

Ashby Town Council

The recognition of the shortage of 3G pitch provision for football, hockey and rugby union in Ashby de la Zouch is welcomed. However, the report is unclear on how this can be alleviated and some more concrete proposals would have been helpful.

This was not part of the scope for the work and it is not standard practice to identify site-specific projects at strategy stage without full feasibility and viability assessment. At this stage, strategies should focus on establishing high-level need and priorities rather than committing to specific sites.

Priorities are more appropriately refined during the initial delivery stage once feasibility, deliverability, and long-term sustainability can be tested. This work is typically undertaken in partnership with the relevant National Governing Bodies to ensure strategic alignment and sport-specific requirements are met.

Alignment with Football Foundation priorities and the Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) is also considered at this delivery stage, enabling an evidence-led and fundable pipeline of projects while reducing delivery risk.

It is stated that some shortfalls can be met by improving the quality of pitches. It needs to be recognised that this may require a higher level of skill to maintain these pitches. We are particularly concerned about the pitches managed by the Town Council where additional resources will be required.

This is just one option to meet shortfalls and the town council will need to identify which option is best for them.

Part 5: Strategic Recommendations, Recommendation D (Improve Quality), identifies a range of support mechanisms available to assist in improving pitch quality. These include the Ground Management Association Pitch Advisory Service, Pitch Power, the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund, and the Groundskeeping Community Online.

In addition, Part 7: Housing Scenarios highlights the potential to secure Section 106 contributions from local housing developments to fund off-site pitch improvements.

The recommendations are intentionally broad to ensure applicability across a range of asset holders, including the Council, Parish and Town Councils, education providers, and sports clubs. Furthermore, the Action Plan identifies key partners for each site and pitch typology, who are expected to work collaboratively to deliver the recommendations.

On page 67 it is stated that the Town Council manages the 3G pitch in Hood Park. This is not the case. It is managed by NWLDC.

This has been amended.

On page 69 reference is made to the Cricket Club and Bowls Club on the Bath Grounds. In one instance it is stated that management is undertaken by the Sport Club and in the other Ashby Town Council. Ashby Town Council owns the Bath Grounds and the two sports grounds. The Bowls and Cricket clubs lease their grounds from the Town Council and the

clubs are responsible for management of the grounds, although the public has access to some parts of the cricket ground when matches are not being played.

This has been amended.

Appendix B

Section 11 discusses Community Buildings. It is disappointing that the report does not give a clear definition of a community facility. This has resulted in inconsistencies between the venues identified for the different settlements, making realistic comparisons very difficult and misleading.

The introduction intends to encapsulate what a community facility is for the purposes of the study. It states they are “*usually multi-functional, providing places for meetings, weddings, socialising and for sports and recreational clubs and activities. In more isolated areas, a church hall or a sports pavilion can also serve a range of functions depending on its size*”. This is considered to reflect the fluid and varied nature of such provision.

The report states that identified venues are self-managed either by the parish/town council itself or via a charitable organisation but of the seven venues identified in Ashby, two are clearly not charities (The Beeches and Lyric Rooms). I'm not sure whether a similar discrepancy exists for other settlements.

This has been amended to “most” to be consistent with the wording elsewhere in the strategy.

Of the seven venues identified for Ashby, the Lyric Rooms is a commercial event space and the Beeches is a room attached to a public house. No other venues of this type have been identified for other settlements. A further two are churches with limited capacity and one is a membership social club. Only two of the seven could be considered as community facilities as generally recognised (Legion House and St Helen's Community Centre). Both of these have limited capacity for a settlement the size of Ashby.

Part 11.3 sets out the approach as to how sites were identified for inclusion. The sites listed/mentioned above are considered to fall within the facility roles set out in the introduction.

The listing of these venues is misleading when compared with other settlements and arises from no clear definition of a community facility.

See above.

Section 11.2 states the number of venues is 45 when there are 46 listed. In the associated Strategy & Action Plan it is stated there are 53 venues (page 8). The same page says there are 10 venues in Ashby (an inflated 7 listed previously) and Coalville has 4 (8 listed). Clearly the comparisons are highly misleading and give completely the wrong impression.

Numbers cited have been amended to ensure consistency.

We are also disappointed that the report makes no effort to quantify the shortfall of community facilities in the various settlements and relies on work being undertaken by Ashby Town Council. Why is a different approach taken for all other types of facility and settlements? Our understanding was that the whole purpose of the report was to undertake the required analysis.

Part 11.2 details that, unlike other sports facilities, there is no national guidance or advice as to what an acceptable level for community facilities is. The section sets out the method used (p102). The work being undertaken by Ashby Town is recognised and signposted to as this will clearly quantify the demand initially highlighted by the town council. The paragraph at top of p103 also states that given the size of the town, it would be unusual for there not to be a large, multifunctional community building to service local need.

Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe and Acresford Parish Council

Donisthorpe currently has three playing pitches, two of which are located off Ramscliffe Avenue/Church Street. These pitches are used regularly by registered football teams and by local residents. Despite this high level of use, the site has no dedicated parking and no changing facilities, which causes severe parking congestion at the pitch entrance and throughout the Ramscliffe estate on match days and during training sessions.

This is generally not within the scope of a Playing Pitches and Outdoor Sports Strategy as these focus on grass pitches and not ancillary facilities such as changing and parking provision. If guided by National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGB's), consideration may be given to them, but this would only be for larger scale sites with multiple facilities. Assessment of the suitability of these elements and, if pertinent, an evidence base, to support the need for enhanced ancillary facilities would be highlighted through the Football Foundation's Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP). Council officers will contact the Football Foundation to endeavour to ensure inclusion within the most recent version of the LFFP.

As with many pieces of land in the village, the field suffers from waterlogging and drainage problems. This has been raised consistently over the years and continues to affect playability, maintenance requirements, and long-term pitch quality. Proper drainage infrastructure will be essential for any future improvement works. However, drainage projects of this scale bring significant cost implications, which have historically prevented action from being taken. Addressing drainage must therefore form part of any future investment strategy alongside improved facilities.

Part 5: Strategic Recommendations, Recommendation D (Improve Quality), identifies a range of support mechanisms available to assist in improving pitch quality. These include the Ground Management Association Pitch Advisory Service, Pitch Power, the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund, and the Groundskeeping Community Online.

In addition, Part 7: Housing Scenarios highlights the potential to secure Section 106 contributions from local housing developments to fund off-site pitch improvements.

The recommendations are intentionally broad to ensure applicability across a range of asset holders, including the Council, Parish and Town Councils, education providers, and sports clubs. Furthermore, the Action Plan identifies key partners for each site and pitch typology, who are expected to work collaboratively to deliver the recommendations.

A further concern is the lack of accessibility for physically disabled residents and visitors. There is currently no hard standing, pathway or accessible route to the pitches, meaning wheelchair users, those with mobility difficulties, and families with pushchairs are unable to safely or independently reach the field.

Creating inclusive, accessible access routes must be a priority within any future development plans to ensure the site is usable for the whole community, not only for those able to navigate uneven grassed areas.

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Given the longstanding challenges, the Parish Council believes that future development within Donisthorpe provides a vital opportunity to secure developer contributions.

The strategies will give the evidence base to be able to secure developer contributions for those elements contained within them.

The Parish Council would also like to highlight the potential for outdoor exercise equipment to be installed around the perimeter of the field. This would provide free, accessible fitness opportunities for residents of all ages and increase year-round use of the space. Developer funding provides a practical way to deliver these improvements.

This was not within the scope of any of the strategies commissioned.