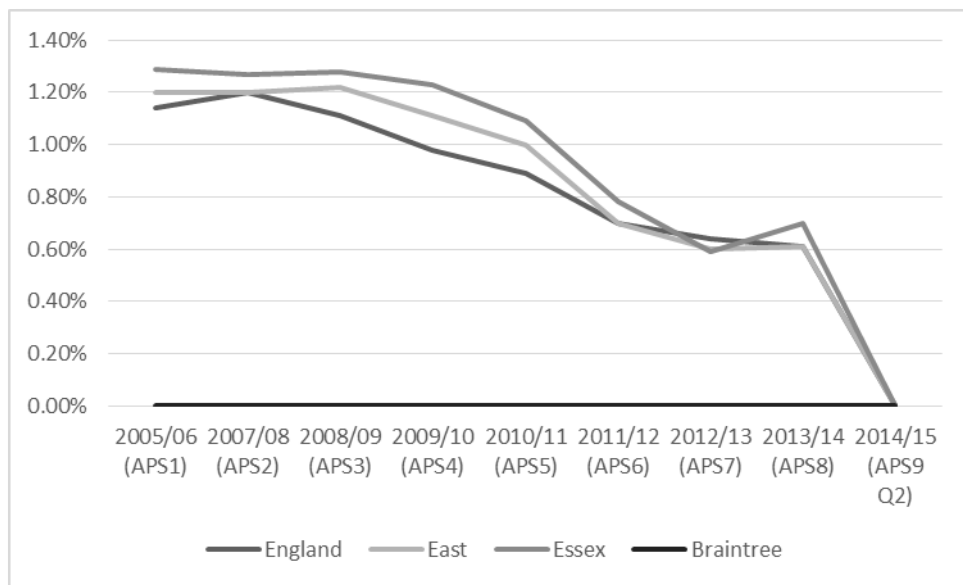
9.9. For both of these types of activity the APS collect data covering participation by adults. Data are available at the national, regional and county level. Insufficient data are available for the Braintree area to be reliable. For both these groups of activity, it will be seen that levels of participation for the measure 'at least 1 x 30 minute session/week' have varied significantly over the years of the APS. **(Figures 9.3 and 9.4)**

Figure 9.3: Participation in 'exercise and movement' by adults at least once/week



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

Figure 9.4: Participation in 'aerobics' by adults at least once/week



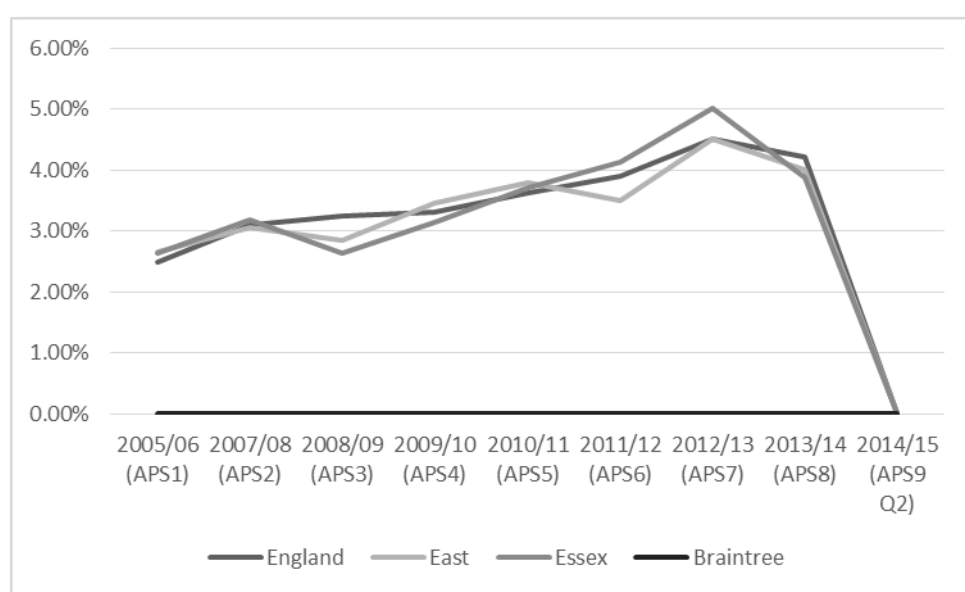
Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

9.10. In terms of both activities if the most recent average participation rates for Essex (at least 1 x 30 minute session per week) were applied to the Braintree local authority adult population it would indicate the following estimates of participation:

- Exercise, movement & dance: 1,240 people
- Aerobics: 868 people

9.11. However, the above two activities fall within a wider category of activities called ‘gym, aerobics, keep fit’ for the purpose of measurements in the APS. If the APS data were analysed for this overall category, as opposed there to above, it would yield the following participation levels (based also on the undertaking of at least 1 x 30 minutes sessions/week).

Figure 9.5: Participation in ‘gym, aerobics, keep fit’ by adults at least once/week

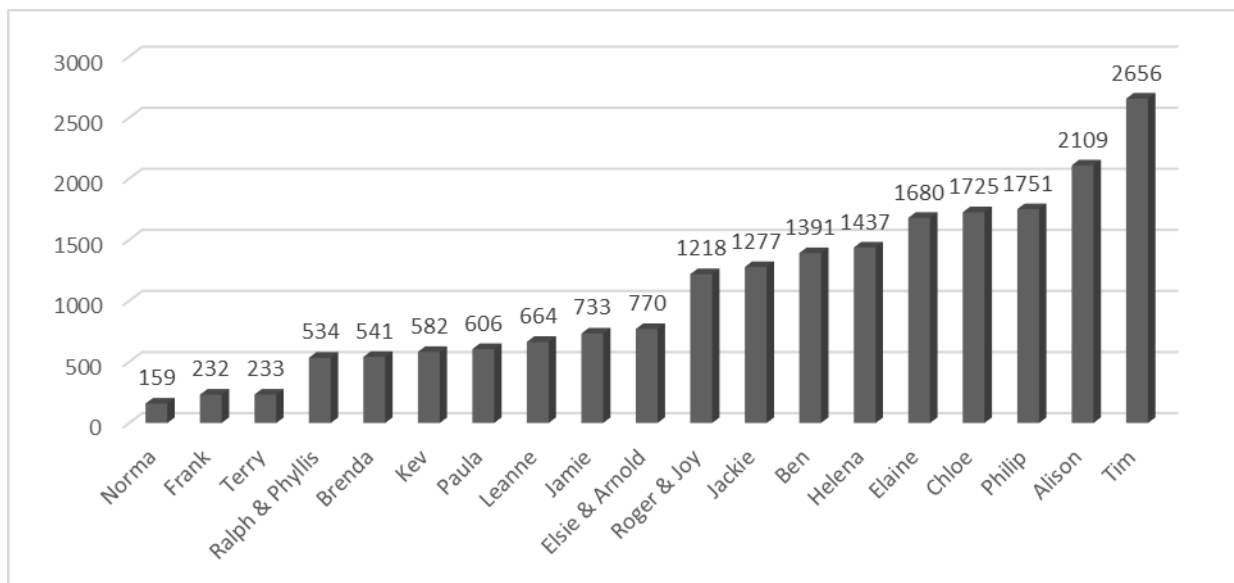


Note: where there is a ‘zero’ % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

9.12. If the most recent participation measure for Essex (c.4%) was applied to the local Braintree adult population it would mean that in the order of 4,960 adults would be regularly taking part in this range of activities, for at least 30 minute session/week. This estimate is far larger than for ‘gym’ and ‘aerobics’ alone, but the ‘gym, aerobics, keep fit’ category also includes a far wider span of activities.

9.13. **Figure 9.6** shows the numerical expression of the percentage of overall Sport England adult Market Segments likely to take part in the given activities.

Figure 9.6: Numerical representation of Sport England (adult) Market Segments in Braintree likely to take part in gym, aerobic, keep fit activity



9.14. When compared **Figures 9.4, 9.5** and the supporting narrative it suggests that the area is under-performing in terms of its potential relative to activity levels- if the above total for the various MS groups are added together they amount to around 20,000 adults.

Quality

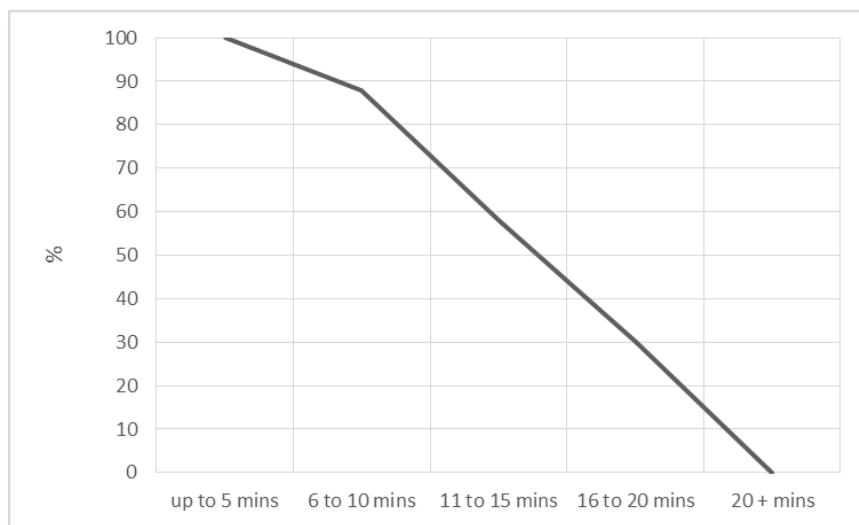
9.15. The household survey indicated that of those responding, the overall view on the quality of Gym, Health & Fitness facilities was that:

- 68% considered them to be of Good or very Good standard;
- 29% considered them to be Average; and,
- 4% viewed them as being either Poor or Very Poor.

Accessibility

9.16. Responses to the household survey indicate that the majority of respondents would be prepared to travel at least 10 to 15 minutes to use a health and fitness centre (a category that includes Studios), and as shown in **Figure 5.5** the 75% percentiles lies somewhere around 10 minutes.

Figure 9.7: Preparedness to travel



9.17. The majority of journeys will be made by car, although the household survey suggested a sizeable percentage of trips will be made by foot.

The Future

9.18. Between 2015 and 2033 the population of the local authority is projected to increase from an estimated 152,100 to 177,400 (excluding any growth that might be attributed to local development allocations yet to be determined). This would mean an increase of 25,000 people. Assuming that the demographic profile of this additional population is broadly the same as the existing, the following might be assumed:

- The MS data (Figure 9.6) estimated that it is likely that in the order of 20,000 adults potentially are taking part in gym and fitness related activities;
- As a percentage of the current population this is 13.1%; and.
- 13.1% of the predicted population change between 2015 and 2033 is 3,275 adults.

This is the membership level that might be expected of a large Gym and Health and Fitness facility (which would include a studio), albeit that the increase in demand will be spread over a large geography.

Issues and options

9.19. Activity studios are proving to be important facilities within larger complexes such as leisure centres and commercial health and fitness venues.

9.20. Such studios offer very flexible space, which means that the larger facilities, such as sports halls, can be released for other activities requiring extensive space. They should be integral to the design of new and improved leisure centre provision.

9.21. It is not considered appropriate to recommend a standard for the provision of additional studio spaces to be incorporated in development plan documents. However, future natural and planned population change within the local authority will increase demand for such venues.

10. SQUASH

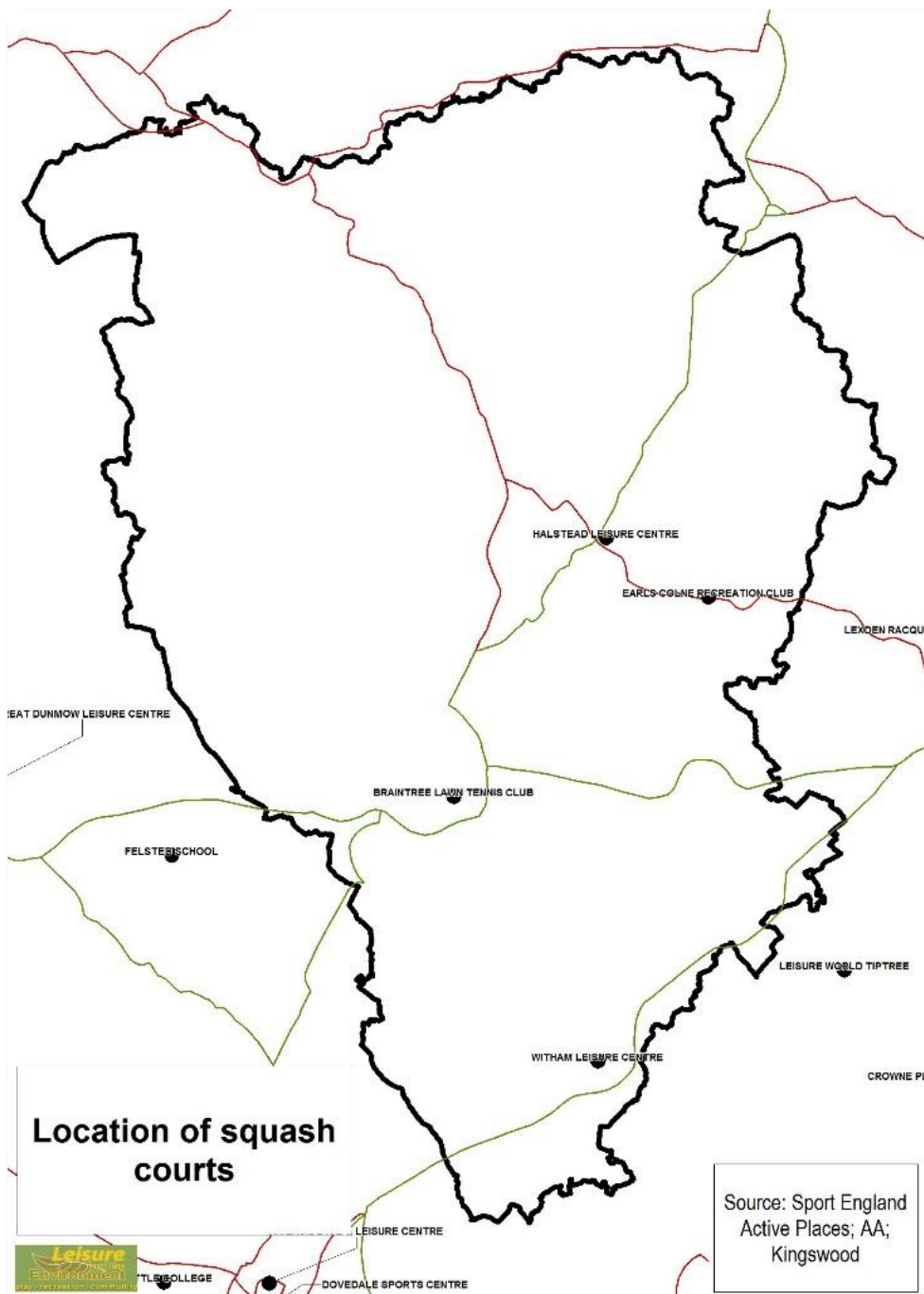
General

10.1. Squash as a sport has had its up and downs in terms of popularity and participation over the years. As with studios, discussed in Section 9, squash courts can also provide flexible space for activities at times when they are not required for the sport.

Quantity

10.2. The following **Figures 10.1 and 10.2** show the location of existing facilities within the local authority and those close by in neighbouring local authorities.

Figure 10.1: Squash court provision in the local authority



10.3. Facilities are provided at a small number of venues within the local authority with a total of 7 courts spread over four venues, and with the local authority controlled facilities existing at the Witham and Halstead providing the majority of this total (2 courts apiece).

10.4. Squash court provision generally covers sectors including local authority, private, commercial, club, and education. These sectors afforded by a variety of access opportunities ranging from pay and play (such as those found in the Council’s leisure centres) to up-market commercial club facilities. As noted in section 1, although these different types of provision will meet varying needs, it is those facilities available on a pay and play basis that meet the widest needs of local residents.

Figure 10.2: Squash court provision in the local authority (list)

Name	Courts	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built
BRAINTREE LAWN TENNIS CLUB	1	Pay and Play	Sports Club	Sport Club	1972
EARLS COLNE RECREATION CLUB	2	Pay and Play	Community Organisation	Community Organisation	1985
HALSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE	2	Pay and Play	Community school	Trust	1974
WITHAM LEISURE CENTRE	2	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Trust	2014

Views of local residents

10.5. Squash facilities are classified as a specialist facility. Respondents to the household survey conducted as part of this study indicated that:

- 8% would use specialist facilities at least weekly;
- 6% around once a month; and,
- 85% less often or never.
- 36% of respondents considered there to be insufficient specialist facilities; 62% considered there to be enough; 3% considered there to be too many.

10.6. It should be stressed that the responses received did not relate specifically to squash courts.

Views of key stakeholders

Active Braintree

10.7. Though adequate currently, may need increasing in the future to match projected demand through housing growth. E.g. additional sports hall space and squash courts

Essex Squash & Racketball Association

10.8. Essex County is developing its own strategy for the development of Squash and Racketball; whilst part of the wider strategy being developed with Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Middlesex.

10.9. The NGB recognises the ageing population and fall away from the sport in recent years and is focusing its strategy on bringing in younger participants through schools and outreach programmes working with Sport England, whilst also focusing on the 18-40 age-groups to get people back into squash. Racketball is also the focus for women's programmes, ageing squash players and new players.

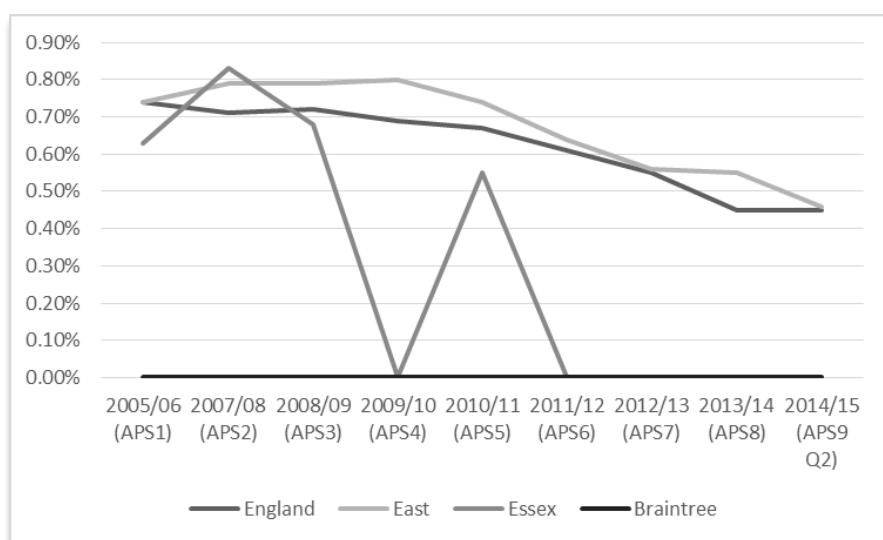
10.10. Squash court provision in Braintree would currently seem to meet demand with no plans identified to increase the number of courts.

Active People Surveys (APS) and Market Segmentation (MS) (See End Note 3 and Appendix 1 for further explanation)

10.11. Squash and Racketball are combined for the purpose of the Sport England Active People Surveys. Braintree local authority cannot be included in the following **Figure 10.3** as the sample sizes within the local authority were insufficient. Neither in the most recent surveys have sufficient data been available to be used in the Figure. However, information has been available for some previous years to enable comparison with national, and regional levels.

10.12. At its height the year 2007/8, adult participation levels in Essex were recorded at about 0.84%. If this percentage is applied to Braintree local authority the adult population playing squash on a weekly basis would be around 1,039. However, the most recent data available for Essex in the year 2010/11 suggested that participation levels have declined to around 0.55 % of the adult population. If this percentage is again applied to the Braintree adult population it would suggest that 681 adults played Squash/racketball at least once a week.

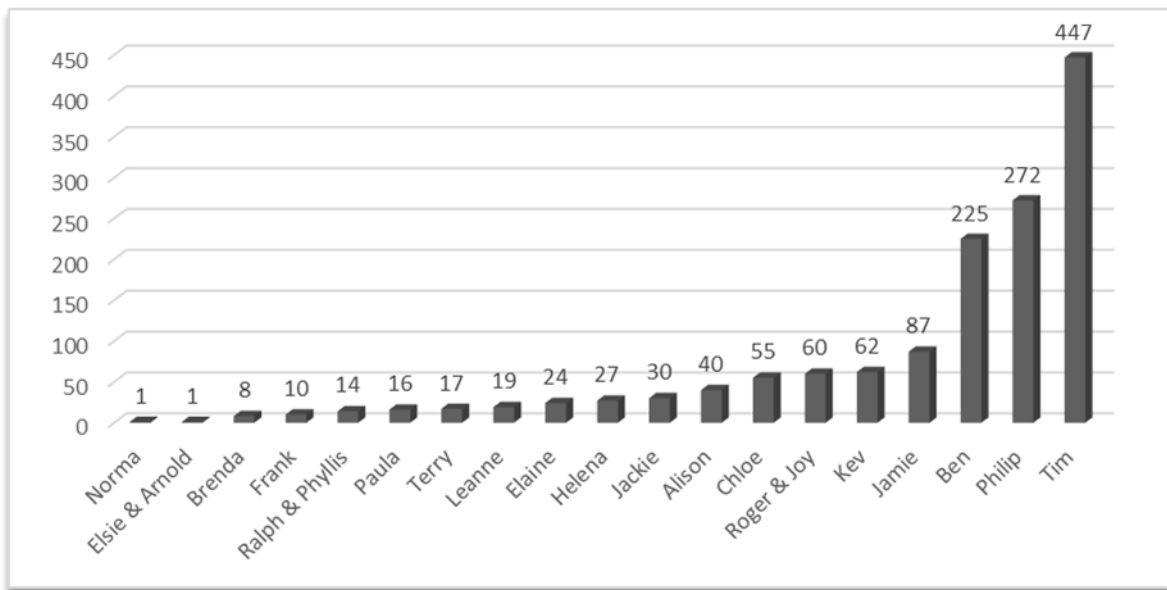
Figure 10.3: Participation in 'squash & racketball' by adults at least once/week



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

Figure 10.4 shows the numerical expression of the percentage of overall Sport England adult Market Segments likely to take part in the given activities.

Figure 10.4: Numerical representation of Sport England (adult) Market Segments in Braintree likely to take part in Squash & Racquetball



10.13. In terms of Sport England Market Segmentation analysis, those groups most likely to play squash within the adult population are, by some distance, Tim, Ben, Philip. When combined, the likely population count inclined to play Squash would be in the order of 1,400 adults. On this evidence, it seems that there may be scope for participation to increase, given comparison with the Active People Survey figures, based on the activity rates in Essex.

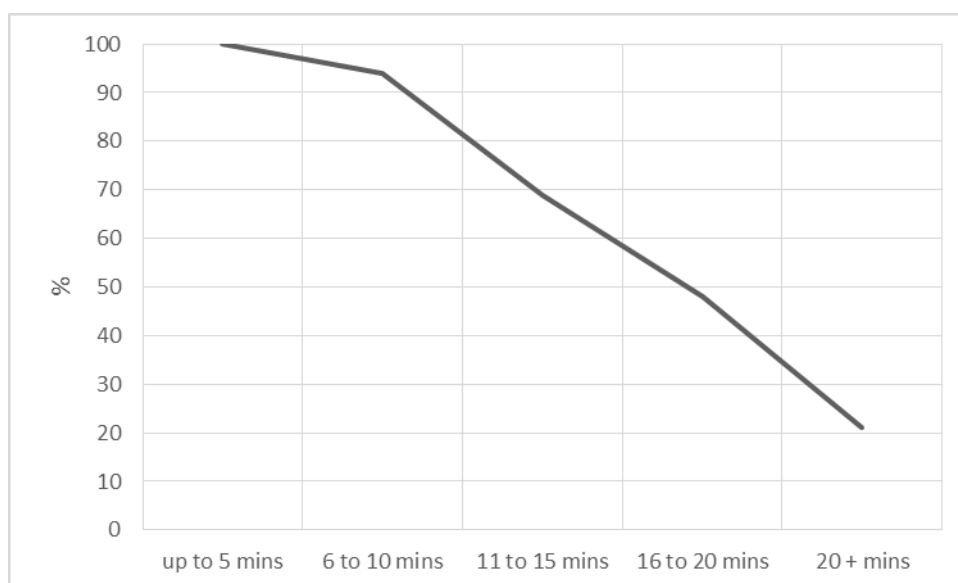
Quality

10.14. Respondents to the household questionnaire survey indicated that in terms of specialist indoor provision: 36%; 44% considered the quality to be average; and, 20% considered quality to be either poor or very poor. However, these response rates were not specifically related to Squash

Accessibility

10.15. The findings of the household survey suggests that respondents the majority of respondents would be prepared to travel between 11 to 15 plus minutes to access a specialist indoor sports facility . The 75 percentile is likely to be within the lower end of this range. See **Figure 10.4**. Most trips will be made by car.

Figure 10.4 Preparedness to travel



The Future

10.16. Between 2015 and 2033 the population of the local authority is projected to increase from an estimated 152,100 to 177,400 (excluding any growth that might be attributed to local development allocations yet to be determined). This would mean an increase of 25,000 people. Assuming that the demographic profile of this additional population is broadly the same as the existing, the following might be assumed:

- The MS data (Figure 10.4) estimated that it is likely that in the order of 1,415 adults potentially are taking part in squash or racketball in the District;
- As a percentage of the current population this is 0.93%; and.
- 0.93% of the predicted population change between 2015 and 2033 is 232 adults.

This is the membership level that might be expected of a large squash facility of perhaps 6-8 courts (assuming membership is dedicated), albeit that the increase in demand will be spread over a large geography.

Issues and options

10.17. The Essex Squash and Racketball Association suggests that the existing facilities are very well used, and that the impact of a new strategy for squash being developed in Essex may have the effect of increasing participation.

10.18. Natural and planned population change within the local authority may increase the demand for access to squash courts.

10.19. The nature of squash courts is such that no specific guidance needs to be included within the statutory development plan in terms of, for example, recommended standards of provision.

10.20. However, it will be important to continue to review the level of provision.

10.21. New squash provision, if required, should be located in association with new or improved leisure centre complexes, and not as a standalone facility. Providing additional facilities in this manner, would allow squash courts to be used for alternative activities during times when not required for the sport itself.

11. FUTURE PROVISION, STANDARD, AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

General

11.1. This section considers future natural and planned changes that will impact upon the need for sports and active recreation provision. It looks at projected growth to the year 2033; and, the potential impact of all allocations within the current Local Development Framework and other strategic projections in terms of influencing demand. It goes on to consider some outline standards (where appropriate) to guide the provision of new or improved facilities, especially in relation to planned new housing allocation, where geographical focused increases in needs are likely to be most acute. Other recommendations are made, in respect of the provision of specific types of facility, and planning policy and guidance.

Natural and planned population change (to 2033)

11.2. As at 2015 Braintree District was estimated to have a population of 152,100.⁸ The same projections calculate that by the year 2033 the population will have increased to 177,400. This figure is itself only based upon previous trends, and does not necessarily take into account the impact of planned new residential growth yet to be determined. The most noteworthy feature of the above changes is that whilst there is an overall growth in the population generally, the biggest numerical increases are in the oldest age groups and especially within those in the post retirement age groups.

11.3. Generally speaking, it is the younger adult age groups between 16 and 45 years of age that have the greatest propensity to participate in sports and active recreation. Whilst these age groups will continue to grow within the local authority it is clear that the greater percentage of the overall population growth will come from within the older age groups, and this will have implications for the way in which sport and recreation facilities are planned.

11.4. The current uncertainty about future housing allocations and growth means it is inappropriate to speculate too much on the location of major new planned growth at this time. However, the requirement for large allocations to meet the projected requirement for new homes, means that a lot of additional future demand for new or improved built facilities will be focussed on specific geographic areas.

11.5. It may be that, when the impact of all new housing allocations (yet to be determined) over this period are taken into account, the levels of population growth will be even higher, and this will certainly be the case in those areas where new major housing allocations are made.

Guidance for the development of new and improved facilities

11.6. Taking into account the above considerations, the following provides some guidance for improvements to the sports built facility infrastructure based on the findings of Sections 3 to 10. Where appropriate, outline standards of provision will be suggested to, in particular, help guide provision in relation to new housing with respect to Section 106 contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

⁸ Table 2b: 2010-based Subnational Population Projections by sex and quinary age

Figure 12.1: Summary of guidance in relation to specific facilities

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
Indoor swimming pools (Section 3)	<p>All the available evidence (see Section 3) suggests that the capacity of the existing pools available for community use is sufficient to meet demand, with any unmet demand being caused by lack of ease of access from some of the rural areas, in particular. There is some evidence of pinchpoints in respect of swimming club access to pool time, but this may be addressed through examining local programming.</p> <p>Paragraph 3.10 of the Needs Assessment identified that there is an estimated 1992 sq.m of pool space available for community use. Given the estimation that this level of provision is sufficient to meet existing community needs, it can serve as a basis for a standard of provision.</p> <p>1992 sq.m of pool space equates to 6.1 25m x 4 lane pools.¹⁰</p> <p>If this was converted into a swimming tank per capita figure it would equate to 1 25m x 4 lane pool per 24,934 people. This figure would be an acceptable basis for</p>	<p><u>1 x 4-lane x 25m tank /24,934 persons.</u></p> <p>Ideally, no more than 15 minutes' drive or walk time (the latter in urban areas); and, a quality component (referring to an expectation on the extent and character of secured community use, and the design of new or improved facilities, such as shape, dimensions, depth variation etc.). Guidance in respect of expectations on quality and community use should be based on current Sport England guidance.</p>	<p>If the quantitative component of the above outline standard was applied to the projected population growth between now and 2033 (c.25k) it suggests that the additional demand generated would lead to a need for an extra 1 25m x 4-lane pool.</p> <p>Provision of a new pool should be addressed in conjunction with the location of any planned new population growth.</p> <p>This will present issues in respect of potential planned new growth on the east and west sides of Braintree, given that Figure 3.7 in the Needs Assessment identifies a comparative lack of access to pools in these areas (in respect of both those in Braintree District as well as neighbouring authorities).</p>	£3740,000

⁹ Based on Sport England Cost Guidance for 2nd Quarter 2016. The most up-to-date cost guidance should always be used.

¹⁰ Assuming dimensions of 25m x 13

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
	guiding future provision, in relation to changes in population (with the caveat that matters of quality and accessibility must also be considered).			
Sports halls (Section 4)	<p>All the available evidence (Section 4). suggests that the capacity of the existing sports halls in community use is struggling to meet demand, although unmet demand is not focused on any particular geographical area. The Sport England FPM modelling exercise suggests that the District might be the equivalent of a 4.5 court sports hall down on what it needs to meet estimated demand. It suggests that this might be in part due to the likely under-use of some of the older facilities, which will not be so attractive.</p> <p>Figure 4.3 of the Needs Assessment identifies that that there are 39 courts (within sports halls) that are available for community use. If this figure was supplemented by a further 4.5 it would make 43.5 courts (equivalent to 10.9 4-court sports halls).</p>	<p>1 court/3,448 persons.</p> <p>Ideally, no more than 15 minutes drive or walk time (the latter in urban areas); and, a quality component (perhaps referring to an expectation on the extent and character of secured community use, and the design of new or improved facilities, such as shape, dimensions, etc.). Guidance in respect of expectations on quality and community use should be based on current Sport England guidance.</p>	<p>If the quantitative component of the above outline standard was applied to the projected population growth between now and 2033 (c.25k) it suggests that the additional demand generated would lead to a need for an extra 7.25 courts, or 1.81 4-court sports halls</p> <p>New or improved provision should be addressed in conjunction with the location of any planned new population growth.</p> <p>It is unlikely that this extra demand could be absorbed by more efficient use of existing community halls, albeit that some of the existing and future unmet demand might be met through upgrading some school and college provision, such as at</p>	£4,009,150

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
	<p>If this was converted into a hall per capita figure it would equate to 1 sports hall per 13,954 people, or, 1 court per 3,448 people.</p> <p>This figure would be an acceptable basis for guiding future provision, in relation to changes in population (with the caveat that matters of quality and accessibility must also be considered).</p>		<p>Braintree College, Hedingham School, and Honywood School.</p> <p>The potential for The Maltings and Rickenstones Academies in Witham to absorb additional community use should also be considered, although it is likely that they are now almost being used to full-capacity.</p> <p>There will be issues in respect of potential planned new growth on the east and west sides of Braintree, given that Figure 4.6 in the Needs Assessment identifies a comparative lack of access to pools in these areas (in respect of both those in Braintree District as well as neighbouring authorities).</p>	
Health & Fitness Suites (Section 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MS data (Figure 5.4) estimated that it is likely that in the order of 20,000 adults potentially are taking part in gym and fitness related activities; As a percentage of the current population this is 13.1%; and. 	<p><u>1 health & fitness station/ 1000 person</u></p> <p>Ideally, no more than 10-15 minutes' drive or walk time (the latter in urban areas); and, a quality component (perhaps referring to an expectation on the extent and character of secured community use, and the</p>	<p>If the quantitative component of the above outline standard was applied to the projected population growth between now and 2033 (c.25k the Council might consider providing for an additional <u>25 health and fitness stations spread over one or more of it centres.</u> It would be sensible for this provision to be made in</p>	

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13.1% of the predicted population change between 2015 and 2033 is 3,275 adults. <p>This is the membership level that might be expected of a large Gym and Health and Fitness facility, albeit that the increase in demand will be spread over a large geography.</p> <p>Given the popularity of H&FS and associated activities within the local authority, it will be important for sufficient provision to be made to accommodate an increase in demand from a growing population.</p> <p>H&FS are clearly very popular facilities, given the local demographic profile; data that exists show that local participation rates in activities using these facilities is high. Furthermore, such facilities appeal strongly to both genders.</p> <p>It is calculated (Section 5) that the total number of fitness stations under the control of the council at its leisure centres is 171 units. Based on the current population estimates for 2015 this number of units approaches almost 1 station per 1000 population.</p>	design of new or improved facilities, such as shape, dimensions, etc.).	association with new or improved provision for sports halls, in line with the recommendations within the appropriate section of this report.	

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
	This provision obviously excludes that which is not under the control of the local authority (such as at schools commercial and membership facilities). No doubt, these sectors will continue to provide for such facilities. However, the local authority makes a significant contribution to the provision of such facilities driven by a community focused pay as you play ethos.			
Indoor bowls (Section 6)	<p>Section 6 identified the stasis or possible decline in participation in bowls generally. However, the sport appeals more to older people, and the ageing population projected may present a better case for the provision of such a facility in the medium to longer term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MS data (Figure 6.3) estimated that it is likely that in the order of 1,072 adults potentially are taking part in bowls in the District; As a percentage of the current population this is 0.7%; and. 	No standard suggested	Keep under review.	

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.7% of the predicted population change between 2015 and 2033 is 175 adults. <p>This certainly in itself does not warrant additional provision.</p> <p>Issues and options</p> <p>Although the Sport England SFC estimates that there may be a theoretical demand for an indoor bowls facility within the local authority, this does not appear to be evidenced by local opinion.</p> <p>Planned and natural population change within the local authority will increase the demand for access to indoor bowls facilities, but only marginally.</p> <p>In circumstances where a local club or other non-local authority interest identified a willingness to pursue the development of an indoor bowls facility, the need for such a facility might be reconsidered, given that data suggest that a theoretical demand might exist.</p>			

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
Indoor tennis (Section 7)	<p>Section 7 identified scope for growth in the market for tennis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MS data (Figure 7.3) estimated that it is likely that in the order of 2,636 adults potentially are taking part in tennis in the District; As a percentage of the current population this is 1.73%; and. 1.73% of the predicted population change between 2015 and 2033 is 432 adults. <p>This additional demand would further fuel justification for an indoor venue, albeit that the increase in demand will be spread over a large geography.</p> <p>Braintree local authority hosts one indoor tennis facility. Although this is an excellent facility, its location and membership status may not make it accessible to the majority of Braintree residents.</p> <p>It is likely that demand will be increased by future natural and planned population growth.</p> <p>Under the circumstances, the best compromise approach to achieving a</p>	No standard suggested	Given the cost of providing such a facility, the best potential for developing an indoor venue might be through the covering of existing courts, such as at Notley School.	

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
	relatively inexpensive indoor facility might be to resurface and cover over existing courts, and a school venue might be the optimal location for such a scheme (such as at Notley High School).			
Athletics (Section 8)	<p>The evidence provided in Section 8 suggested no need for additional bespoke athletics tracks within the local authority. However, an increased population will accentuate demand for access to bespoke facilities, as well as safe off-track running opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MS data (Figure 8.2) estimated that it is likely that in the order of 7,747 adults potentially taking part in athletics within the local authority in some way (on or off-track, and including road running); As a percentage of the current population this is 5.09%; and. 5.09% of the predicted population change between 2015 and 2033 is 1,272 adults. 	No standard suggested	<p>Between 2015 and 2031 the population of the local authority is projected to increase by 23,000. Section 8 estimated that an additional 1,171 adults.</p> <p>Although this will not justify an additional full-scale track, it warrants the maintenance and upgrade of the existing facility at Tabor School; and, potentially consideration of a satellite venue of some description.</p> <p>Discussions should be held with Witham Town Council with regard to their aspiration to develop an 'athletics track'.</p> <p>It will be important that the needs of the existing Braintree Athletics Club can be met through the desired</p>	TBC

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
	<p>Although this will not justify an additional full-scale track, it warrants the maintenance and upgrade of the existing facility at Tabor School; and, potentially consideration of a satellite venue of some description.</p> <p>Discussions should be held with Witham Town Council to clarify their stated desire to develop an 'athletics track' highlighted through the consultation.</p> <p>It is not appropriate to offer a standard for inclusion in the statutory development plan to guide athletics provision in future years. However, it is appropriate to suggest how improvements to provision can be made to help meet increased demand over the future years.</p> <p>First of all it will be important that the needs of the existing Braintree Athletics Club can be met through the desired improvements in respect of a clubhouse and ancillary facilities.</p> <p>Secondly, the success of the club in attracting new members in conjunction with planned population change will increase pressures and wear and tear on the existing track. Measures should be put in place so that funding can be made</p>		<p>improvements in respect of a clubhouse and ancillary facilities.</p> <p>The success of the club in attracting new members in conjunction with planned population change will increase pressures and wear and tear on the existing track. Measures should be put in place so that funding can be made available for the maintenance and eventual overhaul of the track and ancillary facilities.</p> <p>Off-track there are already events for road runners without being committed to a club, or necessarily competing. However, there may be scope for providing some way-marked routes based on the Run England 3-2-1 scheme.</p>	

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
	<p>available for the maintenance and eventual overhaul of the track and ancillary facilities.</p> <p>Off-track there are already events for road runners without being committed to a club, or necessarily competing. However, there may be scope for providing some way-marked routes based on the Run England 3-2-1 scheme.</p>			
Studios (Section 9)	<p>Studios are considered to be a valuable and multi-functional space that should be embraced in both new and refurbished leisure centres wherever possible. They can accommodate activities that have wide appeal across the demographic groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MS data (Figure 9.6) estimated that it is likely that in the order of 20,000 adults potentially are taking part in gym and fitness related activities; As a percentage of the current population this is 13.1%; and; 	No standard suggested	This should be integral to all major new and improved sports hall provision. (See under Sports Halls (above) for an indication of required needs in this regard)	

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13.1% of the predicted population change between 2015 and 2033 is 3,275 adults. <p>This is the membership level that might be expected of a large Gym and Health and Fitness facility (which would include a studio), albeit that the increase in demand will be spread over a large geography.</p> <p>Activity studios are proving to be important facilities within larger complexes such as leisure centres and commercial health and fitness venues.</p> <p>Such studios offer very flexible space, which means that the larger facilities, such as sports halls, can be released for other activities requiring extensive space. They should be integral to the design of new and improved leisure centre provision.</p> <p>It is not considered appropriate to recommend a standard for the provision of additional studio spaces to be incorporated in development plan documents. However, future natural and planned population change within the local authority will increase demand for such venues.</p>			

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
Squash courts (Section 10)	<p>Section 10 of the Needs Assessment does not suggest a need for improved provision, but rather to keep the situation under review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MS data (Figure 10.4) estimated that it is likely that in the order of 1,415 adults potentially are taking part in squash or racketball in the District; As a percentage of the current population this is 0.93%; and. 0.93% of the predicted population change between 2015 and 2033 is 232 adults. <p>This is the membership level that might be expected of a large squash facility of perhaps 6-8 courts (assuming membership is dedicated), albeit that the increase in demand will be spread over a large geography.</p>	No standard suggested	New squash provision, if required, should be located in association with new or improved leisure centre complexes, and not as a standalone facility. Providing additional facilities in this manner, would allow squash courts to be used for alternative activities during times when not required for the sport itself.	TBC

Facility	Comment	Standard (if appropriate)	Calculation and other comments as applied to additional population increase by 2033	Potential capital cost (based on sources indicated) ⁹
	<p>The Essex Squash and Racketball Association suggests that the existing facilities are very well used, and that the impact of a new strategy for squash being developed in Essex may have the effect of increasing participation.</p> <p>Natural and planned population change within the local authority may increase the demand for access to squash courts.</p> <p>The nature of squash courts is such that no specific guidance needs to be included within the statutory development plan in terms of, for example, recommended standards of provision.</p> <p>However, it will be important to continue to review the level of provision.</p> <p>New local authority-controlled squash provision, if required, should be located in association with new or improved leisure centre complexes, and not as a standalone facility. Providing additional facilities in this manner, would allow squash courts to be used for alternative activities during times when not required for the sport itself.</p>			

Other recommendations

11.7 Other than the above guidance it will be very important for the Council to provide complementary guidance through its planning policies, and these should cover the following.

11.8 Include policies and proposals in the Development Plan which are consistent with paragraphs 73 and 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework guidance and, in particular, include reference to the recommendations contained in this Section.

11.9 Include sites specific proposals that cover the relevant recommendations contained in Figure 12.1 where the location and/or site of new or improved provision is determined.

11.10 In circumstances where proposals for development and use of a site are contrary to those contained in the recommendations in this section, they should only be approved where:

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

11.11 Include statements in all relevant supplementary planning documents relating to the recommendations in this section.

11.12 Include reference to all relevant recommendations contained in this section in CIL Regulation 123 List, and any other supplementary planning documents of relevance, that are to be prepared by the Council.

End notes

- 1) **Facilities Planning Model (FPM)** In its simplest form the model seeks to assess whether the capacity of existing facilities for a particular sport are capable of meeting local demand for that sport, taking into account how far people are prepared to travel to a facility. In order to estimate the level of sports facility provision in an area, the model compares the number of facilities (supply), with the demand for that facility that the local population will produce. The level of participation is estimated using national participation rates, and applying them to the number of people within appropriate demographic cohorts living in the local authority. The model can be used to test scenarios, by suggesting what impact a new facility would have, or the closure of a facility, to the overall level of facility provision. It can also take account of and model the impact of changes in population, for example, from major housing development.
- 2) **Active People Surveys (APS)** The Sport England Active People Surveys have now been running for several years. Further details of the Active People Surveys (APS) are contained in **Appendix 1**. Essentially, the analysis is based on a regular sample survey of participation by the adult public aged 16 years and over. The sequence of surveys has now reached Active People year eight (AP8). The APS results are not always available at the local authority level due to the inadequate size of data samples in some situations.
- 3) **Local authority and other key leisure centres**

Braintree Leisure Centre - Sports hall, gym, studio, ATP, netball/tennis, 400m track (with shot put and javelin cages)

Issues/features identified

This is a Joint Use centre with Tabor Academy

- The building was completed in late 1980s/early 90s and was recently refurbished internally; forthcoming maintenance/development includes eventual replacement of the athletics track within some 5-8 years
- The extended fitness gym is divided to accommodate both school and public use.

Braintree Swimming and Fitness (formerly Braintree Swimming Centre) - 25m x 8 lane (17m) pool, leisure/learner pool, 250+ seats, fitness gym (30 stations), exercise studio.

Issues/features identified

- Building completed in 2008
- Limited catering through vending operation
- Fitness Gym has c.30 stations plus multi-function equipment
- The centre has c.1200 members (Fusion Choice allowing multi-site access)
- Main swimming club is Braintree and Bocking Swimming Club; there are c.1500 people enrolled at the centre's swim school.
- A good location, with considerable adjacent footfall, for possible location of additional dry facilities, although not built on Council land.

Halstead Leisure Centre - 25m x 5 lane swimming pool, freeform learner pool, 5 badminton court size sports hall, c.55 station gym, dance studio, spinning studio (12 x cycles), exercise studio, squash courts, Artificial Turf Pitch (school games and football), Multi-Use Games Area, Creche

Issues/features identified

- A Joint Use centre with Ramsey Academy; the public have daytime use of the pool and the gym and all facilities after 5 p.m.
- A mixed age building, originally built in the 1970s with the swimming pool and fitness suite added in the early 2000s; the fitness gym opened in 2013; replacement of pool filters is progressing.
- Ageing sports hall shows evidence of insulation boards to improve environmental conditions; Granwood floor.
- It is intended that the existing sand-based ATP is replaced to strengthen its use as a hockey facility.
- The Swimming Club (Dolphins) attracts some 650 members per week.
- The catering area is adjacent to the Reception area is serviced by vending machines.

Witham Leisure Centre - 25m x 8 lane pool, learner pool, 2 x squash courts gym (c. 55 stations plus multi-function equipment), studio, multi-purpose hall, artificial turf pitch.

Issues/features identified:

- A new leisure centre, completed and opened in 2014.
- Particularly well appointed and spaciouly designed, meeting the user requirements of participants and spectators alike.
- Includes a combined heat and power (CHP) unit for added efficiency.
- A strong swimming school.
- Maltings Academy has a protected bookings agreement at Witham Sports Ground nearby (including use of the ATP).

b) Earls Colne Recreation Club

Also of particular significance is the Earls Colne Recreation Club on the Halstead Road (A1124) (2 squash courts, 2 x badminton court size sports hall, fitness suite. 4 x macadam tennis courts, sports ground (football, cricket). This is privately operated.

c) School and College Facilities

Education based sports facilities include:

- Maltings Academy - close to the Witham Leisure Centre and STP
- The New Rickstones Academy - sports hall, dance studio
- Alec Hunter Academy - 4 court badminton sports hall; Gym.
- Honywood School - sports hall
- Ramsey Academy - joint use of Halstead Leisure Centre (see above)
- Hedingham School - sports hall, gym
- Notley High School - 5 badminton court sports hall, 3 badminton court hall, gymnasium
- Tabor Academy - joint use of Braintree Leisure Centre (see above)
- Braintree College - 6 badminton court sports hall

All the above secondary schools/colleges allow community use of their indoor sports facilities (to varying degrees). There are no firm plans for additional indoor facilities.

d) Neighbouring Local Authority Facilities

Important built sports facilities are provided within neighbouring boroughs which attract use by residents of Braintree District now and in the future due to:

- location and accessibility
- special interest activities, or
- ambience and personal preference.

Similarly, residents of neighbouring boroughs utilise facilities provided within Braintree District.

Significant neighbouring facilities offering multi-activity sports halls, fitness gyms, swimming pools, include:

- Colchester Leisure World (east)
- Maldon, Blackwater Leisure Centre (south east)
- Chelmsford, Riverside Ice and Leisure Centre (south east)
- Harlow Sports Centre (south west)
- Great Dunmow Leisure Centre (west)
- Haverhill Leisure Centre (north west)
- Saffron Waldon, Lord Butler Fitness and Leisure Centre (north west)
- Sudbury Sport Centre (north east).

Appendix 1: Explanation of Sport England Active People analyses

Carried out on behalf of Sport England by the leading social research company TNS BMRB, the Active People Survey (APS) measures the number of adults taking part in sport across England. Providing the most comprehensive and authoritative picture of sports participation in England, APS is central to Sport England's measurement of its own strategy and the performance of key partners.

Key features of APS

- APS is the largest survey of its kind ever undertaken – 165,000 adults (age 14 and over) are interviewed each year
- The size of the survey means results can be published for a large number of different sporting activities and for every local authority area in England
- Time series data stretches back to the first wave of the survey in 2005/6
- A high quality, random sampling, survey design ensures results are representative of the population

High quality survey design including:

- Randomly sampled landline telephone interviews with adults aged 16 and over – extended to age 14 and over in July 2012
- Calls are made throughout the year and at different times across each day
- 500 interviews per local authority (district and single tier) each year

The sequence of surveys has now reached Active People year eight (AP8). The APS results are not always available at the local authority level due to the inadequate size of data samples in some situations.

Appendix 2: Explanation of Sport England Market Segmentation analyses

Market Segmentation

Sport England's market segmentation has been designed to help understand the life stages and attitudes of different population groups –and the sporting interventions most likely to engage them.

The market segmentation data builds on the results of Sport England's Active People survey; the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's [Taking Part survey](#); and the [Mosaic tool from Experian](#). It presents a picture of 19 dominant social groups in each area, and puts people's sporting behaviour in the context of complex lives. Propensity modelling – a statistical technique that matches the probability of displaying a particular behaviour or attitude to each demographic category – was used to link the survey data to wider population groups.

This created a tool with two key elements:

- a Sport England segment for every adult in England
- the ability to count market segment profiles for any region or community, down to postcode level.

The 19 dominant social groups are summarised in the link:
<http://segments.sportengland.org/querySegments.aspx>

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
01	Ben (Competitive Male Urbanites)	Male 18-25 Single Graduate professional	Rugby, Squash, Windsurfing, Tennis, Climbing, Gym, Football	Improving performance Training for competition Social Enjoyment Keep fit	Time Interest	Better facilities Improved transport	Most active in population Approx. 20% of segment zero days
02	Jamie (Sports Team Drinkers)	Male 18-25 Single Vocational Student	Basketball, Football, Weight Training, Boxing, Martial Arts	Social Performance Competition	Time	Better facilities Longer opening hours	Second highest participation of all types Approx. 30% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
03	Chloe (Fitness Class Friends)	Female 18-25 Single Graduate Professional	Running, Aqua Aerobics, Tennis, Gym, Swimming	Weight Fitness	Time	Cost Opening Hours Facilities People to go with	Active type. Approx. 30-35% of segment zero days
04	Leanne (Supportive Singles)	Female 18-25 Single Likely to have children Student / part time vocational education	Swimming, Gym, Aerobics, Dance Exercise, Body Pump, Utility Walking	Losing weight Activities for children	Health isn't good enough Time	Help with child care Longer opening hours Cost	Least active of group A who participate. Approx 40-45% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
05	Helena (Career Focused Females)	Female 26-35 Single Full time professional	Gym, Road Running, Dance Exercise, Body Pump, Yoga	Losing weight Keeping fit Improving performance	Time People to go with	Longer opening hours People to go with	Very active type. Approx. 30-35% of segment zero days
06	Tim (Settling Down Males)	Male 26-45 Single / married May have children Professional	Canoeing, Cricket, Cycling, Squash, Skiing, Golf, Football	Improve performance Keep fit Social	Time	More free time Help with childcare	Very active type. Approx 25-30% of segment zero days
07	Alison (Stay at Home Mums)	Female 36-45 Married Housewife Children	Swimming, Badminton, Aerobics, Pilates, Cycling, Exercise Bike	Taking children Losing weight Keeping fit	Time	Help with childcare Better facilities	Fairly active type. Approx 30-35% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
08	Jackie (Middle England Mums)	Female 36-45 Married Part time skilled worker, housewife Children	Swimming, Dance Exercise, Body Pump, Ice Skating (with children), Aqua Aerobics	Taking children Losing weight	Time Cost Lack of interest	Help with childcare Cheaper admissions	Average activity. Approx 45-50% of segment zero days.
09	Kev (Pub League Team Mates)	Male 36-45 Single / married May have children Vocational	Football, Darts, Snooker, Weights, Fishing, Pool, Ten Pin Bowling, Cricket	Competition Social Enjoyment (ltd) Perform	Time Slight cost factor	More free time Cost Facilities	Less active within group B Approx. 50% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
10	Paula (Stretched Single Mums)	Female 26-35 Single Job seeker or part time low skilled	Swimming, Utility walking, Aerobics, Ice Skating	Lose weight Take children	Cost Lack of childcare Poor transport Lack of interest	Improved transport Cheaper admission Help with childcare Better facilities	Least active type within Group B Approx. 60% of segment zero days
11	Philip (Comfortable Mid-Life Males)	Male 46-55 Married Professional Older children	Sailing, Badminton, Cycling, Gym, Jogging, Golf,	Social Taking children Improving performance Enjoyment	Time Lack of childcare	More free time Help with childcare	Most active within Group C Approx. 40% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
12	Elaine (Empty Nest Career Ladies)	Female 46-55 Married Professional Children left home	Swimming, Walking, Aqua Aerobics, Step Machine, Yoga Gym	Keeping fit Losing weight Help with injury	Time Lack of interest	Longer opening hours More people to go with	Reasonably active type. approx. 40-45% of segment zero days
13	Roger and Joy (Early Retirement Couples)	Male / female 56-65 Retired or part-time	Swimming, Walking, , Bowls, Sailing, Golf,	Keeping fit To help with injury Enjoyment Taking grandchildren	Poor health Lack of interest Transport	Better facilities Improved transport	Participate once or twice a week Approx 50-55% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
14	Brenda (Older Working Women)	Female 46-55 Single / married May have children Low skilled worker	Swimming, Utility Walking, Dance Exercise, Aerobics, , Keep fit	Weight Bring grandchildren Help with injury	Lack of interest Time	More free time Longer hours Help with childcare (for grandchildren)	Sometimes participates Approx 60-65% of segment zero days
15	Terry (Local 'Old Boys')	Male age 56-65 Single / married Low skilled worker Job seeker	Fishing, Shooting, Pool, Darts, Snooker, cycling	Help with injury Social	Poor health Lack of people to go with Cost	People to go with	Some low intensity participation Approx 65-70% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
16	Norma (Later Life Ladies)	Female 56-65 Single / married Low skilled worker Retired	Walking, Keep fit, Swimming, Aqua Aerobics	Help with injury or disability	Poor health Cost	People to go with	Lowest participation of Group C Approx 75-80% of segment zero days
17	Ralph and Phyllis (Comfortable Retired Couples)	Male / female 65+ Married Retired	Bowls, Golf, Walking, Fishing, Swimming	Social Improve performance and keep fit Enjoyment	Transport Lack of people to go with	Improved transport More people to go with	Highest participation of Group D Approx. 70% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
18	Frank (Twilight Year Gents)	Male 66+ Married / single Retired	Bowls, Golf, Darts, Pool, Snooker, Walking, Fishing	Social Enjoyment	Poor health	Improved transport Cheaper admission	Medium participation for group D approx. 75-80% zero of segment days
19	Elsie and Arnold (Retirement Home Singles)	Male / female 66+ Widowed Retired	Walking, Dancing, Bowls, Low-impact exercise	Social Help with injury	Health problems and disability	Improved transport People to go with	Lowest participation of Group D Approx. 85% of segment zero days

Braintree Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Study (2016)



Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Study (Needs Assessment)

Final (January 2017)



Glossary of terms			
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Appendix 1: Methodology- additional notes

Appendix 2: Active People Surveys and Market Segmentation

Appendix 3: All-data spreadsheet (separate)

Appendix 4: Full explanation of match equivalents and capacity for football and rugby

Appendix 5: Maps (relating to the football section)

Appendix 6: Provision required for new housing growth and a suggested standard

Glossary of Terms

AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch(es)
ANOG	Assessment of Needs and Opportunities Guide
APS	Active People Survey(s)
BDA	Bowls Development Alliance
DPD	Development Plan Document(s)
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FIFA	Federation of International Football Associations
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
RFU	Rugby Football Union

PART A: GENERAL

1 INTRODUCTION

Description of report

1.1 This is one of four reports provided within the overall **Braintree Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Study** (2016). It considers the provision of playing pitches and other significant outdoor sports facilities for the community. This report is one of four reports provided within the overall Braintree District Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Study (2015). The reports comprise:

- Part 1: Open Space Study;
- Part 2: Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment;
- Part 3: Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy and Action Plan; and,
- Part 4: Built Sports and Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment and Strategy.

1.2 The four reports are all informed by the Local Needs Assessment Report (Consultation Report) which provides details of the consultation undertaken as part of the study.

Study Overview

1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to set out policies to help enable communities to access high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation. These policies need to be based on a thorough understanding of local needs for such facilities and opportunities available for new provision.

1.4 The Government's public health have seen local authorities take more responsibility for improving levels of public health. Studies show that living a healthy lifestyle and maintaining a healthy weight can reduce the risk of developing chronic disease, improves quality of life and increases life expectancy. The Council is now responsible for many factors which impact on mental and physical health, including sports and leisure provision in the area, environmental health, green spaces and housing standards. The Council is therefore now aiming to support its residents and encourage health improvements by implementing the new Public Health Strategy alongside the Council's other policies and strategies.

1.5 In view of the above, in 2014 Braintree District Council appointed Ethos Environmental Planning, in association with Leisure and the Environment, to produce a new open space, indoor and outdoor sports and recreational facilities audit and assessment- a needs assessment and strategy to inform the decision making process up to 2033.

1.6 Overall aims of the study are:

- To audit existing indoor/outdoor leisure facilities and open spaces within the Braintree District (*irrespective of ownership and extent of existing public access, including school playing fields.*)
- To assess these facilities in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility
- To develop and provide a strategy determining the actions and resources required to guide the Councils decision making up until 2033. This is to include a Playing Pitch Strategy, Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy and an Open Spaces Strategy.

- To highlight areas where there is sufficient or over provision and identify areas where there are deficiencies in either the quantity and/or quality of provision
- To provide a robust and comprehensive evidence base to enable the Council to develop planning policies as part of future Local Plan, sufficient to withstand scrutiny at an Examination in Public
- To provide information to enable the Council to justify collecting developer contributions and inform the Council on the distribution of developer contributions to sports and open spaces.
- Identify strategies for the delivery of required provision and enhancement and to inform future decisions about the provision and funding of recreational facilities
- To provide a needs assessment and provide a comprehensive set of recommendations for local standards and alternative approaches to securing provision where applicable to be adopted by the Council. Review current standards in the adopted Core Strategy and how these have helped new development and Parishes/Town Councils provide more `
- To provide guidance on converting standards into developer contributions.

1.7 There are three key elements to the study:

- An Open Space Assessment
- A Playing Pitch Strategy and Outdoor Sports Assessment (**This report**)
- A Built Sports and Recreation Facilities Assessment

1.8 As such the overall outcome of the study comprises three main reports drawing upon an evidence derived from:

- Consultation and engagement with all relevant key stakeholders, agencies and organisations as well as the wider community and general public.
- A detailed audit of all facilities within the scope of the study.
- Analysis and assessment of the adequacy of current and future facility provision based on recommended methodologies such as Sport England's "Assessing Needs and Opportunities" national planning guidance.

Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Assessment

1.9 In addition to the overall requirements set out for the project (above) the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Assessment should:

- Consider all accessible outdoor sports pitches/ courts including football, rugby, cricket, hockey, and other outdoor sports such as bowls, tennis and netball. (These latter sports can also be played indoors, and have therefore been addressed in the 'Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities Assessment').

- Evaluate current trends in participation and needs of different users, as well as the profile of the local population.
- Undertake an audit of all existing pitches and support facilities (e.g. changing rooms, car parking, equipment/machinery storage etc.), including an evaluation of the quality of pitches (grass and synthetic playing surfaces).
- Undertake an audit of access to existing facilities.
- Identify all current users and potential users of pitches in the local authority.
- Analyse the adequacy of provision to meet both current and projected need.
- Identify key priorities and actions, including timeframes and responsibilities.
- Identify areas for creating new pitches, pitches that need improving and pitches that may be surplus to requirements.
- Identify clear recommendations and an action plan to address specific surpluses, deficiencies, quality issues and priority areas for improvements.
- Help to prove the need for developer contributions towards facilities.

Methodology

1.10 In terms of that part of the assessment dealing with playing pitches, the appropriate guidance to follow is provided by Sport England in its 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' which is explained in Section 2. In terms of other sports covered the assessment has used the Sport England Assessment of Needs and Opportunities Guidance (ANOG) also explained in Section 2.

1.11 The report is made up of **4 Parts and 14 main** sections:

- **Part A** contains three overarching sections relevant to all parts of the report: Introduction, methodology, and context;
- **Part B** contains an overview section of pitch provision in general within the local authority; and, four sports specific sections dealing with key pitch sports of football, cricket, rugby, and hockey.
- **Part C** has three short sections dealing with other notable outdoor sports- bowls, netball and tennis, and golf. Most of these sports can also be played indoors and such aspects are therefore also covered in the separate report dealing with built facilities. Cross references to this report are made as appropriate.
- **Part D** has two separate sections offering a strategy and action plan for playing pitches and other outdoor sports, and this is a separate volume.

A remit that is based on Community Need

1.12 Fundamentally, this report is an assessment of community needs for certain kinds of sports facilities and opportunities. Facilities required specifically by institutions, such schools, the Ministry of Defence etc, are only covered by this report if they also have a (potential) secondary function in meeting wider community needs. In parts of the country where recreation land is in short supply and expensive to create, the dual use of facilities to meet a variety of needs can be highly cost-effective.

What is community use?

1.13 At its simplest 'community use' is a term that is used to describe the extent to which a given sport or recreation facility is available for use by members of the general community- either on a pay-as-you go informal basis, or as part of an organised club or group.

1.14 In practice, the above definition of community use will include a wide range of management regimes whose admission policies will span informal 'pay-as-you-go' access, by the general community; and, through to use by organised clubs and groups by booking or longer-term agreements etc. Whether, individual facilities are considered to be available for significant community use depends of several factors, including:

- Type of facility (and whether its size and design might be of use to the community at large, or at least significant groups within the community);
- The cost of using facilities, and whether these might generally be considered to be affordable; and,
- The times and days of availability (times of most demand for the general community are likely to be in the evenings and at the weekends, as well as during mid-week lunchtime (a popular for people at work).
- The extent to which such use by the community is 'assured' over the longer-term.

1.15 In terms of utility for the general community different facilities will therefore have diverse value by nature of because of their varying scale, location, and management/pricing policies. This is not to deny the importance of other smaller provision for local clubs and groups, as well as those residents who prefer to pay for access to private/commercial facilities.

1.16 Determining which facilities offer a significant level of community use is therefore a matter of judgement.

2 METHODOLOGY

General

2.1 As stated in Section 1, this Assessment has used two sets of guidance in order to follow a recommended and robust approach to the project: The Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (PPS Guidance) for the assessment of pitch sports; and the ANOG in respect of other sports covered.

2.2 These approaches are summarised below.

2.3 The PPS Guidance (See Appendix 1 for a fuller description)

2.4 Sport England (Playing Pitch Guidance, An approach to Developing and Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy) 2013 advocates a 10 step approach to developing a PPS (divided in 5 discrete stages)

2.5 Under the Playing Pitch Strategy methodology, these 10 steps are linked under 5 stages as follows:

Stage A :

Step 1- Prepare and tailor the approach

Stage B:

Step 2- Gather supply information

Step 3- Gather demand information

Stage C

Step 4- Understand the situation at individual sites

Step 5- Develop the current and future pictures of provision

Step 6- Identify the key findings

Stage D

Step 7- Develop the recommendations and action plan

Step 8- Write and adopt the strategy

Stage E

Step 9- Apply and deliver the strategy

Step 10- Keep the strategy robust

ANOG (See Appendix 1 for a fuller description)

2.6 The Sport England ANOG methodology, advocates a broad approach to be undertaken looking at supply and demand and considering need in terms of:

- Quantity - what facilities there are in the area, how many you have?

- Quality – how good are they in terms of condition and being *‘fit for purpose’*?
- Accessibility - where they are located?
- Availability - how available are they? (The degree of ‘availability’ is analogous to the level of ‘Community Use’ (see references and the text box, in the introduction).

2.7 ANOG states that it is only by understanding all these elements together and their inter-relationship that you can form a rounded view of the supply and demand for facilities in an area. As also advocated by ANOG, extensive consultation has been undertaken to inform the analysis. Questionnaire surveys were undertaken as below:

- A sample household survey
- Survey of national governing bodies of sport and local clubs.
- A survey of parish councils.
- A Local groups and organisations’ survey

2.8 Discussions were also undertaken with key Braintree District Council officers and leisure centre staff.

Base dates for information

2.9 The site and participation data used throughout this report were the most current available at the time of preparing the report; this includes online data using Sport England Active Places, Active People and Market Segmentation tools. Site based data was collected largely in 2016, and information on pitch sport teams and where they play, largely in 2015 (although some of this information has been updated subsequently). Much of the data used therefore represents a ‘snapshot in time’, and it will be a function of the strategy and action plan review to update and apply new data as it becomes necessary.

3 CONTEXT

General

3.1 This section includes important contextual information about Braintree local authority relevant to the analysis contained in this report. It considers:

- A brief review of the policies and priorities of the local authority, as well as other key stakeholders and that have relevance to planning for sport and recreation within the local authority.
- The current demographic character of the local authority, and how it is likely to change in the coming years, up to 2033.

3.2 A review of the particular characteristics of the adult population in respect of how this influences people's inclination to take part in sport and active recreation.

3.3 An understanding of the local strategic context, population and sports participation trends is essential in order to ensure that facility provision is tailored to the characteristics, profile and aspirations for the local area.

Policies

3.4 Below is a review of key policies that impact upon the preparation of this assessment and strategy.

National Level

3.5 **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** clearly establishes the requirement that local plans ensure that there is proper provision of community and cultural facilities to meet local needs. The NPPF's expectations for the development of local planning policy for sport and physical activity/recreation, is set out in paragraphs 73 and 74 which require there to be a sound (i.e. up-to-date and verifiable) evidence base underpinning policy and its application. Paragraph 73 indicates that: *'Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.'*

3.6 Paragraph 74 states that: *'Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:*

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

3.7 Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation. This cross-government strategy seeks to address flatlining levels of sport participation and high levels of inactivity in this country. Through this strategy, government is redefining what success in sport means, with a new focus on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In future, funding decisions will be made on the basis of the outcomes that sport and physical activity can deliver.

3.8 It is government's ambition that all relevant departments work closer together to create a more physically active nation, where children and young people enjoy the best sporting opportunities available and people of all ages and backgrounds can enjoy the many benefits that sport and physical activity bring, at every stage in their lives.

3.9 Government is reaffirming its commitment to Olympic and Paralympic success but also extending that ambition to non-Olympic sports where it will support success through grassroots investment in those sports, and by sharing UK Sport's knowledge and expertise. The strategy outlines what is expected of the sector to deliver this vision, and how the government will support it in getting there.

3.10 Public investment into community sport is to reach children as young as five as part of a ground-breaking new this new strategy. The move will see Sport England's remit changed from investing in sport for those aged 14 and over to supporting people from five years old right through to pensioners, in a bid to create a more active nation.

3.11 Investment will be targeted at sport projects that have a meaningful, measurable impact on how they are improving people's lives – from helping young people gain skills to get into work, to tackling social inclusion and improving physical and mental health.

3.12 Funding will also be targeted at groups who have low participation rates to encourage those who do not take part in sport and physical activity to get involved. This includes supporting women, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people. Sport England will set up a new fund in 2016 to get inactive people physically active and will support and measure participation in sport and wider physical activity going forward.

3.13 Sport England Strategy – 2012-2017 (under review). This is Sport England's existing strategy, but it will be reviewed and changed to provide consistency with the Government's revised strategy (above). At the time of finalising this report Sport England were seeking views on how it is to achieve the goals outlined in the government's new Sporting Future strategy. Particular importance is to be placed on promoting sport to people from all backgrounds – be it through taking part in activity, watching live events or volunteering. Sport England is also being asked to further engage those groups who aren't doing sport as regularly as others – such as women, disabled people, those from poorer backgrounds and older people.

3.14 National Governing Body (NGB) 2013-17 funding. NGB 2013-17 funding is the centrepiece of Sport England's strategy with over £450 million to be invested in work with NGBs. Young people (14-25 years old) will benefit from 60% of this investment. Programmes will include helping young people move from school sport into club sport and working with universities and colleges to create more sporting opportunities for students. Additional funding will be available to governing bodies that are successfully increasing participation.

3.15 The FA is now promoting strongly the provision of 3G AGPs for both training and now also for matchplay- the latter especially for junior/minisoccer age groups. This policy initiative is discussed further later in this section. However, it will have implications in respect of the demand for 3G AGPs

at certain times of the day and, potentially, the encouragement of a move of teams training from other types of artificial surface. Likewise, the RFU Council has recently approved a strategy to invest in Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP) which will see 100 artificial, floodlit pitches installed across the country over a four-year period. The strategy will see the creation of; 60 AGPs on rugby club sites to be used by the host club and other local clubs; and, 40 on community sites with a guaranteed number of hours for use by rugby.

3.16 The key drivers for this are to sustain and grow participation while addressing the increasing pressure on natural turf pitches, changing player expectations, competition from other sports investing in artificial pitches and changing weather conditions.

3.17 It is evident nationally that the focus on increasing participation, links to the Council's own priorities of improving health and well-being through more active lifestyles and widening access to sport.

3.18 All these above strategies will require review, as appropriate, to reflect altered national government priorities.

Local Level

Spatial planning

3.19 The current adopted Braintree district development plan is made up of a number of documents, including the Local Plan Review 2005 and the Core Strategy 2011.

3.20 The development plan sets out what, where, when, and how development will be managed in the District for the next 15 years. The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development (growth)

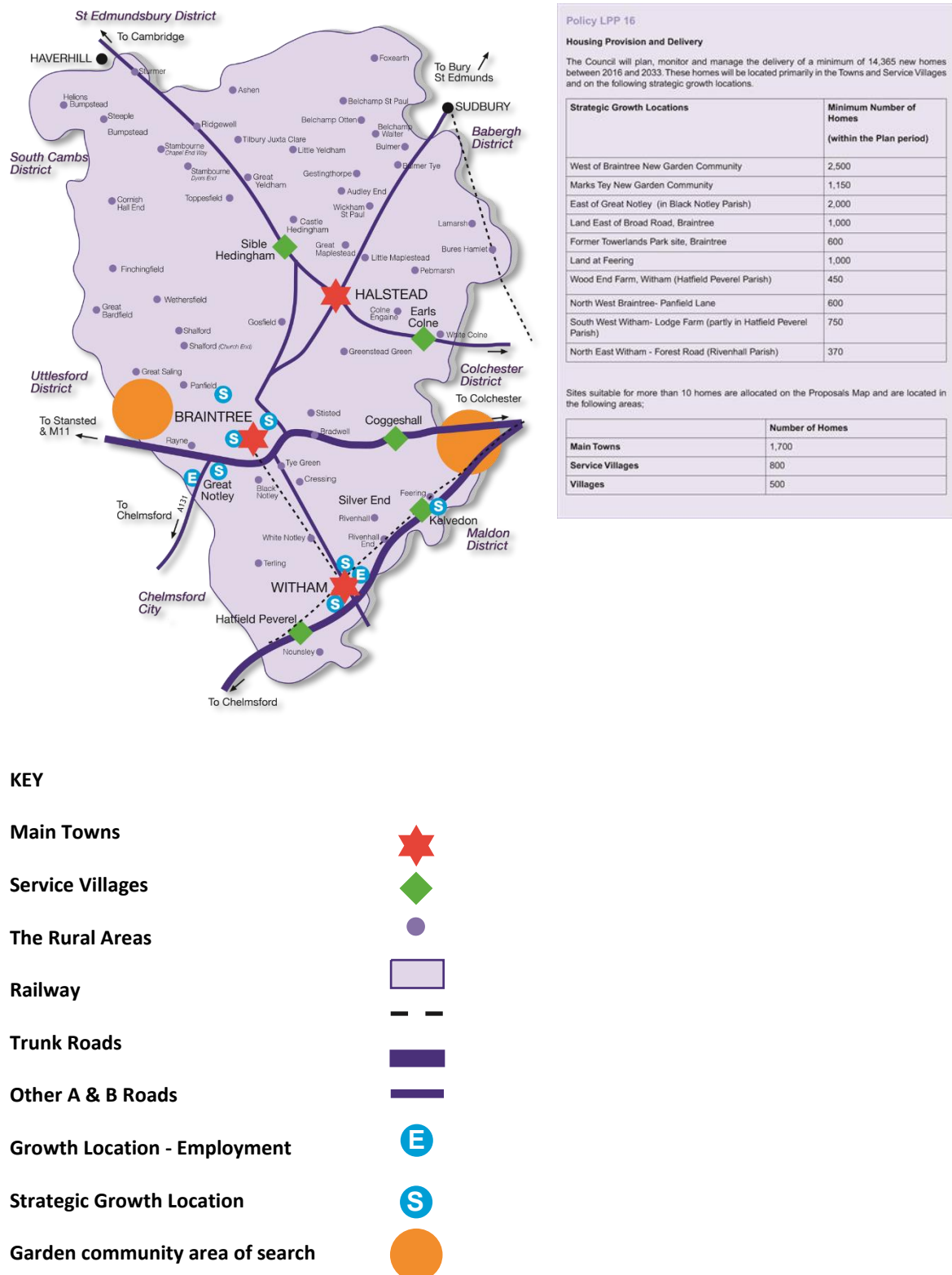
3.21 Work has begun on a new Local Plan. The new Local Plan will include all major planning policy for the District in a single document. Once complete it will replace both the Core Strategy (2011) and the Local Plan Review (2005).

3.22 One of the main requirements in the NPPF is for local authorities to significantly boost their supply of housing and this applies across the Country. A document called a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) helps the Council work out how many houses are needed and of what type. It estimates this need to be between 761 to 883 new homes per year.

3.23 The Council will need to look at some new large sites. An indication of the potential location and scale of new housing is provided in **Figure 3.1**.

3.24 The Local Plan is not just about new homes but must ensure that housing growth is supported by infrastructure, jobs and community facilities. The Council will be working with key stakeholders such as the NHS, education and highways authorities to ensure that vital community facilities such as schools, GP surgeries and roads and public transport links are in place to support existing residents as well as new communities. Open spaces and community facilities will also be protected and new spaces and facilities will be supported.

Figure 3.1: Indicative location and scale of new development in the Plan period



Braintree Sustainable Community Strategy

3.25 The Sustainable Community Strategy, 'One District-One Vision: A Strategy for People and Places in the Braintree District to 2026' was produced as a joint draft document with the earlier stages of the Core Strategy by the Braintree Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Braintree District Council. Usually published separately, but brought together into one overall framework for the future of the District, which it was hoped would be more logical and easier for everyone to understand. The LSP is a non-statutory body that brings together the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, working at a local level. The LSP's aim is to improve the social, economic and environment well-being of the people and communities of the Braintree District, now and for generations to come.

3.26 Local Development Documents will be a key delivery tool for the Sustainable Community Strategy, seeking to achieve the communities' ambitions for the future by implementing the guiding principles of the Sustainable Community Strategy:

- To promote accessibility for all
- To create a clean and green environment and address climate change
- To achieve a prosperous local economy
- To enable everyone to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle

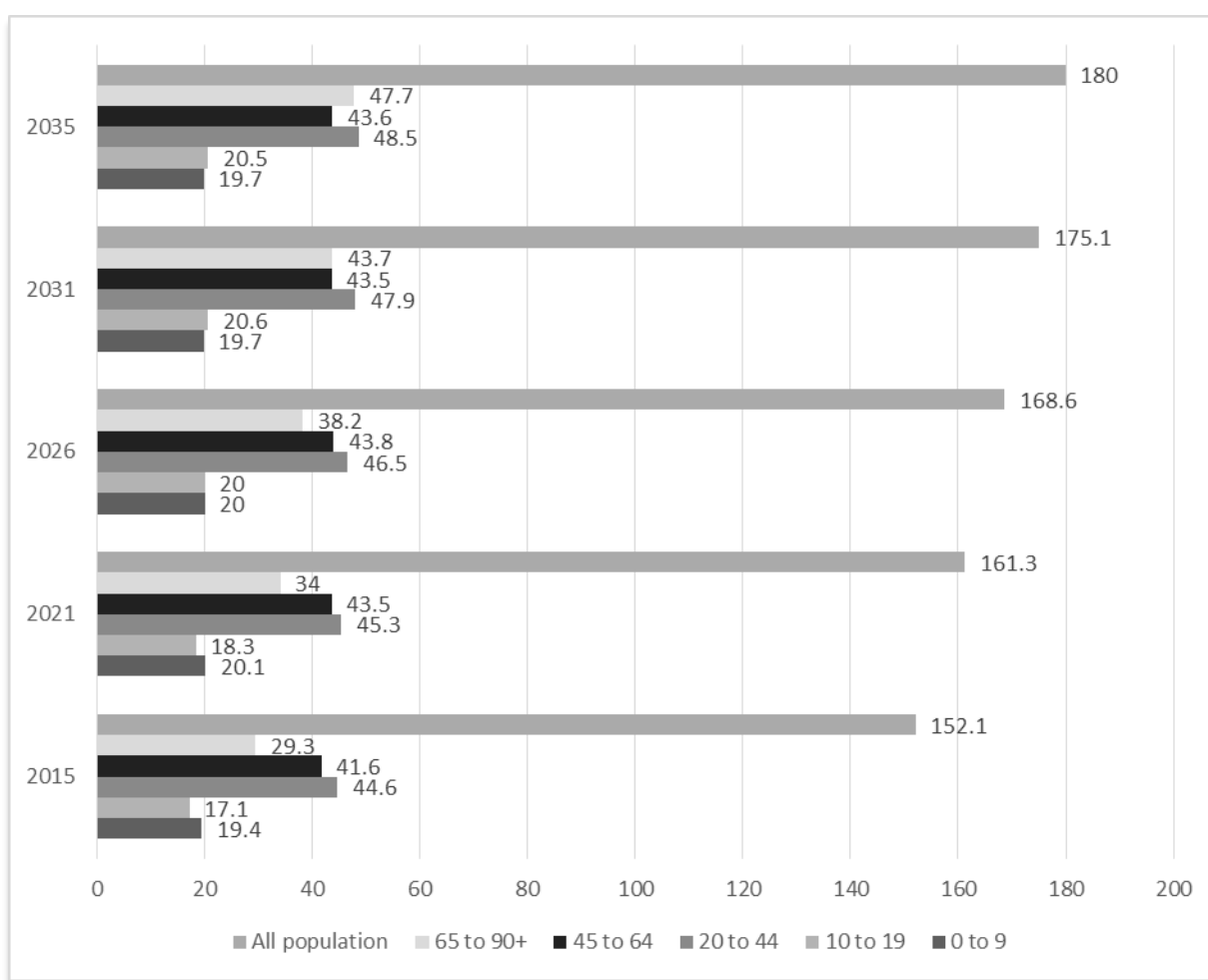
Population

3.27 As at 2015 Braintree District was estimated to have a population of 152,100.¹ The same projections calculate that by the year 2031/35 the population will have increased to 175/180,000. This figure is itself only based upon previous trends, and does not necessarily take into account the impact of planned new residential growth yet to be determined.

3.28 This growth will affect the local demography in different ways. **Figure 2.1** shows the impact it is likely to have on general age cohorts within the population.

¹ Table 2b: 2010-based Subnational Population Projections by sex and quinary age

Figure 2.1: Changing local population and age structure



Source: Table 2b: 2010-based Subnational Population Projections by sex and quinary age

3.29 The most noteworthy feature of the above changes is that whilst there is an overall growth in the population generally, the biggest numerical increases are in the oldest age groups and especially within those in the post retirement age groups.

3.30 Generally speaking, it is the younger adult age groups between 16 and 45 years of age that have the greatest propensity to participate in sports and active recreation. Whilst these age groups will continue to grow within the local authority it is clear that the greater percentage of the overall population growth will come from within the older age groups, and this will have implications for the way in which sport and recreation facilities are planned.

3.31 The current uncertainty about future housing allocations and growth means it is inappropriate to speculate on the location of major new planned growth at this time. However, the requirement for large allocations to meet the projected requirement for new homes, means that a lot of additional future demand for new or improved built facilities will be focussed on specific geographic areas.

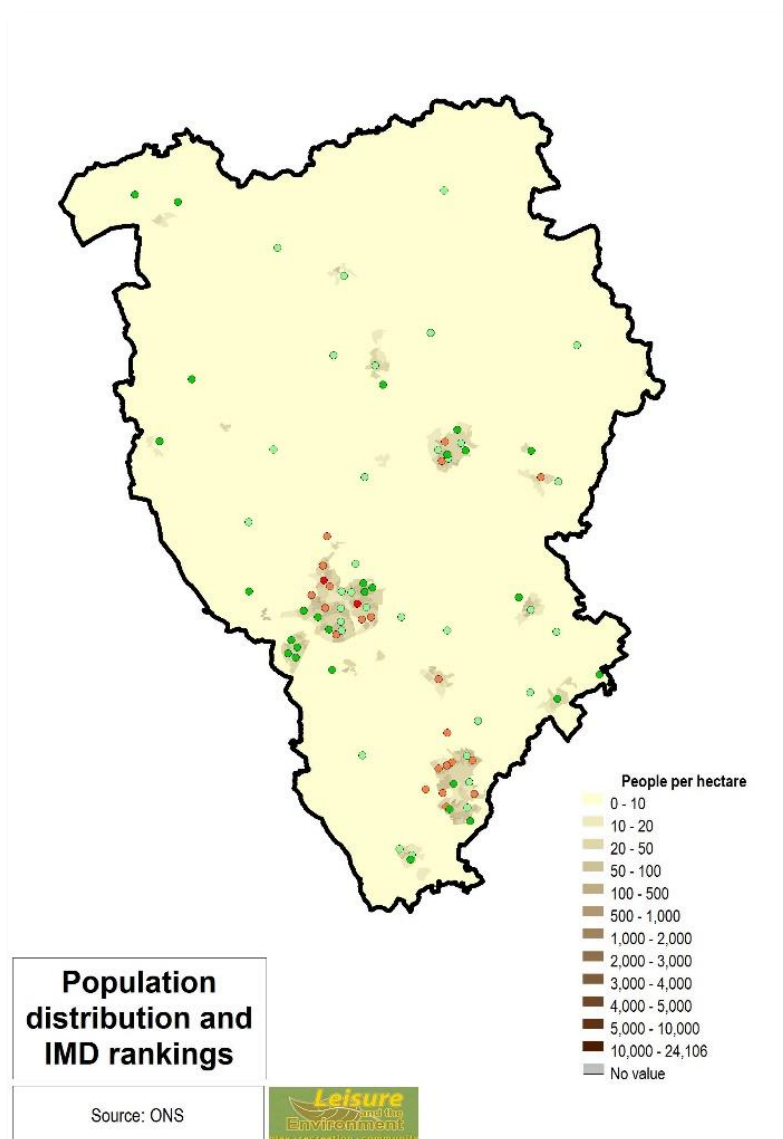
3.32 **Figure 2.2** below shows the overall distribution of population within the local authority (and is based on population data available from the Census Output Area level from the 2011 census).

Affluence and deprivation

3.33 Also shown on **Figure 2.2** is a traffic light colour scheme reflecting the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) scores for the locality. All of the approximately 34,500 Census Super Output Areas (SOAs) within England and Wales have been categorised into one of four quartiles based on their ranking in the most recent available government IMD at the time of this study. The red light represents SOAs in the highest ranked (most deprived) quartile whilst, the dark green light represents those in the lowest ranked (most affluent) quartile.

3.34 Much of the local authority area might be considered quite well off compared with most other parts of the country. There are, however, parts of the urban areas that fall within the least affluent two quartiles. Research has shown that there is a high correlation between levels of deprivation, and participation levels in sport and recreation.

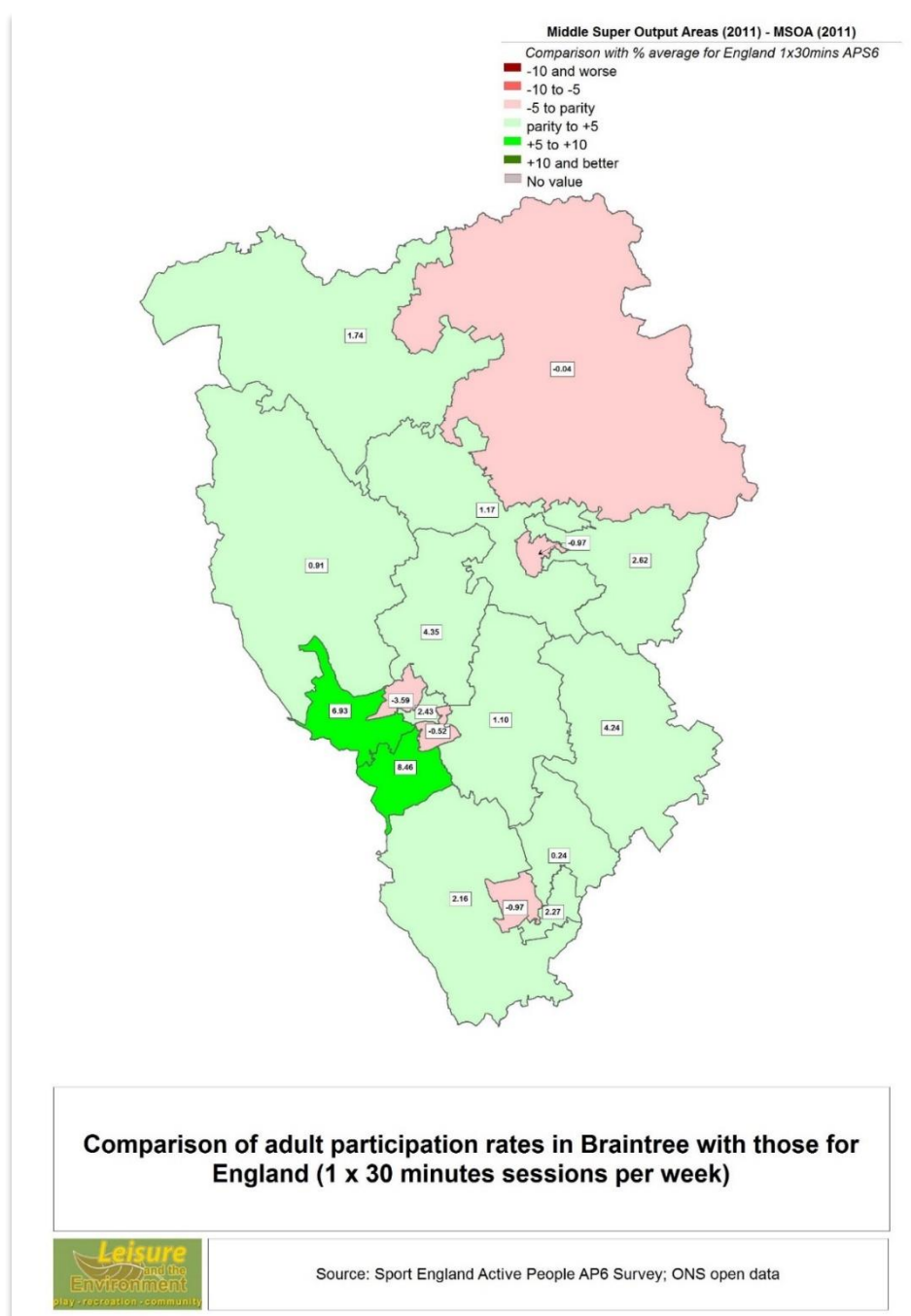
Figure 2.2: Population distribution and deprivation



Local participation levels in sport and active recreation

3.35 The Sport England Active People surveys have now been running for several years. Further details of the Active People Surveys (APS) are contained in **Appendix 1**. Essentially, the analysis is based on a regular sample survey of participation by the adult public aged 16 years and over. The sequence of surveys has now reached Active People year eight (AP8). Data have been released by Sport England allowing for mapping of participation rates to a local Census Middle Super Output Area. The results of this mapping are shown on the following **Figure 2.3**.

Figure 2.3: Participation in sport and active recreation by the adult population (at least 1 x 30 minutes/week)



3.36 Consistent with the relatively high levels of affluence enjoyed by local residents, rates of regular participation in sport and active recreation are generally higher, and often significantly higher, than the national averages for England. To reinforce the point made earlier about the correlation between deprivation and participation, it should be noted that one geographical area where participation rates appear lower than those for England as a whole is that where, (as shown on **Figure 2.2**), levels of measured deprivation are highest (in parts of Braintree urban area itself). Sometimes areas of lower participation might be explained by a higher incidence of elderly people, who will not be so inclined to take part in sport and active recreation.

Propensity to participate in sport and active recreation

3.37 Sport England have developed a Market Segmentation analysis for adults over the age of 16 years. The adult population has been divided into 19 separate demographic groups within four overall categories are (A, B, C, D) each embracing one of four age groups within the adult population (A being the youngest, and D being the oldest). A full explanation of the 19 demographic groups is contained within **Appendix 2**. Each of the 19 age groups has been given a personalised title. The overall breakdown of the local authority's population is shown in the **Figure 2.4** below. It will be seen that, numerically, the most dominant categories are Tim, Philip, Roger & Joy, and Elaine². Although, these groups are not the youngest within the adult population their characteristics yield a greater propensity to take part in sport and active recreation compared with some other groups.

² 'Tim: Settling Down Males'. Sporty male professionals, buying a house and settling down with partner.

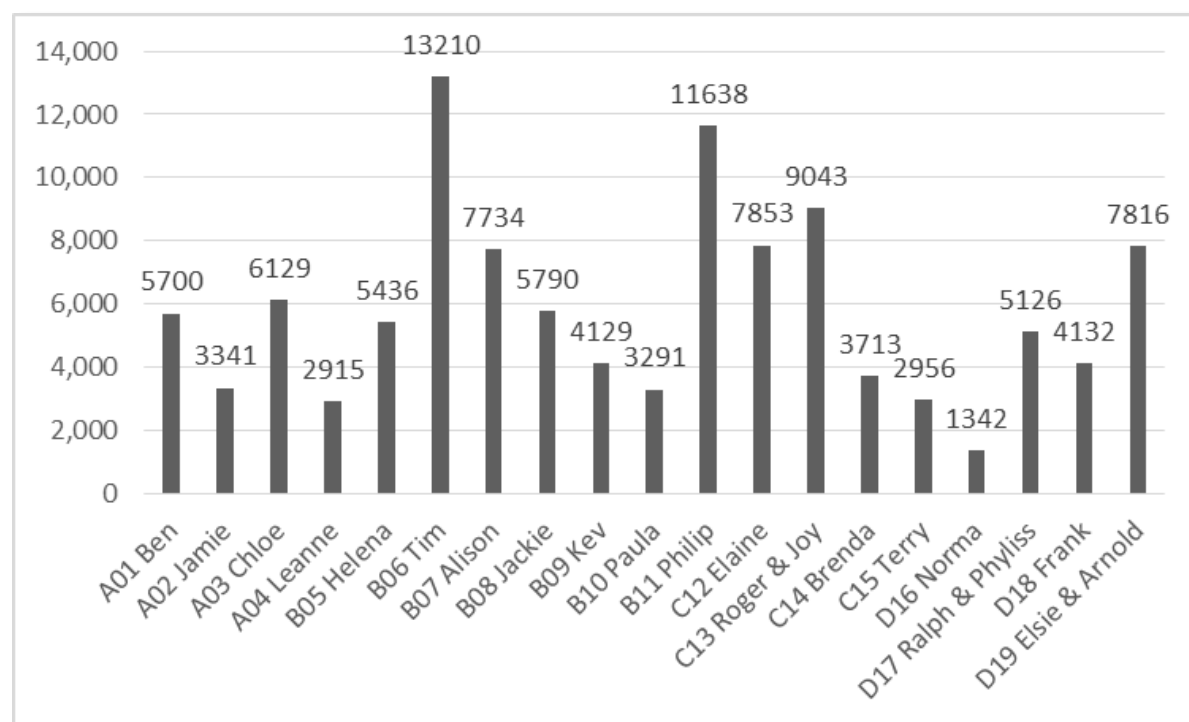
'Philip: Comfortable Mid-life Males'. Mid-life professional, sporty males with older children and more time for themselves.

'Elaine: Elaine Empty Nest Career Ladies'. Mid-life professionals who have more time for themselves since their children left home. Full-time job and owner-occupier, married.

'Roger & Joy: Early Retirement Couples'. Free-time couples nearing the end of their careers. Full-time job or retired, married.

'Elsie & Arnold: Retirement Home Singles'. Retired singles or widowers, predominantly female, living in sheltered accommodation.

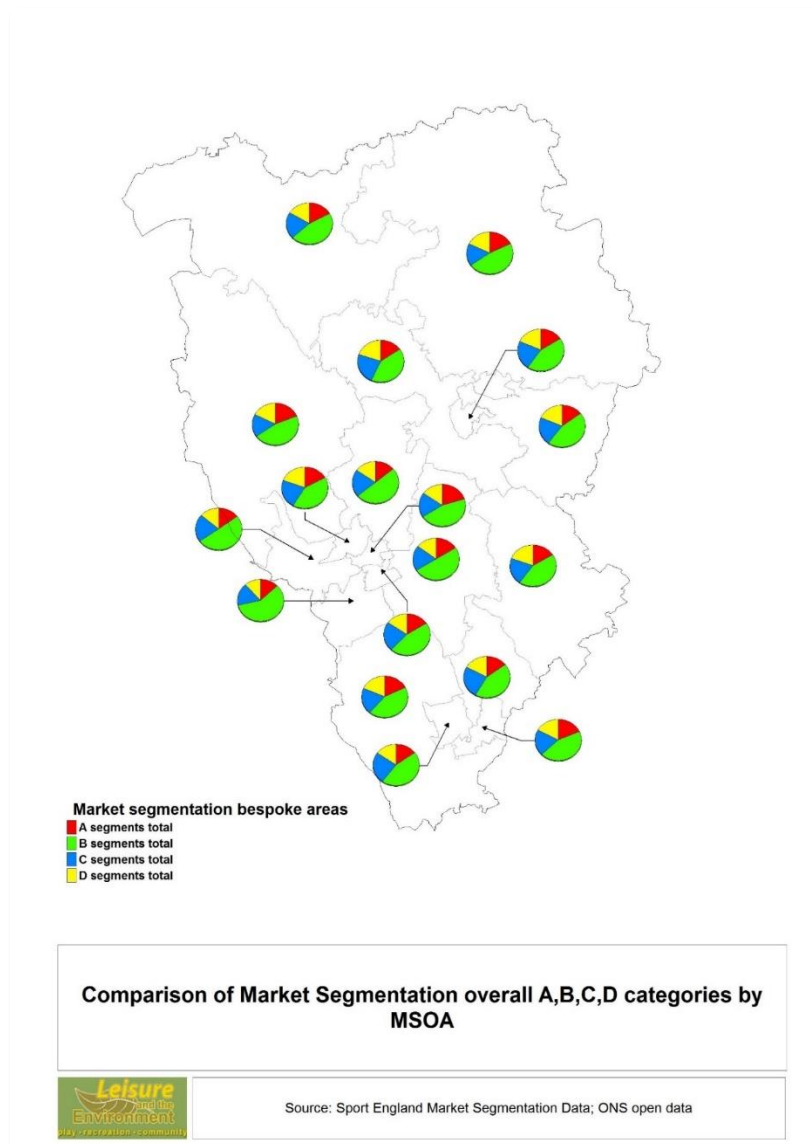
Figure 2.4: Numerical breakdown of adult population by Sport England Market Segmentation



3.38 Figure 2.5 below combines the 19 different groups into the four overall categories (A, B, C, D) and displays them as pie charts for each of the Middle Super Output Areas (MSOAs) contained within the local authority. This provides a geographical representation of the dominance of particular categories throughout the local authority.

3.39 As the population involves the relative size for each of these four categories will change over time within any given area.

Figure 2.5: Distribution of overall Sport England Market Segmentation Categories within the local authority



Issues

3.40 The production of this report is therefore timely. The character of the local authority's population continues to change and this has a profound effect on the types of sport, play and leisure activity appealing to local people.

3.41 Many 'conventional' sports and facilities are seeing a decline in popularity- and in some cases participation and use is unlikely to return up to former levels. Other activities (sometimes derivatives of traditional sports) are becoming increasingly popular. In a modern, fast-moving world income, time, and social media also help dictate what people can and do with their free-time.

3.42 The Council is working in a financially challenging environment- this brings challenges, but it also presents a clear opportunity for reviewing the Council's leisure service and facilities it operates.

3.43 Similarly, many agencies, groups and organisations have shared aspirations in respect of the 'health agenda' and great potential exists for collaboration between public and voluntary sectors, as well as social and commercial enterprises to realise these aspirations

3.44 The various factors considered above suggest that the following will be the major determinants in the demand for sports and active recreation into the foreseeable future within the local authority:

- A growing population, which may be further accentuated by planned new residential growth that has not yet been allocated.
- The strong representation within the local population of some adult age groups with characteristics that make them more likely to take part in sport and active recreation;
- Generally high existing levels of regular participation compared with the national averages, which suggest that any further growth in participation levels will develop an already strong base.
- The relative affluence of the population facilitates relatively high levels of participation within the local population. However, there are geographical pockets within the urban areas that exhibit quite high levels of economic and social deprivation, and where the levels of participation in sport and active recreation may be depressed as a consequence. Improving prospects for participating should be a priority for the local authority and its partners in these areas, with the consequent health and economic benefits.

4 OVERVIEW OF PITCH PROVISION IN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

General

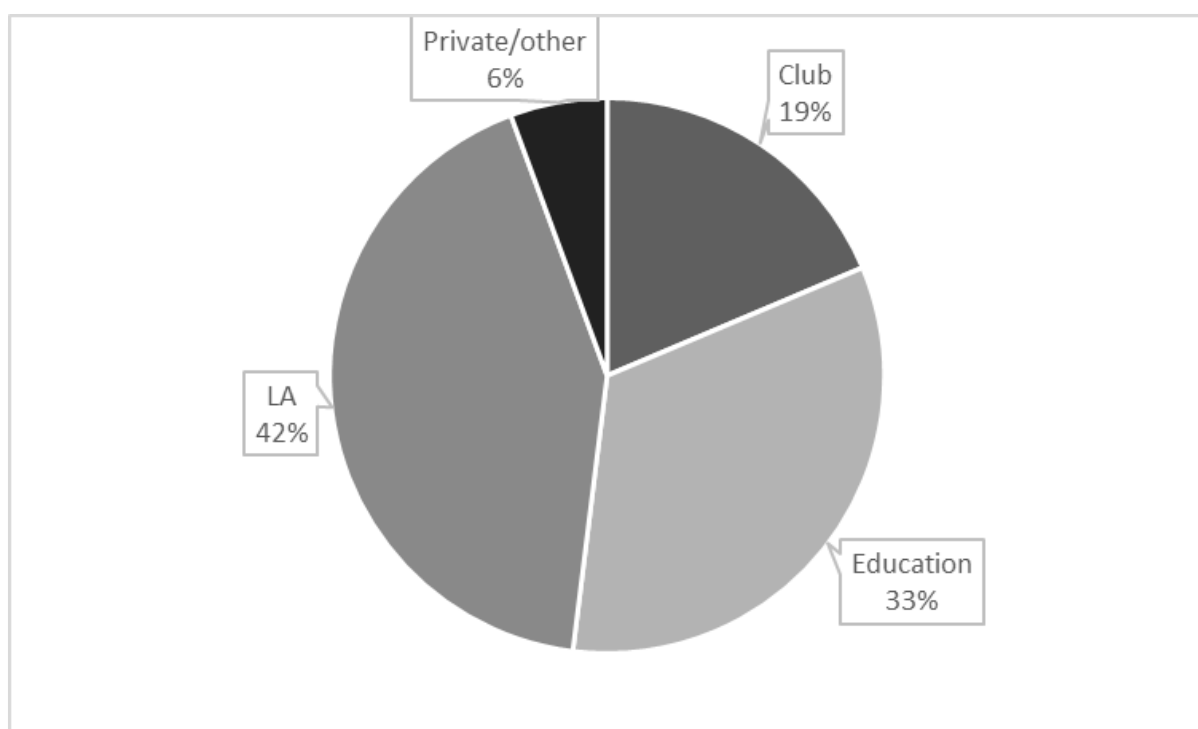
4.1 The following totals all known football, cricket, rugby grass pitches in the local authority. Not all of these will be theoretically available in practice for community use. The provision of pitches is analysed in more detail on a sport-by-sport basis later in this report.

Table 4.1: Grass pitch provision in the local authority

Pitches Adult Football	Pitches Youth Football (11v11)	Pitches Youth Football (9v9)	Pitches Minisoccer (7v7)	Pitches Minisoccer (5v5)	Pitches Cricket Fields	Pitches Adult Rugby
70	6	12	23	35	13	15

4.2 Of the 174 pitches in Table 4.1 most are noted as being in the 'public sector'. The breakdown of ownership is as follows. Local authorities (which includes both Braintree Council and local parish and town councils) are the largest provider. The education sector and club sector are both also significant providers.

Figure 4.1: Ownership by sector

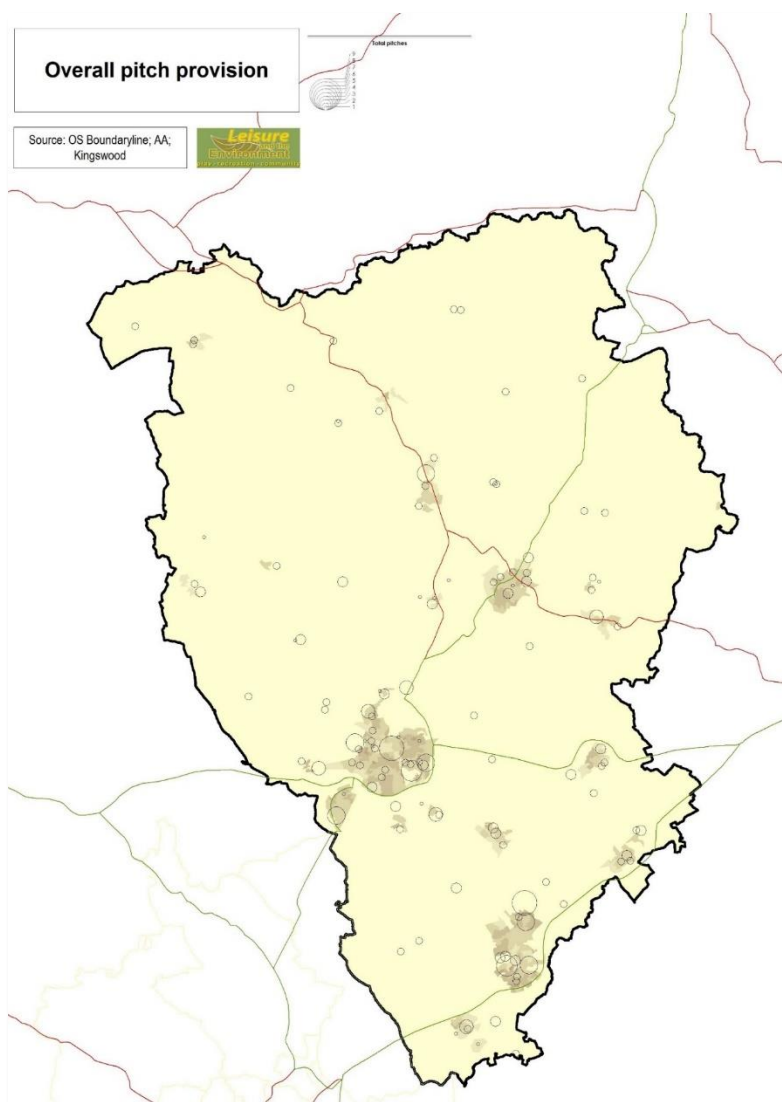


4.3 In addition, there are Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) at various locations, and which are more fully described in the relevant sections (primarily for football and hockey). The provision of pitches is analysed in more detail on a sport-by-sport basis later in this report. AGPs are now accepted as essential facilities for match play for hockey, as well as for football match play and rugby training.

4.4 Various sites (especially a significant number of primary/junior schools) have grass spaces, but which are not formally marked as pitches (at least at the time of the study). These have been identified as part of the wider assessment and site identification process, and background information is therefore held. Playing fields last used as such, but which are now closed, but undeveloped have also been identified. Some junior provision appears to be relatively low compared to the number of such teams playing in local leagues. As will be explained in Section 5, it appears that many mini-soccer and other junior/youth teams share playing surfaces with teams from older age groups.

4.5 **Map 4.1** overlays the above provision onto the local authority's population densities.

Map 4.1: Overall pitch provision in the local authority



4.6 The focus of the largest provisions is within the main population centres. The most demand for pitches is where the availability of additional land to make further provision will be most challenging. The planned population change described in the previous section may alter the geographical demand for such facilities, especially in areas of rapid and large population growth.

4.7 Grass and artificial pitch provision is analysed in detail in the various sport-by-sport sections.

Sites that are wholly or partly excluded from the study analysis.

4.8 This report acknowledges the existence of playing pitches on several infant/junior/primary school sites. Where such facilities are known to be available for community use they have been included in the analysis. Other small school sites may though have some potential to be used by community teams at some point in the future. Many small school sites have grass space, but pitches won't be marked out. These have been identified as part of a wider sites database.

Multi-Functional Recreation Grounds

4.9 There is a significant number of sites around the local authority that host more than one pitch sport, and these can therefore be particularly important local sports venues. Whilst the analysis in the following four sections is largely sports-specific, those sites hosting more than one pitch sport will be acknowledged.

PART B: PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

5 FOOTBALL

Introduction

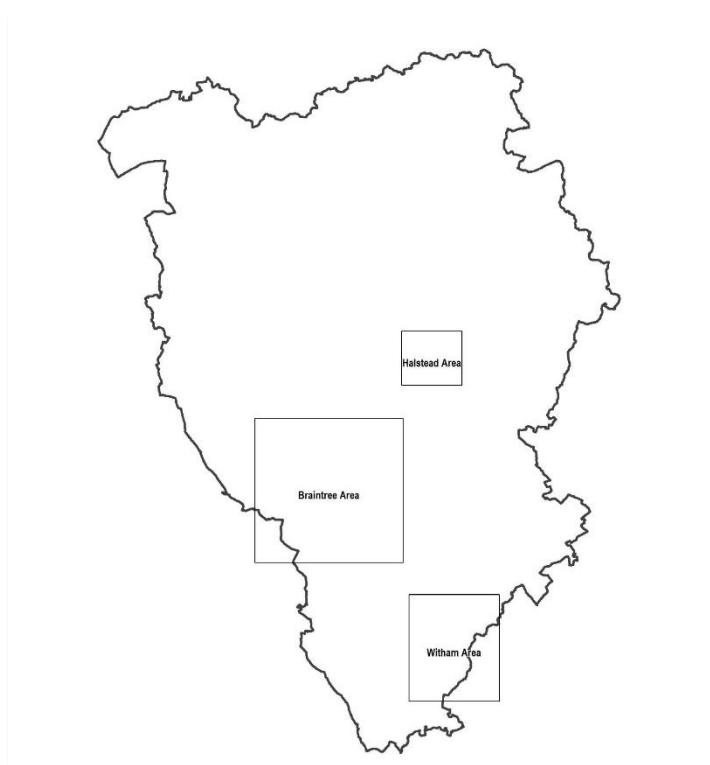
5.1 This section assesses the adequacy of pitches for football in the local authority by presenting the following:

- an overview of pitch supply;
- an overview of demand for football;
- the pattern of play of football;
- a review of the capacity and adequacy of current provision across the local authority, including an understanding of activity at individual sites;
- the future picture of provision for football across the local authority; and,
- a summary of findings and the key issues for the strategy to address.

Supply: Overview of Pitches

5.2 There are many football pitches in the local authority, and although it is not considered appropriate to break up the local authority into sub areas for analysis, it will help in describing football pitch provision to break down mapping of their location into the following areas. (See **Maps xxxx** in **Appendix 5**)

Map 5.1: Inset maps key



5.3 There are estimated to be 141 individual formal grass football pitches in the local authority currently marked out for play. This figure therefore excludes 13 AGPs of varying size, many of which are used for football, but which are subject to a related assessment in a later section of this report.

5.4 Other sites (especially a significant number of primary/junior schools) have grass spaces, but which are not formally marked as pitches (at least at the time of the study).

5.5 **Table 5.1** summarises the breakdown of pitch sizes that are available across the local authority. The table also outlines the level of community access that is available. Further detail is provided in **Appendix 3**

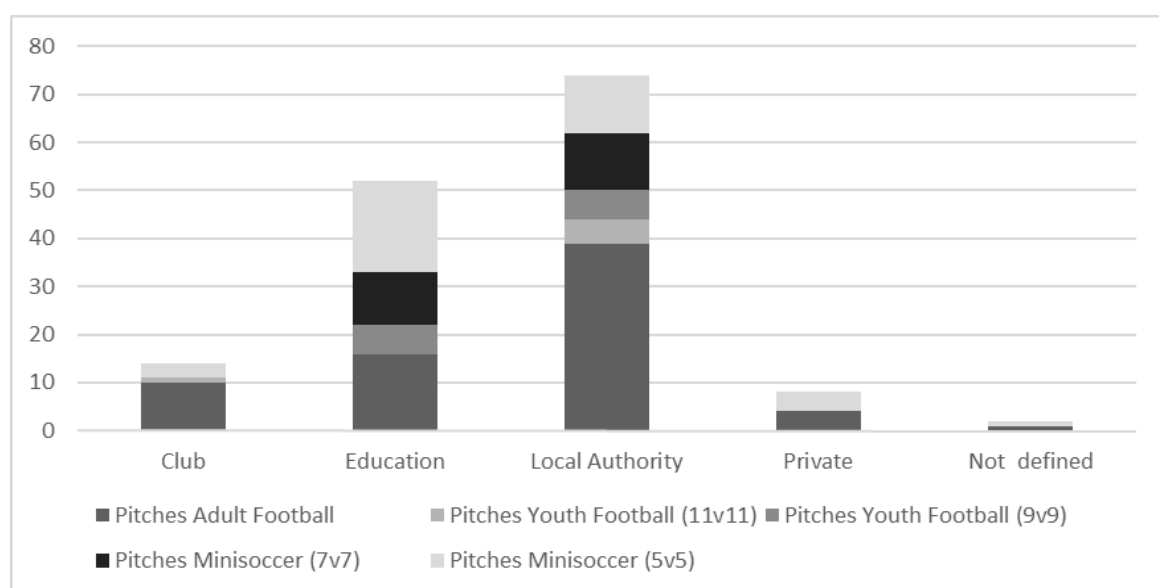
Table 5.1: Total grass football pitches in the local authority

Availability	Adult Football	Youth Football (11v11)	Youth Football (9v9)	Minisoccer (7v7)	Minisoccer (5v5)
'A' Total- Pitch Provision Available to the Community (Used)	64	6	9	14	8
'B' Total- Pitch Provision Available to the Community (Not used)	5				5
'C' Total- Pitch Provision Not Available to the Community	1		3	9	17

5.6 Not included in the above table are pitches that are categorized as 'D'- pitches that were once available, but are on sites that are closed, or disused for sport and recreation generally, but remain undeveloped.

5.7 **Figure 5.1** below breaks the above figures down according to ownership.

Figure 5.1: Grass football pitch stock by size



5.8 It will be seen that adult size pitches account for the largest component of the local authority stock. However, this ignores the fact that some smaller/younger teams will in fact use adult pitches, which will be ‘over-marked’ for their own games to an appropriate size. This is considered further later in the section. Unsurprisingly, provision for younger age groups forms a much larger portion of the education stock.

Quality: Scoring of Sites

5.9 The scores given to both the pitch quality and built facilities are based upon Sport England’s playing pitch guidance – Appendix 2d. (<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>)

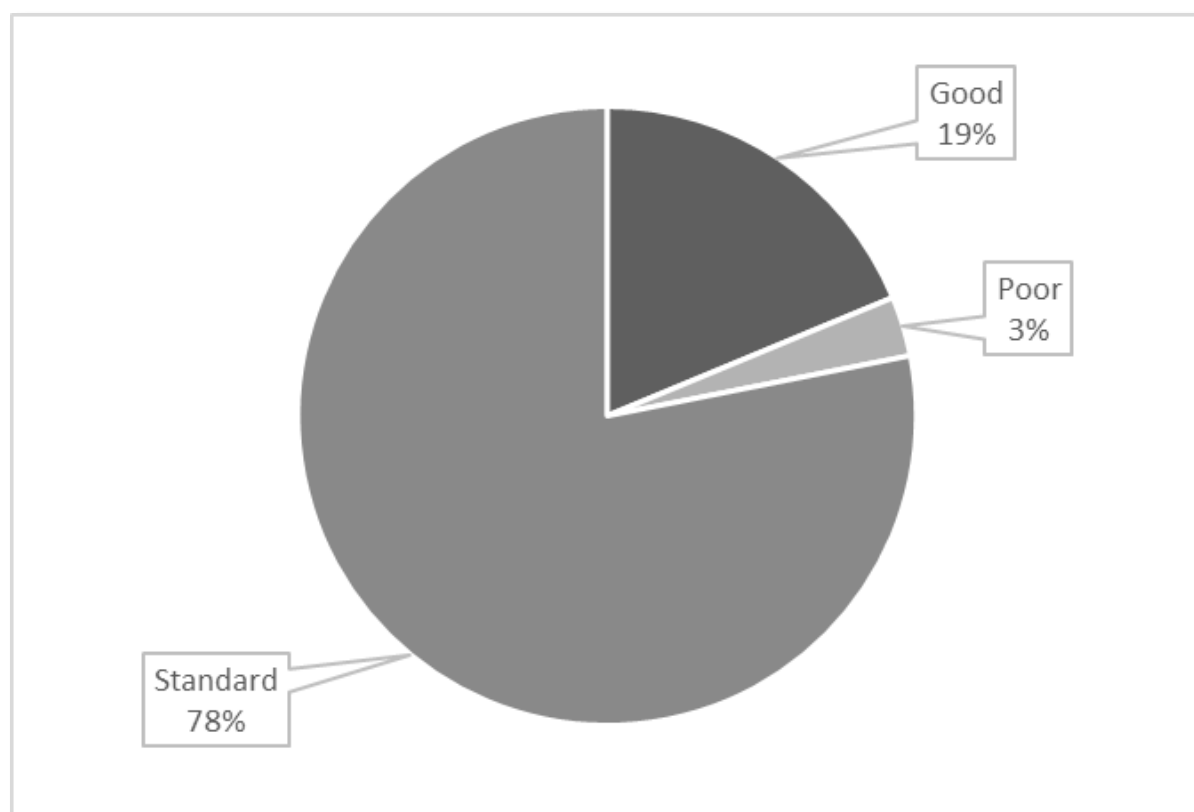
5.10 The final pitch quality scores were based upon the amalgamation of scores for the playing surface (grass length/cover, size/slope/evenness of pitch and any problem areas) with scores for the pitch maintenance programme (frequency and adequacy of grass cutting, seeding and application of remedial dressings). The majority of sites with community use have been assessed. These scores were reviewed and sometimes amended to take into account the views of local clubs, league and NGB representatives, as well as site managers, so as to achieve a rounded assessment, not dependent on the outcome of a single visit on a given day. Where on-site visits were not possible in the time available (such as small schools and on private sites), the comments of clubs and schools (where provided) were the primary source of information, albeit with additional checking of secondary sources, as well as external viewings from off the site.

5.11 The final ‘quality scores’ are therefore as a result of ‘triangulating’ using information from a variety of sources.

Quality Summary Assessment

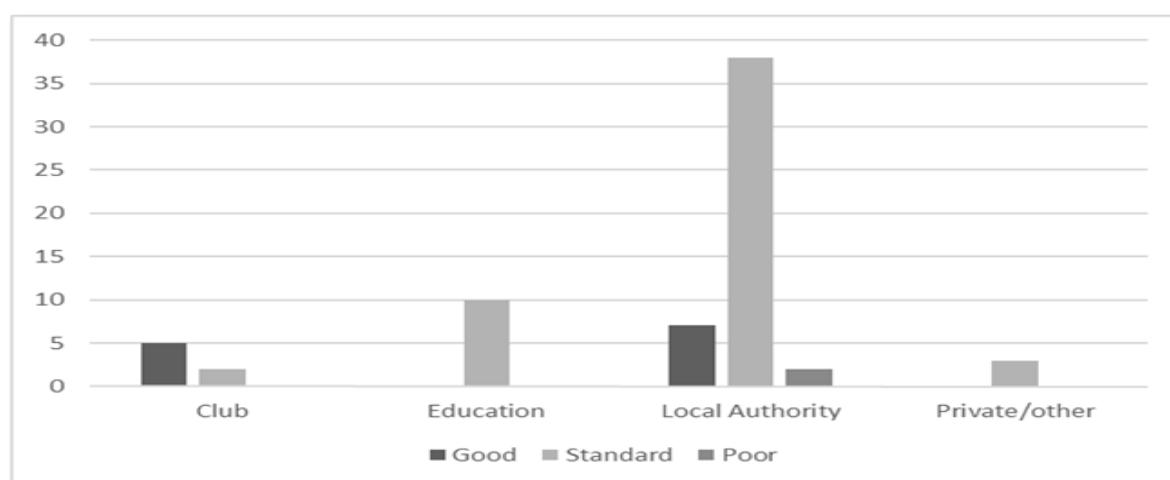
5.12 The quality of such pitches is considered further in the site/area-based review provided later in this section. However, the following is a general summary:

Figure 5.2: football pitch/site quality



5.13 As **Figure 5.2** shows the vast majority of pitches and sites were assessed to be of 'standard' quality.

Figure 5.3: Site/pitch quality by sector



5.14 From **Figure 5.3** it will be seen that the Club, Commercial, and Other sectors have the highest proportions of pitches/sites assessed as being of Good quality. There are few sites/pitches that are considered to be in Poor condition overall, although it is to be noted that extreme weather conditions have made some sites unusable for football for weeks on end over recent seasons- this is an issue that cannot necessarily be attributed to poor quality, although inadequate and poorly maintained drainage will have its effect.

5.15 The site assessments also recorded the existence of changing facilities, and made an assessment of their quality as far as possible. In almost all cases it was not possible to access these facilities to make internal assessments. This is where the views of clubs obtained from the club questionnaire survey were especially helpful.

Generic Quality Issues Constraining Development of Clubs

5.16 Various clubs have made comments about the quality of local facilities, and these are identified later in this section. It should also be noted here that the District hosts some clubs that play at a level requiring provision that is of a higher specification than needed for most community football; the clubs concerned are Braintree Town, Witham Town, Halstead Town, and Coggeshall Town. The senior teams from all these clubs require facilities, such as enclosed grounds and floodlighting, to enable them to compete at their current levels in the national football league pyramid system. Braintree Town FC are playing at the highest level of any of these clubs, and should they progress further through the pyramid structure, their need for enhanced and expanded facilities will increase.

Overview of demand: participation and teams

Active People and Market Segmentation (Sport England)

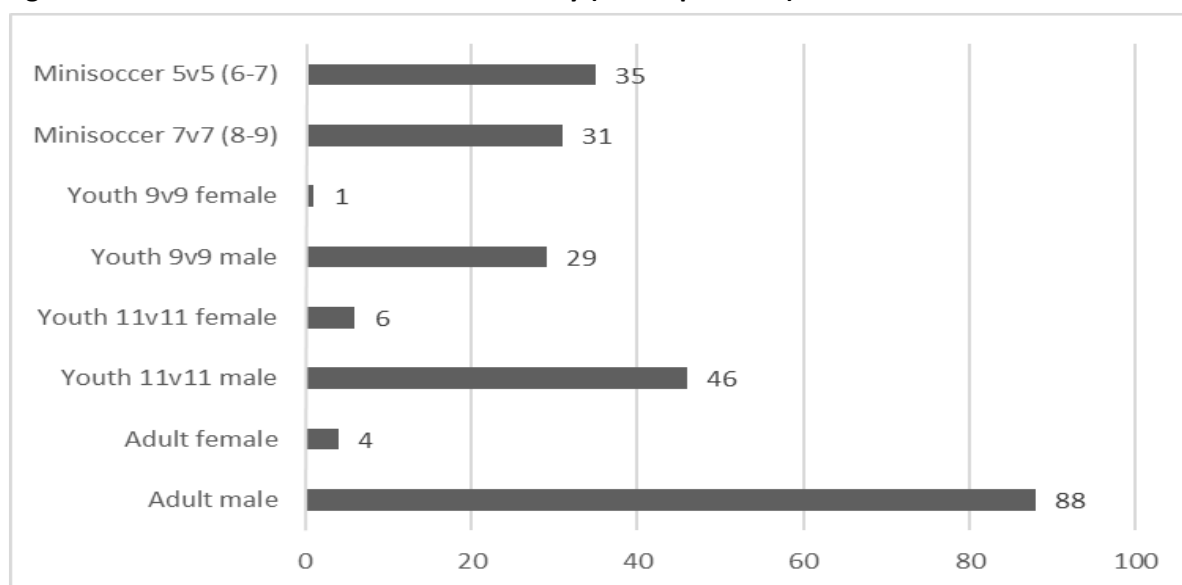
5.17 Analysis of the Sport England Active People and Market Segmentation data suggests that there are certain groups which are significant within the overall population that will have a propensity to play football. These will be focused on young people within their twenties and thirties. The context (Section 3) describes the representation of these groups within the overall population. However, football is also hugely popular amongst children and youth population groups, and these are not covered by the Market Segmentation data. Because the assessments of demand conducted for this study involve counts of 'teams' it is likely to provide a far more accurate assessment of local participation (in codified football) than offered by the sample-based estimates provided by either Active People, or Market Segmentation analysis.

Current Football Participation – Match Play

5.18 Football is the most popular pitch sport in the local authority. **Figure 5.4** summarises the number of teams and indicates that while there are strong participation rates for males and junior boys, senior and junior female game is less well established. In total, there are 240³ teams playing, as follows.

³ Provisional data from the FA suggests that the number of teams in Braintree District could be 273 for the 16/17 season. These figures need some corroboration. However, if they are correct it suggests a 12% increase in number of teams. The additional participation will also have a knock-on effect both in terms of grass and synthetic turf (3G) pitches, to meet training and match play demands. Paragraph 2.9 of this assessment stresses the importance of a strategy and action plan review to update and apply new data as it becomes necessary.

Figure 5.4: Football teams in the local authority (as at April 2015)



5.19 These figures are a bone fide ‘best estimate’, and will in any event change over the course of time. Trends in football participation tend to ebb and flow, and can be influenced by demographics, sports development campaigns, and international success amongst other things.

5.20 The Essex FA maintains records of numbers of affiliated clubs in the local authority, and their most recent participation report provided to inform this report indicated just under 200 teams in total playing within the local authority, based on data provided as at April 2015. This overall total is not quite as high as the overall number of teams indicated in **Figure 5.4** above. Therefore, the larger estimates have been used as the baseline figures for this study.

5.21 This study has also discounted teams that are recorded as being affiliated, but don’t appear to have played matches in recent times.

5.22 On the basis of the ‘ideal’ of two teams sharing one dedicated pitch, it will be seen that the numbers of youth and mini soccer teams is not serviced adequately by the number of dedicated pitches (highlighted earlier in this section) that would be required to meet the above ideal. This can be explained partly by many smaller-sided matches being played on over-marked pitches- sometimes this over-marking can be observed on-site, although with many the markings will be temporary and only provided for match days. With mini-soccer pitches it is quite likely that more than two matches/week may take place on such pitches, due to the nature of local match scheduling, and the relatively small-scale wear and tear generated by such young teams.

5.23 The club questionnaire survey asked whether clubs felt that team numbers had increased, stayed the same, or declined in recent years, with the following results.

Table 5.2: Whether clubs feel team numbers have changed over recent years.

	Increased	Decreased	Stayed the same
Adult Male	25%	21%	54%
Adult Ladies	0%	25%	75%
Youth Male	33%	39%	28%
Youth Female	13%	38%	50%
Mini-soccer	54%	23%	23%

5.24 The observations here are that for the various age and gender categories the majority of clubs felt that:

- Overall, adult male teams had remained largely static in net terms, as has adult female and youth female;
- Very much mixed views on the male youth version of the game; and,
- Minisoccer is perceived to have grown in net terms.

5.25 The club questionnaire asked how far their players travelled to get to their 'home ground', with the following results, with the indications from the responses being that most players live within 5 miles of their home ground.

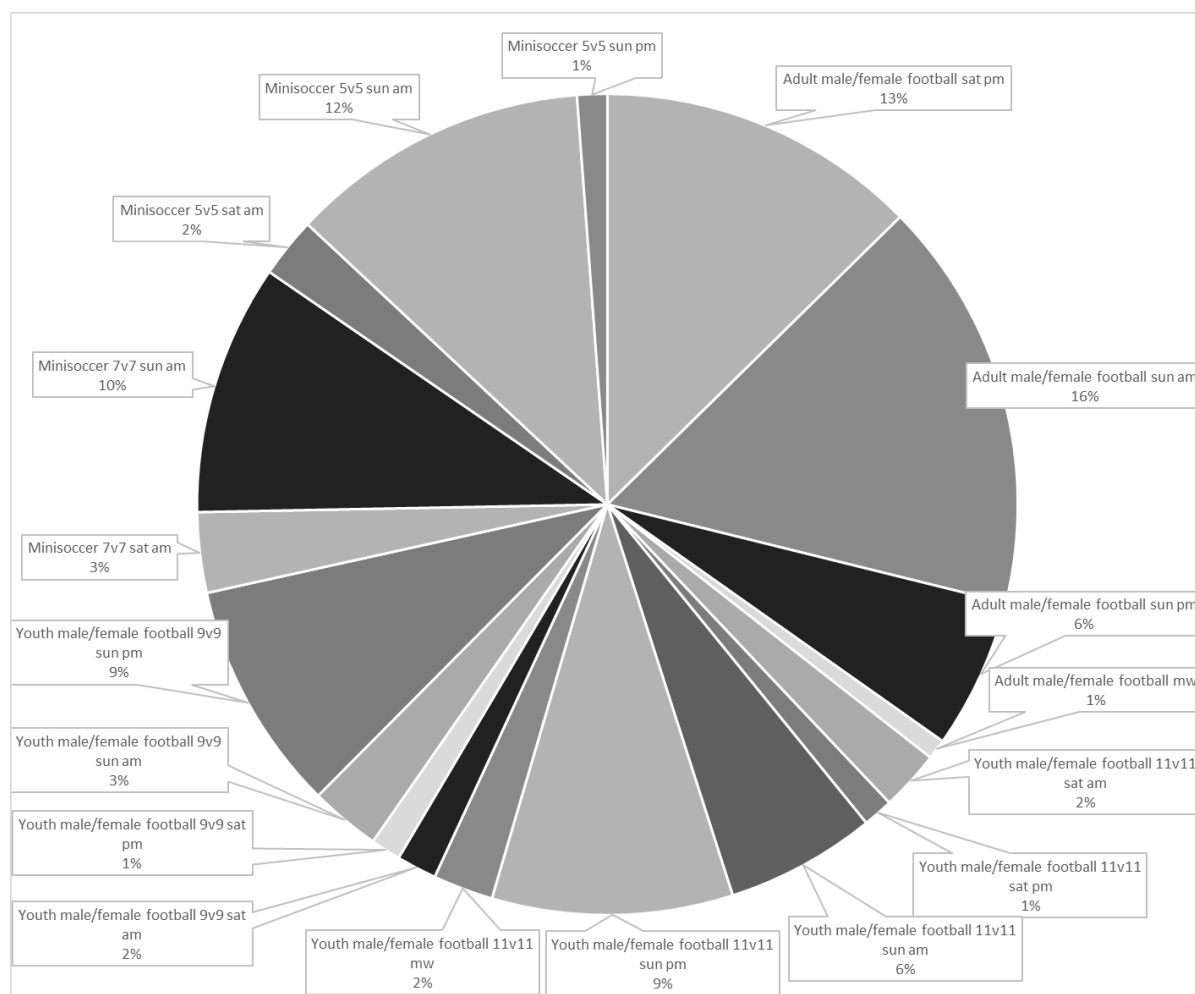
Table 5.3: where players come from

% of members	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	Response Total
Less than 1 mile from your main venue	28.60%	7.10%	21.40%	7.10%	3.60%	3.60%	17.90%	3.60%	7.10%	0.00%	
	8	2	6	2	1	1	5	1	2	0	28
Between 1 and 5 miles from main venue	18.20%	15.20%	15.20%	3.00%	9.10%	9.10%	9.10%	12.10%	9.10%	0.00%	33
	6	5	5	1	3	3	3	4	3	0	
More than 5 miles from main venue	53.30%	20.00%	3.30%	6.70%	3.30%	3.30%	3.30%	0.00%	6.70%	0.00%	30
	16	6	1	2	1	1	1	0	2	0	

5.26 The above responses suggest that the travel distance from a players live and where they play most games can often be further than 5 miles, and this is perhaps explained by the urban/rural nature of the study area.

5.27 The following figures indicates the general times of matchplay for the various age/gender groups. Kick-off times can sometimes vary resulting from local agreements, and so the figure is based on the best available estimates.

Figure 5.5: Time of matchplay



5.28 The figure highlights the importance of weekend play in respect of matches played on grass pitches. (There are small-sided football leagues as well as training activity held on artificial surfaces during the week, but this type of activity is covered elsewhere in this section).

5.29 Training is an important part of playing in competitive football- the majority of clubs and teams will train in some way, albeit that the intensity and regularity of training will vary according to the level of performance. Of the clubs responding to the questionnaire survey the following pattern of responses was received for where clubs train. It will be seen that a large majority of clubs and teams train at their home ground.

Table 5.4: where clubs train

Does your Club train at your home ground ?	Response Percent	Response Total
Yes – on the pitch	21%	7
Yes – elsewhere on the ground (grass)	33%	11
Yes – elsewhere on the ground (non-grass)	9%	3
No	36%	12

5.30 Where clubs indicated that they trained away from their home ground, their explanations as to where they trained highlighted the importance of AGP surfaces for training; and, to a lesser extent indoor provision (such as in sports halls). Of those respondents identifying where, and on what, they trained about two thirds indicated that they trained on an AGP at least once a week (per team).

5.31 For most teams training takes place mid-week and in the autumn and winter months there is a requirement for lighting. Synthetic surfaces also ensure a robust medium that is not subject to the variable whether/climatic conditions.

5.32 Clubs were asked if they had experienced difficulty either accessing pitches/facilities for home matches, or training, with the below overall responses, and followed by some verbatim comments about why clubs felt they experienced any difficulty.

Table 5.5: Difficulty accessing facilities

Have you ever experienced any difficulties in:	Yes	No	Response Total
Obtaining pitches for home matches?	39%	61%	31
Obtaining facilities for training purposes?	48%	52%	29

5.33 The resulting comments have been taken into account in site-by-site assessments that have been conducted, but the main reasons reflect the following:

- Lack of access to pitches at times of very wet weather, when pitches can be waterlogged
- Lack of access to AGPs, and especially for training
- Cost of access to AGPs (for training)

5.34 In particular, there are some strong issues that can be distilled from the comments:

- Very adverse climatic conditions in recent years that have made some pitches unplayable for weeks on end.
- The lack of availability of AGPs (and especially those with the generic 3G surface) on which to train (and sometimes play). This is combined with the perceived high cost of those that might otherwise be available.
- Many pitches are located in public parks and recreation grounds and they often therefore have a multifunctional use. This can cause problems for football matches when these other uses cause wear and tear, and other damage. The following table indicates that many responding clubs to the survey do in fact 'share' their pitches with other activities.

Table 5.6: Shared use of sites/pitches

Are your home ground pitches used for any other informal sports/recreation use during the week ?	Response Percent	Response Total
Yes	41%	13
No	38%	12
Don't Know	22%	7

5.35 The nature of these other activities can be varied, and covers, dog-walking; informal sport; 'other teams' training, and occasional events. There can be illicit activity and vandalism that damages surfaces and facilities.

5.36 Many of the playing fields in the local authority also function as public recreational areas and as such are also used for more informal recreation. This certainly impacts upon the quality of some pitches, particularly with regards dog fouling. During the football season, the use is not sufficiently extensive to reduce the capacity of pitches, but it does have an impact in terms of the quality of facilities.

5.37 Some of the issues associated with the shared use of specific sites will be highlighted in the site/area specific summaries, later in this section.

5.38 The majority of schools in the local authority have their own playing fields and few, if any, do not have any outdoor space at all. Not all schools mark out their playing field area as formal pitches, but most have the capacity to do. There do not therefore appear to be any significant examples of schools using external pitches (such as local authority sites). If this does happen, their pattern of play would be largely complementary to other users. The main exception tends to be on AGPs that are off-site, but very close to the school campus (such as at leisure centres where there is dual use by both school and community).

Local Demand and Supply

5.39 Supply and demand is measured through the use of 'match equivalents' and 'match capacity' to ensure that a comparison is possible. Both the adequacy of pitch provision to meet demand over the course of a week; and the capacity of a pitch to meet demand at peak time are measured. To

measure demand, a team playing home fixtures every other week would generate the equivalent of 0.5 match equivalents per week (one fixture every other week). Match equivalent values are also used to measure the use of pitches by educational establishments and the impact of casual access and training. Weightings have been factored in to take account of considerations like shared education use, and pitch quality.

Peak Time Demand

5.40 The ability of a pitch to accommodate demand at peak time is as important as the overall capacity of the site over a week. The local leagues all have specific kick off times and while these are flexible to a degree, it is important that there are enough pitches available when people wish to use them. It should be noted that pitches can only be considered to have spare capacity at peak time when they are not already utilised to their full capacity over the course of a week. An adult pitch that is not used on a Sunday morning (local authority-wide peak time), but is used three times per week at other times (Saturday afternoon, Sunday afternoon and midweek for example) would not be considered able to sustain additional play at peak-time, even though no one would be using the facility then, as this would be detrimental to the quality of the pitch.

Capacity Scores

5.41 FA guidelines on playing pitch capacity are used to measure supply – pitch capacity is based upon the quality of the pitch and the consequential number of matches that it can sustain per week. The assumptions used are set out in **Table 5.7**.

Table 5.7: Capacity Scores based upon Pitch Quality

Agreed pitch quality rating	Number of match equivalent sessions a week		
	Adult football	Youth football	Mini soccer
Good	3	4	6
Standard	2	2	4
Poor	1	1	2

5.42 Where pitches are located on education sites the impact of curriculum games must also be taken into account. Accordingly, the above guidance is reduced by 50% to reflect these circumstances. So, for example, a ‘Good’ quality pitch located on a school site, would have an adult football rating of 1.5 instead of 3.

5.43 The following table sets out the pitches junior teams should be playing on based on FA regulations.

Table 5.8: FA recommended pitch sizes

		Recommended size without run-off		Recommended size including runoff		Recommended size of goalposts	
Age	Type	Length x width (m)		Length x width (m)		Height x width (m)	
Mini soccer U7/U8	5v5	37	27	43	33	1.83	3.66
Mini soccer U9/U10	7v7	55	37	61	43	1.83	3.66
Youth U11/U12	9v9	73	46	79	52	2.13	4.88
Youth U13/U14	11v11	82	50	88	56	2.13	6.40
Youth U15/U16	11v11	91	55	97	61	2.44	7.32
Youth u17/U18	11v11	100	64	106	70	2.44	7.32
Over 18 (senior ages)	11v11	100	64	106	70	2.44	7.32

5.44 The following matrix **Table 5.9** summarises the use of local pitches relative to their assessed capacity on a site-by site-basis. It supports **Maps in Appendix 5**. The site pitch capacities were derived from site pitch quality assessments undertaken in Winter 2015 using the recommended Sport England approach. Various characteristics of sites' pitches (and also, wherever possible, ancillary facilities) were assessed, leading to an overall quality score being generated- this in turn provided a match rating, offer a guide to how many matches a week a pitch of a given standard might sustain on a regular basis, without undue wear and tear.

5.45 For different types of pitches on a given site, the table (and the maps) total up the Match Capacity (that is the amount of match play (or its equivalent) that can be absorbed each week without undue wear and tear on the pitches). It then compares this with the estimated total Match Equivalents that are hosted by pitches on a given site.

5.46 Match Equivalents are derived from an assessment of the number of match equivalent sessions taking place on a weekly basis in the season. These will include both the matches themselves, as well as training activity. The amount of training activity that takes place on a pitch is a key determinant of its overall susceptibility to wear and tear. Where club training activity was known or thought to take place wholly on a grass pitch, an estimate was made of 'squad sizes' (expressed as a

multiple of the team (as squads are normally bigger than teams), and the length and frequency of training sessions. The information sources used in this regard were club questionnaire returns, information from schools, and club websites. Often teams will train on the grass pitches during the later evenings at the beginning and end of the season, and train either on an AGP or indoors (usually in a sports hall) during the darker mid-season period. To reflect this pattern the multiple factored in to reflect squad training sizes is usually reduced (to 0.75 of a team).

5.47 Different age groups will have varying impacts upon the wear and tear of pitches. For example, an adult male team will produce more wear and tear than a youth 11 v 11 team. The latter will in turn produce more wear and tear than a mini-soccer team. The Sport England guidance relating to the weighting attached to each age-group has been taken into account in the various calculations.

5.48 At some venues casual activity (such as informal matches in public parks and recreation grounds) can add to wear and tear on pitches. Where there is a known tendency for this to happen it has been noted. The calculations and assumptions underlying Equivalent Match Capacity and Match Equivalents are more fully explained in the **Appendix 4**.

5.49 In the Table, where estimated usage of pitches is calculated to exceed notional capacity, the Match Capacity figures are shown in **Red** in the tables. In respect of references to ownership 'LA' means Local Authority- this can mean either the District Council, or else a parish or town council.

Table 5.9: Site capacity v usage (the full dataset is contained in Appendix 3: All Data Spreadsheet)

Name	Ward	AVAILABILITY	OWNERSHIP	A. Adult match equivalent sessions/week	B. Total Junior match equivalent sessions/week	C. Total mini-soccer match equivalent sessions/week	D. Total adult pitches	E. Total youth pitches 11v11	F. Total youth pitches 9v9	G. Total mini pitches 7v7	H. Total mini pitches 5v5	I. Pitch ratings	J. Adult pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	K. Junior pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	L. Mini pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	M. Adult pitches MATCH CAPACITY (D * J)	N. Junior pitches (all sizes) MATCH CAPACITY (E + F) * K	O. Minisoccer pitches (all sizes) MATCH (G + H) * L	Adult pitch net site capacity (M-A)	Junior pitch net site capacity (N-B)	Mini pitch net site capacity (O-C)
Deal Close Playing Fields	Bocking North	A1	LA	0	0	0					1	Standard			4	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	4.00
The Bell Field	Panfield	A1	LA	1.5	0	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	0.50	0.00	0.00
Pebmarsh Road Playing Field	The Three Colnes	A1	LA	0	0	0	1					Poor	1			1	0	0	1.00	0.00	0.00
Camping Close	Bumpstead	A1	LA	0.5	0.5	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	1.50	-0.50	0.00
Braintree Sport and Health Club	Bocking South	A1	LA	0.5	0.5	0	3					Standard	1			3	0	0	2.50	-0.50	0.00
Great Bardfield Playing Fields	Three Fields	A1	LA	0.5	1	0	2					Standard	2			4	0	0	3.50	-1.00	0.00
Gage's Road Playing Fields	Stour Valley North	A1	LA	0.5	0	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	1.50	0.00	0.00
Fairstead Road Playing Field	Black Notley and Terling	A1	LA	0.5	0	0	1					Good	3			3	0	0	2.50	0.00	0.00
Coldnailhurst Avenue Playing Pitch	Bocking South	A1	LA	0	0	0					1	Standard			4	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	4.00
Great Saling Village Hall & Playing Field	Kelvedon	A1	LA	2	0	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wickham Bishops Road	Hatfield Peverel	A1	LA	1.5	3	0			1	1		Standard		2	4	0	2	4	-1.50	-1.00	4.00

Name	Ward	AVAILABILITY	OWNERSHIP	A. Adult match equivalent sessions/week	B. Total Junior match equivalent sessions/week	C. Total mini-soccer match equivalent sessions/week	D. Total adult pitches	E. Total youth pitches 11v11	F. Total youth pitches 9v9	G. Total mini pitches 7v7	H. Total mini pitches 5v5	I. Pitch ratings	J. Adult pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	K. Junior pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	L. Mini pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	M. Adult pitches MATCH CAPACITY (D * J)	N. Junior pitches (all sizes) MATCH CAPACITY (E + F) * K	O. Minisoccer pitches (all sizes) MATCH CAPACITY (G + H) * L	Adult pitch net site capacity (M-A)	Junior pitch net site capacity (N-B)	Mini pitch net site capacity (O-C)
Camoise Close Playing Fields	Upper Colne	A1	LA	0	0	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	2.00	0.00	0.00
Church Road Recreation Ground	Upper Colne	A1	LA	0	0	0					1	Standard			4	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	4.00
Teal Way Playing Field	Kelvedon	A1	LA	0	0	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	2.00	0.00	0.00
Park Drive Recreation Ground	Halstead Trinity	A1	LA	0	0	0	2					Standard	2			4	0	0	4.00	0.00	0.00
Wethersfield Playing Field	Three Fields	A1		0	0	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	2.00	0.00	0.00
Currants Farm Road Park	Bocking South	A1	LA	0	0	0					1	Good			6	0	0	6	0.00	0.00	6.00
Clare Road Football Pitch	Braintree Central	A1	LA	0	0	0					1	Standard			4	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	4.00
Church Road Playing Fields	Gosfield and Greenstead Green	A1	LA	1	0	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	1.00	0.00	0.00
Witham (Bramston Sports Ground?)	Witham South	A1	LA	5	0.5	0	5					Good	3			15	0	0	10.00	-0.50	0.00
The Street Recreation Ground	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	A1	LA	0	0	0					1	Standard			4	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	4.00
Rayne Village Hall	Rayne	A1	LA	1	2.5	1.25	1			1		Standard	2		3	2	0	3	1.00	-2.50	1.75
Mill Chase Playing Field	Halstead St. Andrew's	A1	LA	0	0	0					1	Standard			4	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	4.00

Name	Ward	AVAILABILITY	OWNERSHIP	A. Adult match equivalent sessions/week	B. Total junior match equivalent sessions/week	C. Total mini-soccer match equivalent sessions/week	D. Total adult pitches	E. Total youth pitches 11v11	F. Total youth pitches 9v9	G. Total mini pitches 7v7	H. Total mini pitches 5v5	I. Pitch ratings	J. Adult pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	K. Junior pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	L. Mini pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	M. Adult pitches MATCH CAPACITY (D * J)	N. Junior pitches (all sizes) MATCH CAPACITY (E + F) * K	O. Minisoccer pitches (all sizes) MATCH (G + H) * L	Adult pitch net site capacity (M-A)	Junior pitch net site capacity (N-B)	Mini pitch net site capacity (O-C)
Pebmarsh Road Playing Fields	Stour Valley South	A1	LA	0	0	0			1			Poor		1		0	1	0	0.00	1.00	0.00
Hillside Gardens Playing Fields	Braintree South	A1	LA	0	0	0					1	Standard			4	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	4.00
King George Playing Fields	Braintree East	A1	LA	0.5	0	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	1.50	0.00	0.00
The New Shed, Helions Bumpstead	Bumpstead	A1	LA	0	0	0	1					Good	3			3	0	0	3.00	0.00	0.00
Silver End Playing Field	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	A1	LA	3	0	0	1			1		Standard	2		4	2	0	4	-1.00	0.00	4.00
St. Johns Avenue Recreation Ground	Braintree South	A1	LA	0	0	0					1	Standard			4	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	4.00
Park View Playing Fields	Three Fields	A1	LA	0.5	0	0	1		1			Standard	2		4	2	0	0	1.50	0.00	0.00
Great Yeldham Recreation Ground	Yeldham	A1	LA	0.5	1	0				1		Standard			4	0	0	4	-0.50	-1.00	4.00
Shalford Village Hall Playing Field	Panfield	A1	LA	1	0	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	1.00	0.00	0.00
Strutt Memorial Ground	Hatfield Peverel	A1	LA	0	0	0	2			1		Standard	2		4	4	0	4	4.00	0.00	4.00
Burtons Green Playing Field	Gosfield and Greenstead Green	A1	LA	0	0	0				1					4	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	4.00
Courtauld Memorial Hall	The Three Colnes	A1	LA	0	0	0					1	Standard			4	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	4.00

Name	Ward	AVAILABILITY	OWNERSHIP	A. Adult match equivalent sessions/week	B. Total junior match equivalent sessions/week	C. Total mini-soccer match equivalent sessions/week	D. Total adult pitches	E. Total youth pitches 11v11	F. Total youth pitches 9v9	G. Total mini pitches 7v7	H. Total mini pitches 5v5	I. Pitch ratings	J. Adult pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	K. Junior pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	L. Mini pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	M. Adult pitches MATCH CAPACITY (D * J)	N. Junior pitches (all sizes) MATCH CAPACITY (E + F) * K	O. Minisoccer pitches (all sizes) MATCH (G + H) * L	Adult pitch net site capacity (M-A)	Junior pitch net site capacity (N-B)	Mini pitch net site capacity (O-C)
Queens Gardens Playing Fields	Panfield	A1	LA	0	0	0					1	Good			6	0	0	6	0.00	0.00	6.00
Lawn Meadow	Hedingham and Maplestead	A1	LA	1	0	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	1.00	0.00	0.00
Black Notely Playing Field	Black Notley and Terling	A1	LA	0	0	0	1			1		Good	3		6	3	0	6	3.00	0.00	6.00
Blenheim Close Playing Fields (Deanery Hill)	Bocking North	A1	LA	1	2	0	1		2			Standard	2		4	2	0	0	1.00	-2.00	0.00
Earls olne Recreation Ground	The Three Colnes	A1	LA	1	1.5	0	1	1				Standard	2	2		2	2	0	1.00	0.50	0.00
East Street Park and Recreation Ground	Coggeshall and North Feering	A1	LA	0	0	0			1			Standard		2		0	2	0	0.00	2.00	0.00
Great Notley	Great Notley and Braintree West	A1	LA	0.5	2.5	0	2			2		Good	3		6	6	0	12	5.50	-2.50	12.00
Great Maplestead Playing Field	Hedingham and Maplestead	A1	LA	0	0	0				1		Standard			4	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	4.00
Great Saling Village Hall & Playing Field	Panfield	A1	LA	0	0	0				1		Standard			4	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	4.00
Grove Lane Playing Field	Hatfield Peverel	A1	LA	0	0	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	2.00	0.00	0.00
Henry Dixon Road Playing Field	Bradwell, Silver End	A1	LA	0	0	0	1					Standard	2			2	0	0	2.00	0.00	0.00

Name	Ward	AVAILABILITY	OWNERSHIP	A. Adult match equivalent sessions/week	B. Total junior match equivalent sessions/week	C. Total mini-soccer match equivalent sessions/week	D. Total adult pitches	E. Total youth pitches 11v11	F. Total youth pitches 9v9	G. Total mini pitches 7v7	H. Total mini pitches 5v5	I. Pitch ratings	J. Adult pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	K. Junior pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	L. Mini pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	M. Adult pitches MATCH CAPACITY (D * J)	N. Junior pitches (all sizes) MATCH CAPACITY (E + F) * K	O. Minisoccer pitches (all sizes) MATCH CAPACITY (G + H) * L	Adult pitch net site capacity (M-A)	Junior pitch net site capacity (N-B)	Mini pitch net site capacity (O-C)
	and Rivenhall																				
River View Playing Fields	Witham Chipping Hill and Central	A1	LA	1	0	0	1	1				Standard	2	2		2	2	0	1.00	2.00	0.00
Rickstone Sports Ground	Witham North	A1	LA	2.5	2.5	0	2			1	1	Standard	2		4	4	0	8	1.50	-2.50	8.00
Silver End Village Hall (Silver Street)	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	A1	LA	0	2	1.5	2					Standard	2			4	0	0	4.00	-2.00	-1.50
Releet Sports Ground	Bocking North	A2	Club	0.5	2	0	2	1				Good	3	4		6	4	0	5.50	2.00	0.00
Halstead Town Football Club	Halstead St. Andrew's	A2	Club	2	0	0	1					Good	3			3	0	0	1.00	0.00	0.00
Braintree Town Football Club	Braintree East	A2	Club	2.5	0	0	1					Good	3			3	0	0	0.50	0.00	0.00
The Crops	Coggeshall and North Feering	A2	Club	1	3.5	0.75	2						3			6	0	0	5.00	-3.50	-0.75
Courtaulds Sports Ground	Halstead St. Andrew's	A2	Private	0.5	3	0	2					Standard	2			4	0	0	3.50	-3.00	0.00
Oak Farm (Witham Road)	Black Notley and Terling	A2	Private	2	0	0	2					Standard	2			4	0	0	2.00	0.00	0.00
Bocking Sports Club	Bocking North	A2	Club	2.5	1	0	2					Standard	2			4	0	0	1.50	-1.00	0.00

Name	Ward	AVAILABILITY	OWNERSHIP	A. Adult match equivalent sessions/week	B. Total junior match equivalent sessions/week	C. Total mini-soccer match equivalent sessions/week	D. Total adult pitches	E. Total youth pitches 11v11	F. Total youth pitches 9v9	G. Total mini pitches 7v7	H. Total mini pitches 5v5	I. Pitch ratings	J. Adult pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	K. Junior pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	L. Mini pitches: Number of match equivalent sessions a week/pitch considered acceptable	M. Adult pitches MATCH CAPACITY (D * J)	N. Junior pitches (all sizes) MATCH CAPACITY (E + F) * K	O. Minisoccer pitches (all sizes) MATCH CAPACITY (G + H) * L	Adult pitch net site capacity (M-A)	Junior pitch net site capacity (N-B)	Mini pitch net site capacity (O-C)
Jeffery's Road Recreation Ground (Cressing Sports & Social Club)	Cressing and Stisted	A2	Club	0.5	0	0	1				2	Good	2		4	2	0	8	1.50	0.00	8.00
Witham Town Football Club (inc Spa Road Playing Field)	Witham West	A2	Club	0	0	0	1				1	Good	3		4	3	0	4	3.00	0.00	4.00
College of Braintree Sports Ground	Bocking Blackwater	A2	Education	2	7.5	2.75	4		2			Standard	1	1		4	2	0	2.00	-5.50	-2.75
Tabor Field	Bocking South	A3	Education	0	0	0				1		Standard			2	0	0	2	0.00	0.00	2.00
Stisted C of E Aided Primary School	Cressing and Stisted	A3	Education	0.5	0	0	1					Standard	1			1	0	0	0.50	0.00	0.00
Hedingham School and Sixth Form	Hedingham and Maplestead	A3	LA	0	1.5	0		3				Standard		1		0	3	0	0.00	1.50	0.00
New Rickstones Academy	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	A3	Education	0.5	1	0	2			1	2	Standard	1		2	2	0	6	1.50	-1.00	6.00

Comment

5.50 The 'Red Figure' sites have been distilled from the above table and are summarised below.

Table 5.9: 'Red figure' sites (the full dataset is contained in **Appendix 3: All Data Spreadsheet**)

Name	Ward	Availability	Pitch ratings	Adult pitch net site capacity	Junior pitch net site capacity	Mini pitch net site capacity
Camping Close	Bumpstead	A1	Standard	1.5	-0.5	0
Braintree Sport & Health Club	Bocking South	A1	Standard	2.5	-0.5	0
Great Bardfield Playing Fields	Three Fields	A1	Standard	3.5	-1	0
Wickham Bishops Road	Hatfield Peverel	A1	Standard	-1.5	-1	4
Witham (Bramston Sports Ground?)	Witham South	A1	Good	10	-0.5	0
Rayne Village Hall	Rayne	A1	Standard	1	-2.5	1.75
Silver End Playing Field	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	A1	Standard	-1	0	4
Great Yeldham Recreation Ground	Yeldham	A1	Standard	-0.5	-1	4

Blenheim Close Playing Fields (Deanery Hill)	Bocking North	A1	Standard	1	-2	0
Great Notley	Great Notley and Braintree West	A1	Good	5.5	-2.5	12
Rickstone Sports Ground	Witham North	A1	Standard	1.5	-2.5	8
Silver End Village Hall (Silver Street)	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	A1	Standard	4	-2	-1.5
The Crops	Coggeshall and North Feering	A2		5	-3.5	-0.75
Courtaulds Sports Ground	Halstead St. Andrew's	A2	Standard	3.5	-3	0
Bocking Sports Club	Bocking North	A2	Standard	1.5	-1	0
College of Braintree Sports Ground	Bocking Blackwater	A2	Standard	2	-5.5	-2.75
New Rickstones Academy	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	A3	Standard	1.5	-1	6

In reality much of this apparent 'overplay' is due to the fact that junior and mini soccer teams often play on 'over-marked' larger pitches, and do not have dedicated pitch space of their own.

5.51 The scores provided in Tables 5.9 and 5.10 are derived largely from sites audits conducted on a given day. And whilst the audits were planned to coincide with the 'winter' part of the football season, the results do not necessarily reflect conditions that clubs and teams face when weather conditions are extremely adverse. Over recent seasons, autumn and winter rainfall has been heavy for protracted periods, and this has resulted in major fixture disruptions due to flooding and waterlogging. Perhaps if all pitches were constructed and maintained to a high technical specification some of the disruption could have been avoided, but this is unlikely ever to be economically viable for the majority of pitches.

5.52 The above technical assessment therefore also needs to be informed from other sources, including those who actually use the facilities. The following are the relevant comments made by responding clubs (both to the questionnaire survey and at a club surgery), where they had been directed at their home facility. For completeness they cover other site-related issues beyond pitch quality.

Table 5.11: Comments of resident clubs in relation to ‘home grounds’ (the full dataset is contained in **Appendix 3: All Data Spreadsheet**)

Name	Ward	Relevant points from consultation (Clubs questionnaire and key club surgery)	Also highlighted in Tables 5.9 & 5.10	Consultants’ ratings on pitch quality
Blenheim Close Playing Fields (Deanery Hill)	Bocking North	<p>Sporting 77 FC are the main user of this site, and the Club feels the venue is not big enough for its needs.</p> <p>Issues arising out of use by BMX events and a football pitch being used for overflow event parking. Some of the smaller sides use the Tabor AGP, but not all can.</p> <p>Blocked drainage ditches around the ground.</p> <p>The club is growing and the older teams/players have to move away.</p> <p>Looking for land to house larger venue.</p>	Yes	Standard
Braintree Sport and Health Club	Bocking South	<p>Due to drainage issues for a part of the season only 1 of the 2 pitches available.</p> <p>No separate changing for youth- just general changing in the leisure centre</p>	Yes	Standard

Name	Ward	Relevant points from consultation (Clubs questionnaire and key club surgery)	Also highlighted in Tables 5.9 & 5.10	Consultants' ratings on pitch quality
Camping Close	Bumpstead	Club would like training lights	Yes	Standard
Church Road Playing Fields	Gosfield and Greenstead Green	Football and cricket seasons overlap. At present the storage facilities are shared between football club / cricket club / fete playing field committee- insufficient for club needs.	No	Standard
College of Braintree Sports Ground and John Ray Sportsground	Bocking Blackwater	The Braintree Youth FC dominate use of these two venues. At the College, the club uses one pitch marked for different sizes. Issues with waterlogging. The club has difficulty finding places to train and would like lights on the ground. Winter training is very hard to accommodate. There is only enough changing rooms for 2 teams, and normally 6 games being played at one time. Eastern Junior Alliance football cannot be hosted due to the facilities not being up to standard. Waterlogged pitches Winter months are getting worse. Resident club to own its own facilities	Yes	Standard

Name	Ward	Relevant points from consultation (Clubs questionnaire and key club surgery)	Also highlighted in Tables 5.9 & 5.10	Consultants' ratings on pitch quality
		The Club cannot access sufficient space to meet its current and growing needs. It would like to be a partner club with any new 3G pitch proposed, locally.		
Courtaulds Sports Ground	Halstead St. Andrew's	Club reports issues with pitches in bad weather.	Yes	Standard
Earls Colne Recreation Ground	The Three Colnes	For cost reasons, Earls Colne YFC will have to integrate with Colne Engaine FC to allow remaining team to continue playing next season. With reducing team / player numbers, cost of operating has become a significant factor		
Great Bardfield Playing Fields	Three Fields	U12 team pitch runs across the adults but this is not an issue as youth play Saturday and adults Sunday. Over-marking with blue lines.	Yes	Standard
Halstead Town Football Club	Halstead St. Andrew's	Overuse of pitches does affect the standard of the playing surface. Club would not be able to expand our facilities on this site. Progress to higher leagues would require investment in the infrastructure	No	Good

Name	Ward	Relevant points from consultation (Clubs questionnaire and key club surgery)	Also highlighted in Tables 5.9 & 5.10	Consultants' ratings on pitch quality
Lawn Meadow	Hedingham and Maplestead	<p>Hedingham school mini soccer 9v9 and full size grass pitches. Only available until march when school marks out for summer sports.</p> <p>Mini soccer pitches were unusable after school used them for rugby. So u8's 9's & 10's used 3g instead Managed to play 9v 9</p>	No	Standard
New Rickstones Academy	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	<p>11 v11 Goal posts are old and not so steady in sockets.</p> <p>Club would like on-site storage for the mini goals and training equipment.</p>	Yes	Standard
Rayne Village Hall	Rayne	<p>This site is heavily used by Rayne Youth FC.</p> <p>Mismatch between changing facilities and teams playing on site.</p> <p>Shortage of 3G pitches for training. The Club has to use facilities outside the District.</p> <p>Waterlogged pitches / overuse resulting in the pitch owners (Rayne Village Hall) not allowing the pitch to be used until the grass grew back. Parking is an issue – the Club juggle around fixtures to keep parking in control.</p>	Yes	Standard

Name	Ward	Relevant points from consultation (Clubs questionnaire and key club surgery)	Also highlighted in Tables 5.9 & 5.10	Consultants' ratings on pitch quality
		The ground is not currently large enough to accommodate 2 full-size pitches, and the Club would like to have access to refreshment facilities as a revenue.		
Rickstone Sports Ground	Witham North	<p>This venue is heavily used by Valley Green Youth FC.</p> <p>All 11-a-side matches are played on the same pitches whether they are regarding as youth or adult.</p> <p>9-a-side pitch is continually used by the public and other teams for training which invariable renders the goal mouths unsuitable for matches during the winter.</p> <p>Pitches are prone to waterlogging so many weeks of training and matches are lost throughout the winter, either by a decision of the club or the local council - however other clubs are known to use the facility for training during these times, which often means the pitches are unusable for longer than would be expected.</p> <p>Pitches on public land- games called off. Training by other teams on pitches. Dog fouling. Need high mesh fencing by adj.</p>	Yes	Standard

Name	Ward	Relevant points from consultation (Clubs questionnaire and key club surgery)	Also highlighted in Tables 5.9 & 5.10	Consultants' ratings on pitch quality
		<p>cemetery. The built facility is not big enough and hinders the growth of the club.</p> <p>The clubhouse gets vandalised.</p> <p>The Club have 3-year lease, but are hopeful of a new 10-year lease for the whole site. There is a need to review lease proposals. Fields in Trust is a possibility for longer term asset transfer.</p> <p>The Club has a problem getting access to the AGP at Witham and states that it was an original partner club. Under the terms of the grant it should be a breach of contract in terms of their partnerships status.</p>		
River View Playing Fields (inc Sauls Bridge)	Witham Chipping Hill and Central	Dog fouling an issue	No	Standard
Shalford Village Hall Playing Field	Panfield	Not enough 3G pitches at affordable prices to maintain training through the winter	No	Standard

Name	Ward	Relevant points from consultation (Clubs questionnaire and key club surgery)	Also highlighted in Tables 5.9 & 5.10	Consultants' ratings on pitch quality
Silver End Village Hall (Silver Street)	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	<p>This is the main site of the Silver End Youth FC.</p> <p>The Club has problems with car parking at the ground. Games have to be staggered to optimise car parking and avoid using residential spaces.</p> <p>The Club feels growth is restricted due to size of field, car parking and winter coaching facilities. It feels it needs a 3G or indoor facilities within the village. The Club has used many 3G facilities this season when our pitches are not playable. A 3G pitch for training and matches would be desirable.</p> <p>The Club believes the pavilion needs redeveloping to provide a hall. It is a completely under-used facility and would benefit from redevelopment to provide some kind of revenue during the week/evenings.</p> <p>Winter training facilities are the biggest issue. To maintain good pitches, the club has to find alternative facilities.</p>	Yes	Standard
The Bell Field	Panfield	Site owned by pub	No	Standard

Name	Ward	Relevant points from consultation (Clubs questionnaire and key club surgery)	Also highlighted in Tables 5.9 & 5.10	Consultants' ratings on pitch quality
The Crops	Coggeshall and North Feering	Issues with lack of access to 3G pitch for training. Not enough space for anymore youth pitches.	Yes	Standard
Witham (Bramston Sports Ground?)	Witham South	Pitches can get waterlogged. Need for additional local AGPs for training.	Yes	Standard

5.53 The majority of the relevant comments relate to sites have also been identified by the quality and capacity assessments as being problematic.

5.54 Combined, the above Tables 5.8-5.11 above list includes some key grass pitch sites in respect of local football. The following table lists the main ‘community football’ sites by pitch numbers, and the large majority (in italics) have been cited in the Tables 5.9-5.11.

Table 5.12: Key football sites, showing those that have been identified as problematic

Name	Availability	Ownership	Ward	Total football teams	Total football pitches
<i>College of Braintree Sports Ground</i>	<i>A2</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Bocking Blackwater</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Witham (Bramston) Sports Ground grass pitches</i>	<i>A1</i>	<i>LA</i>	<i>Witham South</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>New Rickstones Academy</i>	<i>A3</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Rickstone Sports Ground</i>	<i>A1</i>	<i>LA</i>	<i>Witham North</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Great Notley</i>	<i>A1</i>	<i>LA</i>	<i>Great Notley and Braintree West</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>4</i>
Alec Hunter Academy	B	Education	Braintree East	0	4
<i>Blenheim Close Playing Fields (Deanery Hill)</i>	<i>A1</i>	<i>LA</i>	<i>Bocking North</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>3</i>
Releet Sports Ground	A2	Club	Bocking North	9	3
Hedingham School and Sixth Form	A3	Education	Hedingham and Maplestead	6	3

Name	Availability	Ownership	Ward	Total football teams	Total football pitches
<i>Braintree Sport and Health Club</i>	<i>A3</i>	<i>LA</i>	<i>Bocking South</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
Jeffery's Road Recreation Ground (Cressing Sports & Social Club)	A2	Club	Cressing and Stisted	1	3
Strutt Memorial Ground	A1	LA	Hatfield Peverel	0	3
<i>Rayne Village Hall</i>	<i>A1</i>	<i>LA</i>	<i>Rayne</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Wickham Bishops Road</i>	<i>A1</i>	<i>LA</i>	<i>Hatfield Peverel</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>2</i>
The Crops	A2	Club	Coggeshall and North Feering	12	2
<i>Courtaulds Sports Ground</i>	<i>A2</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Halstead St. Andrew's</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>2</i>
Silver End Village Hall (Silver Street)	A1	LA	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	10	2

5.55 The above list does not diminish the importance of smaller sites for local teams.

Spare capacity

5.56 On the face of it, and looking at the dull dataset provided as **Appendix 3**, there appears to be a substantial number of sites that are 'underplayed' relative to their overall 'carrying capacity' and 'peak-time' capacity. However, many of these sites are small, and/or are in remote areas that are geographically remote from the main focal points of demand.

5.57 There are however some sites for which data indicate spare carrying and peak-time capacity that are both of a significant size, and well located to geographical focal points of demand, and which might offer the potential to host additional matchplay, and these include the following.

Table 5.13: Significant sites with estimated spare carrying and peak-time capacity

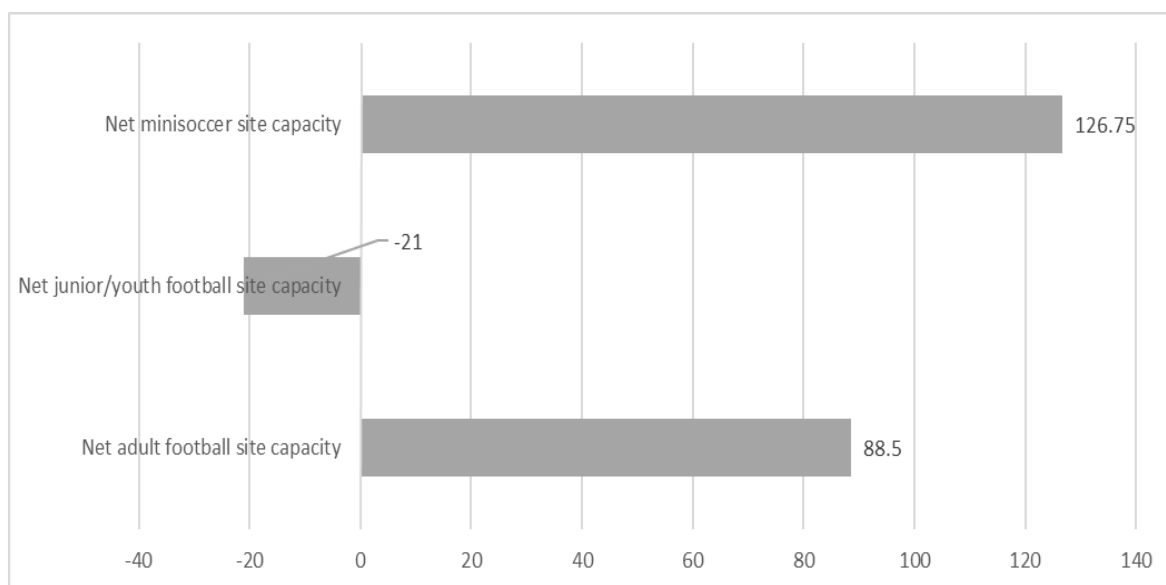
Name	Availability	Ownership	Ward
Witham (Bramston) Sports Ground Grass Pitches	A1	LA	Witham South
Great Notley	A1	LA	Great Notley and Braintree West
Strutt Memorial Ground	A1	LA	Hatfield Peverel
Black Notley Playing Field	A1	LA	Black Notley and Terling
Braintree Sport and Health Club	A3	LA	Bocking South
Hedingham School and Sixth Form	A3	Education	Hedingham and Maplestead
Alec Hunter Academy	B	Education	Braintree East
The Honywood School	B	Education	Coggeshall and North Feering
Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form	B	Education	Braintree South

5.58 It will be noted that some of these sites are in the education sector and which are not recorded as being used for community football, but which nonetheless are theoretically available for use. On some other sites, there may be scope for remarking some adult pitches to smaller sizes, so making them age-appropriate.

An overall picture of strategic supply and demand

5.59 The preceding site-by-site analysis can be converted into a local authority-wide picture of use and capacity. In terms of estimated use of grass pitches relative to notional capacity, **Figure 5.6** aggregates the figures for all the sites to the authority-wide totals, for the main pitch types: adult; youth/junior; and, mini-soccer. As will be seen, for adult football pitches usage is estimated to be well below notional capacity. For youth/junior pitches the situation is worse, with usage outstripping notional capacity. With mini-soccer there appears to be a healthy surplus capacity.

Figure 5.6: Estimated capacity of pitches relative to estimated use



5.60 In practice at least some of the ‘spare capacity’ calculated for adult football pitches will be reduced by the need to absorb play by young age groups on over-marked pitches. In any event the location of spare capacity may not be well placed geographically to meet the needs of clubs and sites that are suffering from ‘overuse’ of their pitches.

5.61 The following three figures highlight the supply of pitches, relative to temporal demand for adult and youth/junior pitches. These, again, are on an authority-wide basis, and are obtained from aggregating the figures for individual sites. At first site, there appears to be a healthy supply of adult pitches, so that there are no discernible pinch points in net supply (**Figure 5.7**). However, for youth/juniors 11v11 (**Figure 5.8**) there appears to be insufficient pitches available during the Sunday am/pm peak demand slots to meet demand. This might seem non-sensical, but is easily explained when it is remembered that some sites covered in the analysis appear to be accommodating pitch markings unsuited to the needs of a given age-group. Therefore, junior/youth teams appear often to be playing on (over-marked) adult size pitches.

Figure 5.7: Local Authority-wide net supply of adult pitches at peak times

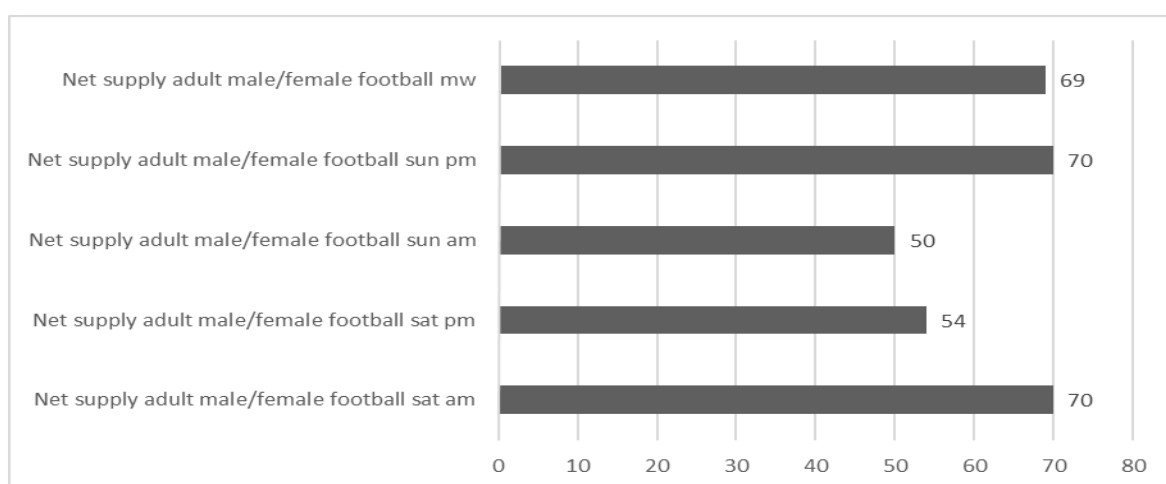


Figure 5.8: Local Authority-wide net supply of youth/junior 11 v 11 pitches at peak times

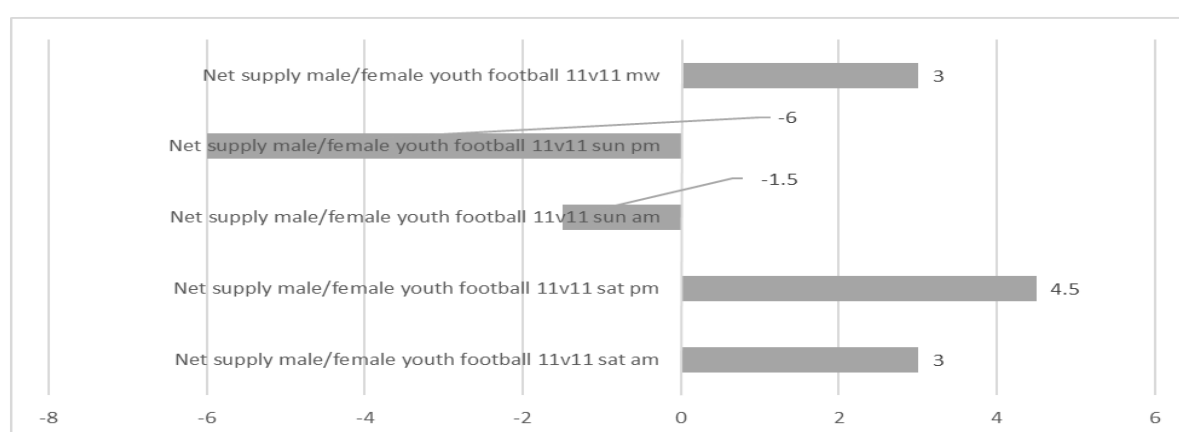
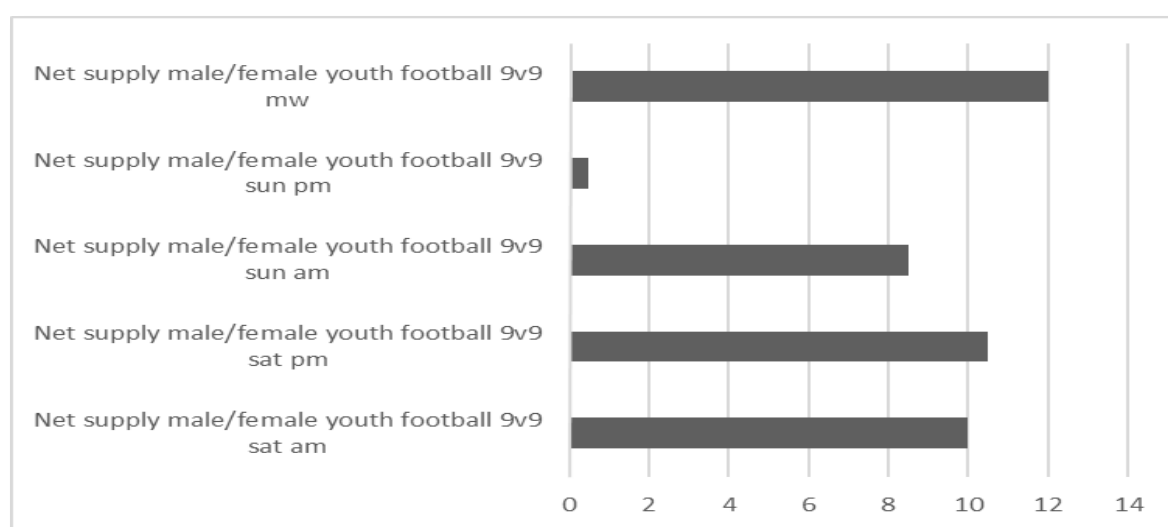


Figure 5.9: Local Authority-wide net supply of youth/junior 9 v 9 pitches at peak times



5.62 This assessment of net supply at times of peak-demand does not take into account the capacity of pitches to absorb match-play, or the equivalent in respect of training sessions- a pitch might in theory be available for use at times of peak demand, but in practice the quality and capacity issues rehearsed in the site analysis may inhibit the ability of pitches to be used any more, if they are presently already being ‘over-played’.

5.63 As with the discussion about ‘pitch capacity’ although there may be spare peak-time capacity at some locations, this may not be well placed geographically to meet the needs of clubs and sites that are suffering from lack of access to pitches due to them not being available because of peak-time pinch points.

Scenario Testing (a): The Importance of Education Sites

5.64 The importance of the education sector as a provider of community football pitches has been clearly illustrated through the site analysis. Another way to emphasise this point is to model a scenario similar to **Figures 5.6-5.9**, but excluding provision in the Education sector. This scenario is provided in **Figures 5.10-5.11**. The number of teams requiring pitches at peak times remains the same, but the number of pitches is reduced. In this scenario, there is a reduced ‘surplus’ of adult pitches at peak

times, and a slightly larger 'deficit' of junior pitches at peak times for some age groups. The main difference is with regard to the net supply/capacity of junior 9v9 pitches, many of which will be on school sites.

5.65 This scenario is hypothetical, and community use of pitches seems to be engrained into the working philosophy of many schools in the local authority- a complete collapse in provision through the education sector is therefore highly unlikely. However, the modelling exercise does showcase the importance of supporting and encouraging the sector in continuing to perform this role. It also highlights the importance of protecting the stock of pitches in other sectors in the event that some schools do fall out of the 'community supply' of pitches, for whatever reason.

Figure 5.10: Estimated capacity of pitches relative to estimated use (excluding education pitches)

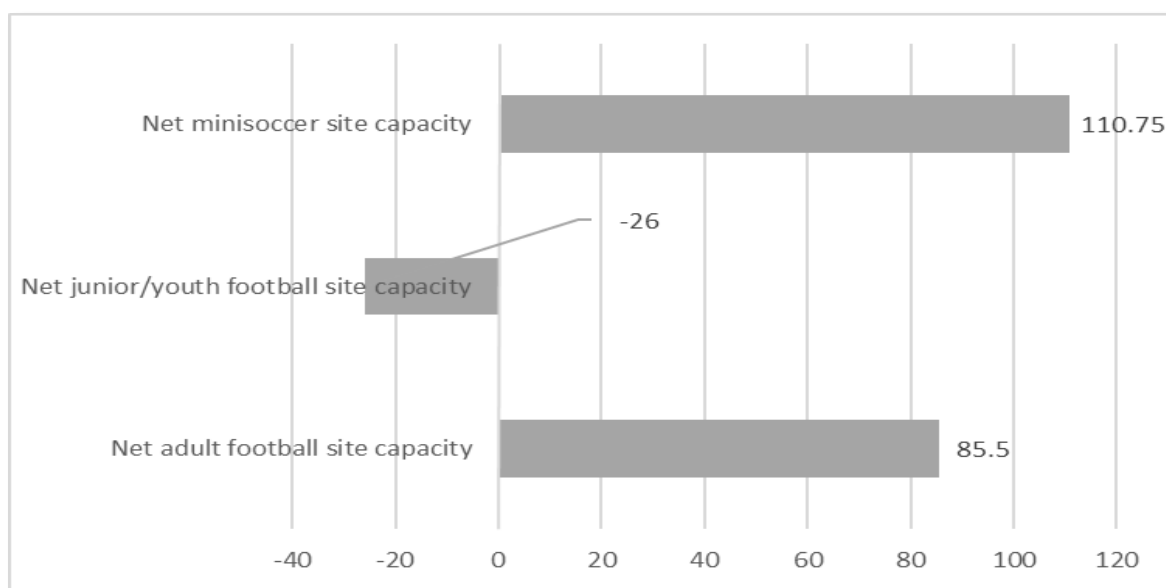
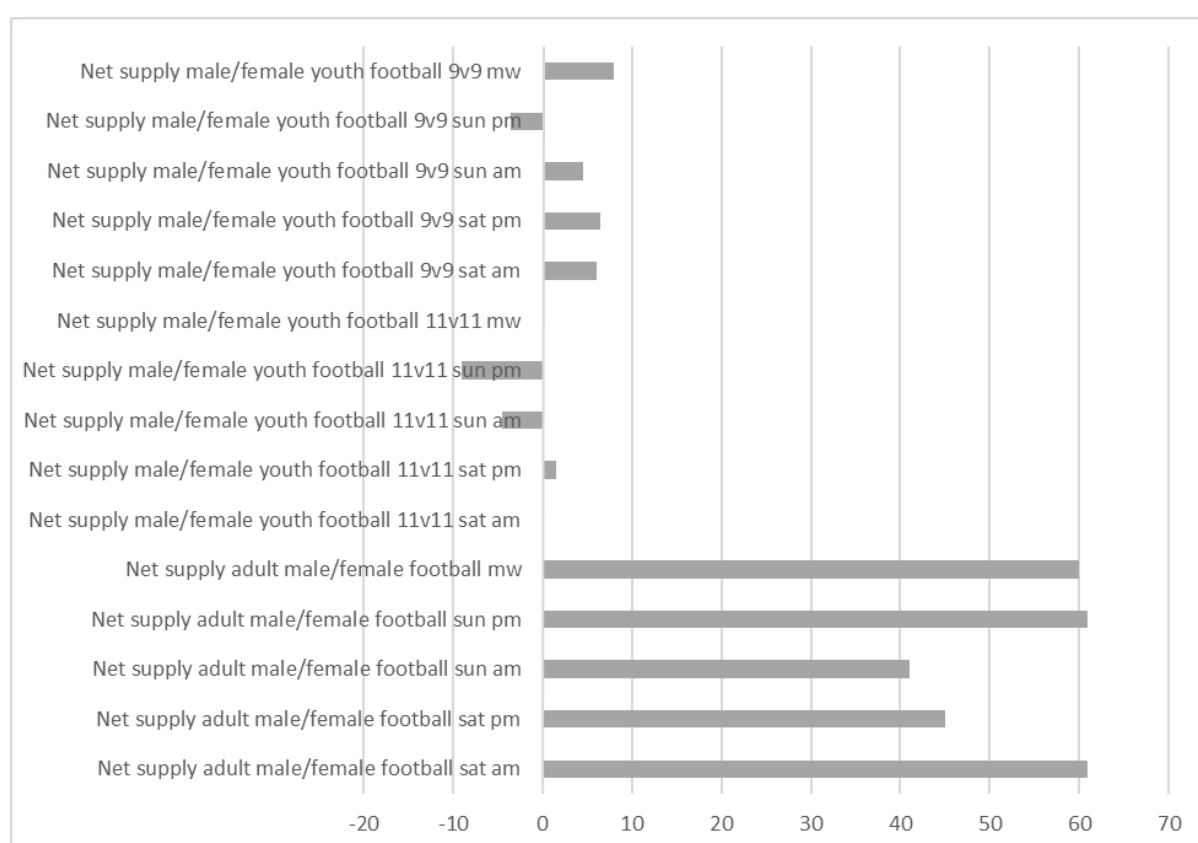


Figure 5.11: Net Supply of Pitches at Times of Peak Demand (excluding education pitches)



Scenario Testing (b): The Future

5.66 Future Picture of Provision

5.67 The future requirement for playing pitches will be impacted by several factors, including:

- changes to the number of people living in the area and / or to the demographic profile of the population;
- changes in participation trends and in how pitch sports are played;
- club specific development plans and aspirations; and,
- amendments to the current facility stock either through the provision of new pitches or the loss of current pitches.

5.68 These issues are considered in turn in order to build a picture of future demand for playing pitches.

A Population Change

Team Generation Rates and future natural population change in the population

5.69 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. TGRs are derived by dividing the appropriate population age band by the

number of teams playing within that area in that age band. By applying TGRs to natural population growth projections, we can project the theoretical number of teams that would be generated from natural population growth and gain an understanding of future demand.

5.70 Table 5.14 summarises the current TGRs for football in the local authority, and uses them to assess the potential impact of projected changes to the population profile on demand for football.

Table 5.14: TGRs and potential change to number of football teams in the local authority: 2015-2033

2015 AGE GROUPS	2015 AGE GROUPS (K)	2015 TEAMS	2015 TGRs	2033 AGE GROUPS (K)	2033 TEAMS	CHANGE (+/-)
Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)	7.76	66	117.6	8.16	69.4	3.4
Junior football (10-15 male)	5.4	75	72.0	6.48	90.0	15.0
Junior football (10-15 female)	5.16	7	737.1	6.12	8.3	1.3
Senior football (16-45 male)	26.7	88	303.4	29.4	96.9	8.9
Senior football (16-45 female)	26.4	4	6,600.0	28.7	4.3	0.3

5.71 The above suggests a growth in all age/gender groups in team numbers by 2033 and, in particular, in the younger age groups. The population data on which the above calculations are predicated⁴ are themselves only based upon previous trends, and do not necessarily take into account the impact of planned new residential growth yet to be determined.

Projected change in the population resulting from planned new growth

5.72 The above projects the change in team numbers arising out of natural change in the population up to 2033. There is also a need to consider any additional teams generated from localised population change resulting from planned new development. This new development may give rise to a significant local redistribution of the population, and conceivably in the spatial demand for playing

⁴ Compiled from Table 2b: 2010-based Subnational Population Projections by sex and quinary age. Source: Population Projections Unit, ONS. Crown copyright 2012.

pitches. The precise housing growth allocations to be catered for in the emerging new development plan are currently being determined.

B Changes in participation trends and how football is played

5.73 Although population growth will influence demand, changes in participation may perhaps have the most significant impact on demand for playing pitches.

5.74 Changes to youth football have only been introduced relatively recently (including the creation of 5 v 5 and 9 v 9) and as such, the impact is not yet fully apparent. The FA indicate that in pilot areas, the introductions of these new formats has seen an increase in the number of teams playing and greater retention of players through the older age groups. In particular:

- where historically two 7 v 7 teams would merge to become one 11 v 11 team when starting to play junior football, now the two teams will seek additional players and instead of merging will remain as two 9 v 9 teams; and
- the same will happen at 9 v 9 age groups, where 9 v 9 teams transition to 11 v 11 teams, they will stay as two teams and seek additional players instead of merging.

5.75 The FA therefore believe that there will be an increase in the overall number of teams (and participants) in future years as a result of the youth review and that higher levels of demand will occur as a result. In this event:

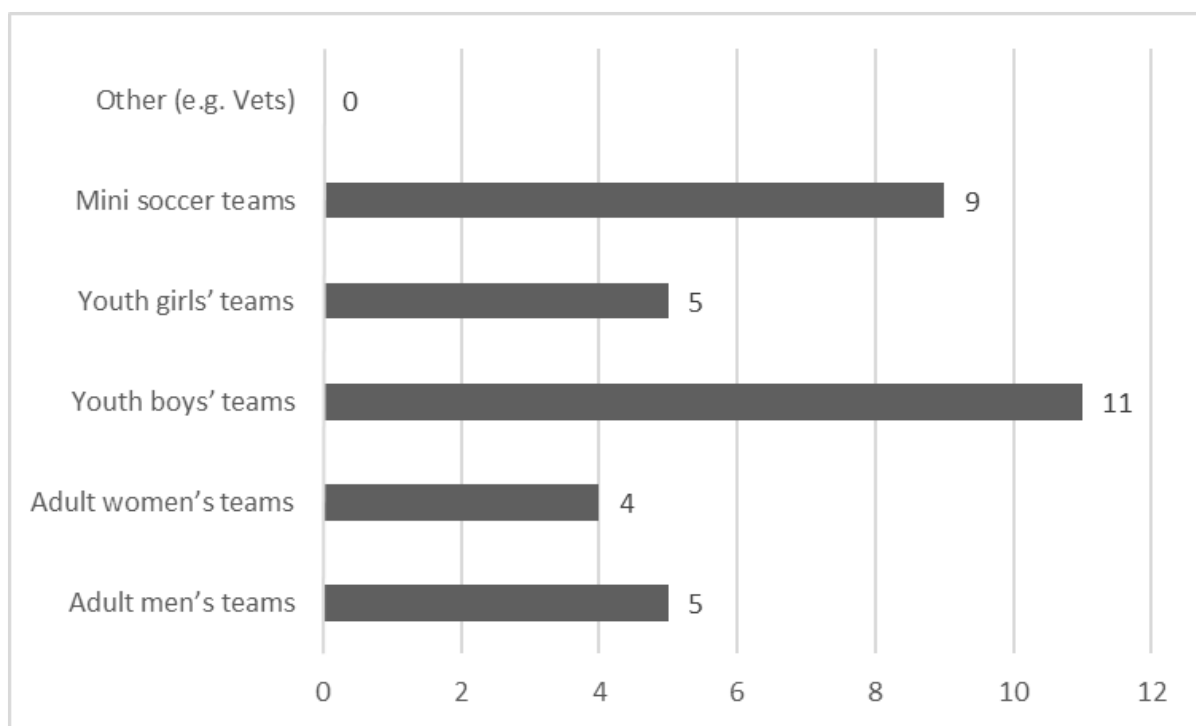
- the already insufficient stock of age appropriate junior football pitches would become even more constrained, and mini soccer pitches (7 v 7 and 5 v 5) would also become insufficient; and
- if issues relating to the drop off in the transition between junior and senior football were addressed however, the spare capacity currently seen in adult football pitches may also become constrained.

5.76 A number of football initiatives are also being implemented by Sport England, focusing on 14 – 24 year olds, and this is similarly expected by the FA to increase the number of teams being formed.

Club development plans and aspirations

5.77 Several football clubs have aspirations to grow and this will impact both on demand across the local authority as a whole but also more locally at a site specific level. Club aspirations are set out in **Table 5.15**. These are bone fide statements on the clubs' part. Where clubs stated that they would like to field teams in a particular category, we have provided a very indicative quantification of how many teams this might be.

Figure 5.15: Club aspirations to field more teams



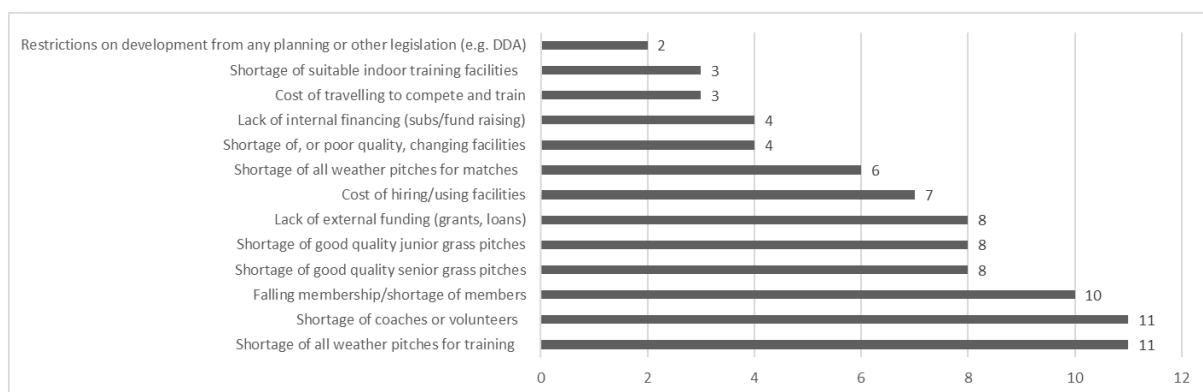
5.78 Taking into account the necessary caveat, the above aspirations suggest that responding team might like to field an additional:

- 9 adult teams;
- 16 junior teams; and,
- 9 mini soccer teams.

5.79 The clubs have also stated some of the obstacles that, they feel, stand in the way of them realising these aspirations. In practice, there may be little that can be done to reduce some of these obstacles, especially in the current financial climate. However, the statements serve to emphasise that some clubs would like to expand their activities were it not for the existence of certain obstacles- one of the goals of the strategy which this needs assessment underpins should be to seek ways in which these obstacles can be mitigated.

5.80 The obstacles will obviously differ depending on the club. However, the following summarises the overall significance of stated obstacles.

Figure 5.16: Summary of obstacles in the way of fielding more teams.



5.82 It is very apparent that shortage of artificial pitches for training are considered to be major obstacles, overall; as are the lack of volunteers and coaches; and, falling membership. Also of note is the perceived lack of availability of good quality grass pitches for matchplay.

5.83 When adding the extra teams that might be generated if responding clubs could achieve aspirations to additional teams arising from projected population growth (2033), the total increased future demand will be:

Table 5.17: Summary potential overall growth in team numbers

Extra teams from population growth		Extra teams for aspirational growth		Combined teams (A+B)	Grass pitches required	Impact on net peak-time supply based on existing stock (Figures 5.7-5.9)	Note
Adult	9.2	Adult	9	18.2	9	Reduction in surplus from 50 pitches to 41 pitches	Assumes 2 games/pitch/week
Junior	16.3	Junior	16	32.3	16	Aggravation potentially in 11v11 pitches deficit from -6 to -22	Assumes 2 games/pitch/week
Mini	3.4	Mini	9	12.4	3	n.a.	Assumes 4 games/pitch/week

5.84 The table also shows that, if the existing pitch stock remains the same, and; all additional matches were played at peak-time, the net peak-time negative supply of pitches for junior/youth games will be aggravated, as will there be a reduction in the net peak time positive supply of adult pitches (which also appear to be used for matches by younger teams (with over-marking)).

5.85 If the stock of football pitches in secured community use remains the same, the above additional teams will place further demands upon the pitch stock. Firstly, they will compound issues in relation to wear and tear on existing pitches. Secondly, they will impact upon the net supply of pitches at times of peak demand. Earlier Figures indicated the net balance of supply of adult, youth, and mini-soccer pitches respectively, based on the current level of provision. Assuming that the current times of peak demand remain the same over the coming years, the above additional teams and match requirements would aggravate the overall situations – especially in relation to the peak time shortage of junior pitches, and the over use of adult pitches.

Security of tenure

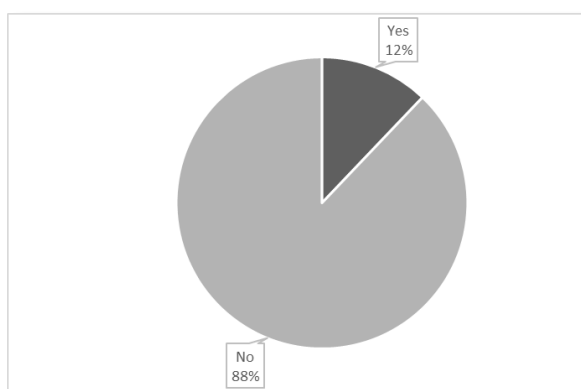
5.86 A significant number of clubs have leases or outright ownership of their facilities. Other clubs, although perhaps only renting facilities, will often use facilities that are either local authority owned, or else vested in some form of trust. The latter, although not allowing for clubs to ‘put down their roots’ and further develop facilities, will afford some limited form of security of tenure. Where clubs

have a leasehold this can often only be short-term lease, and the club questionnaire survey revealed few clubs having leases more than a handful of years left in duration.

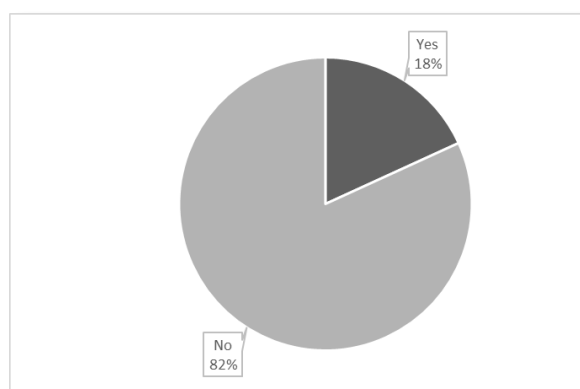
5.87 One or two clubs in the above tables have cited a desire to expand facilities at their home grounds, and the prospects for doing this (and obtaining external funding) are linked to security of tenure.

Figure 5.12: Ground ownership/leasing

Does your club/team own its home ground?



Does your club lease its home ground?



The role of AGPs in meeting local football needs

5.88 Throughout this section there have been references to the use of AGPs by local football clubs. Their use for casual, small-sided football, as well as football training is now commonplace. However, the later FA supported Third Generation (3G) surfaces can also host competitive play, with the endorsement of local leagues. This is increasingly the case with mini-soccer in some parts of the country.

5.89 Several local clubs have expressed a desire access to AGP (3G) to satisfy at least some of their training needs. The remainder of this section explores the existing and potential roles of such facilities.

Overview

5.90 AGPs are frequently used for football training and are becoming more commonplace for competitive play (and are now approved surfaces by FIFA). There are a variety of different surfaces of AGPs and their suitability for football is as follows:

- Long pile 3G with shock pad – suitable
- Long pile 3G – preferred surface for football
- Short pile 3G – acceptable surface for some competitive football and football training
- Sand filled – acceptable surface for football training
- Sand dressed – acceptable surface for football training

- Water based – acceptable surface for football training if irrigated.

5.91 Of particular note here is the use of sand-based AGPs for training by local football teams. Current relevant guidance produced by Sport England, in association with the NGBS, suggests that such surfaces are suitable for modified forms of training/matches, but not for serious training and matches.⁵ It would therefore be wrong to ignore this type of surface, given de facto use by local football clubs. However, they should not form part of the analysis in respect of determining the existing and future needs for serious training and matchplay.

Quantity

5.92 In the Braintree local authority, there is a small varied stock of AGPs that might be used for football training or competition in some way, albeit most not meeting current FA requirements for competitive play.

⁵ 'Selecting the Right Surface for Hockey, Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union'. (Sport England 2010). See Appendix 1.

Table 5.18: AGPs in the local authority

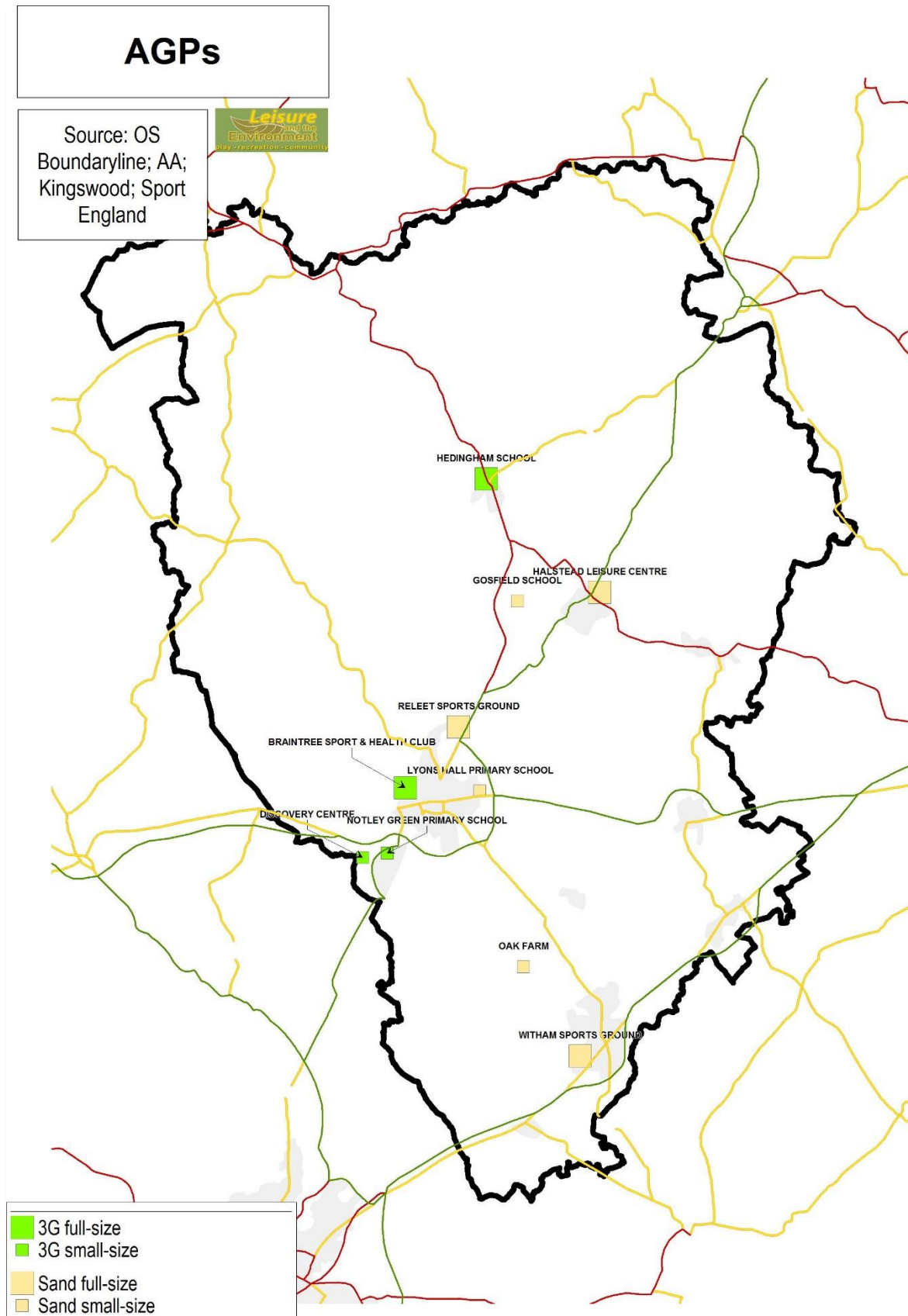
Name	Facility Sub Type	Access Type	Management Type	Year Built	Refurbished	Floodlit	Small AGP	Ward
BRAINTREE SPORT & HEALTH CLUB	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	Pay and Play	Trust	1990	Yes	Yes	No	Bocking South
HEDINGHAM SCHOOL	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	Sports Club / Community Association	School/College/University (in house)	2009	No	Yes	No	Hedingham and Maplestead
LYONS HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	Pay and Play	Not Known	2005	No	Yes	Yes	Bocking Blackwater
NOTLEY GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	Private Use	School/College/University (in house)	2005	No	No	Yes	Great Notley and Braintree West
DISCOVERY CENTRE	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	Sports Club / Community Association	Local Authority (in house)	2009	No	Yes	Yes	Great Notley and Braintree West
WITHAM SPORTS GROUND	Sand Dressed	Pay and Play	Trust	2006	No	Yes	No	Witham South

Name	Facility Sub Type	Access Type	Management Type	Year Built	Refurbished	Floodlit	Small AGP	Ward
HALSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE	Sand Filled	Pay and Play	Trust	2003	Yes	Yes	No	Halstead St. Andrew's
RELEET SPORTS GROUND	Sand Filled	Pay and Play	Sport Club	1996	No	Yes	No	Bocking North
GOSFIELD SCHOOL	Sand Filled	Sports Club / Community Association	School/College/University (in house)	2000	No	No	Yes	Gosfield and Greenstead Green
OAK FARM	Sand Filled	Pay and Play	Sport Club	2000	Yes	Yes	Yes	Black Notley and Terling

5.93 In summary the above comprise:

- 1 x full size and 1 x 2/3 size 3G pitches – the preferred surface for football- although neither of these pitches appear to be included on the FA Register of 3G pitches suited to matchplay.
- 3 x smaller-size 3G pitches, albeit two of these are on primary school sites, and probably not especially useful for community use; and,
- 3 x full-size sand-based AGP pitches (2 of which are at leisure centres, and will have significant use by football for local five-a-side, and training).
- The above facilities will be available to local football in varying degrees. Facilities at Refleet Sports Ground are primarily for the use of hockey (see Section 8). The provision is summarised in the map below.

Map 5.1: AGPs in the local authority



Demand for AGPs for Football

5.94 The adequacy of AGPs to accommodate demand for football, taking into account both training and competitive fixtures, is an important issue. Demand for hockey is considered later (Section 8) as there can often be competing demands from these two sports as both are reliant upon AGPs. **Table 5.4** in this section highlighted that several clubs rely on local AGPs for training.

Adequacy of AGP Provision

5.95 Supply and demand is measured on a site-specific basis considering;

- the amount of play that a site is able to sustain - based upon the number of hours that the pitch is accessible to the community during peak periods (up to a maximum of 34 hours per week). Peak periods have been deemed to be Monday to Thursday 17:00 to 21:00; Friday 17:00 to 19:00 and Saturday and Sunday 09:00 to 17:00, although individual sites differ according to their own policy, planning restrictions etc;
- the amount of play that takes place (measured in hours); and
- whether there is any spare capacity at the site based upon a comparison between the capacity of the site and the actual usage.

5.96 It should be noted that pitch bookings and conversations with pitch operators have been used to compile usage for AGPs. Whilst the analysis seeks to represent the regular weekly usage, it is clear that there is significant variation in usage from season to season, and maybe even from week to week. The peak time capacity for AGPs is midweek evenings for football training. Increasingly though, 3G pitches of the appropriate specification are used for matchplay.

5.97 Relevant points made by the operators and others are included in the Note column in **Table 5.19**

5.98 **Table 5.19** estimates usage in relation to capacity. From these it is clear that some spare capacity may exist at particular venues, but it is uncertain whether a) this is at times suited to those clubs looking for training facilities; b) it is located in relation to this demand; and c) it is affordable. With regard to the last of these points several clubs have expressed a concern about the cost of hiring AGP space for training, and perhaps this is a reflection of a lack of facilities relative to demand, which allows some providers to charge more for usage than might be the case if the choice of facilities was wider, and therefore greater competition amongst providers to attract users.

5.99 The comments made in the **Table 5.19** are an estimate of the current de facto situation. However, they should not form part of the analysis in respect of determining the existing and future needs for football in respect of both serious training and matchplay⁶

⁶ Selecting the Right Surface for Hockey, Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union'. (Sport England 2010). See Appendix 1.

Table 5.19: Usage of AGPs in the local authority

Name	AGP type	Sports Lighting	AGP Length	AGP Width	AGP Area (sqm)	Estimated community use capacity (hours)	Estimated community use (hours)	Significant availability on weekday evenings (10 hours +)?	Significant availability on weekends (10 hours +)?	Overall quality rating	Note
BRAINTREE SPORT & HEALTH CLUB	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	Yes	100	60	6,000	40	35	No	No	Good	There is very limited availability during weekday evenings. There is some availability at the weekends in theory, although recently the pitch has been booked at short notice by junior teams to play matches because of grass pitches being waterlogged.
HEDINGHAM SCHOOL	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	Yes	80	60	4,200	30	25	No	No	Good	This pitch is heavily used for football training out of school hours. Use at the weekends is limited. The pitch is not of sufficient size to allow for full-size matchplay.
LYONS HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	Yes	60	40	2,400	45	20	no	No	Good	This is a small pitch, but floodlit. Actual levels of community use are difficult to gauge, but not likely to be significant.

Name	AGP type	Sports Lighting	AGP Length	AGP Width	AGP Area (sqm)	Estimated community use capacity (hours)	Estimated community use (hours)	Significant availability on weekday evenings (10 hours +)?	Significant availability on weekends (10 hours +)?	Overall quality rating	Note
NOTLEY GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	No	43	28	1,204	0	0	NA	NA	NA	Unavailable for community use, and with inadequate ball retention fencing and no floodlighting.
DISCOVERY CENTRE	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	Yes	61	43	2,623	60	40	No	Yes	Standard	Seemingly well-used for football training and some matchplay.
WITHAM SPORTS GROUND	Sand Dressed	Yes	90	70	6,200	51	40	No	No	Standard (low)	The facility is used for hockey and football training and 5-a-side. There is limited availability at peak periods during the weekdays or weekends. The surface is not suited to matchplay.
HALSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE	Sand Filled	Yes	85	64	5,440	50	35	no	Yes	Standard (low)	This facility is used for football training and 5-a-side. It is too small for matchplay hockey. There are few slots available during weekday evenings, but significant availability at the weekend, although unsuited to football matchplay.

Name	AGP type	Sports Lighting	AGP Length	AGP Width	AGP Area (sqm)	Estimated community use capacity (hours)	Estimated community use (hours)	Significant availability on weekday evenings (10 hours +)?	Significant availability on weekends (10 hours +)?	Overall quality rating	Note
RELEET SPORTS GROUND	Sand Filled	Yes	100	600	6,000 +	70+	40+	no	No	Good	The pitch is primarily for hockey, and unsuited to football matchplay.
GOSFIELD SCHOOL	Sand Filled	No	47	35	1,645	10	minimal	no	No	NA	Small unlit facility at fee paying school, and of little value for football.
OAK FARM	Sand Filled	Yes	40	20	800	60 ('dawn to dusk'	60	30	Yes	Standard (low)	Available for community use but of limited value for serious football training or matchplay.

FA Calculated requirements

5.100 Discussions held with the FA Regional and County Facility Development Officers tend to confirm the view expressed by many local clubs (and some operators) that there are insufficient 3G pitches available for training, in particular.

5.101 Information provided by the FA/Essex County FA suggest a need for c. 5.7 full-size 3G pitches (for football) based on an assumption of 240 teams within the local authority; and, that 42 teams could be allocated viable training slots on a single such pitch. There is 1 full-size 3G pitch currently in the local authority⁷, and an additional facility of around two-thirds of full-size; both of these are heavily used. This leaves a deficit of circa 4 full-size⁸ If three additional pitches were provisionally provided to meet the majority of these existing unmet needs the best locations would likely to be at Braintree, Witham and Halstead, as these are the loci of much club- based activity, and can also serve many clubs in the outlying settlements.

5.102 Beyond the above, an application of current team generation rates for football to the projected population associated with planned new growth between 2016 and 2033 suggests the following numbers of teams being formed. These numbers total around 50 teams, justifying an additional full-size 3G pitch, at some point.

Team age group	Number
Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)	14.0
Junior football (10-15 male)	15.9
Junior football (10-15 female)	1.5
Senior football (16-45 male)	18.6
Senior football (16-45 female)	0.8

5.103 These pitches do not take into account existing pitches that are sand-based, and/or those that are less than full-size (irrespective of whether they are 3G or sand-based surface). The former, in particular are not suited to serious training and match play.⁹

Key issues for the strategy to address

5.104 Wet weather really impacts upon the ability of pitches to absorb play and training.

5.105 There is a need for more AGPs both for training and, increasingly, for matchplay to help deal with wet weather, and increased demand leading to wear and tear

5.106 Increased population levels especially resulting from planned growth will heighten demand for pitches in some locations, in coming years. (See **Appendix 6** for further details). It may be appropriate to accommodate new pitches required by such growth on planned new (potentially multi-

⁷ This discounts the pitch at Hedingham School which is not full-size.

⁸ This FA guidance may be subject to review.

⁹ Selecting the Right Surface for Hockey, Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union'. (Sport England 2010). See Appendix 1.

sport) sites, with scope for expansion beyond 2033 (assuming that some of the major growth areas will develop further beyond the 2033 time horizon).

5.107 It might be an aim to get as much junior matchplay onto AGPs as possible.

5.108 There is overplay and over-marking of some pitches to accommodate junior and Minisoccer of the same surface as older age group play, and this is not ideal.

5.109 The quality of changing facilities at some sites requires attention.

5.104 These themes will be addressed further, and translated to locally/site specific recommendations in the Strategy and Action Plan.

6 CRICKET

General

6.1 This section evaluates the adequacy of pitches for cricket and provides:

- An overview of the supply and demand for cricket pitches
- An understanding of activity at individual sites in the local authority
- A picture of the adequacy of current provision
- The future picture of provision for cricket
- A summary of key issues

Pitch Supply

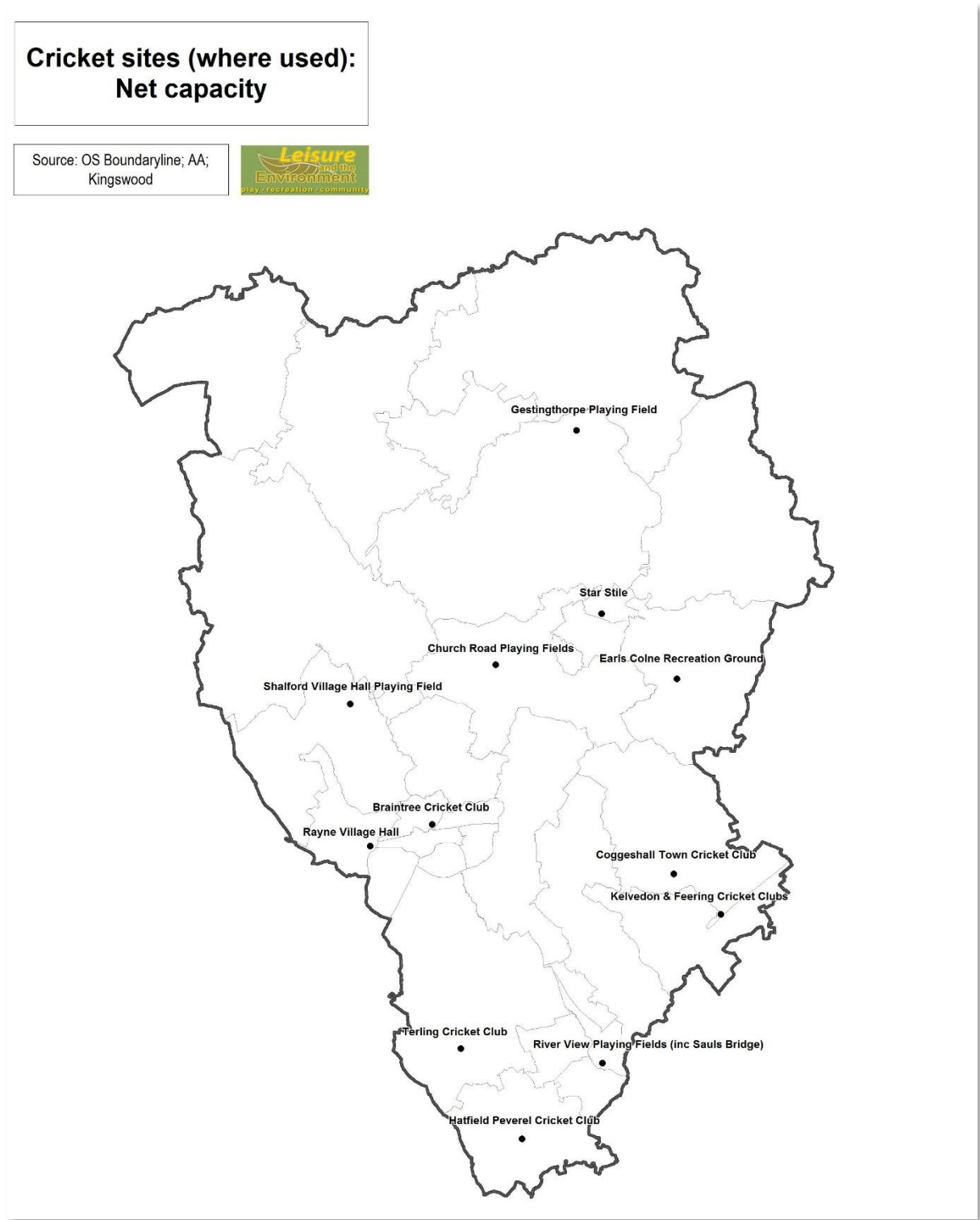
6.2 There are 11 sites currently containing grass facilities for community cricket matches. These sites are included in **Table 6.1** and shown on **Map 6.1**.

Table 6.1: Cricket sites in community use

Name	Ward	Availability	Ownership	Number of grass cricket wicket strips	Number of artificial cricket wicket strips	Pitches Cricket Fields
Braintree Cricket Club	Bocking South	A2	Club	12		1
Church Road Playing Fields	Gosfield and Greenstead Green	A1	LA	10		1
Coggeshall Town Cricket Club & Earls Colne Business Park	Coggeshall and North Feering	A2	Club	12 & 7		2
Earls Colne Cricket Club						

Name	Ward	Availability	Ownership	Number of grass cricket wicket strips	Number of artificial cricket wicket strips	Pitches Cricket Fields
Gestingthorpe Playing Field	Hedingham and Maplestead	A1	LA	8		1
Kelvedon & Feering Cricket Clubs	Coggeshall and North Feering	A2	Club	20		2
Rayne Village Hall	Rayne	A1	LA	8		1
River View Playing Fields (inc Sauls Bridge)	Witham Chipping Hill and Central	A2	LA/Club	20	1	2
Shalford Playing Field	Rayne	A1	LA	8		1
Star Stile	Gosfield and Greenstead Green	A2	Club	24	1	2
Terling Cricket Club	Black Notley and Terling	A2	Club	10		1

Map 6.1: Location of cricket fields



6.3 As will be explained later in this section, some of the sites are more heavily used than others. In addition to the above, there are other sites containing cricket facilities. These other sites include:

- those sites that have previously been used by community teams, but which now do not appear to host cricket activity;
- facilities on state school sites which are primarily part of general sports space and cannot be considered to host dedicated cricket facilities, except where they have non-turf wickets; and,
- those at other education sites, including fee-paying independent schools.

6.4 These other sites are included in **Table 6.2** below.

Table 6.2: Cricket sites in Braintree District

Name	Ownership Type	Management Type	Ward
ALEC HUNTER ACADEMY	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	Braintree East
BOCKING SPORTS CLUB	Sports Club	Sport Club	Bocking North
COLLEGE OF BRAINTREE SPORTS GROUND	Further Education	School/College/University (in house)	Bocking Blackwater
CORTAULDS SPORTS GROUND	Local Authority	Sport Club	Halstead St. Andrew's
GOSFIELD SCHOOL	Other Independent School	School/College/University (in house)	Gosfield and Greenstead Green
HEDINGHAM SCHOOL	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	Heddingham and Maplestead
GREAT NOTLEY SPORTS CENTRE	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	Braintree South
SHALFORD VILLAGE HALL PLAYING FIELD	Other	Trust	Panfield
THE HONYWOOD COMMUNITY SCIENCE SCHOOL	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	Coggeshall and North Feering

6.9 **Table 6.3** summarises the sites currently available for community use in the local authority and the quality issues identified. It also provides an indication of the quality of existing non-turf wickets and training facilities at each site, as well as any issues that have been identified with maintenance of facilities.

Table 6.3: Cricket sites in the local authority and a quality assessment

Name	Ward	Comments	Overall Quality Rating
Braintree Cricket Club	Bocking South	Pitch of good standard, and pavilion of higher than average quality. Practice nets. Junior football has used site in the winter months.	Good
Church Road Playing Fields	Gosfield and Greenstead Green	Gosfield CC play here. Pavilion and wicket of reasonable quality. No nets. Under 11's & Under 9's from St Margarets School, Gosfield, use main pitch.	Standard
Coggeshall Town Cricket Club (refers to both pitches)	Coggeshall and North Feering	Good standard facility, with practice nets. Pavilion well-maintained but perhaps in need of refurbishment.	Good
Earls Colne Cricket Club	The Three Colnes	Good quality overall sports facility. Nets and non-turf wicket.	Good
Gestingthorpe Playing Field	Hedingham and Maplestead	Basic facility. Pavilion and nets in need of overhaul.	Standard

Name	Ward	Comments	Overall Quality Rating
Hatfield Peverel Cricket Club	Hatfield Peverel	Good facilities, and pavilion. Non-turf cages.	Good
Kelvedon & Feering Cricket Clubs	Coggeshall and North Feering	Very good facilities. Cricket nets. 2 nd ground for juniors. Clubhouse probably insufficient to service both fields.	Good
Rayne Village Hall	Rayne	<p>Rayne CC play here (its Sunday team play at Shalford). Facilities quite basic.</p> <p>Playing field shared with local adult/junior football clubs. The ground is over-used for sports and recreation and as such the condition of the outfield is not of good standard. No nets.</p>	Standard
River View Playing Fields (inc Sauls Bridge)	Witham Chipping Hill and Central	<p>Witham CC play here. Second pitch used for 3rd team and sometimes colts.</p> <p>Main pitch and pavilion in excellent condition. Second pitch and pavilion of much lower standard.</p>	<p>Good (main pitch)</p> <p>(low) Standard (second pitch)</p>

Name	Ward	Comments	Overall Quality Rating
		Nets and non-turf wicket on main pitch	
Shalford Playing Field	Rayne	2 nd ground for Rayne CC (Sunday team). Shared facility with football. No nets. Basic quality facility.	Standard
Star Stile (Halstead CC)	Gosfield and Greenstead Green	Home of Halstead. 2 fields on this site. Regularly stages matches for ECCC Seniors & 2nd XI, Two Counties and NECL representative games and in 2014 & 2015, ICC Competition matches. Facilities in good order. Bowling nets and pavilion.	Good
Terling Cricket Club	Black Notley and Terling	Pavilion of reasonable standard. No nets. Small club.	Standard

6.10 Looking at the above assessment it is clear that most sites are considered to have achieved at least a 'standard' overall quality score. There are however some issues experienced, such as in respect of the facility at Saul's Bridge, and the suitability of some pavilions for current needs.

Club comments in relation to home facilities.

6.11 Clubs responding to the questionnaire survey had more detailed comments to make on the quality of their facilities, and these have been integrated into Table 6.3 (above).

Security of tenure

6.12 The larger local clubs tend to own their facilities- either on a long lease, or else freehold. Other clubs, although perhaps only renting, will often use facilities that are either local authority owned, or else vested in some form of trust. The latter, although not allowing for clubs to 'put down their roots' and further develop facilities, will afford some limited form of security of tenure. The club survey has not highlighted any examples of clubs potentially at risk of losing their facility. However, the Witham CCs lack of control over the Saul's Bridge pitch, which may stop it making improvements to facilities at this site.

Demand

Participation across the local authority

6.13 There are estimated to be **65** cricket teams in the local authority The teams are as follows:

Table 6.3: Clubs/teams and where they play

Name	Ground	Adult teams	Junior Teams	League
Braintree CC	Braintree Cricket Club	3	6	Two Counties; North Essex Cricket League; CYCO League; friendlies(Sunday)
Coggeshall	Harefield & Earls Colne Business Park	4	6	Two Counties; North Essex Cricket League; CYCO League; friendlies(Sunday)
Earls Colne Cricket Club	Earls Colne Recreation Ground	1		
Gestingthorpe CC	Gestingthorpe Playing Field	1	1	Friendlies

Name	Ground	Adult teams	Junior Teams	League
Gosfield CC	Church Road Playing Fields	1		North Essex Cricket League (Sunday League)
Halstead CC	Star Stile	6	2	Two Counties; North Essex Cricket League; CYCO League; friendlies(Sunday)
Hatfield Perverel CC	Hatfield Peverel CC	2	2	Mid Essex League; friendlies
Kelvedon & Feering CC	Kelvedon & Feering Cricket Clubs	5	6	North Essex Cricket; Two Counties; NEDCB
Rayne CC	Rayne Village Hall	2	3	Mid Essex Cricket League; North Essex Cricket League;
Rayne CC	Shalford Playing Field	1		
Terling CC	Terling Cricket Club	4		Mid Essex League; friendlies; Warsop T20 Cup
Witham CC	River View Playing Fields (inc Sauls Bridge)	4	5	Two Counties; North Essex Cricket League;

6.14 The table does not make reference to clubs that currently do not appear to field any teams playing in regular leagues.

6.15 Representative teams are excluded from the above totals as they are made up of the same players as those in the club teams. They are however considered when evaluating the use of facilities and the impact that they have on the adequacy of provision.

Distance travelled to home ground

6.16 The evidence from the club questionnaire is that the majority of players will travel between two and five miles to reach their home venue, and so some amount of travel is an expectation.

Table 6.4: Travel distances of players to home ground

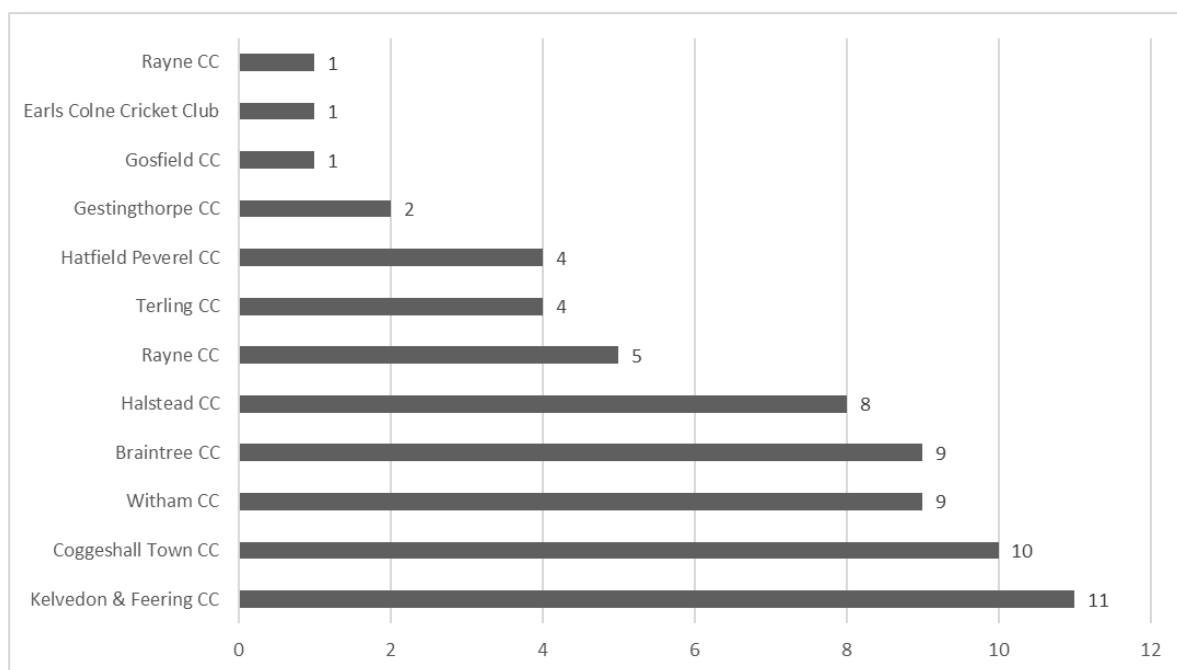
We would like to understand the area from which your members are drawn. Please state approximately, the percentage of where your members live:

Percentage of members	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	Response Total
Less than 1 mile from your main	22.20%	0.00%	11.10%	44.40%	11.10%	11.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	9
	2	0	1	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	
Between 1 and 5 miles from main	0.00%	0.00%	22.20%	22.20%	11.10%	33.30%	0.00%	11.10%	0.00%	0.00%	9
	0	0	2	2	1	3	0	1	0	0	
More than 5 miles from main venue	50.00%	37.50%	12.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	8
	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

6.17 The study has highlighted little if any evidence of clubs with an affinity (perhaps in name or the majority of its membership) using sites outside the local authority to play matches, or vice versa. However, there are examples of clubs using more than one site to field all their teams, and not all these are adjacent pitches. This does not appear to have been highlighted as an issue by clubs responding to the survey.

6.18 In terms of the number of teams fielded by each club, the following figure illustrates how the clubs would be ranked.

Figure 6.1: Total teams fielded by each local club



6.19 The two biggest teams do not appear to have a need for additional sites (currently), with two of them (Witham and Kelvedon & Feering) having 'double-ground' venues. As mentioned, Witham CC has issues with the quality of its adjacent second ground, which it leases.

6.20 The majority of cricket is in the form of formal club-based cricket teams, playing in a variety of leagues, in particular the Mid Essex League; North Essex League (Sunday), T20 League (midweek). The Essex County Cricket Board (via District Cricket Boards) also play a very important role in running junior cricket.

6.21 There are some teams playing less formal cricket (either in midweek leagues or just friendlies). While most of these are associated with a club and a home ground, some travel to different grounds and rent their pitches depending upon availability.

Trends in participation

6.22 Clubs responding to the questionnaire survey indicated the following overall changes in the number of teams fielded over the most recent three seasons.

Table 6.5: changes in numbers of teams

Please can you tell us if, in the previous three years, the number of teams in your club has:				
	Increased	Decreased	Stayed the same	Response Total
Adult Male	0%	11%	89%	9
	0	1	8	
Ladies	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	7
	0	0	7	
Juniors/Colts	22.2%	11.1%	66.7%	9
	2	1	6	
			answered	9
			skipped	6

6.23 The response seems to reflect a general stasis in the numbers of adult teams, but perhaps a slight increase in the ranks of junior teams.

6.24 Some of the responding clubs offered reasons for the identified growth or decline in the numbers of teams fielded, as summarised below.

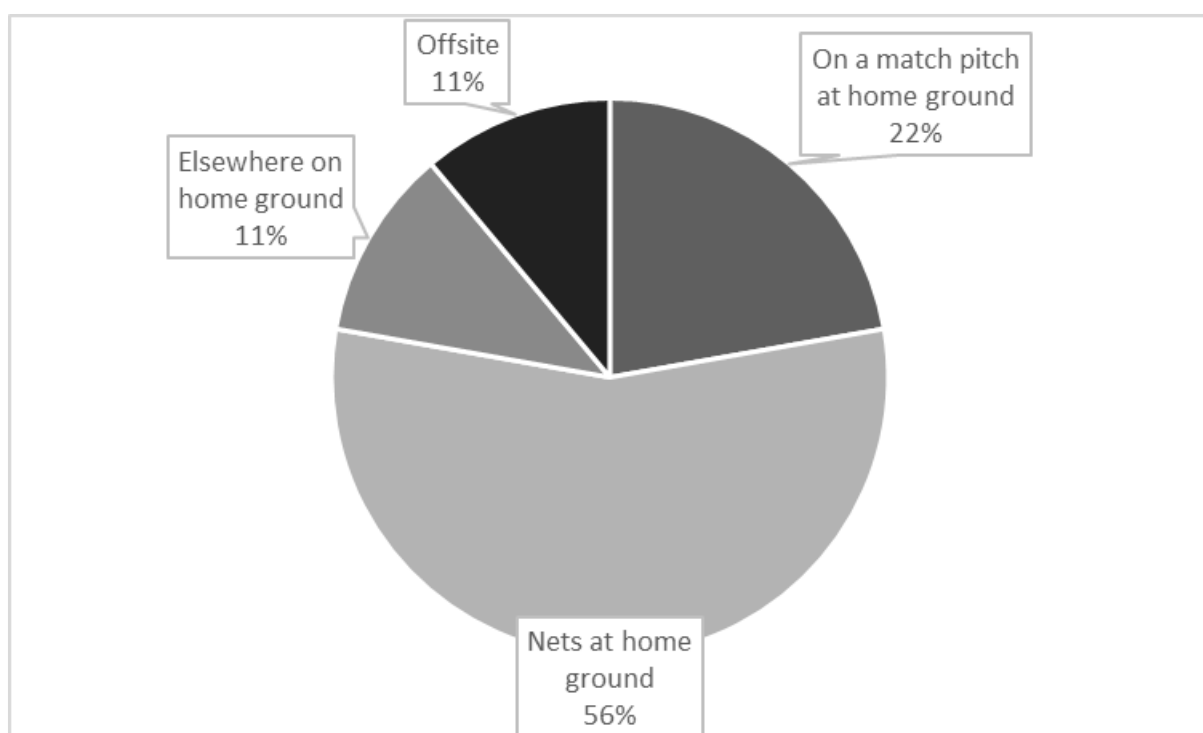
Table 6.6: Reasons expressed for growth or decline in team numbers

Club	Comment
Coggeshall Town CC	Fielded a Saturday 4th Team for one season, but players could not guarantee availability
Gestingthorpe CC	Started a colts section
Halstead CC	Decreased due to lack of numbers

Club	Comment
Kelvedon & Feering CC	Now fielding two Under 11 teams
Rayne CC	Generally fluctuating numbers of juniors over the years

6.25 The club questionnaire survey asked where clubs trained. Where answers were provided they indicated that the majority practiced off-wicket, often using nets (as shown in **Figure 6.2**) However, two clubs indicated that they trained on match pitches, these were Rayne and Gosfield CCs- neither of these clubs cited this to be an issue. Some winter indoor training takes place and venues cited were sports halls at Highwoods, Honywood, and Anglo European Schools; The Maltings Academy; and, Writtle Leisure Centre.

Figure 6.2: Where clubs train



6.26 The ECB have made reference to the paucity of good quality indoor nets for winter training.

School activity

6.27 School activity for cricket is generally outside the remit of this report, although it can have an indirect bearing on the supply of and demand for local pitches.

6.28 The study has revealed that there are education sites with cricket facilities that are potentially of local utility. These include:

- Gosfield School (cricket fields). This is an independent school, with little or no community use. Non-turf strip in a general-use education playing field.
- Hedingham School/Academy. A non-turf wicket in a general-use education playing field.
- Great Notley School/Sports Centre. A non-turf wicket in a general-use education playing field.
- Honywood School. A non-turf wicket in a general-use education playing field. Also indoor nets in sports hall.
- Ramsay Academy. Evidence of disused turf wicket in discrete field, being part of wider education playing field complex.
- Maltings Academy. Indoor nets.

6.29 With the probable exception of Gosfield School (which also hosts Essex Girls Under 11/13 Development Squad), there does not appear to be much cricket forming part of the PE curriculum at

any of the above schools. Although some activity does appear to take place involving schools, as witnessed by the comments of some local clubs responding to the survey.

- Halstead CC: trying to develop a training programme with local primary schools and the Ramsey Academy.
- Witham CC: have had Witham Secondary Schools train / play on its pitches.
- Gosfield CC: Under 11's & Under 9's from St Margarets School, Gosfield use the pitch.

Casual activity

6.30 In terms of competitive cricket, activity within the District is largely through the conventional, codified, league structures. In other parts of the country, where of the population comprises a relatively high Asian component there can often be a significant level of casual cricket matches amongst Asian groups which, again, have no affiliation to clubs or local leagues. Braintree, as a local authority, does not have a significant Asian component as part of its population. However, changes to the ethnic composition of the local authority population might result in an upturn in the demand for such activity, and the situation is worth monitoring.

6.31 Both the ECB and Essex County Cricket Board, stress the importance of capturing and planning for the needs of casual cricket, and have responded to these trends themselves by promoting versions of the sport such as T20 cricket, and Last Man Standing competitions. Essentially such activity can be 'team-based' as opposed to club-based, and if such activity is to be promoted and popularised within the local authority it will be important to provide facilities that can be easily accessed and booked by such teams. However, it is likely that this form of cricket facility would only be viable in the larger urban centres; and, in this regard, Braintree may not have the critical mass to support such a venue.

6.32 The impression from this study is that the larger clubs have much better access to T20 competitions and other short- game derivatives. Smaller clubs may wish to consider the potential impact on traditional matchplay in the medium to long term if young people want to focus on the shorter game and are therefore drawn increasingly to the larger clubs.

Assessing the Supply and Demand Information and Views

6.33 There are therefore two components involved in this calculation:

- Assessing the 'capacity' of wickets to absorb the overall number matches they are required to host without undue wear and tear; and,
- Assessing the availability of pitches to be available for matches at the times that they will be required.

6.34 The above two are considered in the following paragraphs.

6.35 For cricket, unlike other pitch sports, the capacity of a pitch is measured on a seasonal basis (as opposed to weekly) and is primarily determined by the number and quality of wickets on a pitch. Play is rotated throughout the season across the wickets to reduce wear and allow for repair.

6.36 As a guide, the ECB suggests that a **good** quality wicket should be able to take:

- matches per season per grass wicket (adults);
- matches per season per grass wicket (juniors);
- 60 matches per season per non turf wicket (adults); and,
- 80 matches per season per non turf wicket (juniors).

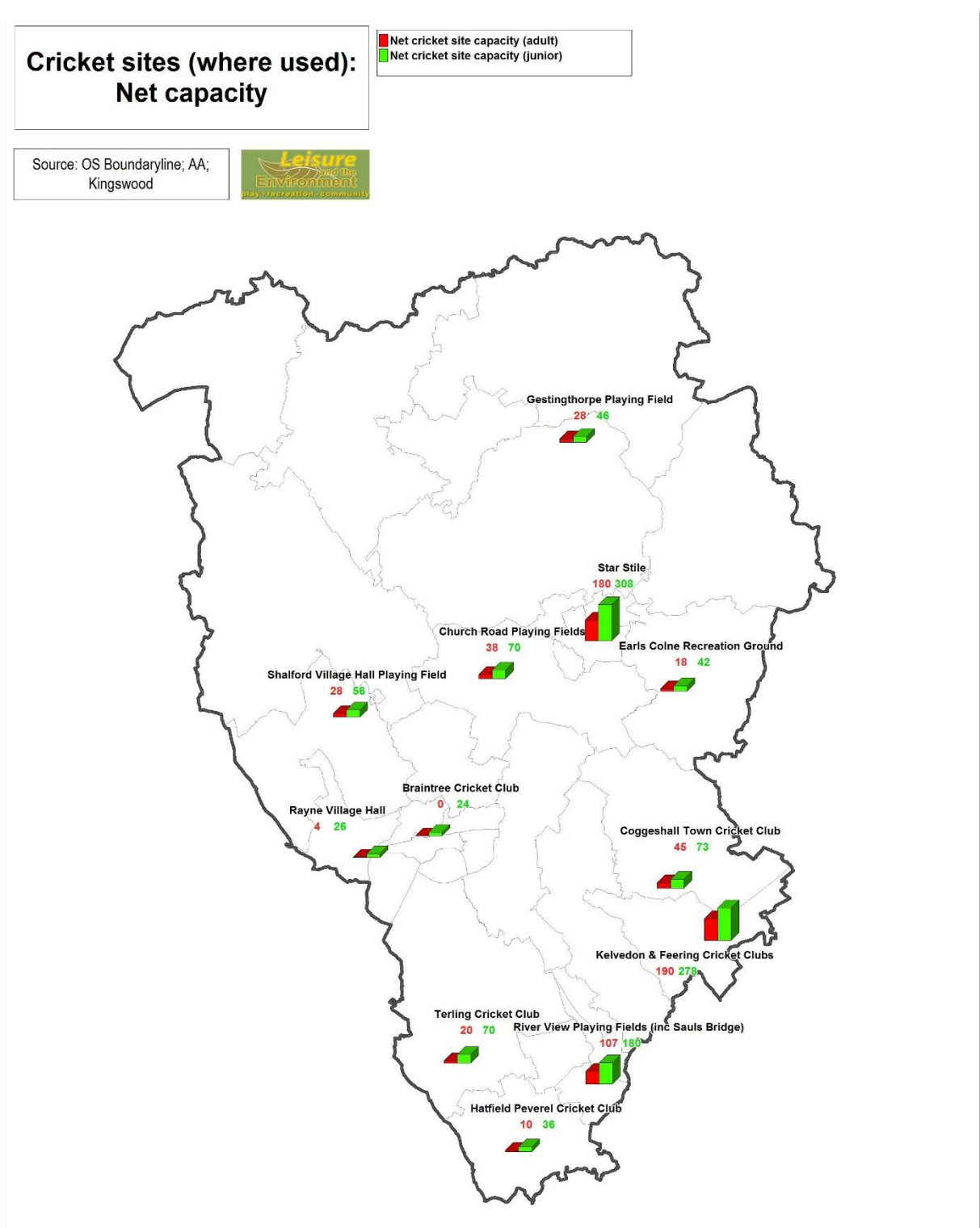
6.37 Demand (in relation to capacity) is therefore measured in terms of the number of home games that each team will play per season.

6.38 Some junior play in the local authority will take place on non-turf wickets. This meets with ECB requirements, unless teams are playing in high standard junior play, and/or are in the 13 years + age groups, in which case play must take place on the grass square. The provision of non-turf wickets can therefore enhance the capacity of a site.

6.39 Assessing demand from adult teams is easier to establish due to the unambiguous requirement for turf pitches for play in local league structures and above.

6.40 **Map 6.2** summarises the situation at the cricket sites across the local authority in respect of the notional capacity of the sites to absorb adult and junior matches, taking into account the availability of both turf and non-turf wickets.. Cricket training will normally take place off the cricket square, and within nets, on non-turf wickets, in the outfield, or winter training indoor bowls. As the map indicates, all of the sites have a positive balance in terms of net capacity.

Map 6.2: Grass wicket capacity relative to adult demand



6.41 Training and junior play (in the older age groups) is not generally a major factor in determining overall use of turf wickets over the course of a season, although it will have some impact. The following **Table 6.7** factors these considerations into calculations on a site-by-site basis, using data on team numbers and training patterns supplied through the consultation. Generally, it was identified that the majority of training took place ‘off-square’ using the outfield, artificial strips, or nets. Any winter

training takes place off-site and indoors. For these reasons the impact of training can largely be discounted from estimations of site capacity for cricket.

6.42 Cricket squares tend to be roped off in off-season, and so are not usually adversely affected by other activity.

6.43 Where sites are italicised it is possible that capacity issues exist or loom in respect to the use of turf strips. Although younger, junior, teams can train and play matches off the turf wickets, beyond a certain age they are required by league regulations to have access to a natural turf wicket for matchplay. As teams move through the age-groups the pressure will increase on turf wickets, and might contribute to 'drop-out' rates in local clubs, because the capacity to absorb this additional demand is not available.

Table 6.7: Capacity v Usage (including junior matches and non-turf wickets, where they exist): (Column E-H use ECB guidance summarised in sub section 6.7)

Name	Ward	A. Estimated adult matches/season	B. Estimated junior matches/season	C. Turf strips	D. Non-turf strips	E. Capacity guide: adult matches/season/turf strip	F. Capacity guide: junior matches/season/turf strip	G. Capacity guide: adult/matches/season/non-turf strip	H. Capacity guide: junior /matches/season/non-turf strip	I. Ideal adult match capacity/season on turf strips (C x E)	J. Ideal junior match capacity/season on turf strips (C x F)	K. Ideal adult match capacity/season on non-turf strips (D X G)	L. Ideal junior match capacity/season on non-turf strips (D x H)	M. Net Capacity (Adults) (I+K)-A	N. Net Capacity (Juniors) (J+L)-B
<i>Braintree Cricket Club</i>	<i>Bocking South</i>	60	60	12		5	7	60	80	60	84	0	0	0.00	24.00
Church Road Playing Fields	Gosfield and Greenstead Green	12		10		5	7	60	80	50	70	0	0	38.00	70.00
Coggeshall Town Cricket Club	Coggeshall and North Feering	50	60	19		5	7	60	80	95	133	0	0	44.00	73.00
Earls Colne Recreation Ground	The Three Colnes	12		6		5	7	60	80	30	42	0	0	18.00	42.00

Name	Ward	A. Estimated adult matches/season	B. Estimated junior matches/season	C. Turf strips	D. Non-turf strips	E. Capacity guide: adult matches/season/turf strip	F. Capacity guide junior matches/season/turf strip	G. Capacity guide: adult/matches/season/non-turf strip	H. Capacity guide: junior /matches/season/non-turf strip	I. Ideal adult match capacity/season on turf strips (C x E)	J. Ideal junior match capacity/season on turf strips (C x F)	K. Ideal adult match capacity/season on non-turf strips (D X G)	L. Ideal junior match capacity/season on non-turf strips (D x H)	M. Net Capacity (Adults) (I+K)-A	N. Net Capacity (Juniors) (J+L)-B
Gestingthorpe Playing Field	Hedingham and Maplestead	12	10	8		5	7	60	80	40	56	0	0	28.00	46.00
Hatfield Peverel CC	Hatfield Peverel	30	20	8		5	7	60	80	40	56	0	0	10.00	36.00
Kelvedon & Feering Cricket Clubs	Coggeshall and North Feering	50	50	24	2	5	7	60	80	120	168	120	160	190.00	278.00
Rayne Village Hall	Rayne	36	30	8		5	7	60	80	40	56	0	0	4.00	26.00
River View Playing Fields (inc	Witham Chipping Hill and Central	53	40	20	1	5	7	60	80	100	140	60	80	107.00	180.00

Name	Ward	A. Estimated adult matches/season	B. Estimated junior matches/season	C. Turf strips	D. Non-turf strips	E. Capacity guide: adult matches/season/turf strip	F. Capacity guide junior matches/season/turf strip	G. Capacity guide: adult/matches/season/non-turf strip	H. Capacity guide: junior /matches/season/non-turf strip	I. Ideal adult match capacity/season on turf strips (C x E)	J. Ideal junior match capacity/season on turf strips (C x F)	K. Ideal adult match capacity/season on non-turf strips (D x G)	L. Ideal junior match capacity/season on non-turf strips (D x H)	M. Net Capacity (Adults) (I+K)-A	N. Net Capacity (Juniors) (J+L)-B
Sauls Bridge)															
Shalford Village Hall Playing Field	Panfield	12		8		5	7	60	80	40	56	0	0	28.00	56.00
Star Stile	Gosfield and Greenstead Green	60	20	24	2	5	7	60	80	120	168	120	160	180.00	308.00
Terling Cricket Club	Black Notley and Terling	30		10		5	7	60	80	50	70	0	0	20.00	70.00

It is fair to say that none of the clubs responding to the questionnaire survey have explicitly referenced 'too many games being played on the turf square' as an issue of importance. Any concerns with respect to home venues have been summarised in Table 6.3, and cover a variety of themes including a desire for improved ancillary facilities and equipment.

Scenario Testing: The Future

Future Picture of Provision

6.44 The future requirement for playing pitches will be impacted by several factors, including:

- A Changes to the number of people living in the area and / or to the demographic profile of the population;
- B Changes in participation trends and in how pitch sports are played;
- C Club specific development plans and aspirations; and
- D Amendments to the current facility stock either through the provision of new pitches or the loss of current pitches.

6.45 These issues are considered in turn in order to build a picture of future demand for playing pitches.

A Population Change

Team Generation Rates

6.46 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. TGRs are derived by dividing the appropriate population age band by the number of teams playing within that area in that age band. By applying TGRs to population projections, we can project the theoretical number of teams that would be generated from population growth and gain an understanding of future demand.

6.47 **Table 6.8** summarises the current TGRs for cricket in the local authority and uses them to assess the potential impact of projected changes to the population profile on demand for cricket.

Table 6.8: TGRs and potential change to number of cricket teams in the local authority: 2015-2033

2015 AGE GROUPS	2015 AGE GROUPS (K)	2015 TEAMS	2015 TGRs	2033 AGE GROUPS (K)	2033 TEAMS	CHANGE (+/-)
Junior cricket (7-17 male)	10.12	31	326.4	11.51	35.4	4.4
Junior cricket (7-17 female)	9.53	0	none	11.00	none	none
Senior cricket (18-55 male)	35.35	34	1,039	37.24	35.8	0.45
Senior cricket (18-55 female)	35.18	0	none	36.74	none	none

6.48 As there are no female-only recorded teams within the numbers estimated, they continue to remain under-represented in projects for 2033.

6.49 The above suggests that there will be an increase in the number of teams by 2033, and especially in the adult male and junior male categories.

6.50 The population data on which the above calculations are based¹⁰ are themselves only based upon previous trends, and do not necessarily take into account the impact of planned new residential growth yet to be determined.

Projected change in the population resulting from planned new growth

6.51 The above projects the change in team numbers arising out of natural change in the population up to 2033. There is also a need to consider any additional teams generated from localised population change resulting from planned new development. This new development may give rise to a significant local redistribution of the population, and conceivably in the spatial demand for playing pitches. The precise housing growth allocations to be catered for in the emerging new development plan are currently being determined

B Changes in participation trends and how sport is played

6.52 Changes in participation may perhaps have the most significant impact upon future demand for cricket pitches. Analysis of recent trends in participation reveals the following;

¹⁰ Table 2b: 2010-based Subnational Population Projections by sex and quinary age. Source: Population Projections Unit, ONS. Crown copyright 2012.

6.53 Earlier in this section it was shown that those clubs responding to the questionnaire survey had, overall, experienced some growth in the junior age-group categories, but a general stasis, at best, in other respects.

6.54 In recognition of changing lifestyle patterns and the challenges of 50 over cricket, the ECB are now seeking to introduce alternative forms of the game, including Last Man Standing and T20, as well as other initiatives to encourage informal participation such as O40 Leagues, Pub Leagues and U19 competitions.

6.55 The ECB strategy is currently focused in these areas: Clubs, leagues & volunteers (Clubs); Children & Young People (Kids); Community engagement & inclusive participation (Community); Casual cricket and new formats (Casual)

6.56 The emergent theme from of the strategy, highlights the potential to grow more informal formats of the game whilst maintaining the current player base in club based cricket.

6.57 This may result in the growth of more casual play and midweek leagues and this could generate demand for 'casual' venues within the local authority. A central, accessible venue would be ideal, but if it were to work anywhere in the District it would need to be in the Braintree urban area where the catchment population is largest

6.58 In addition to this, the 'Chance to Shine' charity may induce additional interest amongst children, as it currently supports around 350 hours of free coaching in local schools within the County. There is also Kwik Cricket locally, with a number of teams involved, and this might also translate into some additional future demand to play in older age groups.

C Development plans and aspirations

6.59 Clubs responding to the club questionnaire survey revealed the following aspirations, and potential obstacles frustrating their realisation.

Table 6.9: Club plans and aspirations

Club Name	Adult Men's Teams	Adult Women's Teams	Junior Boys' Teams	Junior Girls' Teams	Other (e.g. Vets)
Halstead CC	0	0	1	0	0
Kelvedon and Feering CC	0	0	0	0	0
Terling CC	0	0	1	1	0
Rayne CC	0	0	0	0	0
Witham CC	0	1	0	0	0
Gestingthorpe CC	0	0	0	0	1
Gosfield CC	0	0	0	0	0
Braintree CC	0	0	1	0	0
Coggeshall Town CC	0	0	0	0	0
	0	1	3	1	1

6.60 Taking into account the necessary caveats, the above aspirations suggest that responding team might like to field an additional:

- 1 adult (ladies team); and,
- junior teams

6.61 The clubs have also stated some of the obstacles that, they feel, stand in the way of them realising these aspirations. In practice, there may be little that can be done to reduce some of these obstacles, especially in the current financial climate. However, the statements serve to emphasise that some clubs would like to expand their activities were it not for the existence of certain obstacles- one of the goals of the strategy which this needs assessment underpins should be to seek ways in which these obstacles can be mitigated. These are summarised in **Table 6.10**.

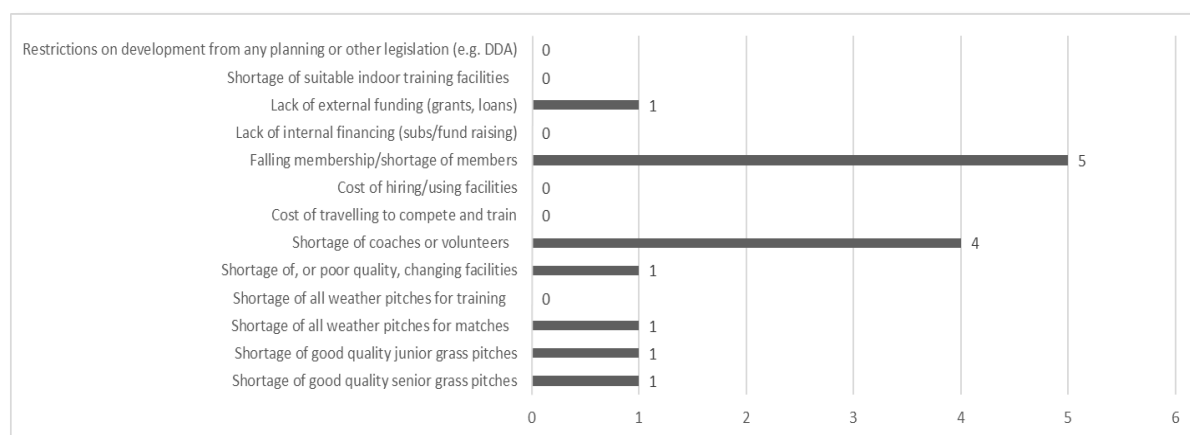
Table 6.10: Obstacles stopping clubs fielding more teams

Club Name	Shortage of good quality senior grass pitches	Shortage of good quality junior grass pitches	Shortage of all weather pitches for matches	Shortage of all weather pitches for training	Shortage of, or poor quality, changing facilities	Shortage of coaches or volunteers	Cost of travelling to compete and train	Cost of hiring/using facilities	Falling membership/shortage of members	Lack of internal financing (subs/fund raising)	Lack of external funding (grants, loans)	Shortage of suitable indoor training facilities	Restrictions on development from any planning or other legislation (e.g. DDA)
Halstead CC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Kelvedon and Feering C C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Terling CC	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rayne CC	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Witham CC	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Club Name	Shortage of good quality senior grass pitches	Shortage of good quality junior grass pitches	Shortage of all weather pitches for matches	Shortage of all weather pitches for training	Shortage of, or poor quality, changing facilities	Shortage of coaches or volunteers	Cost of travelling to compete and train	Cost of hiring/using facilities	Falling membership/shortage of members	Lack of internal financing (subs/fund raising)	Lack of external funding (grants, loans)	Shortage of suitable indoor training facilities	Restrictions on development from any planning or other legislation (e.g. DDA)
Gestingthorpe CC	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Gosfield CC	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Braintree CC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Coggeshall Town CC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	1	1	1	0	1	4	0	0	5	0	1	0	0

6.62 The obstacles will obviously differ depending on the club. However, the following summarises the overall significance of stated obstacles.

Figure 6.3: Summary of obstacles in the way of fielding more teams.



6.63 Shortage of membership, coaches and volunteers are seen as the biggest overall obstacle in the way of team numbers growing.

6.64 When adding the extra teams that might be generated if responding clubs could achieve aspirations to additional teams arising from projected population growth (2033), the total increased future demand will be:

Table 6.11: Summary potential overall growth in team numbers

Extra teams from population growth		Extra teams for aspirational growth		Extra teams (A+B)	Grass Fields required
Adult	1.6	Adult	1	2.6	1 (max)
Junior	4.4	Junior	5	9.4	1 (share the above)

Key issues for the Strategy to address

6.65 Cricket in the local authority is generally in stasis, albeit that there does appear to have been some growth in junior provision.

6.66 The overall quality of existing provision is standard to good, although there are issues experienced at specific sites (noted in the main body of the section).

6.67 Although conventional cricket league cricket is largely in a stasis, there is growth nationally in less formal versions of the game ('Last Man Stands', T20, Kwik Cricket) which appeal to the young and those who are time-challenged.

6.68 The concept of a central venue (perhaps in Braintree) for casual cricket should be explored, with the provision of non-turf wickets. This would help develop team-based (as opposed to club-based cricket for those who cannot commit to regular and frequent games).

6.69 The impression from this study is that the larger clubs have much better access to T20 competitions and other short- game derivatives. Smaller clubs may wish to consider the potential impact on traditional matchplay in the medium to long term if young people want to focus on the shorter game and are therefore drawn increasingly to the larger clubs.

6.70 Increased population levels especially resulting from planned growth will heighten demand for pitches in some locations, in coming years. (See **Appendix 6** for further details).

7 RUGBY

Introduction

7.1 This section assesses the adequacy of pitches for Rugby Union. There is no Rugby League played in the local authority. Although there is some Rugby League played in Essex, such as in Brentwood and Colchester, activity is sparse, and there does not appear to be any move at a local or national level to establish a presence for the sport in Braintree local authority. Accordingly, this section concentrates on the Rugby Union code in the local authority by presenting the following:

- An overview of pitch supply.
- An overview of demand for rugby.
- The pattern of play of rugby.
- A review of the capacity and adequacy of current provision across the local authority, including an understanding of activity at individual sites.
- A summary of findings and key issues for the Strategy and Action Plan to address - separate document.

Overview of Pitch Supply

7.2 There are 9 sites containing facilities for rugby in the local authority. This figure includes all known public, private, school and other pitches whether or not they are in secured community use. The total pitch provision across the local authority is summarised in **Table 7.1**. The list includes some pitches marked out on school sites. However, these appear also at times to be marked out and used for football and other activities. Although rugby appears to be played as part of the curriculum at some secondary schools, the education pitches are not used by the community, although in theory some of them at least could be. Only the venues that are actively used for club rugby have been subjected to a quality assessment (see **Table 7.4**).

7.3 Rugby Union is a club site-based sport, and most clubs across the country focus on a single venue for their teams and home matches. The two principal clubs in Braintree largely prove no exception, with the Braintree and Witham Clubs focusing activity on their own club venues. In addition to the above a small 1-team club (Halstead Templars RUFC) play out of the Courthauld Sports Ground in Halstead.

Table 7.1: Rugby pitches in the local authority

Name	Pitches	Availability	Ownership Type	Management Type
ALEC HUNTER ACADEMY	1	B	Academies	School/College/University (in house)
COURTHAULD SPORTS GROUND, HALSTEAD	1	A2	Club	Sport Club
NOTLEY SPORTS CENTRE	2	B	Community school	School/College/University (in house)
KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD (BRAINTREE)	1 (under-sized)	A1	LA	LA/Trust
BRAINTREE RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB	4	A2	Local Authority	Sport Club
BRAINTREE SPORT & HEALTH CLUB	1	B	Community school	Trust
HEDINGHAM SCHOOL	1	B	Academies	School/College/University (in house)
NEW RICKSTONES ACADEMY	1	B	Academies	School/College/University (in house)
THE HONYWOOD COMMUNITY SCIENCE SCHOOL	2	B	Community school	School/College/University (in house)
WITHAM RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB	2	A2	Sports Club	Sport Club

7.4 The above table and suggests that, for the two clubs in particular, the quality and maintenance of the playing surfaces is of standard quality. This rating tends to be confirmed by the views of the clubs themselves, both of which generally rate their pitches overall as being of a reasonable standard. Braintree RUFC however consider that their training pitch is not well-drained. In addition, some of the club's training tends to take place on one of the three match pitches. It is also noted that some junior training takes place on the under-sized pitch at King George V Playing Field.

7.5 In addition to the clubs' own rugby activity, both grounds are used for other activity, including school rugby activity in both cases. The Witham RUFC venue has also hosted events such as charity football matches, carnivals and fireworks displays.

7.6 It is, however, the intensity of use of rugby pitches by resident and visiting rugby teams both for training and competition that leads to a situation where pitches are over-used relative to their capacity to absorb activity.

Overview of demand

Current Participation

7.7 Excluding Billericay RFC (based at Willowbrook sports club and hosting a range of adult and junior teams) the three clubs based within the local authority, which draw from a catchment largely within Braintree District, yield the following teams as estimated in the 2015 season.

Table 7.2: Clubs and teams in the local authority (excluding Billericay RUFC)

Club	Ground	Adult male rugby teams	Adult female rugby teams	Colts male rugby teams (u18-19)	Colts female rugby teams (u18-19)	Youth male rugby teams (u13-17)	Youth female rugby teams (u13-17)	Mini rugby (u12)
Braintree RUFC	Braintree RUFC	3				5		7
Halstead Templars RUFC	Courthauld Sports Ground, Halstead	1						
Witham RUFC	Witham RUFC	1 ¹¹				1		4

7.8 The majority of adult teams being fielded by clubs play in the BL Essex merit tables. The Braintree men's first team play in the London 2 North East Division. The older youth teams play in the various divisions of the Essex Youth League. The single team Halstead Templars RUFC play in the

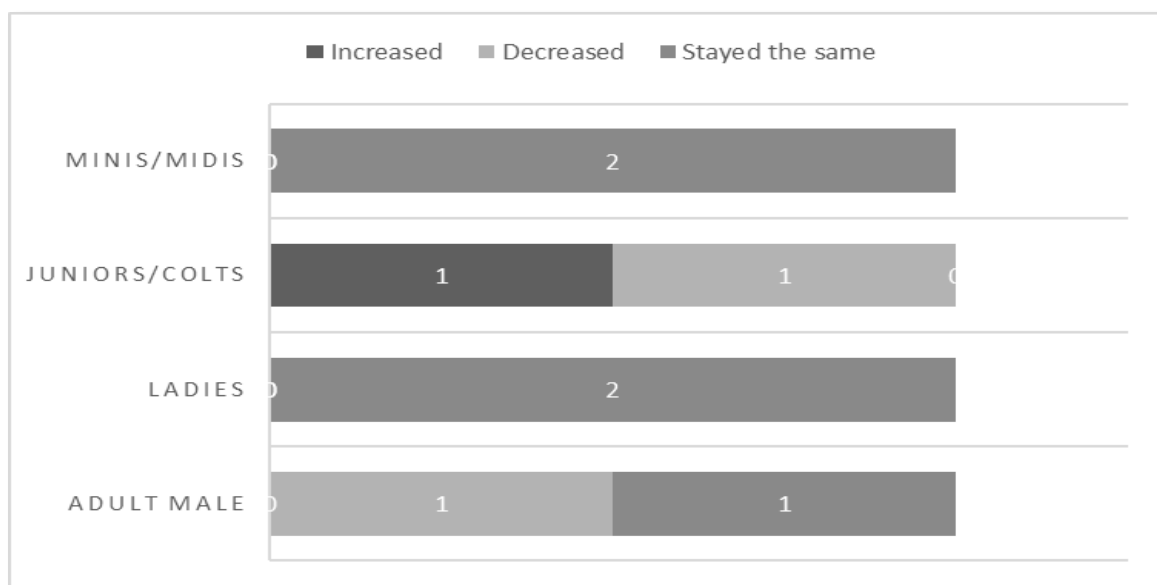
¹¹ This figure was correct at the time of undertaking the assessment. However, later information shows that Witham RFC has now begun to field an additional team, as a result of targeted development work. This team is extremely likely to achieve status as a bona fide league team. Paragraph 2.9 of this assessment stresses the importance of a strategy and action plan review to update and apply new data as it becomes necessary. Because rugby has a small number of active teams in the District compared with football (for example), the addition of even one more adult team will have a disproportionate and significant impact on overall participation levels for the former, as opposed to the latter sport. As current participation levels are used to help estimate future demands for facilities, a significant change in the levels must be recognised when updating the Strategy and Action Plan.

Eastern Counties Greene King Division Three South. The mini and midi teams generally play only friendlies.

Trends in Local Participation

7.9 The club questionnaire survey combined with other evidence suggests that the number of teams fielded by local clubs has largely remained the same over very recent years.

Figure 7.1: trends in team numbers over previous three years



7.10 Braintree RUFC stated that previously had a 4th XV and Vets team, but are now fielding under 17s and an under 18s team

7.11 Witham RUFC states that a decline in numbers has meant it has lost its under 15s, and its under 13's and 14's had to merge to make a team.

Displaced, Unmet and Latent Demand

7.12 The extent to which the current participation hides latent or frustrated demand to play rugby is considered further later in this section. However, there does not appear to be much current evidence to suggest that the number of teams fielded locally will increase dramatically, under the current circumstances. Braintree RUFC suggest that limited capacity at their home ground would stop them from fielding additional junior teams.

7.13 There is little evidence of clubs/teams having to travel outside the local authority to the access home ground facilities.

7.14 It is to be noted that there are no female teams recorded as being fielded.

Origins of Membership

7.15 The club survey indicates that the majority of players live within 5 miles of their home venue. The higher the standard of rugby the greater the preparedness of better players to travel to clubs offering opportunities to play at a higher standard.

Patterns of Play

7.16 The patterns of play for the various age groups in rugby over the course of a week follow the general national pattern of:

- Adult Males playing on Saturday afternoons;
- Colt teams playing on Saturday afternoons;
- Minis and junior teams playing on Sunday mornings; and,
- Adult female teams playing on Sundays.

Training patterns

7.17 All club/team training conducted by local clubs generally takes place on an allocated pitch. However, Braintree RUFC also make use of one of their match pitches. The club also uses an under-sized pitch at the King George V Playing Field.

7.18 Most team training sessions generally take place once per week for each of the team squads. The exception to this is the Braintree 1st and 2nd XVs which train twice a week.

Capacity Scores - situation at individual sites

7.19 For rugby, supply and demand is measured by considering:

- the amount of play that a site is able to sustain (based upon pitch quality and the facilities and pitches available);
- how much play takes place;
- whether there is any spare capacity at the site based upon a comparison between the capacity of the site and the actual usage; and
- any other key issues relating to the site which have arisen through provider and user consultation.

7.20 Both the supply of pitches and the demand for pitches is measured through the use of match equivalents to ensure that a comparison is possible. To fully understand activity on a site, consideration is given to both:

- the adequacy of pitch provision over the course of a week; and,
- capacity of a site to meet additional demand at peak time. It is assumed that a team playing home fixtures every other week would generate the equivalent of 0.5 match equivalents per week (one fixture every other week). Match equivalent values are also used to measure the use of pitches for training, as well as the impact of use by educational establishments and casual access. 90 minutes of training is 1 match equivalent.

7.21 The Rugby Football Union (RFU) has devised a method for estimating the number of adult games that might be played each week in a season without undue wear and tear, based on an assessment of maintenance and drainage regimes. This is shown in **Table 7.3** below.¹²

Table 7.3: RFU capacity assessment guide (adult matches week)

	Maintenance		
Drainage	Poor (M0)	Standard (M1)	Good (M2)
Natural Inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2
Natural Adequate (D1)	1.5	2	3
Pipe Drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25
Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2	3	3.5

Based on this rating method the following assessments have been made for sites used for community rugby.

Table 7.4: Rugby pitch quality ratings

Name	Availability	Ownership	Pitches Adult Rugby	Rugby pitch maintenance score	Rugby pitch maintenance rating	Rugby pitch drainage score
Braintree RUFC	A2	Club	4	M1	D1	2

¹² Quality Scoring of Sites

The score given to the overall pitch quality is based upon Sport England's new playing pitch strategy guidance – (Appendix 4d found at (<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>))

There are two scores recorded on the assessment form: one is for pitch maintenance (frequency of aeration and surface dressing) and the other is for the type of drainage a particular pitch has (natural, pipe drained, pipe and slit drained, unknown). Also noted but not scored on the assessment forms are qualitative and ancillary information (**length and coverage of grass, size of pitch, problem areas, condition and safety of goal posts, and availability of** changing, floodlighting and car parking).

Courthauld Sports Ground, Halstead	A2	Club	1	M1	D1	2
Witham RUFC	A2	Club	2	M1	D1	2
King George V Playing Field	A1	LA/Trust	1 (undersized)	M1	D1	2

7.22 As youth rugby is played on a senior pitch the RFU suggests it should be categorised as equivalent to a senior match. Youth teams tend to play on senior pitches. Where this occurs the play will have some impact on the quality of, and therefore use some of the carrying capacity of, the senior pitches. As they are senior pitches the youth play needs to be quantified as match equivalent sessions of a senior pitch. If a mini/midi team plays on half a senior pitch every week for half the time of a senior match then it may be appropriate to record the use as a quarter (0.25) of a senior match equivalent session a week against the senior pitches on a site. This would enable the demand to be captured against the senior pitches on a site where the play takes place while reflecting the limited impact on the quality and capacity of the pitches compared to the senior play.

7.23 The above is of course the basis for only a rough assessment of ‘carrying capacity’ of rugby pitch sites, and it must be informed by other considerations and the views of users and managers, where they are available. This said, the above method has been applied to the site assessment information and the estimates of teams’ match play and training needs to produce the following picture of overall site use relative to the notional capacity. The **Table 7.5** (below) compares the estimated match equivalent capacity of the key rugby club sites, with the estimated level of match equivalent usage.

7.24 In rugby, the tendency is for different age groups (adults, juniors, and minis) to play on the same playing surface, which is primarily marked out to adult pitch dimensions. Therefore, on most of the sites usage by adults, juniors, and mini teams should be aggregated so as to provide the overall picture of use relative to the estimated capacity. A fuller explanation of the assumptions underpinning the calculations on which **Table 7.5** is based is provided in the **Appendix 4** at the rear of this document.

7.25 It proved possible to assess three out of the four sites that are used by local rugby club teams. The single pitch at the Courthauld Sports Ground in Halstead was not assessed, but its use by just one team is unlikely to lead to issues of over-use.

Table 7.5: Site usage versus capacity (match equivalents)

				a	b	c	d	e	f	g	H
Name	Ward	Availability	Ownership	Total adult/colt rugby match equivalents/week	Total youth rugby match equivalents/week	Total mini rugby match equivalents/week	Adult pitches	Ideal number matches/pitch/week	Total site match capacity/week (d x e)	Rugby pitch drainage/maintenance score	Net rugby site match capacity (f – (a + b + c))
Braintree RUFC	Braintree East	A2	Club	1.5	5	2.63	4	2	8	D1/M1	-1.13
Witham RUFC	Witham West	A2	Club	0.5	1	1.5	2	2	4	D1/M1	1.00

7.26 The following comments can be made in respect of the two sites currently used for club rugby:

- In respect of the Witham RUFC site, there appears to be spare net carrying capacity (which is enhanced by the fact that the club does not currently regularly field a second adult team; and,
- In respect of the Braintree RUFC site, there does appear to be a level of play that is higher than the net site carrying capacity. To an extent, the situation may not be as bad as the calculations suggest, as an under-sized pitch at King George V Playing Field is also used on occasion. However, as stated earlier, the Club has expressed use about the over-use of some of its pitches for both training and matchplay.

Scenario Testing: The Future

Future Picture of Provision

7.27 The future requirement for playing pitches will be impacted by several factors, including:

- Changes to the number of people living in the area and / or to the demographic profile of the population;
- Changes in participation trends and in how pitch sports are played;
- Club specific development plans and aspirations; and,
- Amendments to the current facility stock either through the provision of new pitches or the loss of current pitches.

7.28 These issues are considered in turn in order to build a picture of future demand for playing pitches.

A Population Change

Team Generation Rates

7.29 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. TGRs are derived by dividing the appropriate population age band by the number of teams playing within that area in that age band. By applying TGRs to population projections, we can project the theoretical number of teams that would be generated from population growth and gain an understanding of future demand.

7.30 **Table 7.6** summarises the current TGRs for rugby in the local authority and uses them to assess the potential impact of projected changes to the population profile on demand for rugby.

Table 7.6: TGRs and potential change to number of rugby teams in the local authority: 2015-2033

	2015 AGE GROUPS (K)	2015 TEAMS	2015 TGRs	2033 AGE GROUPS (K)	2033 TEAMS	CHANGE (+/-)
Mini-rugby (7-12 mixed gender)	7.40	11	672.7	8.28	12.3	1.3
Junior rugby (13-18 male)	5.456	6	909.3	6.3	6.9	0.9
Junior rugby (13-18 female)	4.98		none	4.98	none	none

	2015 AGE GROUPS (K)	2015 TEAMS	2015 TGRs	2033 AGE GROUPS (K)	2033 TEAMS	CHANGE (+/-)
Senior rugby (19-45 male)	15.696	5	3,139	16.89	5.3	1.3
Senior rugby (19-45 female)	15.552		none	16.46	none	none

7.31 The above suggests that there will be only small increases in the number of teams by 2033.

7.32 The population data on which the above calculations are based¹³ are themselves only based upon previous trends, and do not necessarily take into account the impact of planned new residential growth yet to be determined.

Projected change in the population resulting from planned new growth

7.33 The above projects the change in team numbers arising out of natural change in the population up to 2033. There is also a need to consider any additional teams generated from localised population change resulting from planned new development. This new development may give rise to a significant local redistribution of the population, and conceivably in the spatial demand for playing pitches. The precise housing growth allocations to be catered for in the emerging new development plan are currently being determined.

B Changes in participation trends and how sport is played

7.34 Whilst focusing on maintaining its core market of 15v15 senior teams, the RFU is actively promoting its variants of the game for younger players – touch and tag rugby and ‘7s’ and also looking to develop more recreational and social rugby during the summer. This is likely to increase the numbers of junior teams and possibly summer activity for adults, which may cascade down to increase participation during the winter months.

7.35 There are also changes in the type of facilities now being used for rugby. Clubs are aspiring to use AGPs more for training, to reduce the impact on the grass pitches for training, thus enabling grass pitches to accommodate greater intensity of match play. In addition, clubs are now considering the possibilities of using WRB 22 accredited AGPs for competitive fixtures. In this instance, the increased capacity offered by an AGP would mean that current and future training needs, as well as match play could be accommodated.

7.36 The 2015 Rugby World Club may have a positive effect on participation locally, although this is difficult to quantify.

¹³ Table 2b: 2010-based Subnational Population Projections by sex and quinary age. Source: Population Projections Unit, ONS. Crown copyright 2012.

C Development Plans and Aspirations

7.37 Clubs were asked about any aspirations they had to field more teams, as well as perceived obstacles in the way of achieving this, with the following results:

- Braintree RUFC would like to run an additional men's team; a women's team; and, a junior girls' team but consider that the following obstacles could get in the way:
 - Shortage of all-weather pitches for matches
 - Shortage of all-weather pitches for training
 - Falling membership/shortage of members
- Witham RUFC state they would like to run an additional men's team; women's team; and, an additional junior boys' team, but suggest that falling membership/shortage of members stops them from achieving this goal. Another improvement that the club would like to make to improve the 'rugby experience' at the ground (if not necessarily the numbers of teams fielded) is the reorientation of the main pitch to run parallel with the clubhouse. This would improve both the spectator and playing experience, but would require associated capital works.

When adding a bone fide estimate of the extra teams that might be generated if responding clubs could achieve aspirations, to additional teams arising from projected population growth (2036), the total increased future demand will be:

Table 7.7: Summary of potential overall growth in team numbers

Extra teams from population growth		Extra teams for aspirational growth		Extra teams (A+B)	Grass pitches required (assuming 2 games per pitch/week)	Note
Adult	1.3	Adult	2	3.3	1-2	
Junior	0.9	Junior	2	2.9	1 (shares the above pitch)	Play on part of full-size pitch
Mini/midi	1.3	Mini/midi	0	1.3	1 (shares the above pitch)	Play on part of full-size pitch

7.38 The above has implications both for the supply of pitches overall, at sites where clubs are currently based, as well as the over-use of existing pitches. The potential issues in this regard will

especially impact upon the Braintree and Witham Clubs. The lack of good quality grass and artificial surfaces for training and matchplay have already been highlighted as problematic for expansion of activity.

Key issues for the Strategy to address

7.39 Pitch drainage improvements are desirable at the Braintree RUFC club, and especially in respect of the training pitch.

7.40 Reorientation of the main pitch at Witham RUFC will help to improve the overall rugby environment at the club.

7.41 If an additional 3G AGP were to be provided in the vicinity of either Braintree and/or Witham RUFC, an WRB- compliant surface would be beneficial, especially in respect of Braintree RUFC.

8 HOCKEY

Introduction

8.1 This section assesses the adequacy of pitches for hockey in the local authority by presenting the following:

- An overview of pitch supply
- An overview of demand
- The pattern of play
- A review of the capacity and adequacy of current provision
- The future picture of provision
- A summary of f issues for the Strategy and Action Plan to address

Overview of Pitch Supply

8.2 Hockey is almost exclusively played on AGPs. Guidance on AGPs (Sport England 2010) indicates the following surfaces to be suitable for hockey:

- Water Based (suitable for high level hockey)
- Sand Filled (preferred surface for hockey)
- Sand Dressed (acceptable surface for hockey)
- Short Pile 3G (acceptable surface for non-competitive hockey).

Quantity

8.3 Based upon the above criteria, there are 3 x full-size pitches with a preferred surface for hockey in the local authority, and which are considered to be matchplay-compliant: these are at Witham Sports Ground; Halstead Leisure Centre; and Refleet Sports Ground. There are other smaller facilities that could be used for training. All relevant facilities are listed in the **Table 8.1** (below).

Table 8.1: Pitches relevant to hockey in the local authority

Name	Facility Sub Type	Access Type	Management Type	Year Built	Refurbished	Floodlit	Small AGP	Ward
WITHAM SPORTS GROUND	Sand Dressed	Pay and Play	Trust	2006	No	Yes	No	Witham South
HALSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE	Sand Filled	Pay and Play	Trust	2003	Yes	Yes	No	Halstead St. Andrew's
RELEET SPORTS GROUND	Sand Filled	Pay and Play	Sport Club	1996	Yes	Yes	No	Bocking North

Quality

8.4 The quality of accessible pitches has been assessed through site audits, and the findings of these have been compared with and, where appropriate, modified by the views of facility users and managers. The overall ratings are as follows:

- **Refleet Sports Ground (Bocking):** The playing surface was replaced in 2014 and is in good condition (which is confirmed by the user club). However, the changing facilities are small and outdated, and the resident and owner club ((Braintree HC (previously Phoenix HC)) is looking to upgrade and enlarge the facility.
- **Witham/Bramston Leisure Centre and Sports Ground:** This facility is owned and managed by the District Council and Fusion Leisure respectively. It is an old surface that is generally only of low-to-standard condition. The resident hockey club rates the surface as being poor. Some of the degradation in quality might be due to footballers using inappropriate footwear. The (off-site and remote at Riverview Playing Fields) clubhouse is owned/shared with a local cricket club, and is considered to be of standard quality.
- **Halstead Leisure Centre:** This facility is owned and managed by the District Council and Fusion Leisure respectively. It is an ageing surface, that is used primarily for football training and 5-a-side. There is currently little, if any hockey use. In its present condition the surface is unlikely to have utility for matchplay hockey.

8.5 There other smaller facilities, such as at Oak Fam and Gosfield School, which are small-sized and unsuited for match play hockey.

Overview of Demand

Current Participation

8.6 There are two clubs based within the local authority, and these are:

- Braintree HC, playing out of the Refleet Sports Ground in Bocking. This club is formed out of a merger of the former Great Dunmow and Braintree clubs;
- The Witham HC, playing out of the Bramston Sports Ground, which is under the management of Witham Leisure Centre (although the remote clubhouse is share-owned and managed by the club in conjunction with the cricket club).

Table 8.2: Clubs and fielded teams

Club	Mens (16+)	Womens (16+)	Boys (11-15)	Girls (11-15)	Minis	Competitions
Braintree Hockey Club	4 (including male colts)	3	6	7	various	Men (East various divisions); Women (Essex various divisions)
Witham Hockey Club	5	3	1	1	various	Men (East various divisions); Women (Essex various divisions)

8.7 In addition to the above, the Witham club fields over 40s men's and women's teams in cup competitions, and there are occasional mixed teams playing.

8.8 Currently, all the adult team activity is based at the 2 venues described earlier.

Trends in Local Participation

8.9 Judging by the comments of both clubs responding to the club survey, the numbers of teams have increased in the last the last three years, and especially in the junior sections. It is noted that both clubs have identified a potential issue over accessing additional pitches if the clubs are to continue to grow. This is considered further later in this section.

8.10 Discussions with England Hockey suggest, in general terms:

- That the Essex/East area growth @ 6% in hockey participation, which is consistent with national situation;
- The proximity of the Olympic Park facilities and 2012 legacy effect may have an important positive influence for participation in the region;
- Nationally, the growth in junior hockey has achieved a 56% increase from a 2012 base level;
- However, hockey is essentially a club-focused sport due to facility needs and culture, and growth in the sport is ultimately limited by availability of facilities;

8.11 Use of team numbers alone in assessing the scale of local hockey can be misleading, as some junior activity, for example, is difficult to quantify through 'team counts'. Data provided by England Hockey record that in 2013/14 the Braintree HC had 90 adult and 207 junior members; and in the same season the Witham HC had 95 adults and 65 juniors. The Braintree club membership is growing

and Witham membership remains fairly level. It is junior membership that appears to have experienced most growth in membership numbers.

Origins of Membership

8.12 In the club survey, it was identified that the two local clubs have differing ranges in terms of the catchments for membership.

8.13 The Witham Club estimate that whilst around 40% of their membership live with 5 miles of the home venue, a large minority (40%) live further than 5 miles away.

8.14 The Braintree Club suggest that around 60% of their membership live more than 5 miles away from the home venue. Perhaps this larger catchment has its historical origins in the merger of the former Braintree and Great Dunmow Clubs.

8.15 Larger catchments can sometimes reflect relatively higher standards of the club matchplay, with good level players being prepared to travel significant distances to play for the Club, but is not likely to be a major factor in the case of the two local clubs.

Patterns of Play

8.16 For both clubs, match day and training patterns tend to follow national patterns: adult matches tend to be played on Saturdays, sequentially through the days. Junior matches are played on Sundays on a similar basis. Training for the various age/gender groups takes place during mid-week.

Training Needs

8.17 In its response to the club questionnaire survey, the Braintree Club did not express any issues with access to facilities for training, as it owns its pitch. However, the Witham Club appears to face significant problems. The club does not control its own venue, and has to share midweek slots with football activity. The Club cites that for 1 year the ladies' section trained in Chelmsford due to lack of availability, and lost a lot of support from players in the process.

Displaced, Unmet and Latent Demand

8.18 In their responses to the questionnaire survey, both clubs have cited views that relate to potential displaced, unmet or latent demand:

- The Witham Club feel that the lack of a dedicated hockey facility within the town causes problems in terms of the retention of (potential) players. The problems caused by the ladies' section previously having to commute to Chelmsford to train have already been mentioned. However, the view of the club is also that promising young players are encouraged to travel to venues at Chelmsford (for example) to get used to water-based pitches generally used for higher level competition.
- The Braintree Club consider that the current standard of the pavilion/clubhouse facilities is deterring potential players, who choose other clubs, or else do not take up the game in the first place. It is also understood that Braintree HC junior teams (known as the Blue Hornets) play the majority of their matches at Felsted School in neighbouring Uttlesford District; and it also runs a satellite club at the Helena Romanes School in Great Dunmow. These circumstances are not necessarily problematic for the club, and views were not expressed to this effect through the questionnaire survey response.

8.19 Another major issue highlighted by both clubs is the potential for any future growth in team numbers being constrained by the potential lack of additional pitches, for matchplay: this is considered further below.

Pitch Capacity Issues

8.20 The problems that the Witham Club face in respect of accessing midweek slots for training, have already been mentioned. Apart from this, the other capacity issue that affects the two clubs is the lack of availability of pitches for fielding additional teams, and especially in the adult sections. Adult league matches tend to be played on Saturdays between 10:00 and 16:00, and this would allow for 4 full-length matches to be played in sequence in that period. On a home/away pattern, this means that the two available pitches can just about manage to host the number of regularly playing teams- if there were an aspiration to field additional teams there would in all likelihood be a need to find additional venues.

8.21 For the Braintree Club this would only be an existential problem if there were strong ambitions to grow the number of adult teams further. As the club own their own ground, they have control over important mid-week training slots and, presumably only hire out the pitch to other uses when the club itself does not require its use. As mentioned earlier, the Club also have access to two other venues (in neighbouring Uttlesford District) that are used for junior and satellite club activity- both these external venues are relatively close to the Club's main venue (between c. 5 and 8 miles).

8.22 For the Witham Club the capacity problems are genuine, both in terms of valuable midweek training slots, as well as the potential for a change of surface type to one that is not appropriate to hockey. The Club does not control the facility, and it is used for football as well as hockey. It has been the experience elsewhere in the country for facility owners to change surface types from hockey-appropriate sand-based surfaces, to those better suited to football (3rd Generation (3G) pitches). Generally speaking, facility providers and managers of venues that are not controlled by hockey clubs, find it attractive to change surfaces to 3G on the assumption that this might better attract external grant funding; and/or, that football is a better 'revenue generator' than other sports such as hockey.

Scenario Testing

Future Picture of Provision

8.23 The future requirement for playing pitches will be impacted by several factors, including:

- A Changes to the number of people living in the area and / or to the demographic profile of the population;
- B Changes in participation trends and in how pitch sports are played;
- C Club specific development plans and aspirations; and,
- D Amendments to the current facility stock either through the provision of new pitches or the loss of current pitches.

8.24 These issues are considered in turn in order to build a picture of future demand for playing pitches.

A Population Change

Team Generation Rates

8.25 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. TGRs are derived by dividing the appropriate population age band by the number of teams playing within that area in that age band. By applying TGRs to population projections, we can project the theoretical number of teams that would be generated from population growth and gain an understanding of future demand.

8.26 **Table 8.3** summarises the current TGRs for hockey in the local authority and uses them to assess the potential impact of projected changes to the population profile on demand for hockey.

Table 8.3: Potential change in teams numbers based on natural population change

	2015 AGE GROUPS (K)	2015 TEAMS	2015 TGRs	2033 AGE GROUPS (K)	2033 TEAMS	CHANGE (+/-)
Junior hockey (11-15 male)	5.28	7	754	6.3	8.4	+1.4
Junior hockey (11-15 female)	4.98	8	622	5.0	8.1	+0.1
Senior hockey (16-45 male)	28.02	6	4,670	30.2	6.5	+0.5
Senior hockey (16-45 female)	27.77	6	4,628	27.8	6	No change

8.27 The above suggests that there will be fractional increases in team numbers throughout the age groups, with the exception of adult females. However, it will be noted that population-driven change alone will begin to nudge up the prospects for an additional adult team being formed, thus potentially aggravating the capacity situation in respect of adult matchplay and training based on the two existing established venues.

8.28 The population data on which the above calculations are based¹⁴ are themselves only based upon previous trends, and do not necessarily take into account the impact of planned new residential growth yet to be determined.

Projected change in the population resulting from planned new growth

8.29 The above projects the change in team numbers arising out of natural change in the population up to 2033. There is also a need to consider any additional teams generated from localised population change resulting from planned new development. This new development may give rise to a significant local redistribution of the population, and conceivably in the spatial demand for playing pitches. The precise housing growth allocations to be catered for in the emerging new development plan are currently being determined

B Changes in participation trends and how sport is played

8.30 The effect of Olympic success on participation may be having a positive impact, and perhaps especially amongst junior females. New initiatives like 'Back to Hockey' or 'Rush Hockey' sessions targeted at certain age groups may engage new participants and increase participation in the sport. England Hockey have suggested that an appropriate model for promoting growth in the game may be to develop a hub club-satellite club framework, and this might better exploit the availability of sand-

¹⁴ Table 2b: 2010-based Subnational Population Projections by sex and quinary age. Source: Population Projections Unit, ONS. Crown copyright 2012.

based AGPs on school sites, and improve links between schools and clubs; this is an approach which the Braintree Hockey Club has adopted, with its use of school facilities in Uttlesford District. There may be scope to further promote hockey on a satellite site basis in Braintree District, with an existing local club helping to encourage activity on the pitch at Halstead Leisure Centre, although it is recognised that there may also be scope to convert this pitch surface to 3G, which would not be suited to competition hockey. Both local clubs have expressed a desire to work more closely with local schools. The Witham Club have stated that whilst hockey is not prominent in the local schools PE curriculum, some of their players teach at schools and therefore have links with potential players.

8.31 It is to be noted that the Witham Club's ground is located next to the Maltings Academy, whilst the Halstead Leisure Centre pitch (currently unused for hockey) is next door to the Ramsey Academy.

C Development plans and aspirations

8.32 Both clubs have expressed a desire to field more teams throughout the junior and adult age-groups, but suggest that their aspirations in this regard are thwarted for various reasons.

8.33 For Braintree Hockey Club the main obstacles are:

- Shortage of, or poor quality, changing facilities
- Shortage of coaches or volunteers
- Falling membership/shortage of members¹⁵
- Lack of internal financing (subs/fund raising)
- For Witham Hockey Club the issues are more in respect of the availability of facilities:
- Shortage of artificial pitches for matches
- Shortage of artificial pitches for training
- Shortage of coaches or volunteers
- Cost of hiring/using facilities
- Shortage of suitable indoor training facilities

Issues to be addressed by the Strategy

8.34 The existing facility at Witham Leisure Centre (Bramston Sports Ground) should be protected and enhanced with a primary function for hockey.

8.35 The potential for improving the facility at Halstead for hockey should be investigated, as a satellite venue involving school-club links, and also as a potential remote overflow match and training venue for existing clubs. The potential for this should be discussed with Braintree Hockey Club.

¹⁵ Although figures made available from England Hockey for this assessment show that membership numbers, are in fact rising. (See paragraph 8.11)

PART C: OTHER OUTDOOR SPORTS

9 OUTDOOR TENNIS

General

9.1 This section examines the provision of outdoor tennis, and analyses the situation with regard to:

- quantity of provision;
- quality of provision; and,
- accessibility of provision.

9.2 Lawn tennis can be played on a variety of surfaces, both indoors and outdoors. In this section it is only the provision of outdoor tennis facilities that is being considered directly, although there will be some crossover in participants playing both indoors and outdoors.

Quantity

Supply

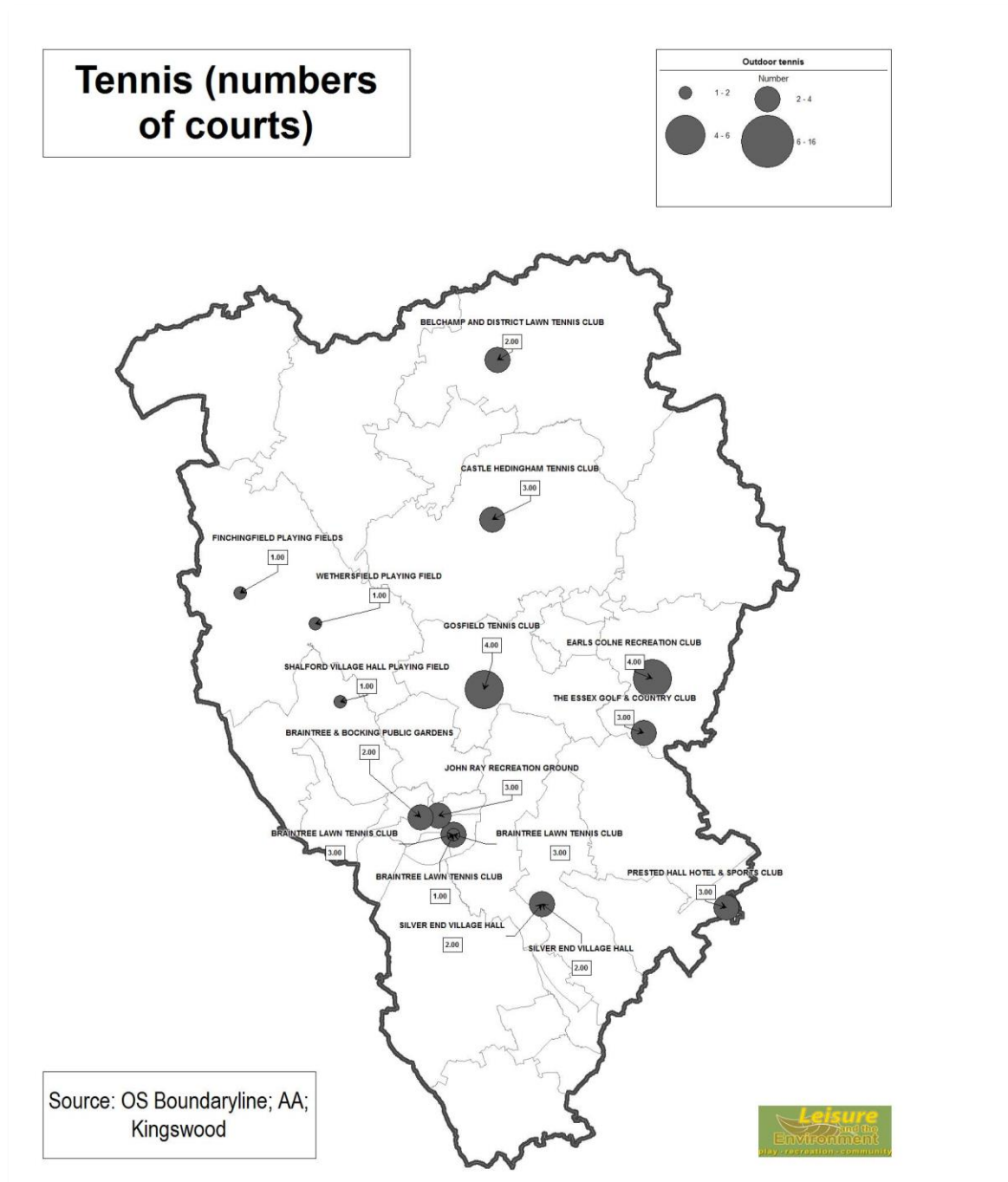
9.3 There are estimated to be 38 courts at 12 different locations within the local authority, and which are listed in **Table 9.1** and shown on **Map 9.1**. These do not necessarily include every private court (and perhaps also exclude some courts on various school campuses, which have no record of availability for community use).

Table 9.1: Known outdoor tennis courts in the local authority.

Name	Number	Floodlit?	Surface	Changing Rooms	Access Type	Quality rating and other notes
CASTLE HEDINGHAM TENNIS CLUB	3	FALSE	Macadam	Yes	Pay and Play	Good
BELCHAMP AND DISTRICT LAWN TENNIS CLUB	2	FALSE	Macadam	No	Pay and Play	Good
BRAINTREE & BOCKING PUBLIC GARDENS	2	FALSE	Macadam	No	Pay and Play	Standard
BRAINTREE LAWN TENNIS CLUB	1	TRUE	Macadam	Yes	Pay and Play	Good
BRAINTREE LAWN TENNIS CLUB	3	FALSE	Grass	Yes	Pay and Play	Good
BRAINTREE LAWN TENNIS CLUB	3	FALSE	Artificial grass	Yes	Pay and Play	Good
EARLS COLNE RECREATION CLUB	4	TRUE	Macadam	Yes	Pay and Play	Good
FINCHINGFIELD PLAYING FIELDS	1	FALSE	Macadam	No	Pay and Play	Standard
JOHN RAY RECREATION GROUND	3	FALSE	Macadam	yes	Pay and Play	Standard

Name	Number	Floodlit?	Surface	Changing Rooms	Access Type	Quality rating and other notes
GOSFIELD TENNIS CLUB	4	FALSE	Macadam	yes	FALSE	Macadam
PRESTED HALL HOTEL & SPORTS CLUB	3	TRUE	Artificial grass	Yes	Pay and Play	Good
SHALFORD VILLAGE HALL PLAYING FIELD	1	FALSE	Macadam	Yes	Free Public Access	Standard
SILVER END VILLAGE HALL	2	FALSE	Other	Yes	Pay and Play	Standard
SILVER END VILLAGE HALL	2	FALSE	Grass	Yes	Pay and Play	Standard
THE ESSEX GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	3	TRUE	Macadam	Yes	Registered Membership use	Good
WETHERSFIELD PLAYING FIELD	1	FALSE	Acrylic	Yes	Free Public Access	Standard

Map 9.1: Tennis provision in the local authority



9.4 Some of the courts are not necessarily dedicated tennis courts, as they are also marked out for other activities, such as multi-purpose ball courts, and/or for netball etc.

9.5 The majority of the provision is located in the south of the local authority, but not essentially focussed on the Braintree area, as there is significant provision at sports and country clubs in the east of the District. The provision listed is largely either macadam, or some other form of artificial surface.

Views of local residents

9.6 A People's Panel Survey conducted to inform this assessment categorised outdoor tennis courts with outdoor bowling greens for the purpose of assessing regularity of use of such facilities. 7% of respondents suggested that they used such facilities at least monthly; 4% at least weekly; and, 1% daily. 65% of respondents suggested that they never used such facilities.

Views of key agencies

9.7 The following agencies/organisations have expressed relevant comments.

Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)

9.8 The LTA has a national Facility Strategy that is available via the LTA website. When a Local Authority becomes a priority area the LTA completes a full technical audit of facility stock. Braintree District is not a priority area at the moment for the regional LTA. Essex LTA did not highlight any specific priority facility needs or aspirations.

9.9 The LTA's Participation Strategy 2013 – 17 places particular emphasis on the following:

- Priority areas: working with partners in priority areas to develop bottom up tennis development plans to offer more opportunities for people to play tennis.
- Parks: maximising the use of park sites to increase regular participation through the development of local authority and partnerships with other providers.
- Clubs: Driving participation in clubs by supporting 'traditional' clubs to keep more people playing tennis through optimised programming and consumer offers.
- Disability: To inspire and engage more disabled people in tennis, and develop a stronger infrastructure and tennis network for disabled players.
- Young People: 14-25 yrs will benefit from adapted product offers, more after school provision, including satellite clubs, as well as a significant expansion of the varied tennis options for FE and HE students, already trialled in 2011-13.
- Talent: to support, and continuously improve, tennis' talent ID and development structures.

Braintree District Council

9.10 Most tennis facilities are provided via local tennis clubs such as Braintree, Castle Hedingham and Halstead.

9.11 Public Tennis courts are available at a small number of sites including Great Notley Country Park, Braintree and Bocking Public Gardens, Witham Leisure Centre and Halstead Leisure Centre.

9.12 Earls Colne Golf and Country Club supply tennis courts including indoor tennis provision within a "dome" type facility.

9.13 Braintree Tennis Club has been involved in discussions about possible relocation.

9.14 Tennis and MUGAs - if provided via developer contributions relating to new housing development it is important that ongoing management and sustainability measures are agreed.

9.15 In broad terms it seems that in most areas Multi-Use Games Areas are needed more than dedicated tennis courts - providing facilities for both tennis and a wider range of sports.

Active Essex

9.16 There are a considerable number of tennis courts across the District – mostly based at clubs. For example, Braintree Tennis Club has its own grass, artificial turf pitch and hard courts. There are also clubs at Earls Colne with courts, Gosfield and Hedingham. Essex Golf and Country Club (near Earls Colne) has indoor courts (dome facility). Not aware of a club at Witham.

Club responses

9.17 Responses were received from four local tennis clubs - Castle Hedingham, Gosfield, Braintree, and Silver End.

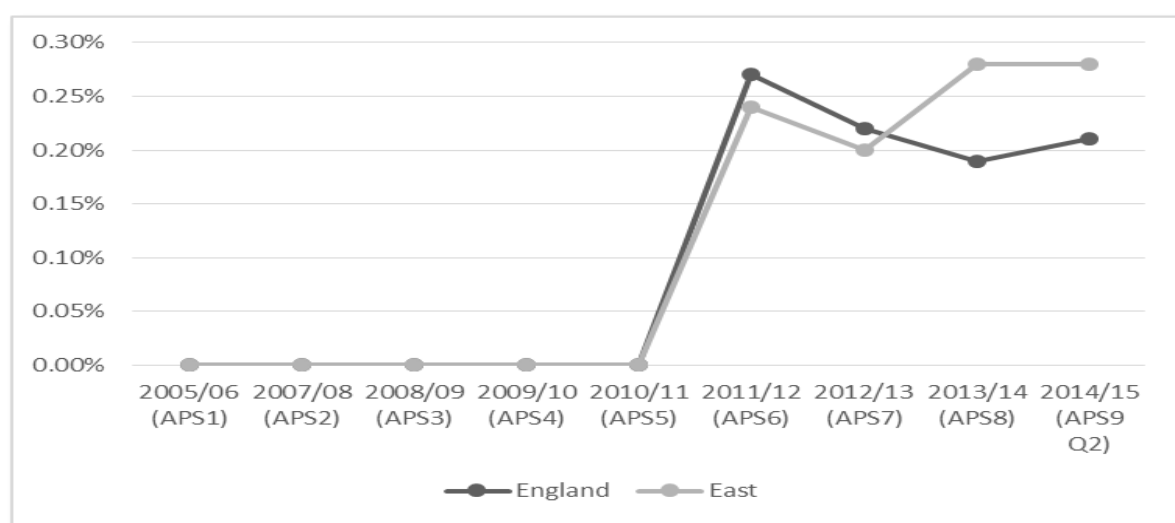
9.18 Membership ranges from 20 (Silver End) up to 120 (Braintree). Only Castle Hedingham report an overall membership increase over the past three years; though both Castle Hedingham and Braintree note an increase in junior membership (as a result of successful coaching initiatives).

9.19 Some clubs have active junior sections with links to local schools.

Active People and Market Segmentation analyses

9.20 The following **Figure 9.1** illustrates the trends for adult participation in indoor tennis in terms of percentage of adults who play at least once a week. Given the small data samples, it was inappropriate to include Essex or Braintree as areas this table. The estimates for the East of England appear similar or just above the average for England, although based on the evidence participation rates at national and regional have declined in recent years. If the most recent regional participation rate (0.28%) is applied to the Braintree adult population in the order of 312 adults within the District would be participating in indoor tennis at least once a week.

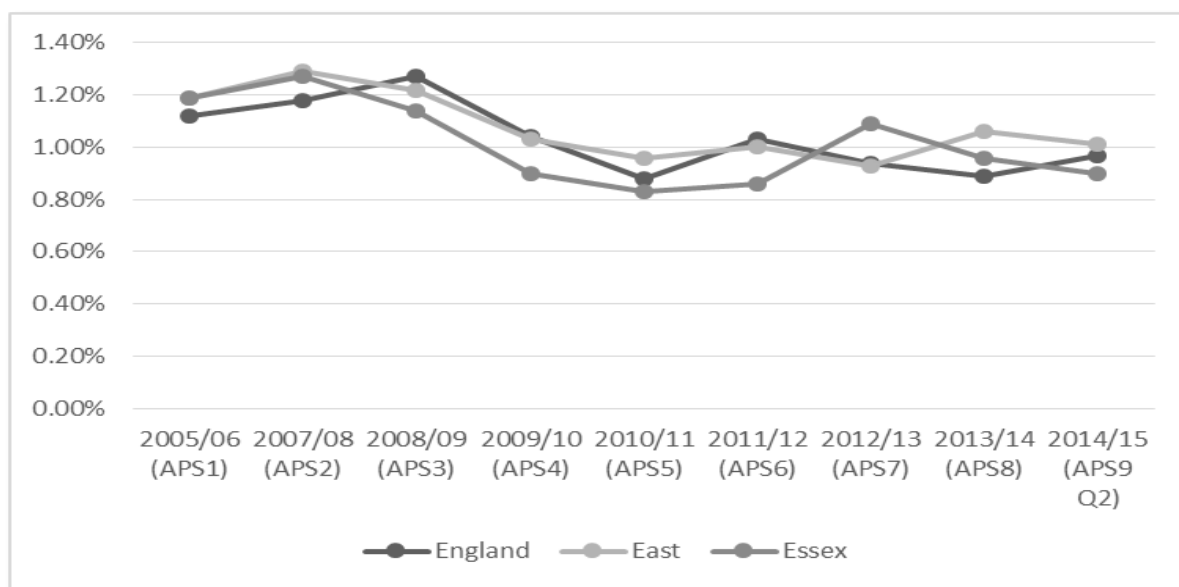
Figure 9.1: Participation of at least 1 x 30 minute session/week (% of adult population) in indoor tennis



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

However, if all forms of tennis (both indoor and outdoor) are included in the analysis a further data set is available that includes measurements for Essex, as well as the regional and national levels. The data sample for Braintree would still be too small for it to be included. It will be seen that national, regional, and county trends and follow each other closely. (See Figure 9.2)

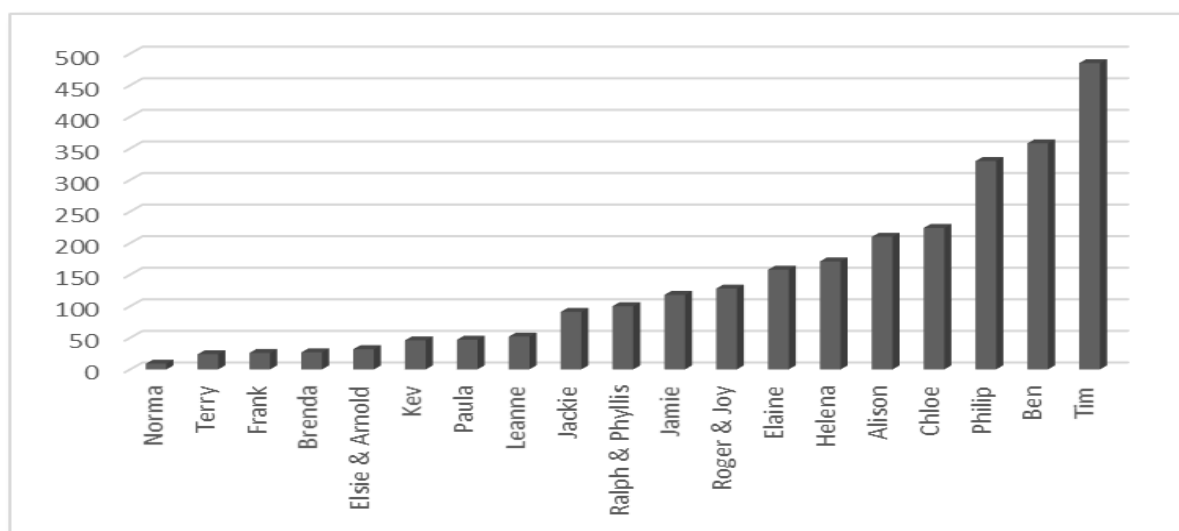
Figure 9.2: Participation in tennis (indoor and outdoor) by adults at least once/week



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included

9.21 If the most recent participation estimate for Essex (0.9%) is applied to Braintree, it suggests that around 1,002 adults would be taking part in some form of tennis (either or both indoor and outdoor) at least once a week. **Figure 9.3** shows the numerical expression of the percentage of overall Sport England adult Market Segments likely to take part in the given activities.

Figure 9.3: Numerical representation of Sport England (adult) Market Segments in Braintree likely to play tennis



9.22 The combined total from the above 18 groups suggests that there may be significant potential demand for tennis in the local authority, when compared with the Active People estimates.

Quality

Views of local residents and site visits

9.23 35% of respondents to the People's Panel survey identified the tennis, netball courts and bowling greens as being either poor or very poor. (23% considered them to be good or very good, 42% considered them to be of average quality).

Site visits

9.24 However, the general perception based on site visits is that the overall standard of provision in respect of outdoor courts ranges from good to standard. The local authority controlled facilities tend to be quite basic, but still play-worthy at beginner/novice level. The club managed sites are normally of a significantly higher standard.

Views of local clubs

9.25 The reported quality of club facilities varies quite considerably for example Silver End and Gosford report many aspects of quality as being unsatisfactory whereas Braintree rate quality aspects as being either good or at least adequate.

9.26 The most commonly highlighted aspect of quality rated less than satisfactory are changing and shower facilities (no better than adequate for all clubs). Gosfield and Castle Hedingham rate their changing and shower facilities as being poor.

9.27 All of the responding clubs think that the quality of their facilities provides good value for money to their playing membership.

9.28 All of the clubs would like to increase activity by attracting more members, to develop more competitive games, increase the numbers of teams etc. However, common barriers to club development are: a shortage of good quality outdoor facilities and a lack of external funding (e.g. governing bodies).

Table 9.2: Tennis club comments on desirable improvements

Club	Plans, aspirations and other comments
Gosfield	Floodlighting of courts-this has already been identified but not funded. Improved signage of club-in progress Improve storage. Improve disabled access from car park to clubhouse. Improve landscaping.
Braintree	Improve courts add floodlights to increase opportunities for play and coaching. Improved access - drive is full of potholes. Improve clubhouse decor to attract new membership. Our land is owned by the council and is earmarked for development. Until we know that we will be moving and when this is likely to happen we are reluctant to invest all our money in the current facilities. However, it has now got to the stage where our court surfaces need replacing and in the absence of any information on timescale we have had to commit to get this done.

Club	Plans, aspirations and other comments
Silver End	New tennis courts needed.
Castle Hedingham	<p>Changing facilities improved.</p> <p>Floodlighting is the main priority this year with the courts needing resurfacing in the near future.</p> <p>Members want to play in the evenings throughout the year and to be able to offer other clubs evening fixtures. With floodlighting we could extend the season run more teams attract more members and join other leagues.</p> <p>Grants are available but the process for applications seems very difficult, time consuming and with very little chance of success.</p>

Accessibility

9.29 Accessibility to tennis facilities can be considered in two ways. Firstly, there is a geographical accessibility time/distance involved to access facilities by various modes of transport. Secondly, there is social and economic accessibility: generally, facilities courts can be accessed either on a pay-and-play basis (such as is the case with the local authority courts); or, through membership of a club. The results of the household survey indicated no clear view on the public's acceptance of travelling to use tennis courts, and by which modes of transport. However, if the results from other sports are used, the general level of expectancy to travel would be up to 15/20 minutes and with the majority of trips being made by car.

9.30 Private clubs can be expensive to join for those on limited financial means, and if there is intent to drive up tennis participation amongst the young and the urban population in particular, the best approach may be to focus initially on park courts, to introduce more (young) people to the game, and then with progression routes to clubs as appropriate.

The future

9.31 Although club tennis appears well-supported, there is spare capacity on some of the public courts that are currently very under-used for tennis. Although future population change will have some impact upon demand for outdoor tennis, it is likely that any such increase could be absorbed by improvements to the existing stock of facilities. The emphasis should be on 'mending before extending' the existing stock. Any new provision, such as in large-scale development areas, should be designed with surfacing, marking, and multiple court configuration. So as to make it suited to multi-use activity.

Conclusions and key issues

9.32 Investment should be focused on upgrading existing provision, in association with activity programmes (such those promoted by the LTA).

9.33 It will be important that any new local authority facility provision has surfacing, markings, and is of a configuration that allows it to be used by a variety of activities.

9.34 The above should also be seen in the context of the identified need tennis facilities, as discussed in the companion built facilities report.

10 OUTDOOR BOWLS

General

10.1 This section examines the provision of outdoor bowls, and analyses the situation with regard to:

- quantity of provision;
- quality of provision; and,
- accessibility of provision.

10.2 Bowls can be played on a grass or synthetic surface either indoors or out. In this section it is only the provision of outdoor bowls facilities that is being considered directly, although there will be some crossover in participants playing both indoors and outdoors. The former is dealt with in an accompanying report dealing with Built Facilities.

Quantity

Supply

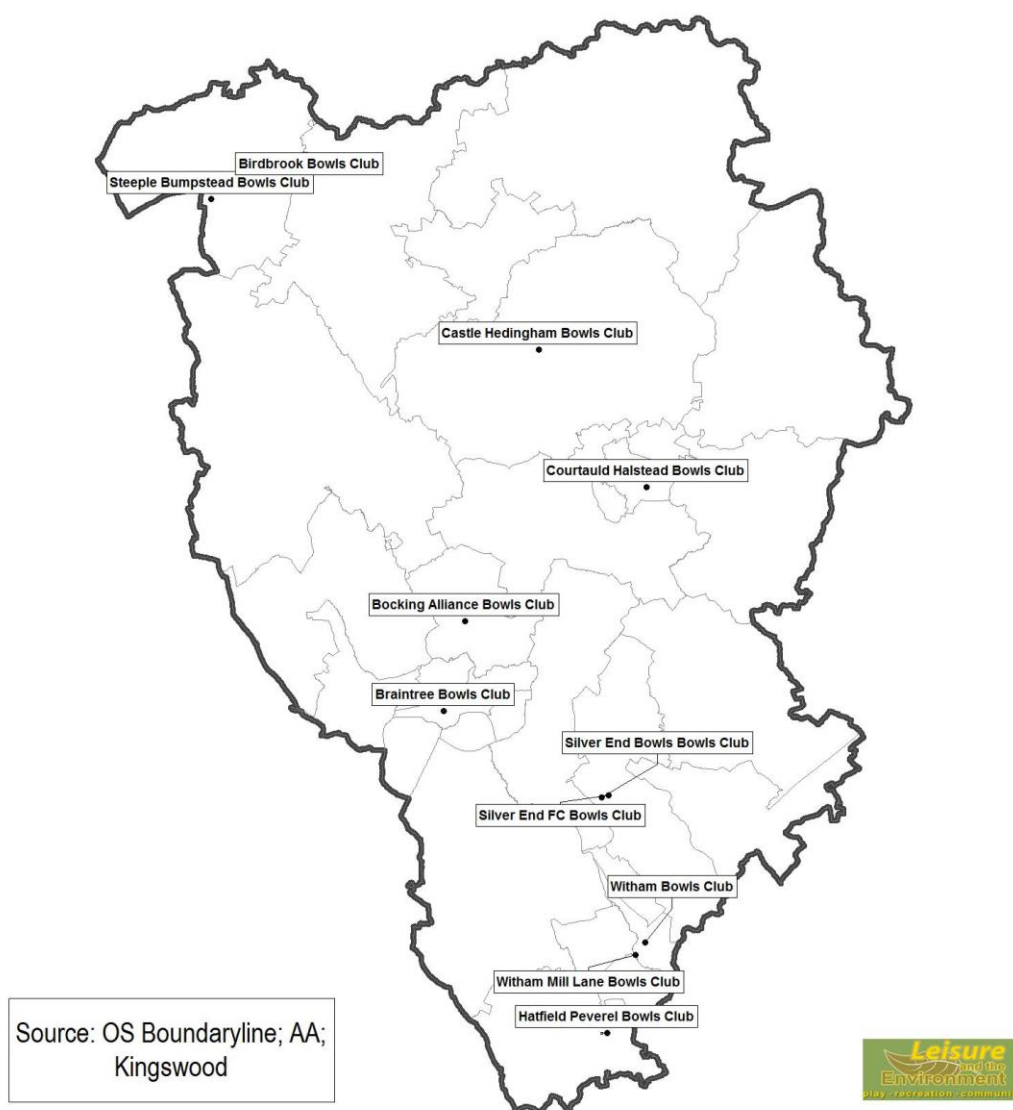
10.3 There are estimated to be 10 greens courts at 9 different locations within the local authority, and which are listed in **Table 10.1** and shown on **Map 10.1**.

Table 10.1: Known outdoor bowls greens in the local authority.

Name	Number of greens	Ward	Green quality	Notes
Birdbrook Bowls Club	1	Upper Colne	Good	Good rated pavilion
Bocking Alliance Bowls Club	1	Bocking North	Good	Good rated pavilion
Braintree Bowls Club	2	Braintree Central	Good	Good rated pavilion
Castle Hedingham Bowls Club	1	Hedingham & Maplestead	Good	Good rated pavilion
Courtauld Halstead Bowls Club	1	Halstead St. Andrew's	Good	Good rated pavilion
Silver End Bowls Club	1	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	Good	Good rated pavilion
Steeple Bumpstead Bowls Club	1	Bumpstead	Good	Good rated pavilion
Witham Bowls Club	1	Witham Chipping Hill and Central	Good	Good rated pavilion
Witham (Mill Lane) Bowls Club	1	Witham Chipping Hill and Central	Good	Average rated pavilion

Map 10.1: Outdoor bowls greens in the local authority

Outdoor bowls



10.4 The green quality ratings are relevant to the discussion about facility quality later in this section, but it will be noted that observations on the quality of greens is that they are on the better side of standard to good, although ancillary provision, in the form of club houses and parking etc can be rudimentary.

10.5 All of the clubs appear to have membership in excess of 60 members. Generally accepted guidance suggests that a standard bowling green requires in the order of 60 members to make it viable.

Views of local residents

10.6 A People's Panel Survey conducted to inform this assessment categorised outdoor bowls greens with outdoor tennis and netball courts for the purpose of assessing regularity of use of such facilities. 7% of respondents suggested that they used such facilities at least monthly; 4% at least weekly; and, 1% daily. 65% of respondents suggested that they never used such facilities.

Views of key agencies

10.7 The following agencies/organisations have expressed relevant comments.

Bowls England, the Bowls Development Alliance and Active Essex

Plans and Strategies - Priority Areas etc

10.8 The overall aim of the Bowls England strategy is stated as: "in conjunction with Affiliated Clubs and County Associations we will:

- Promote the sport of outdoor flat green bowls
- Recruit new participants to the sport of outdoor flat green bowls
- Retain current and future participants within the sport of outdoor flat green bowls

10.9 Bowls England has identified the following strategic priorities for the period to 31st March 2017.

- To increase participation in the sport of outdoor flat green bowls
- To support County Associations and Clubs
- To provide strong leadership and direction

10.10 In 2012 Bowls England through the *Bowls Development Alliance*¹⁶ (BDA) identified 5 "hot spot" areas in the country for the roll out of an "intensive recruitment and investment programme from 2013 - 2015. Essex was a priority "hot spot" area and Active Essex worked in partnership with the Bowls Development Alliance to increase participation levels in the sport of bowls. This phase of the programme has ended meaning there is no longer funding specifically allocated for Essex.

¹⁶ The BDA is the body for Bowls England (flat green outdoor) and English Indoor Bowling Association (flat green indoor) working together to grow the sport of bowls.

10.11 Active Essex reported that overall this has been a successful initiative in the County and clubs have been actively engaged. It remains a challenge however for bowls club to retain and increase membership as it is predominantly viewed as a sport for older people. Attracting younger members is a priority for clubs.

Facility Supply

10.12 Broadly speaking there appear to be sufficient outdoor greens to meet current demand via the local clubs and parish facilities.

Demand Issues

10.13 As Essex has a high population of over 55's and the added health benefits to continue to be active throughout adulthood it is important to continue to support the clubs within the community.

10.14 Bowls England recognises that the trend of a reducing number of affiliated members year-on-year is the biggest single issue facing the sport of flat green bowls. Whilst the board of Bowls England is keen for this trend to be reversed, it must also be realistic enough to recognise that the trend may not be reversed within the term of its own Strategic Plan. It does however wish to focus its efforts on increasing participation, by both current and future participants, and success in this area can be achieved by all parties working together – Bowls England, County Associations and Clubs.

10.15 There are a number of bowling clubs in the District that are sustaining their current levels of membership but a challenge for all is attracting new members, particularly younger players.

Braintree District Council

10.16 The District Council does not consider there to be a need for additional outdoor bowls facilities within the local authority. Whilst the Council does not itself operate any such facilities, they own the land that is used by the Mill Lane Bowling Club. The latter has responded to the club survey and its comments are covered later in this section.

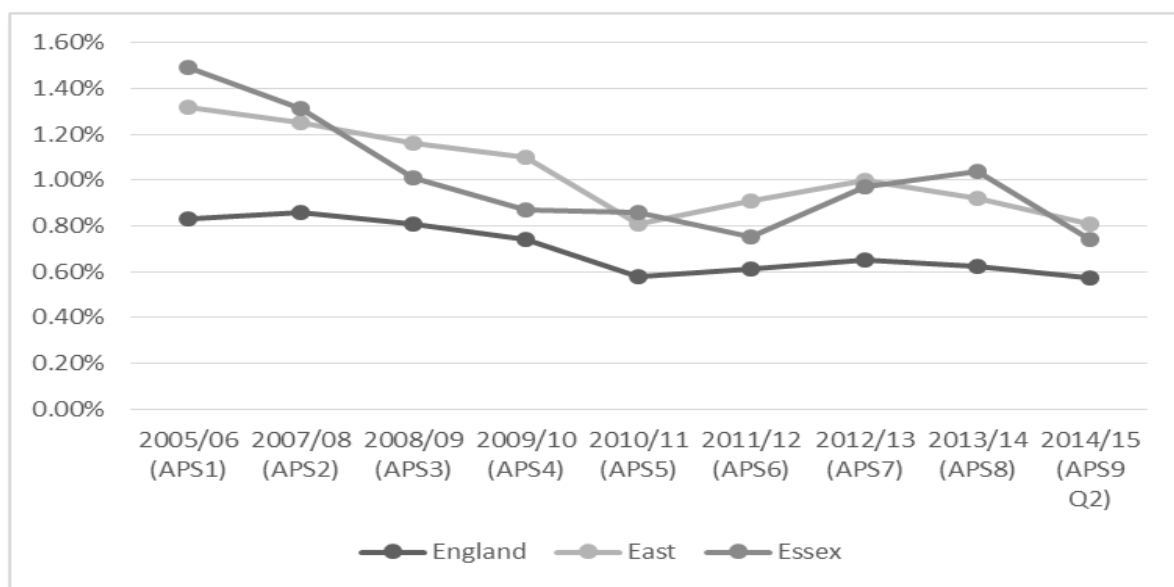
Active People and Market Segmentation analyses

10.17 The following **Figure 10.1** illustrates the trends for adult participation in all forms of bowls in terms of percentage of adults who play at least once a week. Given the small data samples, it was inappropriate to include Braintree within these comparisons. Estimates for Essex and the region appear to be above the average for England although, based on the evidence, participation rates at national, regional and county levels have all declined in recent years.

10.18 Using the most recent participation rate at county level and applying it to Braintree District (0.74%) in the order of 824 adults within the District would be participating in bowls (outdoor and indoor) at least once a week.

10.19 Bowls is traditionally a sports played by older members of the population. Given a generally ageing population within the local authority it might be expected that, rather than declining, rates of participation should be improving. The fact that they are not suggests other reasons contributing to the decline in the popularity of the sport.

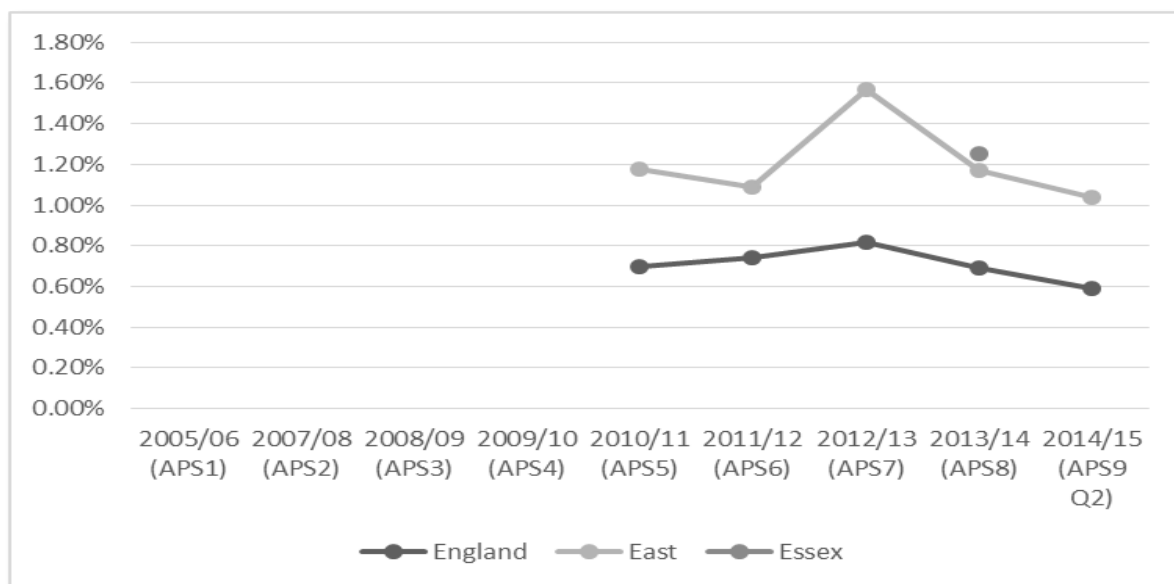
Figure 10.1: Participation of at least 1 x 30 minute session/week (% of adult population) in bowls (indoor and outdoor)



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

10.20 However, if the Active People Survey data for just indoor flat green bowls the picture is markedly different. (See **Figure 10.2** below).

Figure 10.2: Participation of at least 1 x 30 minute session/week (% of adult population) in indoor bowls



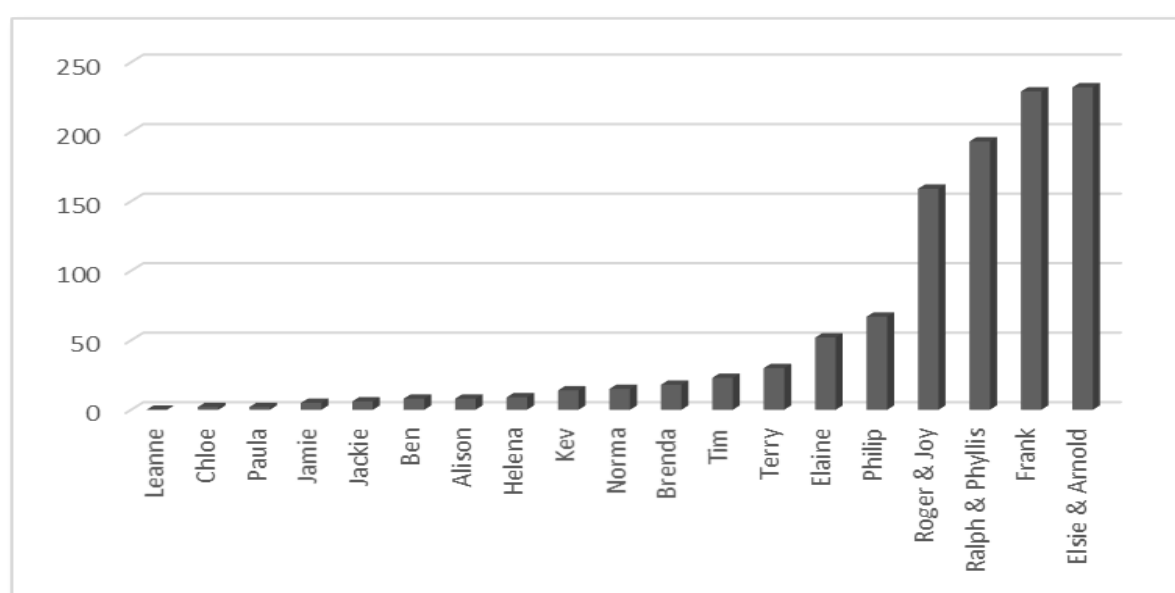
Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

10.21 Data are available for Essex only for 2013/14 using these parameters. However, for the 2013/14 survey the estimate for Essex was 1.25%. If this percentage is applied to Braintree District it

would equate to 1,391 adults taking part in indoor bowls at least one a week. It is clear from this that on the basis of the evidence available participation in indoor bowls is far more popular (using this measure) than that in outdoor flat green bowls within Essex: presumably the nature of the facility offered allows for a much more intense and extended period of use compared to the outdoor turf greens. The promotion of further indoor venues may therefore be a way of driving up participation in the sport, if resources permit.

10.22 Figure 10.3 shows the numerical expression of the percentage of overall Sport England adult Market Segments likely to take part in the given activities.

Figure 10.3: Numerical representation of Sport England (adult) Market Segments in Braintree District likely to play bowls



10.23 Bowls as a sport is somewhat limited in its appeal outside the older demographic groups, and, as can be seen from the above figure, those Segments most likely to play are the post retirement Roger & Joy, Frank, Elsie & Arnold, and Ralph & Phyllis. Even when the above figures are added up it suggests that local participation (based on the Essex rates in Figure 10.2) are already around what might be expected.

Quality

Views of local residents and site visits

10.24 Although 35% of respondents to the People's Panel survey identified the tennis, netball courts and bowling greens as being either poor or very poor. (23% considered them to be good or very good, 42% considered them to be of average quality).

10.25 Active Essex's overview as regards quality is that generally facilities tend to be in good condition with regards to the maintenance of the greens, however the club houses/pavilions are often needing more repairs as leases come to an end and clubs are trying to survive. The only initiative that Active Essex is aware of aimed at improving facilities is via the Sport England Inspired Facilities funding.

10.26 Active Essex note that a lot of the clubs do not have wheel chair access to both the green and the pavilion restricting the number of disabled people playing the sport. (Sport England targets for the BDA is to increase disabled people 16-54 years playing bowls).

10.27 The general assessment of green quality undertaken for this assessment (see Table 10.1) suggests that the quality of all greens is of a reasonable standard, and that if there are problems of adequacy they tend to related to ancillary provision and ease of access for the disabled.

10.28 However, it should be noted that the only bowls club responding to the questionnaire survey (Mill Bowling Club, Witham) considered that many aspects of their facility as being no better than adequate in terms of quality. Lighting and car parking facilities are rated as poor. The club would like to expand its clubhouse, but feels constrained by the short lease. The Club states that,

"We have 2 teams in the North West Bowling Association but due to lack of room in the club house that is the limit"...."We took the club out of council management 3 years ago and have improved the facility and increased the membership; but the loss of parking and the size of the club house will stop the club expanding further".

Accessibility

10.29 Accessibility to bowls facilities can be considered in two ways. Firstly, there is a geographical accessibility time/distance involved to access facilities by various modes of transport. Secondly, there is social and cultural accessibility.

10.30 In respect of travel catchments the household survey suggested that the majority of respondents would be prepared to travel up to around 15 to 20 minutes to access facilities such as bowls greens. The preferred mode of transport will generally be by car. However, overlain on this headline should be the consideration of the general age of bowls participants. As bowlers are generally significantly older than majority of adults playing sport, their preparedness to travel may not be as high. Accordingly, a general travel catchment of no more than 10 minutes may be more appropriate in terms of access by car to bowls facilities.

10.31 In respect of the social cultural and dimensions dictating access to facilities, bowls suffers from an image problem in respect of people's perception that it is an 'old person's sport'. This perception may be off-putting to younger people who might otherwise consider taking up the sport.

10.32 The best way of attracting new and younger membership may therefore be to offer demonstration/taster sessions in pay and play venues and indoor venues, which may have an ambience better suited to younger people. Another way of driving up participation amongst younger people could be to offer better opportunities for families to become members of clubs, which would encourage cohesive and demographically inclusive groups to bolster club membership, and therefore help to address the issues associated with ageing membership of clubs.

The future

10.33 There does not appear to be an unmet demand for outdoor bowls currently: an ageing population and local increases in population resulting from new development may have some upward influence on participation levels in future years, but there is no convincing argument to suggest that this will require additional provision. However, the existing level of provision appears to be well-used based on membership levels, and all facilities appear to be of a good standard and well-maintained. Therefore, there is no convincing alternative argument to suggest that the existing level of provision will not continue to be well-used into the foreseeable future, and especially if some innovations were adopted in participation campaigns and club management.

Conclusions and key issues

10.34 The promotion of (further) taster sessions, linked to '3-generation, family membership' might be a way of bolstering the type of environment which might encourage more young people into the game.

10.35 There does not appear to be a need for additional outdoor bowls facilities, currently; although population change in some areas may cause this to be reviewed at some point in the future.

10.36 Conversely, there is no convincing argument to suggest that the current level of provision is more than required.

10.37 However, Witham Mill Lane site needs to be clarified

11 NETBALL

General

11.1 This section examines the provision of outdoor netball, and analyses the situation with regard to:

- quantity of provision;
- quality of provision; and,
- accessibility of provision.

11.2 Some issues are then summarised to be addressed in the strategy.

Context

11.3 Netball is played on various surfaces, either indoors or out. In this section it is only the provision of outdoor facilities that is being considered directly, although there will be some crossover in participants playing both indoors and outdoors. The companion built facilities report prepared as part of the overall study has highlighted a local expression of need for a new central netball venue that could include both indoor and outdoor court provision: this is considered further later in this section.

11.4 Netball differs from other sports dealt with in this report, as it is generally considered to be a female-only sport. It has a very large participation base but, paradoxically, has had a tendency to be under-represented by coverage in technical needs assessments. Therefore, it is important to explain a little more about the structure of the sport locally:

11.5 The development of netball facility projects is largely reliant on the sourcing of capital grants from external agencies/associations. Netball England has very limited capital funding that is reserved for national and regional priority projects.

Quantity

Views of key agencies

Netball England (NE)

Overview

11.6 Netball East Region is one of 9 Regions within England Netball. It develops and facilitates the delivery of all aspects of netball within the region.

11.7 Working together with the counties Netball East deliver netball throughout the region including competition, coaching, finance, officiating, performance and membership. They run the regional league and the performance development programme in the region.

11.8 The Regional Unit together with the County Netball Development Officers are responsible for Club Development including the Club Action Planning Scheme (CAPS) and developing new junior clubs, working with further and higher education, communication and marketing, education and training, competition, finance and increasing participation.

11.9 The development of netball facility projects is largely reliant on the sourcing of capital grants from external agencies/associations. England Netball has very limited capital funding that is reserved for national and regional priority projects.

Facilities issues and observations

11.10 The NGB note a "couple" of suitable venues, though there is a huge limitation of outdoor courts with no floodlights. They have also had issues gaining access to facilities due to a lack of availability.

11.11 The most important facilities for netball in Braintree District are Braintree Leisure Centre and Braintree College. Braintree Youth Netball Club have used Braintree Leisure Centre for many years.

11.12 NE note that they have always found the schools to be easily accessible in terms of contact but often availability is an issue; particularly with Braintree Leisure Centre being the only venue with outdoor floodlit courts.

Demand Issues and observations

11.13 In terms of development The NE would like to see more netball in the north of Essex. There is a lack of adult and junior netball opportunities in Braintree District. This is a priority for the NE.

11.14 Netball is popular in Braintree, however, and the few junior clubs that exist are at capacity. Braintree Youth Netball have about 100 members affiliated to England Netball.

11.15 Performance programmes are delivered through local clubs and the local league in Chelmsford. The regional academy has been held at Braintree College in the past and they often use the College for regional screening. The NGB has a good link with the College who host coaching courses.

Opportunities/challenges

11.16 The current challenge is a lack of junior netball provision and opportunities for casual adult netballers to play. This is partly due to lack of appropriate outdoor facilities, as indoor is often too expensive, but also a lack of a coaching workforce in Braintree.

Braintree District Council

11.17 The view of relevant Council officers is that netball seems to be quite strong in Braintree town (adult and youth) - mainly played at Braintree Leisure Centre and the College. Netball is also played in Halstead and Witham Leisure Centres.

11.18 The view is that there are currently probably enough facilities/courts to meet demand in Braintree District.

Active Essex

11.19 Active Essex has stated:

- Braintree College have a good indoor facility and teams also use the Braintree Leisure Centre.
- In general, sports halls can be used if they are available.

- There are hard, floodlit courts suitable for netball in Braintree and Halstead.

11.20 As far as Active Essex is aware there is only one senior club registered with Netball England and a couple of junior clubs in district.

11.21 Netball leagues tend to run on a central venue league basis. Colchester and Chelmsford are the nearest so teams may travel to these centres to play. It is not clear that there is enough demand for a main netball centre in Braintree District.

Club Responses

11.22 Responses were received from 2 netball clubs - Braintree Youth Netball Club and Kelvedon Netball Club (youth). Some key points were:

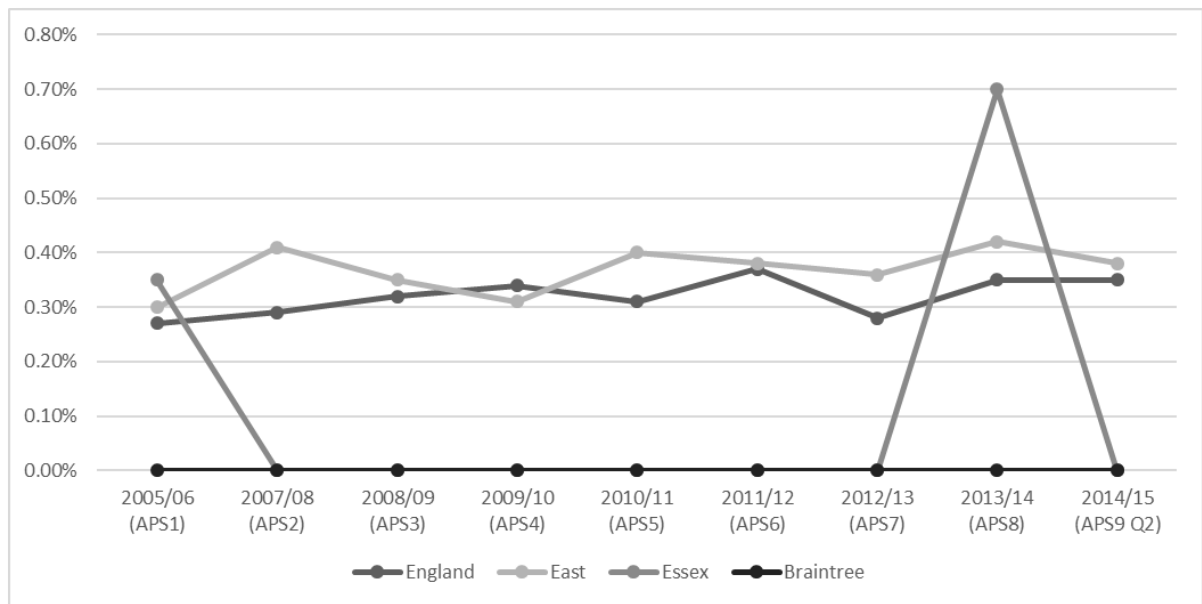
- Both clubs reported that their playing membership has increased over the past 3 years. Braintree Youth has 95 members and Kelvedon has 30 (at capacity). Braintree Youth is a clubmark club and accredited.
- Braintree Youth play at the Braintree Leisure Centre and Kelvedon at Honywood School, Coggeshall. Braintree Youth also uses facilities at Alec Hunter Academy, (indoors and out).

11.23 Braintree Youth FC also stated that:

- “We need more netball courts as we are growing every year. We started with 2 teams now have 11 teams and get an extra one every year”
- “Volunteers are hard to find”
- “Indoor facilities are available but they are too expensive - maybe they could be cheaper for young children”.

11.24 The above view is supported by statements from the Kelvedon club which suggests that there is a need for indoor facilities in the area with two courts, and within a reasonable price range.

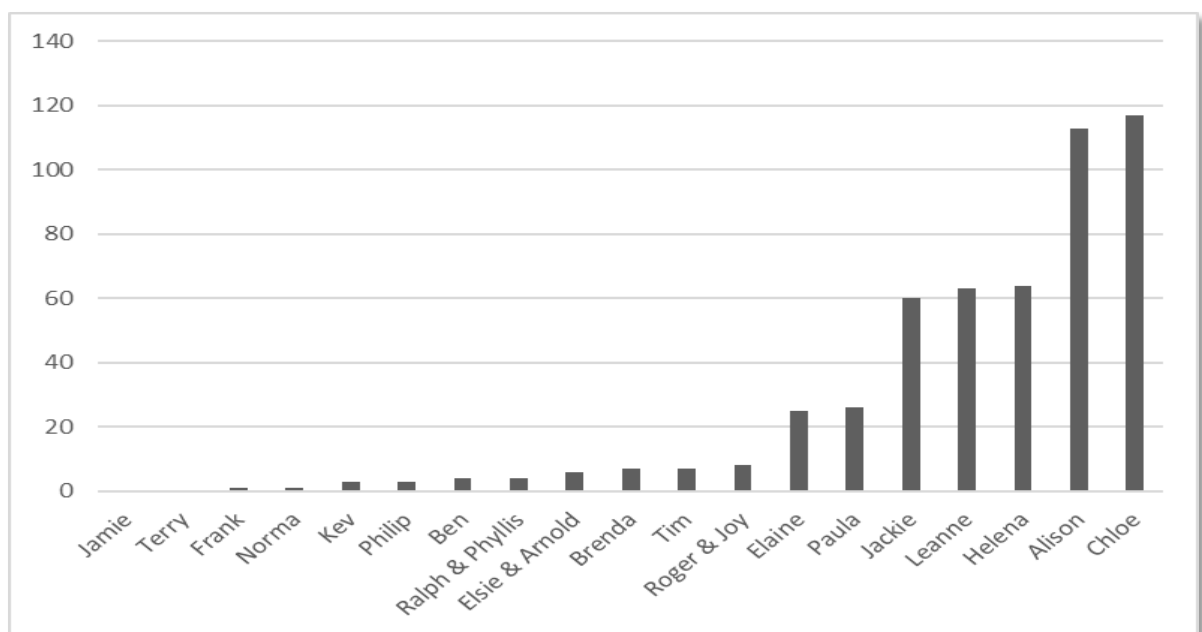
Figure 11.1: Participation of at least 1 x 30 minute session/week (% of adult population) in netball (indoor and outdoor)



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

11.26 Using the most recent participation rate at county level and applying it to Braintree (0.70%) in the order of 514 (largely female) adults within Braintree District would be participating in netball (outdoor and indoor) at least once a week. These figures exclude junior participation. **Figure 11.2** shows the numerical expression of the percentage of overall Sport England adult Market Segments likely to take part in the given activities.

Figure 11.2: Numerical representation of Sport England (adult) Market Segments in Braintree likely to play netball



11.27 The combined total in this graph comes to 514, which exactly coincides with the Active People estimate, and it suggests that the area may be performing close to the ‘expected’ participation.

Quality

Views of local clubs

11.28 The two clubs responding to the questionnaire survey highlighted the following concerns with respect to the quality of the facilities they use.

Braintree Youth (Braintree Leisure Centre and Alec Hunter Academy)

11.29 “Seats are needed for parents to sit on when waiting for their children.”

Kelvedon (Honeywood School)

11.30 “New netball posts are desperately needed, plus the court is old and needs re-surfacing. We need more members for school years 9 and 10 and would love indoor courts for all year round usage.”

Accessibility

11.31 Accessibility to netball facilities can be considered in two ways. Firstly, there is geographical accessibility in terms of time/distance involved to access facilities by various modes of transport. Secondly, the cost and practicality in accessing and using facilities that are often on school sites.

11.32 In respect of travel catchments the household survey did not cover netball specifically, when trying to establish optimum travel distances on the part of people’s propensity to travel to sports opportunities. However, leagues are centrally based, and usually fairly local to the catchment users. A travel time of up to 15/20 minutes to a central netball venue might therefore be considered reasonable, with the most significant mode of transport being by car.

11.33 In respect of the cost and practicality of accessing school sites, in particular, this is down to local leagues and clubs. Netball England does not have a huge involvement in booking facilities for the leagues. However, from the NGB perspective booking appears to be quite easy; though often pricing is an issue when working with a budget. Availability of indoor courts is a can also be a problem, it is considered.

Comment and the future

11.34 Local clubs and interests within the sport are very uniform in their views about the requirement for new facilities. Furthermore, some clubs would like to run more teams, subject to facilities being available. The multi-faceted issue facing the sport locally, is that:

- Clubs already appear to struggle to find sufficient court space to meet their needs;
- There are aspirations on the part of some clubs to field more teams; and,
- If current demands cannot be met through lack of facilities, it is very possible that interest in playing the sport will decline due to a lack of opportunities, which will be very unfortunate, given sport’s local popularity

11.35 Future population growth will only add to the level of demand; and,

Issues to address in the strategy

11.36 Demand is increasing but is frustrated by lack of facilities, locally.

11.37 Whilst the above cannot be a short-term aspiration, the potential should be explored for a shorter-term 'fix' based on existing venues, and/or improving access to existing courts, currently not used for community netball, but having potential.

12 GOLF

General

12.1 This section examines the provision of golf, and analyses the situation with regard to:

- quantity of provision;
- quality of provision; and,
- accessibility of provision.

12.2 Some issues are then summarised to be addressed in the strategy.

Context

12.3 Golf is a very land-extensive form of sports activity, and therefore requires large tracts of land, normally only found in the urban fringe, seaside link land, and open countryside. Its provision is made largely on a commercial/proprietary, or club basis. There are some notable examples of municipal courses, but there are none in the Braintree local authority.

Quantity

12.4 The **Table 12.1** identify golf facilities within the local authority. Provision is focussed on several venues, and there are other facilities bordering the local authority.

Table 12.1: Golf facilities within Braintree District

Name	Facility Type	Sub	Holes	Length (yards)	Year Built
BENTON HALL GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB	Par 3		9	809.24	1993
BENTON HALL GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB	Standard		18	5864.05	1993
BRAINTREE GOLF CLUB	Standard		18	5706.77	1892
COLNE VALLEY GOLF CLUB	Standard		18	5756.15	1991
GOSFIELD LAKE GOLF CLUB	Standard		18	6048.76	1988
GOSFIELD LAKE GOLF CLUB	Standard		9	2288.74	1988
HAVERHILL GOLF CLUB LTD	Standard		18	5547.66	1976

Name	Facility Type	Sub	Holes	Length (yards)	Year Built
NOTLEYS GOLF CLUB	Standard		18	5602.53	1997
NOTLEYS GOLF CLUB	Par 3		9	822.96	1997
NOTLEYS GOLF CLUB	Driving Range		N/A	274.32	2012
RIVENHALL OAKS GOLF CENTRE	Standard		9	2860.24	1994
RIVENHALL OAKS GOLF CENTRE	Standard		9	1159.46	2003
RIVENHALL OAKS GOLF CENTRE	Driving Range		N/A	274.32	2003
THE ESSEX GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	Standard		9	2003.45	1993
THE ESSEX GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	Driving Range		N/A	256.03	1989
THE ESSEX GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	Standard		18	6418.17	1990

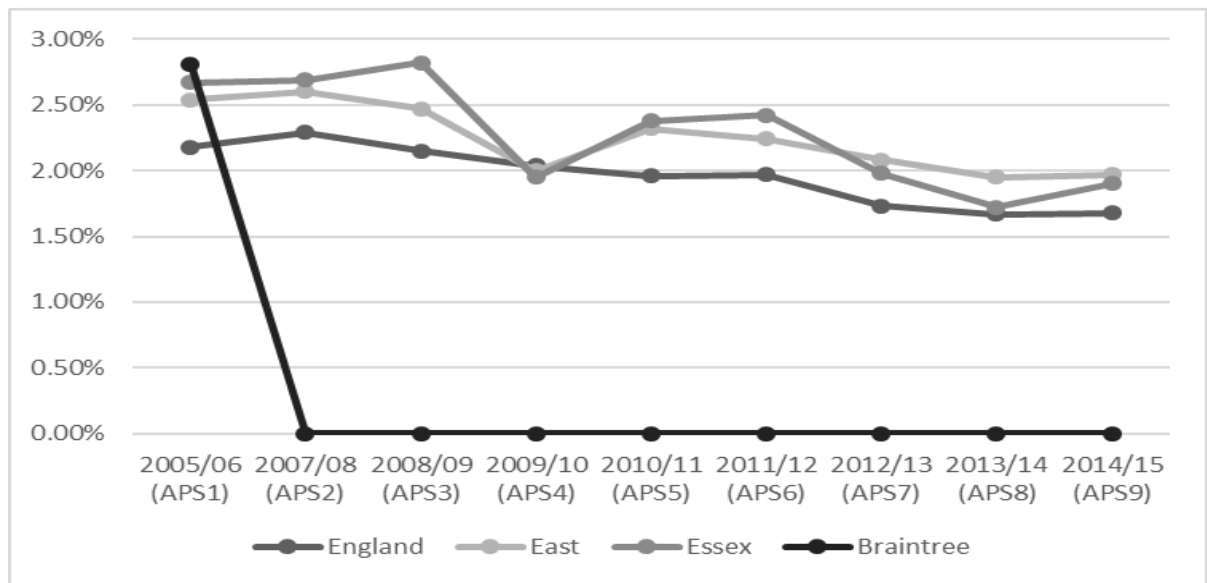
12.5 With a total of 180-holes this makes an average provision of 1-hole/845 people, which is a very high (good) ratio when compared with, say, neighbouring Chelmsford which has a ratio of c. 1-hole/1,740 people within the local authority.

Active People and Market Segmentation analyses

12.6 The following **Figure 12.1** illustrates the trends for adult participation in all forms of golf in terms of percentage of adults who play at least once a week. Given the small data samples, it was inappropriate to include Braintree within these comparisons. Estimates for Essex and the region appear to be above the average for England although, based on the evidence, participation rates at national, regional and county levels have all declined in recent years.

12.7 Using the most recent participation rate at county level and applying it to Braintree (c. 2 %) in the order of 2,225 adults within Braintree would be participating in golf activity at least once a week.

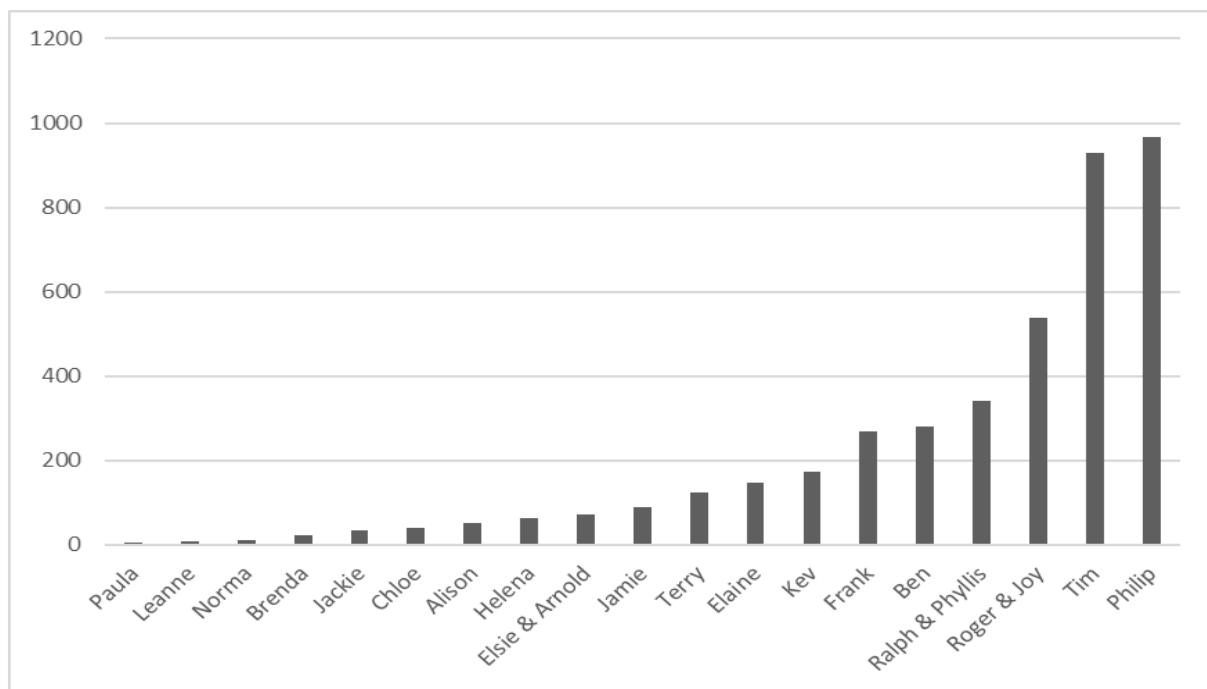
Figure 12.1: Participation of at least 1 x 30 minute session/week (% of adult population) in golf (all forms)



Note: where there is a 'zero' % reading it will be because an insufficient data sample exists to be included.

Figure 12.2 shows the numerical expression of the percentage of overall Sport England adult Market Segments likely to take part in the given activities.

Figure 12.2: Numerical representation of Sport England (adult) Market Segments in Braintree District likely to play golf (all forms)



12.8 Golf is played by a mixed demographic within the adult population, but is very-male dominated. If the totals in the above figure are added together it provides a figure of 4,164: this is well above the assumed participation rate for adults based on Active People data, which suggests that there may be potential to grow the sport locally.

Local clubs and operators

12.9 No questionnaire survey was conducted of golf clubs as part of this study. Experience suggests that it is very difficult to obtain membership information from commercial operators unless a clandestine 'secret shopper' method is adopted, and this is considered to be unethical. However, a biennial report 'The State of Golf' produced by the English Golf Union (EGU) stated the following:

12.10 Over half (53 per cent, or 1,037 English golf clubs) of the 1,954 clubs affiliated to either the EGU or the English Women's Golf Association (EGWA) or both, responded to the survey, with the majority of these (64 per cent, or approximately 663) being private members' clubs. Over a quarter (27 per cent, or approximately 280) of the respondents were proprietary, with the remainder being municipal (seven per cent, or approximately 73) and artisan (two per cent, or approximately 21) clubs.

12.11 The average English golf club has 514 members (out of an optimum total membership of 645), a drop of 33 since 2008, with 27 of that 33 coming from members aged 22 to 60. However, in terms of percentages, the biggest drops are from members with a younger age profile; 13 per cent of the category of members aged 22 to 44 have ended their membership and 12 per cent of juniors aged 15 or younger have ended theirs. While the average golf club has lost 14 members aged between 45 and 60, this represents a drop of only seven per cent from that age profile and, surprisingly, the category of members aged 61 or over, which represents 40 per cent of the average English golf club's membership, has seen its members rise (by about half of one per cent) since 2008.

12.12 In terms of gender, 82 per cent of clubs have vacancies for male adults and juniors, and 83 per cent have vacancies for female adults and juniors. The average club has 33 vacancies for adult males and 24 for adult females, and adult females are the most active of all the members, with 61 per cent of them participating at the club at least once a week.

12.13 If an average membership figure of 600 was applied to the existing 8 clubs/operations in the local authority it would suggest there to be around 4,000 adult golf members: a figure which would exclude pay-as-you-play golfers. The 4,000 estimate is similar to the potential adult market estimate provided by Market Segmentation data (Figure 12.2).

Quality

12.14 The largely high-end commercial and members club nature of local provision makes it difficult to assess quality of facilities in an appropriate non-technical fashion. However, all provision looks to be both well-maintained and managed, and showing no signs of decay resulting from inadequate funding and maintenance.

Accessibility

12.15 The household sample survey conducted as part of this study did not ask specific questions in respect of access to golf courses. However, given the location of courses and the need to transport equipment it is highly likely that most trips to courses will be made by car.

The Future

12.16 Increased population growth in future years will undoubtedly increase demand for golf facilities in future. Between 2015 and 2031 the population is predicted to grow from 152,100 to 175,100 an increase of 23,000- applying the measure of 1 hole/845 people (based itself on current provision), this might suggest a potential need for 27 extra holes, to maintain the current level of provision.

Issues and options

12.17 Although no standard of provision is recommended for adoption by the Council, it is clear that the demand generated by a larger population suggests a need to keep the level of local provision under review, which might be addressed through extending an existing facility, at an appropriate time: this however, is likely to be a commercial project, and subject to normal land-use planning, and other policies governing overall acceptability. Given its characteristics; geographic location; and, the large number of courses, the District is likely to be a net importer of demand, and growth in neighbouring local authorities is also therefore likely to impact upon demand for golf facilities.

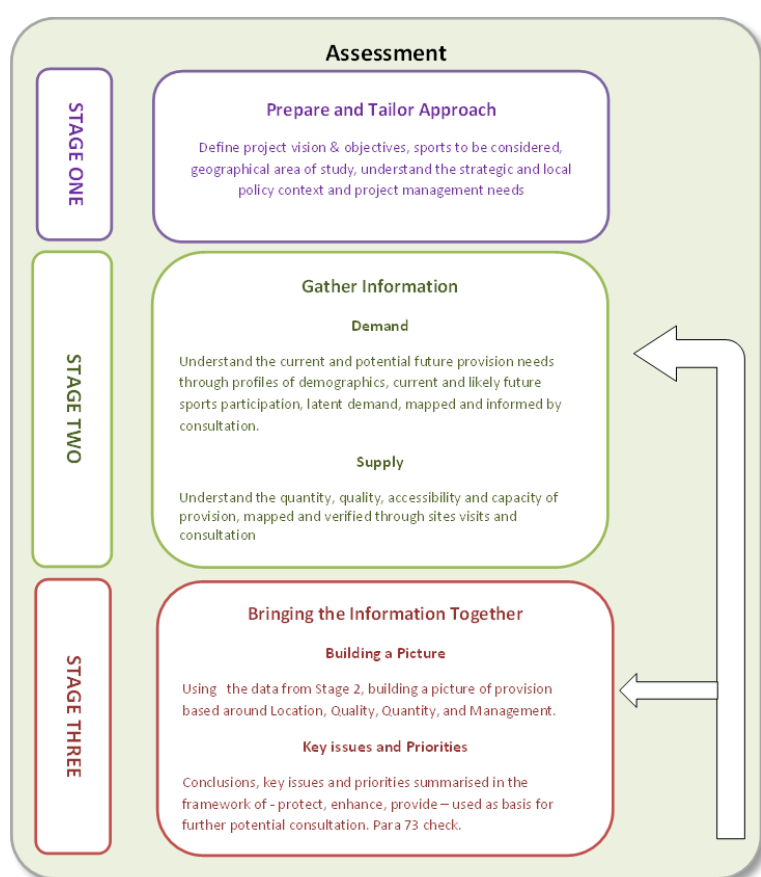
Appendix 1: Methodology – additional notes

The needs assessment work has been produced in line with the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF), which requires that (Paragraph 73, page 18):

‘.....planning policies are based upon robust and up-to-date assessments of needs for open space, sport and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.

This assessment and strategies have therefore been produced in line with guidance by Sport England (Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities; January 2014) and ‘Playing Pitch Guidance, An approach to Developing and Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy (Sport England 2013).

Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide - ANOG

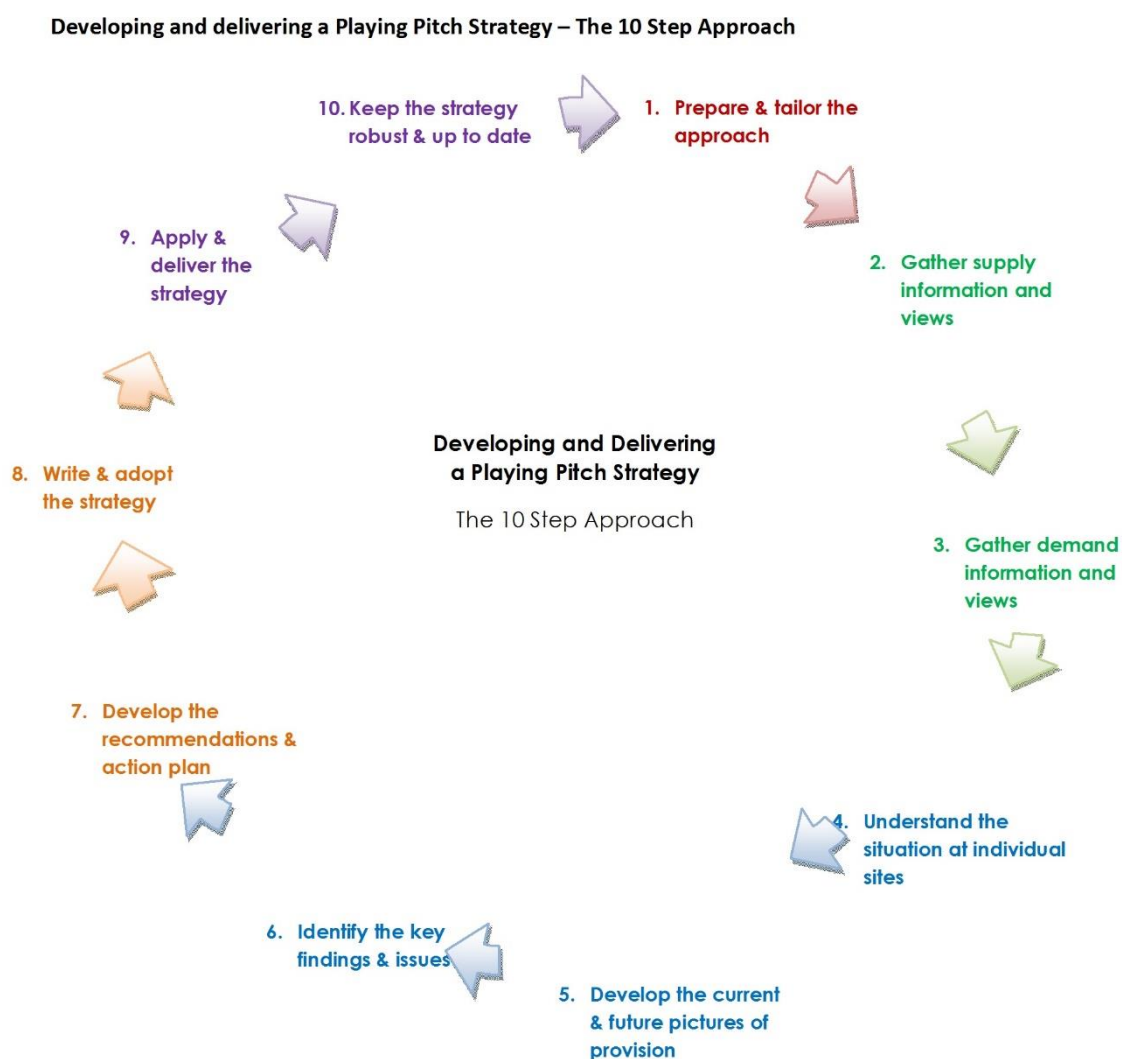


Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) has been developed by Sport England and sets out an approach to undertaking needs assessment for sport and recreation facilities, in order to be compliant with the NPPF. The approach adopted for this work has utilized the process set out in the ANOG guide, as illustrated in the diagram.

While set out as separate methodologies, in reality, many of the tasks have been undertaken as a coordinated and linked approach due to the cross-overs and interrelationships between the methodologies. For both methodologies, the first element of work seeks to tailor the approach to

Playing Pitch Guidance – An Approach to Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy

The ten stages are illustrated in following figure and it is this approach that has been followed for the analysis of pitch sports.



Appendix 2: Explanation of Sport England Active People and Market Segmentation analyses

Carried out on behalf of Sport England by the leading social research company TNS BMRB, the Active People Survey (APS) measures the number of adults taking part in sport across England. Providing the most comprehensive and authoritative picture of sports participation in England, APS is central to Sport England's measurement of its own strategy and the performance of key partners.

Key features of APS

- APS is the largest survey of its kind ever undertaken – 165,000 adults (age 14 and over) are interviewed each year
- The size of the survey means results can be published for a large number of different sporting activities and for every local authority area in England
- Time series data stretches back to the first wave of the survey in 2005/6
- A high quality, random sampling, survey design ensures results are representative of the population
- High quality survey design including:
 - Randomly sampled landline telephone interviews with adults aged 16 and over – extended to age 14 and over in July 2012
 - Calls are made throughout the year and at different times across each day
 - 500 interviews per local authority (district and single tier) each year

The APS results are not always available at the local authority level due to the inadequate size of data samples in some situations.

Market Segmentation

Sport England's market segmentation has been designed to help understand the life stages and attitudes of different population groups –and the sporting interventions most likely to engage them.

The market segmentation data builds on the results of Sport England's Active People survey; the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's [Taking Part survey](#); and the [Mosaic tool from Experian](#). It presents a picture of 19 dominant social groups in each area, and puts people's sporting behaviour in the context of complex lives. Propensity modelling – a statistical technique that matches the probability of displaying a particular behaviour or attitude to each demographic category – was used to link the survey data to wider population groups.

This created a tool with two key elements:

- a Sport England segment for every adult in England
- the ability to count market segment profiles for any region or community, down to postcode level.

The 19 dominant social groups are summarised in the link: <http://segments.sportengland.org/querySegments.aspx>

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
01	Ben (Competitive Male Urbanites)	Male 18-25 Single Graduate professional	Rugby, Squash, Windsurfing, Tennis, Climbing, Gym, Football	Improving performance Training for competition Social Enjoyment Keep fit	Time Interest	Better facilities Improved transport	Most active in population Approx. 20% of segment zero days
02	Jamie (Sports Team Drinkers)	Male 18-25 Single Vocational Student	Basketball, Football, Weight Training, Boxing, Martial Arts	Social Performance Competition	Time	Better facilities Longer opening hours	Second highest participation of all types Approx. 30% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
03	Chloe (Fitness Class Friends)	Female 18-25 Single Graduate Professional	Running, Aqua Aerobics, Gym, Tennis, Swimming	Weight Fitness	Time	Cost Opening Hours Facilities People to go with	Active type. Approx. 30-35% of segment zero days
04	Leanne (Supportive Singles)	Female 18-25 Single Likely to have children Student / part time vocational education	Swimming, Gym, Aerobics, Dance Exercise, Body Pump, Utility Walking	Losing weight Activities for children	Health isn't good enough Time	Help with child care Longer opening hours Cost	Least active of group A who participate. Approx 40-45% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
05	Helena (Career Focused Females)	Female 26-35 Single Full time professional	Gym, Road Running, Dance Exercise, Body Pump, Yoga	Losing weight Keeping fit Improving performance	Time People to go with	Longer opening hours People to go with	Very active type. Approx. 30-35% of segment zero days
06	Tim (Settling Down Males)	Male 26-45 Single / married May have children Professional	Canoeing, Cricket, Cycling, Squash, Skiing, Golf, Football	Improve performance Keep fit Social	Time	More free time Help with childcare	Very active type. Approx 25-30% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
07	Alison (Stay at Home Mums)	Female 36-45 Married Housewife Children	Swimming, Badminton, Aerobics, Pilates, Cycling, Exercise Bike	Taking children Losing weight Keeping fit	Time	Help with childcare Better facilities	Fairly active type. Approx 30-35% of segment zero days
08	Jackie (Middle England Mums)	Female 36-45 Married Part time skilled worker, housewife Children	Swimming, Dance Exercise, Body Pump, Ice Skating (with children), Aqua Aerobics	Taking children Losing weight	Time Cost Lack of interest	Help with childcare Cheaper admissions	Average activity. Approx 45-50% of segment zero days.

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
09	Kev (Pub League Team Mates)	Male 36-45 Single / married May have children Vocational	Football, Darts, Snooker, Weights, Fishing, Pool, Ten Pin Bowling, Cricket	Competition Social Enjoyment (ltd) Perform	Time Slight cost factor	More free time Cost Facilities	Less active within group B Approx. 50% of segment zero days
10	Paula (Stretched Single Mums)	Female 26-35 Single Job seeker or part time low skilled	Swimming, Utility walking, Aerobics, Ice Skating	Lose weight Take children	Cost Lack of childcare Poor transport Lack of interest	Improved transport Cheaper admission Help with childcare Better facilities	Least active type within Group B Approx. 60% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
11	Philip (Comfortable Mid-Life Males)	Male 46-55 Married Professional Older children	Sailing, Badminton, Cycling, Gym, Jogging, Golf,	Social Taking children Improving performance Enjoyment	Time Lack of childcare	More free time Help with childcare	Most active within Group C Approx. 40% of segment zero days
12	Elaine (Empty Nest Career Ladies)	Female 46-55 Married Professional Children left home	Swimming, Walking, Aqua Aerobics, Step Machine, Yoga Gym	Keeping fit Losing weight Help with injury	Time Lack of interest	Longer opening hours More people to go with	Reasonably active type. approx. 40-45% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
13	Roger and Joy (Early Retirement Couples)	Male / female 56-65 Retired or part-time	Swimming, Walking, , Bowls, Sailing, Golf,	Keeping fit To help with injury Enjoyment Taking grandchildren	Poor health Lack of interest Transport	Better facilities Improved transport	Participate once or twice a week Approx 50-55% of segment zero days
14	Brenda (Older Working Women)	Female 46-55 Single / married May have children Low skilled worker	Swimming, Utility Walking, Dance Exercise, Aerobics, , Keep fit	Weight Bring grandchildren Help with injury	Lack of interest Time	More free time Longer hours Help with childcare (for grandchildren)	Sometimes participates Approx 60-65% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
15	Terry (Local 'Old Boys')	Male age 56-65 Single / married Low skilled worker Job seeker	Fishing, Shooting, Pool, Darts, Snooker, cycling	Help with injury Social	Poor health Lack of people to go with Cost	People to go with	Some low intensity participation Approx 65-70% of segment zero days
16	Norma (Later Life Ladies)	Female age 56-65 Single / married Low skilled worker Retired	Walking, Keep fit, Swimming, Aqua Aerobics	Help with injury or disability	Poor health Cost	People to go with	Lowest participation of Group C Approx 75-80% of segment zero days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
17	Ralph and Phyllis (Comfortable Retired Couples)	Male / female 65+ Married Retired	Bowls, Golf, Walking, Fishing, Swimming	Social Improve performance and keep fit Enjoyment	Transport Lack of people to go with	Improved transport More people to go with	Highest participation of Group D Approx. 70% of segment zero days
18	Frank (Twilight Year Gents)	Male 66+ Married / single Retired	Bowls, Golf, Darts, Pool, Snooker, Walking, Fishing	Social Enjoyment	Poor health	Improved transport Cheaper admission	Medium participation for group D approx. 75-80% zero of segment days

Segment	Forename & brief description	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to increase Participation	Participation Profile
19	Elsie and Arnold (Retirement Home Singles)	Male / female 66+ Widowed Retired	Walking, Dancing, Bowls, Low-impact exercise	Social Help with injury	Health problems and disability	Improved transport People to go with	Lowest participation of Group D Approx. 85% of segment zero days

Appendix 4: Explanation of Calculations for Match Equivalents and Match Capacity

Introduction and Overview

Comparing whether a grass football or rugby pitch is being over, or under-used relative to its 'carrying capacity' is critical to assessing pitch quality and supply. As a simple overview, the following factors have been taken into account.

Match Capacity:

The assessed quality of pitch- measured in terms of an estimate of the number of games (or comparable activity, like training) that can be played on it every week without undue wear and tear

Where the pitch is located, and whether this will impact on the number of community team games that it might be able to accommodate each week without undue wear and tear.

Match Equivalents:

The number of games played on a given pitch and by whom on a regular basis

The amount of training and associated activity taking place on a pitch on a regular basis.

Comparison:

Comparing the above to establish whether a pitch is being over or under-played. As appropriate (for multi-pitch sites) the scores for each pitch can be added together to provide an aggregate comparison for the site.

In More Detail

In more detail the following must be taken into account.

Match Capacity

In order to come to an informed judgment on this the following have to be taken into account:

The type of grass pitch(es) under consideration- is it an adult pitch; junior/youth pitch; or, a mini-soccer pitch?

The assessed pitch(es) quality- Good, Adequate, Poor. This will affect the number of matches that can be absorbed each week without undue wear and tear.

Both the Football Association (FA) and the Rugby Football Union (RFU) have provided guidance in this regard. For football the FA have stated that "the following guidance on the number of match equivalent sessions a week that a natural grass pitch is likely to be able to regularly accommodate, based on an agreed quality rating, without adversely affecting its current quality": (The guidance from the RFU is explained towards the end of this Appendix).

	Adult Football	Youth Football	Mini Soccer
Agreed pitch quality rating	Number of match equivalent sessions a week		
Good	3	4	6
Standard	2	2	4
Poor	1	1	2

(n.b. Matches have different time-lengths, depending on the age-group concerned. In the model used to estimate capacity and usage for this study it is possible to incorporate this time dimension. However, for this study the values for match hours have been switched off/neutralized).

The number of community team games that a pitch can absorb will also be influenced by such factors as whether it is located in a public park or on a school site. For example, a pitch on a school site might, technically, be of good quality. However, if that pitch is also used by the school for its own activity, the number of games that it can absorb from 'external' community use will be reduced. Where situations like this have arisen on school sites, they have been taken into account- in most cases this has involved factoring in 1 x school game each week (thereby reducing the actual capacity to absorb community teams games by 1 match per week). A worked example illustrates this situation later in this Appendix.

Where local information exists to allow for a more precise allowance to be made in this regard, it has been taken into account and referenced in the site-overviews contained in Section 4.

Match Capacity is therefore calculated by:

Identifying the number of match equivalent sessions that can be absorbed each week by a pitch of a given type and quality (see table);

Discounting the figure resulting from a) as appropriate to reflect factors (such as school use of pitches) that will add to the wear and tear, and reduce the capacity for community team matches; and

As appropriate aggregating figures from b) for multi-pitch sites to produce a figure for the site as a whole. (On the larger sites this could produce three figures for adult, junior/youth, and mini-soccer pitches).

Match Equivalents

Generally speaking it is easy to estimate the number of actual matches played on a given pitch/site. The number of teams who use a given pitch/site on a regular basis is usually known. Assuming each team plays at home every other week allows the number of matches to be estimated.

However, to estimate Match Equivalents requires the calculations to take into account training activity for which grass pitches might be used. To start with, a good level of knowledge about the training patterns and venues of local teams is required. Many teams, in fact, will not use their grass pitch for training- some will use AGPs, and others may use marginal land off the playing pitch surface(s). Where alternative venues/surfaces are used, the impact of training is excluded from the calculations. There will also be some teams that do not train at all.

However, where teams are known to use a grass pitch for training, or where there is a good likelihood of this being the case in the absence of hard evidence, some informed assumptions need to be made about; the size of training squads; and, the regularity of training sessions. The relevant assumptions made are as follows:

For teams that are known (or likely) to train, the adult and junior/youth training squads equate to 1.5 teams (on the basis that training squads tender to be larger than the match day teams (there being competition for places). However, in the darker months and unless pitches are floodlit teams will not be able to train during weekday evenings, and so will either train off-site, or not at all. For this reason the above factor of 1.5 for the training squad size has been reduced to 0.75 to reflect this pattern

For mini-soccer teams training squads are the same size as the match day teams

Each squad trains once a week.

Match Equivalents are therefore calculated by:

Multiplying the number of teams of the relevant age group by a factor that represents 'home and away' play (usually a factor of 0.5)

Multiplying the number of training squads of the relevant age-group by the training squad size;

Adding the resultant figure from a) to that from b)

As appropriate aggregating figures from c) for multi-pitch sites to produce a figure for the site as a whole. (On the larger sites this could produce three figures for adult, junior/youth, and mini-soccer pitches).

Over-Marked Pitches

One of the pitfalls in applying this method is that not all grass pitch surfaces are dedicated for use by a given age-group. The most obvious examples are where mini-soccer and junior youth teams play their matches and/or train on pitches set-out for adult play, but may also be temporarily over-marked for use by younger age groups- this is where modelling a situation without the injection of some commonsense interpretation becomes dangerous. The current Sport England Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance does offer some suggestions as to how such situations should be addressed in calculating the amount of use relative to capacity. However, it has been extremely difficult, at best, to apply these suggested approaches- and incredibly time-consuming.

The issue arises because, clearly, teams and squads from different age-groups will not impact upon the playing surface to the same extent. For example, a mini-soccer team using an over marked adult pitch for its own matches and training would not exert anywhere near the same amount of wear and tear as an adult team undertaking comparable activity. If the time and resources were available it would be possible to aggregate up the cumulative wear and tear on a pitch caused by use by teams/squads of varying ages. However, resources and time are not infinite and, in any event, the

marking out and use of pitches for the younger age-groups can be very transitional, such as to make such an exercise often 'out-of-date' before it has been completed.

Within the GIS modelling that has been used to underpin this particular study, it has been possible to introduce 'loading' factors to reflect the above situations, and this perhaps is worth reviewing and modifying if the model continues to be run and updated. Currently, a factor of 0.25 is added to mini-soccer teams. For example, if there are 4 mini-soccer teams using the site, this results in $4 \times 0.25 = 1$ adult equivalent team. This allows for the wear and tear wrought by mini-soccer teams to be kept in proportion relative to older, larger, and heavier teams. A similar loading factor of 0.25 could be used for training squads (although note the comments below).

Within the GIS modelling there are fields that can be used to reflect the numbers and sizes of mini-soccer training squads (as with adult and youth/junior squads). However, local evidence indicates that the very large majority of mini-soccer teams train on AGPs or sports halls, and not on their match pitches. Therefore these fields have not been used for this project.

Ultimately, the best approach is the use common sense in viewing the calculations by relating to what is observed and recorded on the ground. If, for example, mini-soccer activity is outstripping notional pitch capacity, but if there are no mini-soccer pitches recorded on site it will generally be because the teams are playing on a non-dedicated playing surface

Worked Example A

A Multi-Pitch Site in Local Authority Control

The site contains 3 x adult and 2 x junior/youth pitches deemed to be in standard condition.

The site is the home of 8 x adult and 4 x junior/youth teams. 6 of the adult teams play on Saturday PM and 2 on Sunday AM. The 4 junior youth teams play all play on Saturday AM. 4 of the adult teams train on their home pitch, as do all of the 4 junior teams.

Match Capacity is therefore calculated as follows:

Identifying the number of match equivalent sessions that can be absorbed each week by a pitch: in this case 2 per adult pitch and 2 per junior pitch (FA guidance)

As the pitches are not on a school site there is no need to discount education use. Although the site is a public recreation ground, other activity tends to be just local dog walkers, and children using a playground, so nothing that would materially impact upon the quality of the surface (other than possible dog-fouling)

Multiply the pitches by the match equivalent sessions: in this case for adults $3 \times 2 = 6$; and, junior/youths $2 \times 2 = 4$

The Match Capacity for the site is therefore 6 matches for adult football, and 4 matches for junior football.

Match Equivalents are therefore calculated as follows:

Multiplying the number of teams of the relevant age-group by a factor that represents 'home and away' play (usually a factor of 0.5): in this case 8 adult teams $\times 0.5 = 4$; and 4 junior teams $\times 0.5 = 2$

Multiplying the number of training squads of the relevant age-group by the training squad size: in this case it is known that the two adult Sunday teams don't train; and two adult Saturday teams train on an AGP elsewhere. All four junior/youth teams train on their home pitch, on-site: so, in this case 2 adult squads $\times 0.75 = 1.5$; and 4 junior/youth squads $\times 0.75 = 3$

Adding the resultant figures from a) to those from b): in this case for adults $4 + 1.5 = 5.5$; and, for juniors/youths $2 + 3 = 5$

The Match Equivalents for the site are therefore 5.5 for adults; and, for 5 for juniors youths.

Overall calculation of site capacity v use	
<i>Adult</i>	<i>Junior/Youth</i>
Site match capacity: 6	Site match capacity: 4
Site match equivalents: 5.5	Site match equivalents: 5

From the above, it can be seen that the adult pitches are being used just below their notional capacity, and the junior/youth pitches are being over-used.

Worked Example B

A Multi-Pitch Site on a School Site

The above scenario of pitches and teams is repeated, but transposed onto a school site. The school has a policy of allowing its pitches to be used by community teams at the weekend. However, the pitches are also used by school teams during the week, and this impacts upon their quality, and their notional capacity for community use. Under b) of the calculation of match hours capacity under Example B must take into account school activity. The notional capacity of the pitches to accommodate community games therefore drops from 2 games to 1 game per adult and junior/youth pitch.

If everything else remained the same above would have the effect of halving the capacity of pitches for community use. As below.

Use by Rugby

The above approaches have been used in a near identical way for rugby, in assessing notional pitch capacity and comparing it with estimated usage. The only differences are in relation to:

The match equivalent estimates recommended by the RFU and presented in the below table;

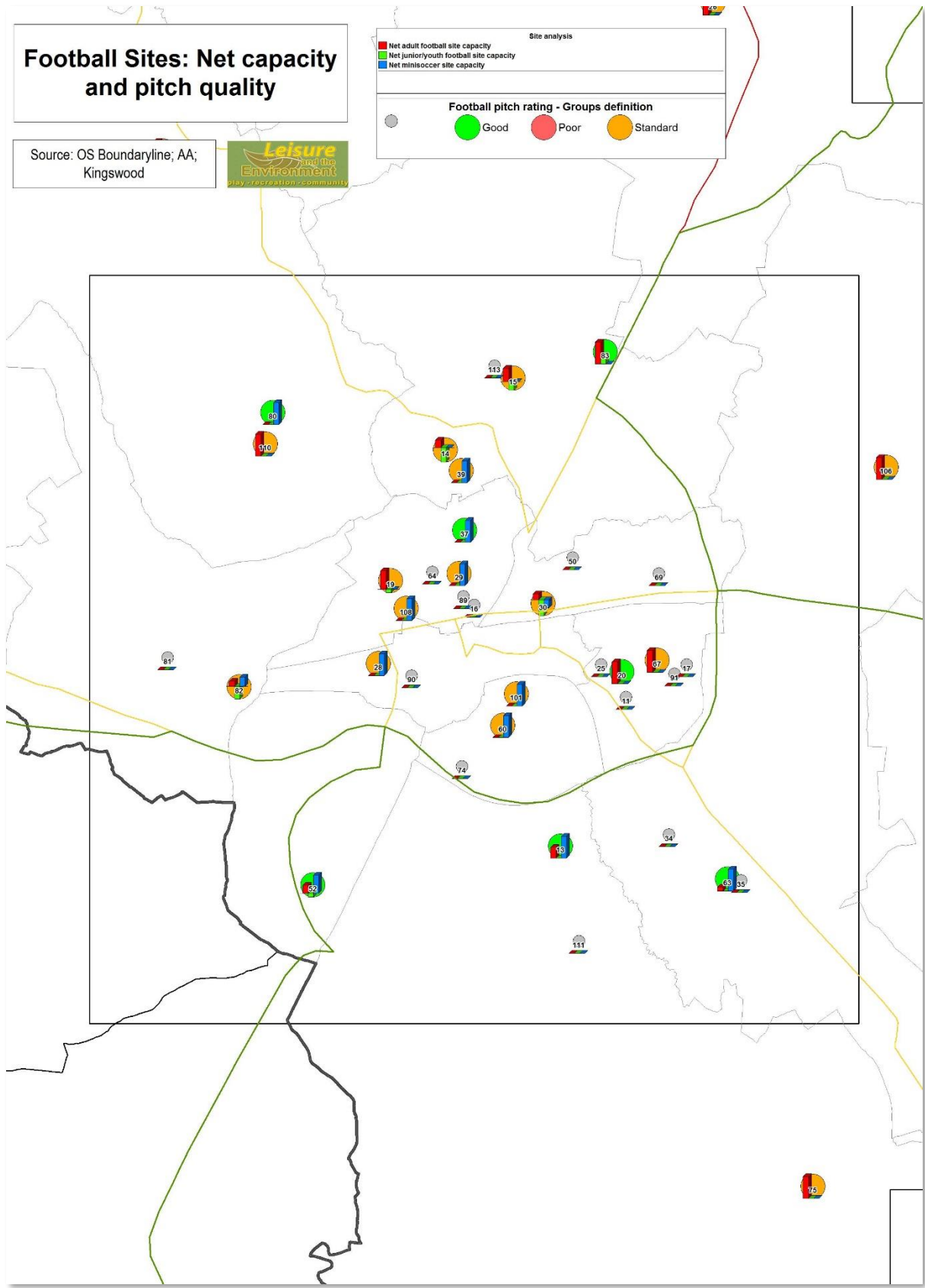
For training the RFU have advised that 2 teams training each on half a pitch every week should equate to 1 match equivalent/week; and,

The inclusion of mini-rugby squads and sizes in the calculations, given that most clubs' mini-teams train on-site. The 'loading factors' are the same used for mini-soccer (i.e. 0.25).

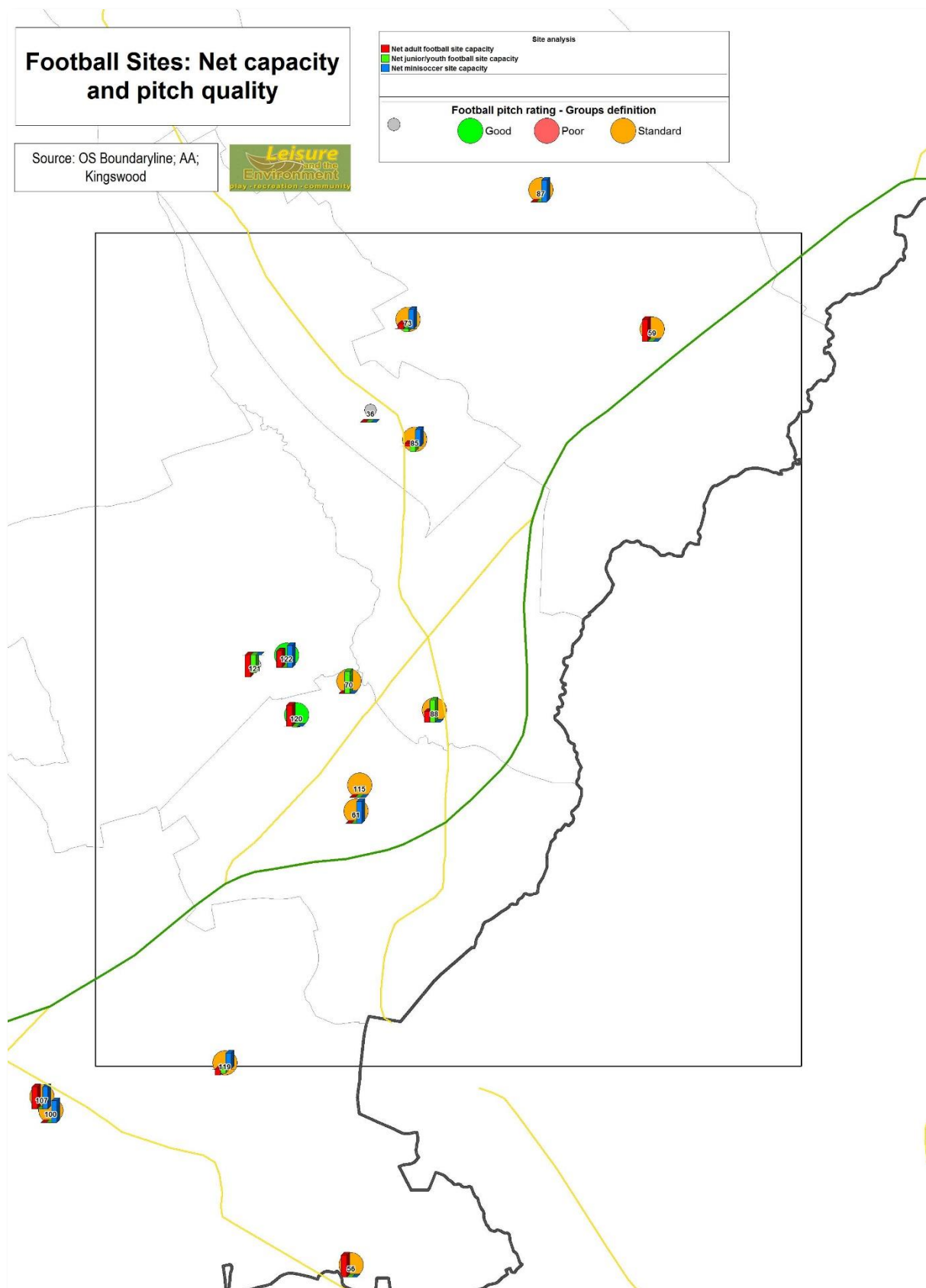
		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Standard (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2
	Natural Adequate (D1)	1.5	2	3
	Pipe Drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2	3	3.5

Appendix 5: Maps (football sites), and supporting table.

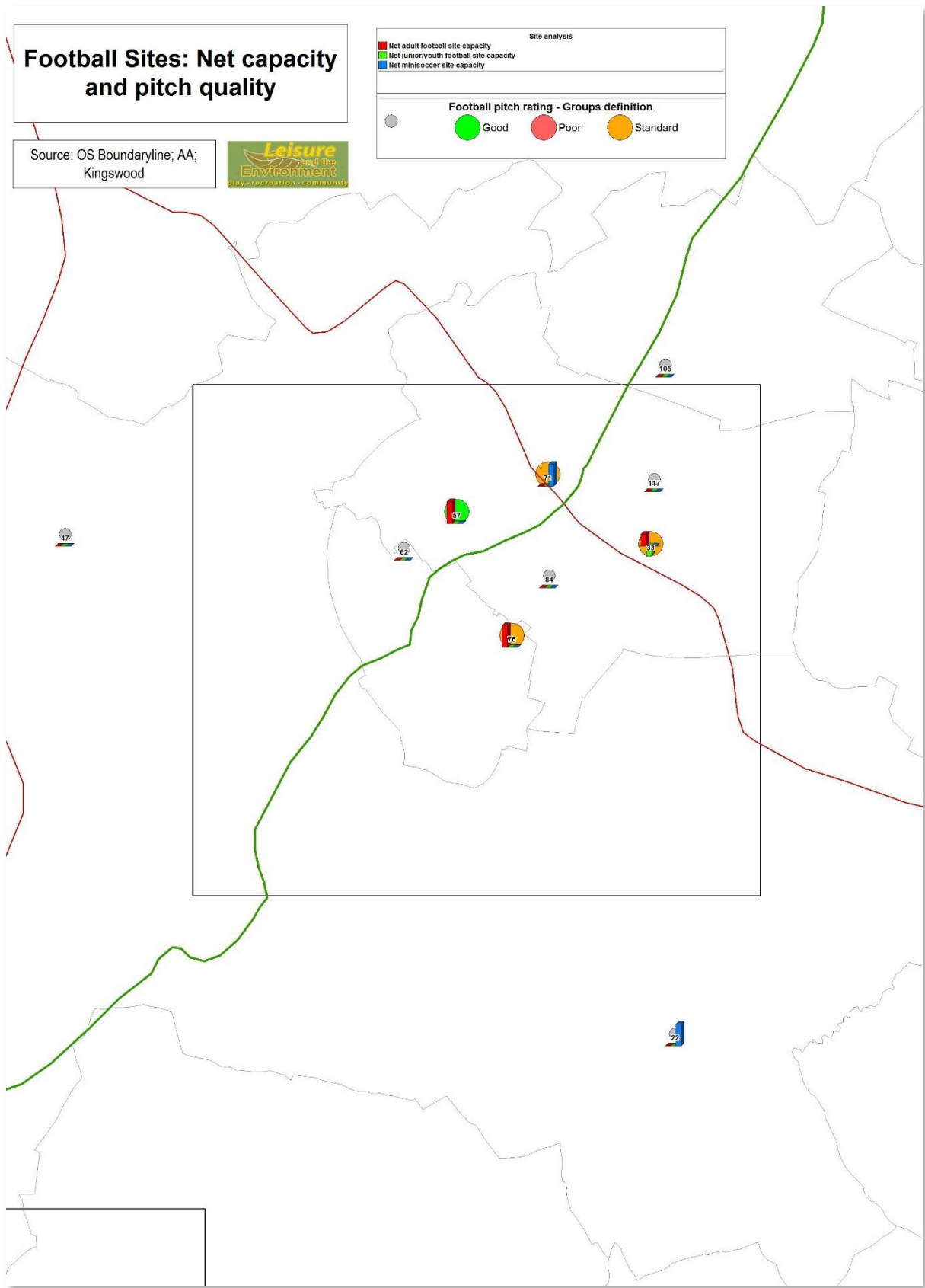
Braintree area



Witham area



Halstead area



Appendix 6: Provision required for new housing growth and a suggested standard

The following is an estimate of the amount of new pitch provision generated by planned new population growth between 2016 and 2033.

Sport/age group	Teams yielded by new housing 2016-2033¹⁷ (14,365 houses)	Pitches required¹⁸	Area required (hectares)¹⁹	Capital cost (pitch + changing for adults and pitches only for youth and mini-soccer)²⁰
Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)	14.0	1.7	0.7	£34,907
Junior football (10-15 male)	15.9	4.0	4.4	£277,667
Junior football (10-15 female)	1.5	0.4	0.4	£25,916
Senior football (16-45 male)	18.6	4.7	5.2	£1,512,622
Senior football (16-45 female)	0.8	0.2	0.2	£68,756
Mini-rugby (7-12 mixed gender)	2.3	Share junior pitches	Share junior pitches	
Junior rugby (13-18 male)	1.3	0.3	0.4	£107,893
Junior rugby (13-18 female)	-	-	-	-
Senior rugby (19-45 male)	1.1	0.3	0.3	£89,911
Senior rugby (19-45 female)	-	-	-	-
Junior cricket (7-17 male)	6.6	Share grounds with adults		
Junior cricket (7-17 female)	-	Share grounds with adults		
Senior cricket (18-55 male)	7.2	1.2	1.9	£605,401
Senior cricket (18-55 female)	-	-	-	-
Junior hockey (11-15 male)	0.8	Share grounds with adults		
Junior hockey (11-15 female)	0.8	Share grounds with adults		

¹⁷ Using team generation rates, explained in the needs assessment, applied to estimates of population arising out of projected new development. A household size of 2.24 was assumed.

¹⁸ This figure was calculated using assumptions of home/away rotation of matches, and a notional estimated number of matches per pitch each week.

¹⁹ Using identified numbers of pitches required multiplied by assumed pitch areas.

²⁰ Based on published Sport England unit costs for the most recent year quarter available at the time of this report.

Sport/age group	Teams yielded by new housing 2016-2033 ¹⁷ (14,365 houses)	Pitches required ¹⁸	Area required (hectares) ¹⁹	Capital cost (pitch + changing for adults and pitches only for youth and mini-soccer) ²⁰
Senior hockey (16-45 male)	2.1	0.3 AGP	1,800 sq.m	£253,867
Senior hockey (16-45 female)	1.3	0.2 AGP	1,200 sq.m	£152,320

A background spreadsheet provides the same data in detail for the above District-wide totals, and also for the following allocations:

Allocation	Number of houses
West of Braintree (new garden community)	2,500
Mark Tey (new garden community)	1,150
East of Great Notley	2,000
East of Broad Road, Braintree	1,000
Towerlands Park site	600
Land at Feering	1,000
Woodend Farm, Witham	450
South West Witham (Lodge Farm)	750
North East Witham	370

Suggested grass pitch standard

	Occupancy rate	
	2.24	
A.	Area required by 100 houses x occupancy rate	
	0.21	
B.	Add in 25% for upswing, rotation, ancillary space etc	
	0.26	
C.	Convert B to Hectares per 1000 people	
	1.18	<u>c. 1.2 ha/000</u>

Braintree Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan

(Part D of the Braintree Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment)

(Final January 2017)



2016 – 2033

Report produced on behalf of Braintree District City Council by Leisure and the Environment in association with Ethos Environmental Planning



Braintree Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Action Plan

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch(es)
ANOG	Assessment of Needs and Opportunities Guide
APS	Active People Survey(s)
BDA	Bowls Development Alliance
DPD	Development Plan Document(s)
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FIFA	Federation of International Football Associations
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
RFU	Rugby Football Union

1.0 INTRODUCTION

General

1.1 This is a strategy and action plan for playing pitches and other outdoor sport for Braintree District Council. It covers the period to 2033. **It is Part D of the overall 'Braintree Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment'.**

1.2 This document is based on a substantial needs assessment and associated community consultation undertaken for the District Council, and following recognised national guidance.

1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to set out policies to help enable communities to access high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation. These policies need to be based on a thorough understanding of local needs for such facilities and opportunities available for new provision. The Government's public health initiatives have seen local authorities assume more responsibility for improving levels of public health. Studies show that living a healthy lifestyle and maintaining a healthy weight can reduce the risk of developing chronic disease, improves quality of life and increases life expectancy. The Council is now responsible for many factors which impact on mental and physical health, including sports and leisure provision in the area, environmental health, green spaces and housing standards.

1.4 Other national policy and strategies also point to the critical role of local authorities in both providing and facilitating new and improved sports provision to provide not just sports but also wider recreation and health benefits.

Remit

1.5 The remit of the strategy covers the major 'pitch sports': Association Football; Cricket; Hockey; and Rugby. Other outdoor sports covered are netball, tennis, bowls, and golf are covered briefly. Most of these other outdoor sports can also rely on indoor facilities, and so indoor tennis, indoor bowls, indoor netball as well as athletics are covered in complementary guidance produced by the District Council.

Application

1.6 The Strategy and Action Plan will be used to inform the preparation of statutory planning policy, and supplementary planning documents. It can be used in the applying the Community Infrastructure Levy and developing Section 106 agreements. The detailed information can also be used to inform other investment decisions on the part of both the Council, and its partners; and, developing bids for external funding.

Method and governance

1.7 The Strategy and Action Plan, as well as the underpinning Needs Assessment follows national guidance produced by Sport England, and the entire project has been overseen by a Steering Group comprising representatives of relevant authorities and organisations, and these are listed **Appendix 1**.

This document

The following sections of this document:

- Summarise the context for preparing this strategy;
- Summarise the main issues that have been identified as affecting each sport, now and in the coming years;
- Provide a strategic vision, aims and recommendations to guide the actions and decisions of the District Council and its partners over the coming years (The Strategy);
- Provide a sport-by-sport and site-by-site schedule of recommendations covering each sport considered. (The Action Plan); and,
- Explain How the Strategy should be kept up-to-date, and its implementation resourced.

2.0 CONTEXT

General

2.1 An understanding of the local strategic context, population and sports participation trends is essential in order to ensure that facility provision is tailored to the characteristics, profile and aspirations for the local area.

Population

2.2 As at 2015 Braintree District was estimated to have a population of 152,100.¹ The same projections calculate that by the year 2033 the population will have increased to 177,200. This figure is itself only based upon previous trends, and does reflect the impact of planned new residential growth.

2.3 Work is well advanced on a new Local Plan for the District. Once complete it will replace both the existing Core Strategy (2011) and the Local Plan Review (2005).

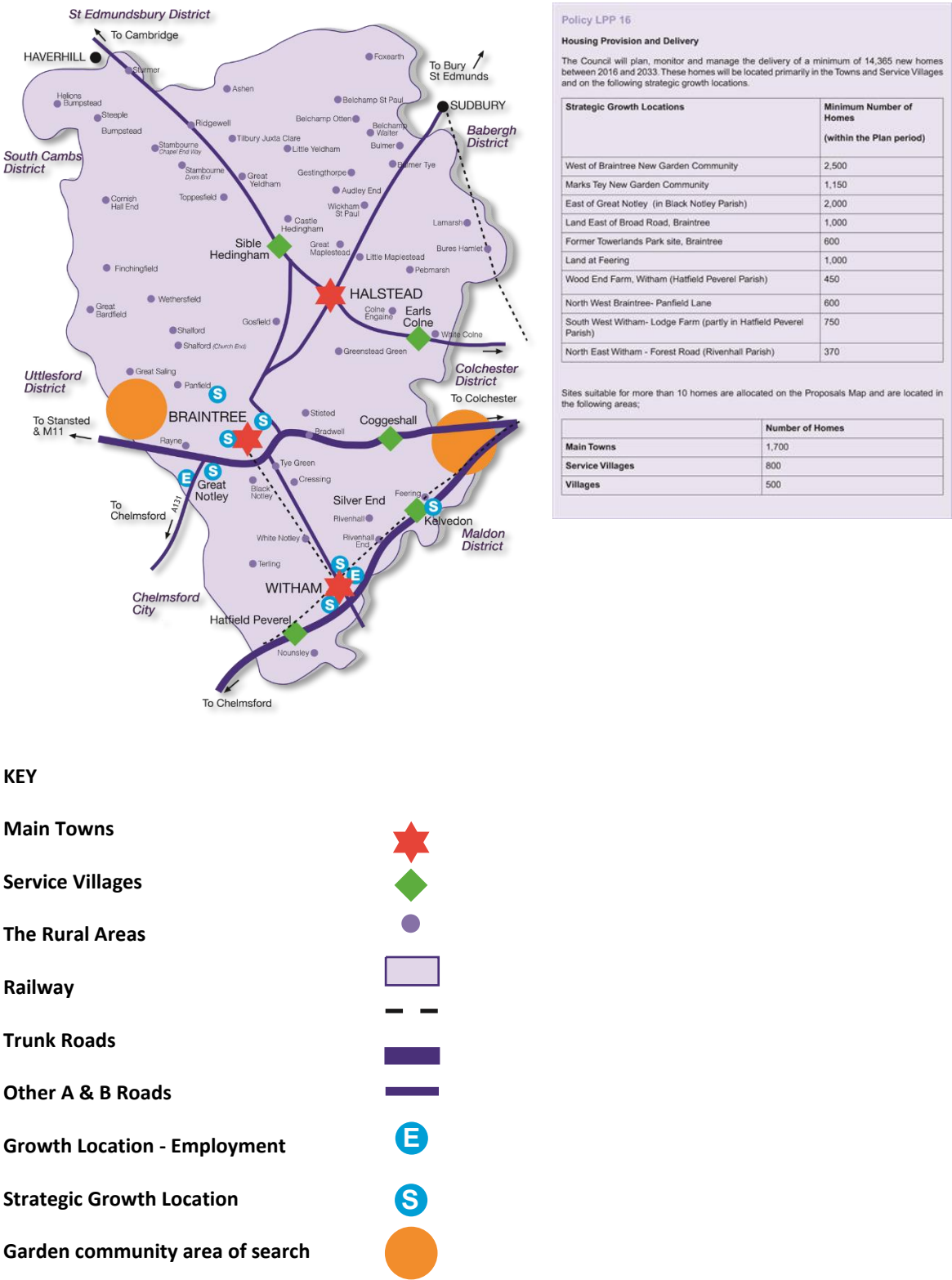
2.4 One of the main requirements in the NPPF is for local authorities to significantly boost their supply of housing and this applies across the Country. A document called a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) helps the Council work out how many houses are needed and of what type. It estimates this need to be between 761 to 883 new homes per year.

2.5 The Council will need to look at some new large sites. An indication of the potential location and scale of new housing is provided in **Figure 2.1**.

2.6 The Local Plan is not just about new homes but must ensure that housing growth is supported by infrastructure, jobs and community facilities. The Council will be working with key stakeholders such as the NHS, education and highways authorities to ensure that vital community facilities such as schools, GP surgeries and roads and public transport links are in place to support existing residents as well as new communities. Open spaces and community facilities will also be protected and new spaces and facilities will be supported.

¹ Table 2b: 2010-based Subnational Population Projections by sex and quinary age

Figure 2.1: Indicative location and scale of new development in the Plan period



2.7 This planned growth up to 2033 will impact on the demand for sports pitches, and this is considered in Section 3. If the proposed New Garden Communities West of Braintree and at Mark Teys are likely to be extended further post 2033, this will need to influence the way in which new and improved community sports infrastructure is provided and maintained in these locations, in particular.

Issues

2.8 In a modern, fast-moving world income, time, and social media help dictate what people can and do with their free-time.

2.9 The new government strategy 'Sporting Future – A new strategy for an active nation', identifies the importance of addressing flat-lining levels of participation in sports, and it has redefined ways of measuring success for sport in respect of physical and mental health and well-being, individual development, social and community development, economic development. Public investment in sport will reach children as young as five years. Funding will also be targeted at groups who have low participation rates to encourage those who do not take part in sport and physical activity to get involved. This includes supporting women, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people.

2.10 In response to the government's strategy, Sport England's new strategy vision is that that everyone in England, regardless of age, background or ability, feels able to take part in sport or activity. Sport England's new vision and its supporting aims will therefore contribute to achieving the government's strategy.

2.11 In terms of participation in sport and active recreation, the local authority has many things in its favour. The general affluence of the population facilitates relatively high levels of participation within the local population. However, there are geographical pockets within the urban area of Braintree (in particular) that exhibit quite high levels of economic and social deprivation, and where levels of participation in sport and active recreation are depressed as a consequence. Improving prospects for participating should be a priority for the local authority and its partners in these areas, with the consequent health and economic benefits.

2.12 The above should be major determinants in influencing local planning for sport and active recreation. In addition to the above, the following will influence demand into the foreseeable future:

- A growing population, which may be further accentuated by planned new residential growth that has not yet been allocated;
- The strong representation within the local population of adult age groups with characteristics that make them more likely to take part in sport and active recreation;
- With some notable geographic exceptions around Braintree urban area, high existing levels of regular participation compared with the national averages, which suggest that any further growth in participation levels will develop an already strong base.

- The character of the local authority's population continues to change and this has a profound effect on the types of sport, play and leisure activity appealing to local people

2.13 The Council is working in a financially challenging environment- this brings problems, but it also presents a clear opportunity for reviewing and transforming the Council's leisure service and facilities it operates. Similarly, many agencies, groups and organisations have shared aspirations in respect of the 'health agenda' and great potential exists for collaboration between public and voluntary sectors, as well as social and commercial enterprises to realise these aspirations.

A remit that is based on meeting Community Needs, and providing Community Use

2.14 Fundamentally, this strategy seeks to create a facility base that meets community needs: facilities best placed to meet such needs have to provide certain conditions to allow community use to flourish. At its simplest 'community use' is a term that is used to describe the extent to which a given sport or recreation facility is available for use by members of the general community- either on a pay-as-you go informal basis, or as part of an organised club or group.

2.15 In practice, the above definition of community use will include a wide range of management regimes whose admission policies will span informal 'pay-as-you-go' access, by the general community; and, through to use by organised clubs and groups by booking or longer-term agreements etc. Whether, individual facilities are considered to be available for significant community use depends on several factors, including:

- Type of facility (and whether its size and design might be of use to the community at large, or at least significant groups within the community);
- The cost of using facilities, and whether these might generally be considered to be affordable;
- The times and days of availability (times of most demand for the general community are likely to be in the evenings and at the weekends, as well as during mid-week lunchtime (a popular for people at work); and,
- The extent to which such use by the community is 'assured' over the longer-term.

2.16 In terms of utility for the general community different facilities will therefore have diverse value by nature of because of their varying scale, location, and management/pricing policies. This is not to deny the importance of other smaller provision for local clubs and groups, as well as those residents who prefer to pay for access to private/commercial facilities.

3.0 KEY ISSUES FOR SPORTS

3.1 The following is a summary of the key issues taken from the technical report ‘**Braintree Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment**’ (Parts A, B, and C). The report was prepared to inform the preparation of this strategy and action plan.

3.2 The various factors considered above suggest that the following will be the major determinants in the demand for sports and active recreation into the foreseeable future within the local authority:

- A growing population, which may be further accentuated by planned new residential growth that has not yet been allocated.
- The strong representation within the local population of some adult age groups with characteristics that make them more likely to take part in sport and active recreation;
- Generally high existing levels of regular participation compared with the national averages, which suggest that any further growth in participation levels will develop on an already strong base.
- The relative affluence of the population facilitates relatively high levels of participation within the local population. However, there are geographical pockets within the urban areas that exhibit quite high levels of economic and social deprivation, and where the levels of participation in sport and active recreation may be depressed as a consequence. Improving prospects for participating should be a priority for the local authority and its partners in these areas, with the consequent health and economic benefits.

Football: key issues for the strategy to address

3.3 Wet weather really impacts upon the ability of pitches to absorb play and training.

3.4 There is a need for more AGPs both for training and, increasingly, for matchplay to help deal with wet weather, and increased demand leading to wear and tear

3.5 Increased population levels especially resulting from planned growth will heighten demand for pitches in some locations, in coming years. (See **Appendix 6** of the Needs Assessment for further details). It may be appropriate to accommodate new pitches required by such growth on planned new (potentially multi-sport) sites, with scope for expansion beyond 2033 (assuming that some of the major growth areas will develop further beyond the 2033 time horizon).

3.6 It might be an aim to get as much junior matchplay onto AGPs as possible.

3.7 There is overplay and over-marking of some pitches to accommodate junior and Minisoccer of the same surface as older age group play, and this is not ideal.

3.8 The quality of changing facilities at some sites requires attention.

3.9 These themes will be addressed further, and translated to locally/site specific recommendations in the Strategy and Action Plan.

Cricket: : key issues for the strategy to address

3.10 Cricket in the local authority is generally in stasis, albeit that there does appear to have been some growth in junior provision.

3.11 The overall quality of existing provision is standard to good, although there are issues experienced at specific sites (noted in the main body of the section).

3.12 Although conventional cricket league cricket is largely in a stasis, there is growth nationally in less formal versions of the game ('Last Man Stands', T20, Kwik Cricket) which appeal to the young and those who are time-challenged.

3.13 The concept of a central venue (perhaps in Braintree) for casual cricket should be explored, with the provision of non-turf wickets. This would help develop team-based (as opposed to club-based cricket for those who cannot commit to regular and frequent games).

3.14 The impression from this study is that the larger clubs have much better access to T20 competitions and other short- game derivatives. Smaller clubs may wish to consider the potential impact on traditional matchplay in the medium to long term if young people want to focus on the shorter game and are therefore drawn increasingly to the larger clubs.

3.15 Increased population levels especially resulting from planned growth will heighten demand for pitches in some locations, in coming years. (**See Appendix 6** for further details).

Rugby: key issues for the strategy to address

3.14 Pitch drainage improvements are desirable at the Braintree RUFC club, and especially in respect of the training pitch.

3.15 Reorientation of the main pitch at Witham RUFC will help to improve the overall rugby environment at the club.

3.16 If an additional 3G AGP were to be provided in the vicinity of either Braintree and/or Witham RUFC, an WRB compliant surface would be beneficial, especially in respect of Braintree RUFC.

Hockey: key issues for the strategy to address

3.17 The existing facility at Witham Leisure Centre (Bramston Sports Ground) should be protected and enhanced with a primary function for hockey, and the encouragement of more time to be made available for hockey, use to help further exploit post-Olympic interest.

3.18 The potential for making better use of the Braintree Club's facility at Releet Sportsground, perhaps in conjunction with the upgrade of the clubhouse pavilion, to allow for a more diverse range of activities.

3.19 The potential for using the facility at Halstead for hockey should be investigated, as a satellite venue involving school-club links. This should be discussed with Braintree Hockey Club.

3.20 Recognition that the Braintree Club also uses and promotes hockey at locations outside the District (in Uttlesford District) and that this should be recognised in the strategic planning for hockey.

Pitch needs resulting from planned new growth (2015-2033)

3.19 The following is an estimate of the amount of new pitch provision generated by planned new population growth between 2016 and 2033.

Figure 3.1: Pitch sports requirements generated by planned new development (2015-2033)

Sport/age group	Teams yielded by new housing 2016-2033² (14,365 houses)	Pitches required³	Area required (hectares)⁴	Capital cost (pitch + changing for adults and pitches only for youth and mini-soccer)⁵
Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)	14.0	1.7	0.7	£34,907
Junior football (10-15 male)	15.9	4.0	4.4	£277,667
Junior football (10-15 female)	1.5	0.4	0.4	£25,916
Senior football (16-45 male)	18.6	4.7	5.2	£1,512,622
Senior football (16-45 female)	0.8	0.2	0.2	£68,756
Mini-rugby (7-12 mixed gender)	2.3	Share junior pitches	Share junior pitches	

² Using team generation rates, explained in the needs assessment, applied to estimates of population arising out of projected new development. A household size of 2.24 was assumed.

³ This figure was calculated using assumptions of home/away rotation of matches, and a notional estimated number of matches per pitch each week.

⁴ Using identified numbers of pitches required multiplied by assumed pitch areas.

⁵ Based on published Sport England unit costs for the most recent year quarter available at the time of this report.

Sport/age group	Teams yielded by new housing 2016-2033² (14,365 houses)	Pitches required³	Area required (hectares)⁴	Capital cost (pitch + changing for adults and pitches only for youth and mini-soccer)⁵
Junior rugby (13-18 male)	1.3	0.3	0.4	£107,893
Junior rugby (13-18 female)	-	-	-	-
Senior rugby (19-45 male)	1.1	0.3	0.3	£89,911
Senior rugby (19-45 female)	-	-	-	-
Junior cricket (7-17 male)	6.6	Share grounds with adults		
Junior cricket (7-17 female)	-	Share grounds with adults		
Senior cricket (18-55 male)	7.2	1.2	1.9	£605,401
Senior cricket (18-55 female)	-	-	-	-
Junior hockey (11-15 male)	0.8	Share grounds with adults		
Junior hockey (11-15 female)	0.8	Share grounds with adults		
Senior hockey (16-45 male)	2.1	0.3 AGP	1,800 sq.m	£253,867

Sport/age group	Teams yielded by new housing 2016-2033² (14,365 houses)	Pitches required³	Area required (hectares)⁴	Capital cost (pitch + changing for adults and pitches only for youth and mini- soccer)⁵
Senior hockey (16-45 female)	1.3	0.2 AGP	1,200 sq.m	£152,320

3.20 Background information supporting the Needs Assessment provides the same data in detail for the above District-wide totals, but also for the strategic allocations identified in the emerging Local Plan.

3.21 As is the case nationally, football and cricket are by far the most significant pitch sports in terms of teams being fielded. For rugby and hockey, additional demand generated by some of the proposed strategic allocations across the District will not generate meaningful additional demand for new pitches; however, it will incrementally generate pressure on existing clubs and venues and it is therefore important to recognise the importance of collecting developer contributions for these sports, reflecting their often larger catchment areas in respect of where players live, and how far they are therefore prepared to travel.

Other outdoor sports: key issues for the strategy to address

Tennis

3.22 Investment should be focused on upgrading existing provision, in association with activity programmes (such those promoted by the LTA).

3.23 It will be important that any new local authority facility provision (especially in conjunction with major housing growth areas) has surfacing markings and is of a configuration that allows it to be used by a variety of activities.

Bowls

3.24 The promotion of (further) taster sessions, linked to '3-generation, family membership' might be a way of bolstering the type of environment which might encourage more young people into the game.

3.25 There does not appear to be a need for additional outdoor bowls facilities, currently; although population change in some areas may cause this to be reviewed at some point in the future.

3.26 Conversely, there is no convincing argument to suggest that the current level of provision is more than required.

3.27 The long-term security of tenure Witham Mill Lane Bowls facility site needs to be clarified.

Netball

3.28 Demand is increasing but is frustrated by lack of facilities, locally.

3.29 The potential should be explored for a shorter-term 'fix' based on existing venues, and/or improving access to existing courts, currently not used for community netball, but having potential. New courts may be provided as a result of the multi-marking of new and improved tennis courts to allow for use by sports such as netball.

Golf

3.30 The demand generated by a larger population suggests a need to keep the level of local provision under review, which might be addressed through extending an existing facility, at an appropriate time: this however, is likely to be a commercial project, and subject to normal land-use planning, and other policies governing overall acceptability. Given its characteristics; geographic location; and, the large number of courses, the District is likely to be a net importer of demand, and growth in neighbouring local authorities is also therefore likely to impact upon demand for golf facilities.

4.0 THE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

General

4.1 The Strategy provides the strategic vision, aims and recommendations to guide the actions and decisions of the District Council and its partners over the coming years (The Strategy).

4.2 The new government strategy 'Sporting Future – A new strategy for an active nation', identifies the importance of addressing flat-lining levels of participation in sports, and it has redefined ways of measuring success for sport in respect of physical and mental health and well-being, individual development, social and community development, economic development. Public investment in sport will reach children as young as five years. Funding will also be targeted at groups who have low participation rates to encourage those who do not take part in sport and physical activity to get involved. This includes supporting women, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people.

4.3 In response to the government's strategy, Sport England's new strategy vision is that that everyone in England, regardless of age, background or ability, feels able to take part in sport or activity. Sport England's new vision and its supporting aims will therefore contribute to achieving the government's strategy.

4.4 Local Development Documents will be a key delivery tool for the Sustainable Community Strategy, seeking to achieve the communities' ambitions for the future by implementing the guiding principles of the Sustainable Community Strategy:

- To promote accessibility for all
- To create a clean and green environment and address climate change
- To achieve a prosperous local economy
- To enable everyone to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle

Vision and aims

4.5 The **vision and key aims** for this strategy are therefore identified to be:

- To create an environment for local sport and physical activity which helps in:
 - Improving the overall physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents
 - Encourages individual, social and community development
 - Promotes participation amongst children, to help develop habits for life in respect of participation
 - Promotes participation amongst those groups within the community that do not traditionally have good levels of participation

4.6 Complementing the above vision and aims are the following proposed strategic recommendations. All four of these recommendations have relevance to the achievement of each of the above aims. Each strategic recommendation is stated, along with a justification. Together with the Vision and Aims, these recommendations help to shape the tone and direction of the Action Plan.

Strategic recommendations

4.7 SR1: Conserve and improve the existing stock of outdoor sports facilities of existing and potential value for outdoor sport

4.8 Reasoning: *It is fundamental to the achievement of the vision and aims of the strategy, that the local authority's stock of outdoor sports sites is conserved. This will mean the outright protection and improvement of many sites, but it may also mean potentially the redeployment of some sites that are or were used for outdoor sport. In terms of the latter, 'redemption' may mean simply making a decision not to invest in maintaining sports facilities, but also that the site is still suited to other recreation activity. In other far more limited circumstances it might be appropriate to release sites for alternative built development. The emphasis is therefore on overall conservation of the stock of local facilities, given the need for facilities to change to best meet current needs as reflected in the Vision and Aims.*

4.9 What to look for in the Action Plan: *Apart from the above it is an aspiration to improve the quality of the overall stock of facilities, to make them more 'playable' and therefore attractive to use. A typology of sites has been identified to help achieve this and other strategic recommendation. Taking into account the findings of the Needs Assessment, it is clear that sites can be classified generally into one of five groupings by type, depending on the role that they serve. No one group is more important than any other, as each grouping represents sites with contrasting but nevertheless vital functions in terms of providing opportunities.*

4.10 *The groups are as follows:*

- *Priority Parks and recreation grounds;*
- *Multi-pitch sports sites;*
- *Other significant sites;*
- *Smaller sports sites; and*
- *Un(der)used Sites with Strategic Potential.*

4.11 *Beyond the above there are sites of limited utility and/or potential. There are also other institutionally controlled facilities (including many schools) that are not used for community sports, but which have a primary function in meeting the needs of their client groups. The introduction of community use to these facilities may be an aspiration, but not a short-term priority of the Strategy.*

4.12 *The five groups (together with sites considered to be of limited utility and/or potential) are explained below, and linked to the Strategic Policy recommendations. This typology has been used to inform site and sports specific actions identified in the Action Plan. Where operational education facilities serve a significant role for community sport covered by this Strategy, they are categorised under one or more of the above. Where they do not currently appear to have a significant role in the above respect. They have been listed as 'Other Education'.*

4.13 *Where sites have been identified for new and/or improved facilities, the quality target should be to achieve a good standard of construction as recognised by the relevant Governing Bodies of Sport, and detailed in the Needs Assessment (Appendix 3).*

4.14 *The local stock of outdoor sports facilities can sometimes be conserved and improved by encouraging some clubs that exhibit the capacity and willingness, to assume some additional responsibility for the management and maintenance of facilities. This might sometimes include formal asset transfer of sites or ancillary facilities (such as pavilions) to clubs. Some potential projects in this regard have been identified in the Action Plan B, but other projects might exist.*

4.15 *In addition, the Action Plan B identifies locations where there is potential to create new facilities to meet existing and future demands. For example, potential locations for new AGPs or grass pitches, subject to normal land-use planning considerations.*

4.16 *Finally, there are recommendations for appropriate policies and other statements to be included in statutory and supplementary planning documents. (See Action Plan A).*

4.17 **SR2: Provide new and improved opportunities and facilities that stand the best chances of encouraging participation amongst those groups that don't traditionally take part in sport and active recreation in high numbers.**

4.18 ***Reasoning:** Sport and active recreation has much to offer in improving the individual health, as well as encouraging social and community development. However, it needs to embrace the changing nature of society and accept that the terms of engagement with potential participants are changing, and new forms of provision and facility management may be required to encourage the identified target groups into sport and active recreation.*

4.19 ***What to look for in the Action Plan:** As identified in Section 2, there are some parts of the local authority that have comparatively low levels of participation in sport, and these tend to coincide with areas of relatively high levels of social and economic deprivation when measured by government indicators. Some sites have therefore been highlighted for this reason, and initiatives for these sites should be aimed at improving participation in the surrounding areas.*

4.20 **SR3: Provide new and improved opportunities for children with the aim of helping develop a 'habit for life' in sport and active recreation.**

4.21 ***Reasoning:** In recent years some sports (notably pitch sports like football) have developed forms of the game that have enjoyed considerable success in encouraging children and young people into sport. Such opportunities and age-appropriate facilities should be the bedrock of any serious attempt to encourage even higher levels of participation amongst children and young people.*

4.22 ***What to look for in the Action Plan:** Facilities that are suited to hosting child-friendly versions of sports are encouraged at various sites- this might be achieved by simple initiatives such as reviewing and re-marking pitches, but also more structural changes, such as improved and expanded ancillary buildings. There are schools that do not appear to currently offer much community use, which are located in or close to areas of relatively high social and economic*

deprivation, and which might offer the potential for getting children from relatively deprived backgrounds into sport.

4.23 *A few sites are also identified where there may be scope for more use, and perhaps through working in tandem with local primary schools.*

4.24 **SR4: Provide new and improved opportunities that help retain and allow for progression of participants.**

4.25 **Reasoning:** *Successfully encouraging new participants is just one challenge to be faced in growing participation in sport and active recreation: retaining new and long-standing participants is the other challenge. To achieve this will require the opportunities for those who wish to stay and progress in a given sport with the facilities and pathways to enable them so to do. Enthusiasm should not be thwarted by a lack of facilities of right type and appropriate quality.*

4.26 **What to look for in the Action Plan:** *This Strategy and Action Plan does not provide for facilities to be used by the elite performance level, but by the general community. However, the priority sites will be of a kind that will help budding sportspersons to play to a good level. Below these priority sites there will be smaller sites, which will still be important entry level venues.*

4.27 **Two parts to the Action Plan:** The Action Plan has two parts- Part A has general recommendations. Part B has site and sports-specific Actions.

4.28 The Strategy and Action Plan has been prepared and agreed by the District Council, Sport England and relevant Governing Bodies of Sport. These stakeholders must therefore cooperate in achieving the strategic and site specific actions proposed. The land-use planning system will be a principal vehicle for addressing many of the actions. The sports and site-specific actions contained in Action Plan B have been graded as to their agreed priority, and practical involvement and leadership in achieving the implementation of actions must be agreed between members of the on-going steering group.

4.29 Section 5 of this documents explains how the Strategy and Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. However, the steering group should be constantly alert to new issues and opportunities that emerge over the course of time, and the Strategy and Action Plan is therefore not intended to be inflexibly prescriptive.

Action Plan A: General actions

Key: Time-frame (Short=0-2 years; Medium=2-4 years; Long=5 years +)

Potential Implementation partners: Braintree District Council; Football Association; England and Wales Cricket Board; Rugby Football Union; England Hockey.

Strategic recommendation	Action	Time-frame
SR1	<p>Planning policies: Develop planning policies for conservation and improvement of the stock of playing fields as identified by SR1.</p> <p>Include policies and proposals in the Development Plan which are consistent with paragraphs 73 and 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework guidance and, in particular, include reference to the recommendations contained in this Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Include sites specific proposals that cover the relevant recommendations included in this Action Plan, and especially in Part B.</p> <p>In circumstances where proposals for development and use of a site are contrary to those contained in the recommendations of this Strategy and Action Plan, they should only be approved where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or • the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or • the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.' <p>Include statements in all relevant supplementary planning documents relating to the policy and actions in this Strategy.</p>	Short

Strategic recommendation	Action	Time-frame
	<p>SPD and CIL: Include reference to all relevant recommendations contained in this Strategy and Action Plan in CIL Regulation 123 List, and any other supplementary planning documents of relevance, that are to be prepared by the Council.</p> <p>Site typology: Develop and maintain a typology of sites to guide planning and investment in line with Figure 5.2 (below)</p>	
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4,	Implementation through steering group: Achieve implementation of the policies and recommendations in this strategy and action plan through the establishment of a steering group.	Short
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4	Monitoring review through steering group: This is to be achieved in accordance with Section 7 of this strategy.	Short
SR1, SR2	Develop capacity of club volunteers to use a central resource of pitch maintenance facilities: Training programmes allied to the creation of a central bank of maintenance equipment to help clubs to maintain the quality of grass pitches.	Med-long

Figure 5.2: Typology of sites

Groups
<p>(1) Priority Park and Recreation Grounds: these are pitches available in the Council's larger parks and public recreation grounds that provide important opportunities for small clubs to have regular access to football pitches and accompanying facilities of a basic but decent quality. The types of clubs and teams that benefit from such sites are either newly established with no facilities of their own; and/or, longer-standing clubs, that do not have the resources or aspiration to own their home ground. Such venues may also be important for other sports, such as cricket, tennis and bowls</p>
<p>(2) Multi-pitch Sports Sites: these are sites that are (almost) entirely devoted to outdoor sport, and will contain multiple pitches (3+), and perhaps of various age-appropriate dimensions. These might be local authority, or club-controlled. The key defining characteristic will however be that they are quite big, and therefore allow for high volumes of play, as well as offering at least the potential for further development and improvement for the benefit of mass participation in outdoor sport.</p>
<p>(3) Other significant sites: these are sites that are also important for sport in the District, but will have only 1-2 pitches (such as dedicated cricket grounds for example).</p>

Groups

(4) **Smaller Sports Sites:** these are smaller sites- perhaps of no more than one or two pitches, (and perhaps courts and/or greens) that value for sport, and potentially for individual clubs. These sites might already be controlled by local clubs, but they may also be controlled by the Council, and have the potential to be offered by leasehold to suitable local clubs with a willingness and capacity to self-manage.

(5) **Un(der)used Sites with Strategic Potential:** these are sites that are currently unused or underused for community sport generally but have playing fields which offer the potential to make a strategically significant contribution to the local stock of football sites (or other pitch sports). These sites can include (disused) education playing fields, amongst others.

Sites of limited utility for pitch sports: There are other sites that do not fit comfortably into any of these categories, and these will tend to be sites of poor quality, and limited utility and/or potential for pitch sports. These sites might be considered for alternative uses to sport, including for other open space functions or, where appropriate, built development.

Action Plan B: Site and sports-specific actions

Key: Time-frame (Short=0-2 years; Medium=2-4 years; Long=5 years +)

Potential Implementation partners: Braintree District Council; Football Association; England and Wales Cricket Board; Rugby Football Union; England Hockey.

Colour coding of sites	
	No specific site
	Sites largely controlled by local authorities (District Council or town/parish councils) available for community use.
	Other sites generally available for community use.
	Sites currently not generally available for community use.

Table 7 Action Plan Part B (Site and sports-specific actions)

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Owner ship	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendation s met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
1	Land in the vicinity of proposed New Garden Community west of Braintree	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Rayne	N.A.	N.A.	SR1, SR3, SR4	The local plan allocation up to 2033 will generate the following estimated demand for pitches. For the time-being, some or all of these additional needs may be met through the upgrading of existing venues in the vicinity of the allocation. However, if the longer-term plan is to expand these new Garden Communities beyond 2033, then it would be appropriate to consider a dedicated large-scale site, to accommodate space to meet pre-2033 demands, but also with the capacity for expansion beyond 2033. Given the location of the allocation, it would may also be appropriate to plan this provision in conjunction with neighbouring local authorities. Close attention must also be given to the ownership, management and financial sustainability of such large-scale sites, which may require a mix of sports and commercial elements, together with co-location of other community facilities. Please note that for rugby and hockey in particular, where levels of potential participation are far lower than for football and cricket, area specific allocations will not generate a detectable additional demand for new pitches, reference should instead be made instead to paragraph 3.21 and Figure 3.1 of this document.	High	Medium /Long

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendations met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
									<p>Pitches required</p> <p>Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender) 0.3</p> <p>Junior football (10-15 male) 0.7</p> <p>Junior football (10-15 female) 0.1</p> <p>Senior football (16-45 male) 0.8</p> <p>Senior football (16-45 female) 0.0</p> <p>Senior cricket (18-55 male) 0.2</p> <p>Senior cricket (18-55 female) -</p>		
2	Land in the vicinity of proposed New Garden Community at Mark Teys	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Coggeshall and North Feering			SR1, SR3, SR4	<p>The local plan allocation up to 2033 will generate the following estimated demand for pitches. For the time-being, some or all of these additional needs may be met through the upgrading of existing venues in the vicinity of the allocation. However, if the longer-term plan is to expand these new Garden Communities beyond 2033, then it would be appropriate to consider a dedicated large-scale site, to accommodate space to meet pre-2033 demands, but also with the capacity for expansion beyond 2033. Given the location of the allocation, it would may also be appropriate to plan this provision in conjunction with neighbouring local authorities. Close attention must also be given to the ownership, management and financial sustainability of such large-scale sites, which may require a mix of sports and commercial elements, together with co-location of other community facilities.</p> <p>Please note that for rugby and hockey in particular, where levels of potential participation are far lower than for football and cricket, area</p>	High	Medium /Long

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Owner ship	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendation s met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame																
									<p>specific allocations will not generate a detectable additional demand for new pitches, reference should instead be made instead to paragraph 3.21 and Figure 3.1 of this document.</p> <table><thead><tr><th></th><th>Pitches required</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)</td><td>0.1</td></tr><tr><td>Junior football (10-15 male)</td><td>0.3</td></tr><tr><td>Junior football (10-15 female)</td><td>0.0</td></tr><tr><td>Senior football (16-45 male)</td><td>0.4</td></tr><tr><td>Senior football (16-45 female)</td><td>0.0</td></tr><tr><td>Senior cricket (18-55 male)</td><td>0.1</td></tr><tr><td>Senior cricket (18-55 female)</td><td>0.0</td></tr></tbody></table>		Pitches required	Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)	0.1	Junior football (10-15 male)	0.3	Junior football (10-15 female)	0.0	Senior football (16-45 male)	0.4	Senior football (16-45 female)	0.0	Senior cricket (18-55 male)	0.1	Senior cricket (18-55 female)	0.0		
	Pitches required																										
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Junior football (10-15 female)	0.0																										
Senior football (16-45 male)	0.4																										
Senior football (16-45 female)	0.0																										
Senior cricket (18-55 male)	0.1																										
Senior cricket (18-55 female)	0.0																										
3	Land in the vicinity of allocation east of Great Notley	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Black Notley and Terling			SR1, SR3, SR4	<p>Please note that for rugby and hockey in particular, where levels of potential participation are far lower than for football and cricket, area specific allocations will not generate a detectable additional demand for new pitches, reference should instead be made instead to paragraph 3.21 and Figure 3.1 of this document.</p> <table><thead><tr><th></th><th>Pitches required</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)</td><td>0.2</td></tr><tr><td>Junior football (10-15 male)</td><td>0.6</td></tr><tr><td>Junior football (10-15 female)</td><td>0.1</td></tr><tr><td>Senior football (16-45 male)</td><td>0.6</td></tr><tr><td>Senior football (16-45 female)</td><td>0.0</td></tr><tr><td>Senior cricket (18-55 male)</td><td>0.2</td></tr><tr><td>Senior cricket (18-55 female)</td><td>0.0</td></tr></tbody></table>		Pitches required	Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)	0.2	Junior football (10-15 male)	0.6	Junior football (10-15 female)	0.1	Senior football (16-45 male)	0.6	Senior football (16-45 female)	0.0	Senior cricket (18-55 male)	0.2	Senior cricket (18-55 female)	0.0	High	Medium
	Pitches required																										
Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)	0.2																										
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Senior cricket (18-55 female)	0.0																										
4	Land in the vicinity of east of Broad Road, Braintree allocation	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Bocking North			SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4	<p>Please note that for rugby and hockey in particular, where levels of potential participation are far lower than for football and cricket, area specific allocations will not generate a detectable additional demand for new pitches, reference should instead be made instead to paragraph 3.21 and Figure 3.1 of this document.</p> <table><thead><tr><th></th><th>Pitches required</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)</td><td>0.1</td></tr></tbody></table>		Pitches required	Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)	0.1	High	Medium												
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Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendations met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
									Junior football (10-15 male) 0.3 Junior football (10-15 female) 0.0 Senior football (16-45 male) 0.3 Senior football (16-45 female) 0.0 Senior cricket (18-55 male) 0.1 Senior cricket (18-55 female) 0.0		
5	Land in the vicinity of former Towerlands Park site allocation	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Bocking North			SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4	<p>Please note that for rugby and hockey in particular, where levels of potential participation are far lower than for football and cricket, area specific allocations will not generate a detectable additional demand for new pitches, reference should instead be made instead to paragraph 3.21 and Figure 3.1 of this document.</p> <div> <div></div> <div>Pitches required</div> </div> Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender) 0.1 Junior football (10-15 male) 0.2 Junior football (10-15 female) 0.0 Senior football (16-45 male) 0.2 Senior football (16-45 female) 0.0 Senior cricket (18-55 male) 0.1 Senior cricket (18-55 female) 0.0	High	Medium
6	Land in the vicinity of land at Feering allocation	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Coggeshall and North Feering			SR1, SR3, SR4	<p>Please note that for rugby and hockey in particular, where levels of potential participation are far lower than for football and cricket, area specific allocations will not generate a detectable additional demand for new pitches, reference should instead be made instead to paragraph 3.21 and Figure 3.1 of this document.</p> <div> <div></div> <div>Pitches required</div> </div> Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender) 0.1 Junior football (10-15 male) 0.3 Junior football (10-15 female) 0.0 Senior football (16-45 male) 0.3 Senior football (16-45 female) 0.0 Senior cricket (18-55 male) 0.1 Senior cricket (18-55 female) 0.0		Medium

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Owner ship	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendation s met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame																
7	Land in the vicinity of Woodend Farm allocation	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Hatfield Peverel			SR1, SR3, SR4	<p>Please note that for rugby and hockey in particular, where levels of potential participation are far lower than for football and cricket, area specific allocations will not generate a detectable additional demand for new pitches, reference should instead be made instead to paragraph 3.21 and Figure 3.1 of this document.</p> <table><thead><tr><th></th><th>Pitches required</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)</td><td>0.1</td></tr><tr><td>Junior football (10-15 male)</td><td>0.1</td></tr><tr><td>Junior football (10-15 female)</td><td>0.0</td></tr><tr><td>Senior football (16-45 male)</td><td>0.1</td></tr><tr><td>Senior football (16-45 female)</td><td>0.0</td></tr><tr><td>Senior cricket (18-55 male)</td><td>0.0</td></tr><tr><td>Senior cricket (18-55 female)</td><td>0.0</td></tr></tbody></table>		Pitches required	Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)	0.1	Junior football (10-15 male)	0.1	Junior football (10-15 female)	0.0	Senior football (16-45 male)	0.1	Senior football (16-45 female)	0.0	Senior cricket (18-55 male)	0.0	Senior cricket (18-55 female)	0.0	High	
	Pitches required																										
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8	Land in the vicinity of south west Witham allocation	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Hatfield Peverell/Witham South			SR1, SR3, SR4	<p>Please note that for rugby and hockey in particular, where levels of potential participation are far lower than for football and cricket, area specific allocations will not generate a detectable additional demand for new pitches, reference should instead be made instead to paragraph 3.21 and Figure 3.1 of this document.</p> <table><thead><tr><th></th><th>Pitches required</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)</td><td>0.1</td></tr><tr><td>Junior football (10-15 male)</td><td>0.2</td></tr><tr><td>Junior football (10-15 female)</td><td>0.0</td></tr><tr><td>Senior football (16-45 male)</td><td>0.2</td></tr><tr><td>Senior football (16-45 female)</td><td>0.0</td></tr><tr><td>Senior cricket (18-55 male)</td><td>0.1</td></tr><tr><td>Senior cricket (18-55 female)</td><td>0.0</td></tr></tbody></table>		Pitches required	Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)	0.1	Junior football (10-15 male)	0.2	Junior football (10-15 female)	0.0	Senior football (16-45 male)	0.2	Senior football (16-45 female)	0.0	Senior cricket (18-55 male)	0.1	Senior cricket (18-55 female)	0.0	High	Medium
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9	Land in the vicinity of north east Witham allocation	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall			SR1, SR3, SR4	<p>Please note that for rugby and hockey in particular, where levels of potential participation are far lower than for football and cricket, area specific allocations will not generate a detectable additional demand for new pitches, reference should instead be made instead to paragraph 3.21 and Figure 3.1 of this document.</p>	High																	

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									<p style="text-align: right;">Pitches required</p> <p>Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender) 0.0</p> <p>Junior football (10-15 male) 0.1</p> <p>Junior football (10-15 female) 0.0</p> <p>Senior football (16-45 male) 0.1</p> <p>Senior football (16-45 female) 0.0</p> <p>Senior cricket (18-55 male) 0.0</p> <p>Senior cricket (18-55 female) 0.0</p>		
10	Land in the vicinity of Panfield Lane, Braintree allocation	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Bocking South/Bocking North			SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4	<p>Please note that for rugby and hockey in particular, where levels of potential participation are far lower than for football and cricket, area specific allocations will not generate a detectable additional demand for new pitches, reference should instead be made instead to paragraph 3.21 and Figure 3.1 of this document.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Pitches required</p> <p>Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender) 0.1</p> <p>Junior football (10-15 male) 0.2</p> <p>Junior football (10-15 female) 0.0</p> <p>Senior football (16-45 male) 0.2</p> <p>Senior football (16-45 female) 0.0</p> <p>Senior cricket (18-55 male) 0.1</p> <p>Senior cricket (18-55 female) 0.0</p>	High	Medium
11	N.A.							SR1, SR3, SR4	The provision of at least 3 full-size 3G AGPs to provide facilities primarily for football training (and some weekend matchplay) at Braintree, Witham, and Halstead (specific locations to be determined). These are to meet immediate needs.	High	Medium
12	New Garden (NGC) allocations				Rayne/Coggeshall and North Feering			SR1, SR3, SR4	Dependent on the scale of longer-term growth at the proposed new NGCs there could be justification for at least 1 additional full-size 3G AGPs at each of these locations. Therefore any, dedicated large sports sites provided in conjunction with these allocations should have the technical, physical, and environmental capacity to accommodate these facilities.	Medium	Long

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendation s met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
13	Black Notley Playing Field	13	LA	A1	Black Notley and Terling	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for contemporary football needs	Low	NA
14	Blenheim Close Playing Fields (Deanery Hill)	14	LA	A1	Bocking North	Football	Multi-pitch sports site	SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4	Improve drainage, pitch maintenance, changing facilities, and parking. An enlarged and improved venue (possibly relocated) would help meet the needs of the existing clubs, and also potentially meet the needs of nearby growth allocations.	High	Medium
15	Burtons Green Playing Field	22	LA	A1	Gosfield and Greenstead Green	?	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Improve pitch drainage and maintenance. Expand/improve ancillary facilities multi-age and gender-appropriate changing facilities.	Medium	Medium
16	Camoise Close Playing Fields	23	LA	A1	Upper Colne	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation. Note: the small pitch on site is used by the school	Low	NA
17	Camping Close	24	LA	A1	Bumpstead	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Provide training lights	Medium	Short
18	Church Road Playing Fields	26	LA	A1	Gosfield and Greenstead Green	Cricket, football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Improve storage facilities for sports on site. Provide practice nets for cricket.	Medium	Short
19	Church Road Recreation Ground	27	LA	A1	Upper Colne	None	Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football needs. It might however be suited to a small cricket club, or one looking for a second venue.	Low	NA
20	Clare Road Football Pitch	28	LA	A1	Braintree Central	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendations met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
21	Coldnailhurst Avenue Playing Pitch	29	LA	A1	Bocking South	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
22	Courtauld Memorial Hall	32	LA	A1	The Three Colnes	None	Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
23	Cressing Cricket Club	34	Other	A1	Cressing and Stisted	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	Explore scope for re-introducing cricket to this site, perhaps as a second/third ground for an existing club	Medium	Short
24	Currants Farm Road Park	37	LA	A1	Bocking South	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
25	Deal Close Playing Fields	39	LA	A1	Bocking North	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
26	East Street Park and Recreation Ground	42	LA	A1	Coggeshall and North Feering	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for cotemporary football needs	Low	NA
27	Fairstead Road Playing Field	43	LA	A1	Black Notley and Terling	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation. Note: single-pitch site remote and used by single Sunday football team.	Low	NA
28	Gage's Road Playing Fields	45	LA	A1	Stour Valley North	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation. Note: single-pitch site remote and used by single Sunday football team.	Low	NA

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29	Gestingthorpe Playing Field	9	LA	A1	Hedingham and Maplestead	Cricket	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Refurbishment of pavilion and practice nets	Medium	Medium
30	Great Bardfield Playing Fields	48	LA	A1	Three Fields	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Improve pitch drainage and maintenance. Portable training lights	Medium	Medium
31	Great Maplestead Playing Field	51	LA	A1	Hedingham and Maplestead	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
32	Great Notley (Notley Green)	52	LA	A1	Great Notley and Braintree West	Football	Multi-pitch sports site	SR1, SR3	Improved grass pitch drainage and maintenance.	Medium	Medium
33	Kelvedon Playing Field	53	LA	A1	Kelvedon	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation. Note: This single pitch venue cannot host additional pitches, but is of a relatively good standard.	Low	NA
34	Great Saling Village Hall & Playing Field	54	LA	A1	Panfield	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
35	Great Yeldham Recreation Ground	55	LA	A1	Yeldham	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Potential provision of portable training lights and additional equipment storage	Medium	Short
36	Grove Lane Playing Field	56	LA	A1	Hatfield Peverel	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA

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37	Henry Dixon Road Playing Field	59	LA	A1	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
38	Hillside Gardens Playing Fields	60	LA	A1	Braintree South	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
39	King George Playing Fields	67	LA	A1	Braintree East	Football, Rugby	Smaller Sports site	SR1, SR2	Seek to promote this venue further for football. It might be considered as a potential venue for a full-size rugby/football compliant AGP, given its proximity to the rugby club. Note: the site is relatively lightly used for football.	Medium	Short
40	Lawn Meadow	68	LA	A1	Hedingham and Maplestead	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	See action recommended under Hedingham School (Recommendation 83)	Medium	Medium
41	Mill Chase Playing Field	71	LA	A1	Halstead St. Andrew's	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
42	Park Drive Recreation Ground	76	LA	A1	Halstead Trinity	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
43	Park View Playing Fields	77	LA	A1	Three Fields	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation. Note: single-pitch site remote and used by single Sunday football team.	Low	NA
44	Pebmarsh Road Playing Field	78	LA	A1	The Three Colnes	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA

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45	Clayhills (Pebmarsh Road)	79	LA	A1	Stour Valley South	None	Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation. Note: small adult single-pitch site remote and unused.	Low	NA
46	Queens Gardens Playing Fields	80	LA	A1	Panfield	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
47	Rayne Village Hall	82	LA	A1	Rayne	Cricket, Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Option A: Improve grass pitch maintenance and drainage. Expand changing facilities to make them age and gender-appropriate and to meet the number of teams. Expand parking provision. Option B: Relocate football club and teams to a larger site as part of the wider NGC proposals (See Recommendation 1). This venue could then become a fully dedicated to cricket. Provide practice nets and strip for cricket. Note: This general location might become a strategically important for local sport because of the NGC proposals in the local plan.	High	Medium
48	Rickstone Sports Ground	85	LA	A1	Witham North	Football	Multi-pitch sports site	SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4	Improve grass pitch drainage and maintenance. Expand changing facilities to provide age and gender-specific facilities. Explore potential for asset transfer to club and/or Fields in Trust, or longer-lease to encourage external funding. Consider scope to provide a full-or half size 3G AGP on site for training and potential matchplay. Provide ball-retention fence adjacent to cemetery.	High	Medium

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									Note: this venue may absorb some of the additional demands arising from local strategic allocations.		
49	Shalford Village Hall Playing Field	93	LA	A1	Panfield	Cricket, Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Portable training lights for football club. Provide practice nets for cricket	Medium	Short
50	Silver End Playing Field	94	LA	A1	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Improve grass pitch drainage and pitch maintenance	Medium	Short
51	Silver End Village Hall (Silver Street)	96	LA	A1	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Explore ways to increase car-parking. Expand changing facilities to make them age and gender-specific. Explore potential for reduced-size 3G AGP to allow for on-site training, and some matchplay. Explore scope for asset transfer with resident club Note: this site and the resident club may potentially absorb some of the additional demand arising from major housing allocations in the Witham area.	High	Medium
52	St. Johns Avenue Recreation Ground	101	LA	A1	Braintree South	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
53	Strutt Memorial Ground	107	LA	A1	Hatfield Peverel	Football	Multi-pitch sports site	SR1, SR3	Improved age and gender appropriate changing facilities	Medium	

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendations met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
54	Teal Way Playing Field	109	LA	A1	Kelvedon	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
55	The Bell Field	110	Private	A1	Panfield		Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation. Note: single-pitch site remote and used by two Sunday football team.	Low	NA
56	The New Shed, Helions Bumpstead	116	LA	A1	Bumpstead	None	Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation. Note: single-pitch site remote and un-used. The previous user (Helions Bumpstead FC) did not appear to be fielding a team at the time of the Needs Assessment	Low	NA
57	The Street Recreation Ground	118	LA	A1	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	None	Site of limited utility for pitch sports	SR1	No recommendation. Note: venue too small for competitive football or other pitch sport needs.	Low	NA
58	Wethersfield Playing Field	123	LA	A1	Three Fields	Cricket	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Provide practice nets	Medium	Medium
59	Wickham Bishops Road	119	LA	A1	Hatfield Peverel	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Provide on-site equipment storage. Improve/expand parking area.	Medium	Short/medium
60	Witham (Bramston Sports Ground)	120	LA	A1	Witham South	Football	Multi-pitch sports site (includes full-size AGP used for hockey)	SR1, SR3, SR4	Improve grass pitch drainage and maintenance. Protect and improve existing hockey-compliant AGP surface. In conjunction with new 3G AGP provision in the Witham area (see Recommendation 11) release additional mid-week time at this venue to meet club training needs, and to help the club develop.	High	Medium

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61	Bocking Sports Club	15	Club	A2	Bocking North	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1, SR2	Improve drainage, pitch maintenance, changing facilities, and parking. These improvements can help meet the needs of the existing clubs, and also potentially meet the needs of nearby growth allocations.	High	Medium /Long
62	Braintree Cricket Club	16	Club	A2	Bocking South	Cricket	Other significant site	SR1, SR3, SR4	Improve/expand changing facilities to make them more gender and age- appropriate. Note: These improvements can help meet the needs of the existing clubs, and also potentially meet the needs of nearby growth allocations.	High	Medium /Long
63	Braintree RUFC	17	Club	A2	Braintree East	Rugby	Multi-pitch sports site	SR1, SR3, SR4	Improved pitch drainage and maintenance in respect of the training pitch, in particular.	High	Short
64	Braintree Town Football Club	20	Club	A2	Braintree East	Football	Other significant site	SR1	In conjunction with the Club, review potential longer-term needs to allow the club to progress to higher levels in the national pyramid (which might include relocation).	Medium	Medium
65	Coggeshall Town Cricket Club	8	Club	A2	Coggeshall and North Feering	Cricket	Other significant site	SR1, SR3, SR4	Pavilion refurbishment. Note: This club site is in the vicinity of major planned growth, and may absorb some of the additional demands arising from that growth.	Medium	Medium
66	College of Braintree Sports Ground (with John Ray Sportsground)	30	Education	A2	Bocking Blackwater	Football	Multi-pitch sports site	SR1, SR3, SR4	Improve pitch maintenance and drainage. Improve and expand changing facilities to align with team numbers and age ranges. Explore provision of training lights, and or as a potential site for a 3G AGP. Explore scope for asset transfer to club. This facility and the resident club is likely to absorb additional demand arising from planned new growth in the area.	High	Short/Medium

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendations met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
67	Courtaulds Sports Ground	33	Private	A2	Halstead St. Andrew's	Football, Rugby	Multi-pitch sports site	SR1, SR3	Improve grass pitch drainage and maintenance.	Medium	Medium
68	Earls Colne Recreation Ground	41	Club	A2	The Three Colnes	Cricket, Football	Multi-pitch sports site	SR1, SR3	Encourage additional football use of this site. A small-sided 3G pitch may be an appropriate means of achieving this, so long as a sustainable business plan can be demonstrated.	Medium	Medium
69	Halstead Town Football Club	57	Club	A2	Halstead St. Andrew's	Football	Other significant site	SR1, SR3, SR4	Explore scope for club relocation to a larger site, which might also be a suitable venue for a full-size 3G AGP in Halstead.	Medium	Medium
70	Hatfield Peverel Cricket Club	4		A2	Hatfield Peverel	Cricket	Other significant site	SR1, SR3	Provide non-turf strip	Medium	Medium
71	Jeffery's Road Recreation Ground (Cressing Sports & Social Club)	63	Club	A2	Cressing and Stisted	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Provide portable training lights	Medium	Medium
72	Kelvedon & Feering Cricket Clubs	65	Club	A2	Coggeshall and North Feering	Cricket	Other significant site	SR1, SR3, SR4	Expand club pavilion. Note: This club site is in the vicinity of major planned growth, and may absorb some of the additional demands arising from that growth.	High	Medium
73	Oak Farm (Witham Road)	75	Private	A2	Black Notley and Terling	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation. Note: Already a very good standard facility	Low	NA
74	Releet Sports Ground	83	Club	A2	Bocking North	Football, Hockey	Multi-pitch sports site- includes full (size AGP for hockey)	SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4	Expand and improve pavilion and changing facilities for the hockey club. This would help to encourage growth of activity on the site, and ensure longer-term sustainability. (It should be noted that the Club's hockey activity and bases spread into neighbouring local authorities, and the club should	High	Medium

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									therefore be recognised as very important for the sport, locally.)		
75	River View Playing Fields (inc Sauls Bridge)	88	Club	A2	Witham Chipping Hill and Central	Cricket, Football	Multi-pitch sports site	SR1, SR3	Improve condition and maintenance of wickets on second ground. Provision of (more) dog waste bins and appropriate signage	Medium	Medium
76	Star Stile	105	Club	A2	Gosfield and Greenstead Green	Cricket	Other significant site	SR1, SR3	Consider ways in which the facility could provide additional facilities for young players, given potential links with the Ramsey Academy (see Recommendation 128)	Medium	Short
77	Terling Cricket Club	6	Club	A2	Black Notley and Terling	Cricket	Other significant site	SR1, SR3, SR4	Provide practice nets. Note: This club site is in the vicinity of major planned growth, and may absorb some of the additional demands arising from that growth.	Medium	Short
78	The Crops	112	Club	A2	Coggeshall and North Feering	Football	Multi-pitch sports site	SR1, SR3, SR4	Improve pitch drainage and maintenance Continue to explore options for longer term relocation of this club to a larger venue. In particular, explore the potential for the club to become an 'anchor tenant' at a new large outdoor sports facility that might be planned in conjunction with the proposed Mark Teys NGC (see Recommendation 2).	Medium	Short/Medium
79	Witham RUFC	121	Club	A2	Witham West	Football, Rugby	Other significant site	SR1, SR3, SR4	Re-orientate and relay main pitch, together with associated drainage provision.	High	Short
80	Witham Town Football Club (inc Spa Road Playing Field)	122	Club	A2	Witham West	Football	Other significant site	SR1, SR3, SR4	Portable training lights on adjacent pitches, and better on-site storage	Medium	Short

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendations met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
81	Braintree Sport and Health Club	19	LA	A3	Bocking South	Football	Multi-pitch sports site (includes 1 full-size 3G pitch)	SR1, SR2, SR3	Improve grass pitch drainage and maintenance. Expanded, more age and gender appropriate changing facilities.	Medium	Medium
82	Feering C of E Primary School Playing Fields	44	Education	A3	Kelvedon	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation Note: School single-pitch venue, used by one team.	Low	NA
83	Hedingham School and Sixth Form	58	Education	A3	Hedingham and Maplestead	Football	Multi-pitch sports site (includes 1 two-thirds-size 3G pitch)	SR1, SR3	Explore scope for creating a community sportsfield on land adjacent to the School to which all Hedingham United teams could be collocated.	Medium	Short/Medium
84	New Rickstones Academy	73	Education	A3	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	Football	Multi-pitch sports site	SR1, SR3	Provide new goalposts. Provide on-site storage facilities for club.	High	Short
85	Stisted C of E Aided Primary School	106	Education	A3	Cressing and Stisted	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	No recommendation Note: School single-pitch venue, used by one team	Low	NA
86	Tabor Field	108	Education	A3	Bocking South	Football	Smaller Sports site	SR1	Examine scope to use as a training field (with portable floodlight)	Medium	Short
87	Alec Hunter Academy	11	Education	B	Braintree East		Other Education /institutional	SR1, SR2	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy. Note: this facility is located in/near an area of significant deprivation.	Medium	Short

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendations met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
88	Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form	74	Education	B	Braintree South		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
89	The Honywood School	114	Education	B	Coggeshall and North Feering		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
90	Belchamp St Paul Primary School	12	Education	C	Stour Valley North		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
91	Bulmer St. Andrew's CofE School	21	Education	C	Stour Valley North		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
92	Carousel Day Nursery	25	Education	C	Braintree East		Other Education /institutional	SR1, SR2	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy. Note: this facility is located in/near an area of significant deprivation.	Medium	Short
93	Colne Engaine CofE School	31	Education	C	The Three Colnes		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
94	Cressing Primary School	35	Education	C	Cressing and Stisted		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
95	Cressing Road School	36	Education	C	Witham North		Other Education /institutional	SR1, SR2	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy. Note: this facility is located in/near an area of significant deprivation.	Medium	Short

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendations met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
96	De Vere Primary School	38	Education	C	Hedingham and Maplestead		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
97	Earls Colne Primary School	40	Education	C	The Three Colnes		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
98	Gosfield Community Primary School	46	Education	C	Gosfield and Greenstead Green		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
99	Gosfield School	47	Education	C	Gosfield and Greenstead Green		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
100	Great Bardfield Primary School	49	Education	C	Three Fields		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
101	Great Bradfords School	50	Education	C	Bocking Blackwater		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
102	Holy Family RC Primary School	61	Education	C	Witham South		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendations met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
103	Holy Trinity C of E Primary School	62	Education	C	Halstead Trinity		Other Education /institutional	SR1, SR2	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy. Note: this facility is located in/near an area of significant deprivation.	Medium	Short
104	John Bunyan Infant School and Nursery	64	Education	C	Bocking South		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
105	Kelvedon St. Mary's Academy School	66	Education	C	Kelvedon		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
106	Lyons Hall Primary School	69	Education	C	Bocking Blackwater		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
107	Maltings Academy	70	Education	C	Witham South		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
108	Monks Lodge Road Playing Field	72	Education	C	Hedingham and Maplestead		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
109	Rayne Primary & Nursery School	81	Education	C	Rayne		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
110	Richard De Clare Community School	84	Education	C	Halstead St. Andrew's		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendations met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
111	Ridgewell C of E Primary School	86	Education	C	Upper Colne		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
112	Rivenhall: St Mary & All Saints/Rivenhall Playing Field	87	Education	C	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
113	Saint Francis Roman Catholic School	89	Education	C	Bocking South		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
114	Saint Michael's Church of England Primary School	90	Education	C	Braintree Central		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
115	School Playing Field	91	Education	C	Braintree East		Other Education /institutional	SR1, SR2	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy. Note: this facility is located in/near an area of significant deprivation.	Medium	Short
116	Shalford Primary School	92	Education	C	Panfield		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
117	Silver End Primary	95	Education	C	Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
118	St John the Baptist Primary School	97	Education	C	Stour Valley South		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendation s met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
119	St Margarets C of E Primary School	98	Education	C	Upper Colne		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
120	St Peter's C of E School	99	Education	C	Hedingham and Maplestead		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
121	St. Andrews Junior School	100	Education	C	Hatfield Peverel		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
122	St. Margaret's School	102	Private	C	Gosfield and Greenstead Green		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
123	St. Peter's Primary School	103	Education	C	Coggeshall and North Feering		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
124	Stanley Drapkin Primary School	104	Education	C	Bumpstead		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
125	The Colourwheel Nursery	111	Education	C	Black Notley and Terling		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
126	The Edith Borthwick School	113	Education	C	Bocking North		Other Education /institutional	SR1, SR2	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy. Note: this facility is located in/near an area of significant deprivation.	Medium	Short

Recommendation number	Name	Site Ref	Ownership	Availability	Ward (wards covering strategic growth allocation in red)	Sports on-site	Site Grouping	Strategic Recommendations met through this Action (justification for action)	Action	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Time-frame
127	The Howbridge Infant School	115	Education	C	Witham South		Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy.	Low	Short
128	The Ramsey Academy	117	Education	C	Halstead St. Andrew's	Football (Includes full-size sand-based AGP)	Other Education /institutional	SR1	The potential for community use should be recognised in local plan policy. In particular, links with Halstead CC (see Recommendation 76)	Medium	Short

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

Delivery

5.1 The PPS seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across Braintree local authority. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in this PPS, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of the local authority can be satisfied. The PPS identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and identifies how best to resolve this in the future.

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

5.3 The production of this PPS should be regarded as the beginning of the planning process. The success of the PPS and the benefits that are gained are dependent upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a strategic approach.

5.4 Each member of the steering group should take the lead to ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence. The role of the steering group should not end with the completion of the PPS document.

5.5 To help ensure the PPS is well used it should be regarded as the key document within the study area guiding the improvement and protection of playing pitch provision. It needs to be the document people regularly turn to for information on the how the current demand is met and what actions are required to improve the situation and meet future demand. In order for this to be achieved the steering group need to have a clear understanding of how the PPS can be applied and therefore delivered.

5.6 The process of developing the PPS will hopefully have already resulted in a number of benefits that will help with its application and delivery. These may include enhanced partnership working across different agendas and organisations, pooling of resources along with strengthening relationships and understanding between different stakeholders and between members of the steering group and the sporting community. The drivers behind the PPS and the work to develop the recommendations and action plan will have also highlighted, and helped the steering group to understand, the key areas to which it can be applied and how it can be delivered.

Monitoring and updating

5.7 It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the PPS. This monitoring should be led by the local authority and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the steering group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery. This should form an on-going role of the steering group.

5.8 As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPS being signed off by the steering group, then Sport England and the NGBs would consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date.

5.9 The nature of the supply and in particular the demand for playing pitches will likely to have changed over the three years. Therefore, without any form of review and update within this time

period it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

5.10 Ideally the PPS could 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 that would have been built up when developing the PPS. Taking into account the time to develop the PPS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

5.11 An annual review should not be regarded as a particularly resource intensive task. However, it 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 PPS has been applied and the lessons learnt
- Any changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs 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.

5.12 Once the PPS is complete the role of the steering group should evolve so that it:

- Acts as a focal point for promoting the value and importance of the PPS and playing pitch provision in the area
- Monitors, evaluates and reviews progress with the delivery of the recommendations and action plan
- Shares lessons learnt from how the PPS has been used and how it has been applied to a variety of circumstances
- Ensures the PPS is used effectively to input into any new opportunities to secure improved provision and influence relevant programmes and initiatives
- Maintains links between all relevant parties with an interest in playing pitch provision in the area;
- Reviews the need to update the PPS along with the supply and demand information and assessment work on which it is based.

5.13 Further to review the group should either:

- Provide a short annual progress and update paper;
- Provide a partial review focussing on particular sport, pitch type and/or sub area; or
- Lead a full review and update of the PPS document (including the supply and demand information and assessment details).

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

5.15 These meetings could be timed to fit with the annual affiliation process undertaken by the NGBs which would help to capture any changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area.

Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites could be fed into these meetings. The NGBs will also be able to indicate any further performance quality assessments that have been undertaken within the study area. Discussion with the league secretaries may also indicate annual league meetings which it may be useful to attend to pick up any specific issues and/or enable a review of the relevant club details to be undertaken.

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

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