



# DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Annual Update 2021

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## Abbreviations

3G	Third generation turf
AC	Athletics Club
AGP	Artificial grass pitch
BC	Bowls Club
B&HHHC	Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead Hockey club
CC	Cricket Club
DBC	Dacorum Borough Council
DPD	Development Plan Document
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
LFFP	Local Football Facility Plan
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NGB	National Governing Body
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
RLFC	Rugby League Football Club
TC	Tennis Club
THC	Tring Hockey Club
VALP	Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This is the Council's first annual update of the Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report April 2019<sup>1</sup> and Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan June 2019 (PPS)<sup>2</sup>. These reports form part of the Council's technical evidence base for local plan preparation and were developed in accordance with Sport England guidance.

1.2 Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance *An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy*<sup>3</sup> also sets out the purpose of undertaking an annual review.

1.3 'An annual review should highlight:

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

1.4 This annual update aims to follow this approach. For completeness of understanding, it should be read alongside the 2019 PPS documents.

1.5 The annual update did not take place during 2020 when participation rates were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and was instead deferred until 2021 when participation rates became more representative. However, for some particular sports and groups of participants there may still remain some residual and ongoing impacts from the pandemic.

1.6 Partner organisations have a vested interest in ensuring existing playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities can be protected and enhanced. As such, many of the objectives and actions within this document need to be delivered and implemented by sports organisations, education establishments, community sports networks and parish/town councils. In many instances, the Council will not be a key partner in delivering these actions or recommendations, meaning the PPS is not just for the Council to act upon, but for all the stakeholders and partners involved within the project.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/playing-pitch-strategy-assessment-report.pdf?sfvrsn=14cd0a9e\\_8](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/playing-pitch-strategy-assessment-report.pdf?sfvrsn=14cd0a9e_8)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/playing-pitch-strategy-and-action-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=33cd0a9e\\_8](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/playing-pitch-strategy-and-action-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=33cd0a9e_8)

<sup>3</sup> [https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/pps-guidance-october-2013-updated.pdf?VersionId=afnAz9cYWu47InVNn\\_t3QCSem9.uRnwg](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/pps-guidance-october-2013-updated.pdf?VersionId=afnAz9cYWu47InVNn_t3QCSem9.uRnwg)

## 2. Methodology

2.1 The 2019 Playing Pitch Strategy focussed on the following types of outdoor sports facilities.

- ◀ Football
- ◀ Rugby union
- ◀ Rugby league
- ◀ Hockey
- ◀ Cricket
- ◀ Bowls
- ◀ Tennis
- ◀ Athletics (including road running)
- ◀ Netball
- ◀ Golf
- ◀ Others as appropriate i.e. water sports facilities, archery, cycling

2.2 For this annual update, baseball has been included as an appropriate additional sport that is particularly relevant to Dacorum Borough.

2.3 In order to identify any changes implemented since the 2019 Strategy was undertaken, national governing bodies (NGBs) and other key stakeholders were asked to complete a survey explaining any changes to demand and supply. The following sports/organisations were contacted:

Sport/Sports Provision	Organisation	Rationale
Football	Hertfordshire FA	Governing body of football in Hertfordshire
Third Generation (3G) Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPS)	Everyone Active	Operator of Berkhamsted Leisure Centre, Hemel Hempstead Leisure Centre, Hemel Hempstead School Courts, Jarman Park Athletics track and Longdean Sports Centre. Sport specific information also provided by NGBs.
Cricket	Herts Cricket	Governing body of cricket in Hertfordshire
Rugby Union	Rugby Football Union	National governing body
Hockey	England Hockey	National governing body
Golf	England Golf	National governing body
Bowls	Herts Bowls Kitcheners Bowls Club	County bowling association Club within Borough
Tennis	LTA	National governing body
Netball	England Netball	National governing body
Athletics	Dacorum & Tring Athletics Club? Gade Valley Harriers Athletics Club	Only athletics club within Borough  One of two running clubs within Borough
Rugby League	Hemel Stags Rugby League Club	Only club operating in Dacorum.
Baseball	Herts Baseball Club	Not included in 2019 strategy, however strong sport within Dacorum, represented by single club.
Football, AGP	Dacorum Borough Council	Provider of sports facilities

2.4 For each sport the following approach was taken:

#### **Supply Update**

This captures changes in supply identified by the sports organisations with each activity linked back to the three overarching aims of the Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan:

- Aim 1 to **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sports facilities where it is needed to meet current and future needs.
- Aim 2 to **enhance** outdoor sports provision and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites.
- Aim 3 to **provide** new outdoor sports facilities where feasible and there is current or future demand to do so.

#### **Demand Update**

This compares participation data from 2019 and 2021. Where a direct comparison is not possible, it presents the data that is available.

#### **Significant Issues by Sport**

Each sport was asked to identify any significant issues from their perspective and also if there had been any further changes to the information presented in the 2019 documents.

#### **Summary and Conclusions by Sport**

The information collated above was then used to determine if any changes were needed to the recommendations for each sport in the Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan 2019.

2.5 A copy of the survey can be found at Appendix 1.

## 3. Football

### 3.1 Supply Update

Table 3.1 Changes in football pitch supply and quality

Site ID	Site	Sport	Settlement	Update	Aim
3	Ashlyns School	Football	Berkhamsted	Ashlyns School have invested funds into an enhanced maintenance programme for their grass pitches in the short term. A Pitch Power Report may be required to assess current condition of these pitches.	Enhance
-	Durrants Lane	Football	Berkhamsted	Durrants Lane is noted as being accessible from 2019-20. This is still not accessible, although talks are progressing for a lease to be agreed for use in 2021-22 season.	Provide
75	Northchurch Sports Ground	Football	Berkhamsted	The Parish Council has been working with Berkhamsted Raiders FC to deliver an enhanced grass pitch maintenance programme.	Enhance
103	Wigginton Sports Field	Football	Tring	The Parish Council has been working with Berkhamsted Raiders FC to deliver an enhanced grass pitch maintenance programme.	Enhance

### 3.2 Demand Update

Table 3.2 Comparison of number of competitive football teams

Demand data 2019		Demand data 2021	
Football Teams	Number of teams per age group*	Football Teams	Number of teams per age group
Adult	53	Men 11v11 (16-45yrs)	72
		Women 11v11 (16-45yrs)	5
Youth 11v11	85	Boys 11v11 (12-15yrs)	78
		Girls 11v11 (12-15yrs)	14
Youth 9v9	58	Boys 9v9 (10-11yrs)	60
		Girls 9v9 (10-11yrs)	11
Mini 7v7	71	Mixed 7v7 (8-9yrs)	71
Mini 5v5	61	Mixed 5v5 (6-7yrs)	68
		5v5 (adults)	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>

\*a male/female breakdown is not available for 2019 to allow for direct comparison

### 3.3 Significant Issues for Football

- Hertfordshire FA have been supporting conversations between the Council and the Grounds Management Association to enhance the grass pitch maintenance programme on Council pitches. These conversations have led to an enhanced programme of work and purchasing additional machinery to support this proposed work, to commence shortly.
- Kings Langley FC are now playing at Step 3, not Step 4 as listed on page 27 of the playing pitch assessment report.
- The Playing Pitch Assessment Report has some sites missing that are included in the Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP)<sup>4</sup> for grass pitch improvement. These are listed in page 5 of the LFFP report and comprise - Astley Cooper School (5), Berkhamsted Sports and Social Club (8), Bovingdon Football Club (16), Cupid Green Sports Field (34), Grovehill Playing Fields (43), High Street Green Playing Fields (51), Pennine Way (76), Longdean Sports Centre (86), the Adeyfield Academy (91), Warners End Playing Fields (101), Velvet Lawn (100), Durrants Lane, Pound Meadow (78), Tring School/Sports Centre (87), Lagley Meadow (61), and Grove Road Primary School (131).

### 3.4 Football Grass Pitch Summary and Conclusions

- As the breakdown of male/female teams in 2019 is not available, a direct comparison of team information with 2021 is not possible. However, it would appear that participation in football across all age groups and genders has increased since 2019 with significant growth in senior teams in particular.
- Given the increased number of adult teams, the spare capacity for adult play recorded in 2019 is likely to have reduced, and would not be able to support any additional needs arising from growth. Herts FA also report waiting lists for youth teams at a number of clubs.
- There has not been any substantive change in the supply of football pitches for community use.
- Hertfordshire FA recommend further pitch assessments are undertaken through PitchPower to deliver regular reports on football pitch sites in Dacorum. This will provide further information to support our understanding of the quality and capacity of grass football pitches in Dacorum.
- The recommendations from 2019 remain valid and should be retained, along with noting the sport specific issues set out above.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://localplans.footballfoundation.org.uk/local-authorities-index/dacorum/dacorum-executive-summary/>



## 4. Third Generation Turf (3G) Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)

### 4.1 Supply Update

Table 4.1 Changes in 3G and AGP supply and quality

Site ID	Site	Settlement	Update	Aim
49	Hemel Hempstead Football Club	Hemel Hempstead	Hemel Hempstead Town FC have installed an additional 3G pitch. Levels of availability for community use to be confirmed, as the pitch was completed during the pandemic and true usage has not been identified without football being actively playing onsite.	Provide
93	Hemel Hempstead School	Hemel Hempstead	The AstroTurf pitch at Hemel Leisure Centre / Hemel School is currently out of use. The school and Council are currently awaiting planning permission to refurbish the facility with a new 3G 5 aside surface and a multi-use surface for recreational football, tennis, hockey, and netball.	Provide
3	Ashlyns School	Berkhamsted	Ashlyns School 3G is in the process of being resurfaced and upgrades provided to the 3G pitch for the 2021-22 season.	Enhance
25	Cavendish School	Hemel Hempstead	Cavendish School 3G still remains absent from the 3G pitch register, meaning no competitive football fixtures should be played on this 3G at present.	Provide
	Adeyfield Adventure Playground	Hemel Hempstead	New floodlit AGP (35mx18m) installed, reserved for Playground use until 18:00 during the week. Available to the community from 18:00 until 21:00 Monday to Friday, 09.00 to 21.00 on Saturdays and 09:00 - 21.00 on Sundays	Provide
	Grovehill Adventure Playground	Hemel Hempstead	New floodlit AGP (5v5) installed, reserved for Playground use until 18:00 during the week. Available to the community from 18:00 until 21:00 Monday to Friday, 09.00 to 21.00 on Saturdays and 09:00 - 21.00 on Sundays.	Provide

### 4.2 Significant Issues for 3G and AGP

- Discussions are taking place between the FA and Football Foundation to develop 3G pitches on a number of sites in the following locations; Hemel Hempstead, Tring, Southern Villages (Kings Langley and the surrounding area) and Berkhamsted.

### 4.3 3G and AGP Summary and Conclusions

- Since the 2019 study was completed new AGP facilities have been provided and there has been some upgrading to existing facilities.
- While these will improve overall provision of 3G pitches, two of the new pitches provided do not meet FA size standards and the availability for community use of the new full sized facility is currently unknown.
- The projects delivered do not contribute towards the requirement for four full sized 3G pitches identified through the Playing Pitch Study, but can help towards the

recommendations for additional training facilities for Hemel Hempstead. As a result, there is still a clear need for additional 3G AGPs across the Borough.

- As a result, there is no change to the recommendations of the 2019 study.

## 5. Cricket

### 5.1 Supply Update

Table 5.1 Changes in cricket pitch supply and quality

Site ID	Site	Sport	Settlement	Update	Aim
14	Bourne End Cricket Club	Cricket	Southern	Bourne End CC have folded as a cricket club and the ground is being promoted for development.	Protect

### 5.2 Demand Update

Table 5.2 Comparison of number of teams

Demand data 2019		Demand data 2021	
Men (18-55yrs)	51	Men (18-55yrs)	62
Women (18-55yrs)	2	Women (18-55yrs)	3
Boys (7-18yrs)	81	Boys (7-18yrs)	79
Girls (7-18yrs)	3	Girls (7-18yrs)	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>

### 5.3 Significant Issues for Cricket

- Herts Cricket note that the National Programmes All Stars Cricket (8 week introductory programme for 5-8 year olds) and Dynamos (8-11 year olds) are not mentioned in the Playing Pitch Strategy. Herts Cricket have over 2000 playing across the county which will hopefully generate new girls and boys junior teams and increase participation in cricket over the coming years.
- Bourne End CC have folded as a cricket club and the ground is not in use. The last year of use was in 2019. Herts Cricket point out that given the increase in all teams and the PPS stating that grounds are over capacity this shows the need for the ground.
- Research by Herts Cricket shows there is now a deficit of pitches at peak times, with clubs seeking additional pitches. The Playing Pitch Strategy should be updated to reflect this, with Sport England highlighting that existing sites will need to be protected and replacement provision will be required if any current or lapsed/disused sites are promoted for development.

### 5.4 Cricket Summary and Conclusions

- Overall demand for cricket has increased, particular from adult men and girls, in addition to the latent demand that is likely to have arisen due to the folding of Bourne End Cricket Club.
- As the cricket ground at Bourne End is currently disused, the overall supply in the Borough has decreased.
- The recommendations for cricket within the Playing Pitch Strategy 2019 include 'protect both cricket provision currently in use and pitches that are no longer in use due to the potential that they may offer for meeting current and future needs (unless replacement provision is agreed upon and provided)'.
- The recommendations from the 2019 study remain valid, particularly the point above to protect both cricket pitch provision currently in use and pitches that are no longer in use, given that there is now a deficit of pitches at peak times.

## 6. Rugby union

### 6.1 Supply Update

Table 6.1 Changes in Rugby Union pitch supply and quality

Site ID	Site	Sport	Settlement	Update	Aim
3	Ashlyns School	Rugby Union	Berkhamsted	Suitable for non-contact rugby training only (contact training requires compliance to World Rugby Regulation 22)	Provide
25	Cavendish School	Rugby Union	Hemel Hempstead	Suitable for non-contact rugby training only (contact training requires compliance to World Rugby Regulation 22)	Provide
49	Hemel Hempstead Town FC	Rugby Union	Hemel Hempstead	Suitable for non-contact rugby training only (contact training requires compliance to World Rugby Regulation 22)	Provide
53	Hobbs Hill School	Rugby Union	Hemel Hempstead	Suitable for non-contact rugby training only (contact training requires compliance to World Rugby Regulation 22)	Provide
84	Berkhamsted Leisure Centre	Rugby Union	Berkhamsted	Suitable for non-contact rugby training only (contact training requires compliance to World Rugby Regulation 22)	Provide
93	Hemel Hempstead School	Rugby Union	Berkhamsted	Suitable for non-contact rugby training only (contact training requires compliance to World Rugby Regulation 22)	Provide
125	Knox Johnston Sports Centre	Rugby Union	Berkhamsted	Suitable for non-contact rugby training only (contact training requires compliance to World Rugby Regulation 22)	Provide

### 6.2 Demand Update

Table 6.2 Comparison of number of teams

Demand data 2019		Demand data 2021	
Rugby Union Teams	Number of teams per age group	Rugby Union Teams	Number of teams per age group
Senior (19+)	7	Men (18+)	7
		Women (18+)	1
Colts (17-19)	3		

Junior (13-16)	12		
		Boys (U13-U18)	12
		Girls (U13-U18)	1*
Mini (6-12)	13	Mixed (7-12)	12

\*group of mixed age girls

### 6.3 Significant Issues for Rugby Union

- The 2019 document lists a number of school AGP sites as ‘Football/Rugby’ which the Rugby Football Union ask to be clarified in the PPS update to avoid any potential misunderstanding around compliant surfaces for **contact** rugby training. A compliant surface must adhere to World Rugby Regulation 22 with regard to construction and testing, which Rugby Football Union believes does not apply to any of the school surfaces listed. As such these surfaces are likely viable options for **non-contact** rugby training only which needs to be made clear in the annual update from a player welfare perspective. (These sites are listed in the supply update above.)
- Rugby Football Union are undertaking a club facility audit to update this data set.

### 6.4 Rugby Union Summary and Conclusions

- Clubs are reporting a full recovery post pandemic, with team numbers similar to that in 2019.
- As the situation regarding demand and supply has not significantly changed since 2019 the recommendations of the Playing Pitch Strategy remain valid and the clarification regarding non-contact rugby training only is recorded.

## 7. Hockey

### 7.1 Supply Update

Table 7.1 Changes in hockey pitch supply and quality

Site ID	Site	Sport	Settlement	Update	Aim
9	Berkhamsted & Hemel Hempstead Hockey Club	Hockey (AGP)	Berkhamsted	B&HHHC have been granted planning permission for building a pitch with floodlights at their home ground at Cow Roast. The club are currently fundraising and have raised £650,000 of a required £750,000	Provide

7.2 The 2019 Strategy highlighted that both community hockey clubs in Dacorum use the RAF Halton (within Buckinghamshire Council area) full size hockey suitable AGP for training and matches and that the MoD had announced that the site would close in 2022.

7.3 However the MoD subsequently announced in February 2019 that there will now be a phased closure from 2022 to 2025. RAF Halton is included as a site allocation within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013-2033, the site specific requirements include 'The retention of existing sports facilities as part of a long-term strategy for sport and recreation to serve new residents and the existing community.'

### 7.4 Demand Update

Table 7.2 Comparison of number of teams

Demand data 2019		Demand data 2021	
Hockey Teams	Number of teams per age group	Hockey Teams	Number of teams per age group
Men (17-55yrs)	5 (B&HHHC) 4 (THC)	Men (17-55yrs)	5 (B&HHHC) 2 (THC)
Women (17-55yrs)	2 (B&HHHC) 3 (THC)	Women (17-55yrs)	4 (B&HHHC) 3 (THC)
Juniors	-	Boys (14-16yrs)	1
		Girls (14-16yrs)	2
		Mixed (5-10yrs)	
		Mixed (Adult)	1
		Masters (Male)	1
Junior membership	122 (B&HHHC) 66 (THC)	Junior membership	86 (B&HHHC) 107 (THC)

### 7.5 Significant Issues for Hockey

- England Hockey has requested support for B&HHHC in raising further funds and has asked that the funding requirement be registered with the Council should there be access to any developer contributions.

### 7.6 Hockey Summary and Conclusions

- The level of overall demand for hockey across the Borough has not significantly changed between 2019 and 2021.

- The proposed new AGP at Cow Roast will help the supply issues identified through the Playing Pitch Strategy and deliver one of the recommendations for hockey.
- As full funding has not yet been secured to deliver this new facility, the recommendations from 2019 remain in place.

## 8. Golf

### 8.1 Supply Update

- The driving range at the non-affiliated Berkhamsted Driving Range has now permanently closed with only the golf shop left in operation. England Golf are not aware of any changes in quality or access to the affiliated facilities.
- There is developer interest in the Berkhamsted Driving Range site and a planning application for redevelopment has been submitted.

### 8.2 Demand Update

Table 8.1 Comparison of golf club membership

<b>Demand data 2019</b>		<b>Demand data 2021</b>	
<b>Club name</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Club name</b>	<b>Membership</b>
Ashridge Golf Club	657	Ashridge Golf Club	730
Ashridge Golf Club (Artisans)	30	Ashridge Golf Club (Artisans)	30
Berkhamsted Golf Club	650	Berkhamsted Golf Club	823
Little Hay Golf Club	184	Little Hay Golf Club	172
Shendish Manor Golf Club	142	Shendish Manor Golf Club	234

### 8.3 Significant Issues for Golf

- Golf has generally benefitted from the pandemic and seen a sizeable uplift in affiliated member numbers throughout the country as evidenced in the table above. As well as there being more members, the number of people playing golf outside of club membership has also increased.
- Despite the increase in member numbers, England Golf are happy to maintain the current position of sustaining quality. The closure of the standalone driving range does cause slight concern given their importance in introducing new people to the game.

### 8.4 Golf Summary and Conclusions

- The increase in participation and the closure of Berkhamsted Driving Range are noted.
- Following the feedback from England Golf, the recommendation of the Playing Pitch Strategy focussing on improving quality will remain.



## 9. Bowls

### 9.1 Supply Update

Table 9.1 Changes in bowling green supply and quality

Site ID	Site	Sport	Settlement	Update	Aim
8	Kitcheners Field	Bowls	Tring	The green is now in very good condition as it is being maintained directly by Kitcheners Bowls Club and the Club has invested in improvements.	Enhance

### 9.2 Demand Update

Table 9.2 Comparison of number of bowling club members

Demand data 2019				Demand data 2020		
Bowls Club	Senior male	Senior female	Junior	Senior male	Senior female	Junior
Hemel Hempstead BC	55	26		52	21	
Little Gaddesden BC	25	11		12	4	
Kings Langley BC	49	34	1	26	19	
Kitcheners BC	45	20		19 (40 in 2021)	14 (22 in 2021)	
Tring BC	43	22	1	35	14	
Bovingdon BC	40	10		30	8	
Potten End BC	47	24	2	39	18	
Berkhamsted BC	60	41	10	56	36	

### 9.3 Significant Issues for Bowls

- Hertfordshire Bowls report that COVID-19 has been a great challenge to bowls. Issues have included a significant drop in the number of members, restricted access to clubhouses and social bowling, cancellation of fixtures, additional challenges to maintaining greens and changes to the planned delivery of bowls. The collection of membership fees has needed to reflect how much access to the green has been available.
- Going forward clubs will be working hard to gain new and younger members and retain existing members.
- Grant funding from local authorities, where made available, has been very well received, and Hertfordshire Bowls look forward to support from Bowls England for funding/marketing bowls that will be made available for 2022.
- Clubs will also always need support for their greens management teams to ensure the best possible delivery of the facility and playing surface.
- Hertfordshire Bowls would like to see an indoor bowls facility included in any future strategy. A 'community hub' that also offers bowls would help with the financing of a bowls facility.

### 9.4 Bowls Summary and Conclusions

- While the data available in 2021 does not give a full picture of current demand, Hertfordshire Bowls reports that there are currently no waiting lists at local clubs. Membership numbers may not have recovered from the impact of the pandemic and this may continue to impact the operation of clubs.
- Provision of indoor bowls is considered within the Indoor Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment March 2019<sup>5</sup> and Leisure Facilities Strategy May 2019<sup>6</sup> which notes that there are no indoor bowls facilities in Dacorum and includes the recommendation to retain and support provision of other formats of the game such as carpet and outdoor bowls.
- Recovery of bowls participation from the pandemic should continue to be monitored and further recommendations may need to be added to the Playing Pitch Strategy in the future to encourage uptake of the sport.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/indoor-leisure-facilities-needs-assessment-march-2019.pdf?sfvrsn=b76e0c9e\\_4](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/indoor-leisure-facilities-needs-assessment-march-2019.pdf?sfvrsn=b76e0c9e_4)

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/leisure-facilities-strategy-may-2019.pdf?sfvrsn=e26e0c9e\\_4](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/leisure-facilities-strategy-may-2019.pdf?sfvrsn=e26e0c9e_4)

## 10. Tennis

### 10.1 Supply Update

Table 10.1 Changes in tennis court supply and quality

Site ID	Site	Sport	Settlement	Update	Aim
34	Cupid Green Sports Field	Tennis	Hemel Hempstead	Cupid Green Playing Fields courts have been refurbished by the Council and are now managed via Apex Multi Sport	Enhance
86	Longdean Sports Centre	Netball/tennis	Hemel Hempstead	Potential loss of 2 courts due to school development (planning application currently withdrawn, revised application yet to be submitted)	Protect

10.2 In the 2019 Strategy it was noted that the Leverstock Green TC site had been identified within the Dacorum Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2017) for residential development alongside a proposed new leisure space allocation at Bunkers Park, to include tennis facilities. In 2020, the Council consulted on the Dacorum Local Plan (2020-2038) Emerging Strategy for Growth (Regulation 18). The Leverstock Green TC site was not brought forward into this document and the land at Bunkers Park was instead proposed for a cemetery and crematorium, which has now received planning permission.

### 10.3 Demand Update

Table 10.2 Comparison of tennis club membership

Demand data 2019			Demand data 2021			
Tennis Club	Adults	Juniors	Adults	Junior	Adults non-members	Junior non-members
Chipperfield TC	165	60	165	60	10	0
Langley TC	100	250	65	338	123	133
Little Gaddesden TC	110	60	156	81	0	0
Berkhamsted LTC	650	350	424	241	38	51
Leverstock Green TC	201	88	204	55	19	32
Bovingdon & Flaunden TC	100	80	No data	82	97	1
Tring LTC	131	68	149	67	9	49
Long Marston TC	69	22	No data	17	60	20

### 10.4 Significant Issues for Tennis

- The LTA are not aware of one specific club that has oversubscribed waiting lists however during 2020/21 common themes amongst all clubs in the Dacorum area have been:

1. court use from members has increased, this was initially seen during lockdowns but has remained where working from home is more common;
  2. increase in new adult members or non-adult members joining a coaching programme;
  3. all coaches have seen higher than average numbers on coaching programmes, especially Easter and summer camps.
- Based on LTA approximate capacity guidelines (outlined on page 33 of the PPS action plan) the LTA identify the following clubs as remaining close to or running overcapacity – Chipperfield TC, Little Gaddesden TC and Langley TC.
  - No club sites have had any material changes to their facilities other than having had another two years of use and being closer to the end of their lifespan and the need for resurfacing or maintenance. The LTA advises clubs to ensure appropriate sinking funds are in place to complete these works at the relevant period in the courts lifespan. However not all clubs will have sufficient reserves to complete this work and may seek support from the Council to retain their sports facility and provide adequate facilities for members.
  - The remaining non club (park sites) have further deteriorated since the last court inspections in 2019. The LTA highlight the tennis courts at Coronation fields, Reith Fields and Pound Meadow all of which now have poor or very poor surfacing and fencing.
  - The LTA has identified Dacorum as a target location for increasing indoor tennis provision and is interested in developing a project that could include the co-location of an Indoor/Outdoor Tennis hub with other sports facilities and services.
  - Langley Tennis Club lease has 3-4 years remaining and the LTA believes the future of this site is unclear.
  - The refurbishment of the courts at Cupid Green Playing Fields has provided an improved offer for public access but the LTA note this only represents one site across what is a largely populated Borough with strong latent demand for tennis. The LTA can support the Council to explore a capital investment plan and feasibility assessment to upgrade other sites and provide parity of access to public courts across the Borough. This could be explored in house with the Council or by working with a third party (tennis operator).
  - The LTA has also identified Dacorum Borough as a target location for indoor tennis.
  - The relocation plans for Leverstock Green Tennis Club are currently unknown (as per the LTA's previous statement in 2019 PPS) but they remain in dialogue with the Council and external partners about their future.
  - Tring Tennis Club has aspirations to add covered courts (a potential two court bubble) to their site.
  - The LTA ask that the following be reflected in amendments to the Playing Pitch Strategy recommendations:
    1. Resolving Langley Lease.
    2. Establishing clarity over Leverstock Green TC land and housing redevelopment plan.
    3. As the Borough is a LTA target location for indoor tennis this should be factored into potential sport and leisure developments as part of Hemel Hempstead's expansion.
    4. Re-focus and work in partnership with LTA in developing potential capital refurbishment plans for non-club (park) sites.

#### 10.5 Tennis Summary and Conclusions

- The LTA report that demand for tennis has increased over the review period during which time there has been an improvement in quality of the courts at Cupid Green Playing Field, but no further changes to quality and supply across the Borough.
- The point raised by LTA regarding the Langley TC lease is covered through the following existing recommendation in the Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan.

- ‘Support Langley TC in gaining a long-term lease agreement on its current site at Abbots Hill School.’
- In order to accommodate the other amendments raised by the LTA, revisions have been made to further recommendations as follows:
  - ‘For non-club venues look to sustain and protect tennis courts that can continue to provide informal access and use and work in partnership with the LTA in developing potential capital refurbishment plans. To optimise and target resource, as well as stimulating demand for tennis, it is advised to look at creating non tennis club ‘hub sites’ which can better attract, grow and support recreational tennis in the area. This would involve working with the LTA on target sites that could improve the customer journey to court.
  - In line with the Leisure Facilities Strategy, support Bovingdon and Flaunden Tennis Club and Tring Tennis Club with their aspirations to develop covered courts and consider opportunities to provide new facilities for indoor tennis within future sport and leisure developments associated with growth at Hemel Hempstead. (Note indoor tennis falls within the scope of the Leisure Facilities Strategy and Indoor Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment).
- As there is no current proposal for the relocation of Leverstock Green TC in the draft Regulation 18 Local Plan and the relocation site is no longer available, the recommendation relating to the Club is amended to:
  - ‘Support Leverstock Green TC in developing plans for their future. If the Club do identify an alternative site to relocate to, then there will be a need to ensure that the provision is to an equivalent or better standard.’

## 11. Netball

### 11.1 Supply Update

Table 11.1 Changes in netball court supply and quality

Site ID	Site	Sport	Settlement	Update	Aim
3	Ashlyns School	Netball	Berkhamsted	4 courts resurfaced, the site is now operating as a Netball Central Venue for the Berkhamsted and Tring area and is host to the newly formed Berkhamsted Netball League	Enhance
86	Longdean Sports Centre	Netball/tennis	Hemel Hempstead	3 new courts have been provided as part of the re-development of the school. As a result 2 poor quality courts at the site may no longer be in use.	Provide

### 11.2 Demand Update

Table 11.2 Comparison of number of teams

Demand data 2019			Demand data 2021
Name of Club	19/20 Number of teams	19/20 Members	21/22 Members
Berkhamsted Royals Netball Club	2 senior teams	40	10
Berko Belles	2 senior teams	93	102
Camelot Netball Club	3 senior teams	42	24
Connexions (Herts) Netball Club	4 senior teams	77	81
Dacorum Netball Club	5 junior teams 1 senior team	70	37
Flamstead Netball Club	2 senior teams	17	14
Hemel Skies		15	9
Horizons Netball Club		5	0
Kings Langley Aces and Diamonds		28	34
Kings Langley Netball Club	2 senior teams		
Shelley Netball Club	3 senior teams 1 U14 team	88	15
Tring Athletic		1	0
Tring Netball Club		36	0
Tring Tornadoes Netball Club	8 junior teams	159	160
KORU Netball Club	New entry 21-22	-	28

### 11.3 Significant Issues for Netball

- No significant changes in demand or supply, or issues were raised by England Netball.
- Dacorum Sports Network report that Ashlyns School is now operating as a Netball Central Venue for the Berkhamsted and Tring area and is host to the newly formed Berkhamsted Netball League. Although starting as a junior league, the development plan is to add youth and senior divisions in the coming years as a central venue for the area. Additionally Mighty Netball hold a large number of netball training sessions for juniors in a year round programme.

### 11.4 Netball Summary and Conclusions

- The change in the way the demand data was collected in 2019 and 2021 makes comparison difficult, however despite the inconsistencies, England Netball report no significant changes in demand.
- Investment at Ashlyns School and Longdean Sports Centre has improved the provision and quality of netball facilities in the Borough. This is in line with the 2019 recommendations to target investment at sites accommodating the highest level of demand and improve poor quality courts at education sites.
- As the recommendations from the 2019 study accommodate the current supply and demand position, they remain valid.

## 12. Athletics

### 12.1 Supply Update

Table 12.1 Changes in athletics supply and quality

Site ID	Site	Sport	Settlement	Update	Aim
83	Jarman Park Athletics Track	Athletics	Hemel Hempstead	In 2020 the track was deep cleaned and re-marked, and a new throwing cage installed to meet international specifications.	Enhance

### 12.2 Demand Update

Table 12.2 Changes in number of club members

Demand data 2019		Demand data 2021	
Club	Number of members	Club	Number of members
Dacorum Athletics Club	600	Dacorum Athletics Club	
		Under 17	300
		Over 17	334
		Volunteers/Coaches	45
		(Female)	345
		(Male)	334
Gade Valley Harriers Athletics Club	170	Gade Valley Harriers Athletics Club	148

### 12.3 Significant Issues for Athletics

- Dacorum AC currently has just under 700 members (679) and has sole use of Jarman Park Athletics Track on Monday evenings from 5.30pm to 6.45pm, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6pm to 9pm, and on Sunday morning from 10am to 1pm. This sole usage has increased in order to comply with the requirements of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Dacorum Athletics Club is not currently operating a formal waiting list due to reduced recruitment because of the pandemic. The Club has been able to accommodate all those who were waiting to join. As the pandemic eases, the need for a waiting list may re-occur.
- The Club has suspended coaching sessions for school years 2 to 4 due to the pandemic, who could be considered to be on a waiting list.
- Although the Club's access to the site has increased, the general public's access to the track outside of the club sessions has been greatly reduced due to the pandemic. This is over and above any periods when the track has been closed due to COVID-19 restrictions on organised activity.
- The pandemic virtually wiped out all club competition in 2020, which has continued to be curtailed in 2021. While activities have been more akin to normal since the last lockdown ended in spring 2021, the sport like many others, is still in the process of recovering.



- Although it has been re-marked and patched Dacorum AC consider the track to be at the end of its useful life and needing to be re-laid, describing the site at best as 'tired' with significant issues such as no covered area for spectators and limited clubhouse accommodation. For Dacorum AC, the top priority for the site is the need for an indoor facility, primarily for strength/conditioning purposes and the club is looking to explore options with the Council and facility provider. Significant investment is required in line with the strategic direction provided by England Athletics.
- Dacorum Athletics Club feel there is no need within the Borough for a Compact Athletics Facility to augment the provision of facilities at Jarman Park provided these are improved as outlined above. In addition, they cite England Athletics Facilities Strategy. 'On 'Compacts' - England Athletics has adopted UKA's strategic position that we should concentrate on preserving and improving the existing stock of 400m tracks rather than seeking to build additional ones. However, there are areas in the country where journey time to the nearest full size outdoor track is greater than ideal and there are places where good coaching has created significant demand despite the lack of a local athletics facility. The Compact Athletics concept is intended to fill this gap, providing training facilities in places where there is insufficient demand, funding or land to accommodate a full size track.'

The approximate measure for a 'greater than ideal journey' is 60 minutes. Dacorum Athletics Club note there are around 9 or 10 tracks within this travel time from Jarman Park. As a result they do not believe there is a need gap and the strategy should focus on Jarman Park, adding that Jarman Park is a needed facility and these alternatives and/or a compact athletics facilities could not form replacement provision.

- Dacorum Athletics Club has aspirations of owning and operating a new, independently operated athletics facility for which it is considering putting a business plan together.
- Dacorum AC report that since the PPS was completed, Tring parkrun has been permanently suspended post Lockdown. There are now two Junior parkruns at Gadebridge Park and Ashlyns School.
- The annual Hemel 10k event has not taken place since 2017. Dacorum AC are exploring the possibility of a running event in the Borough and will look to explore options with the Council.
- As an alternative to a Compact Athletics Facility, Everyone Active suggest a multi-purpose indoor facility that could provide all year round athletics training as well as indoor playing facilities for a number of support. This could meet unmet demand throughout the year and provide training facilities during the winter months. Dacorum Athletics Club support this idea, especially if located at Jarman Park. However, they note that this would necessitate a significant change in the infrastructure of the site and may well be an unrealistic goal.

#### 12.4 Athletics Summary and Conclusions

- Dacorum AC reports that its membership has increased despite the impact the pandemic has had both on the ability to deliver training and on competition which has been severely limited, especially in 2020. Due to the pandemic the club has had to suspend sessions for those aged 7 to 9 years old, but it has managed to accommodate those older athletes who would normally have been on a waiting list. The club is looking at options for improving the facilities at Jarman Park in concert with the Council and service providers.
- Any future consideration of an indoor facility would need to take place in conjunction with the findings of the Indoor Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment March 2019 and Leisure Facilities Strategy May 2019.

- While the works undertaken at Jarman Park since 2019 have helped the track remain usable, overall quality continues to be an issue alongside the lack of suitable ancillary facilities.
- The Playing Pitch Assessment report did not consider facilities located outside of the Borough and within an acceptable driving time as part of the recommendation to 'Explore future opportunities to deliver a Compact Athletics Facility to supplement Jarman Park'. As this forms part of England Athletic's strategic approach this recommendation is removed as further assessment would be needed to confirm this requirement. This may also be informed by any available assessments of athletics facilities by neighbouring authorities such as St Albans City and District, Watford and Luton Borough councils.

## 13. Rugby League

### 13.1 Supply Update

Table 13.1 Changes in rugby league pitch supply and quality

Site ID	Site	Sport	Settlement	Update	Aim
50	Hemel Stags RLFC	Rugby League	Hemel Hempstead	The Club has received a grant of 50% of the cost of modernisation of its existing changing room block and the addition of two extra changing rooms	Provide Enhance

### 13.2 Demand Update

Table 13.2 Comparison of number of rugby league teams

Demand data 2019		Demand data 2021	
Rugby League Teams	Number of teams per age group	Rugby League Teams	Number of teams per age group
Senior	3	Open age	3/24
Youth	4	Under 18's	1/26
Mini	3	Under 16's	1/30
		Under 14's	1/21
		Under 12's	1/26
		Minis (U7, U9, U11)	3/24

### 13.3 Significant Issues for Rugby League

- Hemel Stags is making the provision of Women and Girls rugby league a priority from 2022 onwards.

### 13.4 Rugby League Summary and Conclusions

- The grant the Club has received towards modernising and extending the changing facilities will help resolve the current quality issues.
- As there have been no significant changes in rugby league provision or demand, no change is needed to the Playing Pitch Strategy recommendations.

## 14. Baseball (data not collected in 2019)

### 14.1 Supply Update

Table 14.1 Baseball pitch supply and quality

Site ID	Site	Sport	Settlement	Update	Aim
43	Grovehill Playing Fields	Baseball	Hemel Hempstead	Herts Baseball Club have invested in several new procedures to improve the grass playing surface and the clay playing surface around the bases of the two baseball diamonds. The Club is considering adding a batting lane (cage/tunnel) if funding can be secured. This would be an important addition to the venue which would help increase participation.	Enhance Provide

### 14.2 Demand Update

Table 14.2 Baseball team data 2021

Demand data 2021	
Football Teams	Number of teams per age group
Adult teams (ages 14 and over)	5 teams, 113 members (of which 3 teams (67 players) play at our Hemel Hempstead venue and 2 teams (46 players) at our NW London venue)
Youth teams (ages 15 – 17)	1 team, 13 members (some of these players also play in the adult leagues)
Youth teams (ages 6 -14)	9 teams (U11s play in a 6-a-side league), 64 members (of which 5 teams (40 players) play at our Hemel Hempstead venue and 4 teams (24 players) play at our NW London venue)

### 14.3 Significant Issues for Baseball

- Herts Baseball Club report a waiting list for the U11 team in September 2021 – generated as the Club can only enter two teams in the British Baseball Federation national championships in each of the age divisions, otherwise the Club has room for these wait-listed players in their own regional league.
- Herts Baseball Club has operated the Grovehill Ballpark baseball facility in the same configuration since 2019 and has invested in several new procedures. These were aimed at improving the grass playing surface and the clay playing surface around the bases of the two baseball diamonds.

- Over the years, the baseball infrastructure has suffered damage on a regular basis including serious cases of vandalism to the backstop and perimeter fencing around the diamonds. Herts Baseball Club has invested over £12,000 in the last 10 years to repair the vandalised fencing, which is putting some pressure on their business model. They also see professional dog-walkers using the facility for their daily walks that results in dogs digging holes around the playing field and leaving dog faeces scattered around.
- Herts Baseball Club doubled the capacity of the facility when they built the second baseball diamond in 2010, which has resulted in more games and other events that require more teams and field equipment, putting pressure on storage space and toilets inside the Grovehill Pavilion. The Pavilion is underused as football teams only use part of the building and then only on Sunday mornings from September to May, leaving spare capacity.
- Herts Baseball Club are seeing an increase in the number of female players at their club and at clubs around the country. The Club are aware that the toilet facilities currently do not cater sufficiently for the needs of female players and are in a very bad state. The Club is interested in improving these facilities, with the support of the Council who own the building.
- Herts Baseball Club will consider in more detail whether their facility will need to be upgraded further in order to accommodate potential increased demand resulting from the proposed Hemel Garden Communities project in the coming years, which is expected to result in over 11,000 new homes across the north and east of Hemel Hempstead across Dacorum and St Albans districts.

#### 14.4 Baseball Summary and Conclusions

As baseball was not included within the 2019 Playing Pitch Strategy, the following interim recommendations have been prepared to support the sport based on feedback from Herts Baseball Club:

- Support Herts Baseball Club in developing proposals to improve ancillary facilities in order to retain and increase the number of female players.
- Work with Herts Baseball Club to resolve damage to infrastructure and the playing surface.
- Support Herts Baseball Club in continuing to develop baseball provision at the Grovehill Ballpark baseball facility to increase capacity.

## Appendix 1. Dacorum Playing Pitch Strategy Annual Update Survey

### Current Demand Data

How many teams/members [sport dependent] currently play in Dacorum? Please list out as below:

<b>Football Teams</b>	<b>Number of teams (members for junior hockey) per age group</b>
Men 11v11 (16-45yrs)	
Women 11v11 (16-45yrs)	
Boys 11v11 (12-15yrs)	
Girls 11v11 (12-15yrs)	
Boys 9v9 (10-11yrs)	
Girls 9v9 (10-11yrs)	
Mixed 7v7 (8-9yrs)	
Mixed 5v5 (6-7yrs)	
<b>Cricket Teams</b>	
Men (18-55yrs)	
Women (18-55yrs)	
Boys (7-18yrs)	
Girls (7-18yrs)	
<b>Rugby Union Teams</b>	
Men (19-45yrs)	
Women (19-45yrs)	
Boys (13-18yrs)	
Girls (13-18yrs)	
Mixed (7-12yrs)	
<b>Rugby League Teams</b>	
Men (19-45yrs)	
Women (19-45yrs)	
Boys (12-18yrs)	
Girls (12-18yrs)	
Mixed (7-11yrs)	
<b>Hockey Teams</b>	
Men (17-55yrs)	
Women (17-55yrs)	
Boys (14-16yrs)	
Girls (14-16yrs)	
Boys (11-13yrs)	
Girls (11-13yrs)	
Mixed (5-10yrs)	
<b>Hockey Junior Members</b>	
Boys (14-16yrs)	
Girls (14-16yrs)	
Boys (11-13yrs)	
Girls (11-13yrs)	

Mixed (5-10yrs)	
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For other sports, please add your team information broken down into categories (e.g. age range/gender) relevant to your sport below:

Sport \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Team categories:</b>	<b>Number of teams/members</b>

As far as you are aware, do any of the clubs have waiting lists and if so which clubs and for what sections of the clubs?

Changes Since 2019

- Please advise of any key changes that you are aware of in relation to the supply of facilities since 2019, in relation to new/enhanced facilities, facilities that have closed or changes to the quality or access to facilities?
- Have there been any other significant changes for your sport not listed above? Please give details.
- Have future plans for facility development been identified/progressed since 2019? If so please give details.
- Will any of the changes detailed above need to be reflected in amendments to the recommendations set out in part 4 of the PPS Strategy & Action Plan for your sport?