



Basingstoke  
and Deane

# Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2027 (Updated 2022)



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# Executive summary

This Playing Pitch Strategy sets out how the council intends to meet its aspiration to maintain the borough's reputation for quality leisure provision. This strategy focusses on playing pitches and other outdoor facilities and is complemented by a separate Built Sports Facilities Strategy.

The strategy is informed by an extensive audit of outdoor facilities undertaken during 2020-22, and uses the research, consultation, site assessments, data analysis and mapping that underpins the study to set direction and determine priorities. The intention is that it will help to focus investment and add certainty with regard to areas for targeted support and future programmes.

The core aim remains to support borough residents to be more active, fitter and healthier and to achieve a strong and vibrant network of community sports organisations. The strategy will help the council and partners to focus resources and expertise to achieve this aim.

The facilities included in this strategy which were also within the scope of the consultant's research for playing pitches are:

- Cricket
- Football pitches (grass and artificial surfaces)
- Hockey
- Rugby (grass and artificial surfaces)

The research base for the following outdoor sports in this strategy is published within the Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment:

- Bowls
- Tennis
- Netball

This strategy also sets out the council's intentions with regard to croquet, petanque and disc golf, which were not included in the scope of the sports audits but for which there has been discussion with the relevant local organisations.

This Playing Pitch Strategy should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Built Sports Facilities Strategy.

# Introduction

Basingstoke and Deane has a successful and strong reputation for sport and leisure. With the council's involvement, an ambitious leisure facilities programme has been delivered over the past 30 years including the provision of the Aquadrome; Tadley Swimming Pool, Barlow's Park Football Complex, Winklebury Football Complex, the Active Life Centre and Everest community sports facilities. Significant capital improvements have also been achieved at Basingstoke Sports Centre and Down Grange Sports Complex. With other major facilities such as Basingstoke Indoor Tennis Centre and Basingstoke Golf Centre and a wide range of more local provision, the borough has a stock of attractive, high quality and 'market competitive' sports facilities. We need to build on this success as we plan for the next 15 years in order to meet the council's vision of the borough which was adopted in the Strategic Plan for Sport and Recreation 2012-2025:

*'To have an enhanced infrastructure of facilities and a strong network of people that supports participation in sport and recreation activity within local communities and to make the most of opportunities to achieve outcomes of local, district and borough wide significance.'*

The sports sector in Basingstoke and Deane also has an established reputation for promoting participation and social inclusion through the implementation of physical activity and sports programmes. The most recent Sport England Active Lives figures reflected in the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Wellbeing Strategy suggest:

- 66.3% of residents are active in Basingstoke and Deane (exercising 150 mins a week) which is above the national average of 60.9%.
- 23.1% are inactive (exercising less than 30 mins a week) which is below the national average of 27.5%.

This strategy seeks to ensure that the built sports facilities in the borough continue to provide a choice of quality and accessible opportunities for participation in sport to meet the needs of our changing population.

## Background

The council's adopted Strategic Plan for Sport and Recreation 2012-2025 states 'the council will commission a detailed audit of all sport and recreation facilities every five years to identify changes in the quality and quantity of facilities'. Consultants Continuum Sport & Leisure were appointed to carry out the Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment (LRNA) in 2020-22. The assessment included wide ranging consultation with providers and sports' governing bodies and led to a number of recommendations which have now been collated into the Built Sports Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy informing future sports provision.

Both strategies follow the form of the Strategic Plan for Sport and Recreation, the objectives of which are:

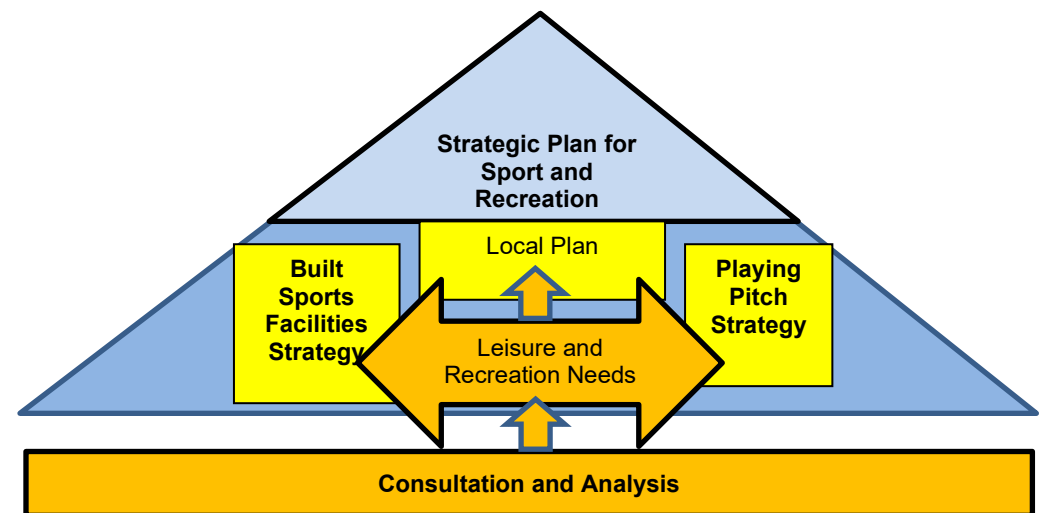
- retain and maintain existing facilities which are highly valued by the community;
- improve the quality and capacity of facilities which are highly valued by the community;
- where there is evidence of need that cannot be met by existing provision, enable the development of new provision; and
- drive up participation in sport and physical activity to increase the number and frequency of people taking part on a regular basis, ensuring there are choices that offer low cost options.

The overarching principles in this strategy relate to the first three objectives. By ensuring there are good facilities in the borough, as well as having strong clubs, programmes to suit different needs and sensitive pricing policies, it is hoped that objective 4 – increasing participation – will be achieved.

This strategy will also play a significant role in the council's ambition to improve access to opportunities for improving health and wellbeing. Increasing levels of participation, particularly among the inactive and those who take part infrequently, is a key strand of the council's partnership approach to enhancing the health of our residents.

This strategy sets out what is intended to be achieved within the period to 2027 and feeds into the current Local Plan. The extent to which actions have been delivered by 2025 will inform the next review of the Local Plan beyond 2029.

By effectively establishing 'need' and having a mechanism to secure resources to contribute towards meeting the need, the council is well placed to achieve both council and community policy objectives in relation to maintaining and improving sport and recreation provision, increasing participation and encouraging more active healthy communities.



## Building on success

Basingstoke and Deane is already well regarded for its range of sports facilities and its commitment to the value of sport. By building on its track record of project delivery, collaboration and partnership working the council can enable further enhancements to the sports infrastructure and encourage greater participation in sport. Sport contributes in so many ways to community life and is a valuable resource for delivering health, skills, economic development and community cohesion outcomes. This Playing Pitch Strategy is a continuation on the journey set out in the overarching Strategic Plan for Sport and Recreation to meet the challenges, maximising opportunities and delivering meaningful outcomes for the benefit of residents within the borough.

One key strand of influence is through the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport, many of which have been engaged through the process of assessing needs for facilities in the borough. Through 'Whole Sport Plans', the governing bodies set out their objectives for development of their sport in terms of facilities and participation targets, much of which also reflects the relationships and appetite for change with their key stakeholders.

Another key strand of influence is through the education sector. Schools have a wealth of facilities in the heart of their communities and are a valuable resource, particularly for rural populations which do not have the same range of choices for sports participation as residents of Basingstoke urban area. Accessibility is a factor in the assessment of sports facilities and several of the proposals relate to working with schools to improve their facilities and access to them.

Our community sports clubs are resourceful and largely self-reliant. A strong information and support network already exists but capacity to grow and develop is often limited by the constraints of their facilities. Where the assessment has evidenced demand for growth the council and support from relevant stakeholders, the Strategy identifies proposals to work with clubs to improve their facilities at neighbourhood and strategic level.

## The council's role

The strategy sets out the council's intent for playing pitches serving each of the main sports. It summarises the existing stock of those facilities and the findings from the Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment. For each facility the strategy identifies what the council should do and how it should do it.

The strategy indicates the role the council can play in each of the actions in the strategy:

- **Lead** – take responsibility for planning, delivery, monitoring and review
- **Collaborate** – play an active role in delivery partnerships
- **Advocate** - seek to influence and offer support as appropriate

Wherever possible, key stakeholders and potential funding sources are identified. For schemes which could be part funded by developers' contributions, the strategy suggests how this could be allocated, subject to discussions with the

relevant ward councillors from the areas of housing development which have generated the contribution.

This strategy will be reviewed and refreshed as schemes and projects are developed, delivered or changed. After further feasibility work, some projects may be considered unviable. All of the projects identified are aspirational however the overarching approach of this strategy is one of optimism, and over the next few years we will do what we can to enhance yet further the facilities that add so much to lives of residents in Basingstoke and Deane.



# Our strategy – football pitches

The stock of football pitches in the borough in 2022 is:

- Grass pitches provided on 53 sites
- 7 full size artificial grass pitches
- 12 small side /5 aside artificial pitches (Beechdown, Lucozade Powerleague Brighton Hill, Queen Mary's College, Fieldgate Centre)

## What the pitch audit told us

- There is a sufficient quantity of grass pitches to meet current demand for league matches.
- There is an insufficient quantity of grass pitches for smaller size youth and mini soccer requirements – use of existing and provision of new pitches needs to be managed flexibly to cater for changes in demand.
- There is an insufficient number of artificial grass pitches, in particular for youth and mini soccer, to meet current and future demand.
- The quality of pavilion and changing facilities varies from good to poor.



## The needs highlighted in the pitch audit are:

- **Short term** - retain and maintain existing grass pitches to a good standard so capacity of use can be improved particularly for youth and mini soccer.
- **Medium** - address the shortfall of four full size artificial grass pitches for football, preferably on multi-pitch sites.

## What we should do:

- Support provision of a minimum of four new artificial grass pitches for community use with football as the priority sport, in the main population areas of Basingstoke Town, Tadley, West of the borough and Oakley/Overton by 2030.
- Support improvements to maintain capacity at existing grass pitches.
- Support improvements to changing facilities.
- Seek to ensure that improvements for facilities on council owned sites does not increase the ongoing revenue cost to the council of routine maintenance and management.

## How we should do it:

### Artificial grass pitches

- Support The Hurst to provide a full size Artificial Grass Pitch on the school site available for community use, and in consultation with relevant ward members.
- Through the planning process secure artificial grass pitch provision on Manydown (North) and East of Basingstoke sites.
- Support Costello School or other Town Based sites to secure funding to provide a full-sized artificial grass pitch by 2030 and in consultation with relevant officers/members, seek agreement to allocate CIL contributions towards the scheme.
- Explore viability of a half size artificial grass training pitch to facilities at sites in Oakley and Overton.
- Explore viability of “hub” site within Basingstoke.

### Grass pitches and changing facilities

- Seek funding for natural turf pitch improvements identified in the pitch power surveys.
- Support clubs with their future ambitions subject to viable/sustainable business planning.
- Support clubs with facility improvements.

- **Enhance** - the council should focus on the quality and sustainability of grass pitches, and take a flexible approach to the number of pitches, in order to more adequately respond to local needs, changing demands and patterns of use in team sport participation.
- **Enhance** - all council sports facilities should aim to achieve a quality rating of very good by 2027.

### What principle this supports:

#### Artificial grass pitches

- **Provide** - the council should support an increase in the number of quality artificial grass pitches by the equivalent of four full size artificial grass pitches by 2030 subject to robust business cases.

#### Grass pitches and changing pavilions

- **Protect** - clubs with issues relating to security of tenure of their premises should be supported to minimise risks and increase long term sustainability.



## What is the council's role?

### Artificial pitches

- **Collaborate** – on identified projects.

### Grass pitches and changing pavilions

- **Lead** – pavilions within council ownership.
- **Advocate** – influence and support local projects as appropriate.



## Our strategy – cricket pitches

### The stock of cricket pitches in the borough in 2022 is:

- 23 pitches with fine turf grass wickets (213 wickets in total), provided at 22 sites: (15 parish sites, three Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council sites three club/community sites and one private parkland).
- 15 pitches each with one non-turf wicket provided at 15 sites: (6 parish sites, four Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council sites, three school sites, two club/community sites)
- 10 sites have outdoor practice nets.

### What the pitch audit told us

- There is insufficient quantity of cricket pitches in the borough to meet current demand and future demand for formal cricket participation. There is not enough accessible and secure provision for free informal games of cricket.

### The needs highlighted in the pitch audit are:

- Retain and maintain the number of existing cricket pitches.
- Seek opportunities for new provision, prioritising facilities that can accommodate high levels of use and be adapted for informal and casual use.



## What we should do:

- Maintain the existing cricket pitches.
- Support ways to provide facilities to encourage informal and adapted versions of cricket.
- Seek to ensure that improvements for facilities on council owned sites does not increase the ongoing revenue cost to the council of routine maintenance and management.

## How we should do it:

- Support proposals for enhanced changing and social facilities at Basingstoke Sports and Social Club.
- Work closely with the ECB on their current strategies and the ECB County Grants Fund.
- Support clubs with facility/pavilion improvements at sites across Basingstoke.
- Investigate viability of provision of non turf pitches with community access at sites across Basingstoke.

## What principle this supports:

- **Protect** - clubs with issues relating to security of tenure of their premises should be supported to minimise risks and increase long term sustainability.
- **Protect** - the council should continue to support local communities to retain and maintain local facilities through funding advice and support where available.
- **Enhance** - focus should be given to modifications of facilities to allow for adapted versions of traditional sports to take place and increase participation.
- **Enhance** - all community owned sports facilities should be supported to achieve a minimum quality rating of good by 2027.

## What is the council's role?

- **Lead** – maintain and enhance existing cricket pitches in council ownership.
- **Advocate** – influence and support local projects as appropriate.

## Our strategy – rugby pitches

The stock of rugby pitches in the borough in 2022 is:

- 19 grass rugby pitches on 15 sites (nine state school / college sites available for community use, four council / club sites, two private school sites for school use only). The four council / club sites support 52 teams playing in the South East Hampshire League.
- Pitches in Aldermaston, Berkshire are used by 18 teams from Tadley Tigers RFC (playing in the Berks/Bucks & Oxon Premier League).

### What the pitch audit told us

- Current supply broadly meets current demand for traditional forms of league and friendly play rugby but there is insufficient supply at peak times of use.
- Existing supply also meets projected future demand; however lack of security of tenure of the rugby pitch is a concern in Overton and as mentioned above there is an issue with critical times of match play and training requirements.

The needs highlighted in the pitch audit are:

- **Short term:** Overton RFC requires security of tenure on their site.
- Improve pitch drainage and maintenance at Basingstoke Sports and Social Club (home to Chineham RFC).
- Support Chineham RFC with securing long-term lease.
- **Medium term:** Conversion of the main or additional pitch into an artificial grass pitch for rugby at Down Grange.



## What we should do:

- Work with Basingstoke Rugby Club and with stakeholders (Sport England and RFU) in planning for a conversion of the main pitch at Down Grange to an artificial grass pitch for rugby.
- Support Overton RFC to secure tenure on their site.
- Support Chineham RFC and Basingstoke Sports and Social Club to improve pitch drainage and maintenance and increase security of tenure on facilities.

## How we should do it:

- Ensure that the business case for a pitch conversion at Down Grange is sound and does not increase the ongoing revenue cost to the council.
- Allocate resources and engage support to co-ordinate and support the facility improvements.
- In consultation with relevant ward members, seek agreement to allocate S106 contributions towards the scheme, provided that: The Rugby Club/Operator can provide a clear business plan to evidence sustainability of the converted pitch for a minimum of 21 years.

- Funding is obtained to cover the cost of the scheme.
- In consultation with relevant ward members, seek agreement to allocate S106 contributions towards the scheme to improve pitch drainage and maintenance at Basingstoke Sports and Social Club.

## What principle this supports:

- **Enhance** - Down Grange Sports Complex should be retained as the focus of strategic investment for athletics, hockey and rugby facility improvements in the borough at least until 2030.
- **Enhance** – the council should focus on the quality and sustainability of grass pitches and take a flexible approach to the number of pitches, in order to more adequately respond to local needs, changing demands and patterns of use in team sport participation.
- **Enhance** - the council should support an increase in the number of quality artificial grass pitches by the equivalent of one full size artificial grass pitches by 2030 subject to robust sustainable business cases.

## What is the council's role?

- **Lead** - on the facility improvement process for a conversion of the main pitch at Down Grange.
- **Advocate** – support Basingstoke Rugby Club in seeking external funding for the scheme.
- **Collaborate** - with key stakeholders on identifying opportunities to create more junior and mini rugby pitches.



## Our strategy – hockey pitches

The stock of hockey pitches in the borough in 2022 are:

- There are two full sized sand-based pitches located at Down Grange Sports Complex.
- There are two smaller sized sand filled artificial grass pitches, one at Dove House (not available for community use) and one at Queen Mary's Sports Centre (available outside college hours).

### What the Playing Pitch audit told us

- Both full sized pitches are well maintained and current demand for league hockey (senior and youth) and for junior development is met by current supply within the borough.

The needs highlighted in the pitch audit are:

**Short to medium term** - Support the resurfacing of the original full-sized sand based pitch at Down Grange, in order to provide the capacity to meet current and future increased demand.



### What we should do:

- Maintain the existing sand based artificial pitches at Down Grange Sports Complex using the Intelligent Play system to ensure use of the pitch is evenly spread and the pitch is maintained in line with manufacturers / Intelligent Play guidelines.
- Work with Basingstoke Hockey Club and with stakeholders like Sport England and England Hockey to support the club throughout participation growth.

## How we should do it:

- Discuss through the Down Grange operational group the requirements of the club as they continue to grow, and ensure the changing facilities located within the Maidenwell Pavilion are fit for purpose, support the growth of the club and meet the league requirements for the level the club compete in.

## What principle this supports:

- **Enhance** - Down Grange Sports Complex should be retained as the focus of strategic investment for athletics, hockey, rugby and facility improvements in the borough at least until 2030.
- **Enhance** - all council sports facilities should aim to achieve a quality rating of very good by 2027.

## What is the council's role?

- **Lead** - on the resurfacing process for the original artificial pitch for hockey at Down Grange.
- **Advocate** - support the club with growth in participation.
- **Collaborate** - with Basingstoke Hockey Club and key stakeholders on the delivery of the scheme.



## Our strategy – bowling greens

Dedicated outdoor bowls facilities in the borough in 2022 are located at:

- 10 outdoor sites across the borough; (with one providing both indoor and outdoor provision).
- 54 outdoor rinks, with all providing standard six rinks each.
- one has a floodlit green with the capacity to extend use during the end of summer and into September.

### What the pitch audit told us

- Outdoor bowls provision is evenly spread around the borough with a number of sites providing for a very rural catchment.
- Many clubs are extremely self-sufficient with a very active volunteer base and memberships have remained consistent over last three years.
- A number of high scoring sites in the quality assessment whilst some are experiencing difficulties with Greens maintenance and ageing clubhouse buildings.

### The needs highlighted in the pitch audit are:

- **Short term** - retain the existing supply of outdoor bowls rinks and support Old Basing Bowls Club in seeking better security of tenure.
- **Medium term** - monitor shared bowls clubhouse at Russell Howard Park.
- Assess the opportunity for Howard Park Bowls Club to expand their clubhouse to accommodate another short bowls mat.
- Assess the feasibility for Oakley Bowls Club to develop an artificial green alongside their current facilities (subject to funding and demand).
- **Long term** - need for an additional 1.85 rinks by 2027.



## What we should do:

- Improve signage at council-maintained sites.
- Maintain quality of the greens where council has direct influence.
- Support Marnell Bowls Club with improvements to the green surface.

## How we should do it:

- In consultation with relevant ward councillors, seek agreement to allocate S106 or CIL contributions towards improvements to bowls greens and facilities, provided that:
- the bowls clubs can provide a clear business plan to evidence sustainability
- funding is obtained to cover the full cost of the scheme.

## What principle this supports:

- **Enhance** - support all community owned sports facilities with support to achieve a minimum quality rating of good by 2027.
- **Enhance** - the council should work with partners to support self-management of facilities by

voluntary sports clubs and other relevant organisations.

- **Enhance** - indoor and outdoor bowls facilities should be improved to enhance access, quality and sustainable levels of participation.

## What is the council's role?

- **Lead** - on maintaining council owned bowls greens.
- **Advocate** - seek to influence and offer support as appropriate to the community sports clubs.

## Our strategy – outdoor tennis courts

The stock of tennis courts in the borough in 2022 is:

- There are 50 outdoor courts across 17 sites within the borough. Ten sites provide two courts, while Oakley and Stratton Park offers the most at a single site (six).
- Five sites are owned by the borough council.

### What the pitch audit told us

- There are a number of successful community tennis clubs who operate successfully in maintaining their sites and developing the sport, however a number of clubhouses are in poor condition which does impact on the ability to attract members and retain players.
- Floodlighting is lacking in a number of sites which reduces training and development opportunities.
- A lack of awareness of outdoor courts on site.



## The needs highlighted in the pitch audit are:

- **Short term:** retain the existing supply of tennis courts in Basingstoke.
- Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to review the tenancy arrangements with totally Tennis as the current lease/contract is due to end in December 2023. The scope of the review should include the current arrangements at Stratton Park including pay and play charges.
- Assess the opportunity to refurbish the courts at Winklebury Park and implement a gated system (similar to that now in operation at Stratton Park) alongside part redevelopment of the ball court to AGP surface for football.
- **Medium term:** Assess the opportunity for Waverley LTC to develop another hard court by extending the current area of land in their lease and/or provide floodlighting.
- Assess the opportunity to install additional floodlights at other tennis clubs or priority parish recreation ground sites to provide more opportunities to play tennis year-round outside the urban area.

## What we should do:

- Discuss with relevant stakeholders the need and viability for:
- resurfacing of outdoor courts;
- floodlighting of outdoor courts and clubhouse improvements.
- Take into account the recommendations from any new Lawn Tennis Association Facility strategies.

## How we should do it:

- In consultation with relevant ward members, seek agreement to allocate S106 contributions towards improvements to local tennis courts provided that:
- there is a clear business plan to evidence sustainability
- funding is obtained to cover the full cost of the schemes.

## What principle this supports:

- **Enhance** – all community owned sports facilities should be supported to achieve a minimum quality rating of good by 2027.
- **Enhance** – providers of tennis courts should be supported to increase capacity through the addition of floodlights where feasible.

## What is the council's role?

- **Lead** – take responsibility for planning, delivery, monitoring and review of signage across council owned facilities.
- **Advocate** - support as appropriate the community sports clubs to deliver floodlighting, clubhouse and signage improvements.



## Our strategy – netball courts

The stock of netball courts in the borough in 2022 is:

- There is one dedicated netball facility at Russell Howard Park with six floodlit courts owned by the borough council.
- The site is based centrally and benefits from close proximity to the town centre.

## What the Leisure Assessment told us

- The site attracts users to the netball league from across the county.
- The courts are in very good condition; however there are limited changing facilities on site, which are considered to be of poor quality.
- There is no signage or information on the activities based there.

## The needs highlighted in the pitch audit are:

**Short term:**

- Refurbish the courts at Russell Howard Park to improve the quality of the site for netball.
- Support the growth of Basingstoke Netball League and the number of “Back to Netball” sessions where possible.
- Invest in the maintenance of the changing facilities to improve its quality.

**Medium term:**

- As part of the strategic school’s investment - assess the feasibility of providing a purpose designed sports hall of at least six courts (suitable for netball) with daytime availability in Basingstoke. Indoor sports halls to be assessed further with the upcoming Sport England FPM analysis.

## What we should do:

- Discuss with relevant stakeholders the need and viability for improving the changing facilities.

## How we should do it:

- Develop a scheme to enhance the facilities for netball at Russell Howard Park linking in with a planned programme of pavilion works.
- In consultation with relevant ward members, seek agreement to allocate S106 contributions/CIL towards improvements to the netball facilities at Russell Howard Park.

## What principle this supports:

- **Enhance** – The council should recognise Russell Howard Park as a strategic hub for netball and enhance the quality of existing facilities.

## What is the council's role?

- **Lead** – take responsibility for planning, delivery, monitoring of changing rooms improvements at Russell Howard Pavilion.
- **Collaborate** – play an active role in delivery partnership with the netball league Centre to improve signage and arrangements for changing rooms at the pavilion.

## Our strategy – croquet, petanque and disc golf

Dedicated facilities in the borough in 2022 are located at:

- **Croquet** - 1 Lawn at Russell Howard Park.
- **Racing Petanque Club** - based at Down Grange next to Basingstoke Rugby Club Building.

### What the research has told us

- **Croquet** – the club shares a lawn with Thorneycroft Bowls Club and have merged to become one club. The club have aspirations to build a second lawn at Russell Howard Park.
- **Petanque** – the club is settled at Down Grange working closely with Basingstoke Rugby Club utilising the club's facilities. Members of the English Petanque Association playing in various Southern County leagues. The club is seeking to expand its membership.

- **Disc Golf** – the sport is attracting a small following that could expand if a permanent site could be identified; Down Grange is not considered to be an appropriate location.

The needs highlighted in the research are:

#### Short term:

- **Petanque** – retain and re-provide if necessary, in the context of improvements to Basingstoke Rugby Club facilities

#### Medium term:

- **Croquet** – need for a second Lawn to meet the aspirations of the club to attract more members and retain players.



## What we should do:

- **Croquet** - support the Croquet Club to identify a location and carry out a feasibility / viability assessment for a second lawn.
- **Disc Golf** - support investigation for a permanent disc golf site.
- **Petanque** - support the club in promoting the sport.

## How we should do it:

- **Croquet** - In consultation with club and Operations Team, identify potential site for second lawn and capital/ongoing cost implications, with the intention to add as an additional multi use element to future external funding bids.
- **Disc golf** - facilitate discussion with golf course sites for potential programmed use.
- **Petanque** - engage with the club to consider initiatives to promote the club to wider public such as Introduction sessions and links to website.

## What principle this supports:

- **Provide** - the growth and expansion of niche sports clubs should be supported within the borough.

## What is the council's role?

### Croquet

- **Collaborate** - play an active role in delivery partnership.

### Disc Golf

- **Advocate** - seek to influence and offer support as appropriate.

### Petanque

- **Advocate** - seek to influence and offer support as appropriate.

# Conclusions

1. This strategy underpinned by the evidence in the Playing Pitch Assessment sets out aspirational actions to deliver the network of sports facilities which will support the council's ambition to support "active, healthy and involved communities" and complements the overarching Strategic Plan for Sport and Recreation adopted in 2011.
2. This plan will only be effective with the support of councillors and partners towards the agreed priorities within the action plan. Reporting of progress to all interested stakeholders is a key element of this long term plan. In particular, this will ensure that all applicable developer contributions can be identified and allocated to the priorities identified in the Strategy.
3. This strategy has been developed to help those responsible for planning and sport and recreation to ensure that the right facilities are provided in the right locations to meet local needs. At a local level, there is a wealth of assessments carried out on a site by site basis, which can assist projects where necessary.
4. The council will commission another detailed audit of all sports and recreation facilities in five years' time to identify changes in the quality and quantity of facilities. That audit will help measure the effectiveness of the strategy.
5. The council welcomes comments, suggestions and updates at any time, as this will be an evolving process.



## APPENDIX 1 Proposed key principles guiding the strategic approach to playing pitch provision<sup>1</sup>

<b>PP 1.1</b>	The council should continue to support local communities to retain and maintain local facilities through advice and funding support where available.
<b>PP 1.2</b>	The transfer of stand-alone sports pavilions to local communities should be explored to increase opportunities for greater community involvement, income generation and facility improvements
<b>PP 1.3</b>	The council should work with partners to support self-management of facilities by voluntary sports clubs and other relevant organisations
<b>PP 1.4</b>	Clubs with issues relating to security of tenure of their premises should be supported to minimise risks and increase long term sustainability
<b>PP 1.5</b>	The council should support, and incentivise where possible, local schools and facility providers to unlock potential for greater community access to the borough's sports facilities

<b>Strategic Plan for Sport and Recreation: Objective 2</b>	
<b>Improve the quality and capacity of facilities which are highly valued by the community. ENHANCE</b>	
<b>PP 2.1</b>	Down Grange Sports Complex should be retained as the focus of strategic investment for athletics, hockey, rugby and croquet facility improvements in the borough at least until 2030
<b>PP 2.2</b>	The council should focus on the quality and sustainability of grass pitches, and take a flexible approach to the number of pitches, in order to more adequately respond to local needs, changing demands and patterns of use in team sport participation
<b>PP 2.3</b>	All council sports facilities should aim to achieve a quality rating of very good by 2025 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Principles have been developed to guide the council's approach to planning for future provision; only those applicable to the playing strategy are presented in this table. The full suite of proposed principles can be found at [\(add weblink\)](#)

<b>PP 2.4</b>	All community owned sports facilities should be supported to achieve a minimum quality rating of good by 2025
<b>PP 2.5</b>	Providers of tennis courts should be supported to increase capacity through the addition of floodlights where feasible
<b>PP 2.6</b>	The council should recognise Russell Howard Park as a strategic hub for netball and enhance the quality of existing facilities
<b>PP 2.7</b>	Outdoor bowls facilities should be improved to enhance access, quality and sustainable levels of participation
<b>PP 2.8</b>	Focus should be given to modifications of facilities to allow for adapted versions of traditional sports to take place and increase participation

<b>Strategic Plan for Sport and Recreation: Objective 3:</b>	
<b>Where there is evidence of need that cannot be met by existing provision, enable the development of new provision. PROVIDE</b>	
<b>PP 3.1</b>	The council should support an increase in the number of quality artificial grass pitches by the equivalent of 4 full size AGPs by 2030 subject to robust business cases
<b>PP 3.2</b>	Land should be set aside in the next phase of development at Manydown beyond 2029 for the provision of a new strategic sports hub comprising of indoor facilities (pool, sports hall health and fitness, studio space) and outdoor facilities (grass pitches, artificial pitch and hard surface courts ) to meet the long term future needs of the borough
<b>PP 3.3</b>	All new local sport facilities should be situated close to other community amenities where possible (community facilities, recreation areas etc.) to form part of a hub for community activity and social interaction and minimise disruption to residents
<b>PP 3.4</b>	Enhancing provision of safe footpaths, cycle ways and easy access to bus routes should always be considered as part of decisions to provide and improve local facilities
<b>PP 3.5</b>	The growth and expansion of niche sports clubs should be supported within the borough
<b>PP 3.6</b>	The council should focus resources for new local provision in areas that have the greatest deficiencies of opportunities for sports participation
<b>PP 3.7</b>	Formal discussions should be held with neighbouring authorities, HCC, Sport England and sports governing bodies to secure partnership approach for strategic facilities wherever possible
<b>PP 3.8</b>	Developer contributions should be secured through planning obligations and CIL, to contribute to the delivery of new sports facilities.

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