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Bedfordshire

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Chapter three: **Playing Pitch Strategy**

Technical guidance

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7. Artificial Grass Pitches

Introduction

7.1 Artificial grass pitches (AGPs) are used for both football and hockey, as well as to a lesser extent rugby. While different surfaces are preferred for each sport, in reality, many facilities are used interchangeably by one or more sports.

7.2 As a result, many of the tools for analysing AGPs consider the stock of AGPs as a whole. For this reason, this section sets out the adequacy of AGPs and the key issues for Central Bedfordshire based upon a variety of key tools available. The implications of this analysis for football, rugby and hockey will be identified in each of the specific sections.

7.3 This section draws upon:

- Active Places Power
- Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM)
- Sport England Facility Calculator
- Football Association Demand Modelling for AGPs

7.4 It should be noted that some additional pitches have been added since modelling was undertaken and tools have not been updated (and / or have been withdrawn since the initial analysis was produced). Where changes to the provision of AGPs may impact upon the findings of the tools this is noted.

7.5 As set out in Section 2, the new methodology for the assessment of AGPs includes a comparison of the number of hours that an AGP is available at peak time versus the number of hours use the site actually receives. This methodology was not published at the time of research and preparation for this assessment and has therefore not been used.

7.6 It should also noted that this strategy considers 3g pitches and sand based surfaced AGPs as these currently represent the most up to date surfaces that are available. It is acknowledged that these will be superseded. Requirements will still remain although the most appropriate surface type may be determined on a site by site basis.

Active Places Power

Supply

7.7 Tools for analysis of the adequacy of AGPs on Active Places Power have recently been removed. Analysis was undertaken before the tools were no longer available.

7.8 The analysis undertaken through Active Places Power revealed that Central Bedfordshire had a total of 8 full size Artificial Grass Pitches, all of which are floodlit. Five are located on school sites, two are owned by Central Bedfordshire Council and managed in-house or commercially, and one is on an MOD establishment and used privately. Three are sand based and five are 3G/rubber crumb. Three of the 'public' pitches have pay and play access whilst the remainder are used mainly by sports clubs and the community on a booking system.

7.9 Table 7.1 summarises the AGP pitches available within Central Bedfordshire. Since this analysis was undertaken, a further pitch has been built at All Saints Academy, Dunstable.

Table 7.1 – AGPs in Central Bedfordshire

Site Name	Size	Facility Sub Type	Number	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Year Built	Refurbished	Year Refurbished
All Saints Academy	Full Size	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	1	Sports Club / Community Association	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	2013	No	n/a
Ashton Middle School	Small 30 x 40	Sand Filled	1	Private Use	Voluntary Aided School	School/College/University (in house)		No	n/a
Briants Lane Sports Ground	Small (35 x 35)	Sand Filled	1	Pay and Play	Commercial	Local Authority (in house)	2002	No	n/a
Creasey Park	Full size	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	1	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Local Authority (in house)	2011	No	n/a
Defence Intelligence And Security Centre	Full size	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	1	Sports Club / Community Association	MOD	MOD	2010	No	n/a
Dunstable Leisure Centre	Full size	Sand Filled	1	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Commercial Management	1996	Yes	2004
Newton Recreation Ground	40 x 60m	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	1	Pay and Play	Local Authority	Local Authority (in house)	2010	No	n/a
Redborne Upper School & Community College	Full size	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	1	Sports Club / Community Association	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	2012	No	n/a
Robert Bloomfield Middle School	60 x 40m	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	1	Sports Club / Community Association	Academies	School/College/University (in house)	2009	No	n/a
Sandy Sports & Recreation Centre	Full size	Sand Filled	1	Pay and Play	Community school	Trust	1996	Yes	2008
Vandyke Upper School And Community College	Full size	Sand Dressed	1	Sports Club / Community Association	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	1997	No	n/a
Cedars Upper School	Full Size	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	1	Sports Club / Community Association	Community school	School/College/University (in house)	2012	No	n/a

7.10 In addition, there are several other full size AGPs within a 20-minute drive the middle of Central Bedfordshire Council, which are:

- A new 3g pitch in Wixams (which straddles the boundary of Central Bedfordshire and Bedford)
- Lea Manor Recreation Centre, Luton sand based pay and play
- Dame Alice Harper School, Bedford, sand based pay and play

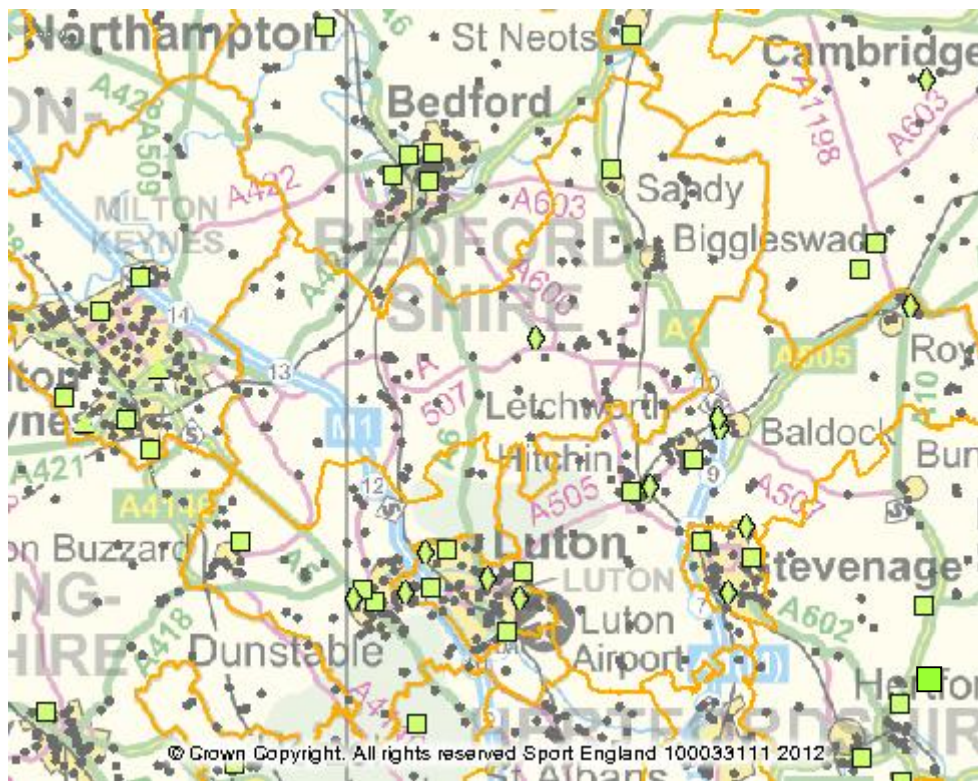
and further pitches within 20-30 minutes drive, specifically;

- Hitchin Boys School, sand based pay and play
- Luton Sixth Form College, sand based, no floodlights
- Lealands High School, Luton, 3G sports club use
- The Arena, Baldock, 3G pay and play
- North Herts College, 3G pay and play
- Bedford Sports & Hockey C, 2 sand based pay and play
- Bedford Modern School, sand based, not floodlit, sports club use
- Knights Templar School, Baldock, 3G pay and play
- Bedford School, 2sand based sports club use, 1 not floodlit
- Barnfield East Academy, Luton, sand based pay and play (some recent quality issues)
- Letchworth Corner SC, sand based pay and play
- Challney Girls High School, Luton, sand based sports club use
- John Henry Newman LC, Stevenage, sand based pay and play
- The Pavilion, Milton Keynes, 2 water based pay and play
- Barnfield West Academy, 3G with floodlights and access to the community
- Bedford Academy AGP, full size floodlit sand based pitch with community use
- Vauxhall Recreation C, Luton, sand based pay and play
- Ashcroft High School, 3G sports club use.

7.11 The conversion of an existing sand based AGP at the Lea Manor Leisure Centre on the northern fringe of Luton to a 3G pitch is also proposed.

7.12 The location of these AGPs is outlined in Map 6.1 (extracted directly from the Sport England Active Places website). It should be noted that new facilities (or facilities not in place at the time of analysis) are not shown on this map.

Map 7.1 - Location of AGPs in and around Central Bedfordshire



7.13 Active Places Power also enables analysis of the number of pitches per 1000 population

7.14 Table 7.2 and Map 7.2 illustrate provision per 1000 population in Central Bedfordshire.

Table 7.2 – Facilities per 1000 Population

	Pitches per 1000 population
Central Bedfordshire	0.021
Bedfordshire	0.043
East region	0.04
England	0.04
Best in region (Ipswich)	0.094

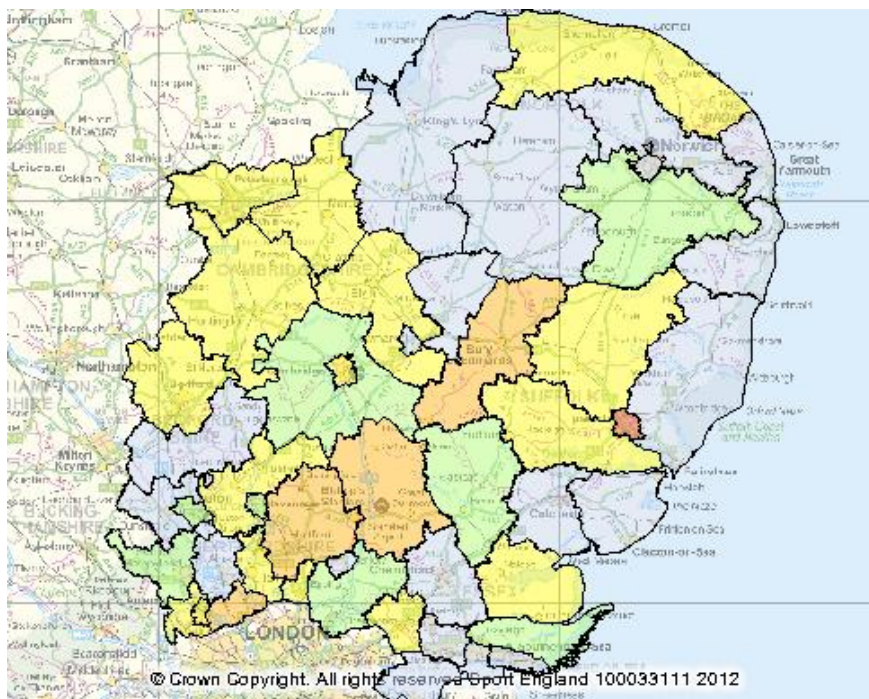
7.15 The relative supply of AGPs in Central Bedfordshire is therefore only half the county, regional and national averages, and less than a quarter of the best provided LA in the region.

Central Bedfordshire provision is 6th worst in the region of 47 local authorities (LA), and the worst in the county.

7.16 The relative provision of 3G in Central Bedfordshire is better than sand based pitches as there are more sand based pitches overall.

7.17 Overall therefore AGP provision in terms of relative supply and compared with other areas is very poor although it should be noted that the new 3G pitch at All Saints Academy, Dunstable, which opened in 2013 will improve this situation.

Map - 7.2 AGPs per 1000 Population



Quality

7.18 All rubber crumb AGPs have been built since 2010 and are all good quality currently. All Saints Academy in Dunstable was only completed in 2013.






7.19 In contrast, sand based pitches are much older. Although the pitch at Van Dyke School was refurbished in 2012, pitches at Sandy Sports and Recreation Centre and Dunstable Leisure Centre have been refurbished since their initial installation, but in 2008 and 2004 respectively. The quality of pitches at Sandy Sports and Recreation Centre and Van Dyke School is thought to be good, although some teething problems arose immediately after the replacement surface at the school.

7.20 In all cases, it must be acknowledged that over the term of this strategy, all facilities will become up to 15 years older, and even if in good quality at the present, may eventually through normal usage no longer be fit for purpose by 2027. AGPs require regular maintenance of their surface, and it is normally recommended that these are replaced at least every 10 years.

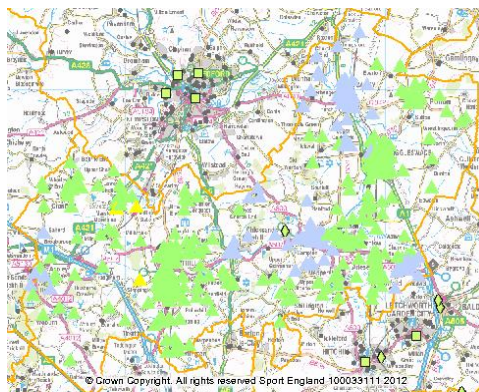
Accessibility

7.21 APP also enables assessment of the access to AGPs. Current access is illustrated in Maps 7.3 – 7.8. The following key relates to all maps:

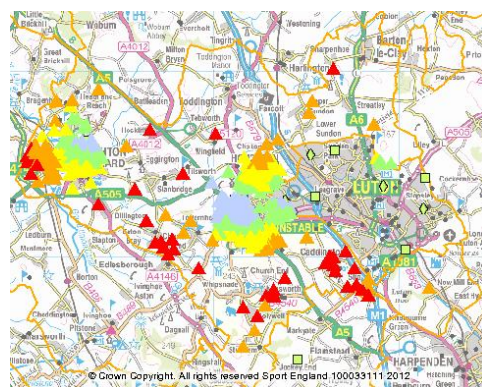
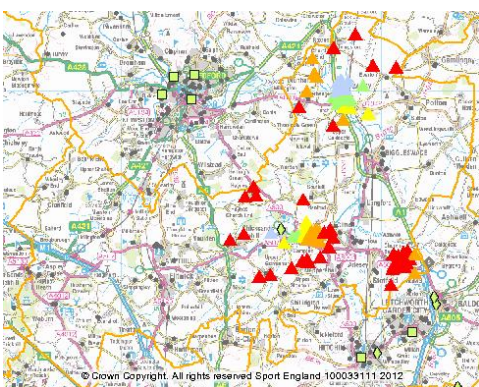
	Lowest values
	↓
	Highest value

Symbol	Range
	0 - 10
	10.1 - 20
	20.1 - 30
	30.1 - 45
	45.1 - 60

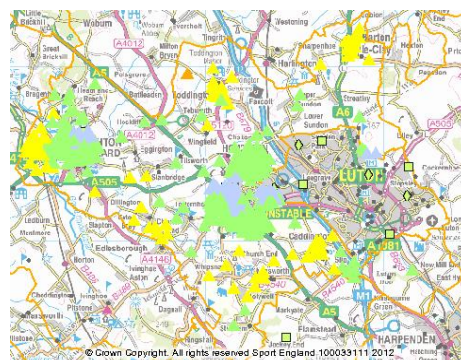
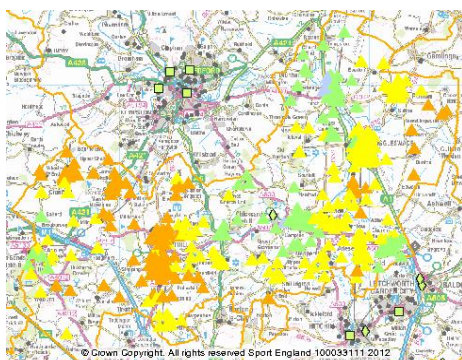
Map 7.3 and 7.4 - Accessibility by car



Map 7.5 and 7.6 - Accessibility on foot



Map 7.7 and 7.8 Accessibility by public transport



7.22 Table 7.3 summarises the information presented in the maps above and in more detail, highlights the proportion of people who live within each 10-minute time band. Again it should be noted that the new pitch at All Saints Academy, Dunstable will have had a positive impact upon provision in this area but is not taken into account in the analysis.

Table 7.3 – Proportion of People living within each distance of an AGP

	Car		Walk		Public transport	
0-10 mins	115890	50%	19439	15%	21346	9%
10-20 mins	117097	50%	32308	25%	94544	40%
20-30 mins	730	<1%	28980	22%	82086	35%
30-45 mins			25899	20%	35781	15%
45+ mins			24392	19%		

7.23 The maps and table demonstrate that despite the relative lack of pitches, most of the population can access a pitch within a 20-minute drive, although some of these pitches will be outside of Central Bedfordshire. The areas with the best car accessibility are in and on the edge of the towns of the district and neighbouring LA area, where the main pitches exist (populations are based on 2001 Census).

7.24 Accessibility to AGPs on foot is inevitably poorer and worse in the northern part of the district where fewer people live in towns where pitches exist. Only about 40% of local residents can walk to a pitch in a reasonable time (20 minutes). Access by public transport also reflects the remoteness of some of the rural areas to pitches, and only about 50% can get to a pitch within 20 minutes. Again the northern part of Central Bedfordshire is less accessible.

7.25 Overall therefore despite the small number of facilities, accessibility to local AGPs is relatively good, especially by car, and also within towns on foot, though the rural areas and parts of the main towns are outside a 20-30 minute walking catchment. In general, residents in the southern part of the district gain easier access to pitches.

Sport England Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC)

7.26 The SFC is primarily intended to estimate the demand for facilities in discrete areas e.g. it is useful in determining the likely demand for AGPs from the residents of new housing growth.

With some provisos it can be used to give a broad estimate of the demand over a local authority area, though it takes no account of demand across LA boundaries, quality of facilities and detailed opening times.

7.27 The SFC estimates that at present (with the latest population estimate of 255,000 in 2011, there is sufficient demand in Central Bedfordshire at normal participation rates for 7.5 full size pitches in community use.

7.28 This compares with current provision of 8 full size pitches that have some form of community usage. From this crude assessment, there appears to be sufficient pitch space in total to meet this expected demand from Central Bedfordshire residents, although pitches in neighbouring LA area will pick up some usage from Central Bedfordshire residents.

7.29 Population growth will see demand according to the Sports Facilities Calculator increase to over 8 pitches (but less than nine).

Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM)

7.30 The Sport England Facility Planning Model considers the adequacy of AGPs in more detail. It takes into account the availability of pitches throughout the day, hours of usage, location in terms of demand, age and condition.

7.31 Sport England's FPM was utilised to test the current (run 1) and 2022 (run 2) adequacy of AGPs in Central Bedfordshire and wider surrounding area as part of the Chapter 1 assessment. The assessment for pitches included all outdoor, full size AGP's with a surface type of sand based, water based or rubber crumb, available for community use i.e. pay and play, membership, Sports Club/Community Association, with a minimum pitch dimension of 75m x45m. The assessment excluded non floodlit pitches from all runs after 1700 on any day, all indoor pitches, 5-a-side commercial football centres and small sided 'pens' and MUGA's, redgra, ash, marked out tarmac areas, etc. But included all 'planned' facilities and commitments. The analysis is based on national participation rates for sport, which are broadly consistent with Central Bedfordshire data. The great benefit of this tool is that it assesses demand and supply across LA boundaries and takes into account catchments and capacities of existing centres. It is based on the database of facilities contained in APP at April 2012, supplemented by additional facilities planned and in the pipeline. It therefore considers all pitches that are now on site

Table 7.4 – Status of Pitches included within Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM)

Name	Surface	Opening Date	Location	Length	Width	Area	Hrs	Comments
Sandy Sports & Community Centre	Sand Based	1996 (Refurbished 2008)	Sandy	102	63	6426	13 Week / 16 Weekend	
Creasey Park	3G	2012	Dunstable	110	70	7700	18 Week / 16 Weekend	

Dunstable Leisure Centre	Sand Based	1996 (Refurbished 2004)	Dunstable	102	63	6426	18 Week / 16 Weekend	
Vandyke Upper School	Sand Based	1997	Leighton Buzzard	101	63	6426	13 Week / 16 Weekend	
Cedars Upper School (Now built)	3G	2012	Leighton Buzzard,	100	65	6890	18 Week / 16 Weekend	New Facility. Included in run 1
Redborne Upper School	3G	Open 2012	Amphill	100	65	6890	18 Week / 16 Weekend	New Facility. Included in run 1
All Saints Academy	3g	Now open 2013	Dunstable	101	63	6363	15 Week / 16 Weekend	Currently under construction. Included in run 2.

7.32 This assessment includes new and committed pitches, but excludes the pitch at Chicksands as it is not accessible to the public. The total number of pitches considered in this assessment is 7 pitches on 7 sites over the 2 runs.

Summary of run 1 (the current situation) of FPM Modelling

7.33 **Supply** - Central Bedfordshire has a slightly lower level of provision in terms of total pitch space per 1000 people when measured against the figures for the surrounding areas and England, though provision is better than in the region as a whole. This provision comprises 6 pitches on 6 sites in run 1 (or 5.6 pitches scaled to hours available). Total supply is the equivalent of 4150 visits per week in the peak period.

7.34 **Demand** - total demand generated by the existing population taking into account participation rates and accessibility is for the equivalent of 5850 visits per week (or about 8 pitches).

7.35 **Supply/demand comparison** – when comparing demand and supply solely within Central Bedfordshire (as a broad indication of adequacy of pitches), there is an apparent shortfall of sports hall space of about 2 pitches when comparing space requirements. In the wider study area outside Central Bedfordshire, there is an apparent deficiency of about 6 pitches.

7.36 **Satisfied demand** - the FPM suggests that approximately 88% of the demand for AGP provision in Central Bedfordshire is being satisfied by facilities within or outside the area. This is broadly consistent across Central Bedfordshire and the study area, although lower in the west area. One of the main factors for the high level of SD in Central Bedfordshire is the high proportion of the population which has access to a car (91%) as a high proportion of satisfied

demand is from residents who travel to a facility by car i.e. the resident population is relatively mobile and is able to travel further to access facilities than residents in other areas.

7.37 Some 55% of the Central Bedfordshire residents' satisfied demand for AGPs is met at pitches in the authority with the remainder being exported, mainly to North Hertfordshire, Milton Keynes, Luton and Bedford. There is high mobility and close proximity and good accessibility to facilities in areas that adjoin Central Bedfordshire.

7.38 **Unmet demand** for AGP provision in Central Bedfordshire represents 12% of the total demand and equates to less than 1 pitch in total. Over the wider study area, the unmet demand is about 15%, the equivalent of about 7 pitches. When aggregated across the whole study area including Central Bedfordshire, aggregated unmet demand is higher in the more densely populated areas and in areas of good accessibility such as main road junctions. AUD is higher in parts of the West Area, Leighton Buzzard and Rural South and Houghton Regis and Dunstable. Central Beds has both types of unmet demand - 78% is due to lack of capacity of existing pitches and 22% is because local residents live outside the catchment area of a pitch.

7.39 **Usage** - Across Central Bedfordshire over 98% of the total capacity of AGP's is utilised. There is 100% used capacity in the West Area and Houghton Regis and Dunstable, and this does not "dip" significantly in the other sub areas, East Area is 94.5% and Leighton Buzzard and Rural South is 97.6%. This includes the second pitch in the area at Cedars Upper School that opened in 2012.

7.40 **Import/export** - Central Bedfordshire is a net exporter of demand for AGPs to LAs outside of about 1000 visits. It retains only 54% of its own SD and exports 46%, slightly mitigated by 32% of capacity imported from outside. In general therefore it relies on pitches outside the district to meet some of its demand, and in particular Luton, Bedford, MK and North Herts, as suggested above, with some import from the same areas (plus Aylesbury Vale) where pitches in Central Beds are more convenient to residents outside the district.

7.41 **Relative share** - In terms of comparison against the national figure, relative share is slightly higher (+16%). Despite the relative lack of pitches, accessibility to pitches outside the district is good with a relatively low population sharing them. The overall score masks some variations within the area, with highest positive scores in the East Area and Leighton Buzzard and Rural South with values of +25% and +29% of the national average respectively, while the West Area and Houghton Regis and Dunstable have a value of +3% to the national average.

7.42 The FPM assessment considered the needs of both hockey and football separately, as these are the two main beneficiaries of such facilities.

7.43 **Summary of key issues for hockey** - There are no big issues for hockey arising from the hockey specific analysis, and the findings are low key. The total supply of hockey pitches is 0.8 and the total demand from Central Bedfordshire residents is for 1.7 pitches. The supply and demand balance therefore shows a deficit of less than 1 pitch. However based on the number and location of pitches in the rest of the study area much of this deficit can be met by other pitches for hockey, which effectively results in a deficit of only 0.17 pitches for hockey.

7.44 **Summary of key issues for football** -The total unmet demand for AGP's specifically for football on football is only 0.76 pitches. The main concern is that all 6 pitches considered in run 1 are working at 100% of their capacity. So whilst there is not that much unmet demand for AGP's for football (i.e. less than one pitch), it does mean there is no spare capacity. There is a very fine balance between the low unmet demand and pitch use at 100% of pitch capacity in

2012. Central Bedfordshire exports some 38% of its total satisfied demand for football to pitches located in the wider study area. So whilst the total satisfied demand for AGP's for Central Bedfordshire residents for football use is an impressively high 88% of total demand, this is in part because Central Bedfordshire exports a lot of its football demand to the wider study area.

Conclusions for run 1 of FPM Modelling

7.45 Current supply of AGPs (including planned and committed pitches) is slightly lower than average, and there is a crude shortfall of pitches if comparing supply and demand within the district alone. In the wider study area there is a larger shortfall.

7.46 However satisfied demand is very high, and the relative share of Central Bedfordshire residents well above average, and this is due to good access by local residents to pitches in the wider study area. Unmet demand is consequently relatively low and only the equivalent of one pitch over the whole area. When aggregated over the wider area to take into account travel catchments, there are some hotspots in CB where additional pitches could be justified though this would drag in some demand from outside the district. Unmet demand is caused more by a lack of capacity at pitches than by residents living outside the catchment of a pitch.

7.47 Central Bedfordshire is a significant net exporter of demand for AGPs to neighbouring local authority areas who meet 14% more of Central Bedfordshire demand than vice versa.

7.48 The main issue for AGPs in the district is that nearly all existing capacity is utilised and effectively all pitches are full.

7.49 It is likely therefore that additional pitches can be justified at present in Central Bedfordshire, to release some spare capacity and partly redress the export of demand outside. A further issue at present is the imbalance between sand filled and 3G pitches and their prime users.

Summary of run 2 (the future situation in 2022) of FPM Modelling

7.50 **Supply** – the supply of AGPs in Central Bedfordshire increases by one pitch (at All Saints Academy in Houghton Regis), and the effective supply (scaled for hours available) increases from 5.6 to 6.5 pitches. The supply comprises 3 sand filled and 4 3G, which is an unusual balance. There are 3 further pitches provided in the rest of the study area by 2022 (at Barnfield South Academy and Barnfield West Academy in Luton (now open) and AFC Kempston in Bedford). All three pitches have a 3G surface. The total supply of pitches in the wider study area in 2022 is 54 pitches (scaled to 44 pitches when the hours available for public use are assessed). Total supply of pitches in Central Beds represents 4800 visits.

7.51 Demand – total demand increases by about 3%, compared with a population increase of 13%, reflecting an ageing population, and in run 2 represents 6050 visits, the equivalent of 8 pitches.

7.52 **Supply/demand comparison** – the 2010 shortfall (when assessing supply against demand crudely) of about 2 pitches reduces slightly to about 0.5 pitches (i.e. threefold) and the apparent shortfall in ROSA also falls by about 1 pitch. So within Central Bedfordshire and over the whole study area there remain insufficient pitches to meet local demand (but with the provisos outlined above about the robustness of this measure).

7.53 Satisfied Demand - Satisfied demand for AGPs increases overall within the area by 10% in terms of total visits, to 5500, and this increases as a proportion from 88% to 91% from in Run 1. The location of the new pitch at All Saints Academy in Houghton Regis (and the 2 new pitches in Luton and the one in Bedford UA) re-distribute demand around the whole study area. In Houghton Regis and Dunstable satisfied demand increases to 94% in run 2 because of the new All Saints Academy pitch, up from 89% in run 1. In the West Area satisfied demand increases to 86%, up from 80% in run 1. The proportion of satisfied demand retained and exported outside the district remains similar to run 1.

7.54 Unmet demand - with increased population, but additional capacity, UD levels decrease in percentage terms from 12% to 9%, a slight reduction in the equivalent number of pitches (which remains at less than 1). This is spread over much of the area, but when aggregated there are hot spots in the Leighton Buzzard and rural south area in the area south of Luton and a second area around Leighton Buzzard town, around Dunstable itself and in areas of high accessibility near the M1. However much of this aggregated unmet demand is dragged in from the rest of the study area, where unmet demand in run 2 is for 7 pitches, compared with less than 1 pitch in Central Beds

7.55 The levels of unmet demand are now more the result of lack of accessibility to halls mainly by those without access to a car, although capacity issues still account for two thirds of the total.

7.56 Usage – the used capacity of pitches is estimated to be 98% of total capacity in run 2, unchanged from run 1. The increase in pitch supply between runs 1 and 2 with the All Saints Academy pitch and the 3 other pitches in the wider study area soaks up some of the unmet demand in Central Bedfordshire. However there is not a sufficient increase in pitch supply to bring down the used capacity of pitches which remains very high. Used capacity will only start to decrease when the pitch supply increase is greater than the total demand increase and by so doing reduces unmet demand and creates some “spare capacity”. Individual pitch capacity.

7.57 Import/export - the district retains a larger amount but smaller proportion of its own SD (2900 visits compared with 2750), but at the same time becomes a smaller net exporter of demand than in run 1, thus relying more on the availability of pitch space within Central Bedfordshire. However the district remains a significant exporter of demand to neighbouring areas.

7.58 Relative share – RS in the district as a whole and within each area increases significantly, as the result of additional pitches, and is consistently higher than the national average. The district figure is 25% above the average, and the sub areas vary between 15 and 31% above average. The ROSA also has a better RS than in run 1 (&5 above average compared with 1%)

7.59 The geographical distribution of the RS remains the same, and no small area of the district has below average RS.

7.60 Findings for Hockey - In run 2 there is one additional AGP for hockey use at All Saints Academy in Houghton Regis. This has however since been laid as a 3g pitch. The FPM analysis indicates that by 2022, there is virtually no unmet demand (0.17 of a full size pitch and is unchanged between runs 1 and 2) and much of the hockey demand continues to be exported to neighbouring areas. it should however be noted that this overstates the hockey provision by one pitch (due to the actual provision of a 3g pitch at All Saints Academy, Dunstable rather than a sand based pitch).

7.61 **Summary of key issues for Football** - There is very little change in the findings for football between runs 1 and 2, because supply does not alter and demand increases marginally.

7.62 However satisfied demand increases to 91%, and total unmet demand is reduced accordingly, and remains at the equivalent of less than 1 pitch overall.

7.63 As with run 1 the concern is that all of the 6 pitches are working at 100% of their capacity in run 2. So whilst unmet demand for AGP's for football is very low, it does also mean that the existing pitches are working at maximum capacity and there is no spare capacity. The fine balance between low unmet demand but 100% pitch capacity remains in 2022. The new 3g pitch now provided at All Saints Academy may reduce this slightly.

Conclusions for run 2 of FPM Modelling

7.64 The supply of AGPs in Central Bedfordshire and the whole study area (particularly Luton) increases significantly and demand increases only marginally. The crude balance between supply and demand with the district therefore drops significantly to much less than 1 pitch.

7.65 Relative share in Central Bedfordshire and the whole study area rises steeply and is now up to 31% better than the national average.

7.66 Satisfied demand increases overall to 91% as additional pitches meet some of the previous unmet demand in run 1, and unmet demand accordingly is reduced to 9% or the equivalent still of less than 1 pitch overall. Aggregated unmet demand is in sufficient concentrations in some parts of Central Bedfordshire to justify additional pitches, but reflects unmet demand both inside and outside of the area and would drag in usage from outside if new facilities were built.

7.67 Demand is still exported overall but to a lesser extent than in run 1. The main issue in run 2 remains the almost complete utilization of all capacity at the (now) 7 pitches in Central Beds, which would justify additional capacity being provided. Overall conclusions and summary of FPM Modelling

Overall Conclusions and Summary of FPM Modelling

7.68 Overall the projected large increase in population up to 2022 is not creating significant changes in demand for full size AGPs. Rounding things up there is a need for one full size pitch in Central Bedfordshire to meet the level of unmet demand both now and projected by 2022, but this is spread across much of the area.

7.69 When aggregated, the hot spot locations for unmet demand are in the Leighton Buzzard and rural south area particularly south of Luton and around Leighton Buzzard itself, in Dunstable, and along the M1 corridor, in particular Harlington (east of M1) and Toddington (west of M1) and the A421 junction/rural area east of Milton Keynes. It is higher at these locations because a lot of demand is imported from outside Central Bedfordshire to accessible locations, where unmet demand is for 7 full size pitches by 2022. So these locations in Central Bedfordshire "soak up" some of the unmet demand in the wider study area.

7.70 Without the provision of any further new pitch(es) the estimate is that used capacity of the 6/7 pitches in Central Bedfordshire now and in 2022 will be up to 100% of their total capacity. There is therefore no "spare pitch capacity" or headroom and contingency for any pitch being taken out of use. To create this headroom used capacity will only start to decrease when the

pitch supply increase is greater than the total demand increase and by so doing create some “spare capacity”. In effect this means providing 2 new full size pitches and thereby building in some spare capacity. Even so, the then 9 pitches would still be working at around 80% of their total capacity.

7.71 In terms of locations for new pitch(es) and modeling options for new pitch provision to lower unmet demand/create spare capacity, it is the hot spot locations already described to focus on. In selecting locations it can also be as much about meeting sports specific development requirements and possibly securing funding through the location of new housing development as locations which best suit projected future demand.

7.72 All these findings assume that the 2012 rates and frequencies of participation in AGPs for football and hockey remain unchanged between 2012 – 2022. Should participation increase then total demand and unmet demand will increase and vice versa with a decrease in participation between 2012 - 2022. Sport specific sections indicate that there are projected increases in the rate of participation for both football and hockey.

7.73 Specific requirements for AGPs for football and hockey will be considered in the sport specific sections.

Key issues to Address – AGPs

7.74 It is essential that theoretical tools (i.e. Active Places Power, Sport England Facilities Planning Model, Sport England Facility Calculator) are considered alongside consultation and sports development needs.

7.75 The key issues arising from the application of the tools are:

- The APP assessment finds that relative provision of AGPS in Central Bedfordshire is very low, although most residents can access a pitch within a reasonable time because of pitches in adjacent local authority areas.
- The SFC estimates that at present there is sufficient demand in Central Bedfordshire at normal participation rates for 7.5 full size pitches in community use, compared with current provision of 8 pitches in some form of community usage. From this crude assessment, there appears to be sufficient pitch space in total to meet this expected demand from Central Bedfordshire residents. In addition, other tools indicate that pitches in neighbouring LA area will pick up some usage from Central Beds residents
- The FPM assessment confirms that while there is relatively low provision of pitches, local residents have good access to pitches and actual unmet demand is low. The main issue is that now and in the future, Central Beds residents depend on pitches in Luton, Bedford and other neighbouring areas, and also that all existing pitches are used to capacity. There is a case for 1-2 new pitches to meet the needs of hockey and football now and in the future.
- The significant increase in population is likely to generate demand for an additional facility over the course of the strategy period.

7.76 Specific issues relating to AGPs for each sport are considered in the Football and Hockey sections

8. Football

Introduction

8.1 This section evaluates the adequacy of pitches for football and provides:

- An overview of supply and demand for football
- An evaluation of the overall adequacy of pitches to meet demand
- Key issues and strategic priorities the strategy will address

Football in Central Bedfordshire – An Overview

Pitch Supply

8.2 There are 192 public football pitches in Central Bedfordshire and these are summarised in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 – Community Use Pitches

Placemaking Area	Adult Football Pitches	Junior Football Pitches	9 v 9 Pitches	Number of Mini Football Pitches	Provision Per 1000 Population
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	16	9	1	4	0.58
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	20	12	1	5	0.70
North	59	31	3	31	0.83
Central Bedfordshire	95	52	5	40	0.75

8.3 Table 8.1 shows that that the majority of football pitches in Central Bedfordshire are located in the North Placemaking area. Provision in these parts is equivalent to 0.83 pitches per 1000 compared to just 0.58 per 1000 population in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking area. Each area contains at least one of all types of pitches and the proportion of each type of pitch is similar except for higher levels of mini pitches in the North Placemaking area.

8.4 In addition to the community use pitches highlighted above, there are numerous football pitches at school sites across Central Bedfordshire. These can be subdivided into two categories:

- Those that are used by the local community
- Those for the private use of schools only

8.5 Table 8.2 summarises the approximate number of school pitches (Several schools indicate that this changes very frequently) that are currently used by the community. These pitches are located at 40 sites.

Table 8.2 – School Pitches Used by the Community

Placemaking Area	Adult Football Pitches	Junior Football Pitches	9 v 9 Pitches	Number of Mini Football Pitches	Proportion of Total Pitches Used
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	2	7	0	6	33%
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	9	2	1	8	35%
North	7	11	0	21	24%
Central Bedfordshire	18	20	1	35	28%

8.6 Table 8.2 reveals that a relatively high proportion of the total pitches used are at school sites (28% across Central Bedfordshire as a whole). There is a higher reliance upon school sites in Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South and Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking Areas than in the north. These figures should be treated as indicative only, as all pitches available at each school site are used in the above totals, but in the majority of cases, only one or two pitches on site are used by the community. It does however clearly reflect the importance of school facilities in providing for pitch sports within Central Bedfordshire.

Pitches that are used informally or are available for community use include;

8.7 Leighton Middle School, Vandyke Upper School, Swallowfield Lower School, Beecroft Lower School, Brooklands Middle School, Burgoyne Middle School, Caddington Village School, Cedars Upper School, Clipstone Brook Lower School, Etonbury Middle School, Gothic Mede Lower School, Greenfield School, Lark Rise Lower School, Mill Vale School, Oak Bank School, Pulloxhill School, Redborne Upper School and Community centre, Sandye Place Middle School, Shuttleworth College, Streetfield Middle School, Russell Lower School, Ardley Hill Academy, Ashton St Peters Lower School, Arnold Junior School, St Marys Lower School, Clophill, Derwent Lower School, Henlow, Kingsland Campus, Houghton Regis, Firs Lower School, Ampthill, Harlington Lower School, Lancot Lower School, St Georges School, Beaudesert Lower School, Maulden Lower School, Ramsey Manor Lower School, Raynesford Lower School, Southcott Lower School, Stratton Upper School, Roecroft Lower School, Templefield Lower School, Watling Lower School, Dunstable and Woodlands Middle School.

8.8 Almost all of these sites are used on an informal basis. Some of the larger schools indicate that they have more formal arrangements for the use of their facilities, specifically:

- Van Dyke Upper School
- Stratton Upper School

8.9 These schools are however able to make decisions relating to public access to their pitches at any time.

8.10 Map 8.1 illustrates the location of all football pitches in Central Bedfordshire demonstrating those facilities that are available for community use.

8.11 The 192 pitches (mini, 9 v 9, junior and adult) pitches that are available for formal community use located at 92 sites. Map 7.2 illustrates the scale of facilities that are available for formal community use. It clearly demonstrates that the majority of sites are relatively small scale and contain just one or two playing pitches. The average site size across Central Bedfordshire is just over 2 pitches.

Map 8.1 – Distribution of grass football pitches across Central Bedfordshire

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Map 8.2 – The Scale and Distribution of Community Use Football Pitches

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Disused and Lapsed Sites

8.12 While not currently functioning as formal playing pitches, it is also important to consider playing fields that have previously functioned as such, as it may be necessary to bring them back into play and they may offer an opportunity to meet existing deficiencies. Such sites in Central Bedfordshire are currently as follows;

- Heathfield School (Caddington)
- Roecroft Lower School (Stotfold)
- Hunting Engineering Sports Ground

Other Facilities

8.13 There are 8 full size Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) that complement the spread of grass football pitches across Central Bedfordshire. Of these, five are 3g surfaces, meaning that they are specifically designed for football. The remainder are sand based and can also be used for football training.

8.14 The 3g pitches are located at:

- Creasey Park, Dunstable
- Defence and Intelligence Security Centre, Chicksands (limited / no community access)
- Redborne Upper School and Community Centre, Ampthill
- Cedars Upper School, Leighton Buzzard
- All Saints Academy, Dunstable

8.15 They are supplemented by a network of smaller AGPs located at:

- Ashton Middle School, Dunstable (sand based) (private use)
- Briants Lane Sports Ground (sand based) (Heath and Reach)
- Biggleswade Football Club (needle punch carpet surface)(Biggleswade)
- Robert Bloomfield Middle School (3g)Shefford
- Newton Recreation Ground(3g), Dunstable
- RAF Henlow (recently resurfaced).

8.16 Section 4 provided detailed modelling of the adequacy of AGPs. Specific detail for football will be considered later in this section.

Demand

Active People and Market Segmentation (Sport England)

8.17 Table 3.5 indicated that according to the Active People Survey, nationally, between 2005/6 (Active People Survey 1) and 2011/2012 (Active People Survey 6) participation in football has declined from 4.97% to 4.94%.

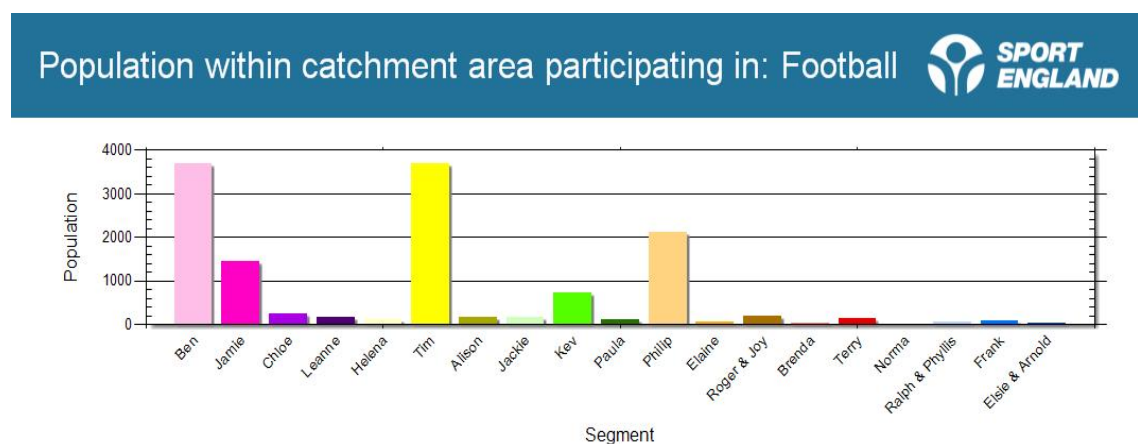
8.18 Using the Active People Survey and Market Segmentation, it is possible to evaluate how many residents of Central Bedfordshire do participate in football and how many of the population would like to participate in football. It is also possible to understand how this varies across different parts of Central Bedfordshire.

8.19 Map 8.3 overleaf shows spatially the percentage of the Central Bedfordshire population who, based on the Active People survey findings, are currently participating in football. Chart 8.1 sets out the profile of current participation in football across the 19 market segments.

Map 8.3: Percentage and location of the adult population who do play football



Chart 8.1: Profile of the market segments who participate in football in Central Bedfordshire



8.20 As can be seen, participation in football is relatively consistent across all areas, between 5.1-10%. More specifically, it ranges between 6.1% and 7.3% and is marginally higher to the west of Central Bedfordshire.

8.21 There are four market segments that dominate participation in football, specifically Ben (3685), Tim (3687), Philip (2112), Jamie (1452) and Kev (724). People in these groups represent 83% of all players.

8.22 The Active People analysis of the percentage of adults who would like to play football is represented in map and bar chart form and set out in Map 8.4 and Chart 8.2 overleaf.

Map 8.4: Percentage and location of the adult population who would like to play Football.

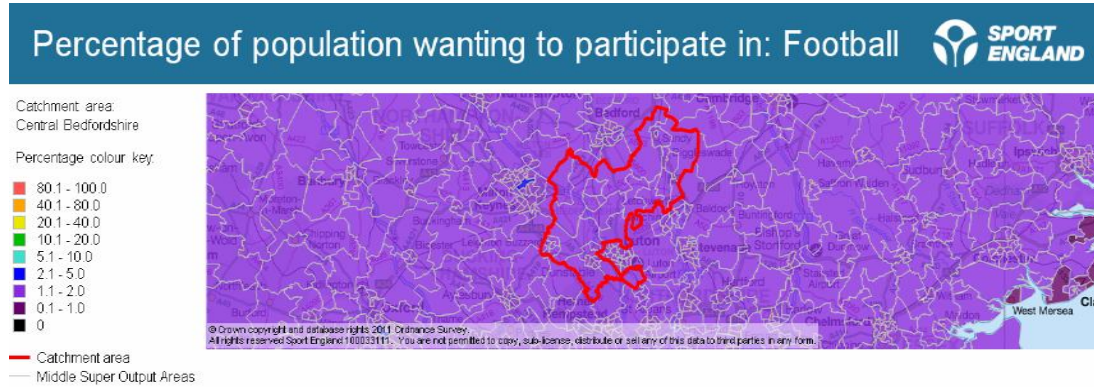
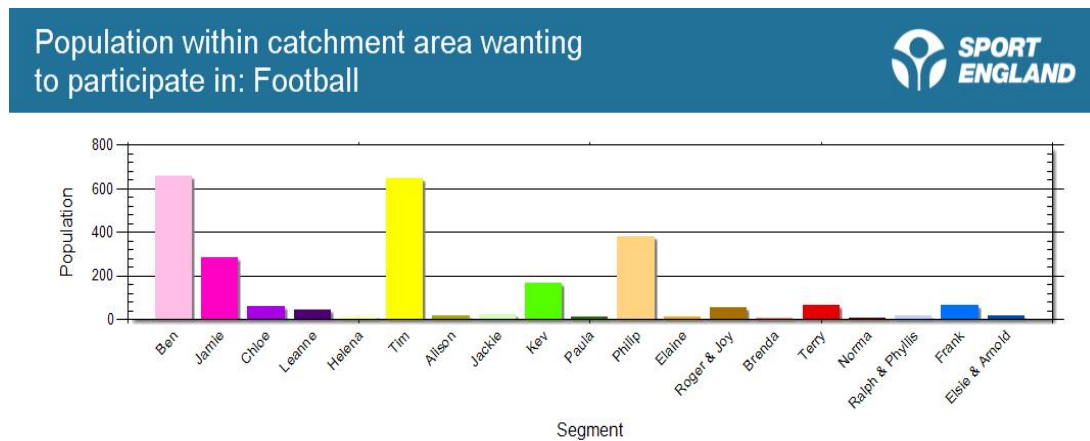


Chart 8.2: Profile of the market segments who would like to play football



8.23 The map and bar chart demonstrate that the number of people in Central Bedfordshire who would like to play football is between just 1.1 and 2%. The segments that would like to increase the amount of football they play are similar to those that currently play – Ben, Tim, Philip and Jamie as well as Kev. These segments together represent 84% of players who do not currently play but would like to.

8.24 Table 8.3 sets summarises the above statistics, providing an indication of the exact number of people who currently play and would like to play, according to Sport England Market Segmentation and Active People Surveys.

Table 8.3 – Participation in Football

DO PLAY POPULATION	% of Adult Population	WOULD LIKE TO PLAY POPULATION	% of Adult Population	Total Number and % who do/would play
13214	6.9%	2535	1.3%	7.96%

Football Association (FA) Participation Report

8.25 The FA record the number and type of football clubs that are affiliated for each season and as a result are able to undertake analysis of participation for each local authority area.

8.26 Reports for Central Bedfordshire for the season 2012 – 2013 provide a comparison with participation in that season and during the previous year. This is set out in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 – Participation trends in Central Bedfordshire between 2010 and 2012

Area and Year	Adult Male Football (Number of Teams)	Female Football Participation (Number of Teams)	Junior Male Football Participation (Number of Teams)	Junior Female Participation (Number of Teams)	Mini Soccer (Number of Teams)
Central Beds 2011/2012	152	5	271	33	224
Central Beds 2012 / 2013	156	6	267	33	231
Central Beds % change	+2.6%	+2%	-1.5%	0%	+3.1%
East England % change	-0.3%	0%	-0.1%	-0.1%	+0.5%
National % change	0%	0%	-0.2%	-0.1%	+0.3%

8.27 It demonstrates that overall, and contrasting with national and regional trends, with the exception of junior male and female football, there has been an increase in participation between 2010 and 2012. The decline in junior male football is marginally larger than that seen nationally and regionally.

8.28 The FA measure participation in football by conversion rates (the proportion of the population in the relevant age group that play football). Analysis of conversion rates reveals that;

- the overall conversion rate is higher than both the East average and national average (7.6% / 6.2% / 5.2% respectively) – this means that football participation in Central Bedfordshire is strong, and
- adult participation is the only area where conversion rate is lower than the East average – in Central Bedfordshire it is 5.8% compared to 6.6% in the East Region. The conversion rate in Central Bedfordshire is higher than national levels (5.2%)
- participation across Central Bedfordshire is growing, particularly in the Leighton Buzzard and Central areas.

8.29 FA analysis compares participation in Central Bedfordshire with that of similar neighbouring authorities. It indicates that participation is higher than that in most other areas and that as a consequence, there is limited latent demand. Baseline participation targets

(which seek to challenge all local authorities to perform at levels equivalent to those in the same family group in the top quartile in terms of performance) are met.

8.30 Adding to the strong levels of performance in terms of participation, FA data reveals that 32.8% of clubs have achieved community club / development club or charter standard status. This compares positively to 24% nationally. 80% of youth and mini soccer teams play in a club with charter standard status. This suggests that there are strong structures for football in Central Bedfordshire. The data reports just 34 teams travelling out of the Central Bedfordshire to play.

8.31 Analysis demonstrates that the peak age for football in Central Bedfordshire is U9. Strong participation at a young age is likely to lead to high demand at junior and senior football levels too as players maintain an interest in the game. This in turn may require higher levels of facility provision. There is however a decline in participation around the U17 and U18 age groups, which reflects national trends (although Bedfordshire FA is seeking to address this – see later in this section).

8.32 It is difficult to directly compare the FA football participation findings on conversion rates and the Sport England market segmentation findings for football given they have different purposes of analysis. Both sets of figures provide contextual analysis only and should be used to support the analysis of issues emerging through analysis of current football participation using the playing pitch methodology.

Current Football Participation

8.33 Football is the most popular outdoor sport in Central Bedfordshire and in total there are 703 teams, of which 22% play senior football. Table 8.5 summarises the spread of teams currently based in Central Bedfordshire by Placemaking area. It also considers the amount of teams created in proportion to the population of each area.

Table 8.5 – Football Teams in Central Bedfordshire

Placemaking Area	Adult Teams	Junior Teams	9 v 9 Teams	Mini Soccer Teams	Teams per 1000 population
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	32	32	4	56	2.12
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	34	67	0	50	2.42
North	91	155	8	174	2.52
TOTAL	157	254	12	280	2.42

8.34 Table 8.5 indicates that overall, taking into account the size of the population, the North Placemaking Area contains the highest proportion of teams per 1000 population (2.52).

Given the size of the population, participation is lowest in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking Area. This accords with analysis outlined in Section 3 which indicated that levels of physical activity are lower in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis area than in other parts of Central Bedfordshire.

8.35 In addition to the above teams, the following teams are based in Central Bedfordshire but currently travel into neighbouring authorities to play their home fixtures:

- AFC Clophill - Leagrave School, Luton
- Arlesey Town Ladies 2nd - Fearnhill School, Letchworth
- Caddington Chequers – Luton
- Cranfield Colts U15, U13 and U12 - North Crawley Recreation Ground;
- Dunstable Rangers - Cavendish Rd, Markyate
- Dunstable Town Ladies - Vauxhall Rec C Luton

8.36 Analysis of the distribution of play indicates that teams are based in settlements of all sizes. There is evidence of significant travel and many clubs are dispersed across a multitude of sites. There are numerous clubs containing large numbers of teams and there are numerous very large clubs running over 20 teams, including; Dunstable Town Youth, Flitwick Eagles, EB Lions AFC, Stotfold Junior, Leighton Utd, Woburn Lions Junior and AFC Dunstable. By the 2013 – 2014 season, this had increased to 10 clubs.

8.37 Reflecting the FA trends, 16 clubs report an increase in the number of teams that they are running between 2012 and 2013. During the same period, 10 clubs have experienced decline, with the main reasons for this given as a lack of membership, internal politics, a lack of facilities and the distances that players are expected to travel (resulting partly from a perceived lack of facilities). The majority of growth appears to be in junior teams but decline also focuses in these age groups.

8.38 While growth has occurred in teams in all Placemaking areas, the majority of participation increases have taken place in the North Placemaking Area (69% of clubs reporting growth are based in the North). Many market towns are now experiencing significantly high demand for pitches due to the growth of clubs associated with the town.

Leagues

8.39 The league structure across Central Bedfordshire is relatively complex with clubs involved in just under 40 different leagues of which circa 50% are adult leagues.

8.40 The key local leagues that teams participate in are summarised below:

Adult teams

- Bedford and District Sunday Football League – large league with six divisions and a U21 division. Play Sunday morning

- Bedfordshire County Football League – five divisions playing Saturday afternoon. The premier division is at Step 7 of the National League system
- Leighton and District Sunday Football League – four divisions playing Sunday morning
- Spartan South Midlands Football League – league is part of the national football pyramid (Step 5 – Step 7) meaning that there are specific requirements for facilities. Matches are played on a Saturday

8.41 There are seven teams playing at step 6 or higher in the National Pyramid structure, specifically:

- Crawley Green (play at Barton Rovers)
- Barton Rovers (Barton Rovers)
- Arlesey Town (play at Arlesey)
- Stotfold (play at Stotfold)
- Potton (play at Potton)
- Biggleswade Town)(Biggleswade)
- Biggleswade United (also play in Biggleswade)
- Cranfield United (Cranfield)
- Leighton Town (Leighton Buzzard)
- AFC Dunstable (Dunstable)
- Dunstable Town (Dunstable)
- Ampthill Town (Ampthill).

8.42 These clubs are required to maintain a standard of facility and are judged against the FAs ground grading requirements for the level of competition that they are in or aspire to.

Junior Football Leagues

- Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire County Girls and Women's League – includes three open aged divisions as well as U18, U15 and U11
- Bedfordshire Mini Soccer League – play on a Sunday and include age groups from U7 to U10
- Bedfordshire Youth Saturday League – for teams U12 to U16, play on Saturdays

- Chiltern Junior Sevens and Youth Leagues – includes league and cup fixtures for teams U11 to U18
- Dunstable and District Lower Schools League – lower schools league playing on a Saturday morning
- Mid Bedfordshire Mini Football League – lower schools league playing on a Saturday morning
- Milton Keynes and District Development League – large league accommodating teams U9 to U14. Play a mixture of Saturday and Sunday morning
- Royston Crow Youth and Mini Football League – U7 to u18 for teams within a 25 mile radius of Royston

8.43 Analysis of patterns of play demonstrates that demand is relatively high at peak time, which is a Sunday morning for both junior football and senior football. At this time, 54% of adult teams and 54% of junior teams all wish to play. All teams playing 9 v 9 football also play on a Sunday morning, while peak time demand for mini soccer is Saturday morning.

Quality of Football Pitches

8.44 Pitch quality influences the amount of matches that be sustained, and as a consequence has a significant impact on the overall adequacy of supply. Furthermore, perceived quality of pitches (and ancillary facilities) is almost as important as actual quality and can change usage patterns.

8.45 Pitch quality in Central Bedfordshire has been evaluated in several ways including:

- site visits
- consultation with providers
- consultation with users – leagues and clubs as well as providers (town and parish councils)

Site Assessments

8.46 Site assessments were undertaken using an assessment matrix – these assessments are non-technical assessments designed to provide an overview of pitch quality. The timing of this study meant that many of the visits were undertaken at the beginning of the season and that pitches may therefore appear to be of higher quality than if they had been measured later in the season.

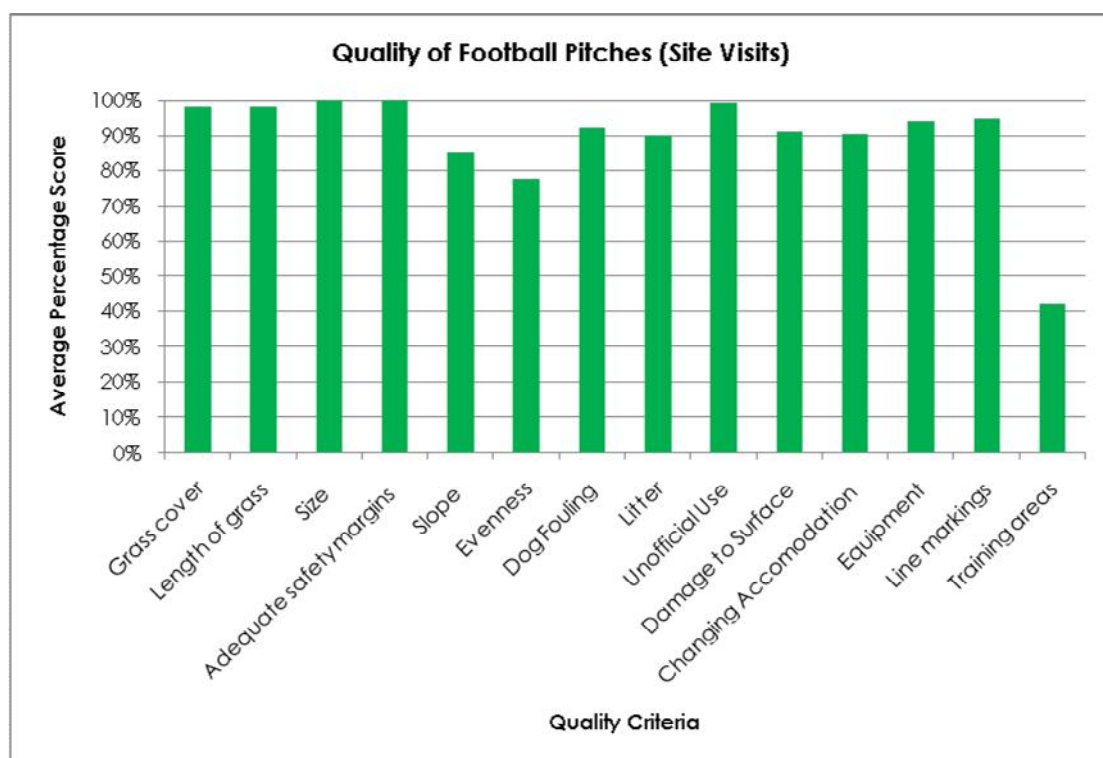
8.47 Overall, the quality of football pitches was good at the time of site visits with the range of scores achieved being 61% - 91% (good to very good). This may be partially attributed to the lack of use over the preceding weeks, but nevertheless pitches were considered to be largely of good quality. Changing facilities however varied significantly and many facilities were heavily fortified, perhaps reflecting issues with vandalism and graffiti.

8.48 With regards pitches, the key issues raised included the evenness of pitch surface, with several pitches having problems with molehills. Gradient was also rated more poorly than

most other factors. Almost all sites met with minimum safety margins and few issues with unofficial use were highlighted although some sites contained evidence of dog fouling and / or suffered from problems with litter. In addition, a relatively low proportion of sites provided access to training areas.

8.49 Chart 8.3 illustrates the average quality score achieved for each of the criteria sites were measured against. Site-specific quality issues are discussed later in this section.

Chart 8.3 – Quality issues at football pitches



Changing Facilities

8.50 The proportion of sites that do not contain changing accommodation is low. Ridgeway Avenue Recreation Ground (Dunstable), Downs Road (Dunstable), Mentmore Crescent Recreation Ground (Dunstable), Holmans Field (Eaton Bray), The Pit Recreation Ground (Henlow), Station Park (Leighton Buzzard), The Rufus Centre (Flitwick) and The Glebe Sports Field (Toddington) do not have changing accommodation. It should also be noted that almost all of the schools that offer use of their pitches do not provide access to changing accommodation.

8.51 While the overall amount of changing facilities provided is high, as highlighted earlier, the quality of this provision is more varying.

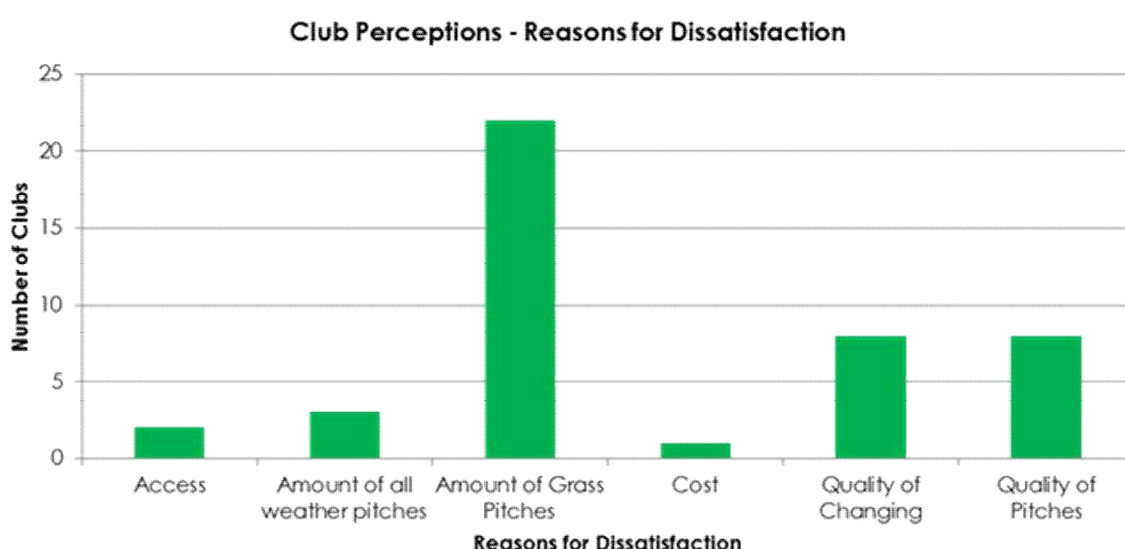
Club Perceptions of Quality

8.52 Just 24% of responding clubs indicate that they are satisfied with pitch provision in Central Bedfordshire.

8.53 Clubs were asked to comment upon the quality of pitch provision in Central Bedfordshire and more specifically on the pitches that they most frequently use. While there is relatively clear dissatisfaction with the overall pitch stock, it is clear that most clubs do not attribute this directly to the quality of pitches, but to the amount of pitches (although there is a view that this then negatively impacts upon pitch quality by causing overuse).

8.54 The reasons given for dissatisfaction with the pitch stock are illustrated in Chart 8.4, which clearly demonstrates that the amount of grass pitches is the area of most significant concern. The quality of pitches and changing accommodation is however the secondary concern for clubs.

Chart 8.4 – Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Pitch Provision

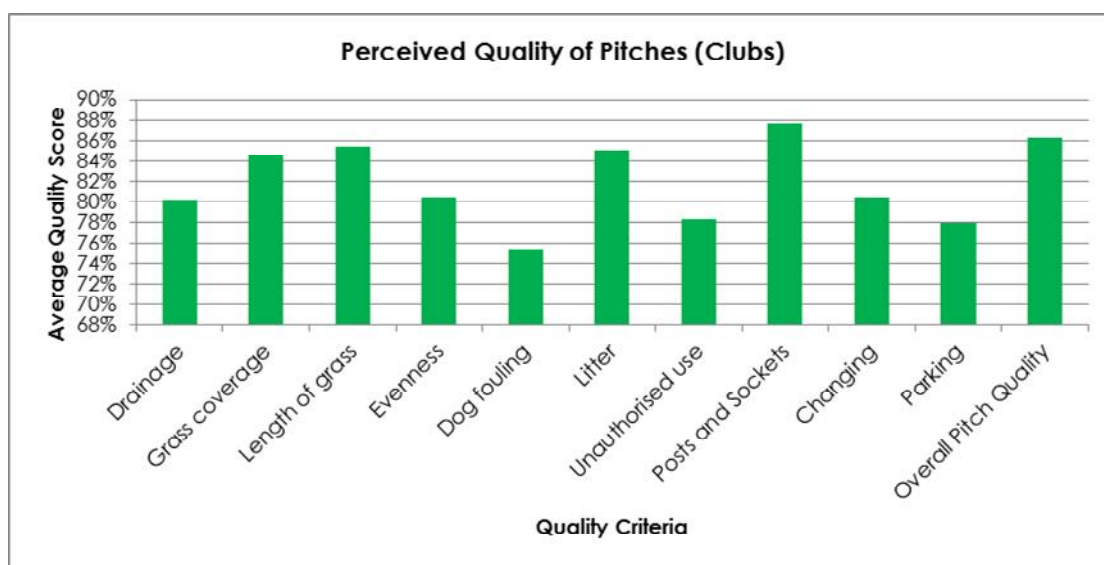


8.55 Geographically, satisfaction with the pitch stock varies between the Placemaking areas:

- 9% of clubs in Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking Area are dissatisfied
- 38% of clubs in Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South Placemaking Area are dissatisfied
- 28% of clubs in the North Placemaking area are dissatisfied

8.56 Chart 8.5 reveals that the main concerns for clubs relate to dog fouling, litter and unauthorised use. Parking is also highlighted as a key issue. Reflecting the findings of site assessments, some clubs consider drainage and changing accommodation to be poor and the evenness of pitches is also one of the most poorly scoring factors.

Chart 8.5 – Perceived Quality of Pitches (Clubs)



8.57 Further analysis of the perceptions of clubs demonstrates that there are variations according to the location of pitches, with views relating to the quality of pitches much more negative in Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking Area than in other parts. Contrasting with the overall views of the pitch stock (where dissatisfaction is highest in Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South), the quality of pitches was consistently rated most highly in this area. It is hoped that the development of Astral Park will increase club satisfaction in the Leighton Buzzard area.

8.58 It is clear that on the whole, there are greater issues with pitch quality and maintenance in the North area, while concerns in Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking area focus around the secondary issues of unauthorised use and equipment. The quality of changing accommodation is rated consistently across the three areas, but the highest average score is achieved in Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking Area. In the north area in particular, there is a heavy reliance upon small Town and Parish Councils to provide and maintain facilities.

8.59 Table 8.6 therefore summarises the perceived quality of facilities by Placemaking area.

Table 8.6 – Pitch Quality Issues by Placemaking Area

Area	Drainage	Grass coverage	Length of grass	Evenness	Dog fouling	Litter	Unauthorised use	Posts and Sockets	Changing	Parking	Overall Pitch Quality
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	93%	87%	87%	73%	80%	73%	73%	73%	83%	73%	87%
Leighton Buzzard and Rural Surrounds	90%	88%	92%	92%	82%	87%	87%	100%	82%	92%	92%
North	75%	83%	83%	77%	73%	86%	76%	86%	80%	74%	85%

Consultation Results

8.60 Consultations with clubs revealed the following:

- In general, participants in football play local to their home with 47% of club members believed to travel a mile or less, a further 19% between 1 and 3 miles and an additional 24% between 3 and 5 miles. Only 9% of participants travel more than five miles. This suggests that local facilities are important. This is also supported by the inclusion of travelling distance by several clubs as one of the reasons for the loss of teams over the past season
- It is clear that more teams are based locally in the North Placemaking area (48% below one mile) than in Dunstable and Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South (this is perhaps influenced by pitch availability, which will be returned to later. The proportion of players within 3 miles is relatively similar:
 - 63% Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking area
 - 69% Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Placemaking area
 - 66% North Placemaking Area

8.61 15% of players from the Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking area travel further than 5 miles.

8.62 It must be noted that this provides an overall indication of travel distance only, as other factors will be involved in decision making including the availability of clubs and pitches, the standard that players wish to compete at and pitch quality.

- 27% of clubs indicate that they have difficulty accessing facilities for matches. Of these, the highest concerns are in the North Placemaking area, specifically:
 - 9% of responding clubs in Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking Area
 - 31% of responding clubs in Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Placemaking Area
 - 33% of responding clubs in the North Placemaking Area
- Clubs highlighting difficulties are largely clubs containing large numbers of youth teams, but include several ladies teams as well as a small number of adult teams.
- 43% of clubs indicate that they have difficulties accessing training facilities, suggesting that this is of even greater concern. These include:
 - 27% of responding clubs in Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking Area
 - 54% of responding clubs in Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Placemaking Area
 - 48% of responding clubs in the North Placemaking Area

- 19 clubs indicate that they are not currently playing at their preferred venue. The majority of these are seeking single venues that can accommodate all of their teams and / or have aspirations to own and manage their own facility. A small number of clubs highlight that they are playing outside of their home settlement and that they would like to move closer but are unable due to pitch availability.
- Reflecting the issues identified above, many clubs raise site and club specific issues with regards the adequacy of the pitch stock. These include:

Dunstable and Houghton Regis Area

- Houghton Athletic Youth – club dispersed across several sites
- Dunstable Town Youth – would prefer to use other pitches
- Woodside FC – no availability of preferred pitches

Leighton Buzzard and Rural South

- Leighton Park Rangers – would like own ground
- Leighton United – would like to use Astral Park when opened
- Caddington Youth - no availability of preferred pitches

North Placemaking Area

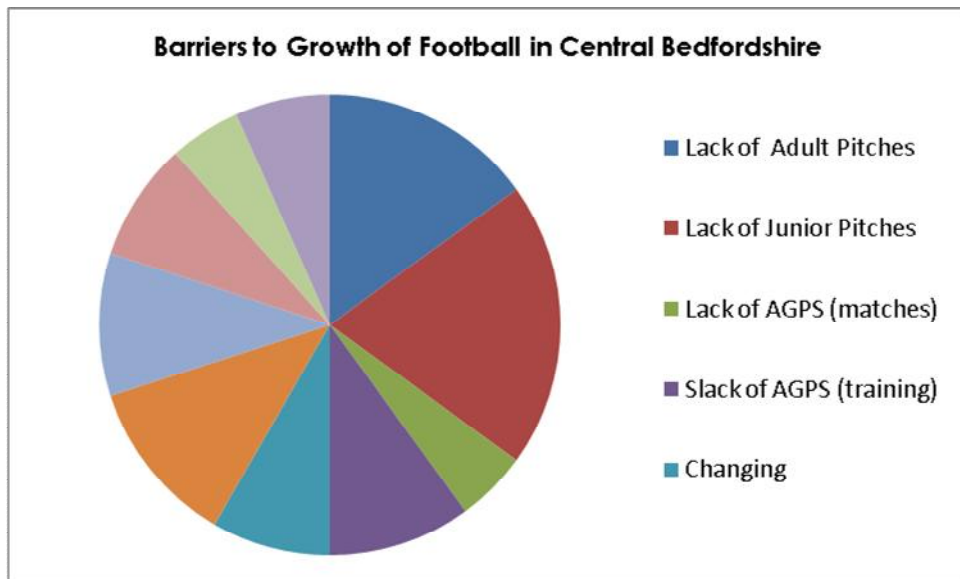
- Biggleswade United – would like own pitch
- Flitwick Eagles – would like own ground
- Barton Rovers – no appropriate alternatives to existing pitches
- GP United – would like to establish home base at one site
- Stotfold Junior – would like own ground. Stotfold hope to relocate to Arlesey Road when open
- Cranfield Colts – would like own ground
- Potton Colts – would like to play in Potton
- Despite recent increases in participation, there is significant potential for further growth. 40 clubs (28 in the north, 9 Leighton Buzzard and 3 in Dunstable) indicate that they have aspirations to increase the size of their club. Most of these relate to increased junior teams, the retention of junior teams to adult teams and the creation of female / girls teams. Taking into account just specific aspirations stated, this could equate to as much as 78 more teams if goals were to be achieved.
- Several barriers to increasing participation were however raised and these are outlined in Table 8.7 and Chart 8.6. As may be expected due to the levels of dissatisfaction with the provision of football pitches, the existing pitch stock is

perceived to be amongst the greatest barriers to ongoing growth of football in Central Bedfordshire. The amount of clubs in each area highlighting each barrier should be treated as indicative only, as the number of responding clubs in the North Placemaking area is significantly higher than in Leighton Buzzard and Rural South and Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking areas as there are more clubs in the area.

Table 8.7 – Barriers to Growth of Football Clubs in Central Bedfordshire

	Lack of Adult Pitches	Lack of Junior Pitches	Lack of AGPS (matches)	lack of AGPS (training)	Changing	Coaches / Volunteers	Pitch Hire	Internal Funds	External Funds	Shortage of suitable indoor training facilities
Central Bedfordshire	9	12	3	6	5	7	6	5	3	4
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	1	2	0	2	0	2	2	2	0	1
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
North	7	9	3	4	5	4	3	3	3	2

Chart 8.6 – Barriers to Growth of Football Clubs in Central Bedfordshire



Football League Consultations

8.63 All of the main football leagues operating in Central Bedfordshire were offered the opportunity to feedback on pitch provision and participation. The following issues were raised by responding leagues.

- Participation in terms of the number of teams that are playing has been relatively static in recent years. There has been a small decline in mini soccer and adult leagues report a more recent drop in the number of teams registering. It is thought that cost is the main reason for the decline, particularly for adult teams who are finding it increasingly difficult to secure sponsorship.
- There are perceived to be shortfalls of junior pitches both in Central Bedfordshire and in neighbouring authority areas. As a result, there are concerns over the impact of the new FA review, which requires additional pitch sizes and is therefore likely to place extra pressures on the existing pitch stock.
- The quality of pitches is perceived to be adequate for the standard of football played on the whole, although some pitches do require improvement. Many teams now play on private pitches as they are better quality. Changing facilities are a concern in some areas (and sometimes prevent promotion).
- It is believed that changes to the way pitches are managed in Bedford may see an increase in the number of teams migrating to Central Bedfordshire to play. If this happens, it will place further pressures on the pitch stock which is already perceived to be at capacity.
- There is increasing support for 3g pitches and the role that they can play both in terms of providing a venue for training, but also for match play, is recognised.

National Governing Body Perspective - The Football Association (FA)

The FA National Facilities Strategy (2013 – 2015)

8.64 The document sets out the long term vision of the FA for the development of facilities to support football. It has a strapline of “Building, Protecting and Enhancing sustainable Football Facilities”. The strategy research identified several key issues relating to the provision of football facilities in England, specifically;

- playing pitch surfaces – many grass pitches fall below acceptable standards. This contributes to poor play and impedes the development of a players technical ability;
- a lack of 3g pitches – these are essential for player and coaching development;
- Lack of floodlighting – to ensure that facilities are used to their maximum potential; and
- basic facilities – such as toilets or changing facilities are either absent or fall below the minimum standards expected

8.65 Based upon the research undertaken, the strategy indicates that facilities should satisfy the following criteria;

- flexible – to support a variety of match and training formats;
- reflective of demand;
- well maintained;
- club centred;
- financially sustainable; and
- inspiring places to train and play.

8.66 Several challenges that football faces to provide facilities to meet these criteria are highlighted, including falling public investment, changes in society, new forms of football, increased club and league ownership and the need to maximise financial sustainability. In particular, the strategy seeks to promote increased club ownership and the acquisition of facilities for clubs through asset transfer, targeting leases of at least 20 years.

8.67 The FA strategy sets out its priorities under five key themes as follows:

- Leading the development of technical standards – building upon existing guidance and leading the way in technical guidance, drawing upon user feedback
- Facility development and protection of playing fields – supporting local authorities to undertake playing pitch strategies, working with key authorities to ensure that provision meets demand, working to ensure that new developments take into account the needs of football and supporting Sport England with their statutory planning role
- Supporting club and league volunteers – create relevant supporting resources and monitor feedback from volunteers

- Targeted facility improvement schemes – national floodlighting scheme, pitch improvement scheme, self-help scheme for clubs, an equipment bank and advice and guidance services
- Capital investment – promoting good standards and good practice and prioritising facilities impacting the activities of Charter Standard clubs.

8.68 The strategy targets the following key facility improvements nationally;

- natural grass pitches improved – target: 3000;
- a network of new Artificial Grass Pitches built – target: 100;
- a network of refurbished Artificial Grass Pitches – target: 150;
- on selected sites, new and improved changing facilities and toilets;
- continue a small grants programmes designed to address modest facility needs of clubs; and
- ongoing support with the purchase and replacement of goalposts.

8.69 Local to Central Bedfordshire, the Bedfordshire FA indicate that participation in football is thriving and there is a very strong network of football clubs across the area. There has been an upward trend in participation in several years in contrast to national trends. Adult football is historically strong in North Central Bedfordshire whilst the south of the area has strong foundations for youth football.

8.70 Central Bedfordshire Council has part funded a post that focuses on encouraging new players into the game, and a focus on reducing the number of players that drop out at 16 – 18 has paid dividends, with a new county wide league introduced capturing players aged 16 – 21 and facilitating the transition between the junior and senior game. In addition to this, walking football has also been introduced – targeting older / less mobile participants and using the basic form of the game but eliminating strenuous physical activity.

8.71 While female participation is not as strong as that for males, it is hoped that this will improve in future years. Recent efforts have been made to streamline girls' leagues across the pathway and it is hoped that the reduction in fragmentation will lead to clearer pathways and an increase in participation. Open age female participation is strong but there are opportunities to further increase girls' participation through improvements to school / club links as this is not as strong as it currently could be.

8.72 There is also a clear focus upon knowledge and information sharing and both clubs and providers meet regularly in an organised forum to share best practice and promote consistency. A forum for AGP providers for example has recently been established that seeks to support providers in offering an efficient service.

8.73 Central Bedfordshire Council does not provide any football pitches, meaning that provision is focused upon a network of club bases, facilities provided by Town and Parish Councils and schools. This contrasts with neighbouring authorities of Bedford and Luton, both of which rely largely on council provision. There is therefore a degree of importing and exporting teams that takes place.

- 8.74 There are some examples of strong partnership working between football clubs and Town and Parish Councils and many councils provide a high quality service. It is clear however that consistency is lacking across Central Bedfordshire, as there are no pricing structures in place due to the number of different providers that have a role to play. Increasing numbers of clubs are taking on greater responsibility for the maintenance of pitches and there is a need to ensure support and access to grants and training so that the quality of this can be improved.
- 8.75 Linking with the strong foundations for participation, facilities have improved and there is a strong network of 3g pitches linking with the club bases.
- 8.76 Despite this, several clubs are experiencing issues with the existing facility stock and it is anticipated that this will only increase if and when population growth is realised. The FA indicates that improvements to facilities are essential if aspirations relating to football are to be achieved. Several clubs are dispersed across multiple sites and some clubs are struggling to access enough facilities to accommodate all of their teams. Many clubs have identified (or are seeking to do so) opportunities for new / improved. It must also be noted that changes to the way that pitches are provided in Bedford Borough (reductions in the service office while prices are retained) may have further implications on demand for pitches in Central Bedfordshire.
- 8.77 There is also a need to ensure that clubs on the FA pyramid have appropriate facilities. While many of the existing sites in Central Bedfordshire are of a high standard, two clubs share the facility at Barton Rovers and two clubs also use Creasy Park (Dunstable).
- 8.78 The implications of the FA youth review, which requires new forms of the game (specifically 5 v 5 and 9 v 9) has already been partially embraced in Central Bedfordshire, with leagues operating 9 v 9 football this season as a pilot. This has been implemented with success and few issues have been experienced. The new format has seen an increase in the number of teams run, as the number of players required is lower and more closely aligned with 7 v 7, aiding the transition between the two formats and reducing the number of surplus players.
- 8.79 As well as grass pitches, the importance of 3g pitches is increasing, and these sites are particularly important given the close balance of supply with demand in some areas of Central Bedfordshire. A strategic network of facilities is essential and it is believed that some additional facilities are required to complete this network.
- 8.80 Several club and site specific issues were also raised and these are covered within area and club specific comments throughout this section.

Supply and Demand Modelling

- 8.81 The methodology undertaken for the football assessment follows the 8 step process set out in TaLPF. To ensure compliance with the emerging methodology (which is not yet published) as far as possible, the following steps of analysis were also undertaken;
- Engagement with NGBs
 - Evaluation of site specific capacity over a week as well as at peak time
 - Consideration of the impact of training and casual use
 - Analysis of site specific activities and issues

8.82 All assumptions made are outlined in the following section.

Peak Time Demand

8.83 In Central Bedfordshire, there is a reasonable spread of play, with 54% of junior and 54% of senior play taking place at peak time (Sunday morning). In addition all 9 v 9 matches are played on a Sunday morning. Peak time for mini football is Saturday morning. Patterns of play have a significant impact on the number of pitches required as the higher the peak time usage, the more pitches that are required to meet demand (particularly as juniors wish to play at the same time as adults).

8.84 The relatively even balance of play means that many pitches are used in more than one time slot and are therefore often required to sustain more than one match.

8.85 Table 8.8 summarises the results of the supply and demand assessment for peak time football. It includes only those pitches that have secured community use.

8.86 These figures have been calculated using the following steps:

- number of teams in each area wishing to play on each type of pitch;
- temporal demand – i.e. proportion of teams that wish to play at peak time;
- number of Games at Peak Time – calculated by evaluating the proportion of teams that wish to play at peak time and using the assumption that each team will play home and away alternately; and
- comparison of above figures with number of pitches of each type available in each area to determine whether there are shortfalls or surpluses.

8.87 More in depth analysis on a site by site basis is provided later in this section.

Table 8.8 – Adequacy of Pitch Provision in Central Bedfordshire

Placemaking Area	Adult	Junior	9 v 9	Mini	Total Pitch Provision
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	7.36	0.36	-1	-16.44	-9.72
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	10.82	-6.09	1	-13.25	-7.52
North	34.43	-10.85	-1	-32.51	-9.93
TOTAL	52.61	-16.58	-1	-62.2	-27.17

8.88 As Table 8.8 indicates, overall across Central Bedfordshire, there are sufficient adult football pitches to meet demand at peak time. This is however negated by a shortfall of junior pitches (and peak time is the same day and time as adult pitches) and mini pitches (peak time Saturday morning). This suggests that there are some pressures on existing pitches, particularly as these figures do not take into account the need for rest and recovery and rotation of pitches. It assumes that each pitch is able to sustain two games per week. This provides an average, as the quality of pitches is a key determinant of capacity and overuse of pitches can lead to deterioration of quality.

8.89 Further analysis indicates that it is in the Leighton Buzzard and Rural South and Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking areas where concerns regarding the quantity of pitches are greatest. In both of these areas, shortfalls of pitches almost outweigh the surplus adult pitches, meaning that supply is very closely matched with demand.

8.90 Table 8.2 highlighted the role of schools in meeting the needs of football clubs in Central Bedfordshire. While most of these schools are used informally (and access could be restricted at any time) they remain an important component of the facility stock. Table 8.9 summarises the shortfalls and surpluses when including the facilities at school sites. It clearly demonstrates that there are enough pitches when including schools.

Table 8.9 – Adequacy of football pitches in Central Bedfordshire (including schools)

Placemaking Area	Adult	Junior	9 v 9	Mini	Total Pitch Provision
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	9.36	7.36	-1	-10.44	5.28
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	19.82	-4.09	2	-5.25	12.48
North	41.43	0.15	-1	-11.51	29.07
TOTAL	70.61	3.42	0	-27.2	46.83

8.91 While the reliance on the use of school sites is clear from the above figures, it must be noted that in almost all instances, school sites can accommodate only one / two teams (and do not therefore meet the needs of large clubs). They also offer limited access to toilets and changing accommodation, and where access may be available, the size/condition of facilities may be a limiting factor. For these reasons, many clubs do not prioritise the use of school sites. Added to this, the changing nature of schools and the introduction of academies, which have greater independence from the local authorities, means that it is becoming much more difficult to guarantee long term community use.

Varying Patterns of Temporal Demand

8.92 Further in depth analysis however indicates that while Table 7.8 and 7.9 assume that patterns of play are similar across Central Bedfordshire, in reality there are some small differences across the area. This is primarily caused by the dominance of different leagues in different areas. This variation has limited impact on the overall peak period but does

mean that pressures in some Placemaking areas are higher than appears in previous tables. Table 8.10 summarises the percentage of play in each local authority at peak time. Most notably, peak time in Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking area is more concentrated than area-wide peak time (Sunday AM). In contrast, play in the North Placemaking area is more spread out than the area-wide average.

Table 8.10 – Percentage of Play in area at Peak Time

Area	Adult Peak (Sunday AM)	Junior Peak (Sunday AM)	9 v 9 Peak	Mini Soccer Peak Saturday AM
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	71%	64%	100% Sunday AM	58% (Sunday)
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	56%	46%	100% Sunday AM	79%
North	45% (Saturday PM)	36%	100% Sunday AM	81%

8.93 Table 8.11 takes these variations in peak time into account and illustrates the adequacy of provision in each area based upon actual temporal demand.

Table 8.11 – Shortfalls and Surpluses taking into account temporal demand in each area

Placemaking Area	Adult	Junior	9 v 9	Mini	TOTAL
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	4.64	-1.24	-1	-12.24	-9.84
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	10.48	-3.41	1	-14.75	-6.68
North	38.525	3.1	-1	-39.47	1.155

The Impact of Quality

8.94 Alongside access to pitches and the dispersion of clubs across multiple pitches, quality of pitches also emerged as one of the significant concerns throughout consultation, particularly with regards the drainage of sites and the undulating and bumpy playing surfaces. Site visits

revealed the quality of pitches to be relatively high, although this was caveated by the time of year that pitches were evaluated.

8.95 To provide an indication of the potential impact that poor quality pitches can have on capacity, Table 8.12 summarises the shortfalls and surpluses across Central Bedfordshire of sites known to suffer from poor drainage (through provider and user consultation) are removed, which in total amounted to 40 pitches. It can be seen that pressures on pitches increase, particularly in the North where these quality issues are more apparent.

Table 8.12 – Impact of Poor Quality Pitches

Area	Adult	Junior	9 v 9	Mini	Total Pitch Provision
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	6.36	0.36	-1	-16.44	-10.72
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	7.82	-11.09	1	-13.25	-15.52
North	15.43	-16.85	-1	-38.51	-40.93
TOTAL	52.61	-16.58	-1	-62.2	-27.17

8.96 Notably, many of the large clubs are also located in areas where there is high clay and loam content. This can impact upon the capacity of the pitch and the ability of pitches to sustain the number of matches that are required.

Impact of the FA Youth Review

8.97 The FA Youth Review will see changes to the way that football is played next season. As highlighted, 9 v 9 has already been introduced this season as a pilot, but next season it will be compulsory. Age group requirements will be as follows:

- U7 – 5 v5 (by 2013/14)
- U8 – 5v5 (by 2014/15)
- U9 – 7v7 already established
- U10 – 7v7 already established
- U11 – 9v9 (by 2013/14)
- U12 – 9v9 (by 2014/15)
- U13 - 11v11 or 9v9 optional

8.98 Based upon participation levels this year (and assuming that relevant age groups continue to play next year), by 2014 / 2015 the following numbers of teams will require 9 v 9 and 5 v 5 pitches:

- 9 v 9 – 116
- 5 v 5 – 76

8.99 While 5 v 5 pitches can be marked out with cones, 9 v 9 pitches are required to be more formally laid out.

8.100 If current patterns of play are continued (all 9 v 9 matches take place at the same time) there would be a requirement for 58 9 v 9 pitches (there are currently 13). Teams that have previously required junior pitches will require a 9 v 9 pitch instead. This will mean that there is less flexibility for teams of different ages to share pitches and will lead to an overall increase in the number of pitches needed.

Other Forms of the Game – Vets Football and U21

8.101 Increased focus on the development of U21 and veterans leagues may place further pressures on existing pitches. These initiatives seek to encourage people who are not currently playing football to participate and even though matches are likely to be played outside peak time, are likely to generate further demand for pitches.

Frequency of Use of Pitches

8.102 Analysis of surpluses and shortfalls at peak times disguises the frequency of use of pitches across Central Bedfordshire. As set out previously, while demand is focused at peak time, there is a reasonable spread across the weekend with some play midweek, and use of pitches is higher than may initially appear. Table 8.13 summarises the number of matches per week on each pitch (competitive matches only). Figures include only sites secured for community use. It indicates that usage of community pitches is around optimum levels in all areas (circa 2 games per week). Adult pitch usage is however low, while junior and mini pitch usage is much higher.

Table 8.13 – Frequency of Use of Pitches

Placemaking Area	Adult	Junior	9 v 9	Mini	TOTAL
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	1.0	1.8	2.0	7.0	2.1
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	0.9	2.8	0.0	5.0	2.0
North	0.8	2.5	1.3	2.8	1.7
TOTAL	0.8	2.4	1.2	3.5	1.8

8.103 Analysis of formal match play only however ignores other uses of pitches. Many of the pitches are located within council owned and managed parks, or within wider recreation areas and are therefore also used informally. There is evidence of many clubs using pitches to train on during the week and some formal pitches are used primarily for training only.

8.104 This use does not impact upon peak time demand, but adds wear and tear to pitches. Dog fouling and litter was highlighted as one of the major concerns by clubs and several clubs highlighted the impact that informal use of the site has on pitch quality.

Imbalance of Use

8.105 While analysis of surplus and deficiencies contained in tables 8.8 to 8.12, as well as the evaluation of the frequency of use of each pitch indicates that the existing pitch stock is stretched (when excluding pitches at school sites) to accommodate the required amount of play, it must be noted that this disguises significant imbalances in the use of pitches both for competitive fixtures and matches.

8.106 Analysis of peak time capacity reflects modelling scenarios presented in tables earlier in this section. Many sites are at / nearing capacity at peak times, however there are several pitches that are not used at this time and there are some pitches that receive limited use.

8.107 Table 8.14 summarises the situation in each settlement while Table 8.15 provides further detail on site specific usage and quality.

8.108 They indicate that in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking area as a whole, reflecting earlier calculations, there is some availability of adult pitches at peak time, however fewer junior pitches have availability, with only 3 sites available at peak times and others oversubscribed. There is a similar situation in Leighton Buzzard and again there are clear imbalances of use.

8.109 In the North Placemaking area, pitches are used less interchangeably, but again there are examples of adult pitches being used by junior teams due to a lack of availability of junior pitches.

8.110 At a settlement specific level, it is clear that there are particular pressures on pitches in Cranfield, Leighton Buzzard, Arlesey, Flitwick, Potton, Tilsworth, Aspley Guise and Stotfold. In contrast, pitches in Everton, Kensworth, Heath and Reach and Blunham in particular receive limited use.

Table 8.14 – Settlement Specific Issues

Area	Settlement	Issue by Settlement
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Dunstable	Imbalance of use of pitches, some capacity but clear pressures. Pitches used quite interchangeably
	Houghton Regis	Some availability, poor quality pavilions and pitches
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	Caddington	Some capacity
	Cranfield	High levels of use, quality concerns
	Eaton Bray	Poor quality, limited additional capacity
	Heath and Reach	Limited use of pitches
	Hockliffe	Nearing capacity
	Kensworth	Limited use of pitches

Area	Settlement	Issue by Settlement
	Leighton Buzzard	Imbalance of use. High levels of use associated with Leighton Town FC, some public pitches have lower use. Varying quality but some opportunities for improvement
	Slip End	Small capacity for additional use but poor quality
	Studham	Some additional capacity, high quality pitches
	Tilsworth	At capacity and overused
	Totternhoe	Sites under pressure with very little capacity
North	Amphill	Some imbalance of use and pitches approaching capacity. One busy site low lying and approaching capacity
	Arlesey	Pressure on pitches
	Aspley Guise	High levels of use, no additional capacity
	Barton-le-Clay	Qualitative improvements required
	Biggleswade	Provision mixed and capacity pressures on some pitches
	Blunham	Limited use of pitches
	Campton	Well used Saturday
	Clifton	Some remaining capacity but busy periods
	Clophill	Some remaining capacity but busy periods
	Dunton	Busy pitch
	Everton	Limited use of pitch
	Flitton and Greenfield	Scope to increase use
	Flitwick	Some quality issues and sites approaching capacity
	Harlington	Some scope to increase use, qualitative improvements
	Haynes	Small capacity for additional use
	Henlow	Small capacity for additional use (adult), Groveside over capacity
	Houghton Conquest	Scope to increase use
	Langford	Pressures on pitches
	Lidlington	Approaching capacity and quality issues
	Marston	Capacity to increase use, poor quality
	Maulden	Pitch at capacity but good quality
	Mogerhanger	Scope to increase use
	Northill	At capacity, some quality issues
	Northill	Scope to increase use but has poor drainage
	Potton	High demand for junior pitches and junior teams using adult pitches. Over capacity
	Sandy	Capacity at current time

Area	Settlement	Issue by Settlement
	Shefford	Scope to increase use of pitches although pressures for juniors / mini teams
	Shillington	Poor quality, some additional capacity
	Silsoe	Some limited additional capacity
	Stondon	Some additional capacity
	Stotfold	Poor quality pitches and significant capacity issues
	Toddington	Pressures on capacity, varying quality
	Westoning	Poor quality pitches, pressures on pitches from junior teams
	Woburn	Pitches nearing capacity. Heavy use by junior and mini teams

Table 8.15 provides further detail on site specific usage and quality. It includes:

- The number of teams using each site (measured in number of teams)
- The number of pitches at each site (measured in number of pitches)
- An overview of the use per pitch per week (number of matches per week)
- An overview of the capacity of the pitch – this measures the ability of the pitch to sustain the usage it is receiving over a week and assumes that each pitch can take 2 games. It is measured in number of matches i.e. a figure of -1 means that the pitch is overplayed
- An evaluation of the peak time capacity of the site – provides an indication as to whether any additional matches can be sustained at peak time, based upon the current patterns of play at the site.

Table 8.15 – Site Specific Issues and Analysis

Ground Name	Settlement	Placemaking Area	Total Teams (no of teams)	Pitch Provision (no of pitches)	Use of Pitch Per week (matches per week)	Peak Time Availability			Mini Pitch (matches per week)	Peak Time Capacity on Pitch			Comments on Usage	Quality Issues
						Adult Pitch (matches per week)	Pitch (matches per week)	9 v 9 Pitch (matches per week)		Adult (matches per week)	Junior (matches per week)	(matches per week)		
Creasey Park	Dunstable	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	55	2 adult, 3 junior, 3 mini	3.4375	1	-2	-0.5	2	0	-2	2	Pitches used over capacity, particularly by junior teams	Excellent pitches throughout site
Luton Rd Dunstable	Dunstable	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	3	2 adult	0.75	1.5	0	0	0	1.5	0	0	Capacity to increase use over week, available at peak time	Surrounded by heavily fortified fencing
Ridgeway Ave Dunstable	Dunstable	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	1	2 junior	0.25	0	1.5	0	0	0	1.5	0	Junior pitch available at peak time, potential to increase usage	No changing. Large site with potential to change layout.
Downs Park Rec	Dunstable	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	1	1 adult	0.5	1	-0.5	0	0	1	-0.5	0	No availability at peak time, scope to increase weekly usage	Lower quality site, no changing

Mentmore Drive	Dunstable	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	0	2 adult, 1 junior	0	2	1	0	0	2	1	0	Pitches used interchangeably with others	No changing
Bennetts Rec	Dunstable	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	7	2 adult	1.75	0.5	-1.5	0	0	0.5	-1.5	0	No availability at peak time, almost at capacity	Average quality
Moore Cresc	Houghton Regis	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	3	2 adult, 1 junior	0.5	1.5	0	0	0	1.5	0	0	Pitches available at peak time and scope to increase weekly usage	Good quality facilities
Parkside Drive	Houghton Regis	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	13	1 adult, 2 junior, 1 mini	1.625	0.5	1	-1	0	0.5	1	0	Some availability at peak times, adult and junior teams playing at same times	Poor pavilion. Equipment and parking poor. Site also has public access and suffers from litter, dogs etc
Tithe Farm HR	Houghton Regis	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	7	3 adult	1.166667	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Capacity to increase use over week, one slot available Sunday	Training area is separate small goal. Dog bins in place but a lot of dog mess. Pavilion in need of improvement

Peter Newton Playing Field (Houghton Regis)	Houghton Regis	Dunstable and Houghton Regis		19 v 9	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	Pitches used interchangeably with others	
Caddington	Caddington	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	7	2 adult	1.75	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	Available at peak time, almost at capacity	One pitch includes dugouts. Good quality facility
Cranfield Recreation Ground	Cranfield	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	5	2 junior	1.25	0	2	0	-2	0	1.5	-2	Capacity at peak time, busy on Saturday, able to accommodate additional use	Other sports churn up pitch - poor surface
	Cranfield	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	0	2 mini	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	Pitches used midweek by students	
Cranfield United - Crawley Rd, Cranfield	Cranfield	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	5	1 adult	2.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	High levels of use, one available slot at peak time	Poor quality equipment
Cranfield University	Cranfield	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	6	1 adult	3	1	0	0	-1		0	-1	High use overall, mini teams using adult pitches	

The Rye	Eaton Bray	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	6	1 adult	2	0	0	0	-2	0	0	-2	Optimum use of pitches over week, use of adult pitch by mini teams	Changing accommodation in very poor condition
Holmans' Field	Eaton Bray	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	4	1 junior	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Pitches used interchangeably with others	No changing
Bryants Lane Recreation Ground	Heath and Reach	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	0	2 junior	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	Capacity - pitches not used for formal play	
Hockliffe Recreation Ground	Hockliffe	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	1	1 adult	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0.5	0	0	Capacity to increase use over week, one slot available Sunday	Old wooden changing
Kensworth Playing Fields	Kensworth	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	0	1 adult, 1 junior	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	Capacity - pitches not used for formal play	

Bell Close LB - Leighton Buzzard Town	Leighton Buzzard	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	5	1 adult	2.5	1	0	0	0	0	-0.5	0	Adult pitch available at peak time, but high pressures on Saturday. Pitches at capacity	Very old 'stadium', shabby in parts, which has been added to on a piecemeal basis over the years. Pitches average
Pages Park	Leighton Buzzard	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	11	3 adult, 1 9 v9	1.375	-0.5	0	1	0	-0.5	0	0	Shortfalls of pitches at peak time	Good facility
Vandyke and other schools/parks	Leighton Buzzard	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South		1 junior	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	Pitches used interchangeably with others	Large site with potential to add pitches. Poor changing and suffers with vandalism and dog fouling
Pages Field (The Vynes LB)	Leighton Buzzard	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South		2 adult, 1 junior	0	2	1	0	0	2	1	0		Pitches average to poor. Some concerns about maintenance expressed

Mentmore Rd LB	Leighton Buzzard	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	8	1 adult, 1 junior	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	Optimum levels of usage, primarily focused outside peak times	Poor pavilion. Pitches of good quality
Station Park (Linslade Rec)	Leighton Buzzard	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	1	1 junior	0.5	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	Some capacity at peak times	Relatively poor. No changing
St Andrews Playing Field - Slip End	Slip End	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	2	1 adult, 1 junior	0.5	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	Capacity to increase use over week, one slot available Sunday	Changing in village hall. One of lower standard pitches. Drainage issues
Studham Sports and Social Club	Studham	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	3	4 adult	1.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	Limited availability at peak time, full on Saturday, limited additional capacity	Exceptional grass quality.
Stanbridge Rd Tilsworth	Tilsworth	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	28	2 adult, 3 mini	2.8	1.5	-5.5	0	2.5	1.5	-5.5	2.5	Pitches used over capacity, significant pressures from junior teams	Excellent pitches

Church End Rec - Totternhoe Rec	Totternhoe	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	7	1 adult, 1 junior	1.75	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	Limited capacity. Adult pitch available at peak times	Good. Some concerns about dog fouling
Lancot Park Totternhoe	Totternhoe	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	4	1 adult	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Pitches at capacity and no availability at peak times	Good quality facility
Abbey Lane Ampthill	Ampthill	North	9	1 adult, 1 junior, 1 mini soccer	1.5	1	1	0	-0.5		0	-0.5	Usage within reasonable levels, peak periods Saturday, mini teams using other pitches	Site is low lying and appears to be vulnerable to flooding. Suffers from poor drainage and overuse. Poor grass cover. Clubhouse in need of refurbishment
Lawrence Park, Ampthill	Ampthill	North	3	1 adult, 1 mini soccer	0.75	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	Scope to increase usage, some capacity for mini football	Good quality facility

Ampthill Park	Ampthill	North	4	1 adult	2	1	-0.5	0	0		-0.5	0	Pitches at capacity, pressures on junior pitches, adult pitches used by junior teams	Very smart ground. Excellent facility
Armadillo Stadium (Arlesey Town FC)	Arlesey	North	3	2 adult	0.75	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	Some availability at peak time	Struggle with maintenance. Drainage poor
Arlesey Rec	Arlesey	North	6	2 junior, 1 9 v 9, 2 mini soccer	0.6	0	-1	1	2		-1	2	Pressure on junior pitches	
Aspley Guise Common	Aspley Guise	North	14	1 adult, 1 junior, 1 mini soccer	3.5	1	0.5	0	0		0.5	0	High levels of use over the week and no additional capacity, but some availability at peak time	Some mole hills, older style changing
Barton PF and Barton Rovers FC	Barton-le-Clay	North	25	4 adult, 3 junior	1.388889	2	2.5	-0.5	1.5	2	0.5	1.5	Scope to increase usage, available at peak times	Potential for additional pitches, overall good facilities but poor ground conditions and grass coverage

Biggleswa de Town - Carlsberg Stadium	Biggleswad e	North	11	2 adult, 2 mini	1.375	0.5	2	0	-1.5	0.5	2	-1.5	Pitch usage high, some availability	The whole complex is gated and locked. Appears new and very smart. Good but need more facilities
Second Meadow - Biggleswa de United	Biggleswad e	North	2	1 adult	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0		Limited parking
The Lakes Playing Fields, Biggleswa de	Biggleswad e	North	1	2 junior	0.25	0	1.5	0	0	0	1.5	0	Some pitches available	Changing accessible via subway under the A1
Stratton Way PF Biggleswa de	Biggleswad e	North	3	1 adult	1.5	1	-0.5	-0.5	0	1	-0.5	0	Shortfalls of pitches at peak time	Relatively poor quality
	Biggleswad e	North	0	1 adult, 2 junior	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	0		
Eagle Farm Rd Biggleswa de	Biggleswad e	North	5	1 adult, 1 junior, 3 mini	0.5	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	Capacity at peak times and overall capacity to increase usage	Average pitches, but poor changing and toilets

	Blunham	North	0	1 adult, 1 junior	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	Capacity - pitches not used for formal play	
Campton PF	Campton	North	2	1 adult	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	Some availability at peak time, at capacity Saturday	
Clifton PF, WhistonC resc	Clifton	North	4	1 adult, 1 mini soccer	1	1	-0.5	-0.5	1	0	-0.5	1	Scope to increase usage over week but relatively busy. Some spare slots	
Clophill Rec	Clophill	North	2	1 junior	1	0	1	0	-0.5	0	0.5	-0.5	Capacity to increase use over week, pitches busy on Saturday	
Dunton Recreatio n Ground	Dunton	North	4	1 adult	2	0.5	-0.5	0	0	0	-0.5	0	Limited availability at peak time, optimum use over week	
Everton Recreatio n Ground	Everton	North	0	1 adult, 1 mini soccer	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	Capacity - pitches not used for formal play	

Flitton& Greenfield Park	Flitton and Greenfield	North	3	1 adult, 1 junior, 1 mini soccer	0.5	1	0.5	0	0	1	0.5	0	Some availability at peak times, scope to increase use	Average, storage issues
Flitwick LC	Flitwick	North	10	2 adult, 1 junior	1.66666 67	1	0.5	0	-0.5	1	0.5	-0.5	Some availability at peak times, capacity to increase use	Some line marking over fallen leaves at time of site visit. Poor maintenance, drainage and issues with grass coverage
Rufus Centre Flitwick	Flitwick	North	7	2 mini	1.75	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	Some capacity for mini soccer	Good quality playing surface, although field used as an overflow car park.
Hinkley Rd Rec, Flitwick	Flitwick	North	4	2 adult	1	1.5	-0.5	0	0	1.5	-0.5	0	Some scope to increase usage, some availability at peak time	Linear site restricts width of pitches. Heavily fortified changing. Poor quality pitches

Bury Orchard Sports Field - New Grounds Harlington	Harlington	North	7	1 adult, 1 junior, 1 mini soccer	1.1666667	1	1	0	0	1	-1	0	Junior team use adult pitch, peak time is Saturday, site available at CB-wide peak time	Changing in good condition. Issues with drainage and molehills, some concerns about public access and dog fouling
Haynes Playing Field	Haynes	North	1	1 adult	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0.5	0	0	Capacity to increase use over week, one slot available Sunday	
RAF Henlow	Henlow	North	1	1 adult	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0.5	0	0	Capacity to increase use over week, one slot available Sunday	
The Pit Henlow	Henlow	North	1	1 junior	0.5	0	1	0	0	0	0.5	0	Scope to increase usage, some capacity	No changing
Groveside Henlow	Henlow	North	6	1 adult	3	-0.5	0	0	0	-0.5	-1	0	No availability at peak times, pitches functioning at capacity	

Houghton Conquest Vill Hall	Houghton Conquest	North	2	1 adult, 1 junior	0.5	1	0.5	0	0	1	0.5	0	Scope to increase usage, some capacity	Good quality facilities
King George Memorial Langford	Langford	North	10	1 junior	1.666667	0	-2	-0.5	1.5	0	-2	1.5	Use of pitches within optimum levels over the week, but high pressure at peak times and insufficient capacity	Floodlit, grass training area to N of cricket square
Langford Football Club	Langford	North	3	1 adult, 3 mini	0.375	1	0	0	3	0	0	3	Some availability at peak time, limited use over week	Struggle with maintenance costs
Hurst Grove, Lidlington	Lidlington	North	1	1 adult	0.5	1	0	0	0	0.5	0	0	Some availability at peak times, nearly at capacity on a Saturday	Grass cover not uniform. 2 container units also on site. Poor soil leads to associated drainage problems

Marston Moretaine Playing Field	Marston	North	3	2 adult	0.75	1.5	0	0	0	1	0	0	Available at peak time, scope to increase use across week	Drainage issues and poor grass cover
Maulden Rec	Maulden	North	5	1 junior, 1 mini	1.25	0	-1	0	1	0	-1	1	Pressure on junior pitches at peak times	Good quality
Moggerhanger PF	Moggerhanger	North	1	1 adult	0.5	1	0	0	0	0.5	0	0	Available at peak time, scope to increase use across week	
Ickwell Green	Northill	North	3	1 adult	1.5	1	-0.5	0	0	0	-0.5	0	Pressures on pitches at peak time.	Training lights attached to changing rooms. Oak tree overhangs pitch. Some line marking over fallen leaves.
Upper Caldecote Playing Fields (Harvey Close)	Northill	North	5	3 adult	0.833333	2.5	0	0	0	1.5	0	0	Available at peak time, scope to increase use across week	Poor drainage

The Hollow, Potton	Potton	North	2	1 adult	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	Available at peak time, at capacity Saturday	
Mill Lane Rec, Potton	Potton	North	8	2 adult	1.333333	2	-2	0	-0.5	2	-2	-0.5	Scope to increase use overall, but high demand for pitches at peak times. Junior teams using adult pitches	
Sunderland Rd Sandy	Sandy	North	11	2 adult, 1 junior, 1 9v9, 2 mini	0.916667	2	0	1	2	2	0	2	Scope to increase use over week, pitches available for further use	New pavilion. Issues with parking. Public access results in concerns with dog fouling
Bedford Rd, Sandy	Sandy	North	3	1 adult	1.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	Some availability at peak time, at capacity Saturday	Good, poor parking
Sandy Recreation Ground	Sandy	North		2 adult	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	Capacity - pitches not used for formal play	

Shefford Memorial Association	Shefford	North	3	2 adult	0.75	2	0	0	0	1.5	0	0	Available at peak time, scope to increase use across week	One pitch is slightly larger, though both are capable of adult play.
Belcote Meadow	Shefford	North	1	1 junior	0.5	0	1	0	-0.5		1	-0.5	Some capacity to increase use, pressures on mini pitches	
Shillington Memorial Playing Field	Shillington	North	9	2 adult, 1 junior, 2 mini	0.9	1.5	0.5	0	2	1.5	0.5	2	Some slots available at peak time	Poor drainage and old equipment. Pavilion too small.
Wrest Park	Silsoe	North	10	2 adult, 1 junior, 2 mini	1	0.5	0.5	0	0	0.5	0.5	0	Minimal capacity available at peak time, scope to increase weekly usage	Issues with parking and dog fouling.
Lower Stondon Rec	Stondon	North	2	1 adult	1	1	0	-1	0	1	0	0	Junior teams use adult pitch. No real availability at peak times	Kickabout goal behind pitch - training area. Changing compact and functional

The Green Stotfold	Stotfold	North	6	1 mini	3	0	0	0	-2	0	0	-2	High use of pitches by mini teams	Poor surface
Roker Park	Stotfold	North	4	1 adult	2	1	-0.5	0	0	0	-0.5	0	Pressures on pitches at peak time.	Enclosed, floodlit ground. Cypress trees beginning to overhang pitch. Poor parking. Clubhouse in need of refurbishment
Riverside Playing Field, Stotfold	Stotfold	North	3	2 adult	1.5	1	-1.5	0	0	1	-1.5	0	No availability at peak time, junior teams using senior pitches	Molehills
Hitchin Rd Rec Stotfold	Stotfold	North	4	3 adult	2	0.5	-1.5	0	0	0.5	-1.5	0	No availability at peak time, at capacity	Poor changing accommodation
Poplars	Toddington	North	3	1 junior	1.5	0	0	0	-0.5	0	0	-0.5	Limited availability at peak times, some scope to increase use over the week	Basic changing

Luton Road (Toddingt on Rec)	Toddington	North	4	1 adult	2	0.5	0	0	0	0.5	-0.5	0	Limited availability at peak times, pitches functioning at capacity	Smart, new style changing block. Poor quality pitches
The Glebe Toddingto n	Toddington	North	8	1 adult, 1 mini soccer	2	0	1	0	-2.5	0	1	-2.5	Optimum use over week, shortfalls of mini pitches - juniors using mini pitches	Site has capacity for more pitches. Relatively poor
Westonin g Rec	Westoning	North	11	1 adult, 2 junior	1.83333 33	0.5	2	0	-3.5	0	1.5	-3.5	Some capacity at CB peak time. Most play takes place outside peak time. Adult pitches used by mini teams	Poor drainage and uneven surface. Suffers from overuse and informal public access
Woburn Vill hall, Crawley Rd	Woburn	North	16	1 adult, 2 junior, 2 mini	1.6	1	2	0	-1	1	2	-1	Pitches nearing capacity. Heavy use by junior and mini teams	

Fox & Duck Stotfold	Stotfold	North	4	1 9v9	2	0	0	0.5	-1.5	0	0	-1.5	Optimum use over week, at capacity with shortfalls of mini pitches	
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Adequacy of AGPs

8.111 As set out in Section 7, modelling indicates that while the balance of 3g AGPs is broadly in line with supply, almost all facilities are operating at capacity and there is little scope for additional use. All facilities have recently been developed and as such are of good quality, but reflecting the findings of modelling, all are believed to be heavily used. Reinforcing this, anecdotal evidence suggests that despite additional 3g pitch provision, hockey clubs must still compete against football clubs for access to sand based AGPs.

8.112 43% of clubs indicate that they struggle to access AGPs (or floodlit facilities for training). Recent additions to the pitch stock in Dunstable (All Saints Academy) and Leighton Buzzard (Cedars Upper School) have improved access in the south of Central Bedfordshire (and were only just opening at the time of the survey) however no further provision has been made in the North Placemaking area. FPM modelling demonstrates that as well as Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable, the key hotspots for lack of provision are around Toddington and Harlington in the centre of Central Bedfordshire.

8.113 In addition to the modelling set out in Section 6, the FA has created its own model which is used to predict need. It seeks to ensure that all teams aged between 6 and 18 at a charter standard club have access to at least one hour per week for training during peak periods.

8.114 The FA also holds modeling and mapping data which is based upon providing access to at least one hour on an AGP per week for teams aged U6 – U18 and playing at a charter standard club. The high participation in football in Central Bedfordshire (discussed further in Section 5) means that the FA modeling indicates that there is demand for 12 full sized AGPs, based upon the current population and this will increase with population growth.

8.115 Taking into account the adequacy of existing facilities, the FA therefore indicate that they believe that there is a requirement for football of between 3 – 4 additional AGPs in Central Bedfordshire and highlight that the key areas of unmet demand for football are as follows;

- Rural south of Central Bedfordshire
- Toddington / Harlington area
- Stotfold / Arlesey
- Biggleswade
- North Houghton Regis.

8.116 While FPM modelling suggests that there are enough AGPs to meet current need, although existing sites are at capacity, it is therefore clear that the high participation in football in Central Bedfordshire means that there is a football development justification for some additional provision to support the needs of large clubs. This is particularly evident in the north and central areas of Central Bedfordshire. It is also important to note that recent changes to rules for competitive fixtures mean that 3g pitches can also be used in local leagues, meaning that they can be used to meet demand at peak time and for competitive fixtures as well as meeting training needs. The introduction of new 3g pitches can therefore reduce the overall level of demand for grass and offset some shortfalls of provision at peak time.

Predicting Future Needs - Team Generation Rates

8.117 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.

8.118 Comparison of TGRs in Central Bedfordshire against the Sport England database reflect messages portrayed earlier in this section and indicate that participation is above national averages for all types of football. Comparison with the national database should however be treated with caution as the database has not been updated for several years. With the exception of junior female, participation is also above that of Cheshire West and Chester, considered to be a nearest 'neighbour authority' for Central Bedfordshire. Table 8.16 summarises the TGRs for Central Bedfordshire.

Table 8.16 – TGRS in Central Bedfordshire

Sport	TGR Central Bedfordshire	TGR Cheshire West and Chester	Sport England National Average
Mini Soccer	1:44	1:69	1:431
Junior Male	1:35	1:45	1:195
Junior Female	1:494	1:293	1:4038
Adult Male	1:315	1:357	1:452
Adult Female	1:6891	1:2,270	1:19,647

Future Demand

8.119 By applying TGRs to population projections, we can project the theoretical number of teams that would be generated solely from population growth and gain an understanding of future demand. Table 8.17 summarises the number of teams in Central Bedfordshire both now, and taking into account the projected population growth.

Table 8.17 – Impact of Projected Population Growth on Football Teams

Sport and Age Groups	Number of teams in age group within the area	Current population in age group within the area	Future population in age group within the area	Current TGR	Population Change in Age Group	Potential Change in Team Numbers in Age Group
Football Adult Men (16-45yrs)	150	47278	49169	315	1792	6
Football Adult Women (16-45yrs)	7	48234	50163	6891	1929	0
Football Youth Boys (10-15yrs)	261	9191	10285	35	1094	31
Football Youth Girls (10-15yrs)	19	9377	10493	494	1116	2
Football Mini Soccer Mixed (6-9yrs)	280	12168	13960	44	1792	41

8.120 Assuming that no additional pitches are created or secured this would mean that there were;

- 50.99 adult pitches surplus;
- 27.51 junior pitches short; and
- 46.67 mini pitches short.

8.121 Tables 8.17 – 8.19 consider potential increases in teams by Placemaking area. They calculate TGRs for each area rather than using Central Bedfordshire as a whole and indicate that the majority of additional teams are likely to be created in the North if participation continues.

Table 8.17 – Potential increase in Demand (Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking Area)

Sport and Age Groups	Number of teams in age group within the area	Current population in age group within the area	Future population in age group within the area	Current TGR	Population Change in Age Group	Potential Change in Team Numbers in Age Group
Football Adult Men (16-45yrs)	31	9657	9879	312	319	1.00
Football Adult Women (16-45yrs)	1	9852	10079	9852	227	0.00
Football Youth Boys (10-15yrs)	35	1877	2067	54	189	3.50
Football Youth Girls (10-15yrs)	1	1915	2108	1915	193	0.10
Football Mini Soccer Mixed (6-9yrs)	56	2485	2805	44	319	7.20

Table 8.18 – Potential increase in Demand (Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Placemaking Area)

Sport and Age Groups	Number of teams in age group within the area	Current population in age group within the area	Future population in age group within the area	Current TGR	Population Change in Age Group	Potential Change in Team Numbers in Age Group
Football Adult Men (16-45yrs)	33	10015	10538	304	414	1.4
Football Adult Women (16-45yrs)	1	10217	10750	10217	533	0.1
Football Youth Boys (10-15yrs)	61	1947	2204	32	257	8.1
Football Youth Girls (10-15yrs)	6	1986	2249	331	263	0.8
Football Mini Soccer Mixed (6-9yrs)	50	2577	2992	52	414	8

Table 8.19 – Potential increase in Demand (North Placemaking Area)

Sport and Age Groups	Number of teams in age group within the area	Current population in age group within the area	Future population in age group within the area	Current TGR	Population Change in Age Group	Potential Change in Team Numbers in Age Group
Football Adult Men (16-45yrs)	86	27607	28753	321	1058	3.3
Football Adult Women (16-45yrs)	5	28164	29333	5633	1169	0.2
Football Youth Boys (10-15yrs)	170	5367	6014	32	648	20.5
Football Youth Girls (10-15yrs)	12	5475	6136	456	661	1.4
Football Mini Soccer Mixed (6-9yrs)	174	7105	8163	41	1058	25.9

Impact on Adequacy of Pitch Provision

8.122 Table 8.20 assumes that pitch provision remains constant, but that the area specific TGRs are applied. It illustrates the shortfalls and surpluses that would exist at peak time, assuming pitch provision and temporal demand remains constant. It indicates that there will be significant shortages of pitch provision across Central Bedfordshire, but particularly in the North. Note totals will vary slightly from previous tables due to the use of area specific TGRs.

Table 8.20 – Adequacy of Pitch Provision by Placemaking Area

Area	Adult	Junior	9 v 9	Mini	Total Pitch Provision
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	7.09	-0.72	-1	-18.995	-13.625
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	10.55	-8.52	1	-16.17	-13.14
North	33.35	-21.92	-1	-42	-31.57

Planned Developments

8.123Planned developments including new facilities at Flitwick (Flitwick Football Centre), Leighton Buzzard (Astral Park) and Arlesey (new football site) will reduce these shortfalls but pressures will remain. These pressures will be highest in areas of high population growth, many of which are already at capacity for football pitches.

8.124The above figures provide an indication of the impact of population growth. The Bedfordshire FA also has aspirations to stimulate further growth in football participation, which would have clear implications for pitch provision.

8.125Supporting this, 40 football clubs (28 in the north, 9 Leighton Buzzard and 3 in Dunstable) stated aspirations to increase their club membership and the number of teams that they were running. Most of these relate to increased junior teams, retention of junior teams to adult teams and creation of female / girls teams. Based on specific aspirations stated, this could equate to as much as 78 more teams. This would exacerbate existing pitch deficiencies further, potentially requiring an additional 20 pitches.

Summary and Key Issues

8.126Table 8.21 summarises the data presented in this section.

Table 8.21 – Summary of Statistics Relating to Provision in Each Placemaking Area

Area	Scenario	Adult	Junior	9 v 9	Mini	Total Pitch Provision
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Baseline	7.36	0.36	-1	-16.44	-9.72
	Including Schools	9.36	7.36	-1	-10.44	5.28
	Taking into account impact of poor quality pitches	6.36	0.36	-1	-16.44	-10.72
	Future	7.09	-0.72	-1	-18.995	-13.625
	Future including schools	9.09	6.28	-1	-12.995	1.375
	Future taking into account poor quality	6.09	-0.72	-1	-18.995	-14.625
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	Baseline	10.82	-6.09	1	-13.25	-7.52
	Including Schools	19.82	-4.09	2	-5.25	12.48
	Taking into account impact of poor quality pitches	7.82	-11.09	1	-13.25	-15.52
	Future	10.55	-8.52	1	-16.17	-13.14
	Future including schools	19.55	-6.52	2	-8.17	6.86
	Future taking into account poor quality	7.55	-13.52	1	-16.17	-21.14
North	Baseline	34.43	-10.85	-1	-32.51	-9.93
	Including Schools	41.43	0.15	-1	-11.51	29.07
	Taking into account impact of poor quality pitches	15.43	-16.85	-1	-38.51	-40.93
	Future	33.35	-21.92	-1	-42	-31.57
	Future including schools	40.35	-10.92	-1	-21	7.43
	Future taking into account poor quality	14.35	-27.92	-1	-48	-62.57
TOTAL	Baseline	52.61	-16.58	-1	-62.2	-27.17
	Including Schools	70.61	3.42	0	-27.2	46.83
	Taking into account impact of poor quality pitches	52.61	-16.58	-1	-62.2	-27.17
	Future	50.99	-31.16	-1	-77.165	-58.335
	Future including schools	68.99	-11.16	0	-42.165	15.665
	Future taking into account poor quality	27.99	-42.16	-1	-83.165	-98.335

8.127 Drawing on the issues and analysis set out in previous pages, the key issues for football in Central Bedfordshire are therefore summarised below.

Key issues to address – Football

- Football participation is very high across Central Bedfordshire. In contrast to national trends, participation continues to grow and with the exception of junior male football, all types of football saw growth between seasons 2011 and 2012. Active People analysis further supports the high levels of participation but indicates that there is potential for a further 1.3% of the population to participate. Current participants are Ben (3685), Tim (3687), Philip (2112), Jamie (1452) and Kev (724) and these represent 83% of all players – it is in these groups where further unmet demand is also evident.
- Football in Central Bedfordshire is well structured – 80% of junior and mini teams play in a club that has achieved charter standard accreditation, levels of above the national and regional averages. Over half of all teams are based in the north and participation is lowest (taking into account the size of the population) in Dunstable and Houghton Regis.
- Football pitches are spread across Central Bedfordshire but the highest levels of provision are found in the North. The majority of the stock is formed from single / double pitch sites (the Central Bedfordshire average is 2 pitches). The quality of pitches is varying although on the whole it is above average. Key issues arising include drainage, changing and evenness of pitches. There is limited consistency between pitches provided.
- Despite relatively high quality pitches, club satisfaction is low, with only 25% of clubs happy with the current stock of facilities. Leighton Buzzard and the rural south contains the highest proportion of clubs that are dissatisfied. The majority of clubs attribute their dissatisfaction to the amount of pitches provided and there are also concerns about dispersion over numerous facilities and the quality of pitches. Some clubs also raise issues with the adequacy of changing accommodation. The FA highlights inconsistencies between different providers in the management and maintenance of football pitches across Central Bedfordshire.
- 25% of clubs suggest that they have difficulties accessing appropriate pitches for matches. Reflecting these concerns, modelling reveals that there are pressures on existing pitches, particularly in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South Placemaking areas. While there are enough adult pitches, surpluses in this type of pitch are offset by shortfalls of junior and mini pitches.
- 40 schools currently allow use of their facilities by the local community – these play an essential role in ensuring that all clubs are able to play. Most do not offer changing accommodation and/or toilets. It must be noted that while these facilities currently act as overspill for the public grounds, there is no long term guarantee that this will remain. Changes to the way that schools operate will place more responsibility for decision making with the school and pitches can be withdrawn from community use at any time.
- Further interpretation enables the identification of areas where there are site specific issues and particular capacity pressures. In many areas, there is an imbalance of play with some pitches very well used and some pitches not used at

Key issues to address – Football

all. There are particular capacity pressures in Cranfield, Leighton Buzzard, Arlesey, Flitwick, Potton, Tilsworth, Aspley Guise and Stotfold. Pitches in Everton, Kensworth, Heath and Reach and Blunham in particular receive limited use.

- It is clear that many sites experiencing high levels of use are those associated with the larger clubs. These clubs are keen to minimise the dispersion of their teams (which hinders club development) and as a consequence focus activity on a small number of pitches. Several clubs have therefore expressed dissatisfaction with their current facilities and are seeking new facilities that will accommodate all teams. There is also evidence that several clubs are keen to explore opportunities for asset transfer, enabling them to manage and maintain their own facilities and secure long term access to a site
- Adding to pressures that are evident currently, the population of Central Bedfordshire is growing and increases in the population alone are likely to generate an additional 6 adult teams, 47 junior teams and 41 mini teams. This will have major implications on demand for pitches and the adequacy of the pitch stock, and if pitch provision remains constant, is likely to increase the reliance upon school sites. Projecting forwards, there are particular deficiencies in North Central Bedfordshire. Furthermore, the larger developmental clubs all indicated that they are seeking to further increase participation, in particular concentrating on more junior participation, as well as creating female and disability teams. Pressure on pitches is therefore likely to grow and there may be further fragmentation of clubs across different sites. There is also evidence of some clubs already travelling outside of Central Bedfordshire to play due to a lack of existing facilities – at least six clubs based in Central Bedfordshire currently travel outside to play
- Planned developments including new facilities at Flitwick (Flitwick Football Centre), Leighton Buzzard (Astral Park) and Arlesey (new football site) will reduce these shortfalls but pressures will remain. These pressures will be highest in areas of high population growth, many of which are already at capacity for football pitches.
- Access to facilities for training is as important for clubs as the selection of appropriate pitches for competitive fixtures. 43% of clubs indicate that they struggle to access training facilities and a shortage of AGPs was highlighted as a key barrier to club development. While Sport England FPM modelling suggests that there is sufficient provision, there is therefore a football development justification for some additional provision to support the needs of large clubs and FA modelling, which is based upon the number of charter standard teams in the district outlines demand for several additional facilities. This demand is particularly evident in the north and central areas of Central Bedfordshire and new AGPs could be used to meet demands for both training and competitive fixtures.
- The FA would like to see priority given to supporting charter standard and community clubs. They are also keen to support clubs in their development and eventually, to own / manage sites. The FA national strategy identifies several issues for football most of which are prevalent in Central Bedfordshire – these include poor playing surfaces, a lack of 3g pitches, a lack of floodlighting and a lack of basic facilities such as toilets and changing. Key priorities over the national strategy

Key issues to address – Football

period include upgrading playing surfaces and creating a network of 3g pitches.

- The recent introduction of 9v9 football by the FA will further impact in Central Bedfordshire as while a small amount of 9 v 9 has been played this year, additional pitches will be required to accommodate this form of the game when it becomes compulsory. While in some areas junior pitches will be converted to 9 v 9 pitches, in others this will not be possible due to required current uses.

Key Priorities to Address

8.128 The key priorities for the future delivery of football pitches across Central Bedfordshire include the following:

Ensure that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

- Protect all current playing fields to ensure the longevity of the pitch stock across Central Bedfordshire (unless pitches are replaced with larger multi pitch sites – see below). This should include former playing pitches, unless they are located in an area identified as having sufficient provision to meet current and future demand.
- In the short term, review the designation of pitches to address deficiencies in junior football and to accommodate the recent FA review of youth football. Ensure that as far as possible, all teams are playing on pitches of the correct size
- increase the amount of pitches available and support clubs to find home venues to ensure that they are not dispersed across multiple sites. This is likely to include
- securing of formal agreements for the use of school sites – ideally sites offering multiple pitches should be prioritised and consideration should be given to the provision of accessible changing / toilets for community teams
- new pitches (promote the creation of new multi pitch sites to support large clubs). This will free up other sites for the use of smaller clubs and single teams
- the creation of new pitches linked with new developments, to offset the impact of the increase in population on the demand for playing pitch provision. There are particular pressures in areas of growth and new facilities will be required where there is evidence of need. Improvements to the quality of existing facilities should be required where there is already sufficient provision.
- There is a need to support football development and access to training facilities for football clubs through the provision of 3g pitches, particularly in the North and Central parts of Central Bedfordshire. 3g pitches (if provided to appropriate standards) can also be used for competitive fixtures and to reduce the requirement for grass pitches.

Ensure that facilities are of appropriate quality to meet current and future demand

- Ensure that all clubs have access to facilities of the appropriate specification by focusing on the improvement of both pitch quality and ancillary facilities. Qualitative improvements should be prioritised over quantity where there are already enough facilities. The following standards should be considered;
 - investment to address basic quality issues at key sites to ensure NGB specifications and standards are met;
 - the provision of changing accommodation at all sites where adult football is played, and a minimum of toilet provision at junior and mini football sites; and
 - supporting clubs in the creation of facilities of higher specification where these are required for club progression.

Promote increased participation and sustainable club development

- Maintain the existing football forums to establish clear routes of communication with pitch users and providers ensuring that all decisions are taken with a full understanding of needs and aspiration
- Support the principles of asset transfer where this will result in positive club and football development outcomes

9. Cricket

9.1 This section evaluates the adequacy of facilities for cricket across Central Bedfordshire and provides:

- An overview of supply and demand for cricket
- An evaluation of the overall adequacy of pitches to meet demand
- Key issues and strategic priorities the strategy will address

Cricket in Central Bedfordshire - An Overview

Supply

9.2 There are 36 cricket grounds across Central Bedfordshire located at club sites. Table 9.1 summarises the distribution of these facilities by Placemaking area.

Table 9.1 – Cricket Pitches in Central Bedfordshire

Placemaking Area	Club Cricket Pitches
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	3
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	8
North	25
TOTAL	36

9.3 Dunstable Cricket Club is the only site containing two cricket pitches. Shefford Town Memorial Association is included in the above totals as the cricket square remains. The facility is however thought to be unused at present.

9.4 In addition to the above facilities, there are circa 30 cricket wickets at school sites, 25 of which are reported to be available for public use. There is also an artificial wicket at Creasey Park, Dunstable.

9.5 Despite the abundance of cricket facilities at school sites, there is a more limited role for school cricket pitches in Central Bedfordshire than for other sports, partially due to the quality standards associated with cricket and the high expectations of facilities. The facility at Shuttleworth College (a full cricket pitch) is the only facility used for community cricket although Fulbrook School, Alameda Middle School, Sandy Upper School and Van Dyke School are used for adhoc junior play and / or training. The remainder of school pitches are largely artificial wickets used for teaching.

9.6 As well as sites currently containing cricket pitches, several sites were identified that have previously contained cricket pitches but no longer do so. These are:

- Houghton Conquest Playing Field
- Luton Road Recreation Ground
- Mogerhanger CC -Shillington Memorial Playing Field
- Westoning Recreation Ground
- Stanbridge and Tilsworth Recreation Ground

9.7 Map 9.1 illustrates the distribution of existing cricket pitches across Central Bedfordshire.

Map 9.1 – Cricket Pitches across Central Bedfordshire

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Demand

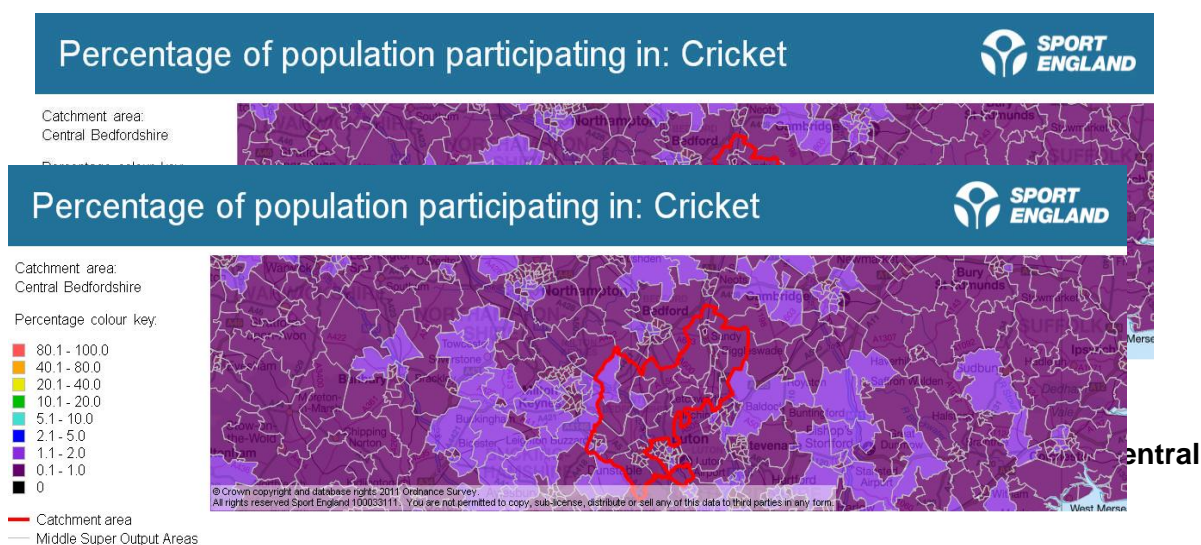
Active People and Market Segmentation (Sport England)

9.8 Table 3.5 indicated that according to the Active People Survey, nationally, between 2005/6 (Active People Survey 1) and 2011/2012 (Active People Survey 6) participation in cricket has declined from 0.48% to 0.43%.

9.9 Using the Active People Survey and Market Segmentation, it is possible to evaluate how many residents of Central Bedfordshire do participate in cricket and how many of the population would like to participate in cricket. It is also possible to understand how this varies across different parts of Central Bedfordshire.

9.10 Map 9.2 shows spatially the percentage of the Central Bedfordshire population who, based on the Active People survey findings, are currently participating in cricket. Chart 9.1 sets out the profile of current participation across the 19 market segments.

Map 9.2 - Percentage and location of the adult population who do play cricket



9.11 As can be seen, participation in cricket is relatively consistent across all areas, between 0.1% and 1%. It is marginally higher to the west of Central Bedfordshire.

9.12 There are four market segments that dominate participation in cricket, specifically Ben (416), Tim (593), Philip (375) and Jamie (144). Players in these groups represent 74% of the total number of cricket players. In addition to these groups, there is some play by residents in the segments of Roger and Joy, Chloe, Jackie and Alison. This suggests that cricket has a wider target audience than rugby and football.

9.13 The Active People analysis of the percentage of adults who would like to play cricket is represented in map and bar chart form and set out in Map 9.3 and Chart 9.2.

Map 9.3- Percentage and location of the adult population who would like to play cricket



Chart 9.2 - Profile of the market segments who would like to play cricket



- 9.14 The map and bar chart demonstrate that the number of people in Central Bedfordshire who would like to play cricket is below 1%. Taking into account the number of residents currently playing cricket, this represents an opportunity to increase the amount of participants in the sport. Those that would like to play are geographically evenly distributed.
- 9.15 Interestingly, 24% of those that would like to play are in groups with lower current participation profiles. While the main additional demand is from groups that already play cricket, specifically Tim, Ben, Jamie and Philip, there is some evidence of latent demand from Kev (80), Roger and Joy (50), Terry (40), Frank (36) and Ralph and Phyllis (38). This suggests that there is potential to attract a more diverse range of participants to cricket. This is supported by specific research undertaken by the ECB, which highlighted particular demand for cricket in the South Asian Communities. A notable drop off was also highlighted in the 26 – 29 age groups.
- 9.16 Table 9.2 sets summarises the above statistics, providing an indication of the exact number of people who currently play and would like to play, according to Sport England Market Segmentation and Active People Surveys.

Table 9.2 – Participation in Cricket

DO PLAY POPULATION	% of Adult Population	WOULD LIKE TO PLAY POPULATION	% of Adult Population	Total Number and % who do/would play
1935	<1%	1004	<1%	1.4%

9.17 While Active People surveys indicate therefore that there was a small decline in participation during the previous year, it should be noted however that the 2012 season was particularly poor in terms of weather and the ECB Club survey indicated that 30% of fixtures were cancelled during this year, which had a significant impact upon participation.

9.18 Two Circles on behalf of ECB conducted a player survey in 2013 (with 22,000 respondents) which demonstrated that participation nationally is actually increasing. (Eureka insight 2013).

Current Participation

9.19 The distribution of cricket teams across Central Bedfordshire is summarised in Table 9.3

Table 9.3 – Cricket Teams across Central Bedfordshire

Placemaking Area	Adult Male	Ladies Teams	Junior Male	Junior Female	Proportion of Teams	Proportion of Population
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	11	0	7	0	9%	20%
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	25	0	12	0	20%	21%
North	77	1	48	0	71%	58%
Central Bedfordshire	113	1	67	0		

9.20 Table 9.3 above indicates that when taking into account the population in each Placemaking area, participation in the North Placemaking area is higher than may be expected, with 71% of teams compared to 58% of the population. Conversely, the amount of teams in the

Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking area is lower than may be expected. This accords with participation data outlined in section 3, which indicates that it is in this area where participation in general is lowest. Table 8.1 also highlighted that there are lower levels of provision for cricket in this area.

9.21 There are no girls' teams and only one female team although it is acknowledged that some of the junior boys' teams include female players.

9.22 10% of cricket clubs responding to the survey report an increase on membership from the previous season while the same proportion have seen a decrease in number. The remainder of clubs have remained static.

Cricket Leagues

9.23 Adult cricket is split evenly between Saturday and Sunday (43% each day) with the remaining games taking place midweek. 45% of junior cricket also takes place on Sunday morning before adult fixtures and the other fixtures are played on midweek evenings.

9.24 The main leagues in which teams across Central Bedfordshire participate in are:

- Bedford Midweek Cricket League
- Saracens Herts Cricket League (Saturday)
- Beds Invitation Saturday Cricket League (Saturday)
- Beds County Cricket League (Sunday)
- Hunts County Cricket League (Saturday)
- Morrants Four Counties Cricket league (Saturday)
- Beds Youth Cricket League (Sunday and midweek)
- Cherwell Cricket League (Saturday)

Quality of Cricket Pitches

9.25 Pitch quality has a significant impact on the overall adequacy of supply in an area. Particularly for cricket, poorer quality pitches can lead to a difficult game, can be dangerous, and can lead to injuries due to uneven bounce of the ball. Lower quality facilities can therefore deter people from playing.

9.26 The following data sources have therefore been used to evaluate the quality of cricket pitches across Central Bedfordshire:

- a. Site Assessments in line with Towards a Level Playing Field
- b. Analysis of individual club perceptions
- c. View of Bedfordshire Cricket Board

Site Assessments

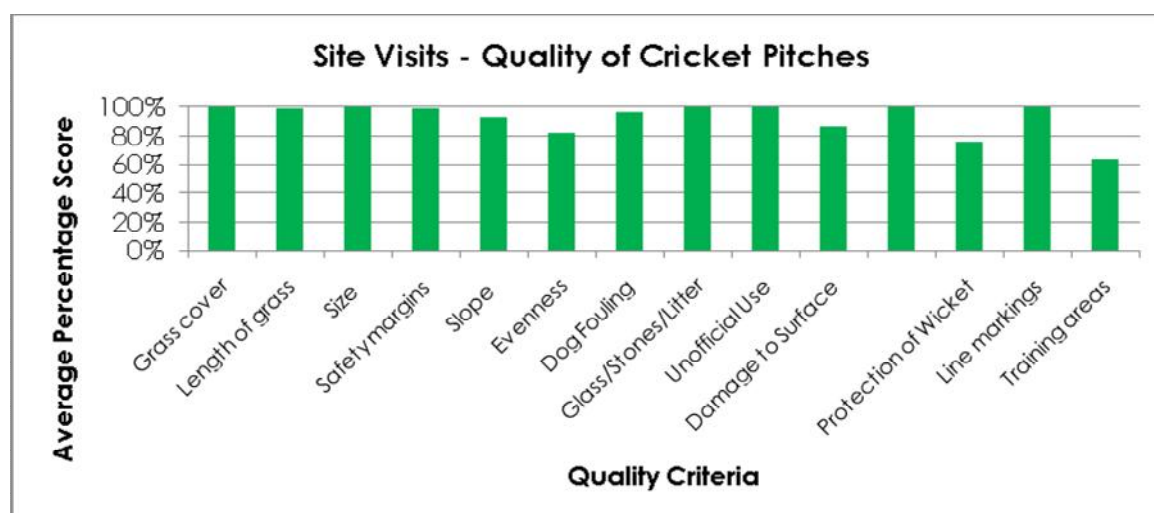
9.27 The specialised grounds maintenance requirements of cricket pitches mean that the non technical site assessment matrix provided as part of Towards a Level Playing Field guidance is of more limited value than for other sports. It does not assess the way that the pitch plays and provides only an overview of pitch quality. Adding to this, the timing of the assessment means that many site visits were carried out during the cricket off season, meaning that wickets were not fully prepared and making it more difficult to accurately judge pitch quality.

9.28 Overall, site visits reveal that;

- the quality of cricket pitches is good, with almost all pitches achieving scores equivalent to good or excellent;
- there is some variation in the quality of pavilions – facilities range from old sheds to new-build high specification pavilions;
- the majority of cricket facilities exhibited good grass cover, perhaps reflecting the lack of use that takes place outside of the season;
- the main areas for improvement were damage to the surface and the unevenness of some outfields. This was mostly the case where facilities were shared with football;
- some pitches are also subject to informal use due to their location. In some instances, wickets were not protected and there is therefore potential that they may suffer damage over the course of the off seasons; and
- several clubs did not appear to have access to any on-site training facilities either artificial wickets or nets.

9.29 Chart 9.3 reinforces the issues outlined above and demonstrates the average percentage score achieved for each of the key quality criteria during site visits.

Chart 9.3 – Quality of Cricket Pitches in Central Bedfordshire



Club Opinion on Quality

9.30 60% of clubs are satisfied with cricket facilities in Central Bedfordshire. Despite this, 50% of clubs indicate that issues with facilities inhibit club development. Most issues raised relate to the quality of pitches for third and fourth teams and for junior teams rather than the quality of the main pitch.

9.31 Clubs were asked to rate the quality of pitches that they use. Table 6.4 illustrates that overall, responding clubs view pitch provision positively. It should be noted that this might be influenced by the questionnaire, which asks clubs to rate the quality of their main ground. Several clubs caveat their responses by indicating that they struggle to find suitable grounds for their third and fourth teams but that they consider their first team pitches to be of a high standard.

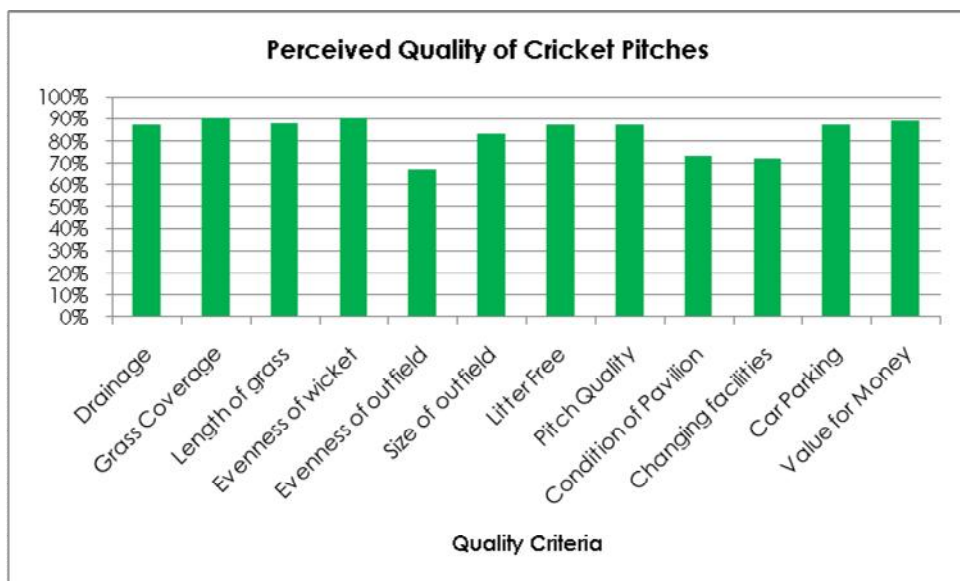
9.32 Responses indicate that the evenness of pitches is perhaps the largest concern, reflecting the issues raised during site visits. The quality of changing / pavilions emerged as the other area for improvement. It is clear that responses are slightly more negative in the north Placemaking area, however this should be treated with caution as there are more clubs in this area and therefore greater opportunities for scores awarded to vary.

Table 9.4 – Perceptions of Pitch Quality by Cricket Clubs

Placemaking Area	Drainage	Grass Coverage	Length of grass	Evenness of wicket	Evenness of outfield	Size of outfield	Litter Free	Pitch Quality	Condition of Pavilion	Changing facilities	Car Parking	Value for Money
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	100%	89%	89%	89%	78%	89%	89%	89%	67%	67%	100%	89%
North	83%	90%	88%	90%	63%	81%	85%	85%	73%	71%	83%	88%
Central Bedfordshire	87%	90%	88%	90%	67%	83%	87%	87%	73%	72%	87%	89%

9.33 Chart 9.4 summarises the perceived quality of cricket pitches across Central Bedfordshire as a whole.

Chart 9.4 – Perceived Quality of Cricket Pitches



Site specific comments are recorded later in this section.

9.34 Despite positive overall perceptions, it should be noted that several clubs noted issues with access and or facility quality as follows:

- Leighton Buzzard (quality and quantity)
- Langford (quality and quantity)
- Biggleswade (quantity of pitches, currently discussing with Stratton Upper School)
- Harlington (quality issues and access to training)
- Ampthill CC – access to pitches
- Blunham CC – access to pitches

Consultation Results

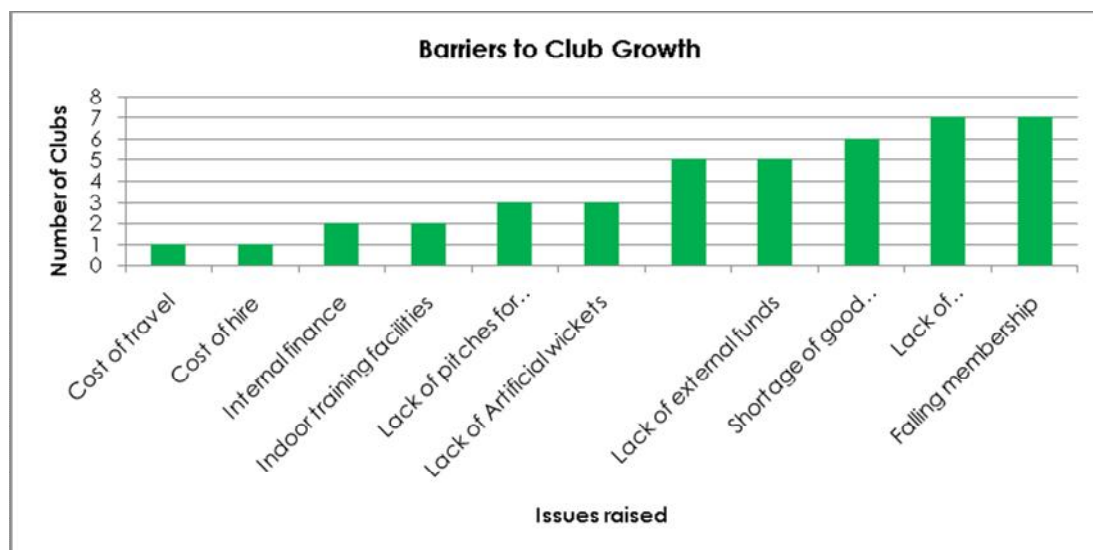
9.35 Consultation with cricket clubs demonstrated that:

- on average, 53% of club members travel 3 miles or less to play cricket at their home ground. Just 24% travel more than 5 miles. This suggests that cricket clubs have a relatively local catchment area;
- circa 50% of clubs do not have access to training bays. Site visits confirm the low levels of practice nets and indoor facilities are also perceived to be difficult to access;

- 31% of clubs indicate that quality factors make it difficult to accommodate matches and training, suggesting that this is a problem that needs to be addressed; and
- there is significant potential to continue to the growth in cricket participation across Central Bedfordshire. More than half of clubs have aspirations to increase the number of teams that they are running in the short term. These include Aspley Guise, Langford, Dunstable, Caddington, Leighton, Sandy, Steppingley, Lidlington, Biggleswade, Pottton, Flitwick, Ampthill, Blunham, and Caldecote. Aspirations stated demonstrate a particular focus upon the creation of ladies teams and additional youth teams.

9.36 With regards barriers to participation, club consultation demonstrates some clear patterns and highlights that facilities are a key concern. Several clubs indicate that growth will be inhibited unless issues identified can be addressed. The key barriers are referenced in Chart 9.5.

Chart 9.5 – Barriers to the Growth of Cricket



National Governing Body Perspective - England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)

9.37 The ECB Strategic Plan (2013 – 2017) Champion Counties recognises the challenging financial environment in which cricket clubs are operating and targets operational excellence. It highlights the additional challenges caused by flooding during 2012 and the impact that this has had on participation, facilities and consequently short term sustainability. The strategy sets the following aims;

- energising people and partnerships through effective leadership and governance;
- building a Vibrant domestic game through operational excellence and delivering a competition structure with appointment to view;
- engaging participants through the maintenance of existing facilities, supporting club/school links , supporting volunteers and expanding women's and disabilities cricket;

- delivering Successful England teams and world class global events;
- to contain support costs within 7.5% of total expenditure;
- to sustain current participation levels and to support clubs in applications for capital grants to Sport England to total a minimum of £5 million for the period 2014–2017;
- to provide funding of £6.15m to the Cricket Foundation to ensure that two million children are introduced to cricket within the school system;
- to increase the number of volunteers to 80,000 by 2017;
- to expand the number of participants in women's and disabilities cricket by 10% prior to 2017;
- to provide up to £5 million of interest free loans and to work with schools and facilities in inner city areas to provide greater community use by 2017; and
- ECB will work through Five Sports to influence Government policy for sport.

9.38 The strategy places a particular focus on increasing participation in the 14 – 25 age group and also seeks to support the introduction of a youth T20 competition engaging with a minimum of 500 teams by 2017.

9.39 Locally in Central Bedfordshire, participation in cricket is vibrant and there is a strong network of both adult and junior participation. Participation has increased significantly in recent years however it is believed that facilities have now begun to restrict further development and growth. Many clubs are at capacity and in need of second grounds. While first team pitches are generally protected, satellite facilities are generally overused and several clubs are not able to field any more teams without the acquisition of a second ground. Several clubs have two teams in each junior age group and matches throughout the week, while senior sides play both Saturday and Sunday.

9.40 The proximity of Central Bedfordshire to Luton and Bedford exacerbates this situation further, as there are shortages of pitch provision in both areas and players are travelling into Central Bedfordshire to find facilities. Both areas have demographic profiles that link with a high propensity to participate in cricket and demand is high and increasing. Many clubs and grounds on the borders of these areas are rented by clubs from outside Central Bedfordshire Council who would otherwise have no facilities. Teams in the Luton Taxi Drivers League for example, frequently use facilities in Central Bedfordshire. Proposals to change the way that pitches are managed in Bedford, through the reduction in services offered, may have further implications on demand for pitch provision in Luton and Central Bedfordshire if teams decide to travel outside of Bedford.

9.41 There are particular concerns with the amount of pitches around Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Buzzard, Sandy and Biggleswade and the new Wixams Development, which will cross into Central Bedfordshire. There is a strong need to provide additional facilities to support existing club bases and to facilitate the ongoing growth and expansion of the game. To facilitate the provision of such facilities, the ECB and Bedfordshire Cricket Board are keen to support asset transfer and will provide training on groundsmanship to relevant clubs. The increased sense of ownership that this brings usually generates a higher standard of facility and

reduces problems of misuse. Opportunities to create shared use sites in conjunction with other sports, for example junior football, should also be considered.

9.42 While the pitch stock is currently restricting participation, there are ongoing attempts to increase the number of players. 57 schools across Bedfordshire have engaged with Chance to Shine, an initiative to introduce cricket into schools. Coaching courses have also been provided for local teachers and for both schemes, new participants are signposted to clubs. The more successful these schemes are however, the greater pressure that is put on the infrastructure base. There is felt to be significant latent demand in Central Bedfordshire for additional cricket from existing residents as well as opportunities to introduce new players to the game as the population expands.

9.43 Reflecting the growth in cricket, two schools (Cedars Academy in Leighton Buzzard and Samuel Whitbread in Shefford) have expressed an interest in creating cricket academies, which would be run for students alongside A levels. Those who participate would leave with coaching, umpiring and groundsmanship qualifications as well as their own personal player development. Both schools would however require improvements to their existing facilities in order to successfully run these schemes. The ECB is supportive of these proposals and keen to ensure their successful delivery through partnership working. It is envisaged that both schemes will be active by 2014. It is hoped that further opportunities to work with schools can be found, particularly in areas where the club based facility infrastructure is struggling.

9.44 Recent engagement with clubs by the Bedfordshire Cricket Board highlighted significant latent demand, but also demonstrated a need to adapt cricket to ensure its ongoing popularity. While there remains demand for the long form of the game (50 overs) which is currently played on both Saturday and Sunday in Bedfordshire, there is also high demand for 20 over games to be played on Sunday. This attracts a different type of player and its introduction would remove some of the barriers to participation associated with cricket. Last Man Standing (a franchise promoting an alternative short form of the game) was introduced unsuccessfully last year and is likely to be reintroduced in the next year. This will provide midweek opportunities and is anticipated to provide a different type of challenge. The promotion of 20 – 20 matches on a weekend would currently clash with the longer forms of the game, however there is a need to review all activities in order to maximise the variety of opportunities that are available to new players.

9.45 Surveys undertaken demonstrated particular latent demand for female cricket, with 42% of participants saying that they would play more if the opportunity arose, but this is often limited by a lack of facilities.

9.46 In addition to outdoor cricket, indoor cricket is thriving and there is a large indoor league, currently based in Bedford (John Bunion Centre). There are concerns over the long term future of this facility however, and the closure of the site would have significant implications for the development of cricket. In order to expand the league, as well as secure its future, additional facilities are required. Consideration has been given to locating some play at Stratton Upper School.

Supply and Demand Modelling

9.47 The methodology undertaken for the cricket assessment follows the 8 step process set out in TaLPF. To ensure compliance with the emerging methodology (which is not yet published) as far as possible, the following steps of analysis were also undertaken;

- Evaluation of site specific capacity over a season as well as at peak time

- Consideration of the impact of training and casual use
- Analysis of site specific activities and issues

9.48 The Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) determines the adequacy of pitch supply to meet peak time demand.

9.49 For adults, peak time demand for cricket is split between Saturday and Sunday, with 43% of matches taking place on each day. Junior matches take place throughout the week and 45% of junior fixtures take place before Senior matches on a Sunday.

9.50 Table 9.5 summarises the situation when considering the availability of pitches at peak time for cricket. It indicates that assuming that assuming that 43% of play takes place on a Sunday afternoon, there are on average just 11 pitches that are not used at this time. Cricket is also played on a Sunday morning (juniors) meaning that there are additional pressures, with it being essential that matches are finished in time for senior cricket to start. If matches overrun (i.e. are played at the same time rather than consecutively) it is clear that there are shortfalls of cricket pitches overall. Supply in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking area is only just in balance with demand. It is within the North Placemaking area where the majority of spare capacity appears to be located at peak time.

Table 9.5 – Adequacy of Cricket Provision at Peak Time

Placemaking Area	Peak Time Demand Shortfall / Surplus of Grounds	Number of Junior Matches also on a Sunday	Shortfall / Surplus Adult and Junior (Sunday)
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	0.6	3.5 (3 grounds available)	-0.9
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	2.6	6 (8 grounds available)	0
North	8.4	24 (25 grounds available)	-2.4
Central Bedfordshire	11.7	33.5 (36 grounds available)	-3.4

9.51 Table 9.5 includes only pitches at club bases. In addition to the club bases, the following sites are used for competitive community cricket:

- Shuttleworth College (used ad hoc midweek for senior cricket)
- Almeda Middle School (used Sunday morning for junior cricket)

- Fulbrook Middle School (used Sunday morning for junior cricket)

Table 9.6 provides a summary of the adequacy of provision including these school sites.

Table 9.6 – Adequacy of Pitch Provision (Including sites used for competitive community cricket)

Placemaking Area	Peak Time Demand Shortfall / Surplus of Grounds	Number of Junior Matches also on a Sunday	Shortfall / Surplus Adult and Junior (Sunday)
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	0.6	3.5 (3 grounds available)	-0.9
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	3.6	6 (8 grounds available)	0
North	104	24 (26 grounds available)	-1.4
Central Bedfordshire	13.7	33.5 (36 grounds available)	-3.4

9.52 With the exception of Shuttleworth College, facilities at school sites are considered relatively poor and are largely artificial wickets. These sites are therefore not suitable to accommodate formal adult cricket and are excluded from further consideration.

9.53 The provision of facilities at school sites may however offer opportunities for cricket development and / or links with clubs and this will be considered when evaluating the adequacy of future provision.

9.54 Further in depth analysis of the adequacy of cricket facilities (based on actual patterns of play at each site rather than assumed patterns of play across Central Bedfordshire as a whole) demonstrates that the following sites are at capacity (i.e. not able to accommodate any more teams) on a Saturday:

- Lancot Park CC(Dunstable Town) (Dunstable and Houghton Regis)
- Caddington Cricket Club (Leighton Buzzard)
- Leighton Buzzard Cricket Club (Bell Close) Leighton Buzzard
- The Rye (Eaton Bray) (Leighton Buzzard)
- Ampthill Park – Ampthill Cricket Club (North)
- Blunham Cricket Club (North)

- Eversholt CC (North)
- Flitwick CC, (North)
- Ickwell Green (North)
- Marston Cricket Pitch (overspill for Ampthill Town) (North)
- Milton Bryan Playing Fields (North)
- The Common (Aspley Guise) (North)
- The Hollow, Potton (North)

Further detail on the above is provided in Table 8.7.

9.55 With the exception of Eaton Bray, Lancot Park and Caddington CC, the same sites are also at capacity on a Sunday. Houghton Regis CC, Fairfield CC and Southill CC and Wrest Park, Silsoe are also unable to accommodate any more teams on a Sunday. Chalgrave Sports Club is used relatively extensively for friendlies on a Sunday.

9.56 This suggests that in each placemaking area, there are the following numbers of sites have capacity on some weekends to sustain additional usage;

- Dunstable and Houghton Regis –2 Saturday, 1 Sunday
- Leighton Buzzard and Rural South –7 Saturday, 7 Sunday
- North – 13 Saturday, 10 Sunday

Site specific pressures and capacity

9.57 While evaluation suggests that overall across Central Bedfordshire there are sufficient pitches to accommodate demand at peak time, many of these pitches are not located in the right areas (or are not of the right quality) and several clubs are experiencing particular pressures at their own club base as highlighted above. Many clubs are not able to run more teams than they are currently doing without finding a venue outside of their own facility to support the new team. The following clubs are currently using venues outside of their own main site:

- Ampthill (Marston / Alameda MS / Silsoe)
- Aspley Guise CC (Fulbrook MS)
- Blunham CC (Roxton CC);
- Flitwick CC (Wrest Park / Eversholt)
- Leighton Buzzard (Pages Park)

9.58 To support both the sustainability of the cricket club as well as to foster club development, clubs like to focus as much activity as possible on or near the club site. As already highlighted, several of the sites function as overspill facilities and there are no clubs based at the site. Several further clubs have a small number of teams but also accommodate teams from other clubs.

9.59 The ECB works alongside the Bedfordshire Cricket Board and associated leagues to improve the quality of the cricket experience and promote higher quality facilities. The amount of cricket played in Central Bedfordshire means that many of the wickets are currently used for a full game Saturday and Sunday as well as by junior teams midweek. ECB guidelines suggest that a strip / wicket should be used as follows:

- 3 times – optimum
- 4 times – overuse
- 5 times – extensive overuse

9.60 Using the above as a basis, it is possible to produce an indication of the usage of each wicket to support analysis of the adequacy of current provision.

9.61 Calculations have been undertaken using the broad assumption that senior teams will play ten home games per season and that junior use will be equivalent to 8 home games per season. Where the number of strips at a club is not known, the average amount in Central Bedfordshire (11) has been used to provide an indication.

9.62 This analysis reveals that strips at the following sites are currently being used more than five times per week:

- Milton Bryan CC
- Langford Playing Fields CC
- Bell Close (Leighton Buzzard)
- Blunham CC
- Caddington CC

9.63 In addition, three other sites use each strip between 4.5 and 5 times per season suggesting that they are also at capacity.

9.64 It should be noted that this assumes that all play occurs on the grass wicket. While artificial wickets are used for some junior play, it was highlighted as being preferable for development that play takes on grass.

9.65 Site specific usage will be outlined later in this section.

Training Facilities

9.66 In addition to the heavy usage that many sites sustain from match. Most of the clubs also train at their own grounds which can add extra wear and tear.

9.67 Usage of the facilities for training is largely off peak and therefore does not impact on peak time shortfalls and surpluses. It can however generate wear and tear of the outfield and on the wicket where artificial wickets are not used.

9.68 The following club based sites are not thought to have artificial wickets; meaning that there is a heavier reliance upon the grass wicket.

- Caddington Sports and Social Club
- Ampthill Park, Ampthill Town CC
- Biggleswade Cricket Club
- Eaton Bray CC - The Rye Gardens cricket pitch
- Eggington Cricket Ground
- Flitwick CC, The Vale
- Harlington Cricket Club
- Henlow CC - Pyghtles Recreation Ground cricket pitch
- Houghton Regis Village Green cricket pitch
- Hurst Grove Recreation Ground cricket pitch
- Studham Sports and Social Club

9.69 Just over half of all sites include practice nets however the following clubs do not have access to either practice nets or an artificial wicket:

- Caddington Sports and Social Club
- Biggleswade Cricket Club
- Houghton Regis Village Green cricket pitch
- Eggington Cricket Ground
- Harlington Cricket Club
- Hurst Grove Recreation Ground cricket pitch

9.70 A lack of access to indoor facilities for training was also highlighted by several clubs and this concern was also raised by the Bedfordshire Cricket Board.

Site Specific Analysis

9.71 Table 9.7 summarises the site specific usage of each community cricket pitch in Central Bedfordshire and also highlights any issues raised with regards the quality of provision through site visits and consultation. It draws together the information presented on previous pages and highlights where sites are at capacity (i.e. unable to sustain any more play) on each day. Pitches with no further availability are highlighted in red.

9.72 The key messages that arise from the table are that;

- reflecting issues highlighted earlier, there are several sites at capacity on both Saturday and Sunday. Most of the large clubs are at or reaching capacity and several are already using overspill facilities. Where there are no facilities available

nearby, the amount of teams that can be run is restricted. There are clear pressures in Dunstable and Houghton Regis on a Sunday, as well as at specific sites across the north (Biggleswade in particular);

- despite this, there are some sites that have relatively limited use (or no use). These include Cranfield University, Shefford Memorial Association and the public facilities in Leighton Buzzard;
- much of the spare capacity is at poorer quality sites or those that suffer from higher levels of informal use. These sites are largely publicly managed facilities, rather than owned or maintained by specific clubs. Many of these sites are also used on an adhoc basis by teams from outside of Central Bedfordshire; and
- at most club bases, there is little capacity to accommodate significant increases in participation either due to the availability of facilities at peak time and / or the number of strips on the square.

Table 9.7 – Site Specific Capacity of Cricket Pitches that Accommodate Competitive Fixtures (Pitches with no further capacity highlighted in red)

Site	Area	Approximate Teams Using Site (number of teams)	Use on Saturday PM (Number of teams)	Use on Sunday PM (Number of Teams)	Number of Strips on wicket	Estimated Use per Strip (number of games per season)	Other Facilities Available	Comments (Site Visits / Consultation)
Lancot Park - Dunstable Town CC	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	14	4	3	35	3.6	Nets and artificial wicket	Impressive facility with extensive pavilion capable of holding minor county games. Second facility not quite as good
Houghton Regis Village Green - Houghton Chargers CC	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	3	1	2	11	2.7	None	Square still in very good condition considering near end of season
Leighton Buzzard CC - Bell Close	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	12	2	2	14	6.9	Nets and artificial wicket	Excellent facility
Caddington Rec - Caddington CC	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	5	2	1	7	6.9	None	Good facilities, some areas of outfield uneven
Cranfield Univ	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	1	-	-	11	0.9	Nets and artificial wicket	
Eggington CC	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	5	-	-	11	4.5	None	Nice looking set up with large club house. Brick scoreboard. No nets evident.
Chalgrave CC	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	4		4	11	Friendlies only	Nets and artificial wicket	No grass square apparent - appears to have limited usage.

Site	Area	Approximate Teams Using Site (number of teams)	Use on Saturday PM (Number of teams)	Use on Sunday PM (Number of Teams)	Number of Strips on wicket	Estimated Use per Strip (number of games per season)	Other Facilities Available	Comments (Site Visits / Consultation)
								Pavilion in need of upgrade
Mentmore Recreation Ground	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	-					None	Well tended square in public park. Square still in good condition considering time of season
Pages Park Leighton Buzzard	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	2	1	1	11	1.8	None	Well tended square in public park. Square still in good condition considering time of season. Site does not have protection or cover
Studham PF - Studham CC	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	2	-	-	11	0.0	Nets	Excellent grass quality wicket and outfield. Wicket doesn't show much wear considering end of season.
The Rye - Eaton Bray CC	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	8	1	2	11	2.2	Nets	Good quality facility
Ampthill Park -Ampthill CC	North	7	2	2	13	4.9	Nets	Attractive site, terraced pitch providing viewing from grass banks. 4 lane nets with very good surface. Separate scoreboard. Club confirm high quality facility but

Site	Area	Approximate Teams Using Site (number of teams)	Use on Saturday PM (Number of teams)	Use on Sunday PM (Number of Teams)	Number of Strips on wicket	Estimated Use per Strip (number of games per season)	Other Facilities Available	Comments (Site Visits / Consultation)
								struggle for good second grounds
Aspley Guise CC - The Common	North	8	2	2	15	4.9	Nets and artificial wicket	Some dog mess and mole hills on undulating outfield. Artificial strip in dangerous condition.
Biggleswade CC	North	9	1	4	14	5.9	None	Square still in very good condition considering near end of season. Outfield poor, changing accommodation also poor. Club indicate that investment is needed in square. Site also suffers from unofficial use
Blunham CC	North	12	2	2	7	14.6	Nets and artificial wicket	Average facilities, site has a small outfield
Caldecote PF - Caldecote CC	North	3	1	1	9	3.1	Nets and artificial wicket	Well maintained, some evidence of damage to surface
Eversholt CC	North	7	2	2	14	4.6	Nets and artificial wicket	Very picturesque
Fairfield - Letchworth CC	North	9	1	4	10	8.2	Artificial Wicket	Good condition

Site	Area	Approximate Teams Using Site (number of teams)	Use on Saturday PM (Number of teams)	Use on Sunday PM (Number of Teams)	Number of Strips on wicket	Estimated Use per Strip (number of games per season)	Other Facilities Available	Comments (Site Visits / Consultation)
Flitwick CC	North	10	2	2	11	8.0	Nets	Very smart set up with separate scoreboard and covers. Club consider facility to be average to good
Groveside, Henlow CC	North	5	1	1	11	4.0	Nets	Good facilities. Club indicate that improvements are required to the pavilion
Hurst Grove - Lidlington CC	North	1	1	-	6	1.7	None	Football pitch on outfield. Club highlight several issues - poor outfield, issues with drainage. Wicket would benefit from covers and rollers
Ickwell Green	North	7	2	2	10	4.0	Nets and artificial wicket	Attractive pavilion in village green location. Club indicate that facility is good but has a low bounce
Langford PF - Langford CC	North	9	1	1	9	8.9	Nets and artificial wicket	Good wicket, some evidence of damage to surface
Marston Playing Fields - Ampthill CC	North	4	2	2	11	3.6	None	Maintained by Ampthill Cricket Club and used as overspill. Site well maintained

Site	Area	Approximate Teams Using Site (number of teams)	Use on Saturday PM (Number of teams)	Use on Sunday PM (Number of Teams)	Number of Strips on wicket	Estimated Use per Strip (number of games per season)	Other Facilities Available	Comments (Site Visits / Consultation)
Milton Bryan Playing Fields - Milton Bryan CC	North	4	2	1	7	5.4	Nets and artificial wicket	Artificial strip on edge of square - short boundary. Club highlight issues with uneven outfield and poor pavilion
New Grounds Sundon Rd - Harlington CC	North	1	1	-	11	0.9	None	Links with football pitches which can result in damage to outfield. Issues with litter and grass cover
Old Warden CC	North	3	-	-	11	2.72	Nets	Picturesque ground
Shuttleworth College	North	1	-	-	11	1	Nets and artificial wicket	Good quality cricket facility. Site also used for curricular use
Rectory Rd - Steppingley CC	North	1	1	-	6	1.7	Artificial Wicket	Small pavilion. Club suggest this is in need of improvement. Outfield poor.
Silsoe (Wrest Park)	North	3	1	2	11	2.7	Artificial Wicket	Several clubs indicate facility to be poor quality
Southill Park - Southill CC	North	6	1	2	15	3.9	Nets	Facility good
Stanford Lane - Clifton CC	North	8	-	-	11	2.9	Nets and artificial wicket	No comments received

Site	Area	Approximate Teams Using Site (number of teams)	Use on Saturday PM (Number of teams)	Use on Sunday PM (Number of Teams)	Number of Strips on wicket	Estimated Use per Strip (number of games per season)	Other Facilities Available	Comments (Site Visits / Consultation)
Sunderland Rd Rec - Sandy Cricket Club	North	4	1	1	11	3.3	Artificial wicket	New pavilion. Club indicate poor drainage. Suffers from dog fouling and litter due to recreational use
The Hollow - Potton CC	North	6	2	2	12	4.7	Nets and artificial wicket	Cricket pitch and changing completely separate from football. Small but well tended
Memorial Playing Fields, Shefford	North	-			11	0.0		No use although site appears to still be in place
Alameda Middle School	North	1	0	1	1	11	Artificial wicket	School facility used for junior play
Fulbrook School	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	1	0	1	1	11	Artificial wicket	School facility used for junior play

Projecting Future Needs - Team Generation Rates and Latent Demand

9.73 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team, thus enabling analysis of participation. Table 9.8 summarises the TGRs for cricket and provides a comparison with national standards. These national figures should be treated with caution as the Sport England database has not been updated for several years, however it can be concluded that participation in cricket in Central Bedfordshire is high and there is limited latent demand for male sport although there is potential to grow participation in female cricket. Participation in Cheshire West and Chester is also higher than in Cheshire West and Chester, an authority falling into the same family group as Central Bedfordshire.

Table 9.8 – TGRs across Central Bedfordshire

Type of Cricket	Sport England National Average	Central Bedfordshire TGR	Cheshire West and Chester TGR
Junior Male Cricket	1:1480	1:154	1:188
Junior Female Cricket	1:21052	0	0
Senior Male Cricket	1:1415	1:563	1:728
Senior Female Cricket	1:54,815	1:64870	

9.74 By applying TGRs to population projections, we can project the theoretical number of teams that would be generated solely from population growth and gain an understanding of future demand. Table 9.9 summarises the number of teams in Central Bedfordshire both now, and taking into account the projected population growth.

Table 9.9 – Impact of Projected Population Growth on Cricket Teams

Sport and Age Groups	Number of teams in age group within the area	Current population in age group within the area	Future population in age group within the area	Current TGR	Population Change in Age Group	Potential Change in Team Numbers in Age Group
Cricket Open Age Mens (18-55yrs)	113	63586	65947	563	2361	4.20
Cricket Open Age Womens (18-55yrs)	1	64870	67279	64870	2409	0.00
Cricket Junior Boys (11-17yrs)	67	10310	10919	154	609	4.00
Cricket Junior Girls (11-17yrs)	0	10519	11140	0	621	0

9.75 Tables 9.10 – 9.12 consider potential increases in teams by placemaking area. They calculate TGRs for each area rather than using Central Bedfordshire as a whole and indicate that the majority of additional teams are likely to be created in the North if participation continues.

Table 9.10 – Potential increase in Demand (Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking Area)

Sport and Age Groups	Number of teams in age group within the area	Current population in age group within the area	Future population in age group within the area	Current TGR	Population Change in Age Group	Potential Change in Team Numbers in Age Group
Cricket Open Age Mens (18-55yrs)	11	12988	13250	1181	262	0.2
Cricket Open Age Womens (18-55yrs)	0	13251	13518	0	267	0
Cricket Junior Boys (11-17yrs)	7	2106	2194	301	88	0.3
Cricket Junior Girls (11-17yrs)	0	2149	2238	0	90	0

Table 9.11 – Potential increase in Demand (Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Placemaking Area)

Sport and Age Groups	Number of teams in age group within the area	Current population in age group within the area	Future population in age group within the area	Current TGR	Population Change in Age Group	Potential Change in Team Numbers in Age Group
Cricket Open Age Mens (18-55yrs)	25	13469	14133	539	664	1.20
Cricket Open Age Womens (18-55yrs)	0	13741	14419	0	678	0
Cricket Junior Boys (11-17yrs)	12	2184	2340	182	156	0.90
Cricket Junior Girls (11-17yrs)	0	2228	2387	0	159	0

Table 9.12 – Potential increase in Demand (North Placemaking Area)

Sport and Age Groups	Number of teams in age group within the area	Current population in age group within the area	Future population in age group within the area	Current TGR	Population Change in Age Group	Potential Change in Team Numbers in Age Group
Cricket Open Age Mens (18-55yrs)	77	37128.62	38564	482.2	1435.0	3.0
Cricket Open Age Womens (18-55yrs)	1	37878.69	39343	37878.7	1463.9	0.0
Cricket Junior Boys (11-17yrs)	48	6020.365	6385	125.4	364.8	2.9

Cricket Junior Girls (11-17yrs)	0	6141.989	6514	0	372.2	0
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9.76 As can be seen in Tables 9.9 – 9.12, population projections indicate that while the amount of people living in Central Bedfordshire will grow, the age of these residents will increase and lower proportions of the population will have the propensity to participate in pitch sports.

9.77 Despite this, the scale of the population growth in Central Bedfordshire will however cause an increase in the number of cricket teams that will be generated. Assuming that the TGRS remain constant;

- the number of adult teams will increase by 4;
- the number of junior male teams will grow by 4; and
- all other participation will remain relatively static.

9.78 Overall across Central Bedfordshire, the above increase in teams would mean full usage of an additional pitch (assuming that all teams were located in one area). In reality however, increases are likely to occur in areas of high population growth and are likely to result in the generation of additional teams at existing clubs.

9.79 Tables 9.10 to 9.12 suggest that the increases will however be geographically skewed towards the north of Central Bedfordshire, in particular;

- Generation of less than one additional adult and one additional junior team in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis area – no additional pitch requirements arising directly from population growth
- Creation of 1 further adult team and one junior team in Leighton Buzzard and the rural south
- Creation of 3 senior cricket teams and 3 junior cricket teams in the north.

The overall impact of the additional teams on peak time supply and demand is outlined in Table 9.13.

Table 9.13 – Projected Future Peak Time Demand for Cricket

Placemaking Area	Peak Time Demand Shortfall / Surplus of Grounds	Number of Junior Matches also on a Sunday	Shortfall / Surplus Adult and Junior (Sunday)
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	0.6	3.5 (3 grounds available)	-0.9

Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	2.4	6.5 (8 grounds available)	-0.5
North	7.5	24 (25 grounds available)	-3.9
Central Bedfordshire	10.6	33.5 (36 grounds available)	-5

Increased participation

9.80 In addition to the growth arising through population projections, the ECB targets significant participation increases however and is keen to see cricket in Central Bedfordshire grow both in terms of traditional cricket but also less formal cricket meaning that facilities able to accommodate both forms of the game will be required. Successful interventions to increase participation would see pressures on the existing pitch stock grow.

9.81 Supporting the Governing Body aspirations, more than half of responding clubs have aspirations to increase the number of teams (Aspley Guise, Langford, Dunstable, Caddington, Leighton, Sandy, Steppingley, Lidlington, Biggleswade, Potton, Flitwick, Ampthill, Blunham, and Caldecote). There is a particular focus upon the creation of new junior and ladies teams which will not necessarily influence peak time demand immediately, but will place existing pressures on strips, many of which are already overused.

9.82 If at least one additional team was created at each of the 14 clubs expressing aspirations to create additional teams, 14 teams would be created. This would lead to higher shortfalls when combining junior and senior play, equivalent to almost 10 pitches.

9.83 Consultation indicated that there are also issues with teams from adjacent authorities seeking to use pitches in Central Bedfordshire. Increases in these patterns of activity will further pressurise the already at capacity pitch stock.

Summary and Key Issues

Key issues to address – Cricket

- Cricket is a popular sport in Central Bedfordshire and there is a strong network of cricket clubs. Participation is increasing and almost all clubs have aspirations to grow further.
- More than half of all cricket clubs are based in the North Placemaking area and there are only two clubs in Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking area. Dunstable are the only club with two on site grounds in Central Bedfordshire. There are 36 public facilities used for community cricket and a further 30 facilities at school sites (of which 25 are available but only three are used regularly). Facilities at school sites are largely artificial and in general are poor quality. They are not of sufficient standard to serve the needs of community cricket clubs. Some schools (in Leighton Buzzard and Shefford) are however considering opportunities to become

cricket academies, which would require a subsequent improvement in facilities. There is a pitch at Chicksands MOD (not used at all by the community) and in addition, there are several sites that no longer function as cricket pitches but have previously been maintained as such. These sites currently have no role in the provision of cricket.

- Cricket clubs are very proactive and the quality of existing clubs is high, particularly with regards the first team pitches. The condition of the outfield and issues with drainage are perhaps the main concerns impacting upon pitch quality and several clubs also raise concerns with the quality of their pavilion. There are much lower levels of satisfaction with the overall stock of facilities however, with 50% of clubs suggesting that facilities inhibit club development and 40% of clubs suggesting that they are not happy with the stock of facilities. The qualities of pitches for 3rd and 4th teams, as well as access to sufficient pitches are the main reasons attributed to this. Several clubs are currently using more than one ground, including Ampthill (Marston / Alameda MS / Silsoe), Aspley Guise CC (Fulbrook MS), Blunham CC (Roxton CC), Flitwick CC (Wrest Park / Eversholt), and Leighton Buzzard (Pages Park).
- Analysis of the adequacy of supply to meet demand at peak time suggests that there are sufficient pitches overall, although supply is particularly closely matched in Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking area. This however disguises site specific pressures and almost all club bases are at capacity on both Saturday and Sunday afternoon. In contrast, several other facilities are used much less frequently and have capacity for further clubs. These are largely of lower quality and may not be in locations adjacent to the large clubs where pressures are occurring. Ampthill Park, Bell Close LB, Blunham, Caddington, Eversholt CC, Flitwick CC, Ickwell Green, Lancot Park CC (Dunstable Town), Marston, Milton Bryan PF, The Common (Aspley Guise), The Hollow, Potton, The Rye (Eaton Bray) are all at capacity on a Saturday and with the exception of Eaton Bray, Lancot Park and Caddington CC, the same sites are also full on a Sunday. In addition, Fairfield CC and Southill CC are also at capacity
- Analysis of the usage of wickets demonstrates that several clubs are using facilities above optimum levels (5 times per season). Adding to pressures, there are several sites that do not include either an artificial wicket or training nets, meaning that any practice must take place upon the grass square or off site. A lack of access to indoor facilities is also highlighted as a key issue for clubs.
- Many clubs have aspirations to increase participation which would place further pressures on pitches in Central Bedfordshire. In addition, the ECB highlight the need to evolve cricket in order to maintain growth and to attract new participants to the game. Analysis of Active People and Market Segmentation indicate that there are just over 1000 people in Central Bedfordshire who would like to play but do not currently.
- Use of Team Generation Rates indicates that population growth alone will generate an additional 5 senior male teams and 4 senior female teams. While this is likely to create extra teams for clubs in areas in close proximity to development, it is clear that it will place further pressures on the existing stock of facilities. The impact of increasing demand will be particularly evident in the north of Central Bedfordshire, where shortfalls of provision (when taking into account both adult and junior

matches) will increase to 4 pitches overall. Additional increases in junior participation may see further growth in demand for cricket pitches, with unmet demand eventually increasing to over 10 pitches. This may be exacerbated further by the impact of teams from other local authorities using pitches within Central Bedfordshire. Consultation suggests that this may increase due to growing pressures for pitches in neighbouring authorities.

Key Priorities

Table 9.14 summarises the quantitative issues raised in this assessment.

Table 9.14 - Quantitative Issues

Placemaking Area	Current / Future	Peak Time Demand Shortfall / Surplus of Grounds	Shortfall / Surplus Adult and Junior (Sunday)	Clubs at capacity (Saturday)	Clubs at capacity (Sunday)	Clubs overusing Wicket
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Current	0.6	-0.9	Lancot Park CC	Houghton Regis CC	N/A
	Future	0.6	-0.9			
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	Current	2.6	0	Caddington Cricket Club, Leighton Buzzard Cricket Club, The Rye	Leighton Buzzard Cricket Club, Wrest Park	Leighton Buzzard CC / Caddington CC
	Future	2.4	-0.5			
North	Current	8.4	-2.4	Ampthill Park, Eversholt CC, Flitwick CC, Ickwell Green, Marston, Milton Bryan, The Common, The Hollow	Ampthill Park, Eversholt CC, Flitwick CC, Ickwell Green, Marston, Milton Bryan, The Common,	Potton CC / Milton Bryan CC / Langford CC / Blunham CC
	Future	7.58	-3.8			

					The Hollow, Fairfield CC, Southill CC	
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9.84 The issues evident in the table, as well as those set out in the assessment indicate that the key priorities for cricket in Central Bedfordshire are as follows:

Ensure that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

9.85 Reflecting the pressures on existing club bases across Central Bedfordshire, protect all existing cricket grounds through the inclusion of appropriate planning policy.

9.86 In partnership with the Bedfordshire Cricket Board, ensure that the amount of cricket facilities available does not impact on the opportunities to grow participation in the sport. Many clubs are at or nearing capacity and there is a need to provide access to additional appropriate facilities. This should be sought by;

- the ongoing development of relationships between larger and smaller clubs. This has already proved successful in Central Bedfordshire, with many larger clubs using facilities owned by smaller clubs;
- the provision of a new satellite ground for clubs at capacity where this represents a sustainable option for growth. This may be either through new provision or the reinstatement of sites that have formerly been used for cricket;
- the development of school club links and the establishment of a relationship between schools and cricket clubs. Facilities at school sites can then be used by the cricket club as the club expands. Note improvements to the quality of facilities are likely to also be required if this is to be successful; and
- ensuring that the impact of the increasing population is taken into account when identifying facility requirements – there are particular pressures in areas of growth and new facilities will be required where there is evidence of need. Improvements to the quality of existing facilities should be required where there is already sufficient provision.

9.87 Any new facilities should be provided in conjunction with an existing club or in support of a new club that has appropriate leadership and structures in place.

Ensure that the quality of facilities is sufficient to meet current and future demand

9.88 Address quality issues raised and ensure that both cricket grounds and pavilions are up to appropriate standards. This should include overspill facilities as well as first team grounds.

9.89 Key areas for improvement relate to:

- grounds maintenance skills
- changing pavilions
- surface
- drainage

9.90 Support cricket clubs in the development of training nets to enhance club sustainability and improve overall performance as well as to remove pressure on grass wickets. This may include:

- an indoor cricket venue
- the provision of outdoor cricket nets at larger clubs that do not currently have access to such facilities

Promote increases in participation and the creation of sustainable clubs

9.91 Support long term sustainability of clubs by promoting succession planning, for example in groundsmanship. Both providers (including Town and Parish Councils) and clubs should be supported in gaining key skills.

9.92 Support initiatives to increase cricket participation including the introduction of new forms of the game, which may require the provision of flexible spaces.

10. Rugby

10.1 This section evaluates the adequacy of facilities for rugby across Central Bedfordshire and provides:

- An overview of supply and demand for rugby
- An evaluation of the overall adequacy of pitches to meet demand
- Key issues and strategic priorities the strategy will address
- Summary and key issues to address.

Rugby in Central Bedfordshire - An Overview

Supply

10.2 Table 10.1 summarises the rugby pitches that are available across the whole area. In total there are 44 senior pitches available. Ampthill RUFC and Dunstablians RUFC also have midi pitches that are used for the younger age groups. Several other schools also mark rugby pitches out on occasion when required.

Table 10.1 – Rugby Pitches in Central Bedfordshire

Area	Site	Senior Pitches Available	Midi Pitches Available	Number of Pitches that are Floodlit	Community Use
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Queensbury Academy	1	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Dunstablians RUFC	3	1	2	Club base - Yes
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	Brooklands Middle School	1	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Streetfield Middle School	1	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Vandkye Upper School and Community College	1	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Cedars Upper School	2	0	0	No
	Manshead Church of England Upper School	1	0	0	No
	Leighton Buzzard RUFC	4	0	3	Club base - yes

Area	Site	Senior Pitches Available	Midi Pitches Available	Number of Pitches that are Floodlit	Community Use
North	Biggleswade RUFC	6	0	2	Club base - Yes
	Amphill RUFC	4	2	1	Club base - Yes
	Alameda Middle School	1	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Arnold Academy	1	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Cranfield University	1	0	0	University
	Defence Intelligence and Security Centre	2	0	0	No – private use
	Henlow Church of England Academy	1	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Holywell School	1	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	RAF Henlow Sports Ground	1	0	0	Private – no use by rugby clubs
	Redborne Upper School and Community College	3	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Samuel Whitbread Academy	2	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Sandy Sports and Recreation Centre	2	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Sandye Place Middle School	1	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Shuttleworth College	1	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Stratton Upper School and Community College	2	0	0	School – yes but no use by rugby clubs
	Parkfields Middle School	1	0	0	No

Map 10.1 outlines the distribution of rugby pitches across Central Bedfordshire.

Map 10.1 – Rugby Pitches in Central Bedfordshire

TO BE INSERTED Post approval

Demand

Active People Survey and Market Segmentation Analysis (Sport England)

10.3 Table 3.5 indicated that according to the Active People Survey, nationally, between 2005/6 (Active People Survey 1) and 2011/2012 (Active People Survey 6) participation in rugby has declined from 0.46% to 0.42% of the adult population.

10.4 Using the Active People Survey and Market Segmentation, it is possible to evaluate how many residents of Central Bedfordshire do participate in rugby and how many of the population would like to participate in rugby. It is also possible to understand how this varies across different parts of Central Bedfordshire.

10.5 Map 10.2 shows spatially the percentage of the Central Bedfordshire population who, based on the Active People survey findings, are currently participating in rugby. Chart 9.1 sets out the profile of current participation in rugby across the 19 market segments.

Map 10.2: Percentage and location of the adult population who do play rugby

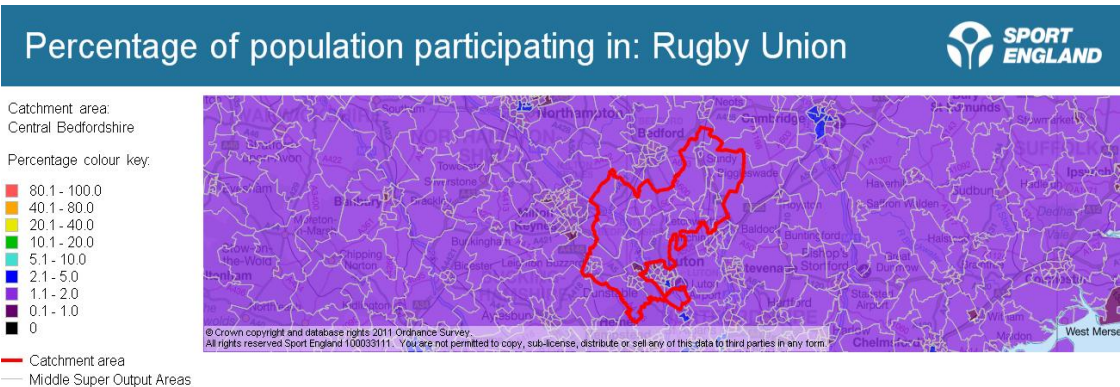
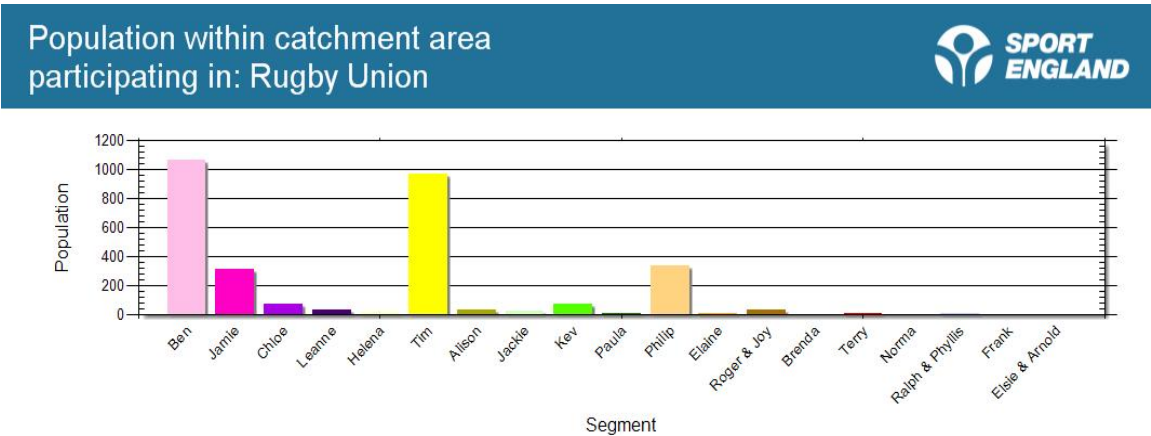


Chart 10.1: Profile of the market segments who participate in rugby in Central Bedfordshire



10.6 As can be seen, participation in rugby is consistent across all parts of Central Bedfordshire (between 1.1-2%) with the exception of north Dunstable (0.1% - 1%). This indicates that participation in Central Bedfordshire is higher than national averages.

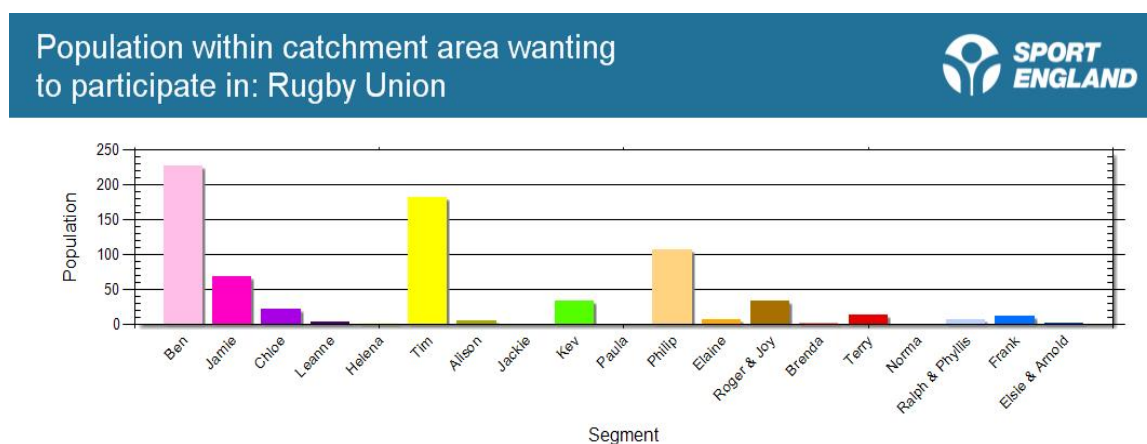
10.7 Like other sports in the area, most rugby players fall within a small number of market segments, specifically Ben (1068), Tim (967), Philip (337) and Jamie (314). In addition, there are a small number of residents in the groups of Kev, Chloe and Leanne that also play rugby.

10.8 The Active People analysis of the percentage of adults who would like to play rugby is represented in map and bar chart form and set out in Map 10.3 and Chart 10.2.

Map 10.3: Percentage and location of the adult population who would like to play Rugby.



Chart 10.2: Profile of the market segments who would like to play Rugby



10.9 The map and bar chart demonstrate that the number of people in Central Bedfordshire who would like to play rugby is between just 0.1 and 1% - this is geographically consistent across the area. The segments that would like to play are consistent with those that already do play, specifically Ben (227), Tim (183), Philip (107) and Jamie (68). These groups make up 82% of total. There is however also some interest from several other groups, including Kev, Roger and Joy, Terry and Frank, as well as Chloe.

10.10 Table 10.2 sets summarises the above statistics, providing an indication of the exact number of people who currently play and would like to play, according to Sport England Market Segmentation and Active People Surveys.

Table 10.2 – Participation in Rugby

DO PLAY POPULATION	% of Adult Population	WOULD LIKE TO PLAY POPULATION	% of Adult Population	Total Number and % who do/would play
3004	1.5%	725	0.03%	3729 (1.9%)

Current Participation

10.11 There are four rugby clubs based within the boundaries of Central Bedfordshire. According to data collated by the RFU, in the 2012 – 2013 season these clubs accommodate 1337 rugby union players, 69% of which are aged under 17. Drawing upon the figures highlighted in the Active People Survey above, this suggests that there is also a degree of casual rugby that takes place in Central Bedfordshire.

10.12 All of the clubs operate both junior and mini teams as well as adult teams, meaning that there are opportunities for progression through the age groups. Female participation is however limited, with no female teams run at any of the four clubs. Table 10.3 summarises the rugby clubs within Central Bedfordshire and the teams that each club runs.

Table 10.3 – Rugby Clubs in Central Bedfordshire

Club	Adult Teams	Colts Teams	Junior Teams	Mini / Midi Teams	Venue
Amphill RUFC	5	1	6	6	Amphill RUFC
Biggleswade RUFC	3	0	5	6	Biggleswade RUFC
Dunstablians RUFC	4	1	5	6	Dunstablians RUFC
Leighton Buzzard RUFC	5	0	5	7	Leighton Buzzard RUFC
TOTAL	17	2	21	25	

Trends in Participation

10.13 Rugby Football Union (RFU) data on club membership suggests that participation in rugby has increased in recent years.

Quality of Rugby Pitches

10.14 Pitch quality influences the amount of matches that can be sustained, and as a consequence has a significant impact on the overall adequacy of supply in an area.

10.15 Site assessments have been carried out in line with the assessment matrix provided in Towards a Level Playing Field – these assessments are non-technical assessments designed to provide an overview of pitch quality and the degree to which facilities are fit for purpose. The non-technical site assessments revealed the quality of rugby pitches to be excellent overall, although there is evidence of heavy use on some of the pitches. In brief, the following comments were reported;

- Ampthill RUFC – Quality excellent overall, pitches consistently good
- Biggleswade RUFC – some pitches located across busy road. Pitches consistent, some bare patches on grass
- Dunstablians RUFC – the only site to contain a small stand. Quality overall consistently excellent
- Leighton Buzzard RUFC – quality good, slight slope and unevenness on one pitch. Grass cover excellent although some evidence of heavy use.

Rugby Football Union Pitch Quality Assessments

10.16 Supporting the site assessments undertaken specifically for this assessment, detailed site visits were carried out to all four club bases by highly qualified groundsmen on behalf of the RFU. These reflected the findings of site visits and revealed that all four rugby clubs in Central Bedfordshire currently have high quality pitches. Despite this (and it should be taken into account that most pitches will look to be of higher quality during the summer months), all clubs suffer from poor pitch quality on their floodlit training areas due to high levels of demand from senior and junior teams, as well as ad hoc school competitions.

The key issues identified for each club can be summarised as follows;

10.17 **Ampthill RUFC** – pitches confirmed as being overall very high quality, particularly the two new pitches which are described as top class. The first team pitch is documented as being in good condition, particularly given the time of year.

Opportunities to improve pitches further were identified as;

- top dress with sand at the end of the season, aerate the pitch and then reseed, and the potential to use fertiliser with lower levels of nitrogen during the Autumn;
- verti drain new pitches at end of season; and
- level first team pitch (seeking grant)

10.18 Biggleswade RUFC—Pitches considered to be excellent overall. All pitches were extremely dry and hard due to weather conditions, however the grass was a good height and the mowing was good and line markings were also clear.

Opportunities for improvement of the pitches were identified as;

- irrigation system for the 1st team pitch and bore hole on site to provide water;
- 3rd team pitch had recently been reseeded and needs close monitoring to ensure that grass is appropriately bedded in before play takes place. The training pitch and 3rd team pitch may also need a top dressing of sand next season;
- requirement to spread training over the whole floodlit area to ensure that play is distributed evenly. There would also be scope to mark out some lines outside of the pitch to enable practicing of line outs etc;
- pitches would benefit from chain harrowing on a regular basis to repair divots and to maintain levelling; and
- increased fertilisation on the Sheep Walk pitches.

10.19 Dunstablians RUFC – Pitches in good condition particularly given the timing of the visit at the end of a long season and the site is clearly well maintained. The second pitch was highlighted as being the highest quality on the complex. The training pitch was highlighted as being clearly overused, but well looked after particularly given the levels of use to which it is subjected. The cut of pitches was described as excellent. Areas for improvement highlighted as;

- invest is requiring in a low nitrogen feed fertiliser to promote grass growth and improve the quality;
- top dressing and aeration on corner of first team pitch that suffers more from drainage issues; and
- investment in larger chain harrow and spiking equipment.

10.20 Leighton Buzzard RUFC— Pitches are again very well maintained and are of high quality. Line marking was also highlighted as excellent and the grass was cut to a regular height and was frequently mown.

Much of the report focuses upon the need to reflect practices undertaken this year in future years, specifically;

- the importance of the application of sand was highlighted particularly if floodlights are provided as this will be necessary to accommodate additional wear and tear;
- the benefits of the use of the Earth Quake machine and the importance of regular aeration of pitches; and
- use of fertiliser and the potential use of slow release fertiliser in future years.

10.21 In particular, the importance of spreading training over the whole floodlit area to ensure that play is distributed evenly was highlighted. It was also emphasised that pitches need at least

8 – 10 weeks rest per year to re-establish themselves and was suggested that alternative arrangements for training needed to be considered during this time.

Club Consultation – Quality Issues and other issues experienced

10.22 Consultation with the rugby clubs resulted in responses from all clubs. The key issues raised were;

- **Amptill RUFC** – despite positive ratings at the time of RFU visits and visits undertaken specifically as part of this assessment, the club rate pitch quality as relatively poor, with most elements rated as poor or average (and all elements relating to pitch surface considered poor). Issues were primarily attributed to overuse of pitches at the time of response to the questionnaire. The two pitches on the Dillingham Park side of the site are perceived to be particularly poor due to overuse and the car park is also highlighted as being inadequate. Issues with changing facilities and a lack of external funding are perceived to be the key barriers to the development of the club.
- **Biggleswade RUFC** –the club highlight few issues relating to pitch quality, with the only concerns raised relating to parking and the standard of the equipment i.e. posts etc. Quality is not perceived to inhibit current club activities, although the club do indicate that they struggle to access appropriate pitches for matches on occasion. The club highlight the main barriers to growth to be access to all weather pitches for both training and matches, changing facilities and lack of coaches. A lack of internal and external funding is also perceived to inhibit club development activity. Perhaps most importantly, the club indicate that they are looking to renew the planning permission for the Sheepwalk pitches (part of the overall Biggleswade RUFC site) as these are important if the ongoing activity at the club is to be sustained. The club have a relatively wide catchment area, with 65% of club members believed to travel over 3 miles. 25% of members travel more than five miles;
- **Dunstablians RUFC** – Pitches are rated as average to good, although the pitch surface is considered to be relatively uneven. The club also highlight a need to re-surface the existing car park which is badly pot-holed and breaking-up. The club suggest that it is becoming difficult to accommodate all activity at their existing site (youth teams) and in good weather conditions, pitches become overused (which has implications for quality). The club highlight the main barriers to growth to be access to all weather pitches for both training and matches, a lack of youth pitches and lack of coaches. In response to these issues, the club are currently evaluating the conversion of 1 Adult pitch and 1 Mini-pitch to an all-weather 4G surface.
- **Leighton Buzzard RUFC** – The club rate their facilities as average to good overall. Club development and growth mean that pitches receive a lot of use and as a consequence, pitch quality now needs upgrading, particularly the floodlit areas. While the club has a successful regular maintenance programme, to rectify the issues caused by this overuse, the club estimate that £25,000 investment is required, which they are seeking funding to afford. It is indicated that high levels of use have led to a deterioration of pitch quality over the last 2 years and raising the standard of the pitches is currently the key priority; and

- the club are not satisfied with the overall provision of rugby pitches in Central Bedfordshire and highlight a lack of public pitches (that can be used for overspill to reduce wear and tear on club pitches) as the main reason for this. The club highlight the main barriers to growth to be access to all weather training pitches, changing facilities and lack of coaches. A lack of internal and external funding is also perceived to inhibit club development activity. The club have a relatively local catchment, with the majority of members travelling between 1 and 3 miles to reach the club.

National Governing Body Perspective

10.23 Facilities are one of the most important components of a rugby club. They drive the club ethos and spirit and facilitate high quality participation and club development. Rugby is increasing in popularity as a sport, with 26,000 new players joining the game in the third quarter of 2012 and it is hoped that this growth will continue, particularly as the rugby world cup will be held in 2015. Appropriate amounts of facilities are essential if clubs are to grow and to develop and attract new members. Facilities are also central to the sustainability of rugby clubs.

10.24 The overall vision of the RFU National Facilities Strategy (2013 – 2017) is;

‘Strengthening our Member Clubs and Growing the Game in Communities around them’

10.25 Effective and efficient facilities are seen as a key component of achieving this goal. Rugby development opportunities (including both the retention of existing players, the recruitment of new players and the development of coaches and volunteers are seen as being essential to the success of the strategy delivery.

10.26 The strategy seeks to;

- recognise the role of facility development in the delivery of community rugby’s core purpose and key drivers;
- provide evidence-based conclusions on the current key facility issues affecting the sustainability and growth of rugby union in England;
- set out priority areas for future investment;
- outline a facility planning model to enable the delivery of the strategy at a local level;
- highlight other key factors in the delivery of high quality facilities; and
- outline the need for and role of associated Investment Strategies.

10.27 The strategy indicates that the key priorities of the RFU in relation to rugby clubs are as follows:

- increase the provision of integrated changing facilities that are child- friendly and can sustain concurrent male and female activity at the club;
- improve the quality and quantity of natural turf pitches (including maintenance);
- improve the quality and quantity of floodlighting; and

- increase the provision of artificial grass pitches that deliver wider game development outcomes.

10.28 The document indicates that investment in the following will also be prioritised;

- social, community and catering facilities, that can support diversification and the generation of additional revenues;
- facility upgrades, which result in an increase in energy-efficiency, in order to reduce the running costs; and
- pitch equipment, including quality rugby posts and pads.

10.29 Increasing participation in rugby by teenagers, with a particular focus on retaining players during the transition between junior and senior rugby is a key priority of the RFU and there is also work underway to increase the amount of female participants. In addition to continuing to build the existing club infrastructure, touch rugby, a newer form of the game is also being introduced in an attempt to attract new participants to the sport. It is hoped that growth across the club structure will amount to at least 2% of participants per annum.

10.30 The facilities strategy sets out three types of model venues, which seek to balance the level of activity that takes place at a club with the facilities that are provided (both on and off the field). The three tiers of provision are;

- Model Venue 1: This is usually a club, school, university or other provider playing lower level or recreational rugby;
- Model Venue 2: An established club venue with a wider programme of adult and junior rugby for both male and female; and
- Model Venue 3: A venue with potentially higher level competitive rugby that can provide for more sophisticated RFU development programmes.

10.31 The strategy indicates that the range of facilities required should be driven by the activity that takes place (named the Activity v Facility Continuum).

10.32 The Sport and Recreation Alliance Survey (2011) revealed the following about rugby clubs;

- accessing funds/sponsorship (81%), generating sufficient income, maintaining/recruiting/retaining volunteers (80%) and recruiting new members (79%) are the key challenges faced by rugby union clubs. Developing skill sets (59%) is seen as the greatest opportunity;
- 32% of clubs are growing and 22% are contracting;
- 30% of rugby clubs share their facilities with football, 24% with cricket and 10% with rugby league. 40% do not share their facilities with any other sports;
- 38% of rugby union clubs hire their facilities, primarily from schools, colleges and universities, down from 45% in 2009; and

- bar, catering and hospitality represents both the biggest income stream and expense, whilst grants provide further income and sports costs represent the next largest expense.

10.33 Locally, rugby union is very strong and all four rugby clubs run both senior and junior sections. Participation in all clubs has increased in recent years and all clubs are proactive and efficiently run. Ampthill RUFC, Dunstablians RUFC and Leighton Buzzard RUFC have all received investment from the RFU in recent years.

10.34 While participation is strong, linking with the agenda of Sport England the RFU are seeking to reduce the drop off that typically occurs when players reach age 14 as well as continue to grow the club membership bases. The projected population growth in the area offers the opportunity to increase the number of players within Central Bedfordshire, however increasing the proportion of the existing population that play rugby is also prioritised.

10.35 Analysis of the Activity v Facility Continuum indicates that in Central Bedfordshire, all clubs are functioning within the capacity of their facility at the current time. In order that current activity, aspirations for participation growth as well as likely population growth can be accommodated, in addition to the Grounds maintenance requirements highlighted earlier in this section, the following is however required;

- Leighton Buzzard RUFC – there is a need to improve the quality of one of the floodlit pitches in order that this can be returned to use;
- Dunstablians RUFC – upgrades to the social facilities including social facilities, toilets and the kitchen were required for the club to accommodate both current and projected demand. The RFU, alongside Sport England, have recently provided support to the club to make significant improvements and it is thought that this work is now complete. Longer term, successful increase in the membership of the club may require the creation of additional facilities including further floodlit training areas (grass or 3g) and social facilities;
- Ampthill RUFC has grown significantly in recent years and have successfully extended their facility through the acquisition of a lease for adjacent land. The pitches on site are of excellent standard however there is a need to ensure that the clubhouse is upgraded to ensure that activity can be sustained; and
- Biggleswade RUFC – the club are currently working towards Inspired Facilities funding to secure improvements to the existing clubhouse.

Supply and Demand Modelling

10.36 The methodology undertaken for the rugby assessment follows the 8 step process set out in TaLPF. To ensure compliance with the emerging methodology (which is not yet published) as far as possible, the following steps of analysis were also undertaken:

- Evaluation of site specific capacity over a week as well as at peak time
- Consideration of the impact of training and casual use
- Analysis of site specific activities and issues.

10.37 Table 10.4 evaluates the adequacy of existing pitch provision on a peak day. It includes all facilities, whether or not they are available for community use and compares this against the number of teams wishing to play (assuming that each team plays home and away on alternative weeks). As two midi games can be played on an adult pitch, it is assumed that 2 midi teams are equivalent of one adult team. Table 10.4 indicates that there are a large number of pitches in Central Bedfordshire.

Table 10.4 – Adequacy of Rugby Pitches taking into account all pitches

Placemaking Area	Number of pitches	Total Number of Match Equivalents per week	Total Number of Matches (Saturday – Senior)	Total Number of Matches (Sunday morning – Junior and Midi)	Total Number of Sunday afternoon (female and colts)	Shortfall / Surplus at Adult Peak Time (Saturday)	Shortfall / Surplus Sunday Morning
Central Bedfordshire	44	26.25	8.5	16.75	1	35.5	27.25
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	4	6.5	2	4	0.5	2	0
Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South	10	6.75	2.5	4.25	0	7.5	5.75
North	30	16.5	4	8.5	0.5	26	21.5

10.38 Table 10.4 therefore suggests that there are enough rugby pitches in Central Bedfordshire as a whole. Only in Dunstable and Houghton Regis Placemaking area is provision relatively tightly matched with demand. It must however be noted that Dunstablians has a midi pitch, which if taken into account would alleviate some of the pressures identified above.

Access and Capacity

10.39 In reality, six of the above pitches are not available for community use at all (three in Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South and three in the North Placemaking area). Even when these pitches are removed from the equation, there remains sufficient provision, although supply is only just above demand in Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South.

10.40 Table 10.5 summarises the availability of pitches at peak time when these facilities are excluded from consideration.

Table 10.5 – Adequacy of Pitches available for community use

Placemaking Area	Number of pitches	Total Number of Match Equivalents per week	Total Number of Matches (Saturday – Senior)	Total Number of Matches (Sunday morning – Junior and Midi)	Total Number of Sunday afternoon (female and colts)	Shortfall / Surplus at Adult Peak Time (Saturday)	Shortfall / Surplus Sunday Morning
Central Bedfordshire	38	26.25	8.5	16.75	1	29.5	21.25
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	4	6.5	2	4	0.5	2	0
Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South	7	6.75	2.5	4.25	0	4.5	2.75
North	27	16.5	4	8.5	0.5	23	18.5

10.41 Building upon this picture, Table 10.6 considers the adequacy of provision when including just the club bases. It indicates that supply is very closely matched with demand. This will be explored in further detail later in this section.

Table 10.6 – Club Base Only

Placemaking Area	Number of pitches	Total Number of Match Equivalents per week	Total Number of Matches (Saturday – Senior)	Total Number of Matches (Sunday morning – Junior and Midi)	Total Number of Sunday afternoon (female and colts)	Shortfall / Surplus at Adult Peak Time (Saturday)	Shortfall / Surplus Sunday Morning
Central Bedfordshire	17	26.25	8.5	16.75	1	8.5	0.25

Dunstable and Houghton Regis	3	6.5	2	4	0.5	1	-1
Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South	4	6.75	2.5	4.25	0	1.5	-0.25
North	10	16.5	4	8.5	0.5	6	1.5

10.42 It is clear therefore that while at club bases, pitch provision is relatively constrained, the large number of schools with rugby pitches provides a potential opportunity for use of these pitches as satellite facilities for clubs.

Impact of Training on Capacity

10.43 All rugby clubs in Central Bedfordshire train at their club base and each club has at least one floodlit pitch to facilitate this. Leighton Buzzard has three floodlit pitches and both Biggleswade and Dunstablians have two.

10.44 This additional use of the facilities outside of match play can impact on pitch quality.

10.45 This can be considered by including this training within modelling. Based on the number of teams at each club and the number of training sessions clubs are thought to have, it has been assumed that the maximum impact of training is equivalent to the following:

- Ampthill RUFC – 7.5 matches per week
- Biggleswade RUFC – 6.5 matches per week
- Dunstablians RUFC -5.5 matches per week
- Leighton Buzzard RUFC – 7.5 matches per week

10.46 This means that training generates the equivalent of 26 - 27 matches per week (54 team equivalents).

10.47 24 of the rugby pitches in Central Bedfordshire are located at school sites (18 sites) and are therefore subject to wear and tear during a typical curriculum programme, particularly for PE lessons and by school teams. The implications of these uses can also be factored in as team equivalents based on the following assumptions:

- each school with a rugby pitch runs 2 hours outdoor PE per week per year group – equivalent of 90 teams (45 matches per week); and
- each school with a rugby pitch also has 5 school teams that compete (45 matches per week).

10.48 In addition, three pitches are located at the MOD site (2 pitches) and Cranfield University (one pitch). This could be considered to generate the equivalent of another 6 teams (3 matches per week), although use on both sites is to be adhoc.

10.49 These implications represent the worst case scenario and assume that all PE use is focused on the rugby pitches and would generate an additional 90 teams matches per week.

10.50 It must be noted that demand from school lessons and training does not impact upon the adequacy of provision to meet peak time demand, however it increases the amount of times pitches are used significantly. Table 9.7 evaluates the impact of both training and school use on the amount of times pitches are used per week.

Table 10.7 – Adequacy of Rugby Pitches in Central Bedfordshire

Number of pitches	Club Matches	Use including training team equivalents	Use including PE lessons and training	Matches per week	Matches per week per pitch
44	26.25	26.25+26.25	26.25+26.25 +95	147.5	3

10.51 As is illustrated, when taking into account the implications of training patterns and school use of facilities, it is clear that pitch provision is much more well used than initially suggested. With pitches used up to 3 times per week. While this perhaps over emphasises the use of the facilities, it provides an important indication of the potential scale of use.

The Importance of the Club Base

10.52 The nature of rugby however means that the adequacy of provision at the club base is the overarching priority and this is also emphasised in the national rugby facilities strategy. Satellite facilities at school sites, while offering a useful short-term solution do not fit into the club ethos and can inhibit club development if they become permanent features if the situation is not appropriately managed.

10.53 All clubs in Central Bedfordshire have their own facilities and there are no known issues with security of tenure for any of the clubs currently (although Biggleswade RUFC must apply for planning permission for their Sheepwalk pitches again). Furthermore, site visits and club consultation confirm that pitch quality is excellent overall, although the quality of the training pitches is poor due to heavy levels of use.

Site Specific Supply and Demand

10.54 Table 10.8 therefore considers the adequacy of supply to meet demand at each of club bases. It focuses on the club bases only as almost all rugby activity focuses upon these sites.

10.55 It can be seen that while the overall spread of rugby across the week generates theoretical surpluses of provision, when looking at the club bases, provision is more closely matched with demand. All of the clubs are however currently functioning within the parameters that might be expected, however there is little scope to increase usage as the number of matches per week is already relatively high. Added to this, Table 9.6 indicated that peak time demand is also relatively closely matched with demand.

10.56 It should be noted that the reduced impact of midi rugby teams (due to their small size and the fact that they play across adult pitches on two club sites) has been taken into account.

Table 10.8 – Club Based Issues - Rugby

	Baseline Demand	Supply	and	Home Games Per Week				Capacity			Games Per Pitch	Matches Per Pitch	Comments
Venue	Number of Pitches	Number of Mini Pitches	Number of Teams	Adult	Colts	Junior	Mini	Saturday	Sunday AM	Sunday PM	Games Per Pitch	Games Per Pitch Including Training	
Ampthill	4	2	18	2.5	0.5	3	1.5	1.5	1.5	3.5	1.25	3	Club wish to extend clubhouse
Biggleswade	6	0	14	1.5	0	2.5	1.5	4.5	2	6	0.9166667	2.3333333	Club wish to upgrade social facilities
Dunstablians	3	1	16	2	0.5	2.5	1.5	1	0	2.5	1.625	4	Club wish to upgrade social facilities
Leighton Buzzard	4	0	17	2.5	0	2.5	1.75	1.5	-0.25	4	1.6875	4.25	Club wish to reinstate one pitch

10.57 The above figures do not take into account the aspirations of clubs to grow and develop or the potential impact of population growth in the area.

Predicating the Future and Latent Demand

10.58 Latent demand can be identified from a variety of sources, including Team Generation Rates (TGRs). TGRs indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team, thus enabling analysis of current participation and the projection of future participation. TGRs are derived by dividing the appropriate population age band in the area by the number of teams playing within that area in that age band. Table 9.9 summarises TGRs for rugby across Central Bedfordshire and compares them with national statistics. To provide a more up to data comparison, figures for Cheshire West and Chester Council (Cheshire West and Chester PPS 2011), who are one of Central Bedfordshire's nearest neighbours in terms of population structure are also provided.

10.59 The TGRs indicate that TGRs in Central Bedfordshire are better than the national averages, suggesting that there is limited latent demand. The national statistics should be treated with caution, as the Sport England database has not been updated for several years. Figures are also on the whole better than Cheshire West and Chester Council although it is noticeable that there is a lack of female participation in Central Bedfordshire in comparison to both national statistics and the comparator authority.

Table 10.9 – TGRs across Central Bedfordshire

Type of Rugby	National Average	TGR Central Bedfordshire	TGR Cheshire West and Chester
Midi Rugby	1:2639	1:487	1:3770
Junior Male Rugby	1:2105	1:438	1:1701
Junior Female Rugby	1:19,524	0	1:2842
Senior Male Rugby	1:7032	1:2488	1:59166
Senior Female Rugby	1:43770	0	1:4837

Meeting Future Demand

10.60 By applying TGRs to population projections we can estimate the theoretical number of teams that would be generated from population growth and gain an understanding of the adequacy of current pitch provision to meet future demand. While there will be population growth, the trend towards an ageing population means that the proportion of the population falling within the age bands most likely to play rugby will be lower. The population growth will not have such a significant impact on demand for pitches therefore as may initially appear.

10.61 By 2022, use of TGRs suggests that assuming that the proportion of participants remains constant, that the following number of teams will be generated in Central Bedfordshire:

- Senior Male – 20 teams (increase of 1)
- Junior Male – 23.5 teams (increase of 2.5)
- Midi rugby – 29 teams (increase of 4)

10.62 Table 10.10 summarises the calculations that have been used to derive the TGRs and the impact of population growth.

Table 10.10 – Impact of Population Growth for Rugby

Sport and Age Groups	Number of teams in age group within the area	Current population in age group within the area	Future population in age group within the area	Current TGR	Population Change in Age Group	Potential Change in Team Numbers in Age Group
Rugby Union Senior Men (19-45yrs)	19	47278	49169	2488	1792	0.7
Rugby Union Senior Women (19-45yrs)	0	48234	50163	0	1929	0
Rugby Union Youth Boys (13-18yrs)	21	9191	10285	438	1094	2.5
Rugby Union Youth Girls (13-18yrs)	0	9377	10493	0	1116	0
Rugby Union Mini/Midi Mixed (7-12yrs)	25	12168	13960	487	1792	3.7

10.63 If female participation was to develop to levels equal to that in Cheshire West and Chester, there would be 3 junior female teams and 3 female senior teams.

Adequacy of Pitch Provision (Future)

10.64 As has already been documented, the amount of activity at club sites, particularly at peak times, means that clubs are approaching capacity. The additional teams that will be generated through population growth will be spread across Central Bedfordshire and will generate a small additional impact at club bases.

10.65 Analysis indicates that the existing pitches at rugby clubs will be sufficient to meet current and projected needs assuming that pitches are well maintained and able to sustain appropriate numbers of matches. All pitches are however already close to capacity meaning that significant increases in participation above and beyond those highlighted above as generated from population growth may mean that additional facilities are required.

10.66 The RFU measures participation increases through the affiliation process, looking at the number of participants, number of matches etc. They target increases in adult participation, as junior participants are more easily generated. The conversion of junior participants to adults (thus avoiding the drop off) is also a key target. Clubs indicate that the targets that they are working towards currently are:

- Ampthill RUFC – additional teams in all age groups. Girls U13 and U15 within next two years
- Biggleswade RUFC – creation of veterans and colts teams;
- Dunstablians RUFC – Youth U6, adult 4th team and ladies
- Leighton Buzzard RUFC – aspiration to develop a girls team.

10.67 The ability of the current pitch stock at club bases to account for these additional games at peak time (from both population growth and participation increases) is summarised in Table 10.11. It indicates that there are enough pitches to accommodate adult demand but pitch provision is constrained when meeting the needs of junior teams.

Table 10.11 – Adequacy of Club Based Stock to accommodate Future Demand

Placemaking Area	Number of pitches	Total Number of Match Equivalents per week	Total Number of Matches (Saturday – Senior)	Total Number of Matches (Sunday morning – Junior and Midi)	Total Number of Sunday afternoon (female and colts)	Shortfall / Surplus at Adult Peak Time (Saturday)	Shortfall / Surplus Sunday Morning
Central Bedfordshire	17	30.75	10.5	19.25	1	6.5	-2.25

10.68 When taking into account the additional training requirements that further teams will generate, it is clear that clubs will be reaching capacity. This is summarised in Table 10.12 but it should be noted that this includes expressed growth only (i.e. not growth likely to occur as a result of population increases).

10.69 Concentration of growth generated from population projections at one of the rugby clubs (and / or significant growth in cub membership) may therefore generate capacity issues at specific clubs. This could be addressed through further grass pitch or 3g provision.

Table 10.12 – Site Specific Capacity (Future)

	Baseline Demand	Supply	and	Home Games Per Week				Capacity			Games Per Pitch	Matches Per Pitch	Comments
Venue	Number of Pitches	Number of Mini Pitches	Number of Teams	Adult	Colts	Junior	Mini	Saturday	Sunday AM	Sunday PM	Games Per Pitch	Games Per Pitch Including Training	
Ampthill	4	2	17	2.5	0.5	4	1.5	1.5	0.5	3.5	1.4166667	2.8333333	Club wish to extend clubhouse
Biggleswade	6	0	13	2	0.5	2.5	1.5	4	2	5.5	1.0833333	2.1666667	Club wish to upgrade social facilities
Dunstablians	3	1	15.5	3	0.5	2.5	1.75	0	-0.25	2.5	1.9375	3.875	Club wish to upgrade social facilities
Leighton Buzzard	4	0	14.5	2.5	0	3	1.75	1.5	-0.75	4	1.8125	3.625	Club wish to reinstate one pitch

Summary and Key Issues

Key issues to address – Rugby Union

- Participation in rugby is relatively strong in Central Bedfordshire and there are four clubs, all of which offer full transition between midi, junior and senior rugby, offering clear player pathways. There have been clear increases in participation in recent years. North Herts Crusaders are also located outside of Central Bedfordshire in Letchworth, and the location of this club means that it is likely to serve some residents of the north of Central Bedfordshire.
- There are 44 rugby pitches spread across Central Bedfordshire and modelling reveals that when taking into account all of these pitches, there are sufficient pitches to meet demand, with circa 27 pitches available at peak time. The majority of pitches are however at school sites and there is limited if any use of these by the clubs currently. Analysis of potential use at these pitches (taking into account school curricular and extracurricular activity, as well as club matches and training) suggests that pitches may be used as much as 3 times per week each, a relatively high amount. Pitches sustaining this level of play need to be high quality, with appropriate drainage and maintenance regimes.
- Club bases are particularly important for the growth and development of rugby clubs. All four clubs in Central Bedfordshire own and manage their own facilities and have security of tenure at these sites. Modelling of the adequacy of pitches at each club highlights that pitches are used between two and four times per week, taking into account training and matches, which is at the higher end of recommended levels. Technical assessments reveal the quality of pitches to be high, although clubs identify some concerns and three of the four clubs identify the requirement to refurbish/ improve / extend their club house facilities, aspirations which are supported by the RFU. Added to this, the levels of training that take place on training pitches mean that these are heavily used and often of poor quality. Club specific improvements will be essential if current levels of activity are to be maintained and potential growth in activity is to be supported. Key club related priorities include;
 - Leighton Buzzard – floodlit pitch
 - Dunstablians –longer term may require more pitches as site is already approaching capacity. This may include new training facilities (grass or 3g). The club have recently received support from both the RFU and Sport England to improve the clubhouse
 - Ampthill – clubhouse upgrade
 - Biggleswade – clubhouse
- The RFU National Facility Strategy emphasises the importance of facilities, and recommends the use of an activity v facility continuum. This enables an evaluation of where club facilities are inhibiting participation and also provides guidance as to the type and extent of facilities that are required to support clubs of varying sizes and aspirations. Reflecting the findings of the TaLPF modelling, all clubs in Central

Bedfordshire are currently functioning within the capacity of their existing facilities.

- Modelling demonstrates that participation in rugby in Central Bedfordshire is high in comparison to national averages and it is also above that in neighbouring authorities. It is clear however that there is limited female participation currently. Use of TGRs to project the impact of future population increases demonstrates that the ageing population will impact on the number of teams that will be generated, however it is likely that population growth alone will see an increase of 1 adult rugby team, 2 - 3 junior rugby teams and 4 midi rugby teams across Central Bedfordshire as a whole. Some clubs also have aspirations to increase their membership, in all likelihood generating further pressures on the existing facility stock. Pitch capacity at club bases will become particularly strained by 2022 if club development aspirations are realised. In this instance, access to school pitches and / or the creation of new pitches at club bases or as a satellite pitch may become increasingly important.

Rugby League

Supply

10.70 There are no public rugby league pitches within Central Bedfordshire. The only pitches identified are at Fulbrook Middle School and Robert Bloomfield Middle School. In addition, North Herts Crusaders, based in Letchworth (outside of CB boundaries) may be the closest club for many of the residents in the North of Central Bedfordshire. The club run adult and junior teams.

Demand

10.71 There are no rugby league clubs in Central Bedfordshire. The nearest clubs are in Bedford (Bedford Tigers), Milton Keynes and St Albans.

10.72 Sport England Active People Survey suggests that there are 875 rugby league players across Central Bedfordshire. These players are predominantly in the same market segments as those playing rugby union specifically Ben (340), Jamie (114) and Tim (185). The same source estimates that there are an additional 295 players that would like to play. These people fall into the same groups as those that currently play (Ben (91), Tim (61) and Jamie (43))

National Governing Body Perspective – the Rugby Football League (RFL)

10.73 Consultation with the RFL confirms that little rugby league takes place in the area with the only known participation being the above clubs. There is limited demand for the provision of a rugby league club within Central Bedfordshire due to the distribution of clubs surrounding the authority.

Summary and Key Issues

Key issues to address – Rugby League

Existing participation in rugby league is limited with no teams based in Central Bedfordshire although there are several on the periphery. There is limited evidence of

demand for rugby league in Central Bedfordshire.

Key Priorities – Rugby Union and Rugby League

10.74 The assessment of rugby in Central Bedfordshire therefore indicates that the key priorities for future facilities are as follows:

Ensuring that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

- Monitor club growth over strategy period. Additional facilities will be required for clubs if participation increases significantly over and above levels that are generated by growth in population. Notably, the impact of training on pitches is significant and this could be addressed through the provision of a 3g training pitch which would reduce the impact of use on grass pitches. Any new provision should be in conjunction with existing or new clubs rather than provided ad hoc on new sites.
- Monitor demand for rugby league provision over the strategy period.

Ensuring that facilities are of appropriate quality to meet the needs of current and future users

10.75 To ensure that pitches can accommodate the level of play that they are required to currently, as well as to meet the needs of additional teams in future years, maintain and improve the quality of existing facilities by;

- addressing maintenance issues identified through RFU ground surveys;
- improving and expanding social facilities and pavilions; and
- the provision of training floodlights – these should be located to enable rotation and use of different parts of the pitches to ensure that additional wear and tear is dispersed.

10.76 Qualitative improvements are currently more important than the creation of new rugby pitches in the short term however long term new provision may be required.

Support Rugby Development

- Support aspirations to increase participation in rugby across Central Bedfordshire Council and manage the impact of these aspirations on facility development.
- Support initiatives to increase rugby participation including the introduction of new forms of the game, which may require the provision of flexible spaces.

11. Hockey

11.1 This section evaluates the adequacy of facilities for hockey across Central Bedfordshire and provides:

- An overview of supply and demand for pitches
- An evaluation of the overall adequacy of pitches to meet demand
- key issues and strategic priorities the strategy will address

11.2 It draws upon the information set out in Section 7 – AGPs.

Hockey in Central Bedfordshire - An Overview

Supply

11.3 Hockey is almost exclusively played on Artificial Grass Pitches and grass pitches are largely obsolete for competitive forms of the game. 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 hockey)

11.4 Table 11.1 summarises the AGPs available in Central Bedfordshire and details their suitability for hockey. It indicates that three of the AGPs are suitable for hockey. These sites are located in Dunstable, Sandy and Leighton Buzzard.

Table 11.1 – Suitability of AGPs in Central Bedfordshire for Hockey

Site Name	Location	Size	Floodlights	Access	Surface	Suitability for hockey
Ashton Middle School	Dunstable	Small 30 x 40	No	Private Use	Sand Filled	No - small size
Briants Lane Sports Ground	Heath and Reach	Small (35 x 35)	No	Pay and Play	Sand Filled	No - small size
Creasey Park	Dunstable	Full size	Yes	Pay and Play	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	No - surface
Defence Intelligence and Security Centre	Chicksands	Full size	Yes	Sports Club / Community Association	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	No - surface
Dunstable Leisure Centre	Dunstable	Full size	Yes	Pay and Play	Sand Filled	Yes
Newton Recreation Ground	Dunstable	40 x 60m	Yes	Pay and Play	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	No - small size and surface
Redborne Upper	Amphill	Full	Yes	Sports Club /	Rubber	No -

Site Name	Location	Size	Floodlights	Access	Surface	Suitability for hockey
School and Community Centre		size		Community Association	crumb pile (3G)	surface
Robert Bloomfield Middle School	Sheffield	60 x 40m	No	Sports Club / Community Association	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	No - surface
Sandy Sports and Recreation Centre	Sandy	Full size	Yes	Pay and Play	Sand Filled	Yes
Vandyke Upper School and Community College	Leighton Buzzard	Full size	Yes	Sports Club / Community Association	Sand Dressed	Yes
Cedars Upper School	Leighton Buzzard	Full size	Yes	Sports Club / Community Association	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	No – surface
All Saints Academy	Dunstable	Full Size	Yes	Sports Club / Community Association	Rubber crumb pile (3G)	No – surface

Demand

Active People and Market Segmentation (Sport England)

11.5 Table 3.5 indicated that according to the Active People Survey, nationally, between 2005/6 (Active People Survey 1) and 2011/2012 (Active People Survey 6) participation in hockey has increased from 0.23% to 0.25%.

11.6 Using the Active People Survey and Market Segmentation, it is possible to evaluate how many residents of Central Bedfordshire do participate in hockey and how many of the population would like to participate in hockey. It is also possible to understand how this varies across different parts of Central Bedfordshire.

11.7 Map 11.1 shows spatially the percentage of the Central Bedfordshire population who, based on the Active People survey findings, are currently playing hockey. Chart 11.1 sets out the profile of current participation in hockey across the 19 market segments.

Map 11.1: Percentage and location of the adult population who do play hockey.

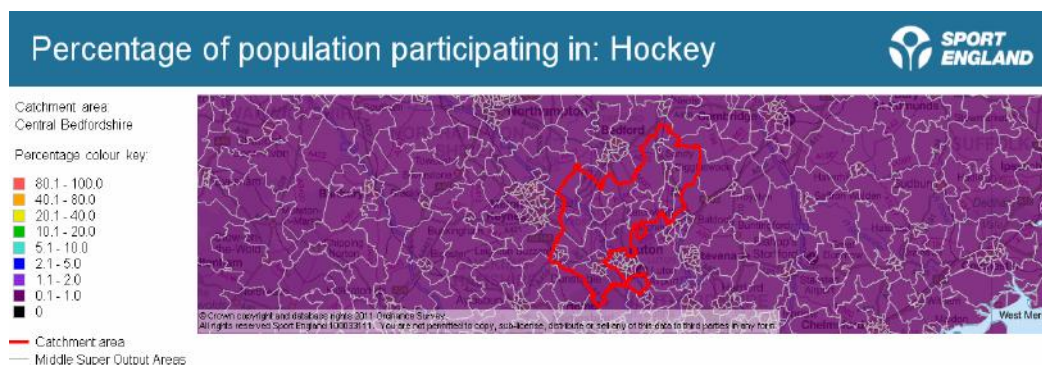
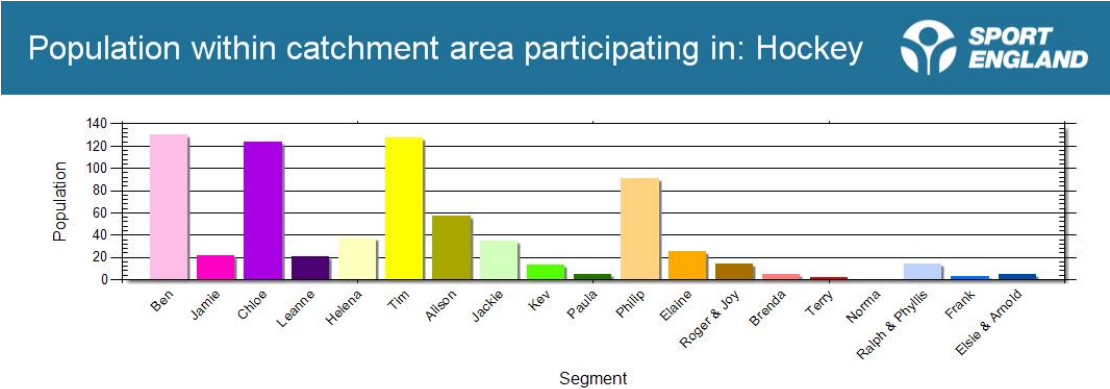


Chart 11.1: Profile of the market segments who participate in hockey in Central Bedfordshire



11.8 As can be seen, participation in hockey is consistent across Central Bedfordshire. The dominant groups in terms of participation are slightly different from most other pitch sports included within this assessment of facilities with the majority of players falling in the groups of Ben (130), Chloe (124), Tim (127) and Philip (91).

11.9 The Active People analysis of the percentage of adults who would like to play hockey is represented in map and bar chart form and set out in Map 11.2 and Chart 11.2.

Map 11.2 Percentage and location of the adult population who would like to play Hockey

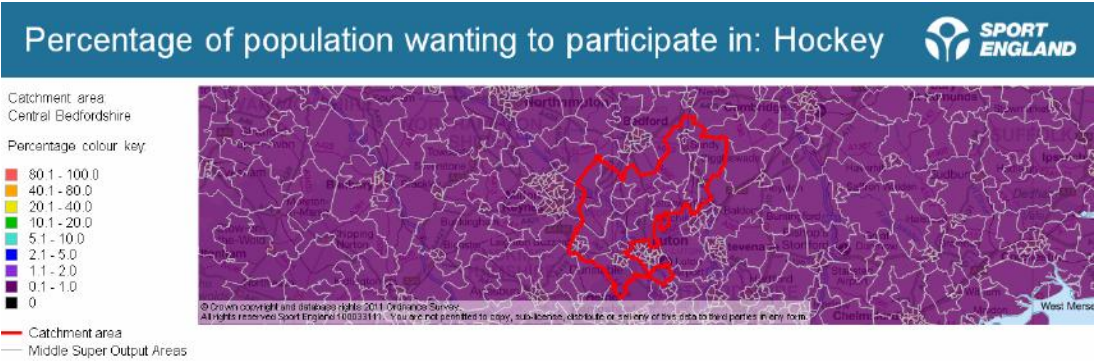
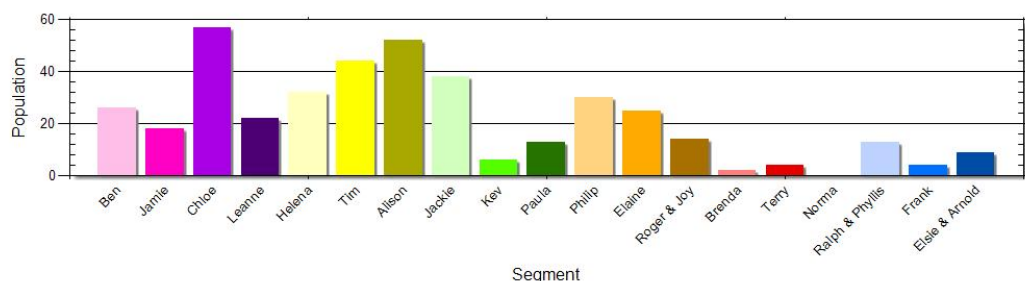


Chart 11.2: Profile of the market segments who would like to play Hockey

Population within catchment area wanting to participate in: Hockey



11.10 The map and bar chart demonstrate that the number of people who would like to play hockey is below 1% in all parts of Central Bedfordshire. Potential participants can be found across a spread of different market segments, including Chloe, Alison, Tim and Jackie. While numbers of potential players are on a much smaller scale than some other sports considered, this suggests that hockey provides an opportunity to encourage different groups of residents back into sport than other pitch sports.

11.11 Table 11.2 summarises the above statistics, providing an indication of the exact number of people who currently play and would like to play, according to Sport England Market Segmentation and Active People Surveys.

Table 11.2 – Participation in Hockey

DO PLAY POPULATION	% of Adult Population	WOULD LIKE TO PLAY POPULATION	% of Adult Population	Total Number and % who do/would play
730	0.03%	409	0.02%	1139 (0.05%)

Current Participation

11.12 There are just two hockey clubs in Central Bedfordshire – Leighton Buzzard Hockey Club and Shefford and Sandy Hockey Club. In total they run 18 adult teams. Full details are provided in Table 11.3 below.

Table 11.3 – Hockey Clubs in Central Bedfordshire

Club	Adult Male Teams	Adult Female teams	Junior Male Teams	Junior Female Teams	Veteran s	Mixe d	Venue	League
Leighton Buzzard Hockey Club	4	4	3				Vandyke Upper School (Leighton Buzzard),	Five Counties Leagues (Ladies), Middlesex, Berks, Bucks

							Training is at Van Dyke Upper School.	and Oxon Leagues (men),
Sandy and Shefford Hockey Club	4	5	2	2	2		Shefford and Sandy Recreation Centre (Matches and Training)	East Hockey Womens League, Five Counties Leagues (Ladies), East Hockey Leagues (Men)

11.13 As demonstrated, the pitch at Dunstable Leisure Centre is not currently used for hockey. Leighton Buzzard HC in particular sometimes have to travel outside of Central Bedfordshire to alternative venues in other local authorities when there is limited capacity at their own site.

11.14 Participation in hockey in Central Bedfordshire has grown in recent years with both clubs demonstrating an increase in playing membership. Table 11.4 summarises the increase in playing members for clubs registered to England Hockey between season 2011 / 2012 and 2012 / 2013.

Table 11.4 – Increases in Participation (Data provided by England Hockey)

Club	Percentage Increase
Leighton Buzzard Hockey Club	28% increase
Shefford and Sandy Hockey Club	20% increase

11.15 Both clubs have aspirations for ongoing and continued growth.

Schools Participation

11.16 Despite the high levels of participation at club level, participation by schools in Central Bedfordshire is relatively low.

Club Consultation

11.17 Consultation with clubs reveals that hockey players travel a greater distance than for most other sports to reach facilities. Just 35% of players are based within 3 miles of their club facility. Neither club owns their own facilities currently and both clubs raise issues with the overall facility stock. The key issues arising from consultations can be summarised as;

11.18 **Leighton Buzzard Hockey Club** - the club rent the pitch at Van Dyke School and consider the quality of the facility to be average to good. The pitch has recently been re-laid and

since then, a number of matches have been cancelled as the new carpet is susceptible to frost. The club indicate that they are not currently satisfied with the stock of facilities, raising concerns with the amount of pitches and access to existing pitches. Until recently, teams had to compete with football for access to the pitch at Van Dyke School however it is hoped that the opening of new facilities will improve access for the hockey club. The club however still struggle to access appropriate pitches. There is also no pavilion on site and players have to travel across town to reach the facility that they share with Leighton Buzzard Football Club. The key barriers to club growth are highlighted as internal funding, the cost of pitch hire and the amount of pitches that are available for training.

11.19 Shefford and Sandy Hockey Club – like Leighton Buzzard HC, the club rent pitches and do not own or manage their own facilities. They consider the quality of the pitch to be average to good, but raise concerns that they do not have access to changing facilities at the school. Instead refreshments etc are served at the nearby village hall. They suggest that ideally, they would like a dedicated club house to support the growth of the club. The club raise particular concerns about the cost of pitch hire and indicate that they have recently lost members as a result of high match fees. Access to pitches is also a key concern, with difficulties encountered for both matches and training. Competition from football clubs is thought to be a key reason for this. As well as issues with access to pitches, the club cite falling membership and a shortage of coaches and volunteers as key barriers to ongoing growth.

National Governing Body Perspective

11.20 England Hockey believes that facilities are arguably one of the most important assets that a club can have. The National Hockey Facility Strategy – The Right Facilities in the Right Places (2012) provides strategic direction and guidance for the provision of new and maintenance and improvement of existing facilities and highlights that with the increasing importance of AGPs for other sports, and the growing rivalry for use of these facilities, it is essential that sufficient appropriate facilities for hockey are secured and protected.

11.21 The strategy sets out the following methodology for evaluating the need for hockey pitches:

- supply and demand – what issues should be addressed, including the amount and quality of nearby facilities
- strategic considerations – for example whether the facility will serve as a venue to accommodate play as part of the single system pathway
- type and level of use – what will be the main use of the pitch and what standard of hockey will be played
- amount of use

11.22 The strategy indicates that there are approximately 1000 sand based / dressed pitches and a further 50 water-based pitches across England. Of these, 12% are over 15 years old and 32% are over 10 years old. It indicates that the key challenges for hockey clubs in relation to facilities are:

- access
- costs

- quality
- storage
- poor / lack of programming

11.23 The strategy sets the target of increasing participation by an additional 10,000 adult players and 32500 junior players nationwide by 2013. This equates to one or two teams per club. It is anticipated that this will largely be met through the growth in existing hockey bases rather than the establishment of new clubs. It also highlights the importance of retaining existing participants and indicates that one of the key ways to do this by providing a quality playing experience.

11.24 As well as growing participation at club level, there are two other initiatives that might impact upon the future demand for hockey, specifically:

- **Back to Hockey:** A scheme providing informal sessions to encourage women to take up hockey. Following the informal sessions, participants are invited to join the club and:
- **Rush Hockey:** This initiative is currently being piloted. It is a small sided form of hockey (4 or 5 players) that can take place on any surface. It is being tested with commercial partners and is likely to roll out following this. It is not anticipated that this new form of the game will immediately generate additional club based players, but will encourage people who are not currently playing hockey to play. It requires a different type of facility and there is potential for this type of hockey to be run from a club base as a commercial venture, or from leisure centres.

11.25 More locally in Central Bedfordshire both hockey clubs have experienced growth over recent years. Given the size of the local catchment area (and the fact that there are also strong hockey clubs in Luton and Bedford) participation levels are considered to be good. In addition to formal hockey structures, a rush hockey programme is also being run at Flitwick Leisure Centre, which may in the longer term encourage new participants into the game. This area was identified as having the propensity to participate in hockey, based upon the demographic profile of the area.

11.26 Supporting the issues raised by the clubs, England Hockey make the following points relating to club based hockey:

- **Leighton Buzzard Hockey Club** has a good relationship with Van Dyke School. The club are able to access the changing facilities and these are segregated from the main school. The club have a club house but this is cited several miles away in Leighton Buzzard Town Centre. A new clubhouse, (on the school site) including a social facility and meeting room would be of significant benefit to the club and would improve the financial sustainability of the club. England Hockey research also indicates that a club house improves the social scene of the club, which in turn attracts new players to the game. There is potential that a new club house could link with other sports that also use facilities at the school. The potential growth of Leighton Buzzard as a town may see increased membership of the club, who are keen to expand and in particular would like to run junior sections on a different day. Historically, the club have struggled to access facilities at appropriate times for training as they compete with football. It was hoped that the new 3g pitch at Cedars

School would reduce this, however some competition from football still remains. The facility is at capacity at peak times, however programming fixtures to ensure that all teams can be accommodated is considered sufficient to meet current needs. It should however be noted that the club are approaching capacity and that growth aspirations, coupled with population growth, may see a requirement for access to additional pitches.

- **Shefford and Sandy Hockey Club** currently plays at Sandy Upper School. The facility was refurbished in 2008 and is of high quality and the club are keen to grow as a club. Like Leighton Buzzard Hockey Club, the existing club is approaching capacity at their current site. Increases in participation, as well as population growth may therefore see a requirement for additional pitches.

11.27 In addition to issues experienced by clubs, there have been no coach education courses due to the lack of appropriate facilities and it is hoped that a new club house could also be used to address this issue.

11.28 There is no hockey use of the sand based AGP facilities in Dunstable. Luton Vagrants used to be based at this site (2 male teams) however they have recently moved to Luton Sixth Form College and no longer require use of the facility at Dunstable Leisure Centre.

Adequacy of Pitches

11.29 Towards a Level Playing Field requires the comparison of the number of teams wishing to play at peak time, with the availability of pitches. The new methodology also considers the total use of facilities at peak time (in terms of number of hours across all sports) however this was released following the preparation of this assessment and is therefore not included.

11.30 Hockey operates more flexibly than most sports, with fixtures typically played over the course of a day with push back times to suit pitch availability. The nature of synthetic pitches means that extensive use of the pitch does not have the same impact as it would on grass. As highlighted, most clubs however report issues with access to training facilities rather than concerns about securing appropriate match venues.

11.31 Table 11.5 summarises the current situation at peak time, considering scenarios at each individual AGP that is suitable for hockey and also when using hockey pitches interchangeably.

Table 11.5 – Towards a Level Playing Field Calculations - Hockey

Calculation	Pitches Suitable for Hockey	Sandy and Shefford Hockey Club	Van Dyke Upper School (Leighton Buzzard HC)
Number of AGPS	3	1	1
Capacity of pitches on peak day (assumes 4 matches per pitch)	12	4	4
Main Peak Day	Saturday	Saturday	Saturday

Peak Demand for Teams (assumes all senior (except veterans) play on Saturday)	17	9	8
Home matches at peak time	9	5	4
Supply / Demand at Peak Time	0	-1 pitch	Adequate

11.32 On the basis that each pitch can take 4 matches per day, overall within Central Bedfordshire there are enough pitches to accommodate match play at peak times.

11.33 When looking at the club specific requirements however, it is clear that both clubs are accommodating high levels of play at their club bases and that there is insufficient capacity at either site to meet the needs of the resident club. This is reflected in the need for teams from both clubs to travel to second venues on occasion. There is sufficient provision in Central Bedfordshire as a whole as there is a pitch at Dunstable, which has sufficient capacity to accommodate the overspill from either club, however this is not located appropriately to do so. This pitch currently receives limited use for hockey and this is not anticipated to change in future years. Pitch capacity for both clubs is therefore a key issue.

11.34 The reliance upon pitches outside of the area is an overall concern, as while the clubs currently have access to these facilities at appropriate times, there is no long term security over these facilities either through the Council or agreements with the clubs. While provision is therefore currently sufficient, the long term adequacy of provision (due to the reliance upon sites outside of Central Bedfordshire outside of the club base could be questioned).

Latent Demand and Team Generation Rates (TGR)

11.35 It is difficult to estimate precise levels of latent demand because of the sub regional nature of hockey. Sport England Active People Survey and Market Segmentation data suggests that latent demand is low, however there is also relatively low participation in terms of the proportion of people playing hockey.

11.36 The Team Generation Rates set out in Table 11.6 enable comparison with national averages. They demonstrate that participation in hockey is above national averages and suggest that there is limited latent demand. It must be noted however that national averages should be treated with caution as the Sport England database containing these figures has not been updated for several years. To facilitate further comparison, TGRs for Cheshire West and Chester (an authority considered to be a nearest neighbour of Central Bedfordshire) are also provided (extracted from Cheshire West and Chester PPS – 2011). Participation in Central Bedfordshire is slightly below levels in Cheshire West and Chester.

Table 11.6 – TGRs for Hockey

Age Group	National Average	Central Bedfordshire	Cheshire West and Chester
Senior Male	1:7944	1:4916	1:2,540
Junior Male	1:4304	1:3828	1:2,106
Senior Female	1:8943	1:4823	1:3,972

Junior Female	1:5299	1:3906	1:2,056
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Meeting Future Demand

11.37 TGRs can be used to provide an indication of the likely impact of population growth on demand for hockey. As set out in Section 3, population projections indicate that the total population of Central Bedfordshire will grow significantly.

11.38 Application of the current Team Generation Rates to future population projections indicates that despite the overall high levels of population growth, this will have limited impact upon the number of hockey teams in Central Bedfordshire, with no additional teams created. This is due in part to the ageing population, but occurs primarily as a result of the low proportion of residents that participate in hockey. The number of participants in hockey will however increase (just not substantially enough to create an additional team). This is summarised in Table 11.7.

Table 11.7 – Impact of Future Population Growth for Hockey

Sport and Age Groups	Number of teams in age group within the area	Current population in age group within the area	Future population in age group within the area	Current TGR	Population Change in Age Group	Potential Change in Team Numbers in Age Group
Hockey Senior Men (16-55yrs)	9	44241	49169	4916	1792	0
Hockey Senior Women (16-55yrs)	10	48234	50163	4823	1929	0
Hockey Junior Boys (11-15yrs)	2	7657	8513	3828	856	0
Hockey Junior Girls (11-15yrs)	2	7811	8685	3906	874	0

11.39 England Hockey does however have aspirations to increase participation in hockey. In addition to targeting growth in the existing club (around one to 2 teams per club over the next five years). Both clubs highlight aspirations to increase the number of teams that are run, including the provision of more junior, senior and veterans teams. They would anticipate that growth in participation would focus around the existing club structure rather than the creation of new clubs in the area.

11.40 England Hockey have also introduced several initiatives designed to attract new players to the game, specifically:

- Back to Hockey
- Rush Hockey

11.41 Analysis of the market segmentation data suggests that Jackie is particularly keen in playing hockey but currently has a low participation profile. The characteristics of Jackie mean

that the Back to Hockey Programme may be particularly successful. This is currently being tried out at Flitwick Leisure Centre as set out earlier in this section.

Adequacy of AGPs

11.42 As set out in this and previous sections, AGPs are essential for football as well as hockey and it is important that needs of the two sports are balanced. The key concerns of hockey clubs relate to access to pitches for training and the competing demands for pitches between football and hockey teams.

11.43 Section 7 has summarised the need for AGPs according to the theoretical modelling and highlighted that there is considered to be enough sand based pitches. Added to this, FPM analysis indicates that overall there are sufficient facilities in Central Bedfordshire, although both clubs are at capacity on their current facilities. The pitch in Dunstable is not used for hockey and is not appropriately located to function as an overspill for the existing clubs.

11.44 Significant growth in the proportion of residents playing hockey may see a requirement for increased provision, as there is little scope for additional teams within the existing infrastructure. In the short term, clubs however identify the need for improvements to the club bases and these are perceived important if either club is to attract more players.

Summary and Key Issues

Key issues to address – Hockey
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are two hockey clubs in Central Bedfordshire. Analysis of participation trends demonstrates evidence of significant recent expansion. Despite this, the current and potential playing profile of the area is relatively limited, with hockey likely to attract less than 1% of residents of Central Bedfordshire, even when taking into account latent demand• Both hockey clubs are dissatisfied with the current levels of provision in Central Bedfordshire. There are concerns about both access to changing and social facilities, with neither club having a dedicated on site clubhouse, as well as issues with access to facilities for training and matches. Both clubs highlight challenges of competing demands with football.• Analysis of use of the facilities at a peak time confirms that there are enough pitches overall to accommodate demand within Central Bedfordshire, however this is skewed by the presence of the pitch at Dunstable Leisure Centre, which is not currently used at all for hockey although it has a sand based surface. It is not located appropriately to function as an overspill facility for either of the two existing hockey clubs. While overall there are sufficient pitches, both clubs are at / nearing capacity at their club bases, meaning that access to overspill facilities is essential if levels of activity are to be maintained. Currently the only availability additional facilities are outside of Central Bedfordshire and as participation grows, the ongoing availability of these sites is essential. The surfacing of these sites is however out of the control of the hockey club and any change from the current sand based surfaces may have significant impact for the clubs in Central Bedfordshire.• Demand modelling (Sport England FPM / Active Places Power) highlights that the supply of AGPs is broadly in line with demand. While FA modelling identifies

Key issues to address – Hockey

shortfalls, this primarily relates to 3g pitches designed for football rather than hockey. Total demand for hockey pitches is equivalent to 1.7 pitches across Central Bedfordshire, meaning that the current stock is sufficient. This does not take into account the strong membership that both clubs currently have and their local growth aspirations

- The significant population growth that is projected to occur will have minimal impact on the demand for hockey and TGRs suggest that no additional teams will be created just from population growth. This can partially be attributed to the small proportion of people that play hockey and also to the impact of the ageing population profile.
- While population growth alone will have limited impact, schemes designed to increase participation in hockey may generate demand for further facilities in the longer term. These include Back to Hockey and Rush Hockey, both of which are currently being trialled at Flitwick Leisure Centre.

11.45 The above analysis leads to the following priorities for hockey:

Ensure that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

- To support hockey development, ensure that the surfaces currently used for hockey are retained as sand based pitches.
- Monitor club activity and support the provision of additional sand based facilities (linked with the clubs) if significant participation increases occur and / or if issues are identified with pitches used outside of Central Bedfordshire
- Work with providers of sand based surfaces to ensure that access for hockey clubs is prioritised
- Ensure that the impact of housing growth is taken into account and that contributions towards hockey are required.

Ensure that facilities are of sufficient quality to meet current and future demand

- Support aspirations for the provision of on site club houses and changing accommodation to facilitate club development. There may be opportunities to share this with other sports as part of the process of securing formal use of school sites (see football recommendations)
- Maintain the quality of existing sand based AGPs, ensuring that facilities are refurbished every 10 years

Promote increases in participation and the creation of sustainable clubs

- Support the introduction of new forms of hockey through the provision of appropriate facilities for the new form of the game

12.Outdoor Bowls

12.1 This section evaluates the adequacy of facilities for outdoor bowls across Central Bedfordshire and provides:

- An overview of supply and demand for greens
- An evaluation of the overall adequacy of greens to meet demand
- key issues and strategic priorities the strategy will address

Outdoor Bowls in Central Bedfordshire - An Overview

Supply

12.2 There are 19 bowling greens in Central Bedfordshire. The distribution of these facilities is summarised in Table 12.1.

Table 12.1 – Bowling greens in Central Bedfordshire

Area	Number of Greens	Facilities	Bowling Greens Per 1000 Population
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	3	Dunstable Town BC, Houghton Regis BC, Kingsbury BC	0.06
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	2	Leighton Buzzard BC, Linslade BC	0.04
North	14	Fairfield BC, Pottton BC, Shefford BC, Stotfold Bowls Club, Barton le Clay BC, Henlow Park BC, Langford BC, Maulden BC, Biggleswade Town BC, Sandy Conservatives BC, Sandy Town BC, St Andrews BC, Ampthill BC, Flitwick BC	0.09
Central Bedfordshire	19		0.07

12.3 As can be seen in Table 12.1, when taking into account the size of the population, provision is lowest in Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South and highest in the North Placemaking area. Notably, most of the bowling greens in the North Placemaking area are to the east– just four are situated in the west.

12.4 The majority of bowling greens are located in the Major Service Centres (11) and there are just five in the Minor Service Centres, with the other sites situated in Larger Villages. There are no Small Villages that contain a bowling green.

Quality of Facilities

12.5 The quality of existing playing and ancillary facilities was investigated by site visits as well as by club questionnaires. As visits to some sites were undertaken outside of the main bowling season, the site visits should be considered to provide an overview of quality issues only. Key issues raised include:

- all sites were highly rated, with scores varying only between 82% and 100% - the average score achieved was 92%, suggesting that provision is of consistently high standard;
- all sites were described as being in good condition. The grass cover and green quality were the most highly scoring attributes; and
- where bowling greens were marked down, this tended to be on the condition of the surroundings (paths / boundaries etc) rather than the quality of the actual green itself.

Demand

12.6 Table 3.5 indicated that according to the Active People Survey, nationally, between 2005/6 (Active People Survey 1) and 2011/2012 (Active People Survey 6) participation in bowls has declined from 3.13% to 2.45%.

12.7 From the Active People Survey and Market Segmentation (explained in Section 3), it is possible to evaluate how many residents of Central Bedfordshire do participate in bowls and how many of the population would like to participate in bowls. It is also possible to understand how this varies across different part of Central Bedfordshire.

12.8 Map 12.1 shows spatially the percentage of the Central Bedfordshire population who, based on the Active People survey findings, are currently participating in bowls. Chart 12.1 sets out the profile of current participation in bowls across the 19 market segments. In total, analysis reveals that there are 1892 people who play bowls, which represents less than 0.1% of the adult population.

Map 12.1: Percentage and location of the adult population who do play bowls

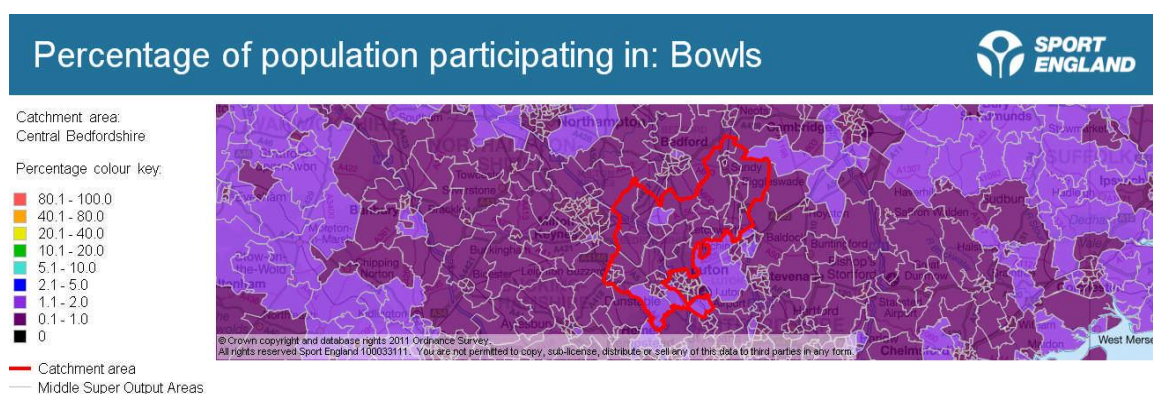
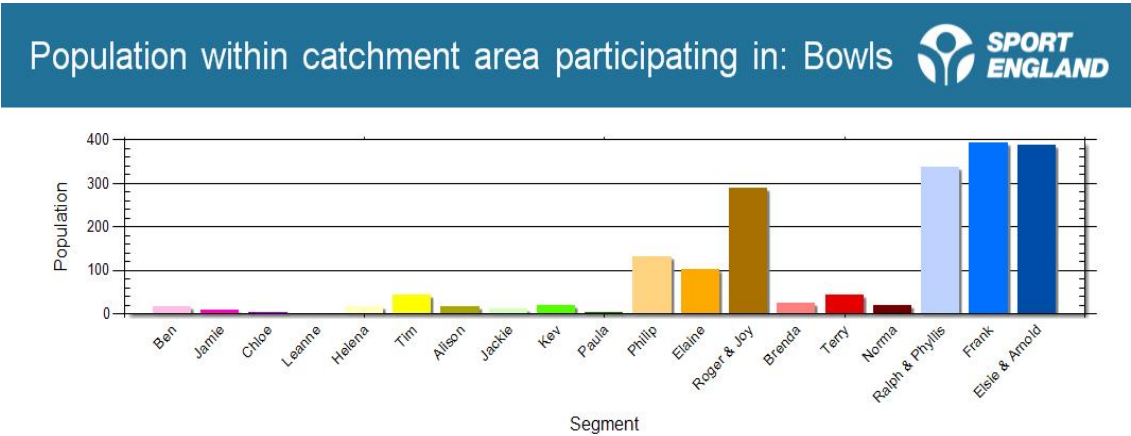


Chart 12.1: Profile of the market segments who participate in bowls in Central Bedfordshire



12.9 It indicates that the proportion of residents currently playing bowls varies slightly across the area, and is marginally higher in the south of Central Bedfordshire (despite fewer bowling greens in this area).

12.10 Chart 12.1 indicates that in general, bowlers are from a different demographic to other sports considered within this assessment. The main participants are Frank (392), Elsie and Arnold (388), Ralph and Phyllis (338), Roger and Joy (289). All of these sectors have a higher average age than participants for other pitch sports.

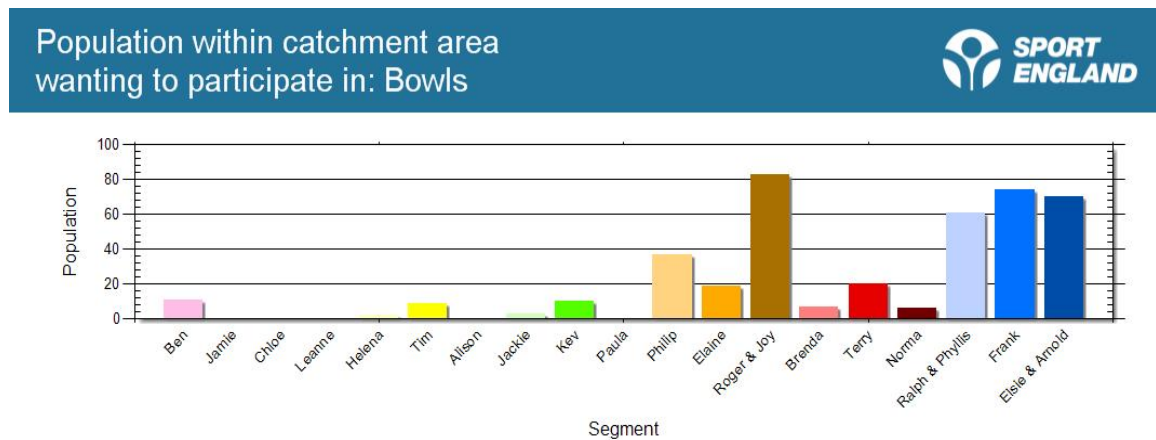
12.11 In comparison to the number of people that do play bowls in Central Bedfordshire, the amount of latent demand is relatively small. 412 residents would like to play bowls that do not currently play and these residents are distributed evenly across the area. These residents are primarily in the same groups as those that already play (Roger and Joy (83), Frank (74), Elsie and Arnold (70)) however interest is also expressed by a small number of residents in the Philip category (37).

12.12 The Active People analysis of the percentage of adults who would like to play bowls is represented in map and bar chart form and set out in Map 12.2 and Chart 12.2.

Map 12.2: Percentage and location of the adult population who would like to play bowls.



Chart 12.2: Profile of the market segments who would like to play bowls



12.13 Table 12.2 summarises the above information, setting out the current proportion of residents that participate in bowls according to Active People and also the number of residents that would like to play. It should be noted that this refers to data collated through the Active People Survey only.

Table 12.2 – Participation in Bowls

DO PLAY POPULATION	% of Adult Population	WOULD LIKE TO PLAY POPULATION	% of Adult Population	Total Number and % who do/would play
1862	0.09%	412	0.02%	2274 (1.1%)

Current Participation

12.14 There are bowling clubs associated with all existing bowling greens in Central Bedfordshire. Reflecting the distribution of bowling greens, access to clubs is therefore highest in the north and lowest in Leighton Buzzard and the rural south. Members of all clubs participate in both separate gender and mixed competitions and in single and doubles events.

Club Feedback

12.15 Clubs were contacted by telephone and / or electronic questionnaire and feedback was provided with regards participation in bowls, as well as the quality and quantity of greens in the Central Bedfordshire

12.16 For those responding, consultation revealed that;

- participation is static at all clubs. The average club membership is now 69. For those clubs responding, out of 561 members in total, just four are junior members, indicating that there are significant opportunities for growth if new segments of the

population could be attracted to the sport. Just under half of responding clubs have members with disabilities, although some issues relating to access for wheelchairs arise because of this; and

- all clubs currently have capacity for new members. All responding clubs indicate that they are actively seeking new members and almost all suggest that they have tried to do this through open days / leaflets / advertisements. The only barriers to growth referenced are funding and finance and issues with falling membership. All clubs raise similar issues and there is no evidence of variations in opinion in different areas of Central Bedfordshire.

Perceptions of Quality

12.17 Overall, consultation demonstrates a high level of satisfaction with facilities for bowls across Central Bedfordshire and only two responding clubs indicate that they are not happy with the facilities (Henlow BC and Sandy BC). Both of these attribute their issues to the number of greens that are available of the right quality.

12.18 There is no evidence of variation in opinion between different parts of Central Bedfordshire and quality is perceived consistently highly across all three Placemaking areas. The majority of greens are managed and maintained by the local clubs and associated volunteers.

12.19 Almost all clubs rate the quality of their facilities as good overall and the majority of factors considered are also rated as good. The playing surface and maintenance of greens are held in particularly high esteem. Alongside the pavilion, car parking is the lowest rated issue by clubs. A breakdown of average scores attributed to each quality factor can be found in Table 12.3.

Table 12.3 – Perceived Quality of Bowling Greens

Playing Surface	Maintenance	Dog Fouling	Litter	Overall Quality	Pavilion / Changing	Car Parking	Value for Money
90%	96%	97%	100%	93%	70%	77%	80%

12.20 Only three clubs highlight specific concerns requiring immediate action;

- Biggleswade St Andrews Bowls Club – toilets required adjacent to green. A new club house adjacent to the existing tennis club is currently being built to address this concern, which is currently a barrier to increasing the membership;
- Leighton Buzzard Bowls Club – existing pavilion requires upgrading and there is also a need for disabled toilets; and
- Potton BC also highlighted a concern about the long term future of their bowling green due to a recent change in the freehold owner.

Accessibility

12.21 Consultation with bowling clubs reveals that most members choose clubs relatively close to their home. On average, 55% of club members live within 1 mile of the green and only 9% travel further than five miles.

12.22 Current travel patterns are however in part likely to be reflective of the distribution of current facilities. i.e. people are forced to travel to reach a bowling green where there is not one located close to their home. The age profile of participants in bowls means that access may be more important, and many may expect local facilities, or require greens that are accessible by public transport. Map 12.3 therefore illustrates the location of each of the greens and includes a 3 mile catchment area.

Map 12.3 – Bowling Greens in Central Bedfordshire

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Meeting Current and Future Demand

12.23 There are no supply and demand models for bowls greens and it is therefore not appropriate to assess demand by applying the methodology used by other sports or by the use of TGRs.

12.24 Recent participation trends (existing club memberships) suggest that participation in bowls is stagnant. Reflecting this, all clubs indicate that they have capacity for additional members, and the flexibility of fixtures means that there is scope to accommodate additional teams on existing greens. It must be noted however that more than half of all members of bowling clubs in Central Bedfordshire travel less than 1 mile to reach their green and the vast majority of residents in Central Bedfordshire are outside this catchment. This may infer that the provision of additional greens would help to address latent demand and to encourage new players to the sport.

12.25 Although there is sufficient capacity within the existing stock to meet the needs of current bowlers, the ageing population suggests that the number of people who may have the

propensity to participate in bowls is likely to grow in future years. Increases in the proportion of residents participating may further increase demand.

12.26 Table 3.5 highlighted that there will be significant growth in the number of residents falling into the older age groups by 2028. The potential impact of this is summarised in Table 12.4. It must be noted that these figures are based upon the assumption that bowls players fall into the age group of 60+. While it is recognised that this is not entirely accurate, membership figures, consultation and the Sport England Market Segmentation indicate that this enables a realistic estimate of future participation to be undertaken.

Table 12.4 – Calculation of Potential Growth in Bowls

Current Situation	
Area considered	Calculation
Current Population Aged 60+	55270
Current Membership of Bowling Clubs	1311 (based upon average membership of 69)
% of Current Population Participating in Bowls	2.3%
Future Situation based upon above figures	
Future Population aged 60+	75910
Assumed Future Population in Bowls (participation remains constant)	2.3%
Potential Future Participants in Bowls	1746
Likely members per club (assumes no new club)	92

*assumes average membership for all clubs to enable inclusion of totals for clubs where exact figures are not known

12.27 Table 12.4 indicates that assuming participation rates remain constant, demand for bowls is likely to increase by 435 players as a direct result of population growth. Assuming that membership of all greens is even, this would mean a membership of 92 players at each bowling club. An average of ten players per team would therefore mean that at least 5 games per week would be taking place per week (in addition to training and taking into account home and away fixtures) and greens would still be able to accommodate further play.

12.28 This suggests therefore that there is just sufficient stock to of facilities to meet current and future demand, based on existing participation rates and the assumption that all greens are retained. The higher levels of membership are likely to maximise the sustainability of clubs.

12.29 Future participation in bowls is only likely to grow significantly however if a more aggressive approach to recruitment is taken by clubs and governing bodies. There is little marketing of existing opportunities outside of word of mouth and leafleting currently and there has been little growth in the sport. If marketing / promotion was to be successful and latent

demand and participation increases were realised, demand could increase significantly and new provision may be required.

12.30 Active People and Market Segmentation analysis quotes higher figures for current participation in bowls (1862 people) and indicates that growth in participation (excluding population increases) could see this rise to 2274 people. Table 12.5 summarises the calculations if these figures are used for baseline analysis and also highlight the implications of population growth. It demonstrates that the increases in participation would lead to significant questions about the capacity of bowling greens to meet demand and reinforces the impact that growth in the proportion of people playing bowls could have on the number of greens that are required.

Table 12.5 – Implications of High Participation Rates on the adequacy of bowling greens

Scenario	Baseline figures from Active People Used	Potential Latent Demand (Active People) realised
Current Population Aged 60+	55270	55270
Current Membership of Bowling Clubs	1862 (according to Active People)	2264 (according to Active People including latent demand)
% of Current Population Participating in Bowls	3.3%	4%
Future Situation based upon above figures		
Future Population aged 60+	75910	75910
Assumed Future Population in Bowls (participation remains constant)	3.3%	4%
Potential Future Participants in Bowls	2505	3036
Likely members per club (assumes no new club)	132	160

Summary and Key Issues

Key issues to address – Bowls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are currently 19 bowling greens across Central Bedfordshire. Provision is highest in the north (particularly to the east) and lowest in Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South. In quantitative terms, there are no supply and demand models for bowls greens and it is therefore not appropriate to assess demand by applying the methodology used by other sports.

- Analysis of capacity of existing facilities suggests that all clubs are able to accommodate additional members, and there is scope to accommodate more teams on most greens. Adding to this, there is no evidence of growth in bowls with all responding clubs indicating that participation is static despite efforts to attract new players.
- Almost all clubs are satisfied with the quality of existing greens and this was also reinforced through site visits, which reveal that facilities are well maintained and all greens are in good condition. Just three clubs identify site specific issues requiring improvement and only two clubs are not happy with the overall stock of facilities (attributing this to the number of greens of the right quality).
- The average membership of bowls clubs in Central Bedfordshire is 69, representing a rate of 2.3% of residents over the age of 60. In contrast to pitch sports, the ageing population may see bowls become more popular in future years, as market segmentation demonstrates that it is the older age groups who have a higher propensity to participate. This growth alone could generate additional 435 bowls players, meaning that clubs would have on average 92 members and supply would be much more closely matched with demand. Sport England Active people surveys however suggest that current demand is higher and also highlight the potential to increase participation, potentially up to 4%. If these targets were to be achieved, added to the anticipated impact of participation increases, the current stock of bowling greens would become insufficient.
- The changing population profile and the propensity of the older age groups to play bowls means that there is a significant opportunity to promote the sport. While overall provision is currently sufficient, regardless of current capacity, it should be noted that residents expect these facilities to be local to their home (on average, 55% of members are within 1 mile of their club) and many residents are outside of this distance to a current facility.

12.31 The key issues raised identify the following priorities:

Ensure that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

- Protect all current bowling greens
- Retain the existing amount of facilities. New bowling greens are not required to meet current (or future) demand unless expressed demand is identified in an area further than 1 mile from an existing bowling green. New provision should be demand rather than supply led and facilities should only be developed where demand has already been identified. Instead, improvements to existing bowling greens should be prioritised
- Monitor the impact of attempts to increase participation as well as population growth on club membership.

Ensure that facilities are of sufficient quality to meet current and future demand

- Seek to maintain the quality of facilities and where issues are identified, improve the quality and consistency of bowling greens

Promote increases in participation and the creation of sustainable clubs

Support clubs to proactively increase participation and membership. To maximise the sustainability of bowls as a sport, efforts should focus on recruitment of junior players as well as adult and veterans.

13. Tennis

13.1 This section evaluates the adequacy of facilities for tennis across Central Bedfordshire and provides:

- An overview of supply and demand for courts
- An evaluation of the overall adequacy of courts to meet demand
- key issues and strategic priorities the strategy will address

Tennis in Central Bedfordshire - An Overview

Supply

13.2 There are 75 formal tennis courts located at public venues across Central Bedfordshire. These courts are found at 28 sites and circa 50% are floodlit. In addition to these sites, there are some Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) distributed across Central Bedfordshire, which are on occasion used for tennis as well as for other sports. These have not been included within the count of tennis courts but are important venues, and some include markings for tennis.

13.3 Table 13.1 outlines the spread of tennis courts across Central Bedfordshire. It can be seen that, in terms of the number of courts, provision is substantially higher in the North Placemaking area than in other areas. Taking into account the size of the population in each area, the distribution of courts is even across Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South and the North Placemaking areas but is lower in Dunstable and Houghton Regis.

Table 13.1 – Distribution of Tennis Courts across Central Bedfordshire

Area	Total Courts	Floodlit	Non Club Based	Courts per 1000 Population
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	10	60%	2	0.19
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	17	29%	3	0.31
North	48	50%	16	0.32

13.4 The majority of tennis courts (57%) are located in the Major Service Centres and 22% are situated in the Large Villages. The stock of courts in the Minor Service Centres and Small Villages is much lower. The largest settlements without dedicated tennis facilities are Houghton Regis, Caddington and Marston Moretaine.

13.5 While provision is highest in the Major Service Centres, these settlements also contain the highest proportion of courts that are not floodlit. This is largely due to the provision of pay and play (and /or free access) facilities in these settlements.

13.6 In addition to the above facilities, there are several multi-purpose facilities (primarily located at school sites) that are used for tennis. There are also 43 courts at upper schools (excluding those with formal community use access arrangements which are included in totals in Table 13.1) and several middle schools also have markings for tennis on their Multi Use Games Areas. There are public facilities at Heath and Reach and Arlesey.

13.7 There are also three courts located at two commercial venues located within Central Bedfordshire, specifically:

- Champneys, Henlow
- Luton Hoo Spa

Demand

Active People and Market Segmentation (Sport England)

13.8 Table 3.5 indicated that according to the Active People Survey, nationally, between 2005/6 (Active People Survey 1) and 2011/2012 (Active People Survey 6) participation in tennis decreased from 1.12% to 1.03%.

13.9 Using the Active People Survey and Market Segmentation, it is possible to evaluate how many residents of Central Bedfordshire do participate in tennis and how many of the population would like to play. It is also possible to understand how this varies across different parts of Central Bedfordshire.

13.10 Map 13.1 shows spatially the percentage of the Central Bedfordshire population who, based on the Active People survey findings, are currently playing tennis. Chart 13.1 sets out the profile of current participation in tennis across the 19 market segments.

Map 13.1: Percentage and location of the adult population who do play tennis

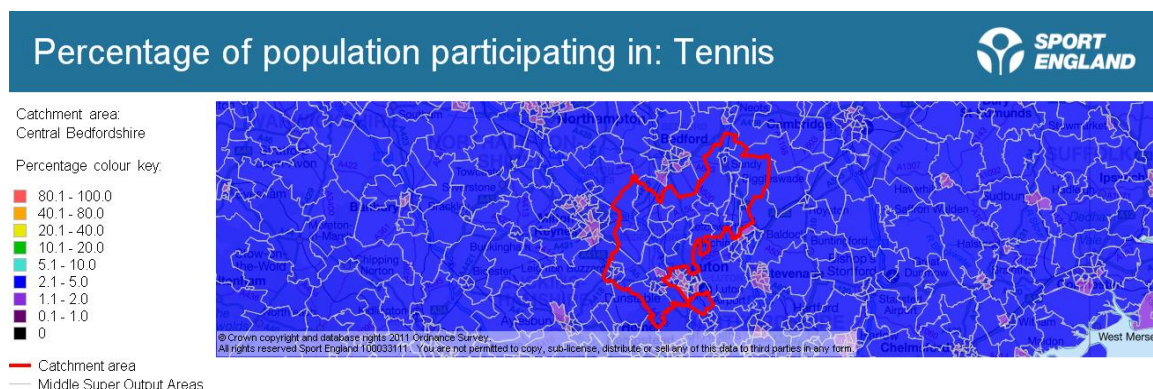
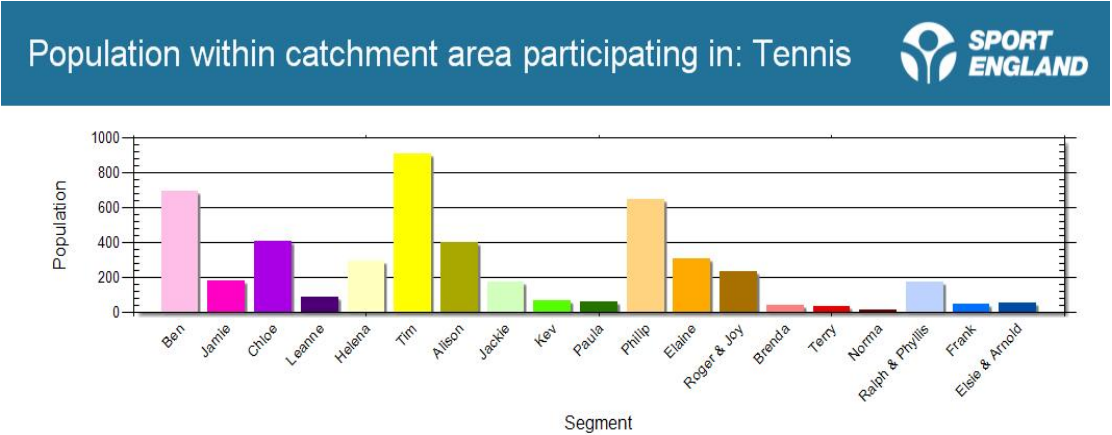


Chart 13.1: Profile of the market segments who play tennis in Central Bedfordshire



13.11 As can be seen, participation in tennis is consistent across Central Bedfordshire, with between 2.1 and 5% playing in most areas. The only exception to this is in North Dunstable.

13.12 There is a much wider spread of participants than in most other sports and more than half of all of the market segments play tennis. The dominant market segment groups are Ben (694), Philip (650), Chloe (468), Alison (400), Elaine (309) and Roger (234), meaning that tennis attracts different residents to other sports considered in this document.

13.13 The Active People analysis of the percentage of adults who would like to play tennis is represented in map and bar chart form and set out in Map 13.2 and Chart 13.2.

Map 13.2 Percentage and location of the adult population who would like to play Tennis

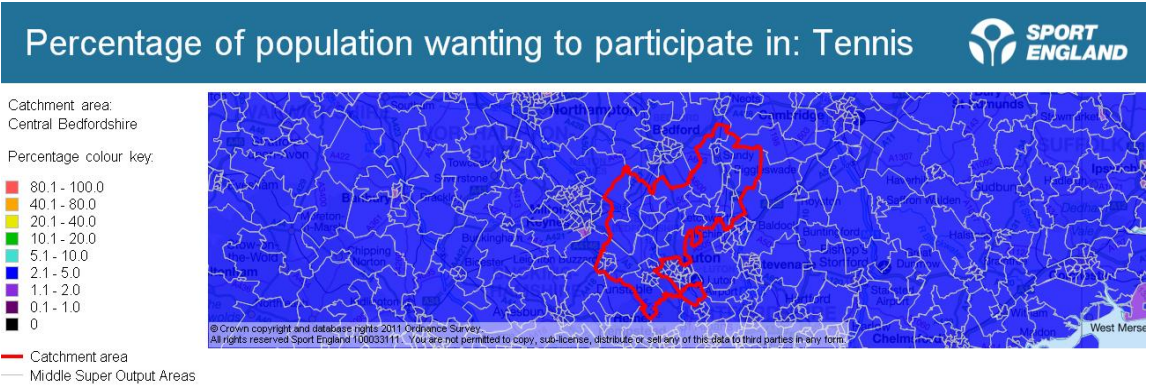
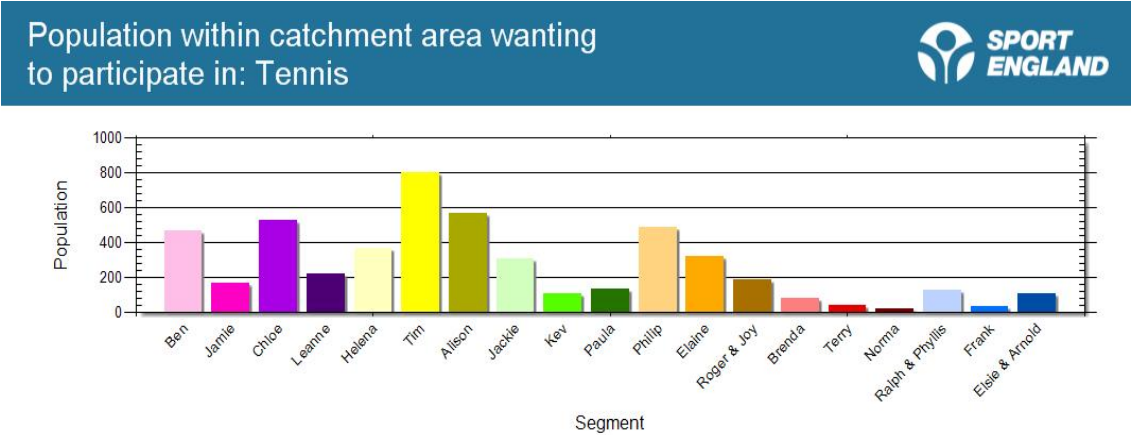


Chart 13.2: Profile of the market segments who would like to play Tennis



13.14 The map and bar chart demonstrate that the number of people who would like to play tennis is between 2.1% and 5% in all parts of Central Bedfordshire. Analysis of exact figures demonstrates that the number of people interested in playing tennis is higher than the amount of people that do.

13.15 Potential participants are evenly dispersed geographically, but are spread across numerous different market segments. The highest levels of latent demand are for Tim, Ben, Alison and Philip. This spread of potential participants as well as high levels of latent demand mean that there may be significant opportunities to introduce new tennis players to the game.

13.16 Table 13.2 summarises the above statistics, providing an indication of the exact number of people who currently play and would like to play, according to Sport England Market Segmentation and Active People Surveys.

Table 13.2 – Participation in Tennis

DO PLAY POPULATION	% of Adult Population	WOULD LIKE TO PLAY POPULATION	% of Adult Population	Total Number and % who do/would play
4826	2.44%	5082	2.5%	9908 (5%)

Existing Participation - Clubs

13.17 Around 75% of identified public courts are associated with tennis clubs. The tennis clubs in each Placemaking area are summarised in Table 13.3.

Table 13.3 – Tennis Clubs in Central Bedfordshire

Area	Club
Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Dunstable TC
Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	Linslade TC, Leighton Buzzard TC, Slip End TC, Studham TC, Eaton Bray TC
North	Barton TC, Westoning TC, Langford TC, Pottton TC, Flitwick & Ampthill TC, Toddington TC, Biggleswade Conservative Club TC, Cranfield University TC, Eversholt TC, Harlington TC

13.18 All of the above clubs operate on a membership basis. According to the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), the following clubs are registered as offering pay and play access:

- Biggleswade Conservative Tennis Club
- Barton le Clay Tennis Club
- Dunstable Tennis Club
- Leighton Buzzard Tennis Club
- Linslade Tennis Club
- Slip End Tennis Club
- Toddington Tennis Club
- Studham Tennis Club

13.19 Access is available free of charge at the following sites:

- Bennetts Memorial Park (Dunstable)
- Pages Park (Leighton Buzzard)
- Mentmore Recreation Ground (Leighton Buzzard)
- Biggleswade Tennis Courts
- Ampthill Tennis Courts

Quality of Provision

13.20 The quality of existing playing and ancillary facilities was investigated by site inspections and also informed by consultations. The following key issues were identified;

Site Visits

13.21 The quality of tennis courts is less consistent than other types of facility. There is a greater discrepancy in overall scores and examples of very poor and very good provision. This is evidenced by the range of scores achieved, which vary from 32% to 100%. In general, the facilities to the south of Central Bedfordshire appear to be of poorer quality than those in the north and it is clear that the higher quality facilities are predominantly associated with the large clubs.

13.22 The key issues identified were the condition of fencing, equipment (nets) and surfacing. Spectator provision, storage and litter and graffiti were the areas achieving the most positive scores.

13.23 With regards specific quality issues, site visits revealed particular concerns about public facilities, notably:

- Tilsworth - untidy court in poor condition
- Billington Tennis Court - poor court with an uneven surface

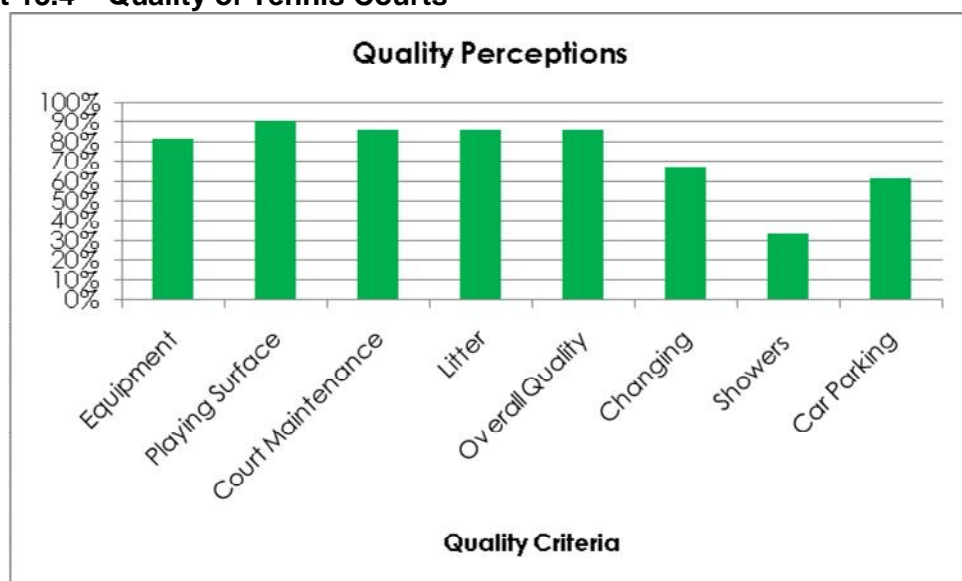
Club Consultation

13.24 Consultation with clubs revealed the following issues with regards the quality of facilities:

- Only 28% of responding clubs are satisfied with facilities for tennis in Central Bedfordshire. Clubs that are dissatisfied are evenly spread. Reasons behind the dissatisfaction are split between the lack of courts, court quality, poor quality changing pavilions and a lack of indoor courts.
- There is a positive view on the quality of facilities overall, although 4 clubs indicate that quality impacts on their ability to function
- Several clubs identified site specific priorities – these primarily relate to similar issues - resurfacing / floodlighting / changing pavilions.

13.25 Chart 13.4 illustrates the views of clubs in relation to each of the factors considered. It indicates that access to parking, changing and showers are poorly rated features for tennis clubs. Court surface and maintenance are the most highly rated elements overall, although it must be noted that this disguises several site specific concerns which will be explored later.

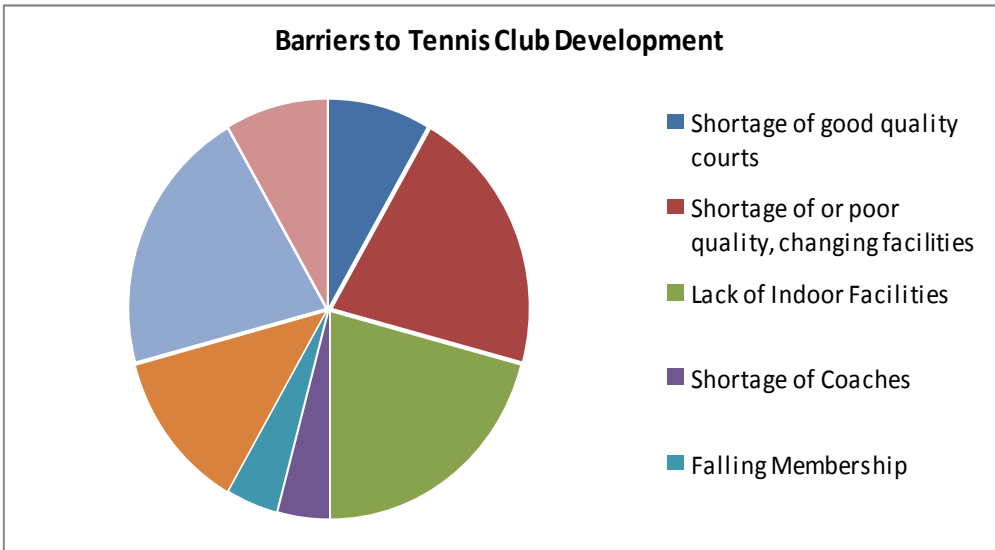
Chart 13.4 – Quality of Tennis Courts



Other Issues arising from consultation

- All but one club (Potton TC) indicate that they are fielding similar teams as in previous seasons, suggesting that membership is relatively static. Potton TC have experienced decline and attribute this to quality of facilities as well as changes to the coaching routines
- Based on LTA figures, the average membership is 124. Flitwick is the largest club (259 members) followed by Dunstable, Leighton Buzzard and Linslade. All clubs indicate that they have capacity for additional members and are currently trying to actively recruit new members (open days / junior coaching / links with schools / social media). The average membership of clubs responding to the survey is 152
- Barton, Linslade and Potton TC all indicate that they would like to run more teams but suggest that growth is inhibited by facilities
- Varying barriers to club development and growth were identified. The key issues raised were the quality of pavilions and a lack of internal and external funding. This is illustrated in Chart 12.5 overleaf.

Chart 13.5 – Barriers to the Growth of Tennis Clubs



Accessibility

13.26 Consultation provides an understanding of the catchment areas of the existing clubs. It is clear that the catchment area of most facilities is relatively local – on average 46% of members of clubs are based within 1 mile of the club base and just 10% travel further than 5 miles.

13.27 The expectation that tennis courts are local to the home may contribute to the relatively high levels of latent demand within Central Bedfordshire, as the majority of residents are located further than 1 mile from a tennis court and lots must travel further than 5 miles to reach a tennis court. This is illustrated in Map13.3, which illustrates the location of each of the courts and includes a five mile radius from each site.

Map 13.3 – Catchment Areas of Existing Tennis Facilities

TO BE INSERTED Post approval

National Governing Body Perspective – Lawn Tennis Association

13.28 The Governing Body for tennis is the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). It is responsible for the administration of tennis across the country, including youth and other development. The LTA National Facility Strategy is set out in Places to Play. The Place to Play Strategy sets out:

- the overall vision for places to play
- how the LTA will grow regular participation by supporting places to play to develop and deliver the right programmes
- how the LTA will make capital investment decisions to ensure investment in the right facilities to grow the sport
- how LTA will support performance programmes in the right locations

13.29 It indicates that the LTA is committed to growing the sport to ensure that more people are playing tennis more often at first class facilities, with high quality coaching programmes and well organised competition. The overall aim between 2011-2016 is to ensure that, as far as practicably possible, the British population has access to and are aware of the location of high quality tennis opportunities in their local area. In brief:

- access for everyone to well maintained high quality tennis facilities which are either free or pay as you play
- a Clubmark accredited place to play within a 10 minute drive of their home
- indoor courts within a 20 minute drive time of their home
- a mini tennis (10 and under) performance programme within a 20 minute drive of their home (Performance Centres)
- a performance programme for 11 - 15 year olds within a 45 minute drive time of their home (High Performance Centre)
- a limited number of internationally orientated programmes strategically spread for players 16+ with an international programme (International High Performance Centres)

13.30 The facility element of the LTA places to play strategy focuses on:

- **improving facilities at high quality places to play:** Enhancing facility provision at performance venues and Tennis Clubmark accredited places to play;
- **tennis in community settings:** Beacon sites - supporting LA's to bring back into use existing community tennis facilities and working with them to develop affordable quality tennis programmes; and
- **sustainability:** Advising places to play to ring fence funding to ensure existing facilities can be upgraded or replaced when they get to the end of their life.

13.31 LTA research reveals that many successful places to play are unable to grow or maximise their potential and their tennis programme due to site restrictions e.g.

- courts are at capacity and there is no space to expand further; and
- planning restrictions preventing the installation of floodlights or indoor courts.

13.32 The key priorities of the LTA both nationally and more locally in Bedfordshire are to develop tennis participation for those aged 14 and above and nationally, to ensure that 450,000 players are playing tennis once per week or more. Current figures are equivalent to 445,000. There was an 18% increase over the summer months in participation in tennis (partially stimulated by the success of Andy Murray) and it is therefore also essential to retain these players.

13.33 To achieve this, a series of priority areas have been developed. These focus upon areas of higher population density as these offer significant potential to increase the amount of residents involved in the sport. Central Bedfordshire is not identified as a priority area, however nearby Bedford is considered to be priority.

13.34 With regards club development, activity is focused on clubs that have achieved the Club Mark accreditation and therefore have a clearly defined programme of activities in place. In Central Bedfordshire, Dunstable TC, Flitwick TC, Leighton Buzzard TC and Linslade TC have all achieved the accreditation. The LTA also targets performance clubs – there are none of these located within Central Bedfordshire.

13.35 For facilities, the key priorities are to:

- rejuvenate park courts
- floodlight existing facilities to extend capacity where there are active tennis programmes
- cover existing tennis courts / provide low cost indoor structures to provide additional capacity and ensure that facilities are playable all year round

13.36 Partnership working with key partners to develop tennis is also identified as a key priority, and technical support is available from the LTA to support clubs and other partners for the improvement of facilities.

13.37 Although there is a good distribution of tennis clubs in Central Bedfordshire, there are no indoor tennis courts available to clubs and the nearest facilities are in Luton (2 indoor courts) and Bedford (3 seasonal courts) as well as at Letchworth Tennis Centre (3 indoor courts). There is a need to consider the provision of such a facility in Central Bedfordshire, focusing particularly on areas of high population and propensity to participate. Key areas for further consideration include Leighton Linslade, Dunstable and Flitwick – all of these areas have a club marked club and a good sized local population. This issue was also reflected in the indoor facility strategy.

13.38 With regards outdoor facilities, the majority of clubs have access to sufficient facilities in relation to the levels of activity that they are undertaking.

13.39 Supporting the network of clubs, there are strong foundations for tennis in schools and circa half of Central Bedfordshire have now attended teacher training on the delivery of tennis. There are structured activity programmes across Bedfordshire of competitive activity.

13.40 In addition to growing participation of formal tennis, there are also aspirations to inspire players through the introduction of new forms of the game including short tennis and cardio tennis. These new forms of the game may increase the number of people playing tennis in the county and longer term, increase the demand for park and club based courts.

Adequacy of Current Provision and Meeting Future Demand

13.41 As with bowls the assessment of tennis facilities does not lend itself to the estimation of demand used in other sports or the use of TGRs. It is however possible to evaluate the adequacy of provision drawing upon the tools available and the information outlined in this section as well as the targets set by the LTA.

13.42 With regards the adequacy of provision, these reveal that:

- Tennis facilities are predominantly located in the major settlements and large villages in Central Bedfordshire and there are relatively few large settlements which do not contain tennis courts. The largest settlements without dedicated tennis courts are Houghton Regis and Caddington, although residents in both settlements are within 5 miles of Dunstable, which contains both a tennis club and free to access courts.
- Active People surveys show that across Central Bedfordshire, 4826 people currently participate in tennis however a further 5082 people would like to play. This latent demand is spread across different population groups and both genders (unlike most other pitch sports). The fact that the amount of people that would like to play is higher than the number of current participants suggest that there is potentially quite a lot of latent demand. Active People suggests that there is an overall potential tennis playing population of 9908. While the LTA now predominantly measures the adequacy of facilities in an area using a series of targets around accessibility, previous standards have measured the amount of facilities based upon a quantity standard of one court per 45 participants (and 1 court per 60 participants if floodlit). It is however emphasised that this provides an indication only, and other elements should be taken into account including tennis development, club structure and sustainability when considering the requirement for additional courts.

13.43 Applying this broad figure however (and drawing firstly upon data collated as part of the Active People Programme) to the estimated current and future demand provides an indication of the adequacy of provision. It can be concluded that;

- based upon an assumed standard of 1 court per 45 participants (not floodlit) and 1 court per 60 players (floodlit), the existing stock of public facilities will serve 3900 players. According to Active People, there are 4826 players, meaning that the stock of facilities is insufficient. The current stock of provision is equivalent to 64 people per court;
- if latent demand was to be realised, creating a potential tennis playing population of 9908, there would be 132 players per court, a figure significantly above LTA standards; and
- the rising population in Central Bedfordshire would have further impact upon the adequacy of facilities. Assuming that current participation rates are maintained and the adult population over 18 increases by 14%, 5501 people would be playing tennis

(73 people per court). If latent demand was realised, this figure would increase to over 10,000 and the number of people per court would be approaching 150.

13.44 The above figures indicate that provision in Central Bedfordshire is insufficient. Further analysis however indicates that actual playing membership of existing clubs accounts to just 1686, a much lower figure than that suggested by Active People. Despite this, 75% of courts are club based. While this does not include casual play and takes into account only club membership, it does suggest that the figure compiled through the active people survey perhaps overestimates the amount of regular activity that takes place. Added to this, all responding clubs in Central Bedfordshire indicate that they currently have capacity for additional members, although it must be noted that some are dissatisfied and attribute this to the number of courts that they have access to.

13.45 While the above calculations provide an indication, they can therefore be considered to potentially over estimate demand and therefore provide an indication of the upper echelons of demand.

13.46 Considering provision on a club by club level provides more revealing analysis. Table 13.4 summarises the theoretical capacity of each club (based upon the number of floodlit and none floodlit courts) and highlights shortfalls and capacity for new members. It also clearly illustrates issues highlighted by clubs in relation to quality and quantity of facilities. It reveals that only Barton le Clay Tennis Club is at capacity in theoretical terms and Langford and Studham Tennis Club are approaching capacity. Both Barton le Clay and Langford Tennis Clubs are restricted by a lack of floodlights at their club bases.

Table 13.4 – Club Based Capacity and Issues

Club	Membership	Floodlit	None Floodlit	Capacity (60 floodlit 45 none)	Spaces Left	Comments (Club / LTA / Site Visits)
Dunstable	157	4	4	420	263	Old clubhouse in poor condition. Club have also highlighted aspirations for expansion
Flitwick and Ampthill	259	4	4	420	161	Poor changing and showers. New building required
Leighton Buzzard	164	4	0	240	76	Issues with current pavilion. Pavilion important income stream for club and in it's current form is not suitable to rent out
Linslade	106	3	0	180	74	Seeking to provide new pavilion for changing and toilets as previous facilities are no longer available

Club	Membership	Floodlit	None Floodlit	Capacity (60 floodlit 45 none)	Spaces Left	Comments (Club / LTA / Site Visits)
Studham	81	0	2	90	9	No floodlights
Biggleswade	93	3	0	180	87	
Eaton Bray	103	2	1	165	62	Upgrade of court surface required
Langford	116	2	0	120	4	Upgrade to changing facilities required. Club also approaching capacity.
Slip End	91	2	0	120	29	Two courts no longer used. Poor quality and suitable for conversion to alternative facility type
Toddington	75	0	4	180	105	
Westoning	30	0	2	90	60	Lack of floodlights restricts use
Potton	70	2	0	120	50	Poorly located adjacent to sewage works. Courts suffer from overhanging trees which encourage moss growth. Courts will require resurfacing in 5 - 6 years, however potential for relocation to new courts as part of development of new community centre
Harlington	124	0	6	270	146	
Eversholt	124	0	1	45	-79	

Club	Membership	Floodlit	None Floodlit	Capacity (60 floodlit 45 none)	Spaces Left	Comments (Club / LTA / Site Visits)
Barton Le Clay	93	0	2	90	-3	No seating, poorly located. Club highlight lack of local courts and floodlighting as restrictive to tennis development

13.47 As shown above, the majority of clubs have capacity within their current structures to accommodate existing demand and also to meet some latent demand. Further calculations demonstrate that there is capacity within the existing clubs to accommodate just over 1000 additional players – population growth is likely to generate between 600 and 700, meaning that there is scope for some increases in participation.

13.48 Supporting this, there is no evidence that the existing network of club and parks courts, with the backup of courts at school sites, is insufficient to meet current demand (although there are some concerns about the quality of public pay as you play facilities, raised earlier in this section).

13.49 There is however clear latent demand and potential to grow participation in tennis, supported by Active People surveys and Market segmentation as well as suggestions from providers that tennis courts could be better used. Growth of the membership of these facilities will be essential if clubs are to remain sustainable, as well as if they are to progress and improve the facilities that are provided.

13.50 Population growth, coupled with an increase in the proportion of residents that are playing tennis would however place pressures on the existing stock of facilities. There are an additional 43 courts at school sites as well as a number of multi-use venues. These venues (and public access to these facilities) may become increasingly important in future years.

Summary and Key Issues

Key issues to address – Tennis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The stock of tennis courts is well spread across Central Bedfordshire, with more than half of all courts in the major service centres. Most residents in larger settlements have access to at least one tennis court within a five mile radius. Provision in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis placemaking area is however much lower than in other parts of Central Bedfordshire. Tennis offers a significant opportunity to increase overall participation in sport and physical activity in Central Bedfordshire – the sport has a wider participation base than any other sport and the Active People Survey indicates that there is significant latent demand at present. While analysis of the existing club bases suggest that demand may be slightly overestimated, it is clear that tennis still provides a an opportunity to introduce new residents to the sport.

- Application of participation statistics outlined in the Active People survey to the existing stock of facilities reveal shortfalls in provision, with the theoretical capacity of the public courts available lower than the number of people in Central Bedfordshire that are currently playing tennis (64 people per court).
- Despite this, there are sufficient courts at all clubs to meet the needs of current membership, with only Studham Tennis Club, Barton Le Clay Tennis Club and Langford Tennis Club approaching their capacity. While club membership does not account for casual play, the current club membership figures suggest that the Active People survey perhaps overestimates demand slightly and provides an indication of the upper echelons of potential demand.
- Building upon this, if all potential latent demand was realised (using figures outlined in the Active People / Market segmentation analysis) notwithstanding the significant amounts of population growth that are projected, then capacity at club and public facilities would be exceeded (136 people per court) and there would be a reliance upon the use of school facilities. Population growth alone could be accommodated within existing club structures (where there is capacity for up to 1000 more members) although some clubs are approaching capacity and may require additional courts if growth is focused in their area. New provision should therefore be based upon specific needs identified for each club.
- While overall there are few concerns about the amount of tennis courts currently, there are concerns about the quality of courts (particularly at public facilities) but also at several club sites and the overall quality is the most varying of all types of outdoor sport, with scores achieved ranging from 32% to 100%. The court surface and changing accommodation are perhaps the issues most in need of attention. Several clubs believe that the quality issues at both club and public facilities will inhibit the overall development of tennis in both the short and long term.

13.51 The above issues identify the strategic priorities for tennis as follows:

Ensuring that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

- Support the provision of new facilities at clubs where specific need can be identified at clubs, taking into account the capacity and quality of existing facilities. In the first instance, additional capacity should be created by adding floodlights to courts. Longer term and following population growth, new courts may be required at some clubs.
- Where there is expressed demand for tennis in areas not currently within a 5 mile catchment, to maximise the use of resources, support additional demand for tennis through a partnership approach with schools where this is possible. Demand for pay and play tennis should be considered in line with the Beacon Tennis Scheme, established by the LTA. Existing public tennis courts in large settlements should also be retained, unless appropriate pay and play opportunities can be organised through club bases or schools

Ensure that facilities are of appropriate quality to meet the needs of users

- Address quality issues identified at club sites prioritising areas where club development is limited by quality constraints, specifically
 - Floodlighting (linked with increasing capacity above)
 - Covering existing courts (linked with increasing capacity above)
 - Surfacing
 - Pavilion / Changing
- Support the development of new forms of tennis in order to increase participation. This might include mini tennis, which provides the use of more flexible spaces.

14. Athletics

14.1 This section evaluates the adequacy of facilities for athletics in Central Bedfordshire and provides:

- An overview of supply and demand for athletics
- An evaluation of the overall adequacy of facilities to meet demand
- key issues and strategic priorities the strategy will address

Athletics in Central Bedfordshire - An Overview

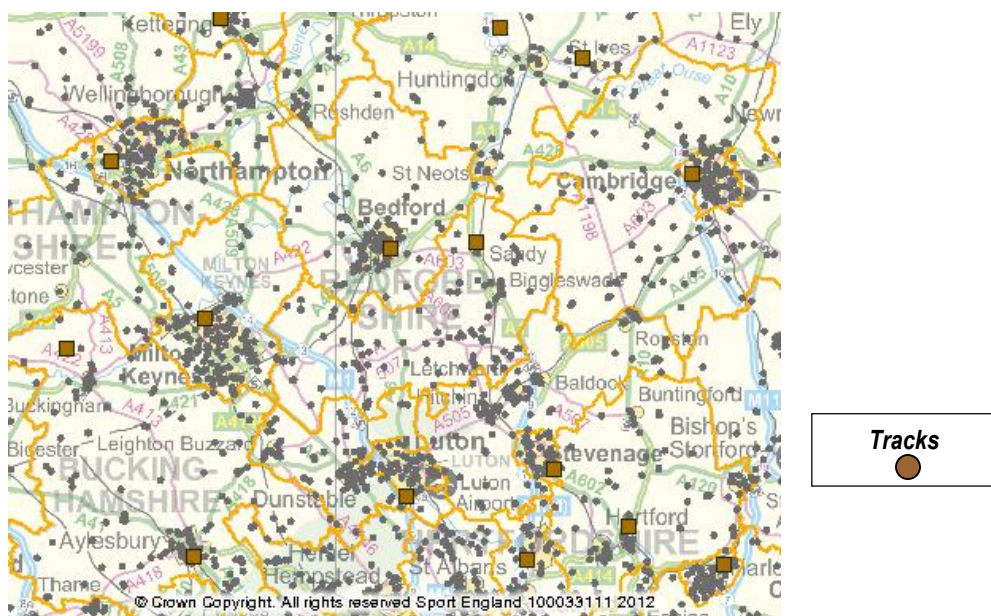
Supply

14.2 There is one athletics track in Central Bedfordshire at Sandy Sports and Community Centre. The track is floodlit and available on a pay and play basis and is of County standard. This is summarised in Table 14.1

Table 14.1 – Athletics Tracks in Central Bedfordshire

Site Name	Ward	Number of Lanes	Ownership/ management	Access	Year Built
Sandy Sports & Community Centre	Sandy Pinnacle	8	Community school/trust	Pay and Play	2005

Map 14.1 Athletics tracks in and around Central Bedfordshire



14.3 Other tracks within a 40-minute drive of the middle of Central Bedfordshire are as follows:

- Bedford International Athletic Stadium, 8 lane floodlit, pay and play
- Stockwood Park Athletics Centre, Luton, 8 lane floodlit, pay and play
- Stantonbury Campus Leisure Centre, Milton Keynes, 6 lane floodlit, pay and play
- Ridlins Wood Athletics track, Stevenage, 8 lane floodlit, pay and play
- Gosling Sports Park, Welwyn garden City, 6 lane floodlit, pay and play
- Sportspace Athletics Track, Hemel Hempstead, 8 lane floodlit, pay and play
- Watford Woodside Leisure Centre, 8 lane floodlit, pay and play

14.4 It should also be noted that several schools in Central Bedfordshire mark out grass athletics tracks on their playing fields during the summer months.

Demand

Active People and Market Segmentation Analysis (Sport England)

14.5 From the Active People Survey and Market Segmentation (explained in Section 3), it is possible to evaluate how many residents of Central Bedfordshire **do** participate in athletics and how many of the population **would like** to participate in athletics. It is also possible to understand how this varies across different parts of Central Bedfordshire.

14.6 Map 14.2 illustrates the distribution of residents that currently participate in athletics while Chart 11.1 illustrates the market segments to which they belong.

Map 14.2 – Population of Central Bedfordshire that participate in athletics

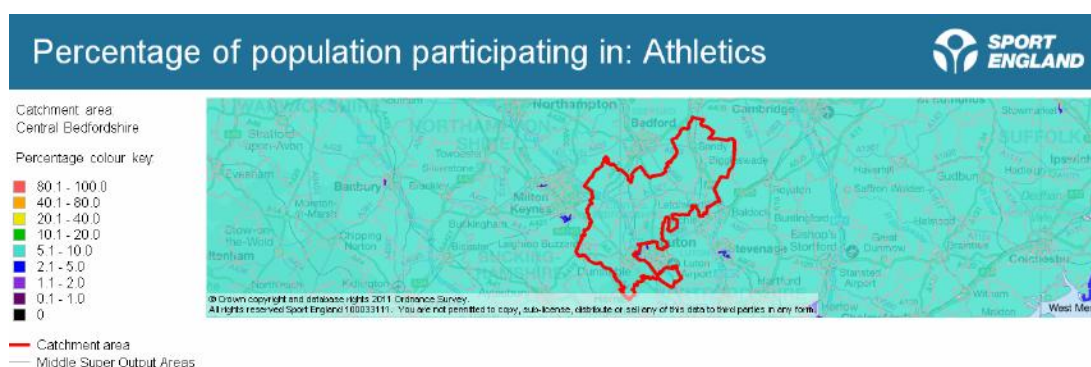
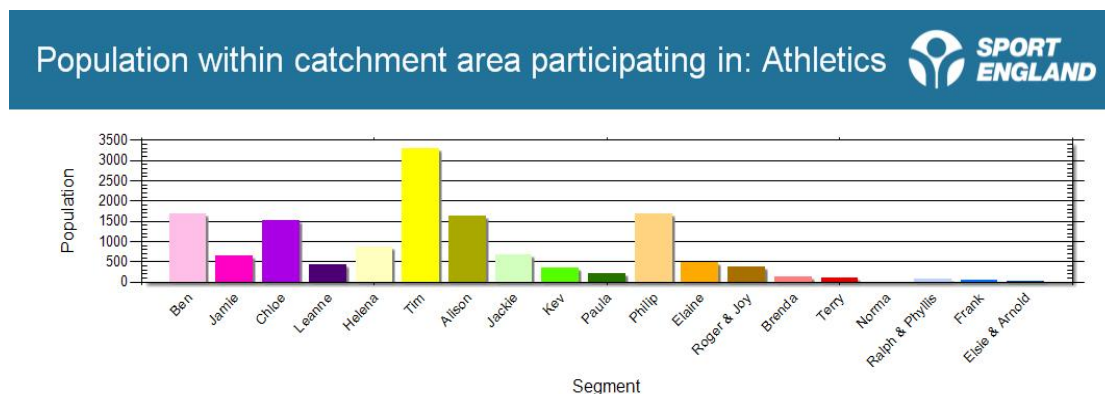


Chart 14.1 – Market Segments of Central Bedfordshire participating in athletics



14.7 Map 14.1 and Chart 14.1 indicate that the distribution of people participating in athletics is even across Central Bedfordshire. Like most other sports included in this document, Tim is the main participant (3294). Ben, Chloe, Phil, Alison, Jamie, Leanne and Jackie also however have strong participation profiles, demonstrating that athletics appeals to a wider cross section of the population than many other sports. In total, there are 14,133 people that participate in athletics.

14.8 Map 14.3 and Chart 14.2 illustrate the distribution of people that would like to do athletics, according to the Active People Survey. It can be seen that the proportion of people that would like to participate in athletic is even across Central Bedfordshire. The profile of those that would like to participate is very similar to those that do participate, with the groups with the highest number of potential participants being Tim, Alison, Chloe, Ben and Philip. In total, there are 5870 people across Central Bedfordshire that would like to participate in athletics but do not currently do so. This is a relatively high quantity and suggests that there are opportunities to increase the number of people.

Map 14.3 – Population of Central Bedfordshire that would like to participate in athletics

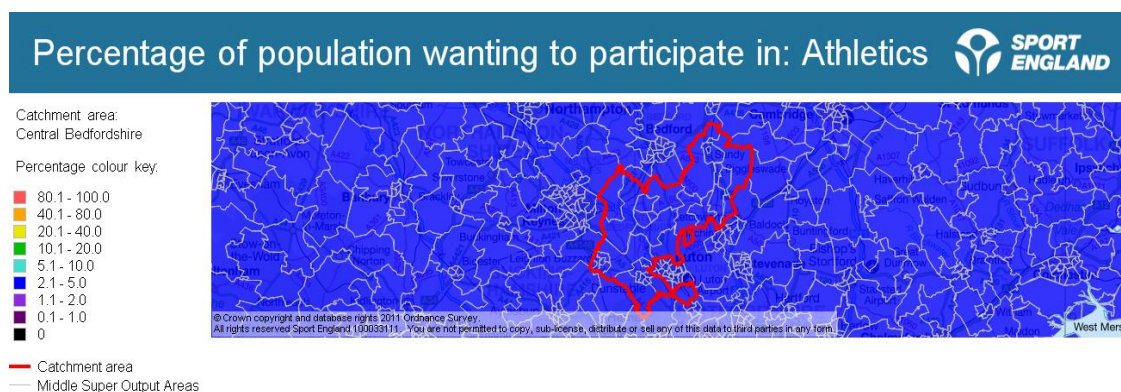
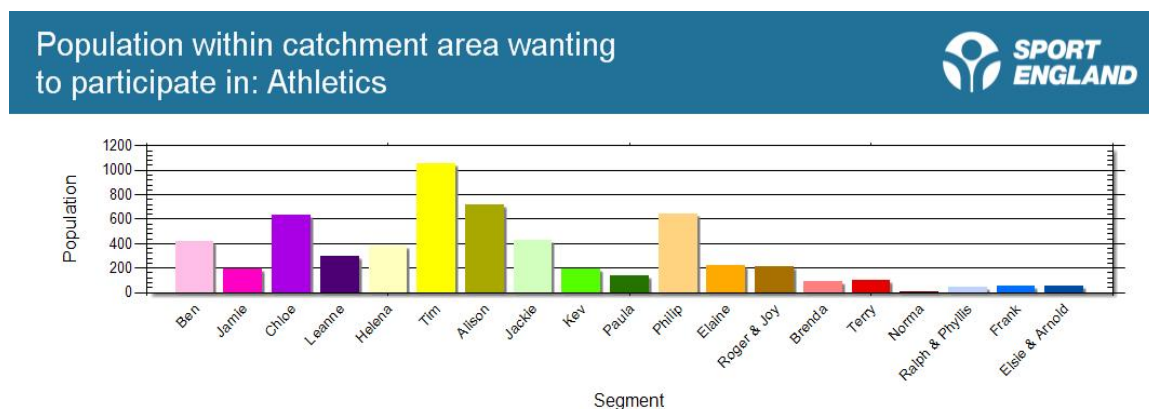


Chart 14.2 – Market Segments of Central Bedfordshire that would like to participate in athletics



Clubs

14.9 There are four athletics clubs in Central Bedfordshire, specifically:

- Ampthill and Flitwick Flyers Running Club (meet at Flitwick Leisure Centre / Redborne School but road running)
- Biggleswade Athletics Club (based at Sandy Athletics Track)
- Dunstable Road Runners Club (road running)
- Leighton Buzzard Athletics Club (meets at Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre but road running and also occasionally competes in track and field)

14.10 While Ampthill and Flitwick Flyers Running Club compete primarily in road races and cross country, both Biggleswade Athletics Club and Leighton Buzzard Athletics Club compete in track and field as well as on the road and cross country.

Club and Local Consultation

14.11 Feedback from club and local residents highlights demand for an athletics track in Leighton Buzzard and it is clear that there have been aspirations for the creation of a new athletics track for several years, and since the loss of a previous facility.

Both Leighton Buzzard Athletics Club and Leighton Linlade Town Council have expressed aspirations for a new athletics track and this has been discussed extensively both in the community and at a more strategic level. There are believed to be three possible sites, specifically;

- Tiddenfoot and Cedars School
- Vandyke School
- Astral Park

14.12 A new athletics facility is believed by the club to be essential in taking the club forward. The club however recognise that the development of a new athletics track is a long term project and highlight an initial requirement for a floodlit training area with a clubhouse and storage of equipment. Currently, the club are unable to practice field events during the winter months and this reduces interest from young athletes and has a detrimental impact on the overall membership of the club.

England Athletics Association Strategic Facility Plan 2012 – 2017

14.13 The strategic facility plan identifies the strategic priorities for England Athletics' future involvement in facility development. It seeks to ensure that investment in facilities supports the overarching core priorities of driving mass participation, developing and supporting sustainable clubs and enhancing coach development.

14.14 The strategy identifies several key issues relating to specific facilities for athletics, including;

- The variety of athletics disciplines and diverse athlete profile require varied facilities
- It is a low cost participation sport and cost is therefore not seen as a barrier but there is a more limited income generation as a result
- Overall there appears to be a sufficient number of formal competition tracks in England, albeit with some uneven distribution around the country
- Tracks are significantly underutilised on non-club nights and during daytimes providing significant potential for further activity
- There is an ageing stock of formal track and field facilities and very limited new build
- An annual subsidy is required for most track operations resulting in sustainability and maintenance issues at some locations
- Approximately 40% of tracks are deemed to be below the standard required for competitive events
- The major growth area is recreational running on-road and off-road

14.15 As highlighted, not all athletics participation takes place in formal facilities. The key priorities for road and off road running therefore focus upon the natural environment and are;

- Helping ensure established routes are protected;
- Exploiting opportunities for new routes;
- Making the entry-level into running easier for new participants and
- Enhancing the enjoyment of existing runners so that they remain actively involved.

14.16 England Athletics encourage local authorities to actively promote running in parks and green spaces. They are also keen to engage with local authority planning officers with regards the installation of 1km – 2km running routes in more urban areas.

14.17 With regards track and field, the strategy identifies five levels of facilities, specifically;

- Level 5 – major venues that may host international and/ or televised events. Such facilities include an 8 lane track as well as warm up track and at least 5000 spectator seats. They would also include full accommodation for athletes, track officials,
- Level 4 – major domestic venues – with capacity of up to 10,000 and similar facilities to level 1 albeit on a smaller scale
- Level 3 – regional or small championship events – 6 or 8 lane track with all field event facilities. Some ancillary accommodation and crowd capacity of at least 200
- Level 2 – league completion / school competition – 6 or 8 lane track with some or all field event facilities
- Level 1 – Not suitable for UKA competitions – undersized or non standard tracks.

14.18 Recent analysis of track suitability (marked against a criteria of grade A – suitable for competition, Grade B – suitable for competition with restrictions and Grade C – not suitable for completion) indicated that all tracks in Bedfordshire are currently categorised as Grade A.

14.19 The strategy identifies several key priorities in relation to the provision, management and maintenance of track and field facilities including;

- Drive the development of Sustainable Facilities Frameworks (SFF) within each Athletics Network to determine local priorities for improvement and investment.
- Identify and assist the funding of a range of field facility and equipment improvements and adaptations to help convert 'B' venues into 'A' venues and to enhance disability provision.
- Provide financial models and best practice studies to illustrate maximising track and field usage to increase revenues without compromising athletics activity, including sharing facilities, club mergers, cross-sport usage, infield mixes etc.
- Work with UKA and Networks to deliver club/operator forums to discuss issues around maintenance, operations, delivery, partner engagement and best practice examples.
- Provide enhanced resources and advice to clubs on business planning and finance, marketing, legal and contract issues, and sponsorship.
- Provide expertise to engage with owners and operators on the issues, impact and opportunities relating to track closure, asset transfer, risk mitigation and future planning.

14.20 In addition to formal track and field facilities, the strategic plan also outlines the role of mobile / compact models including J tracks, enclosed field event facilities and the use of Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) dedicated to athletics. It indicates that compact facilities should include the following:

- 2-4 lane 60-80m running straight, with or without J-track extension
- Vertical and horizontal jumps

- Shot circle
- Adequate lighting to undertake the activities during the winter
- Shelter and toilets (incorporated or nearby)

14.21 The strategic plan also outlines the opportunity to combine the provision of an AGP with an integrated athletics track within the pitch sport enclosure.

14.22 The strategic plan therefore states that the key facility priorities for athletics between 2012 –2017 are as follows:

Road and off-road running

- High visibility route and distance markers
- Notice boards
- Outdoor drop-in units

Track and Field

- Upgrading of field event facilities and equipment
- Clubhouse modernisation projects
- Access improvements for disabled athletes
- Track floodlighting

Compact Athletics

- Permanent compact athletics models

Adequacy of Provision

14.23 Sport England's Active Places tool provides comparison of the amount of athletics tracks with national and regional averages. For Central Bedfordshire it indicates that in lanes per 1000 population, relative provision in Central Bedfordshire is poor compared with the average. It ranks 28th in the region of 47 LAs (and in fact the lowest of any LA where a track exists) and local provision is the lowest in the county.

This is illustrated in Map 14.4 and explained further in Table 14.2

Map 14.4 Athletics tracks per 1000

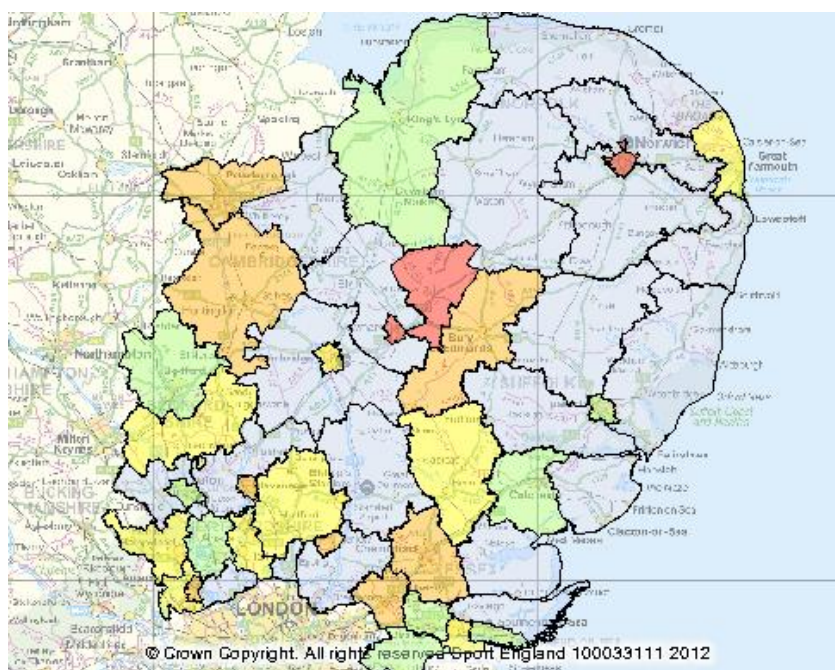


Table 14.2 – Athletics Tracks per 1000 population

	Lanes per 1000 population
Central Bedfordshire	0.034
Bedfordshire	0.052
East region	0.04
England	0.05
Best in region (Norwich)	0.132

14.24 It should be noted that these figures should be considered with some caution as they reflect all tracks, including synthetic, cinder and permanent grass. The track in Central Bedfordshire is a synthetic track.

Quality

14.25 Using Active Places data, it is possible to estimate the quality and condition of the track from date of construction. The track was built in 2005 and is generally in good condition. This was confirmed by a site inspection.

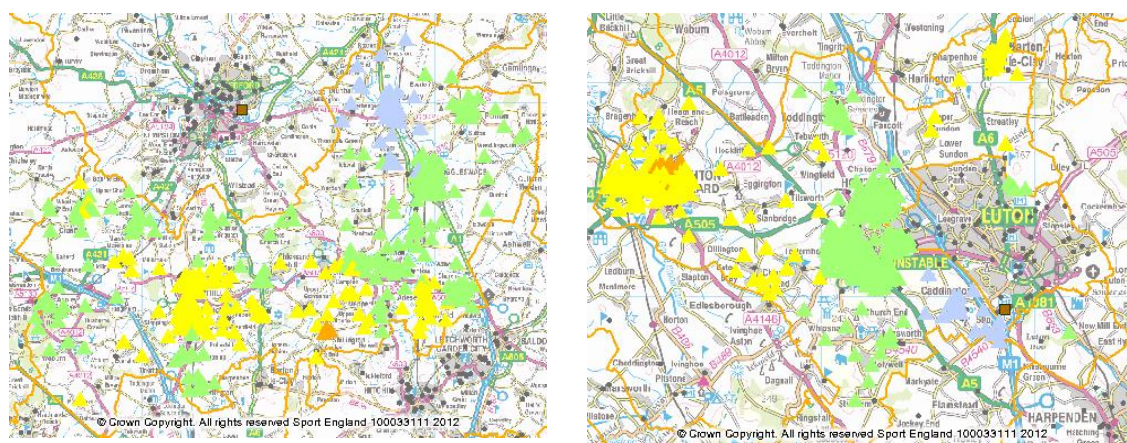
Accessibility

14.26 Active Places Power also allows analysis of access to athletics tracks, taking into account both facilities within Central Bedfordshire and those in the nearby vicinity. This is illustrated in Map 14.4.

14.27 Map 14.4 clearly indicates that with the existence of only one track in Central Bedfordshire and despite other tracks nearby, accessibility for local residents is poor, with over a third living outside a 20 minute driving catchment. Accessibility is skewed to the east (due to the location of the existing track), with parts of Central Bedfordshire in the west outside of the catchment to a track.

14.28 Accessibility is best in Sandy (the location of the current track) but in general, residents in the north placemaking area are closer to athletics facilities than in the south. Poorest accessibility is in Leighton Buzzard and the rural south. The athletics club in Leighton Buzzard (who sometimes participate in track and field) travel to Stantonbury Athletics Track in Milton Keynes.

Map 14.5 Accessibility by car (*see key in Appendix 1)



14.29 In more detail, the proportions of residents within each band are as follows (populations are based on 2001 Census).

Table 14.3 – Access to Athletics Tracks in Central Bedfordshire.

	Population	%
0-10 mins	20634	9%
10-20 mins	125367	54%
20 – 30 mins	84458	36%
30 – 45 mins	3268	1%

14.30 Much population increase will take place in the south, in and around Leighton Buzzard and Houghton Regis and the proportion of the population that are outside of the catchment of an athletics track will therefore also increase.

14.31 Added to this, Active People analysis indicates that there is considerable scope to increase participation in athletics, although it is likely that much of this will be in the form of road running, rather than track and field.

National Governing Body Perspective

England Athletics

14.32 England Athletics promotes the development of athletics in Bedfordshire through the Bedfordshire Athletics Network. The network seeks to:

- Develop generic and technical knowledge of coaches
- Share coaching resources amongst clubs within the network
- Establish localised coach development learning programmes
- Develop standardised support from clubs to athletes
- Provide delivery opportunities in schools and link to club activity
- Strengthen club structure across the network area

14.33 All four clubs in Central Bedfordshire are members of the athletics network and contribute to the achievement of the above aims and objectives.

14.34 Of the Central Bedfordshire Clubs, only Biggleswade AC use an athletics track regularly, although the importance of ensuring that road running clubs have access to appropriate changing and meeting facilities is highlighted.

14.35 The track at Sandy Recreation Centre is the home for Biggleswade Athletics Club and is the centre of activity for the club and as such, is an important base for athletics in Central Bedfordshire. The club have recently drawn up a business plan setting out how they propose to enhance current arrangements for the management and maintenance of the facility. Sustainability of the facility is perhaps the key challenge moving forwards.

14.36 To evaluate the strategic demand for additional athletics tracks, England Athletics consider several factors including;

- Local demographics
- Existing participation and club infrastructure
- Availability of nearby facilities (athletics tracks are considered to have a catchment of 30 minutes to 1 hour)
- The potential to increase demand and club membership through the provision of a new track
- Sustainability of a new track.

14.37 The application of these considerations to Central Bedfordshire indicates that there is no strategic need for the provision of further athletics tracks within the area, particularly given the close proximity to existing tracks in Bedford and Luton.

14.38 The needs and aspirations of Leighton Buzzard AC are noted however and England Athletics remain keen to promote club and facility development. It was highlighted that a

compact athletics facility may provide a locally appropriate and sustainable means of improving the facilities that are available to the club.

Key issues to address – Athletics

- There is one athletics track in Central Bedfordshire at Sandy Sports and Community Centre. The track is floodlit and available on a pay and play basis and is of County standard.
- According to Active People, like most other sports included in this document, Tim is the main participant (3294). Ben, Chloe, Phil, Alison, Jamie, Leanne and Jackie also however have strong participation profiles, demonstrating that athletics appeals to a wider cross section of the population than many other sports. In total, there are 14,133 people that participate in athletics and a further 5870 that would like to (made up of the same market segment groups).
- There are four athletics clubs in Central Bedfordshire. While Biggleswade Athletics Club is based at Sandy Sports Centre, the remainder are road running and cross country clubs. Only Biggleswade AC therefore uses a formal athletics track regularly.

14.39 Sport England's Active Places tool provides comparison of the amount of athletics tracks with national and regional averages. For Central Bedfordshire it indicates that in terms of lanes per 1000 population, relative provision in Central Bedfordshire is poor compared with the average. It ranks 28th in the region of 47 LAs (and in fact the lowest of any LA where a track exists) and local provision is the lowest in the county. Supporting this, analysis indicates that with the existence of only one track in the district and despite other tracks nearby, accessibility for local residents is poor, with over a third living outside a 20 minute driving catchment. Accessibility is skewed to the east, with parts of Central Bedfordshire in the west outside of the catchment to a track.

- Accessibility is best in Sandy (the location of the current track) but in general, residents in the North placemaking area are closer to athletics facilities than in the south. Poorest accessibility is in Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South.
- Despite these deficiencies, current activity levels do not provide clear evidence of a requirement for a new athletics track in Central Bedfordshire (as most activity is in the form of road running). Parameters used by England Athletics to determine the need for new facilities suggest that there is no strategic need for an additional full scale track within the area, although the provision of a compact athletics track may support the growth of athletics.
- There is however clear local aspiration for a new facility in Leighton Buzzard, an area which has previously had a track and the area of Central Bedfordshire that is least well served for facilities. Leighton Buzzard Athletic Club indicates that there is a clear need for facilities in the area and that club development is inhibited without the creation of a track. Recognising that the creation of a track is a longer term project, the club also highlight an immediate priority of the provision of a clubhouse, floodlit outdoor training area and storage facility.

14.40 The above suggests that the key priorities for athletics in Central Bedfordshire are as follows:

Ensuring that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

- Support ongoing athletics participation through the protection of the existing athletics track used by Biggleswade AC
- Ensure that appropriate changing and meeting facilities are available for road running club
- Support sustainable solutions to provide new facilities for athletics in Leighton Buzzard.

Ensure that facilities are of appropriate quality to meet the needs of users

- Maintain the quality of the existing track

Promote increases in participation and the creation of sustainable clubs

- Support clubs to proactively increase participation and membership to maximise the sustainability of the sport.

15. Netball

Introduction

15.1 This section evaluates the adequacy of facilities for outdoor netball in Central Bedfordshire and provides:

- An overview of supply and demand for outdoor courts
- An evaluation of the overall adequacy of courts to meet demand
- key issues and strategic priorities

Netball in Central Bedfordshire - An Overview

Supply

15.2 Netball in Bedfordshire is played both indoors and outdoors. While the majority of competitive fixtures in Bedfordshire take place outdoors, most clubs use indoor facilities for training.

15.3 Unlike for other sports considered in this document, the majority of competitive netball is played at central venue leagues and all teams travel to these venues to play in the scheduled fixtures. The leagues are based out of a small number of venues and attract teams from across Bedfordshire. Local leagues are located in Luton and Bedford as well as in Central Bedfordshire. The facilities used for netball across Central Bedfordshire are as follows;

- All Saints Academy (indoor)
- Cranfield University (indoor)
- Stratton Upper School (outdoor and Indoor)
- Sandy Sports Centre (outdoor and indoor)
- Redbourne Upper School (outdoor and indoor)
- Van Dyke Upper School
- Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre
- Linslade Middle School
- Alameda School.

15.4 In addition, teams from Central Bedfordshire travel to use facilities in Bedford Borough and Luton. The Bunyan Centre / Bedford Academy (indoor and outdoor courts in Bedford Borough) are particularly important in accommodating teams from Central Bedfordshire.

Demand

Active People and Market Segmentation Analysis

15.5 From the Active People Survey and Market Segmentation (explained in Section 3), it is possible to evaluate how many residents of Central Bedfordshire **do** participate in netball and how many of the population **would like** to play netball. It is also possible to understand how this varies across different parts of Central Bedfordshire.

15.6 Map 15.1 illustrates the distribution of residents that currently participate in netball while Chart 15.1 illustrates the market segments to which they belong.

Map 15.1 – Population of Central Bedfordshire that participate in netball

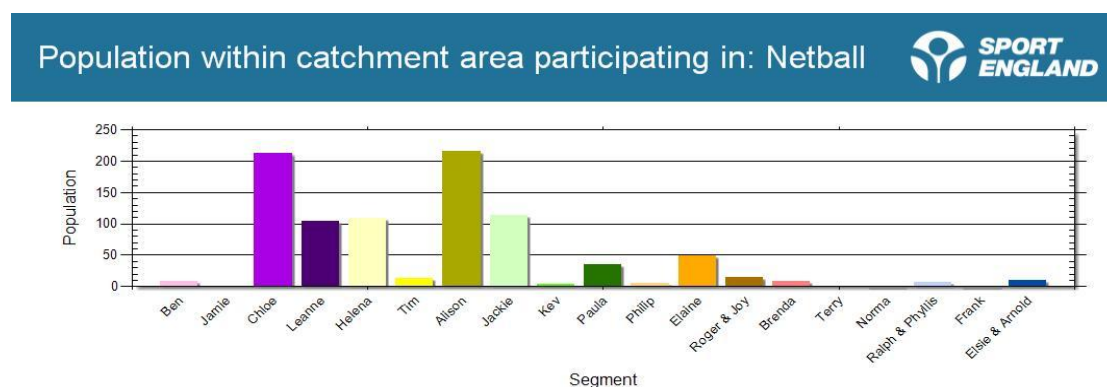
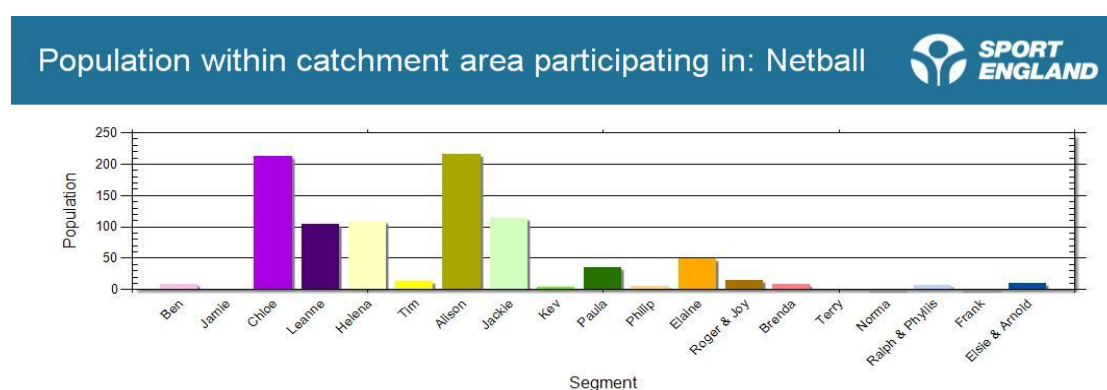


Chart 15.1 – Market Segments of Central Bedfordshire participating in netball



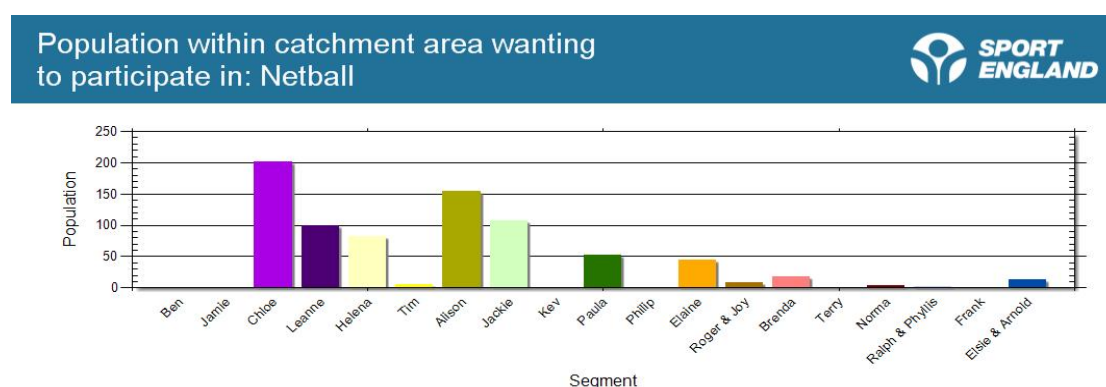
15.7 Map 15.1 and Chart 15.1 indicate that the distribution of people participating in netball is even across Central Bedfordshire. Unlike most other sports considered in this document, there is a strong female participation profile, with the main participants being Alison (216 players) and Chloe (213 players). Jackie, Helena and Leanne are also active in netball and to a lesser extent Paula and Elaine. There is no male profile in netball and in total, there are 912 people that play netball.

15.8 Map 15.2 and Chart 15.2 illustrate the distribution of people that would like to play netball, according to the Active People Survey. It can be seen that the proportion of people that would like to participate in netball is even across Central Bedfordshire. The profile of those that would like to participate is just below those that do participate, and it is the same groups of residents that would like to play. In total, there are 790 people across Central Bedfordshire that would like to participate in netball but do not currently do so. This suggests that there are some opportunities to increase the number of people.

Map 15.2 – Population of Central Bedfordshire that would like to participate in netball



Chart 15.2 – Market Segments of Central Bedfordshire that would like to participate in netball



Participation

15.9 Participation in Bedfordshire is strong and there are three main leagues running, all of which have catchments across the county, specifically;

- Bedford and District Netball League – 6 divisions as well as junior and youth leagues. The league runs Monday – Thursday and is based at the Bedfordshire Academy in Bedford (64 teams)
- The Heritage League has 19 teams spread over 3 divisions and is based in Central Bedfordshire at Sandy Sports Centre and Stratton Upper School
- Luton and Dunstable Netball League has five divisions with 32 teams and is based at several venues primarily in Luton.

15.10 In addition to the above leagues, Cranfield Netball Club also participate in the East Regional League. All clubs in the Central Bedfordshire area operate full junior to senior team pathways and in addition, there are numerous casual and work based teams that play in the local leagues. These teams tend not to train, while those based at clubs train at least once per week at a mix of indoor and outdoor facilities.

15.11 The key clubs based in the Central Bedfordshire area are as follows:

- Leighton Buzzard Netball Club – venues include Vandyke Upper School, Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre and Linslade School
- Maulden Netball Club – Redborne Upper School
- Chiltern Girls Netball Club – Redbourne Upper School
- Westoning Recreation Netball Club – Alameda Sports Hall / Marston Vale / Redbourne Upper School
- Shefford Netball Club
- Cranfield Netball Club – Cranfield University

Consultation – England Netball

15.12 England Netball are the National Governing Body for the sport of netball. The Whole Sport Plan sets out the key aims and objectives of England Netball and these are as follows;

- Grow participation in the game by an average of 10,000 participants per annum
- Deliver a 1st Class Member and Participant experience
- Establish England as the number 1 team in the world by winning the World Netball Championships
- Lead an effective and progressive infrastructure enabling all involved in the netball experience to collaborate as one team aligned behind one dream.

15.13 These targets will be delivered through a series of initiatives seeking to retain and increase the number of players and to expand participation in different groups, including those in hard to reach areas. The provision of the right facilities in the right place is identified as being central to the achievement of these goals.

Bedfordshire County Netball Plan 2013 – 2017

15.14 The Bedfordshire County Netball Plan 2013 to 2017 sets out the current landscape and strengths and weaknesses for participation in netball across Bedfordshire as a whole.

15.15 It considers specifically;

- Equity and equality of access
- Current participation including school netball, club development and community netball
- Facility related issues
- Performance pathways and volunteering.

15.16 The document identifies several issues directly relating to facilities, specifically;

- Lack of quality indoor courts for Regional/National teams

- Lack of quality indoor courts for Performance/Academies
- Facilities predominately fully booked
- University facilities used by BUCs clubs currently no availability
- Lack of outdoor courts for the Luton League
- Lack of maintenance on school courts.

15.17 It highlights the presence of a strong central venue, as well as good relationships with facility providers as a key strength of netball in the county.

15.18 Other issues raised with regards the netball landscape in the county which might impact upon facility requirements in future years include;

- Concern about the varying participation in schools and the lack of participation in lower schools and urban areas in particular. Initiatives to increase this may generate further demand for facilities and clubs
- There are good competition structures across the county but a lack of clubs in urban areas. Club development is often inhibited by a lack of facilities. There is potential to develop satellite facilities on club sites, new clubs through links with the Back to Netball programme.

Adequacy of Provision

15.19 There are no tools for evaluating the adequacy of provision for netball and the spread of play in Bedfordshire countywide, as well as across indoor and outdoor facilities means that it is not possible to quantify demand within Central Bedfordshire.

15.20 Consultation with the Bedfordshire Netball Association, who are regularly in contact with all netball leagues and clubs in the area have the following views with regards the adequacy of provision and future need and aspirations;

- All leagues currently have access to appropriate facilities and there are not anticipated to be shortfalls in provision in the near future. All areas of Central Bedfordshire are adequately served by local leagues, with three leagues (in addition to regional and national competition) available in the county as a whole
- There is a strong network of clubs with good development pathways for players of all ages
- Clubs struggle more to access appropriate facilities for training – many sports halls are full and / or are expensive to hire
- There is a lack of participation in the Dunstable area – recent attempts to set up a club have had limited success
- Similarly, the introduction of Back to Netball Sessions in North Central Bedfordshire also had relatively little success. This was attributed to already good levels of participation and good access to the local league structure. The Back to Netball Scheme has

however been implemented in other parts of Central Bedfordshire with more success, particularly in conjunction with the County Sports Partnership Back to programme.

15.21 With regards facilities, the key issues were highlighted as;

- Poor and deteriorating quality of courts at Redbourne Upper School – this facility serves several clubs for training and is also used as a central venue for netball activity by Bedfordshire Netball
- A lack of netball markings on facilities at Dunstable Leisure Centre – this means that the club must use All Saints Academy, where the cost is believed to impact upon interest in the session.

Key issues to address – Netball

- There is a strong network of participation in netball across Central Bedfordshire, linked with other local authorities in Bedfordshire. There are several affiliated and accredited clubs in the area offering strong development pathways. National increases in participation in netball are mirrored in the Bedfordshire area and participation remains strong.
- According to Active People, there is a relatively high amount of latent demand, generally found in the same market segments as existing participants. England Netball indicate that much of the lower levels of participation are focused in the urban areas and particularly in Dunstable, where the main gap in participation is considered to be. Despite this, all areas of CB are equitably served by local leagues.
- There are no tools for measuring the adequacy of facilities for netball however consultation with Bedfordshire Netball indicate that the network of facilities is currently adequate for local leagues, although there are some issues with access to appropriate training facilities for clubs. The nature of netball and the leagues that are run mean that competition generally takes place at central venues and some degree of travel is expected. Growth in participation may place further demand upon existing facilities, which are spread across Bedfordshire.

15.22 The above identifies the key priorities for netball in Central Bedfordshire are as follows;

Ensuring that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

- Ensure that there are sufficient appropriate venues for club based netball training
- Facilitate the requirement for any competitive netball venues longer term in the event of significant participation increases and the creation of new leagues

Ensure that facilities are of appropriate quality to meet the needs of users

- Maintain the quality of the existing facilities and improve the standard of those courts that are not sufficient to sustain appropriate levels of play

Promote increases in participation and the creation of sustainable clubs

- Support clubs to proactively increase participation and membership to maximise the sustainability of the sport
- Support initiatives designed to increase player retention and participation.

16. Site and Sport Specific Priorities

Strategic Priorities - Football

16.1 The assessment of pitches for football indicates that the key issues to address for football across Central Bedfordshire are as follows;

- Football participation is very high across Central Bedfordshire and in contrast to national trends, participation continues to grow.
- The majority of the existing pitch stock is formed from single / double pitch sites (the Central Bedfordshire average is 2 pitches) and pitches are distributed in settlements of all size. The quality of pitches is varying and key issues arising include drainage, changing and evenness of pitches.
- Club satisfaction is low and the majority of clubs attribute their dissatisfaction to the amount of pitches provided and there are also concerns about dispersion over numerous facilities and the quality of pitches.
- Modelling reveals that there are pressures on existing pitches. While overall there are enough adult pitches, surpluses in this type of pitch are offset by shortfalls of junior and mini pitches. There are particularly capacity issues and unmet demand in some settlements, while in others, the amount of pitches is more than sufficient to accommodate demand. A lot of the high demand is associated with the large clubs. The recent FA Youth Review, requiring 9 v 9 pitches as well as facilities of other sizes will further impact upon the demand for facilities.
- 40 schools currently allow use of their facilities by the local community – these play an essential role in ensuring that all clubs are able to play.
- Increases in the population will have major implications on demand for pitches and the adequacy of the pitch stock and will generate further shortfalls in some areas.
- 43% of clubs indicate that they struggle to access training facilities and a shortage of AGPs was highlighted as a key barrier to club development. Based upon the existing high participation levels, modelling reveals demand for several additional facilities.

The strategic priorities to respond to these issues and the area / site specific implications are therefore set out overleaf in Table 16.1

Table 16.1 Football - Strategic Priorities – Area Specific Requirements

Aim	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
Ensure that there are enough pitches to meet demand (Protect)	Protect all current playing fields to ensure the longevity of the pitch stock across Central Bedfordshire (unless pitches are replaced with larger multi pitch sites). This should include former playing pitches, unless they are located in an area identified as having sufficient provision to meet current and future demand.		
	All pitches (including former playing fields unless they are located in an area identified as having sufficient provision to meet current and future demand.		
	In the short term, review the designation of pitches to address deficiencies in junior football and to accommodate the recent FA review of youth football. Ensure that as far as possible, all teams are playing on pitches of the correct size		
	Review of all pitch requirements required by pitch providers following introduction of FA Youth Review Requirements		
	<p>Increase the amount of pitches available and support clubs to find home venues to ensure that they are not dispersed across multiple sites. This is likely to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • securing of formal agreements for the use of school sites – ideally sites offering multiple pitches should be prioritised and consideration should be given to the provision of accessible changing / toilets for community teams • reinstating former playing pitches • new pitches (promote the creation of new multi pitch sites to support large clubs). This will free up other sites for the use of smaller clubs and single teams • the creation of new pitches linked with new developments, to offset the impact of the increase in population on the demand for playing pitch provision. There are particular pressures in areas of growth and new facilities will be required where there is evidence of need. Improvements to the quality of existing facilities should be required where there is already sufficient provision. 		

	Dunstable and Houghton Regis Capacity to meet current demand. Population growth will however generate unmet demand in both Houghton Regis and Dunstable.	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eaton Bray • Totternhoe • Tilsworth • Leighton Buzzard (longer term depending upon closure of pitches following opening of Astral Park). 	North <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ampthill • Arlesey • Flitwick (proposed developments currently underway will address existing deficiencies) • Cranfield • Langford • Maulden • Pottton • Shefford • Stotfold (proposed developments currently underway will address existing deficiencies)
	Support football development and access to training facilities for football clubs through the provision of 3g pitches, particularly in the North and Central parts of Central Bedfordshire. 3g pitches (if provided to appropriate standards) can also be used for competitive fixtures and to reduce the requirement for grass pitches.		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis North Houghton Regis (3g)	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Totternhoe / Eaton Bray	North (up to 2 required) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toddington / Harlington area • Stotfold / Arlesey • Biggleswade

Ensure Pitch Quality Meets Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all clubs have access to facilities of the appropriate specification by focusing on the improvement of both pitch quality and ancillary facilities. Qualitative improvements should be prioritised over quantity where there are already enough facilities. The following standards should be considered; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – investment to address basic quality issues at key sites to ensure NGB specifications and standards are met; – the provision of changing accommodation at all sites where adult football is played, and a minimum of toilet provision at junior and mini football sites; and • supporting clubs in the creation of facilities of higher specification where these are required for club progression. 		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis Dunstable Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Eaton Bray Leighton Buzzard Slip End	North Cranfield Biggleswade Harlington Lidlington Marston Shillington Northill Westoning
Support Club Development	Maintain the existing football forums to establish clear routes of communication with pitch users and providers ensuring that all decisions are taken with a full understanding of needs and aspiration		
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place including evaluation of success of football forum.		

	Support the principles of asset transfer where this will result in positive club and football development outcomes
	To be evaluated on a club specific basis.

Strategic Priorities - Cricket

16.2 The assessment of cricket provision across Central Bedfordshire indicates that the key issues to address are as follows;

- Participation is increasing and almost all clubs have aspirations to grow further.
- Most community play takes place at public facilities. Facilities at school sites are largely artificial and in general are poor quality and insufficient for community use.
- The quality of first team cricket facilities is high, and the condition of the outfield and issues with drainage are perhaps the main concerns and several clubs also raise concerns with the quality of their pavilion. There are much lower levels of satisfaction with the overall stock of facilities however, with 50% of clubs suggesting that facilities inhibit club development and 40% of clubs suggesting that they are not happy with the stock of facilities. The quality of pitches for 3rd and 4th teams, as well as access to sufficient pitches are the main reasons attributed to this.
- Although there are enough pitches overall to meet current peak time demand, this disguises site specific pressures and almost all club bases are at capacity on both Saturday and Sunday afternoon. Most clubs with capacity are not located in close proximity to those clubs requiring additional pitches. Added to this, several clubs are using wickets above optimum levels (5 times per season) and for many, there are no artificial wicket or training nets, meaning that any practice must take place upon the grass square or off site.
- Population growth will generate increasing demand and unmet demand may rise to over 10 pitches.

The strategic priorities to respond to these issues and the area / site specific implications are therefore set out overleaf in Table 16.2

Table 16.2 - Cricket - Strategic Priorities – Area Specific Requirements

Aim	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
Ensure that there are enough pitches to meet demand	C1 Reflecting the pressures on existing club bases across Central Bedfordshire, protect all existing cricket grounds through the inclusion of appropriate planning policy.		
	Appropriate planning policy to be incorporated into emerging development strategy and other relevant documents		
	C2: Ensure that the amount of cricket facilities available does not impact on the opportunities to grow participation in the sport. Many clubs are at or nearing capacity and there is a need to provide access to additional appropriate facilities. This should be sought by; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ongoing development of relationships between larger and smaller clubs. This has already proved successful in Central Bedfordshire Council, with many larger clubs using facilities owned by smaller clubs; the provision of a new satellite ground for clubs at capacity where this represents a sustainable option for growth. This may be either through new provision or the reinstatement of sites that have formerly been used for cricket; the development of school club links and the establishment of a relationship between schools and cricket clubs. Facilities at school sites can then be used by the cricket club as the club expands. Note improvements to the quality of facilities are likely to also be required if this is to be successful; and ensuring that the impact of the increasing population is taken into account when identifying facility requirements – there are particular pressures in areas of growth and new facilities will be required where there is evidence of need. Improvements to the quality of existing facilities should be required where there is already sufficient provision. <p>Any new facilities should be provided in conjunction with an existing club or in support of a new club that has appropriate leadership and structures in place.</p>		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis Additional provision required in Dunstable and Houghton Regis (1 pitch) to be delivered through either new	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Areas where provision needs to be addressed are as follows;	North Capacity issues in the following settlements:

	<p>facility or investment into school site. There was a former cricket pitch at Luton Road that may provide an opportunity to bring back into use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caddington CC currently at capacity (impacted by lack of training facilities too) C4 • Leighton Buzzard CC at capacity but use overspill ground. Facility at this site requires improvement (C3). No use of second facility currently, but may be required longer term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biggleswade • Blunham • Ampthill • Flitwick <p>Potential to reinstate facilities at Houghton Conquest / Westoning to provide additional capacity but this should be considered in conjunction with clubs.</p> <p>No clear evidence of need for former facility at Shefford currently.</p>
	<p>C3: Address quality issues raised and ensure that both cricket grounds and pavilions are up to appropriate standards. This should include overspill facilities as well as first team grounds.</p> <p>Key areas for improvement relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grounds maintenance skills • changing pavilions • surface • drainage 		
	<p>Dunstable and Houghton Regis</p> <p>Dunstable Cricket Club</p>	<p>Leighton Buzzard and Rural South</p> <p>Page Park / Mentmore Gardens</p>	<p>North</p> <p>Biggleswade CC</p> <p>Sandy CC</p> <p>Wrest Park (Silsoe)</p> <p>Lidlington CC</p> <p>Henlow CC</p> <p>Milton Bryan CC</p>

			Steppingley CC Aspley Guise
Ensure Pitch Quality Meets Requirements	C4: To ensure that pitches can accommodate the level of play that they are required to currently, as well as to Support cricket clubs in the development of training nets to enhance club sustainability and improve overall performance as well as to remove pressure on grass wickets. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an indoor cricket venue • the provision of outdoor cricket nets at larger clubs that do not currently have access to such facilities 		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis Houghton Regis (no nets or artificial wicket)	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Caddington (no nets or artificial wicket) Eaton Bray Eggington Studham	North Biggleswade (no nets or artificial wicket) Harlington (no nets or artificial wicket) Lidlington (no nets or artificial wicket) Amptill Flitwick Henlow
Support Club Development	C5: Support long term sustainability of clubs by promoting succession planning, for example in groundsmanship. Both providers (including Town and Parish Councils) and clubs should be supported in gaining key skills.		

	Initiatives to be developed to achieve these objectives
	C6: Support initiatives to increase cricket participation including the introduction of new forms of the game, which may require the provision of flexible spaces
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place and additional requirements to be added where necessary

Strategic Priorities - Rugby

16.3 The assessment of rugby provision across Central Bedfordshire indicates that the key issues to address are as follows;

- Participation in rugby is relatively strong in Central Bedfordshire and there are four clubs, all of which offer full transition between midi, junior and senior rugby, offering clear player pathways.
- The majority of pitches in the Central Bedfordshire are at school sites and there is limited if any use of these by the clubs currently. Club sites are important for the growth and development of rugby clubs and all clubs are approaching capacity and training facilities are poor. Added to this, there are some quality issues that need to be addressed
- Population growth is likely to generate an increase in participation and some clubs also have aspirations to increase their membership, in all likelihood generating further pressures on the existing facility stock. Pitch capacity at club bases will become particularly strained by 2022 if club development aspirations are realised. In this instance, access to school pitches and / or the creation of new pitches at club bases or as a satellite pitch may become increasingly important.

The strategic priorities to respond to these issues and the area / site specific implications are therefore set out overleaf in Table 16.3.

Table 16.3 - Rugby - Strategic Priorities – Area Specific Requirements

Aim	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
Ensure that there are enough pitches to meet demand	R1: Monitor club growth over strategy period. Additional facilities will be required for clubs if participation increases significantly over and above levels that are generated by growth in population. Notably, the impact of training on pitches is significant and this could be addressed through the provision of a 3g training pitch which would reduce the impact of use on grass pitches. Any new provision should be in conjunction with existing or new clubs rather than provided ad hoc on new sites.		
	<p>Amount of pitches currently sufficient. Population growth and increase in participation likely to generate requirement for new pitch. To be delivered either through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New pitch at club base or satellite facility • Conversion of grass pitch to AGP to increase capacity • Use of school facility by club (may require qualitative improvements) – Queensbury Academy 	<p>Amount of pitches currently sufficient. Population growth and increase in participation may generate requirement for new pitch longer term. To be delivered either through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New pitch at club base or satellite facility • Conversion of grass pitch to AGP to increase capacity • Use of school facility by club (may require qualitative improvements) – Cedars Upper School / Vandyke School 	<p>Amount of pitches currently sufficient. Population growth and increase in participation may generate requirement for new pitch longer term. To be delivered either through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New pitch at club base or satellite facility • Conversion of grass pitch to AGP to increase capacity <p>Use of school facility by club (may require qualitative improvements) – Stratton Upper School / Redborne Upper School</p>
	R2: Monitor demand for rugby league provision over the strategy period.		
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place and additional requirements to be added where necessary		

Aim	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
Ensure Pitch Quality Meets Requirements	R3: To ensure that pitches can accommodate the level of play that they are required to currently, as well as to meet the needs of additional teams in future years, maintain and improve the quality of existing facilities by; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing maintenance issues identified through RFU ground surveys; • improving and expanding social facilities and pavilions; and • the provision of training floodlights – these should be located to enable rotation and use of different parts of the pitches to ensure that additional wear and tear is dispersed 		
	Dunstablians RUFC – Recent improvements to clubhouse undertaken. Priority should now be given to improving the capacity of the facility	Leighton Buzzard RUFC – require additional training floodlights. Quality improvements should be prioritised over additional capacity in the short term.	Biggleswade RUFC – improvements to clubhouse Ampthill RUFC – improvements to clubhouse Quality improvements should be prioritised over existing capacity in the short term.
Support Club Development	R4: Support aspirations to increase participation in rugby across Central Bedfordshire Council and manage the impact of these aspirations on facility development.		
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place and additional requirements to be added where necessary		
	R5: Support initiatives to increase rugby participation including the introduction of new forms of the game, which may require the provision of flexible spaces.		
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place and additional requirements to be added where necessary		

Strategic Priorities - Hockey

16.4 The assessment of hockey across Central Bedfordshire indicates that the key issues to address are as follows;

- There are two hockey clubs in Central Bedfordshire. Analysis of participation trends demonstrate evidence of significant recent expansion. Despite this, the current and potential playing profile of the area is relatively limited, with hockey likely to attract less than 1% of residents of Central Bedfordshire, even when taking into account latent demand
- Both hockey clubs are dissatisfied with the current levels of provision in Central Bedfordshire. There are concerns about both access to changing and social facilities, with neither club having a dedicated on site clubhouse, as well as issues with access to facilities for training and matches. Both clubs highlight challenges of competing demands with football.
- Analysis of use of the facilities at a peak time confirms that there are enough pitches overall to accommodate demand within Central Bedfordshire, however this is skewed by the presence of the pitch at Dunstable Leisure Centre, which is not currently used at all for hockey although it has a sand based surface. It is not located appropriately to function as an overspill facility for either of the two existing hockey clubs. While overall there are sufficient pitches, both clubs are at / nearing capacity at their club bases, meaning that access to overspill facilities is essential if levels of activity are to be maintained.
- While population growth alone will have limited impact, schemes designed to increase participation in hockey may generate demand for further facilities in the longer term. These include Back to Hockey and Rush Hockey, both of which are currently being trialled at Flitwick Leisure Centre.

The strategic priorities to respond to these issues and the area / site specific implications are therefore set out overleaf in Table 16.4

Table 16.4 - Hockey- Strategic Priorities – Area Specific Requirements

Aim	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
Ensure that there are enough pitches to meet demand	H1: To support hockey development, ensure that the surfaces currently used for hockey are retained as sand based pitches.		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis No facilities required for hockey	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Pitches at Van Dyke School should remain sand based surface	North Sandy Sports Centre should remain sand based surface
	H2: Monitor club activity and support the provision of additional sand based facilities (linked with the clubs) if significant participation increases occur and / or if issues are identified with pitches used outside of Central Bedfordshire.		
	New provision likely to be required within reasonable distance of club base to support existing club structures.		
	H3: Ensure priority access for hockey clubs at sand based facilities		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis No facilities required for hockey	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Van Dyke School	North Sandy Sports Centre
	H4: Ensure that the impact of housing growth is taken into account and that contributions towards hockey are required		
	The two hockey clubs will both be impacted upon by population growth and will serve residents across Central Bedfordshire		
Ensure Pitch Quality Meets Requirements	H5: Support aspirations for the provision of on site club houses and changing accommodation to facilitate club development. There may be opportunities to share this with other sports as part of the process of securing formal use of school sites to address quantitative deficiencies		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North

	No facilities required for hockey	Pavilion / clubhouse at Van Dyke School	Pavilion / clubhouse at Sandy Sports Centre
	H6: Maintain the quality of existing sand based AGPs, ensuring that facilities are refurbished every 10 years		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis No facilities required for hockey	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Van Dyke School	North Sandy Sports Centre
Support Club Development	H7: Support the introduction of new forms of hockey through the provision of appropriate facilities for the new form of the game		
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place and additional requirements to be added where necessary		

Strategic Priorities - Bowls

16.5 The assessment of bowls across Central Bedfordshire indicates that the key issues to address for bowls are;

- Analysis of the capacity of existing bowling greens suggests that all clubs are able to accommodate additional members, and there is scope to accommodate more teams on most greens. Adding to this, there is no evidence of growth in bowls with all responding clubs indicating that participation is static despite efforts to attract new players.
- Almost all clubs are satisfied with the quality of existing greens and this was also reinforced through site visits, which reveal that facilities are well maintained and all greens are in good condition. Just three clubs identify site specific issues requiring improvement and only two clubs are not happy with the overall stock of facilities (attributing this to the number of greens of the right quality).
- The average membership of bowls clubs in Central Bedfordshire is 69, representing a rate of 2.3% of residents over the age of 60. In contrast to pitch sports, the ageing population may see bowls become more popular in future years. This growth alone could generate additional 435 bowls players, meaning that clubs would have on average 92 members and supply would be much more closely matched with demand. Sport England Active people surveys however suggest that current demand is higher and also highlight the potential to increase participation, potentially up to 4%. If these targets were to be achieved, added to the anticipated impact of participation increases, the current stock of bowling greens would become insufficient.
- The changing population profile and the propensity of the older age groups to play bowls means that there is a significant opportunity to promote the sport. While overall provision is currently sufficient, regardless of current capacity, it should be noted that residents expect these facilities to be local to their home (on average, 55% of members are within 1 mile of their club) and many residents are outside of this distance to a current facility.

The key strategic priorities and area specific implications for bowls are therefore set out in Table 16.5.

Table 16.5 Strategic Priorities and Site Specific Implications – Outdoor Bowls

Aim	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
Ensure that there are enough pitches to meet demand	BG1: Protect all current bowling greens		
	All bowling greens. Consideration should be given to the future of Potton Bowling Green, a valuable site which may be at risk in the longer term.		
	BG2: New bowling greens are not required to meet current (or future) demand unless expressed demand is identified in an area further than 1 mile from an existing bowling green. New provision should be demand rather than supply led and facilities should only be developed where demand has already been identified. Instead, improvements to existing bowling greens should be prioritised		
	New participants and residents of new development should be channelled towards existing bowling clubs until it becomes clear that an existing facility is over capacity and / or there is significant expressed demand for a new facility in an area currently outside of the catchment of a facility.		
	BG3: Monitor the impact of attempts to increase participation as well as population growth on club membership.		
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place and additional requirements to be added where necessary		
Ensure Pitch Quality Meets Requirements	BG4: Seek to maintain the quality of facilities and where issues are identified, improve the quality and consistency of bowling greens		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis No facilities required for hockey	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Leighton Buzzard Bowls Club	North Biggleswade St Andrews Bowls Club
Support Club Development	BG5: Support clubs to proactively increase participation and membership. To maximise the sustainability of bowls as a sport, efforts should focus on recruitment of junior players as well as adult and veterans.		

Aim	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place and additional requirements to be added where necessary		

Strategic Priorities - Tennis

16.6 The assessment of tennis across Central Bedfordshire indicates that the key issues to address for tennis are;

- The stock of tennis courts is well spread across Central Bedfordshire, with more than half of all courts in the major service centres. Most residents in larger settlements have access to at least one tennis court within a five mile radius. Provision in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis placemaking area is however much lower than in other parts of Central Bedfordshire.
- Tennis offers a significant opportunity to increase overall participation in sport and physical activity in Central Bedfordshire – the sport has a wider participation base and there are high levels of latent demand
- there are sufficient courts at all clubs to meet the needs of current membership and only three clubs are approaching capacity. While club membership does not account for casual play, the current club membership figures suggest that the Active People survey perhaps overestimates demand slightly and provides an indication of the upper echelons of potential demand.
- Population growth alone could be accommodated within existing club structures (where there is capacity for up to 1000 more members) although some clubs are approaching capacity and may require additional courts if growth is focused in their area. Significant participation increases would however require more wholesale increases in provision
- there are concerns about the quality of courts (particularly at public facilities) but also at several club sites and the overall quality is the most varying of all types of outdoor sport. Several clubs believe that the quality issues at both club and public facilities will inhibit the overall development of tennis in both the short and long term.

The strategic priorities to respond to these issues and the area / site specific implications are therefore set out overleaf in Table 16.6

Table 16.6 Strategic Priorities and Site Specific Implications – Tennis

Aim	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
Ensure that there are enough pitches to meet demand	T1: Support the provision of new facilities at clubs where specific need can be identified at clubs, taking into account the capacity and quality of existing facilities. In the first instance, additional capacity should be created by adding floodlights to courts. Longer term and following population growth, new courts may be required at some clubs.		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis n/a	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Studham TC	North Barton le Clay TC Langford TC
	T2: Where there is expressed demand for tennis in areas not currently within a 5 mile catchment, to maximise the use of resources, support additional demand for tennis through a partnership approach with schools where this is possible. Demand for pay and play tennis should be considered in line with the Beacon Tennis Scheme, established by the LTA. Existing tennis courts in large public settlements should also be retained. . Existing public tennis courts in large settlements should also be retained, unless appropriate pay and play opportunities can be organised through club bases or schools		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
Ensure Pitch Quality Meets Requirements	T3: Address quality issues identified at club sites prioritising areas where club development is limited by quality constraints, specifically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floodlighting (linked with increasing capacity above) • Covering existing courts (linked with increasing capacity above) • Surfacing • Pavilion / Changing. 		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North Langford (impacting upon

Aim	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
		Linslade TC Studham TC (Impacting upon capacity) Eaton Bray TC Slip End Tilsworth Billington	capacity) Barton le Clay (impacting upon capacity) Potton Westoning
Support Club Development	T4: Support the development of new forms of tennis in order to increase participation. This might include mini tennis, which provides the use of more flexible spaces.		
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place and additional requirements to be added where necessary		

Strategic Priorities - Athletics

16.7 The assessment identifies the key issues for athletics as:

- There is only one athletics track in Central Bedfordshire at Sandy Sports and Community Centre.
- There are four athletics clubs in Central Bedfordshire. While Biggleswade Athletics Club is based at Sandy Sports Centre, the remainder are road running and cross country clubs. Only Biggleswade AC therefore uses a formal athletics track regularly.

Sport England's Active Places data suggests that the amount of facilities in Central Bedfordshire is poor compared with the average. Supporting this, analysis indicates that with the existence of only one track in the district and despite other tracks nearby, accessibility for local residents is poor, with over a third living outside a 20 minute driving catchment. Accessibility is skewed to the east, with parts of Central Bedfordshire in the west outside of the catchment to a track. Accessibility is best in Sandy (the location of the current track) but in general, residents in the North placemaking area are closer to athletics facilities than in the south. Poorest accessibility is in Leighton Buzzard and the Rural South.

- Despite these deficiencies, current activity levels do not provide clear evidence of a requirement for a new athletics track in Central Bedfordshire (as most activity is in the form of road running).

There is however clear evidence of demand for a new facility in Leighton Buzzard, an area which has previously had a track and the area of Central Bedfordshire that is least well served for facilities. Leighton Buzzard Athletic Club indicate that there is a clear need for facilities in the area and that club development is inhibited without the creation of a track. Recognising that the creation of a track is a longer term project, the club also highlight an immediate priority of the provision of a clubhouse, floodlit outdoor training area and storage facility.

The area specific priorities for athletics are therefore set out overleaf in Table 16.7.

Table 16. 7 - Strategic Priorities and Site Specific Implications – Athletics

Aim	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
Ensure that there are enough pitches to meet demand	A1: Support ongoing athletics participation through the protection of the existing athletics track used by Biggleswade AC		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis n/a	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North Sandy Sports and Community Centre
	A2: Ensure that appropriate changing and meeting facilities are available for road running clubs		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
	A3: Support sustainable solutions to provide new facilities for athletics in Leighton Buzzard.		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Sustainable athletics facility	North
Ensure Pitch Quality	A4: Ensure that appropriate changing and meeting facilities are available for road running clubs		

Aim	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
Meets Requirements	Dunstable and Houghton Regis Dunstable	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre (or alternative venue)	North Flitwick Leisure Centre / Redborne School Sandy Sports and Community Centre
	A5: Maintain the quality of the existing track		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis n/a	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South n/a	North Sandy Sports and Community Centre
Support Club Development	A6: Support clubs to proactively increase participation and membership to maximise the sustainability of the sport.		
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place and additional requirements to be added where necessary		

Strategic Priorities - Netball

16.8 The assessment identifies the key issues for netball as:

- There is a strong network of participation in netball across Central Bedfordshire, linked with other local authorities in Bedfordshire. There are several affiliated and accredited clubs in the area offering strong development pathways. National increases in participation in netball are mirrored in the Bedfordshire area and participation remains strong.
- England Netball indicate that much of the lower levels of participation are focused in the urban areas and particularly in Dunstable, where the main gap in participation is considered to be. Despite this, all areas of Central Bedfordshire are equitably served by local leagues.
- Bedfordshire Netball indicate that the network of facilities is currently adequate for local leagues, although there are some issues with access to appropriate training facilities for clubs. The nature of netball and the leagues that are run mean that competition generally takes place at central venues and some degree of travel is expected. Growth in participation may place further demand upon existing facilities, which are spread across Bedfordshire.

The strategic priorities to address the key issues identified are therefore set out overleaf in Table 16.8

Table 16. 8 - Strategic Priorities and Site Specific Implications – Netball

Aim	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
Ensure that there are enough pitches to meet demand	N1:Ensure that there are sufficient appropriate venues for club based netball training		
	No priorities at current time. Dunstable Leisure Centre may provide an opportunity to accommodate demand for training if aspirations to develop a club are achieved. This site is not currently marked out for netball (indoor or out)		
	N2: Facilitate the requirement for any competitive netball venues longer term in the event of significant participation increases and the creation of new leagues		
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place and additional requirements to be added where necessary		
Ensure Pitch Quality Meets Requirements	N3: Maintain the quality of the existing facilities and improve the standard of those courts that are not sufficient to sustain appropriate levels of play		
	Dunstable and Houghton Regis Dunstable Leisure Centre	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South n/a	North Stratton Upper School
Support Club Development	N4:Support clubs to proactively increase participation and membership to maximise the sustainability of the sport		
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place and additional requirements to be added where necessary		
	N5: Support initiatives designed to increase player retention and participation.		
	Ongoing monitoring and review of strategy to take place and additional requirements to be added where necessary		

16.9 Tables in the previous pages have served to highlight the priority areas for new and improved provision by sport. Table 16.9 provides a brief summary of areas where action is required, bringing together the findings for all sports.

Table 16.9 – Key Priority Summary

	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
New Pitch Provision	<p>Football</p> <p>Capacity to meet current demand. Population growth will however generate unmet demand in both Houghton Regis and Dunstable.</p> <p>3g AGP North Houghton Regis</p> <p>Cricket</p> <p>Dunstable / Houghton Regis</p> <p>Rugby</p> <p>Dunstable RUFC (increased capacity)</p>	<p>Football</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eaton Bray Totternhoe Tilsworth Leighton Buzzard (longer term depending upon closure of pitches following opening of Astral Park). <p>3g AGP</p> <p>Totternhoe / Eaton Bray</p> <p>Cricket</p> <p>Caddington</p> <p>Rugby</p> <p>n/a</p> <p>Tennis</p> <p>Studham TC</p>	<p>Football</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amphill Arlesey Flitwick (proposed developments currently underway will address existing deficiencies) Cranfield Langford Maulden Potton Shefford Stotfold (proposed developments currently underway will address existing deficiencies) <p>3g AGP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toddington / Harlington area Stotfold / Arlesey Biggleswade <p>Cricket</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biggleswade Blunham Amphill Flitwick

	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
			Rugby n/a Tennis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barton le Clay TC • Langford TC
Quality Improvements	Football <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunstable • Houghton Regis Cricket <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunstable Rugby n/a Athletics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunstable 	Football <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eaton Bray • Leighton Buzzard • Slip End Cricket <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leighton Buzzard Rugby <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leighton Buzzard RUFC (floodlights) Hockey Van Dyke School Bowls	Football <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cranfield • Biggleswade • Harlington • Lidlington • Marston • Shillington • Northill • Westoning Cricket <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biggleswade • Sandy • Silsoe

	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
		<p>Leighton Buzzard Bowls Club</p> <p>Tennis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linslade TC • Studham TC (Impacting upon capacity) • Eaton Bray TC • Slip End • Tilsworth • Billington <p>Athletics</p> <p>Leighton Buzzard</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lidlington • Henlow • Milton Bryan • Steppingley Aspley Guise <p>Rugby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ampthill RUFC • Biggleswade RUFC <p>Hockey</p> <p>Sandy Sports Centre</p> <p>Bowls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biggleswade St Andrews <p>Tennis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Langford (impacting upon capacity) • Barton le Clay (impacting upon capacity) • Potton • Westoning <p>Athletics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandy • Biggleswade <p>Netball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biggleswade

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