

A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon

SUMMARY REPORT

BELAP
Bennett Leisure & Planning Ltd

for Devon County Council

October 2010

A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon

BELAP Bennett Leisure & Planning Ltd
with Leisure and the Environment

www.belap.co.uk 01626 333308

www.lande.co.uk 01635 43024

1 SUMMARY REPORT: A PLAYING FIELDS STRATEGY FOR MID DEVON

See also supporting documents:

Figure 1	Summary of New Pitch Recommendations
Figure 2	Mid Devon Pitch and Court Action Points
Figure 3	Standards of Provision – Mid Devon
Map 1	BSF Project Catchments
Map 2	Mid Devon Sub Area Maps
Map 3	Mid Devon Pitch Sites

1 Introduction and Context

- 1.1 This playing fields strategy for Mid Devon was commissioned in autumn 2009 by Devon County Council, initially to fulfill the criteria for the County Council’s Building Schools for the Future (BSF) submission, namely a playing field strategy which was compliant with current Sport England and government guidance and was no more than three years old. The research underpinning the strategy has followed the playing pitch methodology (PPM) set out within ‘Towards a Level Playing Field: A guide to the production of playing pitch strategies’ and ‘BSF Waves 7 and Beyond; The Readiness to Deliver Requirement for a Playing Fields Strategy’ and has covered grass playing pitches, artificial grass pitches and outdoor courts and multi-use games areas.
- 1.2 Alongside Mid Devon, three other Devon authorities - South Hams, Torridge and North Devon - were also subject to strategy preparation; the coverage of these authorities was due to the fact that the five schools identified for rebuilding within the County’s first wave of the BSF programme lay within their boundaries. It had originally been intended to incorporate each local authority review within an overall phase 1 BSF Devon County Council playing field strategy but because of the changes detailed below, a revised format has now been adopted with each local authority area presented as a separate, standalone strategy. Some sections deal with all four local authorities, for ease of presentation and comparison. **Map 1** shows the original BSF catchment for Tiverton High School.
- 1.3 Since the research for the strategies was undertaken a number of the parameters have changed; the BSF programme was withdrawn by the incoming coalition government in early July 2010 and regional spatial strategies (RSS) have also been withdrawn, leaving

A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010 Summary Report

local authority new building to be determined by local authorities. The house building targets set in the RSS have already been incorporated within Mid Devon District Council's core strategy and other local development framework documents. There is new guidance from Sport England on artificial grass pitch provision and the distribution of these facilities within Devon, and a proposed review of the playing pitch methodology itself. The strategic and policy context for sport and recreation provision continues to evolve: for example, the forthcoming comprehensive spending review by the government in October 2010, increasing emphasis on local and community determination of planning issues and proposed new government planning policy guidance on planning for a natural and healthy environment will collectively have major implications for sport and recreation development and asset management, provision and disposal in the coming months.

- 1.4 Local authorities are the single biggest supporter of community sport, but investment is under close scrutiny with pressure to achieve more and better services with less resources. As Sport England has stated: 'Alongside this is a fresh drive for localism, promoting greater accountability for service delivery and improvement and giving more flexibility and responsibility for delivery to both local authorities and their communities. This presents further challenges as well as exciting opportunities for thinking innovatively about how services are delivered.'
- 1.5 It is against this background that the Mid Devon Playing Fields Strategy is presented. Its emphasis is upon a pragmatic review and assessment of pitch and court provision within the authority, which will provide important information and data for future reviews of the sports facility stock and recreation service. The first section of this summary report – **Assessment** - sets out the key findings and analysis relating to the number, usage, distribution, quality and accessibility of facilities and the results of the playing pitch methodology (PPM). The second section – **Strategy** - presents strategic action points for planning, management and development of facilities, and accompanying figures set out recommendations on: the number and location of new facilities (**Figure 1**); specific action points, where appropriate, relating to each pitch and court site (**Figure 2**), and proposed standards of provision (**Figure 3**).
- 1.6 There is an extensive and robust evidence base and it is recommended that this is also referred to. **Section 2** of the Main Report gives an overview of pitch provision whilst **Sections 3 – 8** examine each of the pitch sports (football, cricket and rugby), artificial grass pitches and outdoor courts and multi use games areas in turn. These are supported by databases, tables and figures containing data on the numbers, location and quality assessment of facilities, the distribution of clubs and pattern of play and the playing pitch methodology spreadsheets. There are also a number of **maps** presenting the distribution, quality and accessibility of the facilities and a comprehensive album of **photos** – the first time all playing pitches have been recorded in this way.

- 1.7 For the purposes of running the PPM and to give structure to the analysis and recommendations, Mid Devon has been divided into three sub areas, based on Devon County Council's market town catchments; namely, Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton Sub Areas (see *Map 2*).
- 1.8 Research for the study has highlighted the importance of school based sports facilities across Devon. Given the increasing pressure on available land resources and the financial restrictions which local government and the private sector are experiencing, intensifying the community use of facilities on school sites may be the only realistic way of meeting rising demand from pitch and court sports. Despite the cessation of the BSF programme, the playing pitch strategy embraces the fact that school capital programmes can still offer great opportunities to make full and effective use of school sports facilities and improve the health and quality of life for young people and their families and their wider local communities. In particular, the detailed papers on Tiverton High School in Mid Devon (and the other BSF first phase schools: Dartmouth Community College, now Academy [South Hams] and Chulmleigh Community College and Ilfracombe Arts College [North Devon]) demonstrate how each of these schools could be used as a catalyst for improving and developing provision.
- 1.9 Playing fields are a vital resource for sport. The availability, accessibility and quality of facilities influence whether people take part, which sports they enjoy, how often they participate and how well they perform. If we are to encourage participation in sport and raise standards of play, playing field facilities need to be accessible and affordable, of high quality and well maintained and appropriate to the level of play taking place.

ASSESSMENT

2 Number and distribution of facilities

Playing Pitches

- 2.1 85 playing pitches in total have been recorded in Mid Devon: 38 adult football, 14 junior football, 20 cricket and 12 rugby pitches. 72 of these pitches (85%) are in secured community use, according to Sport England's definition, and an additional six are used by the community without formal agreements. Just under one third (31%) of pitches are in the ownership of the local authority or town and parish councils; this is lower than the national average (43%). The number of adult pitches per thousand of the population is just below the average of a sample of authorities nationwide.

Artificial grass pitches (AGPs)

2.2 There are currently four AGPs in Mid Devon, all of sand construction and full size. There is a dual use AGP at Culm Valley Sports Centre and a MDDC owned and managed AGP at Exe Valley Leisure Centre, Tiverton, with full public access. There are also two sand based AGPs at Blundell's School, with limited community use.

Outdoor Courts and MUGAs (Multi Use Games Areas)

2.3 The study records 36 tennis courts in Mid Devon, 32 of which (89%) are floodlit, which is a high proportion, especially when compared to other Devon authorities. There are at least a further 31 tennis courts on school sites. The study also records 11 multi use games areas of various sizes (excluding those on primary school sites).

Contribution of school facilities

2.4 School pitches make an important contribution to meeting overall demand, particularly the pitches on the several sites at Queen Elizabeth Community College, Crediton. Out of a total 88 hectares recorded as being in playing pitch use in Mid Devon, 22 hectares (25%) are on school sites (this excludes some playing pitches at private schools and on junior/primary school sites). School playing fields are especially important for junior football, and it is essential to the development of football, cricket and rugby in Mid Devon that the school pitches in existing community use are retained; without them, teams will fold unless alternative provision is made. The artificial grass pitch at Cullompton Community College (dual use) is essential to the continuance of hockey within the district and other courts and MUGAs on school sites sustain a wide variety of training and competition in rugby, football, netball and tennis. Facilities at primary schools are a vital part of the stock, particularly in rural areas, and have great potential for more community use.

Training Facilities

2.5 One of the challenges for all pitch sports nationwide is the shortage of accessible and affordable training facilities. Training takes place in a variety of settings; on the pitches themselves; on land adjacent to the pitch, on artificial grass pitches, on multi use games areas and in indoor sports halls. Training on pitches increases wear and tear and results in overuse and deterioration of the grass surface; there is increasing pressure on space within indoor sports halls, and a limited number of floodlit artificial grass pitches and multi use games areas within the district. The study concludes that there is a shortage of separate, accessible, year round training facilities, particularly in smaller towns and villages where there is restricted access to indoor facilities.

2.6 It is interesting to note trends in the last decade or so regarding pitch provision within the four authorities. Whilst there has been new provision of artificial grass pitches and some smaller surfaces for training, there has been very little change in grass pitch provision. Notable exceptions include:

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

- North Devon District: Severn Brethren and Tews Lane (football), Raleigh Meadow (cricket) in Barnstaple; Lobb Field (football) in Braunton
- Mid Devon District: Moorhayes, Tiverton (youth football):
- South Hams: Norton Park, Dartmouth (grass pitches); Ivybridge: Filham Park development (rugby, cricket)
- Loss of some pitches, for example: Battisborough Cross and Farleigh Cross, Moreleigh (South Hams); Morteheo Station Road (North Devon); Broad Lane, Appledore (Torridge) ; Coronation Park, Dartmouth (South Hams); Tiverton – Petroc College cricket pitch (Mid Devon).

3 Pitch and court quality

3.1 The quality of pitches and courts across Mid Devon varies considerably. Sites were assessed using the pitch quality assessment (PQA) set out in 'Towards a Level Playing Field'. Out of 71 football, cricket and rugby pitches, 8% (6) were assessed as very good and the same percentage as poor; 41% (29) were satisfactory and 42% (30) as good. The highest rated football grounds were Ladysmead and Horsdon In Tiverton; the best cricket pitches were the grounds at Kentisbeare and Sampford Peverell. The Mid Devon rugby clubs (Crediton, Tiverton and Cullompton RFC's) scored well on indices of pitch quality at their main pitches. Comparative figures for pitch quality across the four authorities in the study are shown below:

		<55% Poor			55-69% Satisfactory			70-74% Good			>75% Very good			Total pitches assessed
		Football	Cricket	Rugby	Football	Cricket	Rugby	Football	Cricket	Rugby	Football	Cricket	Rugby	
Mid Devon	No. pitches	4		2	15	12	2	21	5	4	6			71
	Overall %	8%			41%			42%			8%			
North Devon	No. pitches	4	3	2	18	5	5	11	3	2	12	3	2	70
	Overall %	13%			40%			23%			24%			
South Hams	No. pitches	2	2		28	7	3	15	2	10	5	3		77
	Overall %	5%			49%			35%			10%			
Torridge	No. pitches	3	1		12	4	2	11	2	2	4	1		42
	Overall %	10%			43%			36%			12%			

- 3.2 The facility quality issues faced by the pitch sports relate principally to poor drainage of pitches, exacerbated by the water retention properties of Devon's clay soils and the location of many pitches within river floodplains. Clubs with security of tenure and control over the management and maintenance of their own grounds generally tend to have the best pitches. The main issue for the quality of the actual pitches is the slope and evenness of some pitches in public ownership, the need for additional drainage in some instances and problems associated with access by other users (i.e. when playing pitches are sited within public recreation grounds/areas).
- 3.3 Many grounds also have limited and/or poor quality changing facilities. There are issues around security of tenure on private grounds, especially village cricket pitches. Outdoor courts and MUGAs are also very variable in surface, quality and fencing. The artificial grass pitch at Culm Valley Sports Centre is rather worn and due for refurbishment within the next few years.
- 3.4 As in other rural authorities in Devon, there is a lack of well defined hierarchies and networks of provision for pitch and court sports in Mid Devon; these are of benefit to enable progression through the various standards of competitive play and guide further investment in the improvement of facilities.

4 Demand for the pitch sports

Existing Demand

Football

- 4.1 The study has identified 47 senior football (including one ladies') teams, 46 junior football (10-15 years) and 38 mini (U10s) football teams in the district, totalling 131 teams in all, representing around 1800 players. The most recent Devon FA local data also records around 96 small sided teams, playing on artificial grass pitches and MUGAs.
- 4.2 Analysis through Sport England's playing pitch methodology relies heavily on the concept of 'team generation rates' (TGRs) – the number of people within each pitch playing age range required to generate one team. Mid Devon exhibits fairly low team generation rates for football, demonstrating a relatively high level of participation. Overall, it takes 174 men between the ages of 10 and 44 to generate one football team (compared with a national average of around 220 players). Participation in junior football is also relatively high – just 65 boys aged 10 -15 years to generate one football team.

Cricket

- 4.3 The study has identified 35 senior (18-55 years) cricket teams and 16 junior (11-17 years) cricket teams in Mid Devon, representing around 770 players. Mid Devon demonstrates a relatively low TGR for cricket, demonstrating a relatively high level of participation. Overall it takes 286 men between the ages of 10 and 44 to generate one cricket team (compared with an average from a number of other studies of 448.)

Rugby

- 4.4 There are three rugby clubs in Mid Devon, between them fielding 39 teams: 13 mini teams (U7-U12), 12 junior boys' teams (U13 – U18), 1 girls' team, 12 adult men's teams and 1 ladies team, representing around 572 players in total. This gives team generation rates of 278 for junior boys and 1045 for senior men.

Hockey

- 4.5 There are two hockey clubs in Mid Devon. Tiverton White Eagles fields 3 ladies' and 4 junior girls' teams and is based at Exe Valley Leisure Centre. Exeter and Culm Vale Hornets field a total of 13 teams, 9 of which (ladies and junior) play at Culm Valley Leisure Centre and the rest at St Peter's School, Exeter.

Latent and future demand

- 4.6 Future demand for pitch sports facilities (and sports facilities in general) is comprised of several causal factors; the interaction of which will have a considerable effect on the demand for outdoor sports opportunities within Mid Devon over the coming years:
- Natural demographic changes within the population (especially in relation to the team playing age groups).
 - Population change driven by planned developments.
 - The impact of sports development and related campaigns.
 - The release of any 'latent' or 'frustrated' demand to play sport, assessed on the basis of teams expressing the desire to run more teams and where league secretaries and national governing bodies have indicated unmet demand exists.
- 4.7 For predicting future demand, it is the numbers of people within the main pitch sport playing age ranges (6-55 years) which are the most critical. Overall in Mid Devon, there is projected to be a decrease in the order of 8% in the numbers of young people aged 6 to 17 years during this period, with the numbers of 16-45 year olds staying about the same, and a slight increase (less than 1%) in the numbers of 45-55 year olds. Overall the population is scheduled to increase by 12% (2008 – 2026), demonstrating that the greatest growth will occur in the age bands 55 years and older.

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

- 4.8 On the basis of existing numbers of teams, latent demand, population change to 2026 and sports development factors to 2026 the following changes in the number of junior and adult (men's and ladies') teams (i.e. excluding minis) are predicted:
- Football 93 to around 99 teams
 - Cricket 51 to around 59 teams
 - Rugby 26 to around 34 teams
- 4.9 This will obviously increase the need for pitches, although it is difficult to confirm a precise relationship between this and future numbers of teams, as much depends on the age structure of the population within the pitch's catchment areas, accessibility to facilities and local sports development initiatives.
- 4.10 An increase in the number of teams, and therefore pressure on pitches is also likely to occur in the growth areas which in Mid Devon are Tiverton, Crediton and Cullompton. Account has been taken of this in making recommendations for new provision; however, where new provision is recommended to take account of latent demand, it is assumed that there will be some spare capacity here to meet demands from the growth in population also.
- 4.11 A principal concern for many responding to the survey is the continuing (and rising) costs of running – and the time spent on administration for - their club. Clubs and teams are struggling to survive, not just to meet rising costs to use council facilities, but to meet increases in other costs such as insurances. Recruiting volunteers is also increasingly difficult.

5 Usage and Patterns of Play

Football

- 5.1 The peak period for football play overall in Mid Devon is – perhaps surprisingly – Saturday morning, because of the large number of junior teams playing - 49 out of a total of 89 mini and junior teams play then. For senior teams however, peak demand is Saturday afternoon, when 43 out of 47 senior teams play. Only one team has been recorded playing Sunday league football (see table below):

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

Temporal demand for pitches – number of teams playing/Mid Devon					
	<i>Sat. am (no. teams)</i>	<i>Sat. pm</i>	<i>Sun. am</i>	<i>Sun. pm</i>	<i>Midweek</i>
18 and over		43	1	1	2
10 – 17	32		19		
Under 10	17		21		
Total	49	43	41	1	2
%	36%	32%	30%	1%	2%

- 5.2 A summary of the playing pitch methodology (PPM) for the current situation in Mid Devon is shown below. Only those school pitches with ‘secure community use’ have been included. Figures without a negative sign indicate numbers of pitches which are spare at that time; negative numbers indicate a shortfall in provision; this commonly happens within the modelling for junior teams, as there are few junior pitches; in practice, of course, junior teams play on adult pitches. The key figures to note are those which are highlighted; even an apparent surplus of around one pitch is not enough spare capacity to allow adequate rest and recovery of the pitches. In short, the highlighted entries indicate where there is severe pressure on the pitch supply and where additional pitches may be required.

PPM for Mid Devon			Shortfall/Surplus (numbers of pitches)					
Football by Sub Area	No. pitches		Saturday am		Saturday pm		Sunday am	
	Jnr	Snr	Jnr	Snr	Jnr	Snr	Jnr	Snr
Current								
Crediton	0	3	-3.1	3.0	0.0	2.1	-1.9	3.0
Remainder Crediton Sub Area	0	6	-0.6	6.0	0.0	0.5	-0.4	5.9
Cullompton	0	3	-1.6	3.0	0.0	1.2	-0.9	3.0
Remainder Cullompton Sub Area	0	6	-3.1	6.0	0.0	2.3	-1.9	5.9
Tiverton	3	5	-3.9	5.0	3.0	0.9	-1.1	4.9
Remainder Tiverton Sub Area	0	7	-0.6	7.0	0.0	1.5	-0.4	6.9
OVERALL MID DEVON TOTAL	3	30	-13.0	30.0	3.0	8.5	-6.5	29.5

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

- 5.3 The above shows that there are pressures on pitches within each of the three main towns (Tiverton, Crediton and Cullompton) at peak times. Outside of the main towns, the demand for pitches can mostly be met, although this often means that junior teams play on adult pitches (and there is little spare capacity in the Crediton Sub Area as a whole). A more detailed analysis of the capacity of pitches shows that there are a number of sites where there are heavy demands for matches and training on the pitches throughout the week and the pitches are suffering from overuse; these include: Ladysmead in Tiverton (Tiverton FC); Horsdon Park in Tiverton (Elmore FC); Amory Park, Tiverton; CCA Fields, Cullompton; Silver Street, Willand and Newton St Cyres Playing Fields. This exercise suggests the main issue affecting football pitch supply in the district is not so much the availability of pitches at times of peak demand, but rather the quality of some of the pitches (and associated facilities) resulting from protracted and heavy use.
- 5.4 The above modelling excludes many school pitches which are nevertheless used on a regular basis – such as in Crediton. When these pitches are added back in, the deficiencies are overcome in many instances, but use of the model in this way shows how reliant junior football teams are upon school pitches and that these and their use by the community must be protected to maintain current, and growing, rates of play.
- 5.5 Great care must be taken in interpreting the PPM figures as, for example, the ‘overall Mid Devon total’ for Saturday afternoon seems to suggest that there are 11.5 pitches surplus to requirements. However, these are not necessarily ‘whole’ pitches; they are ‘equivalent’ pitches (i.e. the summation of spare slots throughout the district). All football pitches in Mid Devon are used at some time of the week, are necessary to maintain current levels of play and none are surplus to requirements.
- 5.6 The strategy has consulted widely with clubs and other users (schools) of the pitches and courts and has taken on board their assessments of quality and the issues which overuse of the pitches raises. For players, whether a pitch can accommodate their match at the time they wish to play is only one consideration; of much greater importance is the quality of the pitch at the time of play and the suitability of changing facilities. It is the findings arising from this which are embedded in the action point and the specific site based recommendations in **Figure 2**.
- 5.7 The strategy advocates that more adult size pitches are required, not only to meet latent and future demand, but also to allow existing adult pitches to be rotated and allowed to rest and recover. The playing pitch methodology in Mid Devon further identifies a shortage of junior (and mini) pitches to meet the demand from junior and mini teams throughout the district. Although in most areas, demand is met by junior teams playing on adult pitches, this is far from ideal and it is advocated that there should be dedicated junior and mini pitches wherever possible. Sport England’s

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

recommendation is that, wherever possible, dedicated ‘right size pitches for the age group’ junior and mini pitches (U16) should be provided to take the pressure off adult pitches. Several grounds have spare land available alongside adult pitches where junior pitches could be marked out (e.g. Morchard Bishop, Wood Lane), and there is sometimes scope for marking out on cricket outfield.

5.8 The table below shows the projected shortfalls and surpluses for 2026:

PPM for Mid Devon	Number of pitches		Shortfall/Surplus (numbers of pitches)					
			Saturday am		Saturday pm		Sunday am	
Football by Sub Area	Jnr	Snr	Jnr	Snr	Jnr	Snr	Jnr	Snr
2026								
Total Crediton Sub Area	0	9	-4.4	9.0	0.0	3.0	-2.6	8.9
Total Cullompton Sub Area	0	9	-5.0	9.0	0.0	2.3	-3.0	8.8
Total Tiverton Sub Area	3	12	-5.1	12.0	3.0	1.1	-1.8	11.7
Overall Mid Devon	3	30	-14.5	30.0	3.0	6.5	-7.4	29.4

5.9 This demonstrates the continuing shortfall in junior pitches and tight situation for adult pitches on Saturday afternoons throughout the district, unless new pitches are provided. Moreover, the PPM underlying the above table does not take account of latent demand or show where the particular pressure points from growth in settlement size are likely to occur. The strategy recommendations have taken into account the above mentioned factors and analysis; it is recommended that the more detailed sections are referred to for full explanations.

Cricket

5.10 The playing pitch methodology indicates pressure on existing cricket pitches and shortfalls in the towns of Crediton and Tiverton (the table below shows results on a sub area basis only for ease):

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

PPM for Mid Devon Cricket by Sub Area	No. of Pitches	Shortfall/Surplus (numbers of pitches)	
		Saturday pm	Sunday pm
Current and 2026			
Total Crediton Sub Area	3	-1.2	0.6
Total Crediton Sub Area 2026	3	-0.4	1.1
Total Cullompton Sub Area	5	1.2	2.8
Total Cullompton Sub Area 2026	5	1.2	2.8
Total Tiverton Sub Area	9	1.9	4.9
Total Tiverton Sub Area 2026	9	2.9	5.5
Overall Mid Devon District Current	17	1.9	8.4
Overall Mid Devon District 2026	17	3.7	9.4

- 5.11 Detailed analysis has also been undertaken for the main towns. In Crediton, where peak time for senior cricket is Saturday, a shortfall of over one pitch is identified, and the town of Tiverton indicates a current shortfall of just under one pitch. Peak time for junior cricket in Cullompton is Sunday afternoon, where the analysis of the town and its sub area currently show a shortage of .4 and .2 of a pitch respectively; however, junior play occurs on senior pitches where there is adequate cover.
- 5.12 In the future, changes in the age structure of the population mean that, according to the PPM, there will be a slight easing of demand for certain pitches. However, the model does not take into account latent demand, and the strategy recommends the provision of new cricket pitches in certain locations to meet existing shortfalls and to enable the development of the sport. As with football, no cricket pitches have been identified in the study as being genuinely surplus to requirements.

Rugby

- 5.13 For rugby, the PPM has been run using the preferred method of counting rugby teams promoted by the RFU. This states that all ages U13 and above are counted as senior teams and 4 mini teams are the equivalent, in pitch usage terms, of one senior team. On this basis, the pressure areas are shown shaded below:

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

PPM for Mid Devon Rugby	Number of pitches	Shortfall/Surplus (numbers of pitches)	
		Saturday pm	Sunday am
Current and 2026			
Total Crediton	2	0.1	-0.2
Total Crediton 2026	2	0.5	0.3
Total Cullompton	4	1.5	1.1
Total Cullompton 2026	4	2.3	2.0
Total Tiverton	2	0.3	0.1
Total Tiverton 2026	2	-0.8	-1.2
Overall Mid Devon District Current	8	1.9	1.0
Overall Mid Devon District 2026	8	2.0	1.2

- 5.14 It should be remembered that this modelling does not include school rugby pitches in Tiverton and Crediton and thus indicates that community use of school rugby pitches must be assured if clubs are to continue playing; moreover an additional pitch is required in Tiverton. As with football and cricket, no rugby pitches have been identified in the study as being genuinely surplus to requirements.

6 Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs), Outdoor Courts and MUGAs

- 6.1 In summary, Mid Devon appears fairly well served in the east with sand based artificial grass pitches at Tiverton and Cullompton and in the south west with proximity to Exeter. However, there are no 3G surfaces which are better suited for football and rugby training and competition. Because of this, there is high usage of the sand based pitches for football training and five-a-side matches. The strategy recommends the provision of full size AGPs in Crediton and Tiverton, suitable for competition and training in rugby and football and the refurbishment of the pitch at Culm Valley Sports Centre.
- 6.2 A number of pitches suitable for hockey in Devon are under consideration for, or have changed to, surfaces which are not so suitable. It is imperative that there is no reduction in the current level of provision for hockey within the county, and that any AGPs which are 'lost' to hockey are replaced.
- 6.3 The strategy makes a number of recommendations embracing the provision of sufficient floodlit outdoor courts and MUGAs to meet the needs of tennis, netball, basketball and for five-a-side football. These focus on making the best use of existing facilities and resources and include: support for redevelopment of Amory Park courts in Tiverton as floodlit MUGA/training facility (as long as current provision for tennis on the site either maintained or replaced elsewhere in the town); upgrading low quality courts adjacent to playing fields in rural areas as floodlit MUGAs, capable of meeting training needs;

A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report

developing a centre for netball at Lord's Meadow Crediton; improving links between facilities and activity at schools and clubs for tennis – particularly development of a hub within Tiverton between Tiverton LTC and Tiverton High School; and safeguarding and securing greater community use to existing courts and MUGAs on both secondary and primary school sites.

STRATEGY

Summary of Action Points

- 7.1 General
- 7.2 Summary of New Pitch Recommendations (see also accompanying Figure 1)
- 7.3 Pitch and Court Action Points (see accompanying Figure 2)
- 7.4 Standards of Provision
- 7.5 Priority Action Points

7.1 General

These are district wide, setting out the main strategic action points to be considered. They are grouped around four themes:

- I Widening and securing community use of school facilities
- II Protecting and making the most of existing resources and facilities
- III Adoption of standards
- IV Planning ahead

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

I Widening and securing community use of school facilities

To put schools at the heart of playing field provision and pitch and court sport development.

	Action Point	Notes	Principal Partners
AP1	To use the development of, and/or investment in, new and replacement schools as a catalyst for reappraising existing provision and improving facilities, and to develop, where feasible, integrated 'hub club' sites based at schools for artificial grass pitches, grass pitch and court provision.	For example, any redevelopment of Tiverton High School offers scope to develop the school, together with Petroc College, into a hub club site for football, rugby and tennis. Similar opportunities may exist at Cullompton Community College, QECC in Crediton and Uffculme School.	Secondary Schools, Devon Education Authority (Devon EA); National Governing Bodies (NGBs), clubs, Mid Devon District Council (MDDC)
AP2	To secure and develop greater use of primary school facilities, such as outdoor courts, MUGAs and junior pitches.	Opportunities to upgrade facilities and link to local clubs and playing field use, particularly in rural areas where training facilities are limited.	Primary Schools, local clubs, town and parish councils, Devon EA, Active Devon (Active Villages), MDDC
AP3	To review and update community use agreements in relation to grass playing fields and outdoor surfaces on school sites as appropriate.	Community use agreements should be in place to safeguard provision and use by the community	Devon EA, schools, clubs
AP4	For schools to publicise National Lottery or national governing body funded projects.	In order to promote the maximum use of these facilities by the local community.	Sport England, Devon EA, schools
AP5	To ensure that facilities on school sites are, from the outset, designed for curricular, extra-curricular, community and sports development use.	In order to use limited resources as effectively as possible and create opportunities for attracting governing body finance.	Devon EA, schools, NGBs

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

II Protecting and making the most of existing resources and facilities

The strategy is being produced at a time of increasing financial constraints for local authorities and the emphasis must be on protecting provision and maximising its use through minimum investment, whether through developer contributions and/or grants and loans from governing bodies and other sources.

	Action Point	Notes	Principal Partners
AP6	To adopt and/or continue strong statutory policies protecting existing pitches, including those on education sites, within the Core Strategy and other LDF documents.	No playing pitches have been identified which are surplus to requirements. All should be subject to protectionist policies.	MDDC, town and parish councils
AP7	To work towards obtaining security of tenure of all playing pitches on private land.	Such sites, especially rural cricket and football pitches, are vulnerable and clubs are often unable to obtain funds/permission for developing their facilities	Sport England, MDDC, clubs, landowners and managers
AP8	To ensure that the upgrading or renewal of existing facilities does not result in the loss of opportunities for any sport.	E.g. the upgrading of outdoor courts to meet needs for both tennis and netball and other sports if demand has been identified, and the provision of artificial grass pitches to meet identified and existing needs for hockey as well as football and rugby.	NGBs, MDDC, Devon EA, Schools
AP9	To ensure that the most efficient use is made of available space.	By, for example, marking out junior pitches alongside senior pitches and on smaller public recreation grounds.	MDDC, town and parish councils, other landowners
AP10	To promote and support floodlighting of all new outdoor artificial surfaces to an appropriate level and to revisit existing facilities for possible upgrading.	To ensure that all artificial grass pitches and surfaces, including on school sites, are floodlit to maximise school and community use and return on investment.	Sport England, MDDC, Devon EA, town and parish councils, schools, other landowners

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

	Action Point	Notes	Principal Partners
AP11	To reconsider management and maintenance regimes of existing facilities.	Many facilities, particularly outdoor courts and MUGAs, are underutilised. Appropriate management including proactive sports development work is key to their effective use, and various options may need to be considered to raise usage and their value to the community. One option is to consider joint management between schools and clubs.	MDDC, town and parish councils, schools, Devon EA, clubs
AP12	To ensure that indoor and outdoor sports facilities are planned in tandem to make best use of opportunities for development of specialist sports and central venues for competition and training.	This is especially relevant for court sports such as netball and tennis.	MDDC, Devon EA, NGBs, clubs
AP13	To support the co-location and sharing of facilities including clubhouses and changing facilities wherever possible.	Co-location of facilities can result in significant cost savings and also result in more efficient use.	Sport England, MDDC, town and parish councils, clubs, NGBs

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

III Adoption of Standards

	Action Point	Notes	Principal Partners
AP14	To adopt the standard of provision as set out in Section 7.4 of this summary report.	These standards of provision to be used as a basis for planning new and improved sport and recreation provision in association with the proposed growth areas and to provide the basis for developer contribution policies within the LDF and other local planning documents.	MDDC, developers, town and parish councils
AP15	To provide and maintain facilities to a good and appropriate standard in order to continue attracting and retaining both male and female players.	Where pitch and changing accommodation, pavilion and other improvements are indicated under 'Pitch and Court Action Points' (Figure 2), the aim should be to undertake improvements to achieve a 'good' standard using Sport England accepted 'quality assessment techniques.' Developer contributions from the growth areas might be justifiably invested in such improvements where it can be shown that there is convenient access and likelihood of use by new residents.	MDDC, town and parish councils, Devon EA, NGBs, developers
AP16	To develop hierarchies of provision for each sport to ensure that the full range of facilities is accessible and available within Devon and to guide any further investment in the improvement of pitches.	This should recognise the role of public, private and education pitches, as well as the need to provide facilities enabling progression through various standards of competitive play	MDDC, Devon EA, Active Devon, NGBs

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

IV Planning ahead

	Action Point	Notes	Partners
AP17	When planning new and improved facilities, to look holistically at the whole settlement's sporting provision – embracing public, private and education landowners.	To plan in a logical, complementary and effective way for new provision and to enable the development of links and sharing of facilities, volunteers, management expertise and equipment wherever possible.	Sport England, MDDC, Devon EA, town and parish councils, schools, landowners
AP18	To review asset management arrangements and examine the longer term options for management and maintenance of playing pitches.	There may, for example, be scope for allowing senior clubs to establish some secure presence (e.g. a licence) on suitable sites.	MDDC, clubs
AP19	To undertake biannual updating of this playing fields strategy, including, at appropriate times, the rerunning of the electronic playing pitch methodology and to incorporate any revisions to policy within LDF documents.	This would include regularly: (a) updating the supply of pitches (recording when new pitches are provided, pitches undergo a change of use, or a different configuration) and (b) updating the demand for pitches by checking number of teams (ideally in September), through new handbooks and club/league websites.	MDDC

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

7.2 Summary of New Pitch Recommendations

These are presented in the accompanying **Figure 1** and are summarised below:

SUB AREA	Location	NEW PROVISION TO MEET EXISTING DEMAND								NEW PROVISION TO MEET FUTURE DEMAND							
		Adult football	Junior football	Mini soccer	Cricket	Rugby	STP - Full size	MUGA	Tennis courts	Adult football	Junior football	Mini soccer	Cricket	Rugby	STP - Full size	MUGA	Tennis courts
CR	Copplestone	1						1									
CR	Crediton						1	1		1							
CR	Newton St Cyres/Exeter fringe	1															
CR	Sandford				1												
CU	Cullompton		2					1		1							
CU	Kentisbeare	1	1														
CU	Uffculme		2														
CU	Willand		2					1							1		
T	Bampton							1									
T	Burlescombe							1									
T	Cheriton Fitzpaine							1									
T	Halberton							1									
T	Holcombe Rogus							1									
T	Thorverton								2								
T	Tiverton	1	2	2	1	1	1	1		1	2				1		
MID DEVON TOTAL		4	9	2	2	1	2	10	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	2	0

7.3 Pitch and Court Action Points

The accompanying **Figure 2** presents action points on a site by site basis, relating to upgrading, refurbishment and improvements to pitches, courts and ancillary facilities.

7.4 Standards of Provision

- 7.4.1 The area of land in playing pitch use currently equates to around 78 hectares of pitches in secured community use, or 1.00 ha. per 1000 people (based on FHSA estimate of 78,293 for the population of Mid Devon in 2009). There are a further 10.3 hectares of pitches without secure community use at schools within the district, which takes the overall total to 88.5 hectares or the equivalent of 1.13 ha/000.
- 7.4.2 This study has taken team generation rates into account in its assessment of latent demand, and has also brought together information on latent and future demand from clubs, sports development officers, local knowledge and future population projections – especially the geographical areas where this growth will be concentrated - to formulate recommendations for additional pitch provision to the year 2026.
- 7.4.3 This estimates that another 18.5 hectares of land in pitch use are required to meet demand to 2026 i.e. giving a district wide standard of 1.24 ha/000 (but note sub area variations). Some of this could be met by bringing some non secure community use pitches into community use. However, it is assumed, for ease for this example, that most pitches which could be subject to secure community use are already under such arrangements and therefore the additional pitches required will need to come predominantly from new provision, funded principally through developer contributions.

A summary of existing and proposed standards of provision is shown below.

**A Playing Fields Strategy for Mid Devon – October 2010
Summary Report**

Summary of Standards of Provision; Mid Devon

Sub Area	Existing population (FHSA estimates 2009)	Existing Hectarage of land in playing pitch use		Existing level of provision (hectares per thousand pop: ha/000)		Projected future population 2026 (RSS 2026 estimates)	Additional hectareage of land required	Future standard of provision 2026 (ha/000 with SCU)
		SCU*	All	SCU*	All			
Crediton Sub Area	20,202	20.2	25.3	1.00	1.25	21,506	4.3	1.38
Cullompton Sub Area	21,637	21.5	25.1	0.99	1.16	23,593	6.0	1.32
Tiverton Sub Area	36,454	36.4	38.0	1.00	1.04	40,921	8.2	1.13
Mid Devon Total	78,293	78.1	88.4	1.00	1.13	86,020	18.5	1.24

SCU * Secure Community Use

7.5 Priority Action Points

There is a considerable amount of detail within this strategy with many points and issues for consideration. However, from all the research underpinning this strategy, we consider the following to be the top points for action (not necessarily in priority order):

1. The provision of an extra rugby pitch in Tiverton
2. The provision of a new full size artificial grass pitch in Crediton of a surface and standard acceptable for competition and training in rugby and football
3. To consider the role of each secondary school within Mid Devon as a sporting hub, with specialisms as appropriate
4. The redevelopment and upgrading of courts at Amory Park to a floodlit all weather/artificial grass surface
5. The provision and/or improvement of changing accommodation to an appropriate 'good' standard for the pitch sports at rural grounds, including Yeoford (playing fields), Silverton (Coach Road), Bampton (The Moat) and Uffculme (Magelake Meadows)
6. Further development of pitch sport hierarchies, based around sports hubs at Bolham Road, Tiverton (Tiverton High School/Petroc College), Lord's Meadow, Crediton and CCA Fields/Culm Valley Sports Centre.
7. The provision, within Tiverton, of a permanent home for Tiverton & Bickleigh Cricket Club
8. The provision of a new full size artificial grass pitch in Tiverton of a surface and standard acceptable for competition and training in rugby and football
9. New or additional provision of junior and mini football pitches at Willand, Uffculme, Kentisbeare, Cullompton and Tiverton.
10. The strategic provision of floodlit MUGAs through district, at, for example, Copplestone, Crediton, Cullompton, Willand, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Halberton, Thorverton, and Tiverton.
11. The development of a tennis hub in Tiverton between the club (based at Exe Valley Leisure Centre) and courts and activity at Tiverton High School
12. The provision of additional adult football pitches to meet demand from new developments in Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton.