

**BOURNEMOUTH AND POOLE**

**SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY**

**2014-26**

**MARCH, 2014**

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## Executive Summary

The Joint Bournemouth and Poole Sports Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to set out a strategic framework which identifies the existing provision of sports infrastructure, gaps in that provision and required improvements to quality, quantity and accessibility. The strategy looks ahead to the year 2026, projecting the potential demand and needs arising from an increasing population and anticipated increases in participation by that time. It sets out a 'direction of travel' for sports provision in the future and a framework to help enable change.

The strategy (produced by Stuart Todd Associates and the Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership) was commissioned by Bournemouth Borough Council and Borough of Poole and its development was overseen by a steering group comprising officers from Bournemouth Borough Council, Borough of Poole, Active Dorset and Sport England. Extensive consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders involved in running, managing, delivering and using sports facilities and pitches.

The strategy focuses on the following types of sports facilities and pitches:

- ▶ Grass and artificial playing pitches;
- ▶ Swimming pools;
- ▶ Sports halls;
- ▶ Indoor and outdoor bowls (Borough of Poole only);
- ▶ Indoor and outdoor tennis;
- ▶ Athletics tracks;
- ▶ Netball courts;
- ▶ Ballparks / open multi-use games areas;
- ▶ Dedicated five-a-side multi-use games areas;
- ▶ Squash courts;
- ▶ Wheel parks;
- ▶ Informal watersports;
- ▶ Marine / harbour / organised watersports;
- ▶ Beach sports;
- ▶ Off-road cycling;
- ▶ A range of other outdoor pursuits;
- ▶ Fitness gyms (as part of leisure centres) (Borough of Poole only);
- ▶ Ice rinks (Bournemouth Borough Council only); and,
- ▶ Golf courses (within Bournemouth).

The development of the strategy has identified a number of key challenges facing provision of facilities and pitches in the future:

- ▶ The population of Bournemouth and Poole is expected to grow significantly in the period to 2026 and the scale and locations of housing development;
- ▶ Participation in sports is generally increasing;
- ▶ The way that sport is provided for is changing;
- ▶ There is no longer the funding available to expect the public sector to provide and subsidise facilities to the degree that it has done in the past;
- ▶ There is a desire to get more young people involved in playing sport;
- ▶ There is a real lack of volunteers and coaches required to grow some sports; and,
- ▶ In responding to these challenges, there is a need to ensure that existing assets are protected and their quality improved in order for participants to benefit from a better experience in sport and maximise facility and pitch capacity to accommodate growth and change in participation.

The role of the strategy is to respond to these challenges and set out a strategic plan for co-ordinating and managing change across Bournemouth and Poole, ensuring that facilities and pitches are responsive to demand and provided in the right quantity, to the right quality, in the right places and remain viable and sustainable into the future. It will help to ensure that the facility and pitch assets available are accessible, the most effective use is made of them and a balanced approach is taken to community versus commercially driven provision.

As acknowledged above, the strategy has been produced at a time when there are significant delivery challenges and against a backdrop of changing roles and responsibilities. Therefore, it is not solely a local authority strategy and should be seen more as a strategy for Bournemouth and Poole, as places. The delivery, running and maintenance of high quality facilities and pitches will not only be the responsibility of the public sector and the local authority role is increasingly

becoming one of enabling and supporting community aspirations for provision as an elected representative body, rather than supporting through direct funding.

The strategy sets out a vision which centres on the provision of high quality facilities and pitches to meet the demand for participation in club based and informal / casual sports, provided in partnership, and which:

- ▶ help to improve the health and wellbeing of the resident population;
- ▶ are accessible and welcoming to the community;
- ▶ increase accessibility, in particular, to young people, people with a disability and casual participants;
- ▶ contribute to the overall economic and visitor 'offer' of the towns; and,
- ▶ are viable and financially sustainable into the future.

There are a number of objectives which have emerged from the strategy process. These are:

- ▶ To maintain and enhance quality of existing facilities to help increase participation and ensure that sports are attractive to existing and new participants and their families;
- ▶ Improve capacity of provision within the existing supply of facilities and pitches;
- ▶ Having made the most of existing stock by increasing use within acceptable levels, seek to fill gaps in provision where demand is demonstrated;
- ▶ Rationalise provision only if and when necessary and without compromising the capacity or quality of the remaining provision and available capacity / supply overall;
- ▶ Work in partnership (public, private and third sectors) to:
  - ▷ improve communication of available provision through traditional PR routes and use of social media;
  - ▷ deliver and manage new additional provision; and,

- ▷ ensure that existing supply which is meeting a need and demand is financially viable and remains sustainable to operate and maintain in the future; and,
- ▶ Where possible, ensure that any new future provision for sport serves more than one sport and / or leisure activity (i.e. is multi-use) to achieve economies of scale and establish 'hubs' for those participating in sport.

The key findings of the strategy suggest a number of important projects and issues face sport in Bournemouth and Poole including, amongst others, the following:

- ▶ A number of artificial grass pitches (AGPs) are required in Bournemouth and Poole to satisfy unmet demand now and in the future;
- ▶ There is a clear need for additional swimming pool provision in Bournemouth and Poole, with identified needs now increasing to 3 additional 25m lanes required in Poole by 2026 and up to 6 additional lanes in Bournemouth;
- ▶ Slades Farm, Bournemouth, where existing plans to make improvements to facilities and pitches, including a new artificial grass pitch, should be delivered;
- ▶ King's Park, Bournemouth, where there remain opportunities to deliver improvements within the context of existing provision, the potential new ice rink and links to the athletics track;
- ▶ Meyrick Park, Bournemouth, where improvements to the quality of rugby pitches and additional training and mini pitches / areas will help increase capacity of pitches to accommodate the rugby club's needs;
- ▶ The Dolphin Swimming Pool, Poole, where the condition of the building will need to be addressed soon;
- ▶ The regeneration sites in Poole, where there will be significant levels of housing growth in the period to 2026;
- ▶ Improvements to facilities in Poole Harbour should be considered on publication of the findings of the VALMER project which has undertaken extensive research to understand issues of harbour users;

- ▶ The seafront areas in both Boroughs, where the proposed changes and introduction of water and beach sport hubs to improve facilities and the quality of the visitor experience should be implemented; and,
- ▶ The assessments have begun the process of quantifying the demand generated by international students. Bournemouth Borough Council, in particular, should work with the international colleges and other partners to seek to identify locations for facilities to accommodate this need (which is additional to that generated by residents of the Borough) and better understand the long term impact of potential continued growth in student numbers.

In addition to the sport, facility and pitch specific recommendations, the strategy process has also identified some recommendations which apply across a number of or all sports. In summary, these are:

1. Improve accessibility for casual users, clubs, people with a disability and international students;
2. Improve and maintain a dialogue with the schools, colleges and Academies to ensure that their plans for changes to provision are embedded within the context of this strategy;
3. Local authorities and Active Dorset should continue to liaise closely with key stakeholders to deliver the strategy effectively in partnership;
4. Local authorities should work together on strategy issues identified where they or their delivery have a cross-boundary and / or conurbation-wide impact on provision;
5. Improve monitoring and understanding where necessary on demand for facilities and pitches 'on the ground' and update the strategy and action plan as necessary in light of such information;
6. Explore options with stakeholders to secure the long-term viability of facilities and pitches where demand is demonstrated and / or the value of the facility or pitch as a community asset is recognised;



7. When planning for new facilities, seek to achieve economies of scale and use by providing hub facilities which provide multi-functional and / or multi-sport space;
8. Explore, with relevant stakeholders, opportunities and options for some sports to adapt and change the way they have traditionally operated to help ensure the long-term future of the sport in Bournemouth and Poole and / or the facilities or pitches used;
9. The identification of locations and sites for additional new facilities and pitches as well as their scale should meet the requirements of local and national planning policy (including requirements for accessibility and parking) and should meet requirements of the sport(s) the facility or pitch is serving, for example, changing rooms, dimensions for competitive play, amount of equipment storage, social / refreshment facilities, rooms for training and officials, and so on; and,
10. New facilities should: respond to a demonstrable local or strategic need; be viable for delivery; be financially sustainable in the future; have a sinking fund established if necessary to ensure future refurbishment; be open to community access during evenings and weekends (with the appropriate proportion of time reflecting local or projected strategic needs and demand); and, respond positively to the requirements of this strategy.

## Context

Stuart Todd Associates and the Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership were commissioned by Bournemouth Borough Council and the Borough of Poole at the start of 2013 in partnership with Active Dorset and Sport England, to develop a Sports Strategy for the Boroughs.

The main drivers behind the development of the strategy included: a need to update the previous strategies for playing pitches and built facilities undertaken in 2008; the need for a strategy to be in place to inform appropriate decisions (for both the Councils and other bodies) about future investment in sports facilities and pitches; and, a need for the strategy to respond to and reflect updated and emerging new policy guidance on planning and sports provision (for example the publication of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 and the now published revised Playing Pitch Strategy guidance).

From a sporting perspective, Sport England and national sports governing bodies now require a joined-up strategy to be in place to support applications for funding for the provision of improved or new sports facilities and pitches.

Within the NPPF, sports facilities and playing pitches (referred to as "playing fields"<sup>1</sup>) are embedded in the context of "promoting healthy communities" and the NPPF sets out how the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Paragraph 74 of the NPPF states that:

"Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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<sup>1</sup> The glossary to the NPPF defines a "playing field" as "The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010."

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.”

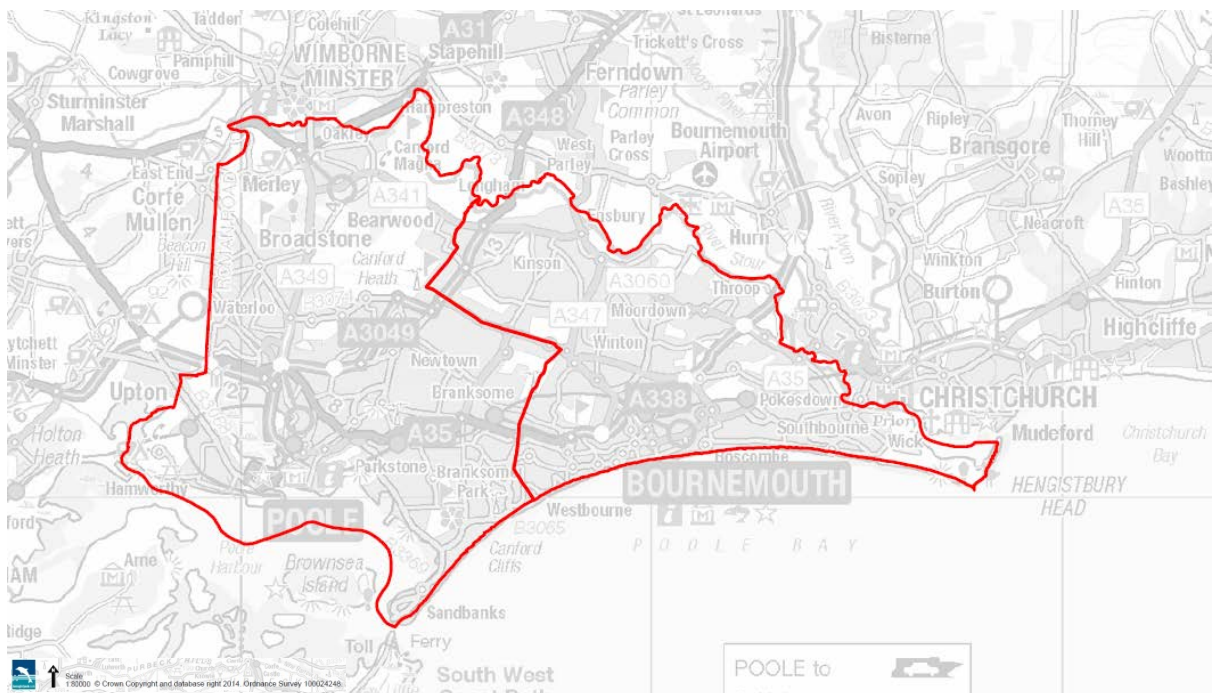
The NPPF is therefore clear that an up-to-date playing pitch and sports facilities assessment and strategy should be undertaken to support the development of healthy communities and local planning policy.

# Introduction

The Joint Bournemouth and Poole Sports Strategy (the Sports Strategy) and Action Plan which accompanies the strategy document have been developed to set out a strategic framework which identifies the existing provision of sports infrastructure (sports facilities and pitches), gaps in that provision and required improvements to quality, quantity and accessibility.

The strategy covers the Bournemouth Borough and the Borough of Poole, as shown below.

**Figure 1: Area covered by the Sports Strategy**



Source: Borough of Poole

It looks ahead to the year 2026, projecting the demand and needs arising from the increasing population by that time. The strategy is the 'cover' document which encapsulates the main findings of the research, making recommendations for specific facility types and / or sports, while also making a number of 'cross-

cutting' measures which apply to sport in Bournemouth and Poole in a more general sense.

The other documents which provide evidence behind the strategy are illustrated below. Much of the detail about the process and how the strategy was developed are contained in these 'daughter' documents, rather than in this strategy document.

**Figure 2: Suite of Documents supporting the Sports Strategy**



Importantly, while the Sports Strategy was commissioned by Bournemouth Borough Council and Borough of Poole with support from Active Dorset and Sport England, it is not simply a strategy which focuses on the Councils' role and responsibilities, but is about the delivery and sustainability of sports provision as a whole, across Bournemouth and Poole, whoever the provider.

# Types of Facilities and Pitches Assessed included in this Strategy

The sports facilities and pitches for which the consultant team was asked to assess for the Sports Strategy are as follows:

## ***Built Facilities***

Detailed focus on:

- ▶ Swimming pools (4 lanes x 25m+);
- ▶ Sports halls (4+ badminton courts) including use by badminton, basketball and five-a-side football;
- ▶ Indoor and outdoor bowls (for Borough of Poole only);
- ▶ Indoor and outdoor tennis;
- ▶ Athletics tracks;
- ▶ Netball courts;
- ▶ Ballparks / open multi-use games areas; and,
- ▶ Dedicated five-a-side multi-use games areas.

Limited appraisal on:

- ▶ Fitness gyms (as part of leisure centres) (for Borough of Poole only);
- ▶ Squash courts;
- ▶ Ice rinks (for Bournemouth Borough Council only); and,
- ▶ Golf courses (focusing on facilities within Bournemouth).

## ***Playing pitches***

Detailed focus on:

- ▶ Grass pitches used for football, rugby and cricket;

- ▶ Full size artificial grass pitches (AGPs) used for hockey and football (which can be partitioned to make a number of smaller pitches for smaller sided games or training); and,
- ▶ Smaller, dedicated, AGPs used solely for small sided football (e.g. 5 or 7-a-side).

### ***'Non-traditional' facilities and land based infrastructure***

Varying degrees of appraisal (dependent upon information received during consultation) on:

- ▶ Wheel parks (which incorporate use by skateboards, scooters, freestyle BMX and in-line skating etc);
- ▶ Informal watersports (which include surfing, windsurfing, kite surfing, SUP (stand-up paddle surfing), bodyboarding, open water swimming, wake boarding, parasailing, etc.);
- ▶ Marine / harbour / organised watersports (which include sailing and rowing);
- ▶ Beach sports (which include beach soccer and beach volleyball);
- ▶ Off-road cycling (which include cycle speedway, BMX racing and informal dirt track BMX, track cycling, cyclocross); and,
- ▶ Other outdoor pursuits (including parkour, orienteering, outdoor gym, outdoor park table tennis).

For facilities to be included in the full assessment, they have to have a degree of 'community access' during peak periods of use (i.e. during weekday evenings and over weekends), and be generally available to the general public through open, 'pay and play' or club or facility membership (where membership is not set at a very high price, excluding some sections of the population). To be included in the assessment, they also need to comply with any relevant standards set by national sports governing bodies for their sport, which might include for example particular dimensions of court or pitch for competitive play. Facilities and pitches excluded from the full assessment include those on education sites used exclusively for curricular and extra-curricular purposes, with

no use by 'external' community clubs and those on other 'private' sites such as armed forces bases or professional sports team, with no (or restrictively limited) use by 'external' community clubs. However, these facilities and pitches are noted and where possible, audited, to get an understanding of their condition and availability, and therefore the role they could play if community access could be gained in the future (for example on some school sites).

Facilities which are outside of the size thresholds identified above have been noted and often play an important role in overall provision. For example, small halls and swimming pools are often an important asset to entry level participation and learning, as well as casual use. However, they have been excluded from assessment through this strategy process given their very localised, rather than strategic, role in provision. Further work may be required in the future to better understand needs arising at these facilities.

### **Locations of facilities and pitches**

The summaries of assessments and sets of actions proposed in this strategy document relate to the locations where action is required, identified through the evidence drawn together from the assessment and audit processes. A full list and maps of facilities, grounds and pitches in the Boroughs is set out in the assessment documents which accompany this strategy, rather than in the strategy document itself, in the interests of reducing the size of the strategy document.



## Strategy Development and Process

As referenced above, the Sports Strategy's development was divided into three areas of focus: built facilities, playing pitches and 'non-traditional' facilities. Each of these were approached in a similar way in order to get a consistent set of evidence to inform the strategy's development. The 'Methodology Report' which accompanies this strategy provides the detail of the approaches taken while the 'Consultation & Engagement Report' documents those who were consulted during the process and how. In summary, each element of focus took the following steps:

1. Establish the number, location and type of existing facilities and pitches.
2. Audit the facilities and pitches to gather a 'snapshot' of their condition (in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility).
3. Consult widely to understand key issues around demand, capacity of facilities and pitches, supply, quality and accessibility (through surveys, interviews, workshops, email and telephone).
4. Appraise existing plans, policies and programmes to understand current thinking on existing and future provision.
5. Establish gaps in provision and improvements necessary to existing facilities and pitches.
6. Estimate the demands and needs which are likely to arise in the future by 2026 from a growing population, changing demographic profile and changes in participation rates in sports.
7. Apply the likely demand and need in 2026 to the existing supply of facilities and pitches to determine how best any changes in required capacity of facilities and pitches can be accommodated (for example

through changes to patterns of use, making more of existing facilities or seeking to provide additional facilities).

Throughout this process, a Project Team has overseen the strategy's development and has been involved in helping to collect data and in providing local knowledge about facilities and pitches. The Project Team comprised officers from Bournemouth Borough Council, Borough of Poole, Active Dorset and Sport England, as well as the consultant team (the Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership and Stuart Todd Associates). For playing pitches, the Project Team was supplemented by a 'core group' of officers from the national sports governing bodies for football, hockey, rugby and cricket who helped to verify information about pitches and local issues and helped to shape the assessments which form the 'backbone' of this strategy.

As stated in the 'Consultation & Engagement Report' which accompanies the Sports Strategy, all relevant National Sports Governing Bodies (NGBs) were approached during preparation of this assessment and strategy and given the opportunity to provide their thoughts on provision in Bournemouth and Poole. Where responses were received from NGBs, their key issues and priorities have been noted and taken into consideration in the assessments and strategy.

## Challenges facing Bournemouth and Poole

The development of the strategy has identified a number of key challenges facing provision of facilities and pitches in the future.

The **population of Bournemouth and Poole is expected to grow** significantly in the period to 2026. Population will increase in Bournemouth from 183,460 in 2011 to an estimated 197,510 by 2026. In Poole the change will be from 148,080 in 2011 to 158,870 in 2026. As well as the amount of growth, the change in the numbers of people in age groups will be important to provision. For example, there will be greater numbers of people in older age groups and younger age groups both reflecting 'baby booms' in the late 1940s and early 1950s and again at the turn of this century.

The **scale and locations of housing development** pose challenges. Projections produced by Bournemouth Borough Council for Bournemouth and Poole reflect a 'policy on' scenario with figures taking into account the additional development that will come forward between now and 2026. The scale of development allocated in Bournemouth is 7,500 dwellings between 2011 and 2026 and in Poole is 10,000 in the same period. The Boroughs face well-known challenges in accommodating required housing development within largely urbanised areas with little, if any, greenfield land to develop, implying that the focus of change will be on redevelopment and infill sites. There are particular challenges for sports provision in responding to growth based on these 'brownfield' sites which are likely to be spread around the Boroughs in appropriate locations and necessitate relatively high building densities with few opportunities to provide additional semi-formal space for playing pitches or outdoor facilities or land for new built facilities. In Poole, 40% of proposed development will come forward on regeneration sites and in and around the town centre area, presenting both challenges and opportunities to accommodate changes in provision which will be necessary in the future.

**Participation** in sports is generally increasing. This is particularly the case in sports which can be done outside of a formal club setting and which have been inspired by the Olympics and Paralympics in 2012, such as cycling and running. The challenge is to respond appropriately to help facilitate these free activities for health and wellbeing benefits when set against a background of limited available public funding for facilities, while also capturing interest to help ensure the continued viability of built facilities.

The **landscape of sports provision and sports development is changing**. The traditional set-up for providing and running facilities has changed substantially in recent years. Local authorities are no longer providing and running 'municipal' public access facilities such as sports centres, with overall management being passed to trusts or leisure companies and with larger facilities being run on a more commercial basis having to pay their way with less or no public subsidy. In itself, while this model is a sensible way of trying to secure the viability of multi-sport centres in the long-term, it brings with it pressures on those centres to raise funds through meeting market demand for provision (for example through increased fitness gym or classes space) which in turn, increases pressure on less financially lucrative, but nonetheless important, space for club based sport and sports development.

There is no longer the **funding** available to expect the public sector to provide and subsidise facilities to the degree that it has done in the past. However, there is an understanding that the public sector has a clear role in enabling and co-ordinating provision for 'community benefit'. Continuing pressures on local authorities mean that new ways of facility and pitch provision and management are being found to ensure their sustainability and viability in the long-term. For some sports this means adapting to changing circumstances and trends in participation and to some clubs, to taking a greater responsibility in the facilities and pitches they use. In some places, this is already happening. What is clear is that the provision and maintenance of high quality and viable facilities into the

future are most likely to be ensured through working in partnership between the public, private, education and community sectors (including clubs and leagues).

A key focus for Sport England through their current strategy (and therefore for national sports governing bodies) is to get **more young people involved in playing sport** and continuing to do so as they leave the school environment and become more reliant upon clubs structures to continue to play sport. The education sector as a whole and the facilities provided at schools, colleges and Academies will be key to helping ensure this happens. With the changing nature of the sports provision sector, education establishments with facilities and pitches will also become increasingly important to the overall supply in the future and new ways of working in partnership will be needed to help ensure continuity for pupils and students and also provide increased access to the local community and clubs where possible.

A number of clubs which responded to the surveys issued suggested that in addition to physical sports infrastructure sometimes limiting their capacity to grow, **a lack of volunteers and coaches** was a significant issue. While the strategy can do little to influence the recruiting of volunteers and coaches to help clubs grow, it can help clubs to improve their attractiveness through the support in principle of providing good quality facilities to support the people who run clubs (and their families) at the site of the facility or pitch. The 'softer' supporting infrastructure for clubs has been raised as a key issue by a number of clubs across many sports and improving the overall quality of the 'offer' will help to increase participation.

In responding to these challenges, there is a need to **ensure that existing assets are protected and their quality improved** (including their accessibility) in order for participants to benefit from a better experience in sport and maximise facility and pitch capacity to accommodate growth and change in participation.

## Role of the Strategy

The role of this strategy is to respond to these challenges and set out a strategic plan for co-ordinating and managing change across Bournemouth and Poole, ensuring that facilities and pitches are responsive to demand and provided in the right quantity, to the right quality, in the right places and remain viable and sustainable into the future. It will help to ensure that the facility and pitch assets available are accessible, the most effective use is made of them and a balanced approach is taken to community versus commercially driven provision.

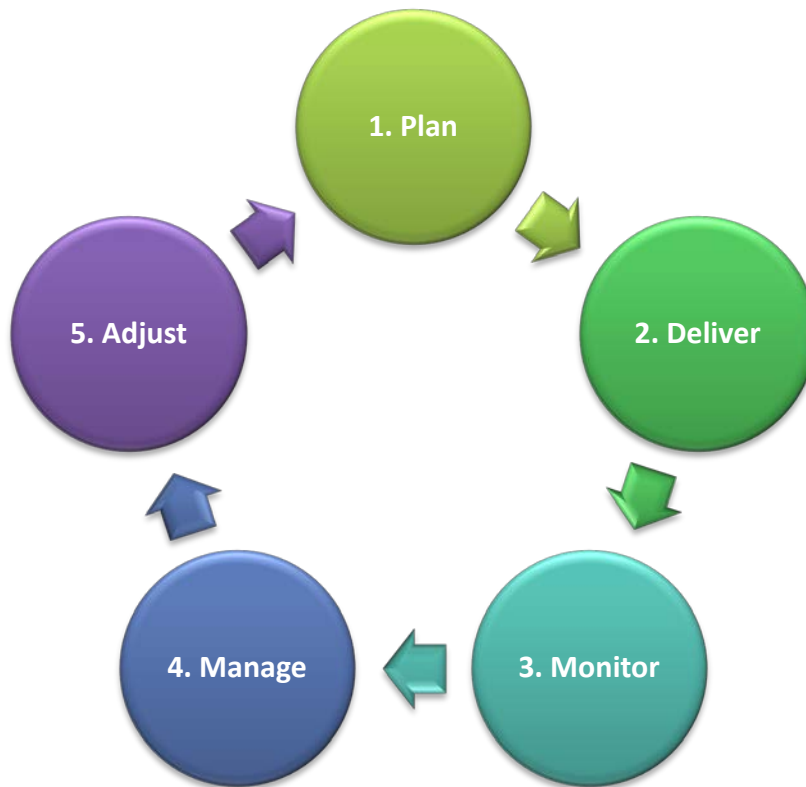
The strategy covers the period to the year 2026. However, it is not intended to be a strict blueprint which does not change during that time. Rather, the Strategy and its Action Plans set out a 'direction of travel' and a framework to help enable change (i.e. a rationale for prioritisation and decision-making), but it does not provide justification and feasibility for individual projects. This will need to be assessed on a site-by-site basis, during the 'delivery phase'.

While the strategy is based on robust evidence gathered from a number of sources, projections of future demand are exactly that and will never be 100% accurate. With this in mind, the assessments for most facilities and pitches conclude by suggesting a range of additional provision where needed rather than recommending a single figure.

The strategy and, in particular, its Action Plans for each Borough, should be treated as a 'live' and on-going process of delivering against the plans set out in this strategy and demonstrable demand. This requires an effective approach to monitoring demand and change in participation, key to this being an on-going dialogue with others involved in the provision, running and management of facilities and pitches (such as the education sector, leisure centres, clubs and leagues), national sports governing bodies and the community and commercial

sectors. While not as straight forward a process in reality, the approach is captured in simple terms in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 3: Strategy and delivery process**



The strategy therefore sets out an evidence based framework within which delivery can adapt to demand 'on the ground' during that time. However, there are a number of issues which have emerged from the assessment of facilities and pitches which will need to be tackled in the short-term of the strategy period to address shortfalls in provision and necessary improvements which will increase the time available and accessibility to sports for participants and the capacity of facilities and pitches.

The Action Plans appended to the strategy are set out in alignment with the above approach, with short (2014-2017), medium (2018 – 2021) and long-term (2022 – 2026) phases for projects identified to address demand.

Importantly, this strategy and its supporting evidence should play a key role in 'gluing' together the aims, objectives and aspirations of a number of other plans and strategies which relate to sports provision and those of other organisations involved in sport in Bournemouth and Poole. As referenced in the Strategic Literature Review Report which accompanies this strategy, the Sports Strategy has a particularly important role in helping to deliver objectives in other plans and programmes, which, amongst others include: the Borough Councils' respective adopted and emerging statutory development plans and supplementary planning documents (including seafront regeneration plans); Infrastructure Delivery Plans; the Bournemouth and Poole Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2016; the emerging Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Plan; Sport England's Youth and Community Strategy (2012 – 17); and, various national sports governing body Whole Sport Plans.

The strategy also provides the evidence required to inform the developing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in Bournemouth and inform decision making on the allocation of funds arising through application of the adopted CIL in Poole, which is the Government's preferred mechanism to ensure that the value of development and mitigation of the impact of development on infrastructure is captured alongside a reduced planning obligations ('section106') process.



## Delivering the Strategy and Action Plans: Roles and Responsibilities

As acknowledged above, the strategy has been produced at a time when there are significant delivery challenges and against a backdrop of changing roles and responsibilities. This strategy is not solely a local authority strategy and should be seen more as a strategy for Bournemouth and Poole, as places. The delivery, running and maintenance of high quality facilities and pitches will not only be the responsibility of the public sector and the local authority role is increasingly becoming one of enabling and supporting community aspirations for provision as an elected representative body, rather than supporting through direct funding. There are a number of key organisations which are likely to need to be involved in a partnership approach, the roles of which will depend on particular sports and facilities or pitches. Many of these are captured in the figure below.

**Figure 4: Partners likely to be involved in facility and pitch provision**



## ***The Role of Schools, Colleges and Academies in Future Provision***

The need to increase the participation of young people in sport and to create a bridge between school sports activity and club based sport is a key issue with which this strategy and the plans and programmes of Sport England and national sport governing bodies seek to address. Schools, colleges and Academies will also play an increasingly important role to overall provision in Bournemouth and Poole during the strategy period. We understand that Academies and colleges are likely to be open to explore opportunities to open facilities outside of school hours to community use, where it is safe, accessible and convenient to do so. Equally, there is an appetite from many sports, to have more access to facilities and pitches on education sites and also to offer coaching for pupils, both for sports development and also as a swap for access to facilities.

With regards to facilities' provision and use, it will be important for the education sector to engage fully with the local authorities to ensure that any proposals they have for increasing the quantity of provision or reducing existing community access is planned in alignment with or to help accommodate demand arising from the Sports Strategy. Discussion with schools has highlighted that access to facilities can be an issue of concern to some schools, particularly to the primary tier where there is not always sufficient access to facilities on their school site. With this in mind, further work should be undertaken to establish access to nearby facilities available at Academies and colleges within a short walking distance, where these relationships do not already exist.

In Poole, in particular, shared leisure centre sites take up the majority of daytime use for sports facilities such as halls. Therefore, the strategy for sports halls for example, seeks to unlock daytime community use at leisure centres.

Given all of these important factors, it is recommended that the local authorities and Active Dorset continue existing and pursue improved networking and communication with the education sector to help enable the strategy to be delivered and to adapt as necessary if education sector proposals come forward which help to deliver or accommodate future demand for community use.

## Vision, Objectives and “Main Headlines”

This strategy sets out a vision which centres on the provision of high quality facilities and pitches to meet the demand for participation in club based and informal / casual sports, provided in partnership and which:

- ▶ help to improve the health and wellbeing of the resident population;
- ▶ are accessible and welcoming to the community;
- ▶ increase accessibility, in particular, to young people, casual participants and people with a disability;
- ▶ contribute to the overall economic and visitor ‘offer’ of the towns; and,
- ▶ are viable and financially sustainable into the future.

There are a number of objectives which have emerged from the strategy process. These are:

- ▶ To maintain and enhance quality of existing facilities to help increase participation and ensuring that sports are attractive to existing and new participants and their families;
- ▶ Improve capacity of provision within the existing supply of facilities and pitches;
- ▶ Having made the most of existing stock by increasing use within acceptable levels, seek to fill gaps in provision where demand is demonstrated;
- ▶ Rationalise provision only if and when necessary and without compromising the capacity or quality of the remaining provision and available capacity / supply overall;
- ▶ Work in partnership (public, private and third sectors) to:
  - ▷ improve communication of available provision through traditional PR routes and use of social media;
  - ▷ deliver and manage new additional provision; and,

- ▷ ensure that existing supply which is meeting a need and demand is financially viable and remains sustainable to operate and maintain in the future.
- ▶ Where possible, ensure that any new future provision for sport serves more than one sport and / or leisure activity (i.e. is multi-use) to achieve economies of scale and establish 'hubs' for those participating in sport.

Spatially, key sites for improvements to sports facilities and pitches in Bournemouth and Poole include:

- ▶ Slades Farm, where existing plans to make improvements to facilities and pitches, including a new artificial grass pitch, should be delivered;
- ▶ King's Park, where there remain opportunities to deliver improvements within the context of existing provision, the potential new ice rink and links to the athletics track;
- ▶ Meyrick Park, where improvements to the quality of rugby pitches and additional training and mini pitches / areas will help increase capacity of pitches to accommodate the rugby club's needs;
- ▶ The Dolphin Swimming Pool, where the condition of the building will need to be addressed soon;
- ▶ The regeneration sites in Poole, where there will be significant levels of housing growth in the period to 2026;
- ▶ Improvements to facilities in Poole Harbour should be considered on publication of the findings of the VALMER project which has undertaken extensive research to understand issues of harbour users; and,
- ▶ The seafront areas, where the proposed changes and introduction of water and beach sport hubs to improve facilities and the quality of the visitor experience should be implemented.

The strategy may also lead to other solutions being explored for other key sites in the medium to longer term.

A number of artificial grass pitches (AGPs) are required in Bournemouth and Poole to satisfy unmet demand now and in the future. AGPs provide an effective solution for accommodating football matches, previously confined to playing on grass, but now supported by the FA and local leagues. They also now offer, with the correct surface, training opportunities for rugby. While initial capital investment is greater than that for a new football pitch and a sinking fund needs to be established to ensure replacement after around 10 years, maintenance costs are much lower per match with less general maintenance required and an AGP being able to accommodate 5 times the number of matches that an average grass pitch can (and also provide capacity for training).

There is a clear need for additional swimming pool provision in Bournemouth and Poole, with identified needs now increasing to 3 additional 25m lanes required in Poole by 2026 and up to 6 additional lanes in Bournemouth.

The assessments have begun the process of quantifying the demand generated by international students. Bournemouth Borough Council, in particular, should work with the international colleges and other partners to seek to identify locations for facilities to accommodate this need (which is additional to that generated by residents of the Borough) and better understand the long term impact of potential continued growth in student numbers.

The detail of these and of other projects and requirements are set out in the sections which follow.

# Strategy Recommendations

The following sections set out the Strategy's main recommendations for cross-cutting issues, for each facility and pitch type and for demand created by international students.

## Cross-cutting issues across sports, facilities and pitches

In addition to the sport, facility and pitch specific recommendations, the strategy process has also identified some recommendations which apply across a number of or all sports. These are set out below.

1. Improve accessibility for casual users, clubs, people with a disability and international students by:
  - ▶ Improved communication and promotion of facilities and pitches;
  - ▶ Increased use of social media, apps and platforms such as SPOGO in order to provide up-to-date information on the availability and location of facilities, court time, etc.
  - ▶ Exploring the extension of the successful key fob system used for some park tennis courts at more tennis courts and for application to other outdoor facilities;
  - ▶ Discussing opportunities for schools, colleges and Academies to open-up their facilities or increase existing use of those facilities for community access outside of school hours; and,
  - ▶ Making physical improvements to facilities and pitches where necessary as identified through the assessments and audits. The assessments and audits which form the evidence which underpin the strategy have identified the *existing* facilities and pitches where there is a need to improve accessibility. All *new* facilities should be designed so that there is good accessibility and should follow design and access requirements for access outlined by the appropriate Building

Regulations and the Disability Discrimination Act<sup>2</sup>. This will be a requirement on all new developments enforced through the planning system and building control processes overseen by the Councils as local planning authority and responsible authority for enforcing building regulations.

2. Improve and maintain a dialogue with the schools, colleges and Academies to ensure that their plans for changes to provision are embedded within the context of this strategy.
  
3. Local authorities and Active Dorset should continue to liaise closely with key stakeholders to deliver the strategy effectively in partnership, including:
  - ▶ Schools, colleges and Academies;
  - ▶ Bournemouth University
  - ▶ International colleges;
  - ▶ Sport England,
  - ▶ National sports governing bodies;
  - ▶ County sports associations;
  - ▶ Poole Sports Council;
  - ▶ Clubs; and,
  - ▶ Commercial providers; and leisure centre managers.
  
4. Local authorities should work together on strategy issues identified where they or their delivery have a cross-boundary and / or conurbation-wide impact on provision.
  
5. Improve monitoring and understanding where necessary on demand for facilities and pitches 'on the ground' and update the strategy and action plan as necessary in light of such information. Treat this as an on-going

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<sup>2</sup> the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requires service providers to make 'reasonable adjustments' to their premises to tackle any physical features that prevent disabled people from using their services. See the Planning Portal here <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partm/approved#Download> and the NHBC guidance note here [http://www.nhbc.co.uk/Builders/ProductsandServices/BuildingControl/documents/filedownload\\_40529\\_en.pdf](http://www.nhbc.co.uk/Builders/ProductsandServices/BuildingControl/documents/filedownload_40529_en.pdf) for further information on the DDA and Building Regulations (Part M).

process but undertake full reviews at 4 – 5 year intervals in the strategy period to 2026, if required.

6. Explore options with stakeholders to secure the long-term viability of facilities and pitches where demand is demonstrated and / or the value of the facility or pitch as a community asset is recognised. Amongst other options, this could include:
  - ▶ Clubs and teams taking a greater role and responsibility for the facility and / or pitch they use;
  - ▶ Seeking sponsorship to maintain a facility or pitch;
  - ▶ Considering community asset, social enterprise or trust models;
  - ▶ Increasing patronage or footfall at or associated with a facility or pitch;
  - ▶ Establishing attractive membership or participation schemes, open days and demonstration or try-out days; and / or,
  - ▶ Considering other uses for the space, pitch or facility which will generate an income where they do not compromise the facility or pitch's quality.
7. When planning for new facilities, seek to achieve economies of scale and use by providing hub facilities which provide multi-functional and / or multi-sport space.
8. Explore, with relevant stakeholders, opportunities and options for some sports to adapt and change the way they have traditionally operated to help ensure the long-term future of the sport in Bournemouth and Poole and / or the facilities or pitches used. This may include a need to consider when they play, when matches / games take place, merging with other clubs, the type of surface used, and so on.
9. The identification of locations and sites for additional new facilities and pitches as well as their scale should meet the requirements of local and national planning policy (including requirements for accessibility and parking) and should meet requirements of the sport(s) the facility or pitch



is serving, for example, changing rooms, dimensions for competitive play, amount of equipment storage, social / refreshment facilities, rooms for training and officials, and so on.

10. New facilities should:

- ▶ respond to a demonstrable local or strategic need;
- ▶ be viable for delivery;
- ▶ be financially sustainable in the future;
- ▶ have a sinking fund established if necessary to ensure future refurbishment;
- ▶ be open to community access during evenings and weekends (with the appropriate proportion of time reflecting local or projected strategic needs and demand); and,
- ▶ respond positively to the requirements of this strategy.

## **Built Facilities**

## Sports Halls

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 16 sports halls on 12 sites which have a minimum of 4 badminton courts on each site with dimensions for competitive play and open to the community at peak periods.*

*Unmet demand (2012): 3.7 badminton courts*

*Unmet demand (2026): 3.8 badminton courts*

*Key issues to address: seek to accommodate unmet demand within existing hallspace by securing increased levels of community access (for e.g. to school / Academy halls); monitor the impact on unmet demand of proposed halls 'in the pipeline' (for e.g. at LeAF Academy and extension to Winton Arts and Media College hall as part of the Slades Farm proposals); and, free-up existing hallspace by working with gymnastics clubs to secure a dedicated facility.*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 13 sports halls on 10 sites which have a minimum of 4 badminton courts on each site with dimensions for competitive play and open to the community at peak periods.*

*Unmet demand (2012): 2.6 badminton courts*

*Unmet demand (2026): 2.8 badminton courts*

*Key issues to address: seek to accommodate unmet demand within existing hallspace by securing increased levels of community access (for e.g. to school / Academy halls); address issue of inadequate daytime use with lack of community accessibility to shared school use leisure centres; monitor the impact on unmet demand of proposed hall extension at The Junction if delivered, of the hall recently opened up for community use at Poole High School and of courts at the re-opened Dolphin Sports Centre if badminton courts are also re-opened; and, explore feasibility of extending the facility at OLGA to cater for unmet demand for gymnastics.*

## Assessment Conclusions

While sports halls will continue to get busier, opening a greater number of existing sports halls up for increased community use and increasing community use at those which already open their doors to the public where there is the opportunity to do so will help to ameliorate the impact of decreasing levels of comfort within the existing stock of sports halls. This, together with development of planned new facilities and extensions to existing halls may fill the levels of unmet demand in Bournemouth and Poole.

If levels of increased availability cannot be secured in existing sports halls to sufficiently impact on comfort levels at halls which are approaching or are over the 80% comfort capacity, there may be a case for additional hall space in Bournemouth and Poole in the medium to long-term if additional provision in the pipeline does not fill unmet demand sufficiently. This is particularly the case in areas of expected population growth where demand is likely to grow and outside or on the edge of local catchments of existing hall facilities.

A key issue that needs to be dealt with is the changing nature of provision and the role of leisure centres and the opportunities this can give them and schools. Leisure centres are becoming more 'market facing' and have to respond to market forces and the demand of users, with popular 'dry' facilities being the gym and exercise / fitness classes. This raises an issue for the use of hallspace, where less money is generated from the space than for these other popular activities. With demand for facilities growing, this is an issue particularly in Poole where all sports hall provision apart from The Junction are on shared use school / leisure centre sites. At the same time, as more schools and colleges obtain Academy status, they too are having to look at the world through a 'market facing lens' and many see the opportunity to use hallspace to generate an income. This is coupled with a willingness in some Academies, schools and colleges to develop a sports development and learning specialism focusing one or more sports. The strategy period presents a good opportunity to better align this direction of travel for both leisure centres and the education sector, through a programme of 'strategic repositioning' of sports hall provision. Tying in with

this position are the needs of gymnastics, where a need for additional capacity has been identified from communication with clubs.

### ***Bournemouth and Poole***

For Bournemouth and Poole, the key issues for the strategy are:

- ▶ Local authorities should work together on the strategy issues identified where they have a cross-boundary and conurbation-wide impact on provision.
- ▶ Where lack of secured daytime use is an issue for schools, colleges and Academies, they, together with local authorities and Active Dorset (if necessary), should work with other education establishments with sports hall provision and leisure centres within a 0.5 walking distance to determine whether the capacity required and identified needs (for example if sport specific) can be accommodated, prior to considering options for new additional hallspace on a school site.
- ▶ Local authorities should work with Dorset Badminton and other key partners to help identify an improved system to provide updated information on the availability of badminton courts for casual users. This could include working with Sport England and Badminton England to ensure that the spogo site ([www.spogo.co.uk](http://www.spogo.co.uk)) is best utilised as an existing platform providing information on access to facilities, and extend to seeking to improve the management of badminton courts overall as a facility type.
- ▶ Local authorities and Dorset Badminton should work with schools, colleges and Academies to seek to increase participation of young people in the sport.
- ▶ The important contribution that small halls can play to the overall supply should be acknowledged and taken into account when planning for future provision and any additional capacity.

### ***Bournemouth***

For Bournemouth, the key issues for the strategy are:

- ▶ Monitor the impact of known additional hallspace being planned for delivery during the strategy period on unmet demand at: LeAF Academy (9 court equivalent - 2013); and, extension to / new sports hall at Slades Farm (Winton Arts and Media College) (2020).
- ▶ Work with schools, colleges and Academies to open up additional capacity where possible, particularly in relation to the specific needs of some sports (for example, badminton), unmet demand in central parts of the Borough and within catchments of the following facilities where use is at or beyond 'comfortable' levels at peak periods (and where there is no direct proposal to add capacity identified above): Bournemouth Collegiate School; Linwood School; Littledown Leisure Centre; Sir David English Leisure Centre; and, The Bourne Academy.
- ▶ Respond to demand for gymnastics by either: working with clubs and schools, colleges and Academies to extend the clubs' capacity by using other venues; and / or, developing a specialist gymnastics centre at an existing building (or buildings) flexible enough to convert for use (e.g. warehouse or other industrial unit if a unit with adequate parking can be found) for all clubs to use as a base; or, developing a new specialist gymnastics facility in conjunction with a school, college or Academy if there is interest, which Bournemouth clubs could use as a base. The latter two options would have the benefit of freeing up existing sports hall capacity for multi-sports community use at Harewood College (which already has a badminton centre) and at Littledown Leisure Centre (which is currently operating at 100% capacity). Freeing up capacity at Littledown would have the additional benefit for badminton providing more suitable capacity for the sport as a preferred location.
- ▶ Discuss options for provision of 4 courts capacity with International Colleges so that the additional demand created by international students in Bournemouth can be accommodated. This could be formed from existing supply, for example, at schools, although any knock-on impact of removing capacity already secured for community (resident) use would need to be considered.

## ***Poole***

For Poole, the key issues for the strategy are:

- ▶ Monitor the impact of known additional hallspace being planned for delivery during the strategy period on unmet demand at the proposed extension to The Junction Leisure Centre hall (2014/15).
- ▶ Work with schools, colleges and Academies to open up additional capacity where possible, within catchments of the following facilities where use is at or beyond 'comfortable' levels (and where there is no direct proposal to add capacity identified above): Ashdown Leisure Centre; Rossmore Leisure Centre; and, St Edward's School; and with Carter School to explore use for casual users (not solely block bookings) given the focus of allocated development in and around the Hamworthy area.
- ▶ Add capacity for the daytime sports hall use at Rossmore Leisure Centre by delivering a new sports hall at St Aldhelms Academy which can: be dedicated to Academy use during school times; supplement additional peak time capacity if necessary for clubs (thus allowing a more commercially driven focus in the Rossmore sports hall at peak times) should demand require it; and, allowing the Rossmore sports hall to be used solely for dedicated community use.
- ▶ Continue to monitor the situation at the Dolphin Sports Centre following the re-opening of the facility, should the possibility of re-opening some badminton courts be an option, even though it would be on a commercial basis.
- ▶ Respond to demand for gymnastics by either: extending OLGA further to satellite facilities at schools; or, expand existing facility (at Rossmore) if there is capacity on site, if physical impact on other existing facilities can be mitigated against and the funding can be secured to do so. Expansion would need to be considered alongside plans for a new sports hall for the Academy if both proceed. One could help to make the other viable.

## Swimming Pools

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 7 pools on 5 sites, 2 of which are teaching pools providing equivalent of 18 x 25 m and 4 x 20m lanes*

*Unmet demand (2012): 190 m<sup>2</sup> water area (approx. 4 x 25m lanes)*

*Unmet demand (2026): 220 – 253 m<sup>2</sup> water area (approx. 5 - 6 x 25m lanes)*

*Key issues to address: provision of a new pool in a central part of Bournemouth (where demand is at its greatest) to at least meet anticipated levels of unmet demand in 2026; consider provision of a leisure pool alongside any new pool to serve as a wet weather / leisure amenity; and, co-ordinate the timing of provision of additional pool space with the Borough of Poole.*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 9 pools on 6 sites, 2 of which are teaching pools and 1 of which is a diving pool providing equivalent of 25 x 25 m and 4 x 20m lanes*

*Unmet demand (2012): 100 m<sup>2</sup> water area (approx. 2 x 25m lanes)*

*Unmet demand (2026): 115 – 133 m<sup>2</sup> water area (approx. 3 x 25m lanes)*

*Key issues to address: decide on a solution to the poor condition of the Dolphin pool, providing replacement capacity in addition to additional capacity to accommodate anticipated levels of unmet demand in 2026; and, co-ordinate the timing of provision of any replacement and additional pool space with Bournemouth Borough Council.*

## Assessment Conclusions

A range of between 220 sqm and 252.97 sqm of pool space will be needed by 2026 in Bournemouth (equating to between 5 and 6 x 25m lanes) and between



115 sqm and 132.9 sqm in Poole (equating to around 3 x 25m lanes). In practice, this means that additional provision of a 6 – 8 lane pool in Bournemouth (6 lanes would meet the unmet demand and 8 would provide some surplus capacity for the period beyond 2026) and a 4 lane pool in Poole by 2026.

In addition, international colleges may wish to discuss the demand arising from international students, which would need to be provided as additional capacity to the amount of poolspace generated by residents. International students' demand for poolspace is the equivalent of 2 x 25m lanes, most of which will arise in Bournemouth.

There are already considerable existing pressures on swimming pools in both Bournemouth and Poole with all pools operating above 'comfortable' capacity. While unmet demand is lower in Poole than Bournemouth, there remains a need for additional provision in Poole into the future given population growth, particularly with a focus on 40% of housing allocations being delivered on the regeneration sites and in and around the town centre. Bournemouth's need is greater than that of Poole's, reflected in the balance of trade or import of users into Poole from Bournemouth.

Addressing the higher levels of unmet demand in Bournemouth will serve to relieve some of the demand pressure on pools in Poole if a new facility is located in the right location to serve central and western areas of the Borough. Moving forward, a phased approach during the strategy period to additional provision, seeking to deliver solutions as a priority in Bournemouth would allow the impact of this additional provision on unmet demand in Poole to be measured prior to delivering additional provision in Poole.

If new additional pools are developed, consideration should be given to delivering leisure pool provision alongside if commercially viable to do so.

While this assessment does not include consideration of smaller pools in the overall supply, they play an important role in provision (particularly for younger swimmers and teaching) which should continue to be supported.

### ***Bournemouth***

For Bournemouth, the key issue for the strategy to respond to is:

- ▶ Additional new provision, preferably in a central part of the town, to alleviate existing pressure on pools and provide capacity for community and club use for both the existing and future population of the Borough.

### ***Poole***

For Poole, the key issues that the strategy needs to respond to are:

- ▶ Continuing to support the important role of The Junction pool in provision in the Borough;
- ▶ Additional new provision to meet the identified existing and future unmet demand in the Borough;
- ▶ Structural issues with the building at the Dolphin Pool. Closure of the pool would leave Poole with a very significant shortfall in provision and have a detrimental impact on capacity for both Boroughs. A redeveloped pool with additional capacity could be a solution to existing structural concerns and the need for additional waterspace. The following options present themselves for consideration:
  - i) maintaining the pool in the short to medium-term with eventual closure during the strategy period with replacement either on the existing site or on a new site (linked to or on a regeneration site either side of the twin sails bridge). Funds from redevelopment of the existing site could be used to deliver a new facility. The re-positioning of the pool to a new site could also help to achieve additional 'dry' facilities such as a fitness studio

/ exercise hall and gym identified by Everyone Active management as a demand in central Poole and an AGP (see pitches assessment).

- ii) retaining the existing Dolphin pool if funding for improvements can be found. However, retaining the existing capacity on the site would still leave a need for additional provision elsewhere in the Borough during the strategy period to 2026 should the additional provision necessary in Bournemouth be delivered in a central location but not alleviate unmet demand in Poole to the degree required to meet shortfalls in existing and future demand.

### ***Bournemouth and Poole***

For Bournemouth and Poole, the key issues are:

- ▶ To ensure that the quantity, quality and accessibility standards are maintained at existing and additional new facilities;
- ▶ To ensure that provision of additional pool space is well-co-ordinated across Bournemouth and Poole, is delivered in a managed, phased way to monitor the impact of new provision in Bournemouth on Poole's levels of unmet demand and is financially viable in the long-term; and,
- ▶ To ensure that supply does not outstrip demand and that new planned provision takes full account of private operator and Academy proposals for new pool space where those proposals have been demonstrated as being viable (and therefore deliverable) and their impact on community and club provision has been quantified.

## Indoor and Outdoor Bowls

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 11 indoor rinks, and 30 outdoor rinks on 4 sites and 5 greens*

*Unmet demand: none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): (potentially) 1 indoor rink*

*Key issues to address: no key issues of concern with indoor bowls; outdoor bowls has significant costs associated with maintenance of greens and there is an imbalance of provision with regard to player / rinks ratios between sites; the key challenge is to explore ways to ensure the future viability of outdoor rinks and clubs or to rationalise if solutions cannot be found*

### **Assessment Conclusions**

From assessment of existing provision and future likely demand, there are no additional requirements proposed for indoor or outdoor bowls in Poole.

Demand for outdoor bowls seems likely to continue at current levels or decrease, while demand for indoor bowls seems likely to remain steady or grow slightly, but without a need for additional rinks. However, the position of outdoor bowls will need to be monitored to ensure that provision fits demand suitably and clubs remain viable against a back-drop of likely continuing reductions to grant from the local authority to support them. Rationalisation is an option which needs to be considered.

An additional indoor rink may need to be provided in the future (probably through extending provision at the existing indoor bowls centre) but this should only happen if there is a business case to do so. There will certainly not be enough demand to support a new standalone indoor facility, where 4 or more rinks are likely to be needed to ensure viability.

Across indoor and outdoor bowls (although particularly for outdoor bowls) there is a need to better understand why people who would like to access a club or facility cannot do so to help identify measures which could be introduced to enable these people to access bowls and therefore increase membership.

### ***Poole***

The key issues that the strategy needs to respond to are for outdoor bowls and are as follows:

- ▶ Clubs which have 30-70 members per 6 rink bowling green should be closely monitored and discussion should take place between the Borough of Poole and the club to ensure that the viability of the club into the future can be secured or that the members can continue to access a green to play, should the club become unviable to run. Clubs which fall into this category may need to consider, with the local authority, one or more of the following options in order to remain viable into the future:
  - ▷ Positive promotion of a club to generate additional members and help fill spare capacity (for example, diversifying the game to open up use of facilities and the green by families – e.g. through ‘target’ bowls);
  - ▷ Using community asset transfer or community trust models to ensure the viability of a green and therefore club if willing members of the club can commit time to making it happen;
  - ▷ Securing sponsorship or other support from local business;
  - ▷ ‘buddying up’ with bowls clubs elsewhere in the country which have faced similar problems and have overcome them;
  - ▷ Merging or partnering with another club;
  - ▷ Using the pavilion for other activities. If space allows, the pavilion could be sub-let or hired out for other events and activities (if clauses within a lease allow or the lease can be amended to allow alternative uses);
  - ▷ Using the green as a space for alternative activities. Greens not used fully during the season have been hired out as a space for wedding marquees for example. Concerns about the impact of a marquee on a green can now be overcome.

- ▶ A strategic solution may need to be explored to tackle issues around viability of the clubs which fall into the above category. This would need to involve consideration of options by the outdoor bowls clubs as a whole across Poole, with the local authority, and could include one or more options such as:
  - ▷ All or a proportion of grants to individual bowls clubs being pooled to help achieve economies of scale around maintenance costs and other common issues;
  - ▷ Clubs with a more buoyant membership supporting a club with a lower number of members (for example, in kind, funding / resource, fundraising, etc.);
  - ▷ Sharing equipment and maintenance costs between clubs / greens;
  - ▷ If upfront capital investment can be found, develop an artificial bowling green on one of the existing greens to enable guaranteed playing during the season (for example to overcome potential waterlogged greens) and to achieve long-term maintenance savings. If this option is developed, a sinking fund would need to be established to ensure that replacement of the surface at the end of its life is secured. An all-weather green may also help to prevent loss of members during and after wet seasons to other activities or indoor facilities (if this is deemed as unacceptable by the bowling community).
- ▶ For clubs with membership of 150 or more per green, consideration may need to be given to utilising under-used greens to avoid usage levels becoming unmanageable or 'uncomfortable' levels. Provision of additional new greens are unlikely to be viable when at least one green is currently underused and there is minimal projected growth in the sport.

## Netball

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 7 outdoor sites with community access with 30 courts, 8 of which host the Bournemouth League at Sir David English Sports Centre*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): some potential depending on whether the location of the Poole League changes (for e.g. moving to a central location in Poole); and depending on growth in participation.*

*Key issues to address: maintain and improve quality of facilities at Sir David English Centre and consider identifying 'overflow' site should the number of teams increase beyond the capacity of the Sir David English Centre.*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 8 outdoor sites with 11 courts, with the Poole League playing outside of the Borough at the Queen Elizabeth Sports Centre in Wimborne*

*Unmet demand (2012): none identified although the Poole League plays outside the Borough and could therefore be considered as displaced demand due to the lack of a suitable 4 court facility within the Borough*

*Unmet demand (2026): dependent upon whether Poole League seeks to relocate back into the Borough during the strategy period*

*Key issues to address: establish whether there is real desire for the Poole League to relocate to a facility within the Borough and if so what changes will need to be made (for e.g. to Rossmore or Ashdown Leisure Centres) in terms of additional court provision and ancillary facilities to enable it to happen.*

## **Assessment Conclusions**

There is no evidence to suggest, in Bournemouth or Poole, that there is a lack of existing provision for outdoor netball courts for practice and training. In addition, two schools in Poole (Broadstone Middle and Hamworthy Park Junior) have expressed a desire to open-up their existing courts for community use outside of school hours, further enhancing supply for non-competitive training, play and practice by up to 7 courts. Refurbished and additional provision at Slades Farm / Winton Media and Arts College in Bournemouth is a high priority in the Slades Farm masterplan and, if realised, capacity of outdoor courts there would increase by 8 in total and these could be utilised for community use outside of school times if demand is demonstrated.

Provision for training and practice is enhanced by indoor multi-use sports halls and plans for accommodating future demand for those facilities is addressed in the assessment for sports halls. However, the cost of hiring indoor facilities is likely to continue to act as a blockage to most teams wanting to train, and certainly will be for leagues.

For competitive play, existing levels of provision should be maintained and if possible, consideration should be given to finding a host venue for the Poole League closer to Poole's population if the league wishes to relocate from its existing host venue, to rebalance demand between the Bournemouth and Poole leagues and help to increase opportunities for participation in leagues. With demand currently accommodated at Queen Elizabeth Leisure Centre, this should only be pursued if considered a priority by England Netball and the Poole Netball Association, if demand outstrips supply available and if viable in capital build and revenue (running costs) terms.



## ***Bournemouth and Poole***

The key focus for the strategy across Bournemouth and Poole for outdoor netball courts is as follows:

- ▶ Support sufficient outdoor netball court provision to accommodate competitive league matches and take the opportunity to rebalance demand for play in the Bournemouth and Poole leagues if it presents itself;
- ▶ Support existing clubs by working with them and providers of training courts / facilities to ensure that provision continues to meet their needs. Where a facility cannot accommodate growing demand from a club, work with the club to find an alternative suitable and / or additional existing venue;
- ▶ Support informal teams by helping to maintain and ensure access to a network of suitable outdoor courts on leisure centre and school / college / Academy sites; and,
- ▶ A key fob system could be piloted at an existing or new netball court in Bournemouth or Poole (perhaps on a shared school site) to test if it is a viable option for netball as it has been for tennis. Further work such as an in-depth survey of local teams (through the Bournemouth or Poole League) could understand viability of a scheme prior to launch.

## ***Bournemouth***

The key issue that the strategy needs to respond to for outdoor netball courts is as follows:

- ▶ Maintain existing provision for the Bournemouth Netball League to use Sir David English Leisure Centre as its base for competitive play and help to address concerns about quality of and access to supporting / ancillary facilities.
- ▶ Monitor supply and demand balance at the Sir David English Centre and consider identifying an overflow site for additional demand to be accommodated (in senior and / or junior leagues) if necessary, such as Slades Farm, although recognising the impact on splitting league games between two sites (for example, on needing more personnel, umpires and organisation time).

## **Poole**

The key issues that the strategy needs to respond to for outdoor netball courts are as follows:

- ▶ It is understood that the Poole Netball League has an aspiration to, at some point, return to play at a venue more centrally located in Poole. If considered as a priority by England Netball and the Poole Netball League during the strategy period, consideration should be given to find a suitable location (for example at Rossmore or Ashdown Leisure Centres) for competitive play to accommodate the Poole league to satisfy demand generated in Poole and to introduce a better balance of playing teams between the Bournemouth and Poole leagues (freeing up / creating capacity to accommodate potential unmet demand, latent demand and future growth). In exploring options, discussion would need to be held with the operators of the Queen Elizabeth Sports Centre in Wimborne to determine whether partial or total freed capacity of netball courts will have a beneficial or adverse impact on provision of facilities on-site. In the likely event that an indoor facility is likely to be too costly to host the league, options which could be explored include:
  - ▷ Using existing or additional space at one of the leisure centres in Poole depending on requirements of the league (for example at Rossmore or Ashdown Leisure Centres); or,
  - ▷ Discuss options with schools, colleges and Academies in Poole, the Poole Netball Association, Poole Sports Council and England Netball about developing a netball centre on an education site modifying existing provision or introducing a new facility if viable to meet England Netball standards of courts; or,
  - ▷ Potential for the refurbished and additional courts at Slades Farm / Winton Arts and Media College (in Bournemouth Borough) to host the league. The new courts, if developed to England Netball competitive standard, could be utilised to meet some or all of the demand for league matches in Poole to add capacity to or replace use of the facility outside of Poole in Wimborne. This would also help to secure a good revenue stream for the school.

## Indoor and Outdoor Tennis

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 4 indoor courts (+ 5 temporary in the winter) and 110 outdoor courts, 4 of which are mini courts and 35 of which are floodlit.*

*Unmet demand (2012): no demonstrable unmet demand.*

*Unmet demand (2026): no demonstrable unmet demand although improved monitoring of use of courts will help to confirm during the strategy period.*

*Key issues to address: maintain quality of outdoor courts and make improvements where necessary; exploring extension of the successful key fob system to other courts should the system continue to prove to sustain increases in demand; work with the LTA to gain a better understanding of realistic latent demand and with both the LTA and clubs on the identification of additional temporary indoor courts during the winter should demand be demonstrated locally.*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 7 indoor courts and 70 outdoor courts, 5 of which are mini courts and 12 of which are floodlit.*

*Unmet demand (2012): no demonstrable unmet demand.*

*Unmet demand (2026): no demonstrable unmet demand although improved monitoring of use of courts will help to confirm during the strategy period.*

*Key issues to address: maintain quality of outdoor courts and make improvements where necessary; exploring extension of the successful key fob system to other courts (for example within a 20 minute walking catchment of new major development at regeneration sites) should the system continue to prove to sustain increases in demand; work with the LTA to gain a better understanding of realistic latent demand.*

## **Assessment Conclusions**

The level of provision of tennis courts is very good across Bournemouth and Poole and the conurbation is fortunate to have a good range and number of court types. Provision for club based tennis is good with no significant issues or concerns raised. Participation outside of club set-ups is improving with the recent initial success of the key fob system in Poole Park and in Bournemouth to Shelley Park, Swanmore Gardens and Winton Recreation Ground. The system allows dedicated access to bookable courts for a small fee and ensures that courts are well-maintained and secure.

Gaps in provision for tennis are not around the number of facilities or courts, rather, access to community or pay and play courts, with figures suggesting a high latent demand (although these figures may have changed following the recent introduction of the key fob system). The focus of the strategy for tennis is therefore round maintaining existing levels of supply and quality while introducing further measures to help increase participation on an informal basis at community accessible courts.

This could mean extending the key fob system to some courts, working more closely with schools to ensure that availability of courts is widely known and providing additional temporary indoor court(s) to encourage play in the winter months and during poor weather, if viable. At the same time, some parts of Poole will need to respond to major development areas, which may, in itself, demand additional community access to court time in the area.

Key to ensuring that provision meets demand in its various forms, will be monitoring the fit of supply and demand and having an up-to-date understanding of need.

## ***Bournemouth and Poole***

The key focus for the strategy across Bournemouth and Poole for tennis courts is as follows:

- ▶ There is a lack of reliable quantifiable data, particularly about how many people play tennis informally and what that means in relation to the number of courts available during the summer peak and during the winter in terms of indoor court provision. Therefore, local authorities, the LTA, Sport England and clubs should work together to improve quantifiable data about supply and demand of publicly accessible / community courts by:
  - ▷ Monitoring the amount of court time and availability of courts (indoor and outdoor) for community use (in parks, schools sites, leisure centres and clubs) to help better understand the demands and therefore how best to manage the existing supply of courts and whether additional courts will be needed in the future; and,
  - ▷ Monitoring the impact of the key fob system in terms of catchment of use, number of members, frequency of use, periodically reviewing fee structures to ensure accessibility to as many socio-economic groups of the population as viability allows, understanding a maximum threshold of members that courts can support to evidence appropriate future roll-out of the system and understanding the balance of use and potential impact on other community accessible facilities such as courts provided at leisure centres.
- ▶ Being informed by and informing this on-going monitoring process, increasing community access to informal tennis opportunities from the existing supply of courts and ensuring that there are development pathways from community tennis and tennis in schools through to coaching and club based tennis, by:
  - ▷ Maintaining all existing courts to a high quality;
  - ▷ Continuing to maintain the park courts' environment to a high standard so that the quality of the overall 'offer' (and therefore the attractiveness of courts) is not compromised;

- ▷ Making improvements to those courts identified as being in 'poor' condition;
- ▷ Building on the success of the current key fob scheme and exploring opportunities to extend the key fob pay and play system to continue to improve accessibility to courts, maintain quality of courts and improve participation rates (particularly when membership levels justify increasing the number of key fob system courts);
- ▷ Ensuring that key fob system does not prevent young people from gaining access to outdoor courts;
- ▷ Ensuring that future costs of resurfacing and maintenance of community access courts are covered by a 'sinking fund'<sup>3</sup> based on annual contributions of 10% of the initial capital cost;
- ▷ Supporting, in principle, the securing of additional indoor provision for community access, if viable;
- ▷ Working with schools, colleges and Academies to ensure that tennis becomes better embedded as an accessible sport to young people (for example through bringing together children interested in playing after school at a single site to maximise coaching resource and time, building relationships with clubs and coaches through satellite club schemes or and introducing a coaching time for court time 'in kind' swap where schools open courts up free of charge and clubs provide some coaching time free of charge);
- ▶ Improve communication of the community accessibility and cost of indoor and outdoor courts to the general public. For example, the SPOGO (<https://spogo.co.uk/>) site and / or other online communication tools (e.g. search engine listings and apps should be utilised and advertised as the way in for an understanding of what is available, where and when.

### ***Bournemouth***

At the Borough level, within the context of and in addition to the Bournemouth and Poole-wide strategy, the focus in Bournemouth should be as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> A sinking fund is where money is accumulated in a fund through regular payments in order to eventually finance refurbishment.

- ▶ explore opportunities to roll out the key fob system to other parks (particularly when membership levels justify increasing the number of key fob system courts); and,
- ▶ explore opportunities to utilise key fobs for community access outside of school hours at the new and improved Slades Farm courts (the system could also be employed, through a pilot, to the use of netball courts at the same site).

### ***Poole***

At the Borough level, within the context of and in addition to the Bournemouth and Poole-wide strategy, the focus in Poole should be as follows:

- ▶ with membership levels of the key fob system reaching capacity at the Poole Park courts, explore opportunities to roll out the key fob system to other courts. Consideration should also be given to extending provision to new additional courts in relation to the increase in population arising from the new developments.

## Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs)

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 13 MUGAs, 11 of which are open access.*

*Unmet demand (2012): 7 areas of search with a one mile radius have been identified where there are spatial gaps in provision (one of which is a joint area with the Borough of Poole). 1 MUGA demand identified generated solely by international students.*

*Unmet demand (2026): this is dependent upon spatial coverage at that time and density of under 18 population.*

*Key issues to address: maintain and improve the quality of existing MUGAs; an increasing number of children in the population will equate to a need for additional provision which could include additional MUGAs; consider additional provision in several of the identified 7 areas of search which are currently outside of the catchment of existing MUGAs; explore options to identify a site for a MUGA to serve the demand generated by international students; deliver existing plans for new MUGAs; amongst other criteria, deliver additional MUGAs only where the local population data shows there is demonstrable demand locally and investment for provision and maintenance is secured.*



### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 7 MUGAs, 3 of which are open access.*

*Unmet demand (2012): 10 areas of search with a one mile radius have been identified where there are spatial gaps in provision (one of which is a joint area with Bournemouth Borough).*

*Unmet demand (2026): dependent upon spatial coverage at that time and density of under 18 population.*

*Key issues to address: maintain and improve the quality of existing MUGAs; an increasing number of children in the population will equate to a need for additional provision which could include additional MUGAs; consider additional provision in several of the identified 10 areas of search which are currently outside of the catchment of existing MUGAs and respond to additional demand likely to be generated from new development on the regeneration sites; deliver existing plans for new MUGAs; amongst other criteria, deliver additional MUGAs only where there is demonstrable demand locally and investment for provision and maintenance is secured; and, within this context, consider possible solutions to improve, replace or relocate the existing redgra MUGA at Turlin Moor.*

### **Assessment Conclusions**

Applying catchment areas and population density to the locations of open access and selectively open MUGAs suggests that there are gaps in provision. These are more significant gaps in Poole and less so in Bournemouth. Provision in Poole is largely comprised of MUGAs on sites where their access is dependent upon an adjoining facility being open such as a school or youth club. This arrangement, although often providing floodlighting, quality and security, can mean that there are no accessible MUGAs for much of the young community in an area.

The strategy approach needs to continue with improvements to existing MUGAs which are below average quality. The assessment has identified spatial gaps new additional MUGAs across Bournemouth and Poole which will need to be prioritised and phased throughout the strategy period. There are 17 areas of search within which additional provision should be considered. This does not mean that 17 new MUGAs need to be provided. Actual provision 'on the ground' may be less than this number and will be dependent upon demand demonstrated locally, identification of suitable sites and their catchments and be subject to capital funding being available to develop the facilities and being sustainable in the long-term (i.e. have sufficient funds for ongoing required maintenance). Any new MUGAs should be delivered in conjunction with related improvements and provision to other facilities such as wheel parks or alongside improvements to the same site on which they are or will be located.

### ***Bournemouth and Poole***

The key focus for the strategy across Bournemouth and Poole for open access MUGAs is as follows:

- ▶ To maintain and enhance the quality of provision at existing MUGAs where they are considered to be in 'poor' or 'very poor' condition;
- ▶ To deliver existing proposals already identified or being delivered ;
- ▶ To ensure that delivery of new additional MUGAs responds to locally demonstrated demand and that they are viable and phased;
- ▶ To ensure that delivery is prioritised accordingly:
  - ▷ In areas of high deprivation;
  - ▷ In areas of highest levels of population density of young people;
  - ▷ In areas where there is no provision of open access MUGAs nor selected opening MUGAs within a mile or more walking distance;
  - ▷ In areas where there is no provision of open access MUGAs

New MUGAs which fit more of the above criteria should be higher priority than those which fit with fewer.

## ***Bournemouth***

The following MUGAs currently rated (at least in part) as 'poor' or 'very poor' should be improved:

- ▶ Cranleigh Road, Fern Heath and Kings Park MUGAs.

The following programmed improvements should remain:

- ▶ Seafield Gardens kick-about area (convert into a mini MUGA);
- ▶ Churchill Gardens MUGA improvements; and,
- ▶ The proposed beach MUGA.

To meet spatial requirements, Bournemouth should explore opportunities for additional open-access MUGAs in the following 6 'areas of search', (+1 in an area to be determined with Borough of Poole +1 to be delivered jointly with International Colleges to serve demand arising from international students). Areas are prioritised taking into account the criteria identified in the priorities list above. New facilities should only be delivered where demand is demonstrated locally, a suitable site can be found, an open access MUGA is considered appropriate in the area (rather than a controlled access MUGA), funding is secured and facilities are viable and sustainable in the long-term. Facilities should be delivered in a phased way during the strategy period to 2026:

### *Priority A areas*

- ▶ Westbourne / West Cliff

### *Priority B areas*

- ▶ Meyrick Park / Talbot Woods
- ▶ Kinson Park Road / Pelhams Park

### *Priority C areas*

- ▶ Town centre

- ▶ Winton East / Queens Park
- ▶ Bearwood / Bear Cross / West Howe (joint with Borough of Poole)

*Priority D areas*

- ▶ Throop / Castlepoint / Strouden;
- ▶ A site within a one mile or 20 minute walk catchment of one or more of the largest 5 colleges: which are ETC International College, Kings, Anglo Continental, Southbourne School of English and Kaplan International College (to serve demand from international students, to be provided in partnership with International Colleges).

**Poole**

The following MUGAs currently rated (at least in part) as 'poor' or 'very poor' should be improved:

- ▶ Bourne Valley MUGA
- ▶ Turlin Moor (regra), where the quality is such that it should either be improved, replaced / refurbished or returned to grass and replaced elsewhere.

To meet spatial requirements, Poole should explore opportunities for additional open access MUGAs in the following 9 'areas of search' (+1 in an area to be determined with Bournemouth Borough Council). Areas are identified taking into account the criteria identified in the priorities list above. New facilities should only be delivered where demand is demonstrated locally, a suitable site can be found, an open access MUGA is considered appropriate in the area (rather than a controlled access MUGA), funding is secured and facilities are viable and sustainable in the long-term. Facilities should be delivered in a phased way during the strategy period to 2026:

*Priority A areas*

- ▶ Sterte / Longfleet / regeneration sites (to align with programmed Sterte Esplanade landscape improvements)

*Priority B areas*

- ▶ Harbourside Park (to align with programmed Harbourside Park landscape improvements)
- ▶ Hamworthy Park / Hamworthy regeneration sites
- ▶ Turlin Moor (either at the Recreation Ground site to replace the existing redgra MUGA or elsewhere if a suitable location can be found)
- ▶ Broadstone

*Priority C areas*

- ▶ Canford Heath
- ▶ Creekmoor / Hilbourne / Waterloo
- ▶ Merley
- ▶ Bearwood / Bear Cross / West Howe (joint with Bournemouth Borough Council)

*Priority D areas*

- ▶ Branksome Park / Canford Cliffs
- ▶ Oakdale / Foxholes

## Athletics Tracks

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 1 track*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): no demonstrable unmet demand.*

*Key issues to address: maintain and enhance the quality of provision; seek to encourage more use of facilities by casual runners (capitalising on growing interest in running) to help secure viability and reduce subsidy costs borne by the Council; link with Park Runs; improve signposting and communication of running routes; work in partnership with others to help secure the long-term viability of the facility; explore options to capitalise on the use of the space for events without compromising the quality of the facility; explore options to improve easy access to the facility such as a swipe card system or targeting specific user groups; and, ensure that the track is an integral part of the plans for the development of the King's Park multi-sports hub.*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 1 track*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): no demonstrable unmet demand.*

*Key issues to address: maintain and enhance the quality of provision; seek to encourage more use of facilities by casual runners (capitalising on growing interest in running) to help secure viability and reduce subsidy costs borne by the Council; link with Park Runs; improve signposting and communication of running routes; work in partnership with others to help secure the long-term viability of the facility; explore options to improve easy access to the facility such as a swipe card system or targeting specific user groups; explore options to capitalise on the use of the space for events without compromising the quality of the facility.*

### **Assessment Conclusions**

There appears to be sufficient demand for athletics, from existing numbers and those who would like to participate but who cannot, to support the existing provision of track facilities in Bournemouth and Poole. There is no demonstrable need for additional athletics facilities.

However, estimates of the proportion of that number who just want to take-up or already run informally mask the supply – demand balance and therefore the likely membership of clubs which use the facilities. Membership levels of those clubs which regularly use the facilities certainly do not reflect the number identified by the Sport England Market Segmentation tool and Active People Survey data. However, there is a strength of feeling amongst local authorities and users of these facilities that they provide a significant opportunity for their communities which could not be found locally (or even within Dorset) if they were to close. There also appears to be a growing interest in athletics for people with disabilities, with the Olympics and Paralympics affect continuing to result in

increased participation and opportunities to grow disabled athletics should be taken.

Informal running is growing in participation nationally, mirrored in Bournemouth and Poole and demonstrated through the popularity of Park Runs in both towns. There are opportunities to better link up this enthusiasm and activism in informal running with the facilities provided at the track facilities and these should be developed and strengthened further to ensure that the assets continue to be such in the future. Without an increase in use of the facilities generating increased income, through athletics or other events, the viability of operating two facilities across the conurbation in the long-term may be called into question if subsidy levels have to remain at current levels.

### ***Bournemouth and Poole***

The key focus for the strategy across Bournemouth and Poole for athletics tracks is to secure growth in participation in informal and club based athletics and ensure viability of facilities through the following measures:

- ▶ Continue to support the growth in participation in informal and formal athletic sports such as (but not only) running, through:
  - ▷ Park Runs;
  - ▷ Signposting running routes in public places through electronic, paper (leaflet) and physical signposting;
  - ▷ Exploring the creation of a joint athletics development post hosted by either local authority or Active Dorset to work across both athletics tracks to increase usage. This could be a graduate intern with an athletics coaching qualification who could go out to schools (encouraging indoor athletics in the Winter) and build up junior sections of clubs and engage with parents. The role could also be used to recruit more junior coaches from the University;
- ▶ Continue to support athletics clubs by:
  - ▷ supporting the timely improvement of facilities where needed;



- ▷ facilitating increased opportunities for people to access clubs and the facilities they use;
- ▶ Maintaining the quality of the running and athletics tracks and environments by:
  - ▷ Working with clubs and providers to deliver a realistic and viable programme of improvements where necessary;
  - ▷ Working with Park Run organisers to introduce a voluntary donation sinking fund or crowd funding scheme to help ensure that quality of parks used for Park Runs is maintained given the additional intensive use of the spaces;
- ▶ Working in partnership with clubs, school / colleges / Academies, NGBs and providers to ensure the viability of athletics track facilities in the long-term;
- ▶ Monitor the use of the track facilities to help ensure that viability into the long-term is secured;
- ▶ Improve communication of community accessibility, clubs' offer and the cost of hiring athletics tracks and facilities to the general public, schools / colleges / Academies and businesses. For example, the SPOGO (<https://spogo.co.uk/>) site and / or other online communication tools (e.g. search engine listings and apps should be utilised and advertised as the way in for an understanding of what is available, where and when; and,
- ▶ Should viability be an issue in the medium term, with ways of reducing subsidy and increasing income not secured, review the strategic provision of athletics tracks across the conurbation and rationalise that provision onto a single site if necessary.

### ***Bournemouth***

The focus in Bournemouth should be as follows:

- ▶ To capitalise on the growth in informal running further and continue to link Park Runs to the King's Park Athletics Centre, increasing patronage, use of facilities (and possibly membership of the clubs which use it) and income.
- ▶ Increase income generated by and reduce public expenditure on the King's Park facility (therefore reducing subsidised support from the local authority in

a managed way in the long-term) through a package of measures to be explored including:

- ▷ Working to introduce a partnership approach to running and maintaining the facility, discussing options with the University, local businesses and schools / colleges / Academies;
  - ▷ Exploring sponsorship opportunities;
  - ▷ A community crowd funding initiative for improvements in quality and accessibility;
  - ▷ Exploring other ways of increasing use of the facility such as a swipe card system for casual users or groups (operated on a similar basis to the key fobs for tennis courts in the parks). This could prove popular for people during the day, on winter evenings for floodlit running / jogging, family groups at weekends or triathletes (a sport becoming more popular);
  - ▷ Exploring options to increase the variety of events which can be held at the facility year round (which can be held using temporary structures or flooring) and if viable seek investment for necessary improvements or changes which do not compromise its key role as an athletics facility nor its setting in the park. Communication and promotion of this role for the facility would be needed if this is considered as a feasible way forward; and,
- ▶ Ensure that any future plans to improve or add to facilities at King's Park Athletics Centre fit alongside plans by AFC Bournemouth for changes to their football stadium or associated pitches and facilities.

## ***Poole***

The focus in Poole should be as follows:

- ▶ Improve the quality of ancillary facilities at the Ashdown Leisure Centre Track;
- ▶ Increase income generated by and reduce public expenditure on the Ashdown Leisure Centre facility (therefore reducing subsidised support from the local authority in a managed way in the long-term) through a package of measures to be explored with Everyone Active including:

- ▷ Working to introduce a wider partnership approach to running and maintaining the facility, discussing options with local businesses and schools / colleges / Academies;
- ▷ Exploring sponsorship opportunities;
- ▷ A community crowd funding initiative for improvements in quality and accessibility;
- ▷ Exploring other ways of increasing use of the facility such as a swipe card system for casual users or groups (operated on a similar basis to the key fobs for tennis courts in the parks). This could prove popular for people during the day, on winter evenings for floodlit running / jogging, family groups at weekends or triathletes (a sport becoming more popular); and,
- ▷ Exploring options to increase the variety of events which can be held at the facility year round (which can be held using temporary structures or flooring) and if viable seek investment for necessary improvements or changes which do not compromise its key role as an athletics facility. Communication and promotion of this role for the facility would be needed if this is considered as a feasible way forward.

## Squash Courts

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 4 courts*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): none identified from data available.*

*Key issues to address: work with providers to seek to maintain existing supply of courts where demand demonstrates need; monitor changes in demand over time; and, support the provision of additional courts by providers in principle (subject to consideration of planning issues) where there is demonstrable need and a viable business case for their provision, given the identification of figures which suggest potential demand for additional courts.*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 15 courts*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): none identified from data available.*

*Key issues to address: work with providers to seek to maintain existing supply of courts where demand demonstrates need; and, monitor changes in demand over time.*

## Assessment Conclusions

All residents are within the catchment (a 20 minute drive-time) of a squash court / club. While figures suggest some latent demand, this is mainly from existing types of people already playing. There is a good supply of courts in Poole and less so in Bournemouth, although there is no evidence to suggest that the local authorities need to intervene in provision, with commercial and private clubs providing all supply: providers which are likely to come forward with

proposals if they wish to or need to grow their club's facilities (unless physically constrained to do so). Concerns around commercial viability of squash courts over other facilities such as gyms and studio space for fitness classes has led to a market response to provision with levels of provision probably adjusting to fit demand overall.

Figures suggest that there is a fairly high level of existing demand not catered for in Bournemouth and Poole which suggests, in theory, that some additional capacity may be needed, if that demand can be translated from those wanting to play to those people playing. Any additional demand from the increase in population is unlikely to be large, although this position will need to be monitored during the lifetime of the strategy should the number of players increase 'on the ground' within the projected figures. However, the projected figures suggest a need for some additional courts in both Bournemouth and Poole, with a rebalance of provision across the conurbation towards Bournemouth perhaps being needed. Figures suggest an existing demand for around 7 courts across the conurbation, with a split of around 4 – 5 courts in Poole and 2 – 3 in Bournemouth if provision is not to be rebalanced across the towns. The number of additional courts required applying increases in population and potential positive participation changes equates to around 1 – 2 courts in the period to 2026 across Bournemouth and Poole.

Notwithstanding this, with a lack of response from club surveys and with Bournemouth and Poole not being a priority area for England Squash and Racketball (the governing body for squash and racketball) it would appear that there are no priority issues of concern relating to provision. Audits have not identified any issues relating to quality or quantity for the sport as a whole, although demand for an additional court has been identified by West Hants club in Bournemouth and support for an additional court at this site should be supported in principle if viability is demonstrated. Likewise, whilst it is understood that a change of use application has been submitted for the facility, evidence could be used to support the re-opening of the 4 court facility on Ringwood Road in Poole if a robust and viable financial business case can be put forward by a group or club which clearly sets out demonstrable local demand for

the additional capacity (this may need to include courts being used for other uses outside of peak times).

In summary, while the figures suggest that there may be a need for additional capacity, there is little data or information 'on the ground' to corroborate the levels of deficit in supply suggested by reports in 2008 or for potential future demand outlined by the above calculations. Neither, it is understood, has there been a 'groundswell' of requests in the last 5 years for additional courts. England Squash and Racquetball, the NGB for the sport has not identified Bournemouth and Poole as a priority place and leisure centre managers have said that they are not aware of any demand in Bournemouth and Poole for additional squash courts. While there may be some need, real demand will need to be more clearly identified in dialogue with clubs and the NGB to quantify support to open of any additional courts in Poole and future provision beyond that identified by West Hants club in Bournemouth for one additional court and the recently re-opened courts at the Poole Sports Centre.

While Bournemouth and Poole are not priority areas for England Squash and Racketball, if there are opportunities for 'flexible' modern squash provision in the area the NGB has stated that it will do all it can to help realise and support with their partners a development programme for the sports.

With no publicly run courts and little quantifiable demand for additional provision to existing supply, ultimately, the local authorities can only play an enabling role in provision given that the maintenance of courts is largely out of their control.

### ***Bournemouth and Poole***

Within the context of the above issues, the key focus for the strategy across Bournemouth and Poole is to:

- ▶ Maintain the existing supply and quality of squash courts;
- ▶ Work with clubs to periodically monitor the relationship between supply and demand to ensure that there is sufficient supply;

- ▶ Support the provision of additional courts by providers in principle (subject to consideration of planning issues) where there is demonstrable need and a viable business case for their provision, given the identification of figures which suggest potential demand for additional courts, particularly in Bournemouth; and,
- ▶ Improve communication of community accessibility and the clubs' offer to the general public, schools / colleges / Academies and businesses. For example, the SPOGO (<https://spogo.co.uk/>) site and / or other online communication tools (e.g. search engine listings and apps) should be utilised and advertised as the way in for an understanding of what is available, where and when.

## Golf

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 3 courses publicly owned with the management of two outsourced, plus one accessed via Bournemouth Borough but mainly on land within Christchurch Borough.*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): none identified by available data*

*Key issues to address: ensure that courses are maintained in at least an adequate condition and enhanced where necessary; ensure that membership and pay & play options remain attractive in a competitive market with a plentiful supply of private clubs near to Bournemouth; monitor use closely to ensure continued viability into the future; and, ensure that communication of the available courses is effective to residents and business in and around Bournemouth.*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 7 private / commercial clubs operating a membership and guest play system.*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): none identified by available data*

*Key issues to address: none identified.*

## Assessment Conclusions

The assessment for golf takes a similar approach to that undertaken for other facilities and sports. However, Bournemouth Borough Council has asked for an assessment in relation to its public pay and play courses. No in-depth assessment has been undertaken for courses in Poole which are all privately



owned and run, although the Borough Council has asked for a short perspective of whether much has changed in terms of provision since the last Sports Strategy was undertaken.

There is a good range of provision of golf courses in Bournemouth, including driving range, 18 hole and Par 3 courses. All residents are within the catchment (a 20 minute drive-time) of a golf course or club outside of Bournemouth's Borough boundary. While figures suggest that there could be an increase in the number of people who play or want to play golf in Bournemouth, it is not known what proportion of these would travel to get to another club rather than use the courses in Bournemouth.

While the courses in Bournemouth are under public ownership, 2 out of 3 (3 out of 4 if the club on the boundary, Christchurch Golf Club at Iford, is included) are run by management companies or clubs and are therefore largely commercial in nature. Provision, as with many other leisure and sports facilities, has changed with operation moving away from full management by local authorities to fill a need otherwise not provided for by the private sector and commercial clubs. Many clubs now offer pay and play or temporary memberships and so publicly owned courses are now increasingly facing direct competition from clubs which have opened up their offer, partially in response to lower demand due to recession. At the same time, usage of the public courses in Bournemouth have also lost some patronage as disposable income levels have fallen during recession although not yet to a point where viability is being called into question.

There are no major quality, quantity or accessibility issues at courses in Bournemouth, from the evidence available, although there are minor improvements required at Solent Meads to supporting infrastructure. With a plentiful supply of golf courses within a 20 minute catchment of Bournemouth and no evidence to suggest there is significant unmet demand 'on the ground', there is no demonstrable need for additional golf courses or facilities.

Despite falling number of users / members at the courses in Bournemouth, the existing provision provides a good base from which to look to grow membership

/ use and compete with other clubs and courses in south east Dorset. There are opportunities at some clubs to adapt provision and introduce better sports development to ensure that new members, adult, junior and family based, are attracted to use the courses. A more strategic approach to provision across all levels of ability and promotional work to attract new members should be actively encouraged in order to help ensure the long-term viability of the game and courses in Bournemouth given the plentiful supply of competitive clubs across south east Dorset.

### ***Bournemouth***

The strategy approach for golf in Bournemouth is as follows:

- ▶ Ensure that courses and associated facilities are maintained in at least an 'adequate' condition, are 'fit for purpose' and make necessary improvements to supporting infrastructure at Solent Meads course;
- ▶ Monitor the number and age / type of user of the public courses in Bournemouth to ensure that an up-to-date understanding is kept of use, particularly in light of falling numbers since the recession began. With a plentiful supply of courses in and around Bournemouth, course offers will need to remain competitive to residents in Bournemouth in order to remain viable. If numbers continue to fall as the economy recovers and levels of use bring viability of running courses into question, options will need to be considered in relation to re-aligning provision better to fit demand or to attract a higher number of players to meet any shortfall in income; and,
- ▶ Improve membership and usage levels of courses and clubs in Bournemouth (working with England Golf / the Dorset Golf Partnership) by:
  - ▷ Providing a strategic network of provision for all levels of amateur golf across the Meyrick Park, Queen's Park and Solent Meads courses / clubs in Bournemouth;
  - ▷ Introduce a package of offers as appropriate to encourage new, young, family and beginner members into golf, including discount offers, open days, beginners' lessons, 'play golf in a day' and so on;

- ▷ Introduce improved sports development pathways at clubs / courses where it is not present or improve the collective offer between the courses / clubs in Bournemouth, for example, introducing professional coaching where absent and viable; and,
- ▷ Improved proactive promotion and communication of community accessibility and the clubs' offer to the general public, schools / colleges / Academies and businesses to help promote facilities. For example, the SPOGO (<https://spogo.co.uk/>) site and / or other online communication tools (e.g. search engine listings and apps) should be utilised and advertised as the way in for an understanding of what is available, where and when.

### ***Understanding change in Poole***

The Borough of Poole has asked for a perspective on whether there have been any changes to provision in the borough since the last sports strategy was undertaken in 2008.

The 2008 strategy concluded for Poole that the quality of facilities was high with all courses being assessed to be 'good' or 'excellent'. It also stated that Broadstone and Parkstone Golf Clubs (in Poole) operated on a membership only basis. Consultees suggested an over-supply of golf courses in the area (i.e. within a 20-minute drive of the conurbation). There was no evidence that the facilities were over used or of demand for additional courses. Consequently, it concluded that there is no identified need for additional golf courses, but there is no confirmation that there is over provision.

We have seen no data to suggest any real change to the conclusions in 2008. All courses in Poole now seem to offer visitor packages as well as membership and it is understood from Dorset Golf that golf clubs are having to adapt and change in response to what is now a very competitive market. Despite difficult economic circumstances, it appears that private clubs have not been impacted sufficiently to consider closing although they are introducing range of

membership packages and are being more flexible letting visitors play, even if with notice and not on a direct pay and play model.

In conclusion, no evidence has come to light that the conclusions of the 2008 have changed. There is no need for the local authority to intervene in provision as a result of the number of golf courses and type, how clubs have been changing to make themselves more accessible to families and younger people as well as different socio-economic demographic groups and due to the 'public' pitches structure in Bournemouth.

## Fitness gyms

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 219 'stations' in four leisure centres and a further 706 'stations' at commercial and school gyms.*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): 15 to 27 gym 'stations at leisure centre sites' based on existing participation rates and membership.*

*Key issues to address: there is significant benefit to use of other facilities in co-locating gyms within sports centres; where opportunities present themselves for development of new or additional facilities such as pools, gyms can be successfully co-located on these sites; and, population increases suggest that there could be a need for between 15 and 27 additional gym stations in the period to 2026 at leisure centres in Poole if membership changes as anticipated.*

### **Assessment Conclusions**

The Borough of Poole requested a short assessment of the role that fitness suites (or 'gyms') play as part of the leisure centre offer that the Council owns and provides through Everyone Active at the Dolphin, Ashdown and Rossmore Leisure Centres and provides through the YMCA at The Junction Leisure Centre. This is in light of a changing nature in provision with many fitness centres and gyms being owned and operated by the private / commercial sector and in order to understand the contribution that gyms are making to the overall offer and demand for use at leisure centres.

There is a good range of gym provision in Poole compared to both demand and local authority areas with similar characteristics as Poole. There is significant benefit to co-locating gyms with leisure centre or other multi-sport provision

with each acting as an anchor for the other attracting more users than if a stand-alone facility.

Using the gym is becoming more popular despite challenges in the economy, as people who do have the disposable income and time choose to stay fit at gyms which provide flexibility and choice about where and when to go. In a competitive market, it appears that demand remains strong at leisure centre facilities, with interest in expanding at least two of the existing gyms identified from consultation.

Population increases suggest that there could be a need for between 15 and 27 additional gym stations in the period to 2026 at leisure centres in Poole if membership changes as anticipated.

There may be opportunities to tie in with recommended additional provision of other sports facilities identified in other assessments, such as possible changes to the Dolphin Swimming Pool, where improvements to the site or relocation to a new site could increase the supply of gym stations and space to the local community. Other potential changes or reshaping of existing provision, for example, in relation to sports halls at leisure centres on shared sites, could also provide opportunities to expand provision where demand suggests a need locally.

In Bournemouth, demand generated by international students alone is estimated to be for around 8 gym stations, and provision amounting at least to this level should be explored by international colleges and Bournemouth Borough Council.

## **Bournemouth Ice Rink**

No assessment has been required on the provision of ice rink(s) in Bournemouth and Poole.

A significant amount of work has already been done by Bournemouth Borough Council to secure the outline planning permission for an Olympic sized facility which would be likely to serve a conurbation-wide and sub-regional catchment. The permission is for a facility on the south-western edge of King's Park between the existing football pitches and the indoor bowls centre on King's Park Drive.

An ice rink of this size cannot be delivered without significant private sector investment. At this time, a lack of confirmed investment (largely due to the changing nature of the economy), has meant that delivery is unlikely to happen in the near future. The option should remain open, however, should investment be found, particularly during the period for which the outline permission remains valid and assuming no other sub-regional ice rink is developed in a location which would have a detrimental impact on the viability of such a facility in the long-term.

## Playing Pitches



## Football (grass pitches)

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 33 senior pitches, 4 (permanently marked out) youth pitches, 4 (permanently marked out) junior pitches and 19 (permanently marked out) mini pitches*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): 5.5 – 18.5 pitches (11 – 37 matches per week equivalent), if pitches maintained in at least a 'standard' condition (i.e. they can accommodate 2 matches per week without significant damage or wear and tear to the surface).*

*Key issues to address: protect the existing supply of pitches, improve quality of a number of pitches to increase the number of games (capacity) they can host by reducing 'overplay' and improving drainage etc, maintain the quality of pitches in a 'standard' and 'good' condition, improve the quality of ancillary facilities where necessary, look to AGPs as part of solution to additional pitch provision (for e.g. 1 AGP could host at least 9 matches per week plus training without change to the quality), within the context of the above measures monitor demand 'on the ground' before providing additional grass pitches in the long-term.*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 38 senior pitches, 9 (permanently marked out) junior pitches and 12 (permanently marked out) mini pitches*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): none, if pitches maintained in at least a 'standard' condition (i.e. they can accommodate 2 matches per week without significant damage or wear and tear to the surface).*

*Key issues to address: protect the existing supply of pitches, improve quality of a number of pitches to increase the number of games (capacity) they can host by reducing 'overplay' and improving drainage etc, maintain the quality of pitches in a 'standard' and 'good' condition, improve the quality of ancillary facilities where necessary.*

### **Assessment Conclusions**

There are currently sufficient grass pitches to meet existing demand in Bournemouth and Poole. However, there are a number of pitches which need improvements to their quality, particularly in Bournemouth, and others which require a rebalance of matches played against their carrying capacity (i.e. how many matches that should be played there in relation to the quality of the surface).

Looking to the future, the projected team generation rates suggest that there will not be a significant increase in adult team numbers by 2026, as a result of most increases in population being within the older and younger age groups. However, with a drive to increase participation and maintain younger people's interest in the game for longer, the focus of support will need to be largely for younger players playing mini, junior and youth football. As well as the need to ensure quality is maintained and enhanced where possible, support will need to be given to clubs where the number of volunteers, their time and availability of coaches is appearing to limit clubs' capacity to grow.

There is some additional demand created by potential increases in adult participation and from latent demand (if realised), if quality and opportunities to access pitches (for informal play in particular) can be improved. This is especially the case in Bournemouth, where there is a need for additional pitches from estimated increases in demand to 2026. Poole is less likely to require additional grass pitches in the long-term as long as quality can be maintained.

However, the provision of grass pitches for football cannot be determined in isolation from the provision of artificial grass pitches (AGPs) which can now be used for competitive play (supported by both the FA and local leagues) and can therefore be part of the solution to overcoming supply and quality deficiencies. AGPs can accommodate many more matches and training time and are versatile in being easily used for small sided games or training in addition for 11-a-side matches.

### ***Bournemouth and Poole***

The key areas of focus in Bournemouth *and* Poole should be to:

- ▶ improve quality where pitches and ancillary facilities require it through a number of measures including (but not limited to) direct improvements to the pitch, rebalancing use where appropriate to relieve pressure on some pitches, ensure that pitch inspections give sufficient notice of a need for a change of pitch; increasing overall capacity within supply through provision of AGPs;
- ▶ protect the existing supply (or ensure that supply and quality of supply is not lost if pitches are rationalised or replaced by AGPs);
- ▶ where the loss of a grass pitch is unavoidable, replacement pitch(es) and ancillary facilities to at least meet the use of the pitch should be provided elsewhere within the Borough;
- ▶ support growth of clubs and teams through support in increasing the number of coaches and volunteers;
- ▶ ensure high quality of provision is made for young people;

- ▶ provide for additional demand within the limitations of provision placed upon the towns given their lack of available land to develop new additional pitches; and,
- ▶ monitor the changes to participation to ensure that the strategy being implemented continues to meet any changing needs and demand arising during the strategy period to 2026.

### ***Bournemouth***

In Bournemouth, the focus for the strategy should be:

- ▶ Improve the quality of the following pitches (through a combination of direct improvements to the pitch and /or rebalancing use to pitches which are under used) ***where they are rated as 'standard' or 'good' quality but have a poor (red) capacity rating with a weekly overplay of more than 1.5 matches:***
  - ▷ LEAF Academy pitches 1 and 2;
  - ▷ Harewood College Junior pitch;
- ▶ Improve the quality of the following pitches (through a combination of direct improvements to the pitch and /or rebalancing use to pitches which are under used) ***where they are rated as 'standard' or 'good' quality but have a poor (red) capacity rating with a weekly overplay of up to 1.5 matches:***
  - ▷ King's Park pitch 9;
- ▶ Improve the quality of the following pitches (through a combination of direct improvements to the pitch and /or rebalancing use to pitches which are under used) ***where they are rated as 'poor' and have a poor (red) capacity rating with a weekly overplay of up to 1.5 matches:***
  - ▷ Fern Heath Playing Fields pitch 1; and,
  - ▷ Harewood College pitch 1.
- ▶ Improve the quality of the following pitches (through a combination of direct improvements to the pitch and /or rebalancing use to pitches which are under used) ***where they are rated as 'poor' but where use is appropriate to carrying capacity:***

- ▷ Fern Heath Playing Fields pitch 2;
- ▷ Winton Arts and Media College pitches 1 and 2 (junior);
- ▷ Muscliff Park pitches 1 and 2;
- ▷ Bishop of Winchester Academy pitches 1 and 2; and,
- ▷ Littledown Park (junior).
- ▶ Improve the quality of the following pitches (through a combination of direct improvements to the pitch and /or rebalancing use to pitches which are under used) **where the audit and consultation alone have identified concerns about quality:**
  - ▷ Wallisdown Playing Fields pitches 1 and 2 (in Borough of Poole but leased to Bournemouth Borough Council);
  - ▷ King's Park pitches 5 – 7 inclusive (5 being mini and 6 & 7 being youth pitches).
- ▶ Improve the **quality of the ancillary facilities** at the following pitches:
  - ▷ Pelhams Park pitches; and,
  - ▷ King's Park pitches 4 – 7 inclusive (5 being mini and 6 & 7 being youth pitches).
- ▶ **Monitor use** at the following pitches where there have been cancellations to ensure that quality conditions do not worsen:
  - ▷ Kinson Manor Playing Fields pitches 1 and 2;
  - ▷ Slades Farm pitches 1 – 5 inclusive;
  - ▷ Muscliff Park pitch 1;
  - ▷ Strouden Playing Fields pitches 1 – 4 inclusive; and,
  - ▷ King's Park pitches 1 – 3 inclusive.
- ▶ Identify locations for **up to 3 additional full size AGPs** (with peak period community and team access) which can support quality and supply change to respond to demand in club based and informal play in the Borough. A proposed AGP at Slades Farm should be delivered as a priority. Options around provision of an AGP at King's Park should be explored as a potential way of improving quality at the pitches, accessibility and to add capacity should pitches 1 and 2 be lost to the proposed ice rink which has outline planning permission. Consider further AGPs if necessary to support match equivalent growth in unmet demand by 2026 (11 – 37 matches per week), if that demand is demonstrated 'on the ground' by that time.

- ▶ Within the context of the above strategy actions, ensure the delivery of the ***Slades Farm masterplan***, which will help to address some of the above issues around quality and capacity.
- ▶ Explore opportunities with the ***youth league*** to increase the number of teams which can be accommodated as participation in youth play grows.

## ***Poole***

In Poole, the focus for the strategy should be:

- ▶ Improve the quality of the following pitches (through a combination of direct improvements to the pitch and /or rebalancing use to pitches which are under used) ***where they are rated as 'good' or 'standard' but have a poor (red) capacity rating with a weekly overplay of more than 1.5 matches:***
  - ▷ Junior pitches at Learoyd Road (pitch 2) (particularly drainage), and, Haymoor School (pitch 3) and Plainfield Farm Recreation Ground (pitch 4).
- ▶ Improve the quality of the following pitches (through a combination of direct improvements to the pitch and /or rebalancing use to pitches which are under used) ***where they are rated as 'poor' and have a poor (red) capacity rating with a weekly overplay of up to 1.5 matches:***
  - ▷ Junior pitch at Learoyd Road (pitch 3) (particularly drainage).
- ▶ Improve the quality of the following pitches (through a combination of direct improvements to the pitch and rebalancing use to pitches which are under used) ***where they are rated as 'poor' but where use is appropriate to carrying capacity:***
  - ▷ Bearwood Playing Fields.
- ▶ Improve the quality of the following pitches (through a combination of direct improvements to the pitch and /or rebalancing use to pitches which are under used) ***where the audit and consultation alone have identified concerns about quality:***
  - ▷ Branksome Recreation Ground pitches 1 – 5 inclusive (particularly drainage);
  - ▷ Learoyd Road Playing Fields pitch 1 (particularly drainage);

- ▷ Oakdale Middle School pitch 1 (particularly drainage);
  - ▷ Canford Park Sports Arena pitches 1 – 8 (particularly drainage);
  - ▷ Plainfield Farm pitches 1 – 3 inclusive (particularly drainage and an uneven playing surface); and,
  - ▷ St Edwards School (particularly drainage).
- ▶ **Monitor use** at the following pitches where there have been cancellations to ensure that quality conditions do not worsen:
- ▷ Branksome Recreation Ground pitches 1 – 3 inclusive;
  - ▷ Learoyd Road Playing Fields pitches 1 – 3 (pitches 12 and 3 are junior) inclusive;
- ▶ Identify locations for **up to 2 additional full size AGPs** (with peak period community and team access) which can support quality and supply change to respond to demand in club based and informal play in the Borough.

## Cricket

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 14 grounds with a total of 104 wickets , 6 of which are an artificial surface.*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): up to 5 grounds (assuming 8 wickets on a pitch and the wickets being kept in 'standard' condition which can accommodate 4 matches per season) if estimated demand is demonstrated 'on the ground'.*

*Key issues to address: protect the existing supply of grounds, enhance grounds and facilities where necessary to increase play / capacity and participation, address issues relating to tight boundaries by creating capacity for senior matches elsewhere, consider 'mothballing' use of Meyrick Park due to conflict of use with rugby and events, focus use of Kinson Manor for junior teams only and Winton Recreation Ground for junior, youth and evening play, explore new senior pitch provision at Pelhams Park and Strouden Park, consider greater use of artificial wickets for a greater number and type of matches, following these measures explore whether projected unmet demand can be accommodated within existing supply of grounds (for e.g. through improvements to quality (and therefore capacity) or whether additional grounds will be needed.*



### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 12 grounds with a total of 89 wickets, 10 of which are an artificial surface.*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): up to 3 grounds (assuming 8 wickets on a pitch and the wickets being kept in 'standard' condition which can accommodate 4 matches per season) if estimated demand is demonstrated 'on the ground'.*

*Key issues to address: protect the existing supply of grounds, enhance grounds and ancillary facilities where necessary to increase play / capacity and participation, explore if projected unmet demand can be accommodated within existing supply of grounds (for e.g. through improvements to quality (and therefore capacity), add additional wickets where this can be accommodated or exploring the times and days some types of match are played, consider greater use of artificial wickets for a greater number and type of matches, if following the above measures a demonstrable demand for additional grounds becomes clear seek to provide additional pitch / wicket capacity to accommodate demand sufficiently.*

### **Assessment Conclusions**

Cricket in Bournemouth and Poole, on the whole, is well provided for. The key issues in Bournemouth relate to constrained boundaries on some older grounds surrounded by housing and a need to improve some grounds to a better standard, with most of those grounds under local authority control. Some grounds have additional pressure on them, particularly where it is not dedicated to cricket but is shared by football or rugby during the winter months. There are additional issues around Dean Park, a high quality ground (and probably the best in Bournemouth) currently overplayed but yet under pressure from sale by its Trust owners, which if not retained for cricket in the future, could mean two teams having to relocate to an alternative ground or grounds. Clubs may look to

the local authority and ECB / Dorset Cricket to help find alternative grounds if the loss of Dean Park is unavoidable as there are no commercially provided grounds in the town. However, with supply overall balanced with demand, Dean Park (and capacity provided by other grounds in Bournemouth) should be protected from loss.

In Poole, the position is different with few if any boundary issues and fewer quality issues. The pressure in Poole is that from existing teams, where there are a much higher number than those in Bournemouth and the consequential impact this has on capacity at some grounds, for example, The Delph and Branksome Recreation Ground. Quality is yet to be compromised at those grounds under pressure but increased use could challenge this position in the future. Poole has two commercially operated grounds of significance, which are important to the overall supply and also important because of the potential for costs to increase for teams which use them. Should costs prove too high for clubs and teams, there may be an expectation that the local authority should help to provide a ground for those displaced.

However, we understand that, locally, some clubs are tending to want to take more control over their grounds (in terms of security of tenure and maintenance) and they may need to work with the local authority, owners of grounds and Dorset Cricket / ECB in the future to develop a more commercial or community club trust based model to ensure increased control over the ground they use. Proposals identified below for changes to grounds, should be considered within the context of on-going discussions with clubs about the potential transfer of responsibilities.

Looking to 2026, estimations of demand have suggested a requirement for additional capacity in both Bournemouth and Poole, although some of this requirement may be able to be accommodated within the existing supply of grounds, if carrying capacity can be increased by improving quality. However, the ability to accommodate additional teams at existing grounds will depend on the exact nature of the teams being generated. For example, junior teams may not need new grass wickets or the increase in teams might be predominantly for

evening matches which could lend itself to use of existing grounds if quality can be improved and maintained.

### ***Bournemouth and Poole***

Within the context of specific recommendations for Bournemouth and Poole below, the focus for cricket in Bournemouth and Poole should be:

- ▶ To monitor the balance between supply and demand to ensure that capacity is available to accommodate demand and requirements of clubs;
- ▶ To protect the existing capacity of grounds, where demand requires it, by seeking to prevent their loss. Where their loss is unavoidable and there remains demand for the capacity and quality provided, compensate their loss through additional and / or new replacement capacity to accommodate the existing carrying capacity or matches played (whichever is greater). Such compensatory provision should be provided to a 'good' quality (i.e. accommodating 5 matches per wicket per season and provision of appropriate ancillary facilities) within the Borough;
- ▶ Should the demand for grounds during the period of this strategy (to 2026) show a demonstrable long-term surplus capacity across a Borough, the following criteria (amongst others of relevance to the local authority) should be considered in assessing which grounds should be rationalised or lost from use for cricket:
  - ▷ Quality of grounds (lower quality grounds should be considered for loss ahead of higher quality pitches);
  - ▷ Quality of ancillary facilities (grounds with associated lower quality facilities should be considered for loss ahead of those with higher quality facilities);
  - ▷ Ground use (those pitches used more often by teams and clubs should be retained ahead of those used less often); and,
  - ▷ Carrying capacity (there must be sufficient practical and workable carrying capacity at other pitches to be able to accommodate any teams displaced by loss of a ground);

- ▶ If demand drops during the strategy period signposting loss of grounds, retain the grounds as open space (i.e. 'mothball' use for cricket) should demand increase again;
- ▶ Consider 'restructuring' use of some grounds to better accommodate play ensuring that grounds remain appropriate to the type of cricket played, age group and sex of teams, club and team needs. For example:
  - ▷ Consider ceasing use of grounds where ongoing maintenance proves unviable or unsustainable in the long-term;
  - ▷ Consider the realistic sustainability of retaining use of smaller grounds for adult cricket where tight boundaries compromise play and give rise to concerns about balls damaging nearby property;
  - ▷ In response to these issues, consider provision of additional pitches to provide more suitable grounds which can also provide additional capacity to accommodate potential growth in demand for cricket.
- ▶ Explore options to reduce the maintenance costs of grounds and levels of subsidy per head where these levels are unsustainable in the long term, including (amongst other options) the potential for asset transfer and a greater role being played by clubs in the management, maintenance and ownership of the grounds they use. A number of clubs identified through consultation that they would like to pursue such options and discussions should be held with those clubs;
- ▶ Enhance existing quality of grounds identified through the assessment which are in 'poor' condition or where specific issues of quality and accessibility have been identified through the assessment;
- ▶ If overplay at a ground starts to compromise the quality of the ground, consider options to provide additional capacity at other grounds to rebalance use as necessary;
- ▶ Explore options with clubs, leagues and the ECB to ensure that the best use is made of existing ground supply in terms of the number of matches played and on which days;
- ▶ Consider greater use of artificial wickets for a greater number and type of matches to absorb demand;
- ▶ At education establishments with cricket grounds:

- ▷ consider opportunities to utilise grounds for some level of community use if possible, particularly to accommodate practice for senior teams and matches for junior and youth teams. This could have a positive impact on accommodating potential growth in teams and relieve some pressure on existing grounds to help maintain quality;
- ▷ where clubs and teams utilise education site grounds for practice and training support the adoption of secured use contracts between the club and ground owners / managers; and,
- ▷ support, in principle, improvements identified through the audit;
- ▶ Provide additional grounds during the strategy period where demand demonstrates need for additional capacity over and above that provided by existing supply. In Bournemouth, the demand could be for between 2 and 5 grounds (with 8 'standard' quality wickets) and in Poole between 1 and 3 grounds (to the same standard) in the period to 2026, if estimated levels of additional demand come to fruition; and,
- ▶ Where replacement or additional new grounds are provided, ensure that the number of wickets and quality are appropriate for the teams likely to use them.

### ***Bournemouth***

The following tables set out potential options for dealing with the key issues for cricket in Bournemouth now and during the strategy period. The recommendations sit alongside those identified above for 'Bournemouth and Poole' and the detail of which will need to be explored further through discussion between the Borough Council, clubs, the ECB, Sport England and Active Dorset. With some issues remaining unresolved at the time of drafting these recommendations, the strategy will need to be adapted accordingly to deal with changes in demand as and when the position is clarified (for example, the future of Dean Park as a cricket ground).

Ground	Action
<b><i>Privately owned</i></b>	
Dean Park	As a high quality dedicated cricket ground, seek to retain play there meeting the criteria set out above <sup>4</sup> .. When other grounds have been improved, consider utilising them for cup and league competition finals, should the quality at Dean Park be compromised by continuing overplay.
<b><i>Local authority pitches</i></b>	
Kinson Manor Playing Fields 1 (grass wicket)	Consider options for cricket at Kinson Manor. For example, the transfer of use of the Kinson Manor senior ground to permanent use by junior teams only, to create a 'junior hub' should the club support a move to an alternative or new ground.
Kinson Manor Playing Fields 1 (artificial wicket)	
Slades Farm Playing Fields	<p>Improve Slades Farm to 'good' quality, thereby improving capacity and quality of the playing surface.</p> <p>Provision of a 'good' and high quality ground could help to bring back displaced demand and provide a ground for a team / teams if displaced from Dean Park.</p> <p>Improve the quality of the pavilion.</p> <p>Ensure that improvements remain an integral part of the Slades Farm masterplan.</p> <p>If Slades Farm is not needed as part of the solution to either or both of these possible outcomes, the</p>

<sup>4</sup> Should its loss be unavoidable, ensure that adequate replacement of capacity and high quality is provided at existing or new grounds within the Borough in accordance with the criteria identified above.

Ground	Action
	ground should remain within the supply to cater for existing slight undersupply and potential additional demand generated by growth in participation.
Winton Recreation Ground	Retain for use for junior, youth and evening cricket and improve the pavilion and changing facilities to meet standards required for these age groups and type of cricket. The use of Kinson Manor solely for junior and youth cricket, if the option is favourable to the club (see above), would also help to relieve existing overplay at this site.
Meyrick Park	Cease use of Meyrick Park for cricket, given quality and maintenance issues, retaining solely for rugby and events as and when replacement capacity has been secured elsewhere.
Wallisdown Playing Fields (grass)	Maintain the 'standard' quality of grounds and wickets and improve the quality of the outfield.
Wallisdown Playing Fields (artificial)	Consider further improvements if viable such as clubhouse and floodlighting to increase capacity.
Muscliff Park (artificial)	Treat as a 'reserve' ground for the medium to long-term. Introduce a grass wicket and improve the artificial wicket should demand require it following changes to other grounds and if demand grows in the future.
Littledown Park 1 (grass wicket)	Maintain existing 'standard' condition and improve access to changing rooms.
Littledown Park 2 (artificial wicket)	
Kings Park 1	Improve the quality of grounds to a 'good' standard to increase carrying capacity, enabling existing
Kings Park 2	

<b>Ground</b>	<b>Action</b>
Kings Park 3	demand to be better accommodated.
<b><i>Education pitches</i></b>	
Harewood College (artificial)	<p>Discuss opportunities to utilise College grounds for some level of community use if possible, particularly to accommodate practice for senior teams and matches for junior and youth teams. This could have a positive impact on accommodating potential growth in teams and relieve some pressure on existing grounds to help maintain quality.</p> <p>Where clubs and teams utilise education site grounds for practice and training support the adoption of secured use contracts between the club and ground owners / managers.</p> <p>Support, in principle, improvements identified through the audit.</p>
Oakmead College of Technology (LeAF Academy)	
Winton Arts and Media College 1 (artificial)	
Winton Arts and Media College 2	
<b><i>Proposed replacement and additional pitches</i></b>	
Pelhams Park	Consider the development of replacement grounds at Pelhams Park (subject to viability) to ensure that capacity is provided (at least) for senior teams currently using Kinson Senior ground if the club which plays there supports a move (see above).
Strouden Park	Consider the development of replacement grounds (including necessary improvements to ancillary facilities) at Strouden Park to act as replacement capacity for the ground at Meyrick Park (i.e. retain programmed plans for Strouden Playing Fields). Provision of a 'good' and high quality ground could help to bring back displaced demand and could help to provide capacity if Dean Park is lost for cricket use.



Ground	Action
King's Park (East) – (currently no longer used as a pitch)	Bring back into use if demand requires in the medium to long-term of the strategy.
Location to be determined	When the changes outlined above have been delivered (i.e. the existing supply issues have been dealt with and provision made as effective and suitable as possible), provision should be made for up to 5 additional grounds (which could include reinstating King's Park East) if additional demand 'on the ground' is demonstrated during the strategy period.

### ***Poole***

The following tables set out potential options for dealing with the key issues for cricket in Poole now and during the strategy period. The recommendations sit alongside those identified above for 'Bournemouth and Poole' and the detail of which will need to be explored further through discussion between the Borough of Poole, clubs, the ECB, Sport England and Active Dorset.

Ground	Action
<b><i>Local authority pitches</i></b>	
Poole Park (grass)	Maintain the 'good' quality of grounds and ensure that flexibility is retained to provide sufficient wickets through the season to accommodate this quality on the site.
Poole Park (artificial)	
Whitecliff Recreation Ground	Improve the 'standard' quality of wickets, improve the quality of the outfield and ensure that flexibility is retained to provide sufficient wickets through the season to accommodate this quality on the site. Retain programmed plans to develop pavilions and community facilities at the site.
Branksome Recreation Ground (grass)	Improve the 'standard' quality of grounds and ensure that flexibility is retained to provide sufficient wickets through the season to accommodate this quality on the site.
Branksome Recreation Ground (artificial)	
The Delph (grass)	Maintain the 'good' quality of grounds.
The Delph (artificial)	
Charborough Road	Maintain the 'standard' quality of wickets and improve the overall quality of the ground (particularly the outfield).  Improve the quality of the ancillary facilities as far as the Listed status of the building allows to help grow the club (Broadstone CC) and enable junior teams to

<b>Ground</b>	<b>Action</b>
	use the ground.
<b><i>Commercial pitches</i></b>	
Canford Park Sports Ltd (grass)	None required as commercial facilities. Monitor club / team use season by season to determine if pitches accommodate needs and demand and to help ensure that the grounds play an important role in overall provision across the Borough.  Support clubs' use of these grounds so that good quality of the grounds is maintained.
Canford Park Sports Ltd (artificial)	
The Hamworthy Club (grass)	
The Hamworthy Club (artificial)	
<b><i>Education pitches</i></b>	
Corfe Hills School (artificial)	Discuss opportunities to utilise College grounds for some level of community use if possible, particularly to accommodate practice for senior teams and matches for junior and youth teams. This could have a positive impact on accommodating potential growth in teams and relieve some pressure on existing grounds to help maintain quality and increase capacity.  Where clubs and teams utilise education site grounds for practice and training support the adoption of secured use contracts between the club and pitch owners / managers.  Support, in principle, improvements identified through the audit.
Parkstone Grammar School	
Carter Community School (grass)	
Carter Community School (artificial)	
<b><i>Proposed replacement and additional pitches</i></b>	
Location to be determined	Identify a site in the short to medium term of the strategy which can be developed to accommodate potential capacity issues in the short term if they

Ground	Action
	<p>arise and which could help to alleviate pressure on existing grounds (for example at The Delph), should demand grow and commercial providers reduce capacity or quality provided to teams using their grounds and facilities.</p> <p>When the changes outlined above have been delivered (i.e. the existing immediate supply issues have been dealt with and provision made as effective and suitable as possible), provision should be made for up to a further 2 grounds if demand 'on the ground' is demonstrated during the medium to long term of the strategy period.</p>

## Rugby (grass pitches)

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 11 senior pitches and 1 dedicated junior pitch, with 3 of these senior pitches being used by clubs at Meyrick Park (2) and Iford Playing Fields (1).*

*Unmet demand (2012): demand currently met although overplay on supply of pitches of almost 11 matches per week or 3 'good' quality pitches / 5.5 'standard' quality pitches.*

*Unmet demand (2026): over 8 senior 'standard' quality pitches hosting 2 matches per week or almost 5 senior 'good' quality pitches hosting 3.5 matches per week if participation increases demonstrated 'on the ground' by 2026.*

*Key issues to address: protect the existing supply of pitches, increase capacity of pitches by introducing floodlights where feasible and improving drainage, introduce new mini pitches on the old bowls site and explore provision of an additional training pitch at Meyrick Park, ensure access for training for clubs when the Slades Farm proposals for an AGP are delivered, improve ancillary facilities where possible, if these measures do not address unmet demand, seek to provide an additional pitch in the short-term and monitor demand*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 3 senior pitches and 1 dedicated junior pitch in Poole, with 2 senior pitches being used by clubs (at Turlin Moor).*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): 4 senior 'standard' quality pitches hosting 2 matches per week or 2 senior 'good' quality pitches hosting 3.5 matches per week if participation increases demonstrated 'on the ground' by 2026.*

*Key issues to address: protect the existing supply of pitches, increase capacity of pitches by improving quality at Turlin Moor pitches to 'good' standard (accommodating 3.5 matches per week), improve the quality of ancillary facilities at Turlin Moor, monitor demand during the strategy period providing additional pitches if increased demand is demonstrable 'on the ground'.*

## **Assessment Conclusions**

Rugby has a tradition of playing on natural turf (grass) pitches which tend to be subject to significant wear and tear and therefore have additional pressure to maintain quality to a 'standard' condition. More recently, technology has moved sufficiently forward to enable training to take place on artificial grass surfaces where adequately sprung (that which meets the IRB regulation 22 standard<sup>5</sup>) and such surfaces can be shared with football. Club rugby tends to be played on pitches dedicated to a club as a home ground and the supply of pitches at schools does not feature in use by club teams for matches or training, yet, there is a reasonably good supply of school pitches across the Boroughs.

The clubs which play in Bournemouth and Poole are Oakmedians RFC, East Dorset RFC and Poole RFC which play at Meyrick Park, Iford Lane Playing Fields and Turlin Moor Recreation Ground respectively. While Oakmedians is the

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<sup>5</sup> IRB 22 relates to the standard required of artificial turf for rugby. Pitches need to be tested every 3 years to remain IRB 22 compliant. See [http://www.irb.com/mm/document/lawsregs/regulations/04/21/57/42157\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.irb.com/mm/document/lawsregs/regulations/04/21/57/42157_pdf.pdf) for the full regulation.

largest club of these three, Bournemouth RFC is larger still, although it plays at Chapel Gate in Christchurch Borough. While this might be the case, it is likely that much of its membership is drawn from residents in Bournemouth Borough. Bournemouth University also plays at Chapel Gate, a situation which can limit its growth due to the difficulty for students to get to the facility from where they live (as most will not have access to a car). The assessment has only been able to focus in detail on those clubs with pitches within the boundaries of Bournemouth and Poole Boroughs, although the facility at Chapel Gate is an important part of supply to Bournemouth residents playing rugby.

Although tradition has dictated that clubs use their 'own' facilities and home pitch as a base, the supply of pitches at school sites may prove useful in helping to address need and demand for training purposes in the future in Bournemouth and Poole. With limited land on which to develop new pitches, opportunities to make the most of existing pitches and increase their carrying capacity by introducing improvements to quality will need to be the initial priority for the strategy. Schools' supply may provide opportunities but will probably not be the answer to accommodate significant amounts of play due to condition, lack of floodlighting for evening training and potential difficulties in accessing school facilities and changing facilities. School facilities are best used for junior and mini rugby and are not likely to be suitable for senior matches.

Figures suggest a range of pitch numbers will be required in addition to the existing supply. If existing pitches rated as in 'poor' condition are improved and see carrying capacity (the number of match equivalent sessions they can host) increase, resulting in 'standard' quality pitches, the additional requirement for pitches will fall. Likewise, if pitches can be improved or provided to 'good' conditions, the number of pitches required will fall again. However, on the basis of existing 'poor' pitches being improved to a 'standard' condition and school supply taken into account, the estimated demand for additional pitches in Bournemouth is for almost 4 pitches and in Poole, just over 1 pitch. If school supply is excluded and the majority of play continue to be at club based pitches, the number required increases to just over 8 pitches in Bournemouth and almost 4 in Poole. However, if new additional pitches can be developed to a 'good'

standard, the requirement falls to up to 5 pitches in Bournemouth and up to 2 in Poole. It is therefore sensible to plan for a range of provision to accommodate demand for up to 5 pitches in Bournemouth and up to 2 in Poole. All existing and new pitches should meet drainage standards recommended by the RFU.

Given limitations on land available to develop new additional pitches and future estimated increases participation rates being challenging (and perhaps unrealistic), a range of ways of accommodating this demand should be pursued sequentially prior to identifying locations for additional pitches.

### ***Bournemouth and Poole***

The key areas of focus in Bournemouth *and* Poole should be to take a sequential approach to improving capacity by:

- ▶ Protecting the existing stock and supply of rugby pitches available to club teams;
- ▶ Improving capacity at club pitches by making improvements to drainage and maintenance regimes and to relieve pressure on overplayed pitches by making other pitches more accessible (for example by introducing floodlighting where the additional play will not compromise quality);
- ▶ Discussing opportunities with schools, the RFU and local clubs to utilise school pitches for training for junior / mini rugby on the basis of providing assistance to improve the quality and carrying capacity of those pitches;
- ▶ Ensure that new additional artificial grass pitches being developed in response to the demand identified elsewhere in this report are capable of hosting rugby training (and meet IRB regulation 22 standard) as well as play for football, so that rugby clubs can relieve pressure on existing pitches by training on the AGP;
- ▶ Where new additional pitches are required, provide them to meet a 'good' standard which accommodates 3.5 match equivalent sessions per week (being pipe and slit drained and meeting RFU drainage standards), locate them close to existing club facilities and pitches if possible and take into



account opportunities, if they arise, of utilising existing football pitches where rationalised; and,

- ▶ Closely monitor how demand increases during the lifetime of the strategy. As projections of demand and need are based on assumptions around increasing participation, which may or may not come to fruition, changes responding to additional provision should be responsive to demonstrable levels of demand prior to going ahead.

### ***Bournemouth***

In Bournemouth, the focus for the strategy should be to:

- ▶ Improve the quality of club pitches and training area at Meyrick Park and increase the carrying capacity (and thereby also reducing cancellations) by:
  - ▷ Improving floodlights at the training pitch;
  - ▷ improving drainage at the pitches to standards recommended by the RFU;
  - ▷ improving drainage at the pitches to standards recommended by the RFU;
  - ▷ ensuring that the club gets access to some training time at the new proposed AGP at Slades Farm when delivered;
  - ▷ ensuring that some access to the Slades Farm AGP is given to the University rugby teams for training (who currently use Meyrick Park pitches to train);
  - ▷ delivering proposals to introduce new mini pitches on the old bowls site adjacent to the adult pitches;
  - ▷ exploring opportunities to set out an additional training pitch at the site alongside existing adult pitches.
- ▶ Improve the quality of pitches at Iford Playing Fields and increase carrying capacity by:
  - ▷ improving drainage and the maintenance regime at the pitch;
- ▶ Support improvements to the quality of ancillary facilities:
  - ▷ by making improvements to accessibility of social facilities at Meyrick Park / Oakmedians RFC.
- ▶ Seek to identify opportunities for junior and mini teams to train and play matches at one or more school pitches if necessary;

- ▶ Should the above measures not satisfactorily resolve the significant capacity issues for Oakmedians RFC and issues experienced by East Dorset RFC in the short term, seek quickly to identify a location for an additional full size pitch to accommodate demand; and
- ▶ Having followed the sequential approach to improving capacity, outlined above, identify locations for up to 4 further additional pitches to satisfy demand (if demonstrable) during the medium and long-term of the strategy period.

### ***Poole***

In Poole, the focus for the strategy should be:

- ▶ Support improvements to the maintenance regime to ensure that quality remains at 'standard' condition;
- ▶ In the medium term, improve the quality of the pitches at Turlin Moor to meet 'good' condition if possible, to increase the carrying capacity to help meet anticipated growth in participation;
- ▶ Support improvement to the quality of ancillary facilities:
  - ▷ By making improvements to the social area at Turlin Moor currently shared by football and rugby teams, for the benefit of the rugby club (with indirect benefits for the football club).
- ▶ Seek to identify opportunities for junior and mini teams to train and play matches at one or more school pitches;
- ▶ Having followed the sequential approach to improving capacity, outlined above, identify locations for up to 2 further additional pitches to satisfy demand (if demonstrable) during the medium and long-term of the strategy period.

## Artificial Grass Pitches (serving hockey, football and rugby)

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: [Full size] 1 sand filled (hockey); [Small 4 – 7-a-side] 15 3G (football).*

*Unmet demand (2012): 3.5 full size.*

*Unmet demand (2026): 2 -4 full size (3 for football and potentially 1 for hockey dependent on demand being demonstrated 'on the ground')*

*Key issues to address: an immediate need for AGPs for football, provision to be made for full size AGPs which can also accommodate small-sided games, proposed Slades Farm AGP a priority, explore opportunities for introducing community use at school / Academy sites not currently opened-up to the community, potential for additional AGPs to be brought forward in addition to above identified unmet demand to provide part of the solution to long-term additional capacity for football grass pitches if demand demonstrated, the hockey need (if demonstrated by demand 'on the ground') may be most appropriately located at Chapel Gate outside the Borough if the facility continues as the preferred site / centre to serve the needs of hockey in Bournemouth, 'future proof' 3G provision for football to ensure that the surface is also suitable for rugby training, explore opportunities to identify a site (with International Colleges) to cater for up to 1 full size AGP to accommodate demand generated by international students (this is additional to the unmet demand figures above which are generated by residents).*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: [Full size] 2 sand filled (hockey), 1 water filled (hockey), 1 3G (football); [Small 4 – 7-a-side] 5 3G (football).*

*Unmet demand (2012): 1.5 full size.*

*Unmet demand (2026): 2 -3 full size (2 for football and potentially 1 for hockey dependent on demand being demonstrated 'on the ground').*

*Key issues to address: an immediate need for AGPs for football, provision to be made for full size AGPs which can also accommodate small-sided games, explore opportunities for increasing capacity and community use at school / Academy sites, 'future proof' 3G provision for football to ensure that the surface is also suitable for rugby training, hockey need for the equivalent of a whole pitch not robustly quantified and so demand will need to be monitored during the strategy period to clarify need prior to delivery.*

### **Assessment Conclusions**

AGPs can provide a secure and high quality surface on which to play hockey, football and rugby (for training where they meet IRB regulation 22 standard<sup>6</sup>). Hockey is played on sand and water filled pitches with a 25mm pile and the AGPs are used for both matches and training. For football, in recent years, the popularity of AGPs has increased with most informal play (5 and 7-a-side in particular) and some training taking place on AGPs. The preference for football use is for 40mm or (preferably) 60mm rubber crumb AGPs, which cannot be used for hockey, whereas such surfaces can be shared with rugby for training purposes where the AGP is sufficiently sprung. Football is now sanctioned for competitive play on AGPs, given recent advances in surface improvement and the obvious advantages in quality, and therefore playing capacity, for matches

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<sup>6</sup> IRB 22 relates to the standard required of artificial turf for rugby. Pitches need to be tested every 3 years to remain IRB 22 compliant. See [http://www.irb.com/mm/document/lawsregs/regulations/04/21/57/42157\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.irb.com/mm/document/lawsregs/regulations/04/21/57/42157_pdf.pdf) for the full regulation.

over traditional grass pitches which require much more maintenance and where bad weather can result in high numbers of match cancellations during a season.

For any new additional AGPs delivered, location of such facilities are likely to be partially dependent upon the ability on or close to the site to administer them (for example, through which bookings can be taken, and through which the pitch can be opened and locked if fenced to maintain quality and so on).

### *Football*

Football is catered for at the moment predominantly by small 5 or 7-a-side pitches in Bournemouth at Pelhams Park, Littledown and Sir David English Leisure Centres, with the later pitches having the capability to be used as a full size pitch (although it is understood the pitch rarely used on that basis).

Outside of this provision there is some community use of a full size pitch at Talbot Heath School. Smaller sided pitches will continue to play an important role in the overall supply of AGPs for football, but new additional AGPs should normally be provided at full size given their flexibility to be used for small sided games.

In Poole, there are small size permanent AGP pitches at the University, the Hamworthy Club and Carter School, each of which have some community use. While there are two full size AGPs at Canford School, they are sand and water filled surfaces and not suitable for football. The only full size pitch suitable for football is the pitch at Canford Park Sports which is commercially run.

There are two known Football Association priorities for football for the provision of AGPs at Slades Farm (a new additional AGP with some access for rugby) and in Poole for a new AGP at Hamworthy United (County Ground), a proposed replacement for an existing grass pitch. The full size AGP at Ashdown Leisure Centre is used for football as well as hockey (see below).

In order to maximise opportunity for capacity from existing AGPs, opportunities should be explored to open up commercial and school sites with AGPs to an increased amount of time for community use.

Bournemouth Borough Council and the Borough of Poole should work closely with Active Dorset and the Football Association to identify other suitable sites (including existing grass pitch sites where quality is an issue) for new AGPs and surfaces should also be designed to be able to accommodate rugby training. Preferred locations will be where there is existing provision to oversee the hiring, opening and closing of facilities during peak and off-peak times and outside of the catchments of existing AGPs to provide an improved geographical / spatial distribution of pitches across the Boroughs.

Surfaces for AGPs proposed for football should be 'future proofed' to ensure that they are capable of accommodating rugby training (meeting the IRB regulation 22 standard<sup>7</sup>).

### *Hockey*

Hockey needs are reasonably well-provided for in Poole with the Ashdown Leisure Centre hosting Poole Hockey Club, although there are issues relating to the ancillary facilities there. In Bournemouth, hockey is played outside the Borough at nearby Chapel Gate in Christchurch. This is understood to be considered as the 'home' of hockey in Bournemouth with Bournemouth Hockey Club and the University Hockey Club using the facility as its base. Despite its location outside of Bournemouth Borough, there is no real desire expressed by England Hockey, nor by Bournemouth Hockey Club to move into the Borough to a new facility and England Hockey has confirmed its support for the facility through recent investment in a new surface on one of the pitches there. The University club has expressed a desire to have better access to a closer AGP, however, if the club is to grow, with transport to the facility several miles from the University posing problems for some students.

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<sup>7</sup> IRB 22 relates to the standard required of artificial turf for rugby. See [http://www.irb.com/mm/document/lawsregs/regulations/04/21/57/42157\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.irb.com/mm/document/lawsregs/regulations/04/21/57/42157_pdf.pdf) for the full regulation.

## *Bournemouth*

In Bournemouth, the findings translate into a need to identify locations for up to 3 AGPs for resident based play with a surface suitable for football which will serve informal small sided play and training for teams, as well as supporting pitch provision for competitive 11-a-side games. The provision of AGPs should therefore play a key role in supporting the overall demand for match play pitches.

In addition to provision for the resident population, a need for up to 1 AGP has been identified to serve the demand arising from international students. International Colleges should discuss options for provision with Bournemouth Borough Council and other partners such as Academies and the University to consider suitable sites and funding options available, and to ensure that any proposals are aligned with the needs identified in this assessment and the Sports Strategy for AGPs for the resident population. If possible, provision should be made to accommodate demand within a 20 minute walking catchment of one or more of the 5 biggest international colleges.

The priority for provision of the first AGP required to meet demand should be at Slades Farm where the AGP can also play a role in supporting rugby training to relieve some pressure on pitches at Meyrick Park, in particular. There may also be opportunities at King's Park as part of the masterplanning for the site should the proposed ice rink be developed.

There is a need identified for up to 1 additional AGP for hockey in the longer-term and the potential need for a pitch suitable for hockey should be revisited in the middle part of the strategy period to understand fully whether demand is present. A new hockey AGP may or may not be located in Bournemouth itself, with the 'hockey centre' now being developed at Chapel Gate in Christchurch Borough and further work with Christchurch Borough Council and England Hockey will be needed to define need and the most appropriate location for an additional pitch to serve Bournemouth's population.

## *Poole*

In Poole, the findings translate into a need to identify locations for up to 2 AGPs with a surface suitable for football which will serve informal small sided play and training for teams, as well as supporting pitch provision for competitive 11-a-side games. The provision of AGPs should therefore play a key role in supporting the overall demand for match play pitches.

The FA supports proposals for an AGP to replace the existing grass pitch at Hamworthy United FC which would see significant levels of secured community use. However, it is understood that discussions are on-going between the FA and the local authority about the most appropriate site for an AGP to serve the area.

For hockey, there *could be* potential demand for up to 1 pitch, although it is recommended that demand should be demonstrable prior to any additional provision, as the demand estimated comes principally from latent demand and participation increases, which may or may not be realised 'on the ground' during the strategy period. In addition, the provision of additional AGPs for football may free up any additional necessary capacity for hockey currently used for football at Ashdown Leisure Centre AGP.



## **'Non-traditional' Facilities**

## Wheel Parks

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 6 wheel parks*

*Unmet demand (2012): spatial gaps have been identified where additional wheel parks should be considered to enable young people to access a facility within a 20 minute walking distance.*

*Unmet demand (2026): unquantifiable at this stage. If gaps in existing provision are filled, further assessment based on local knowledge of demonstrable demand will indicate potential additional needs in 2026.*

*Key issues to address: continue with existing planned improvements and new facilities, improve the quality of existing facilities where necessary, explore provision of additional new wheel parks where there are spatial gaps in provision, local need is demonstrated 'on the ground' and where provision is viable in the short and long-term.*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 6 wheel parks (1 of which is commercial)*

*Unmet demand (2012): spatial gaps have been identified where additional wheel parks should be considered to enable young people to access a facility within a 20 minute walking distance.*

*Unmet demand (2026): unquantifiable at this stage. If gaps in existing provision are filled, further assessment based on local knowledge of demonstrable demand will indicate potential additional needs in 2026.*

*Key issues to address: continue with existing planned improvements and new facilities, maintain good quality facilities and improve the quality of existing facilities where necessary, explore provision of additional new wheel parks where there are spatial gaps in provision, local need is demonstrated 'on the ground' and where provision is viable in the short and long-term.*

### **Assessment Conclusions**

Wheel parks provide a free to access facility for use predominantly by young people who use BMXs and skateboards. They can also offer use to scooters, although there is some known conflict between users of BMX / skateboards with scooters largely due to the different age groups involved and speed of use of ramps. As well as performing a functional role, they can provide a social hub for young people just wanting to 'hang out', although the sometimes territorial nature of youth can mean that some wheel parks will be 'off-limits' to some young people.

Designed well and with the right materials and appropriate initial upfront investment they can also prove to be long-lasting and attractive additions to the urban landscape with minimal ongoing maintenance costs. For example, concrete parks are more durable and less noisy than metal ramps and can be

designed in a sculptural / artistic way contributing positively to the urban environment.

At some existing wheel parks, improvements have been identified as necessary through an audit of quality and consultation. In addition, there are known gaps in provision of wheel parks across both Boroughs which should be addressed during the strategy period to 2026. There will also likely be demands placed upon facility provision in response to an increasing population and of an increasing proportion of the population being comprised of young age groups.

The successful provision of wheel parks hinges on the involvement of the local community to ensure that they are well-placed and have the right design for the needs of users and in all cases where refurbished or new additional parks are proposed, local authority managed but community led involvement is key.

### ***Bournemouth and Poole***

Bournemouth and Poole are reasonably well-served by wheel park facilities by number. However, the size and quality of some facilities means that improvements will be needed to some during the lifetime of the strategy and that gaps in provision should be filled if viable to do so in the short-term (i.e. having sufficient capital to develop them) and the longer-term (i.e. that they are sustainable into the future with sufficient maintenance funds). A network of small, medium and large facilities should be provided to cater for a range of skills and ages and types of interest. In summary, the approach to provision in Bournemouth and Poole should be:

- ▶ Maintain existing good facilities;
- ▶ Enhance facilities which are in a poor condition;

- ▶ Where a facility is unavoidably 'lost', ensure adequate replacement of the facility or rationalisation (without reducing its capacity) at a location within its catchment area;
- ▶ Within this context, continue with current plans for scheduled improvements to existing facilities and provision of new facilities;
- ▶ When considering additional (new or replacement) provision within the areas of search identified below:
  - ▷ ensure that capital funds are in place to deliver the facility;
  - ▷ ensure that sufficient funds are in place to maintain the facility into the future;
  - ▷ ensure that noise levels are not disruptive to neighbours;
  - ▷ deliver durable concrete facilities (which are also quieter than metal or wooden ramps);
  - ▷ seek to locate them where 'hubs' of facilities such as play facilities and MUGAs already exist or are planned to be located, if possible;
  - ▷ seek to locate them in accessible places in locations where the catchment of young people likely to use them do not have significant physical barriers to access them (for example a main 'A' road which is difficult to cross safely within line of sight of the facility);
  - ▷ consult in depth with young people who live locally to ensure that provision meets their needs;
  - ▷ consult with local residents within a reasonable radius of the proposed facility (for example, 100m-200m).
- ▶ Prioritise delivery on the basis of 'best fit' in satisfying as many of the following conditions as apply:
  - ▷ absence of any provision (including wheel parks, MUGAs or BMX tracks) for young people in the vicinity or catchment identified for wheel parks;
  - ▷ absence of provision of wheel parks in the vicinity or catchment identified for wheel parks;
  - ▷ areas with poor IMD score (i.e. areas with higher levels of deprivation);
  - ▷ higher population densities;
  - ▷ site availability;
  - ▷ opportunity to deliver in conjunction with other scheduled improvements on the site / location;

- ▷ pressures from population growth / housing development; and,
- ▷ satisfactory consideration of the above criteria under 'When making additional (new or replacement) provision'.

### ***Bournemouth***

In Bournemouth, within the context of the above recommendations for Bournemouth and Poole, the key issues for the strategy are:

- ▶ Ensure that the quality of facilities is improved as necessary at the following facilities (or at a site within its catchment if replacement is required):
  - ▷ Slades Farm;
  - ▷ King's Park;
  - ▷ Duck Lane / Poole Lane; and,
  - ▷ Redhill Park.
- ▶ Subject to locally demonstrable demand, viability of provision and maintenance of facilities in the future, consider making provision in the following areas of search at the appropriate scale so that there is coverage of provision within walking distance where medium and large facilities have a coverage area or catchment of 20 minutes walking distance (approximately one mile) and where small facilities have a 10 minute walking catchment:
  - ▷ East Southbourne / Tuckton;
  - ▷ West Southbourne;
  - ▷ Throop / Muscliff;
  - ▷ Charminster / Moordown;
  - ▷ Strouden;
  - ▷ Boscombe East;
  - ▷ Queen's Park – Winton Recreation Ground;
  - ▷ Meyrick Park / Talbot Woods;
  - ▷ Westbourne and Westcliff; and,

- ▷ Central Bournemouth (if the proposals for a wheel park at Horseshoe Common are delivered, there may be no further need to find a site in central Bournemouth).

## ***Poole***

In Poole, within the context of the above recommendations for Bournemouth and Poole, the key issues for the strategy are:

- ▶ Ensure that the quality of facilities is improved as necessary at the following facilities (or at a site within its catchment if replacement is required):
  - ▷ Fleetsbridge; and,
  - ▷ Harbourside Park (Baiter).
- ▶ Subject to locally demonstrable demand, viability of provision and maintenance of facilities in the future, consider making provision in the following areas of search at the appropriate scale so that there is coverage of provision within walking distance where medium and large facilities have a coverage area or catchment of 20 minutes walking distance (approximately one mile) and where small facilities have a 10 minute walking catchment:
  - ▷ Branksome Park;
  - ▷ Branksome East;
  - ▷ Parkstone;
  - ▷ Canford Cliffs;
  - ▷ Hamworthy / Turlin Moor;
  - ▷ Longfleet;
  - ▷ Creekmoor;
  - ▷ Broadstone; and,
  - ▷ Merley.

## Watersports

### Bournemouth Summary

*Key issues to address:*

- ▶ *improve the quality of existing facilities and provide new supporting infrastructure to help ensure a high quality experience for participants where that provision serves multiple user groups and is capable of being used for other non-sporting coastline leisure and learning activities;*
- ▶ *work across departments (for example, Parks, Tourism, Economic Development, Planning) and with the appropriate organisations and local businesses to ensure that the quality of the offer is improved and delivered in a co-ordinated way and that the offer for watersports participants is widely communicated;*
- ▶ *support the proposals being developed as part of the Seafront masterplan for a multi-watersports hub facility and supporting infrastructure within the proposed Boscombe Coastal Activity Park;*
- ▶ *support continual improvement to the facilities at Hengistbury Head; continue to explore solutions for more suitable facilities for the Westover Rowing Club through continuing work on the Seafront Masterplan, to include a new 'hub' facility (based on accessibility to multiple watersports); and,*
- ▶ *maintain the quality of existing publicly accessible slipways and monitor their use to ensure that demand does not outstrip supply if watersport*



## Poole Summary

*Key issues to address:*

- ▶ *improve the quality of existing facilities and provide new supporting infrastructure to help ensure a high quality experience for participants where that provision serves multiple user groups and is capable of being used for other non-sporting coastline leisure and learning activities;*
- ▶ *work across departments (for example, Parks, Tourism, Economic Development, Planning) and with the appropriate organisations and local businesses to ensure that the quality of the offer is improved and delivered in a co-ordinated way and that the offer for watersports participants is widely communicated;*
- ▶ *support the proposals being developed as part of the Sustaining Poole's Seafront Draft Supplementary Planning Document, for example, a multi-watersports hub facility and supporting infrastructure at Branksome Beach;*
- ▶ *support continual improvement to the facilities at Hamworthy Outdoor Centre;*
- ▶ *support the delivery of improvements to the supporting infrastructure for Poole Harbour Canoe Club;*
- ▶ *work with all relevant partners with an active interest in watersports in Poole Harbour to consider the full implications of the VALMER study on Poole Harbour (when published in full in March 2014); and,*
- ▶ *maintain the quality of existing publicly accessible slipways and monitor their use to ensure that demand does not outstrip supply if watersport participation grows during the strategy period.*

## **Assessment Conclusions**

Watersports are clearly important to the local economy in Bournemouth and Poole, and the coastline and Poole Harbour provide a beneficial asset for residents and visitors alike. Plans for seafront regeneration in both

Bournemouth and Poole are well-advanced, with a draft masterplan and draft Supplementary Planning Document produced in Bournemouth and Poole respectively. From evidence gathered for the assessment, there is nothing to suggest that these plans should not be implemented and improvements to the facilities, both for sports specifically and for wider seafront visitor use such as toilets and accessible showers, will support growth in club based and informal watersport participation. Given the nature of many watersports accessing shared areas of coastline and the needs being similar (in terms of toilets, changing rooms, showers, refreshments and storage for equipment), the focus in additional provision should be for multi-sports hubs as proposed in the emerging plans.

With improvements to the infrastructure supporting watersports leading to anticipated increases in participation and return visitors, facilities for lifesaving clubs must also be improved given the important role they play (not only for watersport participants but also for visitors using the beaches for summer leisure).

No issues have been raised in Bournemouth or Poole suggesting that sailing provision and facilities needs improving at members' sailing and yacht clubs.

It is important to ensure that a package of support is given to the coastline which embraces the wider visitor experience as well as providing supporting facilities for watersport participants, an approach being embraced by the emerging plans for the seafront in both Bournemouth and Poole. While some consultation has identified higher priority improvements to the coastline for visitors to Bournemouth than for watersports (largely around amenities and leisure activities), improvements for the wider activities associated with the coastline will benefit watersport participants, reflected by comments received for this assessment highlighting the importance of supporting facilities such as good choices of refreshments.

## ***Bournemouth and Poole***

The overall strategy approach to watersports in Bournemouth and Poole is to improve the quality of existing facilities and provide new supporting infrastructure to help ensure a high quality experience for participants, where that provision serves multiple user groups and is capable of being used for other non-sporting coastline leisure and learning activities. This should focus on secure seafront and harbour facilities to support club development and increase in informal participation and be located at or near to most used and accessible parts of the coast used by watersport users. Wherever practicable to do so, facilities should be flexibly designed to enable access by a number of watersport users likely to be active in the area (acting as watersport 'hubs') and also be accessible by non-watersports users using the area for other leisure activities. Suitable scale and types of commercial opportunities (for example, refreshments and cafes, sports equipment / wear, hire of room space, etc.) at improved facility locations should be supported in principle.

Alongside improvements to facilities, the local authorities should work across departments (for example, Parks, Tourism, Economic Development, Planning) and with the appropriate organisations and local businesses to ensure that the quality of the offer is improved and delivered in a co-ordinated way and that the offer for watersports participants is widely communicated, using existing platforms for publicity and exploring new ways of communicating the offer. Any improvements to facilities should be sustainable in the long-term and be delivered within the context of the wider coast / seafront plans.

Across Bournemouth and Poole, in the medium to long-term, demand for watersports should be closely monitored through liaison with key local clubs, watersports businesses and active individuals to identify future needs for participants beyond those identified to date. Future provision should be

demand-led and also identified in conjunction with the relevant national sports governing body / bodies.

### ***Bournemouth***

In Bournemouth, within the context of the above approach, the initial priorities for watersports should be:

- ▶ To support the proposals being developed as part of the Seafront masterplan for a multi-watersports hub facility and supporting infrastructure within the proposed Boscombe Coastal Activity Park;
- ▶ Support continual improvement to the facilities at Hengistbury Head;
- ▶ Continue to explore solutions for more suitable facilities for the Westover Rowing Club through continuing work on the Seafront Masterplan, to include a new 'hub' facility (based on accessibility to multiple watersports) near to West Cliff / Durley Chine; and,
- ▶ Maintain the quality of existing publicly accessible slipways and monitor their use to ensure that demand does not outstrip supply if watersport participation grows during the strategy period.

### ***Poole***

Consultation with Councillors at Borough of Poole suggested that there may be a lack of public access to the harbour. However, despite some respondents to the VALMER study requesting additional access points, on the whole, evidence has not identified an overwhelming demand for additional public slipways to be provided in the short-term. However, the use of public slipways in Poole should be monitored to ensure that demand does not outstrip the supply available during the strategy period, particularly if demand grows substantially.

In Poole Harbour, the VALMER project findings (expected to be published in full during March 2014) will need to be further scrutinised to inform improvements and additions to provision. However, in the short-term, proposals such as that at the Poole Harbour Canoe Club for replacement of existing facilities at Ham Common will improve the quality of provision if delivered.

In Poole, within the context of the above approach and this assessment, the initial priorities for watersports should be:

- ▶ To support the proposals being developed as part of the Sustaining Poole's Seafront Draft Supplementary Planning Document, for example, a multi-watersports hub facility and supporting infrastructure at Branksome Beach (to provide a new facility for Branksome Chine lifesaving club but also wider use by watersports participants) and to improve or extend lifeguard station at Canford Cliffs Beach;
- ▶ Support continual improvement to the facilities at Hamworthy Outdoor Centre;
- ▶ Support the delivery of improvements to the supporting infrastructure for Poole Harbour Canoe Club;
- ▶ Work with all relevant partners with an active interest in watersports in Poole Harbour to consider the full implications of the VALMER study on Poole Harbour (when published in full in March 2014) to introduce additional improvements where necessary and to further inform demand and need during the strategy period; and,
- ▶ Maintain the quality of existing publicly accessible slipways and monitor their use to ensure that demand does not outstrip supply if watersport participation grows during the strategy period.

## Beach Sports

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: up to 4 beach soccer courts and 2 beach volleyball courts plus the indoor beach volleyball hall at the LeAF Academy.*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): none identified.*

*Key issues to address: support the emerging seafront plans and respond to the findings of this assessment in the short-term by:*

- ▶ *continuing to maintain the good quality of the courts;*
- ▶ *considering the introduction of secure lockers near to courts in appropriate locations; and,*
- ▶ *seek to improve marketing and publicity for the courts to increase their use.*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 2 permanent beach soccer courts and 2 – 8 beach volleyball courts (depending on demand).*

*Unmet demand (2012): none.*

*Unmet demand (2026): none identified.*

*Key issues to address: support the emerging seafront plans and respond to the findings of this assessment in the short-term by:*

- ▶ continuing to maintain the good quality of the courts;*
- ▶ considering the introduction of secure lockers near to courts in appropriate locations;*
- ▶ ensuring that nets are in good condition at Canford Cliffs courts;*
- ▶ considering the introduction of high nets around the goals at the Canford Cliffs courts; and,*
- ▶ seeking to improve marketing and publicity for the courts to increase their use.*

### **Assessment Conclusions**

Bournemouth and Poole are fortunate to have good beach soccer and beach volleyball facilities. As well as courts for each sport in both towns, there is a good indoor facility for beach volleyball at the LeAF Academy in Bournemouth. Poole has two permanent beach soccer courts which are used by England Beach Soccer team to train and which is the only location in England with this number of permanent courts. Plans are well-advanced for improving provision in both Bournemouth and Poole in their respective seafront plans and there is no new evidence which suggests any departure from proposals developed to date. Further shaping and confirmation of the emerging proposals should continue through each Councils' consultation with the community and other key

stakeholders. Support for beach sports will also be provided through the improvement to the overall quality of facilities and the visitor experience along the seafront areas.

### ***Bournemouth***

In Bournemouth, the key focus for the strategy should be to align with the emerging seafront plans and responding to the findings of this assessment in the short-term by:

- ▶ Continue to maintain the good quality of the courts;
- ▶ Consider introducing secure lockers near to courts in appropriate locations; and,
- ▶ Seek to improve marketing and publicity for the courts to increase their use.

### ***Poole***

In Poole, the key focus for the strategy should be to align with the emerging seafront plans and responding to the findings of this assessment in the short-term by:

- ▶ Continue to maintain the good quality of the courts;
- ▶ Consider introducing secure lockers, if feasible and practical to do so, near to courts in appropriate locations;
- ▶ Ensure that nets are in good condition at Canford Cliffs courts;
- ▶ Consider the introduction of high nets around the goals at the Canford Cliffs courts; and,
- ▶ Seek to improve marketing and publicity for the courts to increase their use.



## Off-road Cycling

### Bournemouth Summary

*Current provision: 1 outdoor velodrome, 1 informal circular path, 3 BMX 'pump' tracks, 1 BMX track with jumps, 1 BMX racing track*

*Unmet demand (2012): some spatial gaps in provision exist for BMX dirt / pump tracks.*

*Unmet demand (2026): none quantified but demand 'on the ground' should be monitored so that additional provision can be made if necessary by 2026.*

*Key issues to address:*

- ▶ *improve the quality of the Townsend BMX track and Winton Cycle track;*
- ▶ *continue to work with the Bournemouth BMX Club to secure and deliver required improvements to the Iford BMX track;*
- ▶ *continue to work with the Bournemouth Cycling Centre to make improvements to the supporting facilities on site and to increase capacity of the track (through introducing a covering structure over the track and floodlighting if possible) as part of the Slades Farm masterplan; and,*
- ▶ *should demand be demonstrated 'on the ground' and short term (capital investment) and long term (maintenance) viability be secured consider provision for up to 2 additional informal BMX tracks in areas outside of the existing catchments of provision of freely accessible tracks.*

### Poole Summary

*Current provision: 5 BMX tracks and 1 cycle speedway track*

*Unmet demand (2012): some spatial gaps in provision exist for BMX dirt / pump tracks.*

*Unmet demand (2026): none quantified but demand 'on the ground' should be monitored so that additional provision can be made if necessary by 2026.*

*Key issues to address:*

- ▶ *improve the quality of the Hamworthy, Foreland Road and Harbourside Park BMX tracks; and,*
- ▶ *work with Bournemouth BMX Club to identify a suitable site and draw-up a business case for an additional BMX track in an area of search north of the A35 or improve an existing track where the location is suitable for increased club based use to provide capacity should they wish to expand. Should demand be demonstrated 'on the ground' consider provision for an additional informal BMX track north of the A35 should delivery and long-term maintenance prove viable (should a club based track not be forthcoming in that area).*

### **Assessment Conclusions**

Cycling in all its forms is becoming more popular as an informal activity and sport in on and off road disciplines. As well as sporting and competitive riding, using a bike can positively contribute to general fitness and keeping fit and active and therefore has a cross-over to health and transport issues as well as sport. While the assessment has predominantly considered facilities for cycling, these must not be treated in isolation when considering strategy options. Opportunities should be taken to ensure that cycling facilities are well-linked to existing and future cycle routes across Bournemouth and Poole and are integrated within the planning of the cycling network across the conurbation. While outside the remit of this assessment, where opportunities arise, sport

tourism should be embraced both at the informal leisure level and at the competitive and spectator level by attracting elite cycling competition to the area.

Both Bournemouth and Poole are fortunate to have some very good facilities for cycling: Bournemouth with the BMX racing track at Iford and the outdoor velodrome at Slades Farm (which is a good central location to serve the conurbation as a whole) and in Poole with the Cycle Speedway facility. In addition both have informal access BMX dirt tracks with 2 in Bournemouth and 5 in Poole, which are important not just to young people (in that they provide a very different riding experience to freestyle BMX facilities shared with skateboards at wheel parks), but perform an important role in offering a set-aside area for BMX riding which can take pressure away from other green spaces and semi-natural areas of land which may have landscape, habitat, ecological or other environmental protection and which may otherwise be at greater risk from BMXs (and mountain bikes) if the 'formally designated' tracks were not there.

### ***Bournemouth and Poole***

The strategy in Bournemouth and Poole should be to:

- ▶ Seek to ensure that existing provision is maintained and enhanced where improvements are necessary. This means supporting, in principle and in partnership, improvements to informal BMX tracks and also improvements to formal cycling facilities. Growth in the use of formal facilities should be supported by helping clubs and facilities to grow patronage and membership where necessary to maximise their use. For informal use BMX tracks it also means that, although demand is difficult to quantify with accuracy, recognising the important role that they can and should play as a facility for young people but also as a way to help prevent damage to the local protected landscape and environment;
- ▶ Seek to fill gaps in provision where necessary and viable to do so in the short term (in terms of initial capital required) and in the long-term (i.e. ensuring

that maintenance can be sustained into the future). Potential should be explored further, locally, and action taken to deliver additional BMX tracks if demand is demonstrated and they are deliverable;

- ▶ Where a facility is unavoidably 'lost', ensure adequate replacement of the facility or rationalisation (without reducing its capacity) at a location within its catchment area;
- ▶ Within this context, continue with current plans for scheduled improvements to existing facilities and provision of new facilities;
- ▶ When considering additional (new or replacement) provision of informal (non-club based) cycling facilities or BMX tracks:
  - ▷ ensure that capital funds are in place to deliver the facility;
  - ▷ ensure that sufficient funds are in place to maintain the facility into the future;
  - ▷ ensure that noise levels are not disruptive to neighbours;
  - ▷ seek to locate them where 'hubs' of facilities such as wheel parks and MUGAs already exist or are planned to be located, if possible;
  - ▷ seek to locate them in accessible places in locations where the catchment of young people likely to use them do not have significant physical barriers to access them (for example a main 'A' road which is difficult to cross safely within line of sight of the facility);
  - ▷ consult in depth with young people who live locally to ensure that provision meets their needs; and,
  - ▷ consult with local residents within a reasonable radius of the proposed facility (for example, 100m-200m).
- ▶ Monitor changes to demand in off-road cycling by keeping regular contact with facility management and local clubs to enable demand-led additional provision to be made as necessary for 'formal' cycling facilities.

### ***Bournemouth***

Within this context, in Bournemouth, the strategy's focus should be to:

- ▶ Improve the quality of the Townsend BMX track and Winton Cycle track;

- ▶ Continue to work with the Bournemouth BMX Club to secure and deliver required improvements to the Iford BMX track;
- ▶ Continue to work with the Bournemouth Cycling Centre to make improvements to the supporting facilities on site and to increase capacity of the track (through introducing a covering structure over the track and floodlighting if possible) as part of the Slades Farm masterplan; and,
- ▶ Should demand be demonstrated 'on the ground' and short term (capital investment) and long term (maintenance) viability be secured consider provision for up to 2 additional informal BMX tracks in areas outside of the existing catchments of provision of freely accessible tracks.

### ***Poole***

Within this context, in Poole, the strategy's focus should be to:

- ▶ Improve the quality of the Hamworthy, Foreland Road and Harbourside Park BMX tracks; and,
- ▶ Work with Bournemouth BMX Club to identify a suitable site and draw-up a business case for an additional BMX track in an area of search north of the A35 or improve an existing track where the location is suitable for increased club based use to provide capacity should they wish to expand. Should demand be demonstrated 'on the ground' consider provision for an additional informal BMX track north of the A35 should delivery and long-term maintenance prove viable (should a club based track not be forthcoming in that area).

## Parkour

### Bournemouth Summary

*Key issues to address: a site for a parkour facility should identified in Bournemouth Borough, given the town seems to be the focus for parkour in the south east Dorset conurbation. If a site for a facility can be found, plans should be deliverable (i.e. have capital investment up front to build it) and sustainable in the long-term (i.e. have sufficient funds available for maintenance or at least a mechanism through which funds can be raised to secure maintenance), prior to commitment.*

### **Assessment Conclusions**

The level of interest in parkour in Bournemouth and Poole seems to support a need for a facility for the sport. A well-designed facility meeting the needs of participants will provide a hub for parkour. It could help to alleviate concerns which may exist about people using existing structures and provide a focus around which safe and structured learning and training can take place as well as informal use. There are lessons that can be learnt from existing parkour facilities provided elsewhere in the country and a number of useful suggestions have been made through the survey undertaken for the assessment to help frame appropriate provision.

It is suggested that a site for a facility is identified in Bournemouth Borough, given the town being the focus of support for parkour in the south east Dorset conurbation. If a site for a facility can be found, plans should be deliverable (i.e. have capital investment up front to build it) and sustainable in the long-term (i.e. have sufficient funds available for maintenance or at least a mechanism through which funds can be raised to secure maintenance) prior to commitment.

The search for a suitable site for a facility should consider the following criteria. An appropriate site should:

- ▶ Be in an overlooked or well-used area such as a well-used park or adjacent to a leisure centre to minimise the potential for vandalism to the facility;
- ▶ Be in a central location within easy (walkable) distance to public transport nodes;
- ▶ Be located alongside existing or proposed wheelpark or MUGA to encourage use of the facilities, creating an outdoor activity 'hub' for young people; and,
- ▶ Be located or have the opportunity to be near to refreshments.

Due to cost, it is likely that an outdoor facility will be more viable than an indoor one (although a shared facility with use for gymnastics as identified in the sports halls assessment may be an attractive proposition for parkour for the winter months and for training, if provided in addition to an outdoor facility). However, close consultation with users of a facility and groups such as Train Hard Parkour and Freerunning CIC and the sports governing body, Parkour UK, should take place to help determine an appropriate site and nature of the facility.

# **Orienteering**

## **Assessment Conclusions**

Orienteering has an opportunity to grow as a sport in and around Bournemouth and Poole. However, due to the nature of the sport requiring predominantly open green space, there are limitations to how many trails can be set-up and formally designated across the Boroughs. However, as far as practicable, Bournemouth Borough Council and Borough of Poole should work with the orienteering club to designate additional new trails if the demand suggests a need and there is funding available to do so in the initial and longer-term to sustain routes. There are a number of other things that the Borough Councils could help with, including exploring with the clubs opportunities to help promote the sport more widely to young people and families and exploring opportunities to allow the club access to a multi-sport hub facility if developed as part of other wider plans for sports hubs.



## **Outdoor Gyms**

### **Assessment Conclusions**

Bournemouth Borough Council has asked for an assessment to be done of demand and need for outdoor gyms. The assessment has utilised information gathered for other assessments such as that for running and athletics and also data collected by Bournemouth Borough Council on use of parks. As the Borough of Poole already has outdoor gyms, evidence of use of has also been used to benchmark potential use in Bournemouth.

Based on evidence gathered on potential demand in Bournemouth and on experience of use of outdoor fitness equipment in Poole, provision should be made as currently proposed in Bournemouth (i.e. at Slades Farm, on the seafront, Horseshoe Common and King's Park). When this provision has been delivered, its use should be monitored to determine whether additional facilities will be required. Any additional facilities should be provided in locations where they are likely to be used by runners and other users.

## **Outdoor table tennis**

### **Assessment Conclusions**

Bournemouth Borough Council asked for an assessment to be undertaken of outdoor table tennis facilities. While it is very difficult to estimate likely demand, various sources of information have been used to help determine whether or not investment in such facilities is worthwhile and cost-effective.

While there is little evidence locally to substantiate the provision of a particular number of outdoor table tennis tables in Bournemouth, an indication of demand from the Parks Survey and the success of pilot projects elsewhere supported by the ETTA suggest that having a similar pilot project in a park in Bournemouth would be beneficial to help establish whether provision on a more permanent basis in other locations across the town would be worthwhile. This could be developed in partnership with the ETTA and other interested stakeholders. Temporary provision in seafront locations may also be worth trialling at the height of summer (although success will be closely linked to the weather conditions).

Should a pilot prove successful, further tables could be installed at other locations during the middle and later parts of the strategy period if funding for their provision and long-term maintenance can be secured.

## **International Students**

## Assessment Conclusions

The assessment highlights that much of the demand identified below arises from students attending colleges in Bournemouth, where most are located. Provision in response is therefore likely to be best located within Bournemouth Borough.

- ▶ Assessment suggests that there is a need for the following provision of built facilities (in addition to that identified for the resident population), should the student numbers remain relatively consistent in the period to 2026. Provision for formal built facilities (halls, pools and artificial grass pitches) are based upon provision being made to accommodate student demand only. Should arrangements be made for access to shared facilities, which would limit access, the requirement in terms of the amount of courts or space would increase.
  - ▷ A 4 badminton court sports hall;
  - ▷ 2 lanes of a 25m swimming pool;
  - ▷ 1 full size artificial grass pitch;
  - ▷ 1 multi-use games area (marked out for basketball and five-a-side football); and,
  - ▷ 8 additional gym stations.
- ▶ Where possible, hall provision should be made within existing capacity if capacity can be unlocked at existing facilities as a result of the recommendations in the assessment for resident based demand for hallspace. If this cannot be achieved, consideration of new additional hallspace should be made.
- ▶ Provision should be made to accommodate demand identified above within a 20 minute walking catchment of one or more of the 5 biggest international colleges if possible (understood to be ETC International College, Kings, Anglo Continental, Southbourne School of English and Kaplan International College).
- ▶ For all proposed additional capacity, international colleges should discuss opportunities to bring forward facilities with the relevant Borough Council and schools / colleges / Academies to utilise existing opportunities to bring forward facilities and ensure that proposals tie in with the Sports Strategy.

- ▶ Opportunities for international students to use existing facilities should be better signposted. For example, Borough Councils and international colleges could work more closely to ensure that students know how and where to access facilities (both those identified above in terms of additional needs and other facilities such as tennis courts and the key fob system, which could introduce monthly membership to attract international students to join). SPOGO (<https://spogo.co.uk/>) or social media could be better utilised to raise awareness of facilities.
- ▶ A pilot scheme could be established to mark out some outdoor courts for volleyball or handball in park spaces. Nets, goals and balls could be provided by colleges for a deposit for students to use and return. Alternatively, an enclosed area could be set-up, if funding could be found for initial capital costs, and a key fob system introduced for international students and residents to use courts marked out permanently for handball and volleyball.
- ▶ In order to get an accurate picture of demand, monitoring should be introduced with the international colleges and Borough Councils working together to understand the levels of use of facilities and latent demand generated by students. This would involve getting a sample of responses from students when they arrive and again when they leave over a 1 month period initially and combining this with annual collation of data on the number of students coming to Bournemouth and Poole, where they stay and the duration of their stay.