

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WEDNESDAY, 25
FEBRUARY 2026**



Title of Report	PLAYING PITCHES, BUILT FACILITIES (SPORTS AND COMMUNITY), AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGIES	
Presented by	Cllr Michael Wyatt Portfolio Holder for Community Services	
Background Papers	None	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	<p>There are no financial implications within the strategies to be considered. If specific projects are to be delivered, then separate business cases will be developed for these, and the appropriate approvals will be sought in line with the Council's Constitution prior to delivery. The strategies will give the Council, parish and town councils an evidence base for securing developer and other financial contributions to help support the delivery of projects.</p> <p>Any future projects arising from these strategies will be subject to separate reports, full financial appraisal and approval in accordance with the Council's Constitution.</p>	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	<p>The strategies will form part of the Council's evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. Evidence bases must be "robust and up-to-date" under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Adoption of these strategies will support compliance with planning legislation and guidance by ensuring infrastructure planning is based on appropriate assessment. Failure to adopt a sufficiently rigorous evidence base may weaken the Council's position in defending planning decisions or securing developer contributions.</p>	
	Signed off by the Deputy Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	<p>Delivery of the strategies will require ongoing officer time across Planning Policy, Leisure Services, and Community Services. This is expected to be managed within existing resources but will require cross-departmental coordination as projects develop.</p>	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes/	
Purpose of Report	<p>To make Community Scrutiny Committee aware of the key points highlighted in the North West Leicestershire Playing Pitches and Outdoor Sports, Built Facilities and Open Spaces strategies and to seek members views and comments.</p>	

Recommendations	<p>THAT COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE NOTES AND PROVIDES FEEDBACK ON THE NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE PLAYING PITCHES AND OUTDOOR SPORTS, BUILT FACILITIES, AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGIES TO INFORM CABINET’S CONSIDERATION OF THE STRATEGIES ON 28 APRIL 2026.</p>
-----------------	---

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. The Council’s emerging Local Plan has a key role to play in achieving this as it sets out a long-term strategy for the district. The National Planning Policy Framework advises that *“Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision”*.
- 1.2 In order to support the Local Plan and understand where current and future gaps in provision are likely to be, and to cost and prioritise these, the Council procured Kavanagh, Knight, and Page (KKP) in November 2024 to develop the following strategies for the district:
- Playing Pitches and Outdoor Sports, to include:
 - Football
 - Artificial Grass Pitches
 - Rugby union
 - Hockey
 - Cricket
 - Tennis
 - Netball
 - Athletics
 - Bowls
 - Built Facilities (Sports and Community), to include:
 - Sports halls
 - Swimming pools
 - Fitness rooms
 - Gymnastics
 - Squash
 - Indoor tennis
 - Indoor bowls
 - Community facilities
 - Open Spaces, to include:
 - Parks and gardens (urban parks and formal gardens)
 - Natural and semi-natural greenspace (sites providing wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness)
 - Amenity greenspace (informal recreation spaces and other incidental spaces that offer opportunities for informal activities)
 - Provision for children and young people (play provision)
 - Allotments
 - Cemeteries and churchyards

- 1.3 The strategies will also assist with development across the district by creating an evidence base. This will initially support the preparation of the new Local Plan and provide evidence to seek contributions from new development towards the provision of additional open spaces, sport and recreation facilities. It will also support the Council, parish/town councils, and other stakeholders to be able to seek contributions from other funding streams, in order to help secure the additional infrastructure required to support the growth of the district.
- 1.4 Whilst having a district-wide approach, the strategies have a focus on the following localities:
- Ashby-de-la Zouch
 - Castle Donington/Kegworth
 - Coalville
 - Ibstock
 - Measham
- 1.5 As part of the development of the strategies, KKP was also asked to have a specific focus on the following:
- The feasibility of a potential 'Sports Village' or Hub in Ashby
 - The feasibility of sports hall provision in Castle Donington
- 1.6 In order to develop the strategies, KKP undertook the following approach:
- Consultation with key stakeholders such as National Governing Bodies of Sport, sports clubs, parish and town councils, schools, and other facility owners to understand supply and demand issues
 - Quantity and quality assessments of existing infrastructure
 - Supply and demand assessments considering current use, potential future use, user mapping, and potential housing and population growth
 - Scenario testing
 - The development of Needs Assessment reports for Playing Pitches and Outdoor Sports and Built Facilities
 - The development of the strategies and associated action plans
 - The checking and challenging of the various documents with the Council and National Governing Bodies of Sport for accuracy

2.0 PLAYING PITCHES AND OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY (PPOSS)

- 2.1 The PPOSS and associated Action Plan can be found at **Appendix A** and the Needs Assessment at **Appendix B**.
- 2.2 The key headlines within the PPOSS, broken down into sports, are:

Football

- Currently there is capacity for adult full-size pitches and children's mini-pitches across the district, but there is a shortfall in youth pitches across the district
- Future demand created by population increases in line with the Local Plan, club development aspirations, and potential growth in football teams that reflects the same level of growth since the last PPOSS was undertaken in 2017 would potentially lead to pitch shortfalls across the district for all pitch types other than adult pitches
- Shortfalls in provision can be mitigated by improving pitch quality, through improved drainage and maintenance
- Shortfalls can be reduced further by the reinstatement of unused pitches across the district

- Consequently, recommendations in the Action Plan include:
 - Protect the existing quantity of pitches
 - Work to accommodate future demand at sites which are not operating at capacity
 - Work to improve pitch quality to alleviate identified overplay on grass football pitches
 - Monitor future growth levels to determine when and where new grass pitches may be required
 - Ensure that any housing development considers potential increases in provision either on-site or through contributions to improve existing sites
 - Where a development is of a size to justify on-site football provision, focus on the creation of multi-pitch sites with community use that reduce existing shortfalls, with accompanying clubhouse provision

3G Pitches

- There is currently a shortfall of five full-sized 3G pitches across the district
- Future demand created by population increases in line with the Local Plan and potential growth in football teams that reflects the same level of growth since the last PPOSS was undertaken in 2017 would potentially lead to a shortfall of just over seven 3G pitches across the district
- The only area that does not have a shortfall in 3G pitches and is unlikely to, with future demand factored in, is Castle Donington/Kegworth
- Consequently, recommendations in the Action Plan include:
 - Work with relevant partners to deliver additional 3G pitches specifically in the Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Ibstock and Measham areas
 - Explore the feasibility of any new 3G pitch to support rugby union.

Rugby Union

- There is currently a shortfall of pitch provision in Coalville and Ashby which increases further when future demand is factored in
- Current and future demand can be predominantly met through improving pitch quality, installing lighting, and/or through the provision of a rugby compliant 3G pitch
- Consequently, recommendations in the Action Plan include:
 - Improve pitch quality at all sites
 - Explore installation of additional sports lighting across the sites used by clubs
 - Explore the feasibility of creating a Rugby compliant 3G pitch

Hockey

- Current and future demand is met with existing pitch provision

Cricket

- There is currently a shortfall in natural turf wickets at peak times on Saturdays
- Demand across the district as a whole at other times is met, despite there being localised shortfalls in provision in the Castle Donington/Kegworth, Coalville, and Ibstock areas
- Future demands and club development aspirations would lead to further shortfalls in provision
- Shortfalls in provision could be mitigated against by improving pitch quality, considering hybrid or non-turf wickets, or bringing unused provision back into use

Tennis

- Current and future demand is met with existing court provision
- There is a shortfall of seven Padel courts across the district

Netball

- Current and future demand is met with existing court provision. However, consideration should be given to increasing the number of lit facilities to help develop the sport

Athletics

- Whilst there is demand for athletics provision, it is deemed that a 400m track would be unsustainable. Therefore, consideration should be given to a NewGen Track, which could be a compact facility, a mini track, or an active track in a nature environment which would be bespoke to the district to meet demand and to be sustainable

Outdoor Bowls

- Current and future demand is met with existing provision

3.0 Built Facilities Strategy (BFS)

3.1 The BFS and associated Action Plan can be found at **Appendix C** and the Needs Assessment at **Appendix D**.

3.2 The key headlines of the BFS broken down into facility areas are:

Sports Halls

- Whilst demand across the district as a whole exceeds supply currently, there is an unmet demand in the Castle Donington area
- Whilst modelling suggests that there is a current provision surplus and no shortfall, consultation indicates there is unmet demand in Ashby. However, this demand would be met with additional sports hall provision in the Isley Woodhouse and Castle Donington areas
- Future demand creates a shortfall in provision across the district of ten badminton courts, the majority of which would be met with additional sports hall provision in the Isley Woodhouse and Castle Donington areas, subject to these facilities having adequate community access arrangements in place

Swimming Pools

- There is currently a surplus of pool provision across the district which should meet future demand
- There is a localised unmet demand in the Castle Donington/Kegworth area, but not enough to justify additional pool provision

Fitness Rooms

- Current and future demand is met by the current supply

Gymnastics

- There is one dedicated gymnastics facility located in Coalville, and anecdotal evidence to support additional facilities in the Ashby and Castle Donington/Kegworth areas

Squash

- Whilst there is a shortfall in current provision that will increase with future demand, current supply levels have the capacity to meet current and future demand

Indoor Tennis

- Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) analysis and local clubs indicate demand for indoor tennis
- Population and housing growth is likely to create increased demand for indoor tennis

Indoor Bowls

- There is no demand currently or in the future for an indoor bowls facility in the district

Community Facilities

- There is a requirement for additional community facilities in the Ashby area

4.0 OPEN SPACES STRATEGY (OSS)

4.1 The OSS can be found at **Appendix E**.

4.2 The key headlines within the OSS are:

- Other than in the Coalville area, there is a shortfall of parks and gardens in all other localities across the district, with none in the Castle Donington/Kegworth and Ibstock areas
- Other than in the Ibstock area, there is a shortfall of natural and semi-natural greenspace in all other localities across the district, with none in the Ashby, Castle Donington/Kegworth and Measham areas. However, this shortfall is offset by the National Forest and other local amenity spaces
- There is a shortfall of amenity greenspace in the Coalville and Ibstock areas
- There is consistent play provision coverage for children and young people across all localities with Ashby, Castle Donington/Kegworth and Ibstock having slightly less provision than Coalville and Measham
- There is a shortfall of allotment provision in the Ashby, Coalville and Measham areas with waiting lists in the Castle Donington/Kegworth, Coalville and Measham areas
- In terms of provision of cemeteries and churchyards, mapping demonstrates a fairly even distribution across the area. Quality is not assessed due to the unique role of these assets

5.0 ASHBY SPORTS HUB

5.1 As part of developing the strategies, KKP was asked to consider the potential feasibility of developing a Sports Village or Hub in the Ashby area. This can be broken down into two elements: the demand for sports provision/facilities and the desire of sports clubs to be part of the Hub.

5.2 **Appendix F** highlights the key points made by KKP in relation to sports provision/facilities and the desire of sports clubs. This is summarised at a high level below:

- There are identified shortfalls for various sports within Ashby, but most of these can be addressed without providing a new dedicated sports hub site (grass football pitches, grass rugby union pitches, cricket)

- New facilities that are required in the area include two 11v11 size 3G pitches (one potentially being World Rugby compliant), padel courts, a NewGen athletics track, and a community space
- There is also a desire to have indoor tennis courts (although not necessarily within a building as they could be outdoor courts covered with a dome), archery, and cycling provision
- Neither football clubs, the rugby club, cricket clubs, or bowls clubs have a desire to relocate from their current sites
- There is a future shortfall of ten badminton courts across the district. If four court sports halls were developed in the new settlement at Isley Woodhouse as proposed as part of the emerging Local Plan, and Castle Donington with adequate community access, this would still leave a future shortfall of two badminton courts across the district. However, the demand is likely to be met in Ashby with the additional provision in Isley Woodhouse and Castle Donington
- Alternative options should also be explored as to whether the shortfalls for new provision identified could potentially be addressed at current sporting sites within Ashby that already have some level of established infrastructure
- This could include putting an air dome over the tennis courts at Ashby Castle Lawn Tennis Club and the creation of one 11v11 size 3G pitch at either Ashby Ivanhoe Football Club or Ashby Rugby Football Club, with both of these options replacing grass pitches
- If the above can be achieved, a smaller new site could be developed which accommodates the remaining provision required
- A wider feasibility study is required to fully understand if this facility mix could form a new dedicated sports hub site

6.0 SPORTS HALL PROVISION IN CASTLE DONINGTON

- 6.1 KKP was also asked to consider if there was sufficient demand to facilitate a sports hall in the Castle Donington area.
- 6.2 The BFS identified a need for a one court sports hall in Castle Donington to meet current and future demand. However, based on guidance from the Department for Education on pupil numbers and school curriculum need, there is a requirement for a three-court sports hall at Castle Donington College, and a proposed expansion of the College is scheduled to include provision of a three-court sports hall.
- 6.3 KKP also identified it would be desirable to increase this school provision to a four-court sports hall, if possible, as this would help meet the future demand of ten courts across the district, as well as allowing local netball and basketball clubs to train and play matches.
- 6.4 It is suggested in the strategy that the sports hall development be linked to the potential expansion of Castle Donington School to enable it to increase capacity.
- 6.5 It is recommended the Council work with Castle Donington College and Castle Donington Parish Council to explore the feasibility of securing funding to be able to deliver the provision.

7.0 PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON

- 7.1 Parish and Town Councils were consulted by KKP as part of the development of the strategies.

7.2 Following completion of the strategies, all parish and town councils were sent copies of the strategies and were invited to comment on the back of the consultation and engagement they had during the process.

7.3 Out of the thirty parish and town councils, only two responded. Their comments are attached as **Appendix G**, with the Council's responses below each comment.

8.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications within the strategies to be considered. If specific projects are to be delivered, then separate business cases will be developed for these, and the appropriate approvals will, in line with the Council's Constitution, be sought prior to delivery.

8.2 The strategies will give the Council, parish and town councils an evidence base for securing developer and other financial contributions to help support the delivery of projects. The Council's new Local Plan will need to include any policy requirements, whether they be of a generic nature or more site specific. This will be addressed through the work of the Local Plan Committee.

9.0 NEXT STEPS

9.1 The Strategies will be presented to Cabinet at their meeting on 28 April 2026, alongside any further comments for consideration from Community Scrutiny Committee, with a view to seeking approval for the Strategies to be adopted corporately and to be included as an evidence base within the Local Plan.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning and regeneration - Communities and housing - A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	Local Plan NWL Health and Wellbeing Strategy
Safeguarding:	None
Equalities/Diversity:	Ensuring all residents have access to adequate and well-maintained facilities
Customer Impact:	Ensuring there are adequate facilities of a reasonable standard to meet the needs of the district and its residents
Economic and Social Impact:	Creating an evidence base to support the Local Plan and to allow for developer and other funding contributions to be accessed to be able to ensure the infrastructure can be enhanced and developed in order to meet the needs of a growing local population
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	None
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Parish and Town Councils Sports Clubs Schools Elected Members Sport England National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGB's)
Risks:	Failure to have an evidence base within the Local Plan will mean the Council may struggle to justify requesting developer contributions from new housing developments. This will impact on the Council's ability to ensure the infrastructure is enhanced and developed to meet the needs of a growing local population.
Officer Contact	Jason Knight Leisure Services Team Manager jason.knight@nwleicestershire.gov.uk