



**East Devon District Council**

**East Devon Playing Pitch Strategy**

**Revised Draft Honiton Sports Pitch  
Strategy**

**October 2016**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Revised Draft Honiton Sports Pitch Strategy assesses a number of options and makes draft recommendations on how to deliver on the sports pitch needs for Honiton to 2024 as identified in the East Devon Playing Pitch Strategy.

The report assesses a number of sites against a methodology and then recommends ways to meet the sports pitch needs of Honiton. The table below summarises these recommendations which are discussed in more detail within the strategy and identified on the plan found at Appendix 7.

Site	Revised Draft recommendations*
Mountbatten Park (HA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install drainage to increase pitch capacity on site</li> <li>• Enhance/extend/replace existing clubhouse with up to 2 storey building to serve all proposed pitches in this vicinity</li> <li>• Explore options for additional car parking on-site</li> <li>• Install new cricket training nets</li> </ul>
St. Rita's (HB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install drainage to increase pitch capacity on site</li> <li>• Improve accessibility along Turks Head Lane</li> </ul>
All Hallows (HC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install drainage and floodlights</li> </ul>
Honiton Community College (HD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install floodlit sand-based AGP</li> </ul>
St. Rita's extension (H1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New pitches site comprising of <i>either</i>:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2x Youth 11v11 and 2x mini 5v5 football pitches;</li> <li><i>or</i></li> <li>○ Relocated 10x grass (plus 1x artificial) wicket cricket ground and small cricket pavilion</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Explore options for additional car parking</li> </ul>
Former Showground (H4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New pitches site comprising of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2x Senior rugby pitches</li> <li>○ 3x Midi rugby pitches</li> <li>○ Changing facilities and parking</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Former Manor House School (H5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring playing field back into community use on a temporary and overflow basis for use by football and rugby clubs until other projects are completed.</li> </ul>


\*It is important to note that the recommendations in this strategy are not a substitute for planning permission and do not mean that such proposals would necessarily gain planning permission. All planning applications are considered on their own merits against the development plan and any relevant material considerations at the time.

### Public consultation

If you have any comments regarding this Revised Draft Honiton Sports Pitch Strategy then please send representations to the contact details below by **5pm on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2016**. Any comments received after this point will not necessarily be taken into account.

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- Appendix 1 – Stage 1 sites – Honiton
- Appendix 2 – STRI Stage 1 Report
- Appendix 3 – Stage 2 sites – Honiton
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- Appendix 6 – Site by site sustainability and suitability assessment
- Appendix 7 – Revised draft recommendations plan
- Appendix 8 – Honiton Development Trust plans for Tower Hill

## VERSION CONTROL

Version Number	Reason for Update	Date
01	Public Consultation Draft	27/05/2016
02	Draft for Strategic Planning Committee	24/10/2016

## INTRODUCTION

- I.1 The East Devon Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) was adopted in June 2015. The PPS is a robust evidence base which considers strategic and site specific issues for sports pitches around the district and recommends action plans for their resolution.
- I.2 This report responds to the PPS action plans with regards to sports pitch development in Honiton. It does not aim to review the core data or information that went into the PPS, rather it takes that information from it and aims to deliver solutions to the issues which have been highlighted.
- I.3 Honiton is a market town in the central part of East Devon district. In 2012 it had an estimated population of 11,608<sup>1</sup>. It's location in the Otter river valley on the edge of the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONBs, sandwiched between the A30 trunk road and floodplain to the north and west and the hills of the East Devon AONB to the south and east makes it a particularly difficult place to find relatively flat land suitable for sports pitch development.
- I.4 The PPS highlighted the following strategic action plans for Honiton for **F**ootball, **R**ugby, **C**ricket, **H**ockey and **O**ther users:

Action Ref.	Sport	Action
HO.1	<b>R</b>	Explore possibilities for the rugby club to move to a new site capable of providing a total of 3x senior pitches, 5x mini/midi pitches, floodlit grass training areas and appropriate ancillary facilities preferably all on the same site. Definite plan of action to be agreed through the ongoing PPS Steering group by December 2015. If no alternative options are found to be deliverable then Tower Hill proposals should be explored more fully. Should the rugby club stay at All Hallows, efficient drainage must be installed.
HO.2	<b>O</b>	Ensure that All Hallows remains available for Honiton Community College to use.
HO.5	<b>F</b> <b>C</b>	Explore the possibility of moving the senior football club to a new site capable of providing 2 stand-alone, well-drained football pitches with suitable ancillary facilities. Cricket and mini football pitches could remain at Mountbatten. Definite plan of action to be agreed through the ongoing PPS Steering group by December 2015. If no alternative options are found to be deliverable then Tower Hill proposals should be explored more fully.
HO.13	<b>F</b>	Explore options for delivering additional youth football pitches at St Rita's and levelling and draining existing pitches. If this is not possible then consider alternative options. Definite plan of action to be agreed through the ongoing PPS Steering group by December 2015.
HO.18	<b>F</b> <b>C</b> <b>R</b> <b>H</b> <b>O</b>	Explore the possibility of addressing all Honiton pitch issues on alternative sites better related to the existing town and outside of the AONB first but if there are no realistic alternatives then some pitches may need to be delivered on Tower Hill.
HO.20	<b>H</b> <b>O</b>	Encourage and support the provision of a full size, floodlit, <u>sand-based</u> AGP at Honiton Community College available for community use outside of school times, along with suitably accessible changing facilities for such community use (accessible without the main school building being open). Pitch must be suitable for local football and rugby teams to conduct non-contact all weather floodlit training.

<sup>1</sup> PPSA (2012) "2012 PPSA population estimate for East Devon"

I.5 This subsequent report sets out recommendations on how to implement the actions and resolve the core issue of undersupply of sports pitches in Honiton.

I.6 The PPS included an appendix which covered Honiton pitch issues in greater detail than other locations. This appendix showed that in 2014 there was demand for the following sports pitches in total in Honiton with no overmarking (assumes capacity of provision at “standard” quality):

Pitch type	Sport	Number
Adult 11v11	Football	1
Youth 11v11	Football	2
Youth 9v9	Football	2
Mini 7v7	Football	1
Mini 5v5	Football	1
Grass wicket	Cricket	9
Senior rugby	Rugby	2
Mini/Midi rugby	Rugby	4
Sand-based AGP	Hockey	1

I.7 It then showed that by 2024 there would be the following demand for sports pitches in total in Honiton.

Pitch type	Sport	Number	Increase
Adult 11v11	Football	2	+1
Youth 11v11	Football	2	0
Youth 9v9	Football	3	+1
Mini 7v7	Football	2	+1
Mini 5v5	Football	2	+1
Grass wicket	Cricket	6	0
Junior grass wicket	Cricket	5	+2
Senior rugby	Rugby	3	+1
Mini/Midi rugby	Rugby	5	+1
Sand-based AGP	Hockey	1	0

I.8 Currently the following provision exists:

Pitch type	Sport	Number (overmarked)	Under/over supply on 2014 reqs	Under/over supply on 2024 reqs
Adult 11v11	Football	2	+1	0
Youth 11v11	Football	2	0	0
Youth 9v9	Football	1(1)	-1	-2
Mini 7v7	Football	0(2)	-1	-2
Mini 5v5	Football	0(2)	-1	-2
Grass wicket	Cricket	10 +1 artificial	+2	0
Senior rugby	Rugby	2	0	-1
Mini/Midi rugby	Rugby	0	-4	-5
Sand-based AGP	Hockey	0	-1	-1

I.9 In addition to the above it is important to note that whilst there are potentially sufficient numbers of adult 11v11 and youth 11v11 football pitches there is an ongoing issue of shared use with the cricket ground at Mountbatten Park which may require either the football pitches or cricket pitch to relocate.



I.10 With so many additional pitches required to meet both current (2014) and projected (2024) demands it is important to think strategically and holistically about the provision of new pitches in Honiton. This means exploring options for wholesale relocation of clubs/facilities as well as potentially just improvements to existing and additional pitches to supplement existing and weighing up the pros and cons of each option.

**Methodology**

I.11 A methodology was worked up by an officer working group to consider the site options for new sports pitches. This involved 4 stages broken down into 9 steps.

**Stage 1 – Identification of sites**

- Step A – Objective search for potential sites to take sports pitch development
- Step B – Rationalisation through basic feasibility assessment

**Stage 2 – Site assessments**

- Step C – Site surveys
- Step D – Potential site plans
- Step E – Basic sustainability and suitability assessment

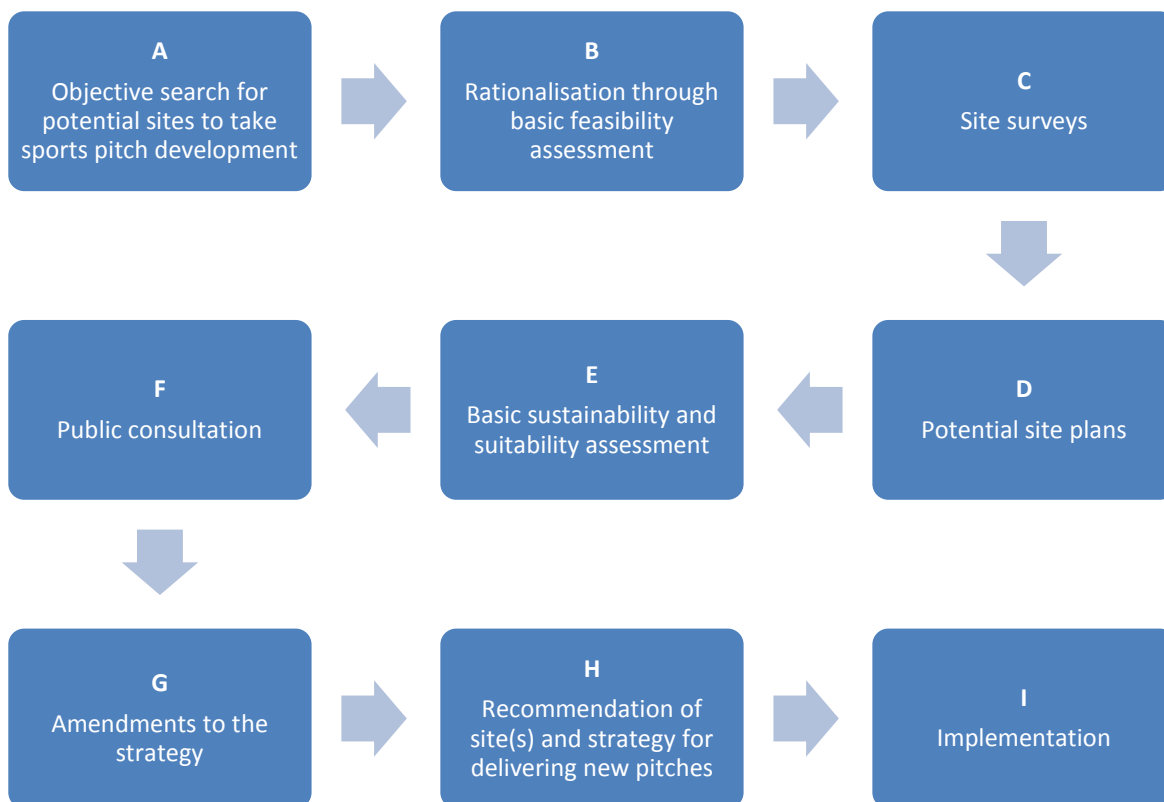
**Stage 3 – Finalising recommendations**

- Step F – Public consultation
- Step G – Amendments to strategy
- Step H – Recommendation of site(s) and strategy for delivering new pitches

**Stage 4 – Implementation**

- Step I - Implementation

The diagram below sets out the general process of this methodology.



- I.12 Following this process would ensure there was a clear audit trail and robust evidence base as to how and why options were selected and developed. Having such a clear evidence base should help to streamline the planning application process, site acquisition process and delivery process further down the line.

## **Policy context**

### National policy

- I.13 Paragraph 73 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning policies on sport and recreation and their application to be underpinned by robust evidence:

*‘Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.’*

- I.14 The Playing Pitch Strategy and the Open Space Study provide the robust evidence base required by paragraph 73 and these are translated into policy in Strategy 43 of the new Local Plan (2013-2031).

- I.15 Paragraph 74 of the NPPF protects open spaces including playing pitches from development unless certain criteria are met:

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

- 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.’*

### East Devon Local Plan (2013-2031)

- I.16 Policy RC1 of the new Local Plan (2013-2031) builds on NPPF paragraph 74 in protecting existing open space sites from development.
- I.17 Policy RC2 allows for the provision of new or enhancing of existing recreation facilities including playing pitches where certain criteria are met. Compliance with this policy will be key for delivery of new sports pitch sites at Honiton.
- I.18 Policy RC4 allows for the provision of new recreation facilities in the countryside and on the coast where certain criteria are met. This policy may apply where sites are more remote from the main urban area of Honiton.

- I.19 Policy RC5 allows for new community buildings and developer contributions to be sought towards their provision. This covers sports clubhouse facilities which may be required on new sites.
- I.20 Policy RC6 allows for new or enhanced community facilities to be provided where certain criteria are met. Compliance with this policy will be key where there is a requirement for built facilities on site such as changing rooms, clubhouse etc.
- I.21 Policy RC7 requires new community facilities to be capable of dual use where appropriate. It will be expected that any new built facilities are designed to be usable by other community groups as well as the specific sports club(s) that they serve. This will ensure effective and efficient use of land and space as well as potentially enabling greater viability for the club/owner of the facility.
- I.22 In addition to sports and community facility specific policies, proposals for new sports pitch sites will need to have due consideration to design, environment and transport policies amongst others.
- I.23 Strategy 3 sets the Local Plan’s objective for sustainable development.
- I.24 Strategy 4 sets out how social and community facilities which would include sports clubs are an integral part of creating balanced communities.
- I.25 Strategy 5B requires all developments to contribute towards or be located in suitable locations to allow sustainable travel.
- I.26 Strategy 6 sets out when development within Built-up Area Boundaries (BuABs) will be permitted. No new sites are proposed within the Honiton BuAB, however All Hallows is within the BuAB.
- I.27 Strategy 7 restricts development in the countryside to only allow for it when it is in accordance with specific policies and criteria. All sites being considered are outside of the Honiton Built-up Area Boundary (BuAB) and are therefore within the countryside.
- I.28 Strategy 23 sets out proposals and ambitions for development at Honiton. Key points from the strategy in relation to sports pitch development are an aspiration for the town “to remain compact enough to minimise car travel and not to extend into a ribbon development”, and to “support the schools, health and other service providers to meet their accommodation needs and local aspirations for new and improved facilities”. The supporting text to the strategy also states in the list at paragraph 11.6 that “We will enhance Honiton by: Directing new retail, leisure, tourist and major community uses to the town centre, unless there are no suitable sites available...Improving sporting cultural and community facilities to serve Honiton and the surrounding rural area by requiring new provision in any large new development and supporting community initiatives to develop these...Encouraging the provision of sports pitches on hill top land to the South of the town in line with community aspirations”. It is important to note the preference to direct development to sites within and well related to the existing built form of the town, but that if no suitable sites exist that meet this then proposals for sports pitches at Tower Hill to the south of Honiton will be supported and encouraged. Tower Hill proposals are considered alongside all other sites in this report.
- I.29 Strategy 46 requires developments to conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the natural and historic environment. It applies across the district but is of particular importance in relation to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

- I.30 Strategy 47 requires developments to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity and minimise fragmentation of habitats. It protects internationally and nationally designated sites from direct or indirect adverse effect and sets out how effects or potential effects will be mitigated.
- I.31 In terms of the development management policies of the plan, in addition to policies RC1, RC2, RC4, RC5, RC6, and RC7 (covered above), policies D1, D2, D3, EN7, EN13, EN14, EN16, EN21, EN22, TC2, TC4, TC7 and TC9 are of particular note and sites will be considered against these. In summary, proposals will need to respect local design and distinctiveness; not adversely impact on and where applicable mitigate impact on amenity, biodiversity and landscape; be safely designed; respect trees and hedgerows where relevant; consider sites of potential archaeological importance, quality of agricultural land, control of pollution, potentially contaminated land, potential for flooding, and surface run-off implications of development; and ensure that the site is accessible by a range of transport modes, accessible by persons with reduced mobility and that a suitable amount of car parking is provided for.

### Sports guidance

- I.32 In addition to specific policies there are a number of important guidance documents that will need to be considered and taken account of at a more detailed stage of planning including (though not limited to) the following:
- The FA Guide to Pitch and Goalpost Dimensions (FA)
  - Facilities Guidance Note 2: Grass Pitches for Rugby (RFU)
  - Recommended Guidelines for the construction, preparation and maintenance of cricket pitches and outfielders at all levels of the game (TS4) (ECB)
  - Successful Management of Dual Use Cricket and Football Sites (ECB, FA, Sport England and Institute of Groundsmanship)
  - Natural Turf for Sport (Sport England)
  - Pavilions and Clubhouses (Sport England)
  - Facilities Guidance Note 5: Changing Rooms and Clubhouses (RFU)
  - Pavilions and Clubhouses (TS5) (ECB)
  - Artificial Surfaces for Outdoor Sport (Sport England)
  - Accessible Sport Facilities (Sport England)
  - Artificial Sports Lighting (Sport England)

### **SEA/HRA Screening**

- I.33 Officers have conducted a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report of the Revised Draft Honiton Sports Pitch Strategy which concludes that neither SEA or HRA is required to accompany the strategy. This screening report will be available for consultation alongside the revised draft strategy.

### **Consultation**

- I.34 A Draft Honiton Sports Pitch Strategy was consulted on for 6 weeks from 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016 to 8<sup>th</sup> July 2016. Representations were received from 34 different people and organisations on a range of issues and regarding a number of the sites that were considered. In response to this a number of changes were made to this strategy. The

Consultation Statement sets out the consultation that has taken place and the changes made in response to representations that have been made.

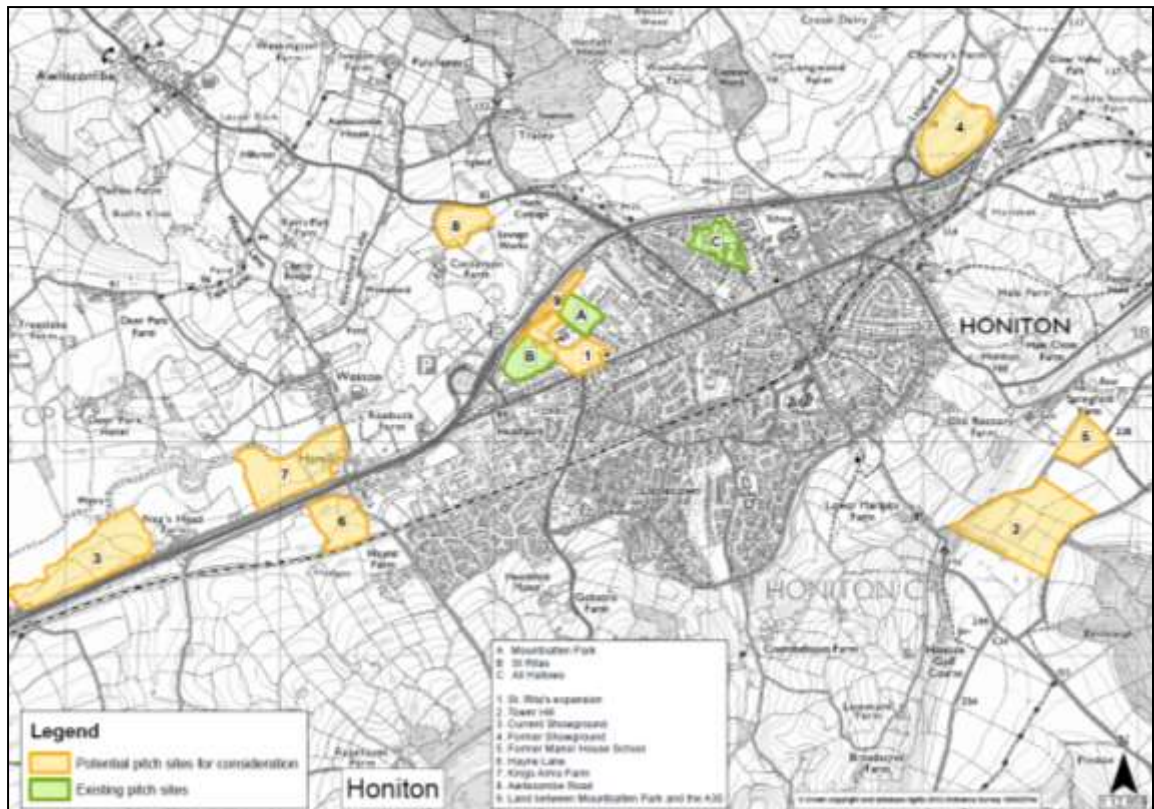
- I.35 A Revised Draft Honiton Sports Pitch Strategy, along with SEA/HRA Screening Report, Consultation Statement and Equalities Impact Assessment will be consulted on for 4 weeks from Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016 to Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

## STAGE 1 – IDENTIFICATION OF SITES

### Step A - Objective search for potential sites to take sports pitch development

- 1A.1 The process began by doing desk-based map searches for land that might be suitable for sports pitches. The criteria here was that land: should not be too steeply sloped; preferably out of the floodplain; and relatively close to the town; or that the site had been identified by third parties during the PPS process. There was not a requirement for sites to be located within the Honiton Town Council administrative area but they did have to be relatively close to the town.
- 1A.2 Honiton Town Council was invited to identify sites they felt ought to be considered in October 2015. At that stage a number of sites were suggested which aligned with sites already identified as potentials by officers. Later, during the Draft Strategy consultation in Summer 2016, a further site on land between Macauley Close and Northcote Hill Road was floated by the Town Council, however, officers considered the site to be likely to fail at Step B (rationalisation) due to the flattest part of the site being in the floodplain, the remainder being relatively sloped and an irregular shape which would not allow for suitable sports pitch development. The site would also be difficult to gain access to. That being the case it was not considered any further.
- 1A.3 As a result the following sites were identified as potential sites to take sports pitch development at Honiton. These are identified on the plan below which is replicated at a more legible scale in Appendix 1. No other possible land areas met the basic tests of suitability set out in paragraph 1A.1 above. It should be noted that the Honiton Community College playing field (referred to as site HD elsewhere in this strategy) was not considered as it has already been identified for the location of a floodlit sand-based AGP in the PPS.

Site ref	Site name
<u>Existing pitch sites</u>	
HA	Mountbatten Park
HB	St. Rita's
HC	All Hallows
<u>Potential new sites</u>	
H1	St. Rita's extension
H2	Tower Hill
H3	Current showground
H4	Former showground
H5	Former Manor House School playing field
H6	Hayne Lane
H7	Kings Arms Farm
H8	Awliscombe Road
H9	Land between Mountbatten Park and the A30



Plan showing Stage 1 potential sites for consideration (reproduced at Appendix 1).

## Step B - Rationalisation through basic feasibility assessment

- 1B.1 Following the objective identification of sites with potential to take sports pitch development the Council appointed consultants STRI (Sports Turf Research Institute) in November 2015 to provide technical expertise on the project.
- 1B.2 All existing and potential sites were visited by both officers and consultants to see first-hand what potential each site had for sports pitch development. The consultants then produced an initial assessment report (available at Appendix 2 and from here on referred to as the STRI Stage 1 report) considering agronomic<sup>2</sup> issues and site potential.
- 1B.3 Sites were assessed against a standard methodology which considered key aspects of the site location, access, general topography, current vegetation, soil type and drainage characteristics, size of the site and other mitigating risks or factors that would make the site difficult to potentially develop. Each aspect was weighted and scored appropriately with the resultant overall score for each site providing a guide as to whether a site would be feasible or not. Sites were scored out of 100, with sites scoring 56 or more being considered worth taking forwards to the next stage (full surveys and plans to be drawn up) and sites scoring 55 or less considered as “Poor Quality” or “Unacceptable” and therefore being removed from the process as they would have little prospect of being feasible for sports pitch development.

Overall Weighted and Adjusted Scores /100				
Unacceptable	Poor Quality	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Good Quality
≤ 30	30 - 55	56 - 70	71- 85	> 85

Stage 1 feasibility assessment scoring matrix

- 1B.4 Those sites identified as being in the “Unsatisfactory” category would require significant works and investment to bring them up to sports pitch standards, but it would be feasible. Sites identified as “Acceptable” would possibly need improvement and investment. Sites identified as “Good Quality” would require few or no works and investment.
- 1B.5 The table below summarises the findings of the STRI Stage 1 Report listed in priority and score order. It should be noted that the scores and comments on potential works required and potential pitch numbers were based solely on the consultant’s opinion having carried out non-technical site visits. Surveys and plans to be drawn up as part of Stage 2 would refine the detail of what works would be required and potentially how many pitches could be delivered on site.

Priority	Site	Site ref	Score	Key reasons	Potential works required	Potential pitch numbers
1	Land between Mountbatten Park and A30	H9	76	Narrow strip of land possible use for mini pitches	Drainage and surface works	2x mini
1	St Rita’s extension	H1	75	Good site but next to St.	Drainage and	2x adult

<sup>2</sup> Agronomy is the science of soil management



Priority	Site	Site ref	Score	Key reasons	Potential works required	Potential pitch numbers
				Rita's	surface works	
1	All Hallows	HC	75	Space for 2 pitches, very wet and soft	Drainage	2x adult
1	St Rita's	HB	65	Undulating site with some expansion possible, access poor and soft	Drainage	2x adult 1x junior
2	Former Showground	H4	63	Good site but with slopes and large pylon	Levelling and drainage	4x adult
3	Mountbatten Park	HA	82	Football and cricket with limited space, pitches wet	Drainage	2x adult
3	Former Manor House School	H5	64	Site reasonable but out of town and now part of an exclusive pavilion development	Limited works but may need drainage	2x adult
3	Kings Arms Farm	H7	61	Large site but on edge of town and on floodplain	Drainage and surface works	3x adult
3	Tower Hill	H2	58	Large site able to accommodate a number of pitches, out of town	Drainage and infrastructure	5x adult
4	Honiton Showground	H3	57	Large site but out of town and on floodplain	Reject	
5	Hayne Lane	H6	50	Steeply sloped and pylon across site	Reject	
5	Awliscombe Road	H8	34	Steeply sloped, out of town and with large pylon	Reject	

### Honiton Showground (H3)

1B.6 Honiton Showground (site H3) was recommended for rejection despite the fact it scored 57/100 in exception to the methodology . Most of the site was steeply sloped and considered nearly impossible to re-grade, with the only areas of the site that might be suitable lying within the floodplain. In addition to this the soil was stoney and made of a silty clay loam which would drain poorly. The location of the site, at best 1km from the western edge of Heathpark industrial estate to the eastern edge of the site, but more significantly around 3.2km from the town centre to the centre point of the site weighed heavily against taking this site any further forwards and with such a borderline score it was considered appropriate to reject the site at Stage 1.

### Hayne Lane (H6)

1B.7 Hayne lane (site H6) was recommended for rejection. The site is steeply sloped and would need significant re-grading. If the site were to be re-graded then this would result in only being able to accommodate two pitches. In addition to this there is a low voltage pylon that crosses the site which would need to be diverted or undergrounded, the site is currently divided up by multiple hedgerows, the soil is stoney and made of a silty clay loam which would drain poorly, and it is located right on the western end of the town, around 2km from the town centre to the centre point of the site. It was considered that it would be unfeasible to develop the site for sports pitches without significant costs that would not outweigh the benefits considering that other better sites exist.

1B.8 This site is owned by East Devon District Council. It was originally purchased for recreational purposes with the intention for the site to host new sports pitches for the town. A covenant exists on the site's title deeds restricting usage to recreation. Having purchased the site in 1999, the Council subsequently looked into ways to

bring the site into recreational use but the topography of the site and the need to divert or underground the pylon meant that it simply was not feasible to deliver. As such, the intended recreational use has not been possible to deliver. The new Local Plan (2013-2031) now allocates the land for employment use.

### **Awliscombe Road (H8)**

1B.9 Awliscombe Road (site H8) was recommended for rejection. The site is steeply sloped and were it to be re-graded then there would likely be only room for a single pitch. In addition to this the site is out of town, it has a pylon crossing the southern corner of the site, and the soil is stoney and made of a slity clay loam which would drain poorly. It was considered that it would be unfeasible to develop the site for sports pitches.

### **Sites proceeding to Stage 2**

1B.10 Mountbatten Park (site HA), St Rita's (site HB) and All Hallows (site HC) are existing pitch sites and all scored relatively highly. All Hallows and St Rita's were both recommended as priority 1 sites for investment and improvement in terms of needing drainage urgently to be able to continue in their current usage. Mountbatten Park was listed as a priority 3 site despite its high score. The lower priority reflects the fact from an agronomic/sports turf specialist point of view it is capable of continuing in its current usage but ideally it will require adequate drainage to be installed.

1B.11 Land between Mounbatten Park and the A30 (site H9) and St. Rita's extension (site H1) were both recommended as priority 1 sites with significant potential to provide sports pitches with relatively minimal drainage and surface works to bring them up to standard. They appeared to show the best prospects for new pitch delivery from an agronomic/sports turf perspective.

1B.12 The Former Showground (site H4) was recommended as a priority 2 site identified as requiring significant levelling and drainage works to bring it into use for sports pitches, but of such a size, gentle slope, location and with limited stones in the soil to make it a realistic prospect for sports pitch delivery. Benefits here would likely outweigh the costs. It's location the opposite side of the A30 to the rest of the town, high voltage powerline cutting across the southern corner of the site, and silty clay loam soil make up detract slightly from the positives but overall it was considered a feasible site to take forward to Stage 2.

1B.13 The Former Manor House School (site H5) was recommended as a priority 3 site. Whilst being a large flat site with limited stone and weed cover, it's silty clay loam soil and drainage potential plus location out of town and current usage for weddings and other events meant that its overall score was compromised. Had the site been closer to town and the current use been known to not be an issue it may have scored higher.

1B.14 Kings Arms Farm (site H7) was recommended as a priority 3 site. Whilst being a large site with extensive flatter areas, close to town with good access, the pitches would have to be delivered on the floodplain, a powerline across part of the site could cause an issue and the stoney soil with a silty clay loam make up would drain poorly. The site holds some potential, although the fact that pitches would have to be delivered on the floodplain would potentially be an issue.

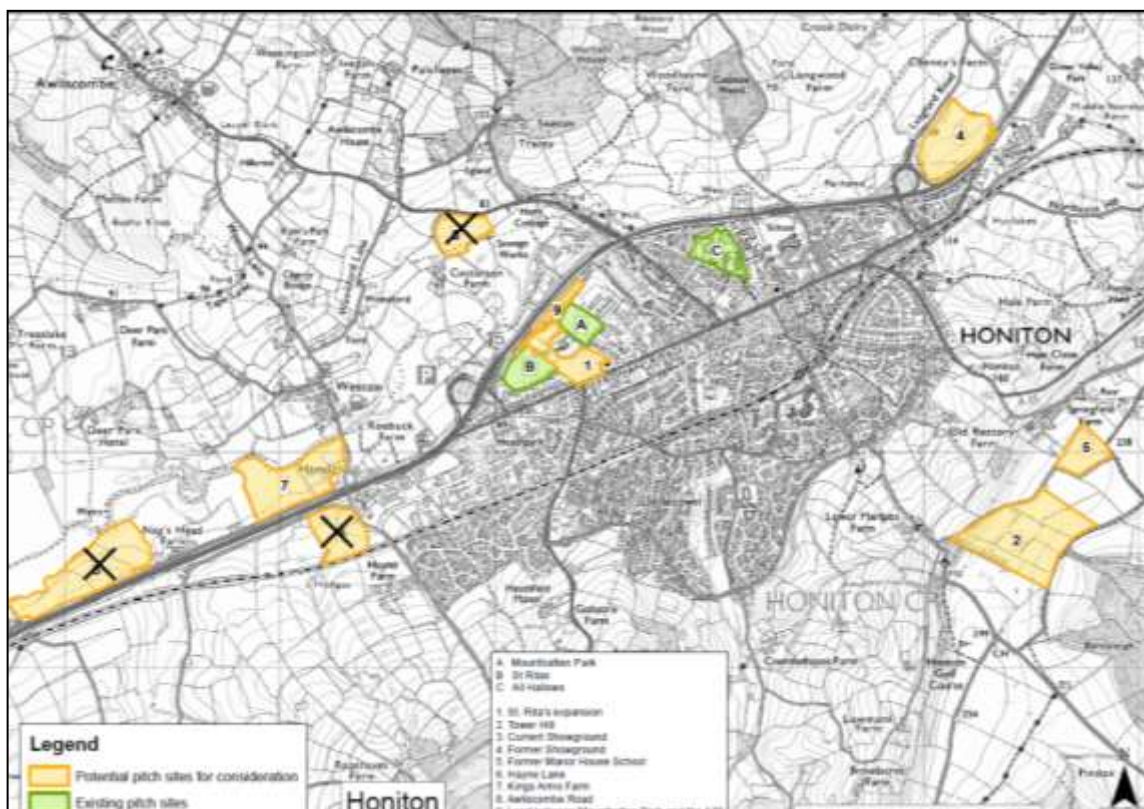
- 1B.15 Tower Hill (site H2) was recommended as a priority 3 site, however, similar to the Honiton Showground site it may have also been considered suitable for rejection due to its borderline score, location and potential costs of delivery. However, there is a known willing land owner and project that has been worked up by Honiton Development Trust and the PPS specifically states that if no other suitable sites are found through this strategy then Tower Hill will become the preferred option. That being the case, Tower Hill has remained in the process at this stage.
- 1B.16 The STRI Stage 1 Report also included commentary on how Devon hedgerows, stoney soil issues and the floodplain impact on the delivery of sports pitches in general. All three can pose potential constraints to pitch development.
- 1B.17 In some circumstances hedgerows can be removed or even moved to facilitate development, however more detailed ecological assessment of the hedgerows in question would be required to understand whether this could be possible. Older hedgerows supporting a wide range of biodiversity or forming key links between biodiversity rich areas would always be more sensitive to movement or removal.
- 1B.18 Stoney soil is a recurrent issue across most of the sites assessed in Honiton. Whilst some stones can be removed or buried effectively some smaller stones can remain which can cause significant injuries. The report suggests installing a “sand cap” if pitches are delivered on sites with particularly stoney soil.
- 1B.19 The floodplain of the River Otter is a particular challenge. Most of the flatter areas of land around Honiton are within the floodplain. Potentially, technically pitches can be provided on the floodplain, however, there are a number of important issues to be taken account of. It is important to remember the functional purpose of floodplains and as such the fact that little built form or land re-forming could take place within them without express consent of the Environment Agency. In addition to this, when rivers flood they potentially can contaminate land as they bring with them pesticides, sewage and other contaminants and put pitches out of action whilst the problem is resolved at sometimes significant expense. Drainage systems for pitches can also be capped off by silt which then would potentially need removing from the system. Above all though, pitches delivered on floodplains may well be out of action for extended periods of the year as and when the river floods. The only site remaining in the process where this is an issue is Kings Arms Farm (H7) part of which has flooded on a number of occasions over recent years. It remains in the process for now so that the pros and cons can be weighed up against other sites.

## STAGE 2 – SITE ASSESSMENTS

### Step C – Site Surveys

2C.1 Six potential sites and three existing sites were taken forward into Stage 2. The map below shows these sites with the sites that dropped out of the process at Stage 1 crossed out. The map is replicated at a more legible scale in Appendix 3.

Site ref	Site name
<u>Existing pitch sites</u>	
HA	Mountbatten Park
HB	St. Rita's
HC	All Hallows
<u>Potential new sites</u>	
H1	St. Rita's extension
H2	Tower Hill
H4	Former showground
H5	Former Manor House School playing field
H7	Kings Arms Farm
H9	Land between Mountbatten Park and the A30



Plan showing Stage 2 sites for consideration (reproduced at Appendix 3).

2C.2 Of these sites it was considered necessary to get full Computer Aided Design (CAD) surveys completed for sites HB, H1, H4, H7 and H9. Where sites were considered flat or simple enough to develop drawings without the need to understand the topography any further, surveys were not carried out. In this case only the Former Manor House School site (H5) was considered not to need a survey for that reason out of the potential new sites.

- 2C.3 It was considered unnecessary to survey Mountbatten Park (HA) or All Hallows (HC) as they are both flat sites hosting existing pitches and the only works necessary to improve the sites would be the installation of new drainage systems and improved maintenance. St. Rita's (HB) was felt necessary to survey to understand whether the site could be levelled out to address the undulating surface of the existing pitches or even provide additional pitches.
- 2C.4 Tower Cross (H2) was not surveyed as plans already exist as part of the Honiton Development Trust proposals for a sports hub on the site.
- 2C.5 The Honiton Community College playing field (HD) was not surveyed nor plans produced as it has already been identified for the delivery of a floodlit sand-based AGP through the PPS.

## **Step D – Potential site plans**

- 2D.1 After conducting the relevant site surveys, potential site plans were drawn up for each of the Stage 2 sites with the exception of Tower Hill (H2) for which plans already existed showing the intentions of Honiton Development Trust.
- 2D.2 For potential new sites the intention was for plans to show what and how many pitches plus ancillary facilities could be accommodated on each site. The process would look to maximise provision on each site by showing a range of grass pitch types and sizes that could be delivered. This would enable officers to understand how the required pitch combinations for the town could be delivered across a combination of sites if necessary. For existing pitch sites plans would show how site capacity could be maximised.
- 2D.3 At the end of Stage 1, a number of technical experts were consulted to understand what technical constraints there may be to sports pitch development on a number of the sites. Comments were sought (where relevant) from Devon County Council's Highways and Historic Environment teams, and the District Council's Landscape Architect and Countryside and Environmental Health teams. The full comments from these consultees were passed to the consultants (STRI) to help inform their site plans. Comments received for each site are detailed in Appendix 4 in full.
- 2D.4 Consultants STRI were required to provide a second report (from here on referred to as the STRI Stage 2 Report – found at Appendix 5 to this report) to which the site plans would be appended, and which would detail what pitches each site could accommodate, how that would be made possible and the reasons for this. The report was also required to include indicative costings on the delivery of the plans (excluding land purchase costs).
- 2D.5 The potential site plans for each site are discussed below. It should be noted that these are *potential* site plans and show what potentially *could* be accommodated on each site according to STRI as agronomic and sports turf experts. It is not to say that such plans would be acceptable in all cases and is not a signal that the Council intends to deliver or would support delivery of such plans on any site at this stage. They and this report are also not a substitute for planning permission and do not mean that such proposals would necessarily gain planning permission. All planning applications are considered on their own merits against the development plan and any relevant material considerations.
- 2D.6 The plans themselves should be viewed alongside the following explanations which can be accessed as part of the STRI Stage 2 Report at Appendix 5 to this strategy.
- 2D.7 The discussion below explains what was required of the consultants (STRI), what the plans show, what alternative options there potentially could be, and the approximate costs for delivery of the pitches themselves (including associated earthworks, primary drainage systems, cultivations, sand amelioration, secondary drainage, seed bed preparation, seeding, initial maintenance and a 10% contingency), and appropriate clubhouse and car parking facilities. It should be noted that STRI are specialist agronomic and sports turf experts and as such costings for any ancillary facilities are outside their area of expertise and provided as ballpark figures based on experiences elsewhere. Costings do not include VAT, removal of excess spoil, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs), diversion of existing utilities/services such as powerlines, or other ancillary requirements such as covered stands, perimeter rails, etc. Land

costs and ownerships are also not covered here and are considered later in the report.

### **Mountbatten Park (HA)**

- 2D.8 STRI were not required to produce plans to show accommodation of additional pitches on this existing pitches site as it is already used to its full potential. However, the site requires primary sports pitch drainage for the football pitches which is indicatively costed at around £45,000.
- 2D.9 If additional pitches were laid out on sites adjacent to Mountbatten Park then the existing clubhouse facilities would need to be extended/replaced. Further plans will be necessary to understand exactly how this may be accommodated on site, but in principle it could be possible. However, additional car parking could need to be provided on an alternative site (H1 or H9).

### **St. Rita's (HB)**

- 2D.10 STRI were required to produce a plan showing how this existing pitches site could be levelled and pitch space maximised. The plans show how potentially the site could be levelled to accommodate 2x youth 11v11 and 2x mini 5v5 football pitches. Currently, the site accommodates 2x youth 11v11s and 1x youth 9v9 with various other pitches overmarking these base pitches. The STRI report explains that it may not be considered cost beneficial to carry out the full suite of levelling works shown in their plan and in fact improve the worst of the undulations and drainage.
- 2D.11 If the plans shown were to be delivered the indicative costs for the pitches would be £148,000. However, if just drainage were to be installed then costs would likely be in the region of £61,000.

### **All Hallows (HC)**

- 2D.12 STRI were not required to produce plans to show accommodation of additional pitches on this existing pitches site as it is already used to its full potential. However the STRI Stage 1 report states that the site desperately requires drainage to be installed and this is anticipated to cost in the region of £100,000 for combined primary and secondary drainage covering the entire playing field.

### **St. Rita's extension (H1)**

- 2D.13 STRI were required to produce a plan showing two adult football pitches being delivered on the land immediately to the south-east of the St. Rita's Centre with the hope that overspill car parking could possibly be accommodated in the eastern most edge of the site. However, this was not possible due to the dimensions of the site and requirement to retain and respect the existing hedgerows and trees on site.
- 2D.14 The plans show provision of 2x U15/16 youth 11v11 football pitches delivered in this area with a further 2x mini 5v5 pitches in the field to the west of the St. Rita's Centre, between the centre and the existing pitches site (HB). The STRI Stage 2 Report explains that alternatively the area to the south-east of the centre could accommodate a single adult 11v11 pitch and 2x mini 5v5 pitches.
- 2D.15 Whilst no car parking or clubhouse facilities are shown as being deliverable on this site, it could potentially be possible to deliver either/or facility on the land immediately

to the north-west of the St. Rita’s Centre on the south side of Turk’s Head Lane if necessary.

2D.16 Indicative costs for this work would be approximately £157,000 for the pitches. If just the area to the south-east of the centre were delivered then this would cost in the region of £130,000.

### **Tower Hill (H2)**

2D.17 Plans already existed showing how a range of pitches could be delivered at Tower Hill (see Appendix 8). As such STRI were not required to produce any further plans. The Honiton Development Trust plans for Tower Hill show a total of 3x senior rugby pitches, 3x midi rugby pitches, 2x adult football pitches, 3x youth 11v11 football pitches, 2x mini 5v5 football pitches, a standalone cricket ground, a second cricket square overmarking midi rugby pitches and a small MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area) together with a clubhouse and car parking facilities.

2D.18 As these plans were drawn up a number of years ago (2009) many of the pitch sizes are no longer in conformity with relevant FA / RFU/ECB/ Sport England standards, however the plans give an idea of what could in theory be accommodated on site.

2D.19 A feasibility report produced by Business Information Point (BIP) was produced in 2012 to accompany these plans and this suggested the following costs as minimums. The costs do not include car parking, land purchase, off-site infrastructure improvements, or internal fittings and fixtures for the clubhouses. The figure for groundwork, pitch drainage and establishment was provided by STRI in June 2011 and discussion with them has highlighted that this cost would likely only be revised upwards as a result of inflation and works that have been carried out to the field since that original estimate was provided.

	Total Estimate Cost £ (excl VAT)
Ground work, pitch drainage and establishment	£600,000
Pavillion, changing rooms	£1,606,330
Machinery store, changing rooms	£312,457

### **Former Showground (H4)**

2D.20 STRI were required to produce a plan showing multiple senior and midi sized rugby pitches, clubhouse and car parking. Plans show a total of 2x senior rugby pitches and 3x midi rugby pitches capable of being delivered on site. It had been hoped to provide for more pitches than this on this site, however, the significant slope requires major cut and fill re-profiling to create flat platforms for the pitches and the powerlines at the southern end of the site are a major constraint to expansion of the platform to accommodate more pitches.

2D.21 Indicative costs for this work would be approximately £475,000 for the pitches and £650,000 for the clubhouse and car parking.

### **Former Manor House School (H5)**

2D.22 STRI were required to produce a plan showing delivery of a cricket square with football and/or rugby pitches overmarking the outfield. Plans were also required to show expansion of car parking provision and extension to the existing cricket pavilion.



2D.23 The plans show that it would be possible to accommodate an 8x wicket cricket ground with a senior rugby pitch and an adult football pitch overmarking the outfield. It would not be possible to accommodate 2x senior rugby pitches as the south-western end of the site is too narrow to fit the full length required.

2D.24 Indicative costs for this work would be around £101,000 for the pitches. Clubhouse and car parking extensions would be in addition to this.

### **Kings Arms Farm (H7)**

2D.25 STRI were required to produce a plan showing delivery of a range of football and rugby pitches of varying sizes together with a clubhouse and car parking. As the majority of the site is within the floodplain of the River Otter, only the area closest to the road was surveyed and only this area was modelled for pitch provision, however, additional pitches could potentially be delivered on the floodplain although there would be risks involved with this.

2D.26 The plans show provision of 1x adult 11v11, 1x youth 11v11, 1x mini 7v7 and 1x mini 5v5 football pitch delivered on cut and fill platforms above the floodplain plus an indicative location for a clubhouse and car parking. The STRI Stage 2 Report explains that potentially there could be room for up to two adult sized pitches to be laid out in the floodplain if necessary, however these would obviously be at risk of flooding and potentially be out of action for long periods at the wettest times of the year.

2D.27 Indicative costs for the plans would be approximately £205,000 for the pitches and £350,000 for the clubhouse and car parking. If pitches were laid out in the floodplain as well then there would likely be some additional costs involved for this, however the effectiveness of installing drainage would be questionable and no groundworks would be required so costs could be minimal at the outset.

### **Land between Mountbatten Park and the A30 (H9)**

2D.28 STRI were required to produce a plan showing delivery of mini football pitches and potentially a clubhouse and additional car parking to meet the expanded needs of all the sites in this vicinity. The site is only just wide enough to accommodate mini 5v5 football pitches and could not fit any larger format pitches.

2D.29 The plans show provision of 3x mini 5v5 football pitches plus an indicative area that could potentially accommodate a clubhouse and additional car parking.

2D.30 Indicative costs for this work would be around £55,500 for the pitches and £200,000 for the clubhouse and car parking.

## **Step E – Basic sustainability and suitability assessment**

- 2E.1 In addition to understanding whether it is technically feasible to deliver pitches on sites and what pitches might be able to be accommodated on them, it is key to assess the basic sustainability and suitability of the sites to host sports pitches. Essentially this means conducting a basic policy test and considering a number of pros and cons for each of the sites.
- 2E.2 The policy context for delivering sports pitches at Honiton is set out in the introduction to this strategy. These are the key policies and the key guidance that any new sports pitch proposal at Honiton will need to be considered against. Some policies will apply to some sites and not others, whilst other policies will apply to all.
- 2E.3 The full basic sustainability and suitability assessment for each relevant site can be found at Appendix 6, however, the section below discusses the key issues at hand for each site, makes conclusions about their suitability and sustainability in planning terms and recommends whether pitches should be delivered on sites or not. All potential new sites have been assessed. Existing pitch sites are automatically considered to be appropriate for simply grass pitch provision.
- 2E.4 It should be noted that this assessment and recommendation in this strategy is not a substitute for planning permission and does not prejudice the formal consideration of any submitted application taking into account the comments and views of any statutory consultees, interested 3rd parties, policies laid out in the East Devon Local Plan (as well as other policy guidance), and the views of the Service Lead - Planning and the Chairman and Development Management Committee.
- 2E.5 Following the site by site assessments, the various costs involved with delivering each site are compared and sport by sport and overarching conclusions are made explaining why pitches should be delivered on specific sites. This is followed by a table setting out the draft recommendations and explanation of how they meet the requirements for sports pitches in Honiton to 2024.

### **General Environmental Health comments**

- 2E.6 When consulted, the Council's Environmental Health team gave some general advice that would apply to any site regarding floodlighting, hours of use, dogs, and drainage outfall:
- Lighting – It is always possible to design, install and maintain lighting so that it does not overspill into gardens or cause nuisance through windows. What needs to be achieved is to conform with the Institute of Lighting Engineers standards for the avoidance of light pollution – this is not the same as just achieving illumination levels which is what designers usually do.
  - Hours – all weather pitches provide important extra time for exercise and this can only be welcomed. We see elsewhere that evening hirings usually end at 9pm or 10pm at latest. At this time both the noise level dies down and the lighting is switched off. The use therefore does not encroach on the night hours of 11pm to 7am. There will be some people noise but the impact of this should be balanced against the health and well-being benefit of providing better facilities over longer hours.
  - Dogs – I strongly recommend that dogs are prohibited from all playing pitches from the outset. This is easier where the pitches are fenced and a nearby alternative for dog walking off lead is preferable, but we can help with this in

due course. Any pitches which are leased to private clubs and the like can be subject to their own rules and enforcement.

- Drainage of the pitches is of course essential and again care must be taken where the pitches are on previously developed land. All drainage must go to a suitable running outfall and this must be evaluated if not already in significant use – it would not be appropriate just to assume that a nearby dry ditch is in a fit state to accept piped run-off. We are also happy to help with this too if you wish us to look at specific sites.

### **St. Rita's extension (H1)**

2E.7 The PPS specifically identifies in action plan HO.13 that options for delivering additional youth football pitches at St. Rita's should be explored. It would be possible to lay out two of the largest youth 11v11s plus 2x mini 5v5s on additional land at St. Rita's. It may also be possible to accommodate additional grass cricket wickets between the youth 11v11 pitches. This would enable the youth football club to spread current and future usage out over additional pitches (reducing the impact on the quality of existing pitches) and the cricket club to expand in the future. It would not be possible to accommodate two FA compliant adult pitches without unreasonable impact on protected trees and hedgerows, (although a single adult pitch would be possible). U15/16 Youth 11v11 pitches, at 91m x 55m (excluding run-offs) would be slightly smaller than the pitches at Mountbatten Park. An option could be for the adult football club to utilise the pitches when the cricket season takes over at Mountbatten Park, reducing the issues of ground sharing that currently exist. However, the football club has raised issue with this and explained that they would not be able to compete at Peninsula League level (which is the club's ambition) on smaller than official adult sized pitches or on the current arrangement of using an adult pitch overmarking a cricket outfield (they require sole occupancy for football). That being the case, another option might be to consider relocating the cricket ground to site H1, and then improving Mountbatten Park (HA) to allow development of a Peninsula League standard football ground in due course. This would enable the adult football club's current and future needs to be met on one site, and the increased quality and capacity provided by drainage and sole occupancy would enable additional junior football to be met through overmarking the adult pitches with youth/mini pitches. This would also address the issue of adult football and cricket sharing their home ground. This option would, however, be less appealing to the cricket club who's ambitions to expand would be tempered and who would not be able to take advantage of potential sponsorship and catering/bar functions and the important revenue stream these bring at the main clubhouse. Co-location with existing pitches makes the sustainability and viability credentials of the site for the delivery of sports pitches in general impossible to overlook.

2E.8 In addition to this, the potential cost of laying out pitches on this site as proposed by the STRI plans is relatively low at an estimated £157,000 because the land is fairly flat already, therefore requiring less re-profiling. The costs may vary for the above mentioned alternative including a relocated and suitably prepared cricket square. Additional changing and car parking facilities would need to be accommodated through a review of the existing provision at Mountbatten Park (HA). If the above alternative arrangement were pursued then it could be possible to move the first XI football pitch on Mountbatten Park (HA) slightly north-west (over what is currently the cricket square). This should provide room to construct additional car parking to the south-east of the pitches along Ottery Moor Lane.

- 2E.9 The site is located outside the floodplain, on land classified as “urban” in agricultural land terms and less sensitive in landscape terms than some other sites being considered. Having said that, the amenity impact on neighbouring properties would be more significant than others.
- 2E.10 Floodlights are not proposed for this site, however added noise pollution during daylight hours, particularly on weekends and summer evenings could potentially be an amenity issue for neighbouring properties. Having said that, the site would be unlikely to add significantly to the noise pollution created by the pre-existing sports facilities and would likely be dwarfed by the noise pollution of the A30 dual carriageway. When taken in the wider cost/benefit of providing pitches in town on this site or on a site more removed from the town, the benefits clearly outweigh the potentially slightly increased noise pollution impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties. Some additional boundary planting could help as a noise buffer.
- 2E.11 Despite all of the obvious benefits of the site, the owners of the site have stated that they would not be willing to let any further land at St. Rita’s be used for sports pitches. In essence this means they would not be open to selling or leasing the land for such purpose. The reason for this was that the St. Rita’s Centre is a retreat / convention centre and any further increase in sports provision around it would be at odds with the peaceful and reflective nature of its use. However, the benefits of the site’s location would appear to clearly outweigh any increases in noise pollution when the pitches were in use. The main concerns of the retreat are the location of pitches in close proximity to the centre and the general impact that intensified use of land surrounding the centre might have on the peaceful and reflective nature of the centre’s use. It might be possible to reduce the impacts on the centre by exchanging the football pitches shown on the STRI plans with a relocated cricket ground which may have a less significant impact in terms of noise and in any case only be used from May to September.

#### Recommendation

2E.12 The St. Rita’s extension site should be progressed as a priority site for the provision of additional sports pitches to meet the needs of Honiton in conjunction with improvements to existing pitches and ancillary facilities at St. Rita’s and Mountbatten Park. Two alternative options exist for use of the site:

- (1) 2x Youth 11v11 and 2x mini 5v5 football pitches (as per the plans produced by STRI); *or*
- (2) A relocated 10x grass (plus 1x artificial) wicket cricket ground and small pavilion building

In order to progress this site it may be necessary to exercise a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) depending on further negotiations with the landowner. Which option is pursued will be at least partly dependent on these negotiations..

#### **Tower Hill (H2)**

2E.13 The PPS has specific action plans regarding Honiton Development Trust’s Tower Hill proposals. It explicitly states in HO.18: to “explore the possibility of addressing all Honiton pitch issues on alternative sites better related to the existing town and outside of the AONB first but if there are no realistic alternatives then some pitches may need to be delivered on Tower Hill”, and in HO.19: “Only support the development of such a facility if all clubs involved are willing to move, a sustainable travel plan can be developed and it would not adversely affect existing club, viability of other clubs and facilities in the area and access to open access pitches in Honiton and surrounding villages”.

- 2E.14 Clearly, the site could potentially accommodate a significant number of pitches, but this would come at a high price, financially, environmentally and socially. The 2012 BIP Report suggests that excluding land costs their plans would cost more than £2.5 million. Considering these cost estimates were made in 2012, this is likely to have increased with inflation.
- 2E.15 The above assessment clearly shows how development of sports facilities at Tower Hill would be contrary to multiple policies of the Local Plan. The lack of accessibility by sustainable means, potential impact on the local road networks and significant anticipated impact on the landscape and AONB make the site wholly inappropriate for sports pitch delivery. Considering the alternative options that are assessed in this report it is therefore not an appropriate site to take sports pitch development.

#### Recommendation

- 2E.16 No sports pitches should be delivered on this site.

#### **Former Showground (H4)**

- 2E.17 Whilst the Former Showground is located on high quality agricultural land within the AONB and potentially has issues regarding safe accessibility by foot/bike, it clearly is well related to the town and has potential to deliver significant numbers of pitches to help meet the sporting needs of the town. It is moderately sensitive to development in landscape terms, and whilst being within the AONB it is potentially less sensitive than other parts of the AONB due to its close proximity to the town and A30 Honiton bypass. The fact that it is high quality agricultural land is a drawback of the site, however, other sites of lower quality agricultural land are not suitable for other reasons outlined in this report and therefore development of this site for sports pitches would be possible. A suitable safe pedestrian/cycle access would likely need to be achieved for this site to be progressed.
- 2E.18 Particular care would need to be given to the design of any built facilities due to its AONB location to ensure that they are reflective of their surroundings and do not cause unnecessary intrusion into the landscape. The cut and fill banking should also be minimised as much as possible and effectively mitigated through design and screening to reduce the impact of such an engineered landform in this location. It may be that RFU/Sport England cross fall gradient guidelines need to be exceeded to achieve a suitable outcome. The Blackdown Hills AONB team highlighted concerns with the impact of this site on the wider AONB as part of the consultation on the draft strategy.
- 2E.19 In addition to this, during the consultation, Devon County Council published plans for the improvement and re-alignment of the A30 trunk road from Honiton to Devonshire Inn. These plans showed potential for a new link road linking what would then become the old A30 Monkton Road to Langford Road cutting directly across this site. If delivered exactly as proposed through their consultation plans then it would undermine the ability of the site to deliver sports pitches as proposed in the draft strategy. Initial discussions with the County Council have intimated that they would like to accommodate plans for the sports pitches as much as possible within reason and it appears that a suitable solution to accommodate both plans may be possible, but the final design and decision will rest with Highways England. If there is a requirement to accommodate the new link road then it is expected that it would be necessary to also need to utilise the adjoining field immediately to the north-east of the field identified as site H4. That may then enable the new link road to be delivered but also improve the landscape impact of the pitches.

2E.20 By splitting out the pitches across two separate fields, it would be possible to create multiple different “platforms” rather than siting them all on a single level. This would mean a less engineered and harsh reprofiling of the land could be possible which it is hoped would help to address concerns voiced by the Blackdown Hills AONB.

2E.21 As things stand there are two potential ways of achieving a safe pedestrian/cycle access to the site:

- Utilise Clapper Lane which passes under the A30 approximately 400m west of where Langford Road appears on the north side of the A30. In this option, a new footpath/cycleway would need to be laid along the north side of the A30 between Clapper Lane and Langford Road.
- Improve existing footways and crossing points on the A30/A35 junction bridge and run a new footpath along the remainder of Langford Road to the site entrance.

However, it is perhaps unlikely that either of these arrangements would be supported by the County Council highways department on safety grounds. The only other option would be to potentially consider a new bridge over the A30 as part of the plans to improve/re-align the A30 in this location, though this would be at significant cost and the realistic number of people likely to access the site by foot/cycle in that situation would need to be weighed up to understand if it was of reasonable cost/benefit.

2E.22 The cost of delivering pitches in this location would be significant, mainly due to the sheer quantity of earthworks required to create a flat platform(s) for the pitches. However, in combination with existing facilities at All Hallows it could provide enough pitch space for current and future rugby needs in Honiton for years to come.

2E.23 The site would not be large enough to host all of Honiton RFC’s required rugby pitches on its own without continued reliance on All Hallows and its location within the AONB means it would not be a suitable location for floodlights. Therefore this option is reliant on retention and improvement of All Hallows as Honiton RFC’s main ground capable of being floodlit if necessary.

2E.24 The owners of the site (who also own the field immediately to the north-east which may potentially also be required) have stated that they would potentially be open to the idea of making the site available for sports pitches.

### Recommendation

2E.25 The Former Showground should be progressed as a priority site for the provision of additional rugby pitches to meet the needs of Honiton in conjunction with improvements to existing pitches and ancillary facilities at All Hallows. In order to progress this it may be necessary to exercise a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) depending on further negotiations with the landowner.

### **Former Manor House School (H5)**

2E.26 The Former Manor House School site (H5) has many of the same issues as Tower Hill (H2), being located almost immediately next door to it. The difference here is the former use as a school playing field and the scale of development. Pitches could be simply marked out on this site and be used by clubs without a need for planning permission due to its current use being as a playing field (albeit that it has no user at present) and lack of need for engineering works. However, if drainage needed installing, additional car parking and a new clubhouse were required to enable intensification of the use of the playing field as modern sports pitches then this would require permission and it is unlikely that an increase in traffic and noise pollution in this tranquil AONB setting would be appropriate. The existing pavilion would need to

be utilised and any extensions kept to a minimum and designed in keeping with the original building to have any likelihood of being considered appropriate.

- 2E.27 That being the case, it might be possible for the site to be utilised as temporary or even permanent overspill sports pitch provision. However, the pitches would be unlikely to be able to be improved or ancillary facilities extended. This may put clubs off wanting to use the site as part of a permanent solution.
- 2E.28 In addition to this, the site could host at most 1x adult 11v11 football pitch and 1x senior rugby pitch overmarking an eight wicket cricket ground. If football or rugby pitches were laid out here then clubs would have to maintain multiple sites for their pitches which might be considered to be unviable. The cricket club could potentially move to this site wholesale and increase the number of wickets to 11 meaning that current issues regarding sharing at Mountbatten could be resolved and they would only need to maintain one site. However, they would then be detached from the town and this would discriminate against users that do not have access to a car. This may have serious membership issues which in turn could undermine the long term viability of the club.
- 2E.29 The fact that the site has previously been used as a school playing field and therefore could be used as sports pitches without a need for planning permission means it makes sense for this site to be made available as a temporary solution to pitch issues in Honiton until the sites for the permanent solution are completed, however, long term it is not a suitable location for sports pitches.
- 2E.30 The owner of the site has indicated that it would be able to be used for sports pitches, so long as use did not encumber the existing/proposed wedding and educational businesses running out of the pavilion. Further negotiation would be required to reach a suitable arrangement.

#### Recommendation

- 2E.31 The Former Manor House School site (H5) should be considered as a temporary solution for sports pitches in the Honiton area usable by any of the sports clubs in the town with the existing pavilion/toilets available for users as changing facilities/clubhouse. Once permanent sites have been completed then the site could either continue as an unimproved playing field, be returned to its natural state or an agricultural field. The site is not suitable for the long term permanent location of sport pitches to meet the needs of Honiton considering the other options that are available.

#### **Kings Arms Farm (H7)**

- 2E.32 Kings Arms Farm (site H7) is a good site for sports pitch delivery in many ways (easily accessible, close to town, minimal land re-profiling required, outside the AONB and not on high quality agricultural land. Delivery of pitches as per the plans prepared by STRI could be possible and would potentially be able to accommodate all of the additional football pitch requirements but in a less suitable location in comparison to St. Rita's. The area on which STRI have identified pitches being constructed (out of the floodplain) could only accommodate up to 2x senior rugby pitches which would not meet the needs of the rugby club. Delivery of more pitches than this would require use of the floodplain which is undesirable and in fact unsuitable. If new pitches are not available during the wettest periods of the year (the time of peak demand) then there is little point to their provision and regular flooding would result in higher maintenance costs. Indeed, Strategy 43 of the Local Plan which sets out the amounts and types of open space required for new housing development specifically rules out delivery of open space (excluding natural and

semi-natural greenspace) within floodzone 2. That being the case, only the smaller area of the site which lies outside the floodplain could reasonably be acceptable for sports pitch use.

- 2E.33 This part of the site is not big enough to accommodate the number of rugby pitches required for the town or a cricket ground and as such could only accommodate additional football pitches. The site could potentially accommodate a better mix of football pitch sizes than St. Rita's extension (H1), however it would clearly not have the same accessibility and co-location credentials.

#### Recommendation

- 2E.34 No pitches should be delivered here unless it proves impossible to deliver additional pitches at St. Rita's extension (H1), additional capacity at Mountbatten Park (HA) and St. Rita's (HB) or that provision does not satiate demand.

#### **Land between Mountbatten Park and the A30 (H9)**

- 2E.35 As with delivering additional pitches on site H1 (extension to St. Rita's), additional pitches here would have the benefit of close links and good access to the town as well as the existing pitches and facilities at Mountbatten Park and St. Rita's. Delivering pitches here would have very few detrimental impacts so long as they were designed correctly and could ensure that more sensitive landscapes were protected.
- 2E.36 However, the site is only able to accommodate 3x mini 5v5 football pitches which means it would be limited to use by under 7s / under 8s. No other pitch types (football, rugby or cricket) could fit on this site. The site is therefore not that flexible in terms of ability to be used by multiple age ranges or sports. It would not be prohibitively expensive to lay pitches out on this site, but the benefits of doing so would be fairly minimal. The STRI potential plans for site H1 show how two additional mini 5v5 pitches could be accommodated on land directly to the west of the St. Rita's Centre. If these are provided alongside the larger format provision potentially proposed to the south of the centre, then there would likely be little demand for additional mini 5v5 pitches on site H9. If, however, these pitches are not delivered or the alternative arrangement of a relocated cricket ground on site H1 is pursued then there may be an increased likelihood of needing this site (H9) to deliver some mini football pitches depending on how much capacity can be increased at Mountbatten Park (HA) and St. Rita's (HB) through other improvements.
- 2E.37 The plans show how potentially extended clubhouse or car parking facilities could be accommodated on the site as well as pitches. If delivering additional car parking or clubhouse facilities on sites HA and/or H1 turns out not to be possible then it may be necessary to deliver some extended facilities here, but this need will have to be subject to more detailed site planning across all of the Mountbatten Park and St. Rita's sites.
- 2E.38 In response to the consultation on the draft strategy, the owners of the site stated that they would not be willing to allow use of their land for sports pitch related uses. That being the case, if it transpired that the site were required for the delivery of additional mini soccer pitches then CPO might be required.

#### Recommendation

- 2E.39 Consider this site as a backup in case plans for other sites in the vicinity do not create sufficient capacity to accommodate all mini football. Depending on the exact plans for extension and improvement of clubhouse and car parking facilities at



Mountbatten Park, additional facilities could potentially be accommodated here. However, if required, a CPO would likely be needed to acquire the site.

### **Mountbatten Park (HA)**

2E.40 The existing Mountbatten Park pitches site (HA) currently hosts a 10x grass + 1x artificial grass wicket cricket square with 2x adult 11v11 football pitches overmarking the outfield. Mini 7v7 football pitches further overmark the second XI pitch. The key issues identified for this site by the PPS are the need for sports pitch drainage and the ongoing difficulties associated with sharing the site between football and cricket. With appropriate drainage the site has potential to be an excellent facility in an easily accessible location within the town and as such should be retained and enhanced. The indicative costs for primary drainage only on this site would be around £45,000.

2E.41 In terms of football and cricket sharing issues there would appear to be three realistic options:

- 1) Honiton Cricket Club relocate to the Former Manor House School playing fields (H5) and Mountbatten Park is then used solely by Honiton Football club; or
- 2) Mountbatten Park continues to be used by both the cricket and football club but when the cricket season starts the football club utilise the youth 11v11 football pitches that potentially could be laid out on site H1.
- 3) Honiton Cricket Club relocates onto site H1 and Mountbatten is then used solely for football but would need to cater for some additional usage by the Honiton Youth Football Club.

Considering the sustainability issues with utilising site H5 and the significant benefits in terms of sustainability and viability in using sites HA and H1 in combination it is clear that either option 2 or option 3 would be preferable.

2E.42 In addition to this, to cater for an intensification and increase in use of facilities and pitches in this vicinity as recommended above then the existing clubhouse and car parking facilities at Mountbatten will need to be extended or replaced. If the cricket club relocated onto site H1, then that site would need to host a small cricket pavilion containing changing rooms and room for teas etc. The existing clubhouse buildings on Mountbatten Park could then be enhanced/extended or replaced with a new up to two storey building containing sufficient changing for all the intended football pitches and social facilities for both sports. Furthermore, relocation of the cricket ground would enable the two adult football pitches on Mountbatten Park to be squeezed a little closer together (closing the gap currently taken up by the cricket square) and this could create room for additional car parking alongside Ottery Moor Lane. These options will need to be explored further at a more detailed stage of planning.

### Recommendation

2E.43 Install primary drainage to increase pitch capacity and enhance/extend/replace the existing clubhouse facilities with an up to two storey building capable of accommodating users of all pitches on sites HA, HB and H1. Explore options for accommodating additional car parking on-site.

### **St. Rita's (HB)**

2E.44 The existing pitches site at St. Rita's (HB) currently hosts 2x youth 11v11 and 1x youth 9v9 football pitches with various smaller format pitches overmarking these. The site slopes off fairly significantly in the corners which means that one of the youth 11v11 pitches and the youth 9v9 pitch exceed Sport England/FA guidelines. The plans produced by STRI show how potentially the site could be levelled to provide for

an adult 11v11, youth 11v11 and mini 7v7 within guidelines but it would be impossible to expand the provision any further due to the existence of a large pipe running across the site. It therefore would appear to not necessarily be cost beneficial to level the site completely but the worst undulations could be ironed out and primary and secondary drainage installed for around £61,000.

2E.45 The site is easily accessible (although the access track could potentially be improved), has very limited landscape impact and is already in use as sports pitches. Continuation of pitch provision in this location is an obvious choice, and if additional pitches are located on adjoining fields (H1) and the existing pitches on Mountbatten Park (HA) are improved then in combination with the above mentioned drainage improvements, all of Honiton's football needs can be met in one hub location.

#### Recommendation

2E.46 Retain and enhance the site through the installation of primary and secondary drainage. Explore options for improving the access track to site HB as part of more detailed plans for enhancement of clubhouse and car parking facilities in this vicinity.

#### **All Hallows (HC)**

2E.47 The existing All Hallows pitches site (HC) currently hosts 2x senior rugby pitches and there is no room to lay out additional pitches. The site currently hosts all of Honiton RFC's teams, however is significantly overused as a result of this. Honiton Community College also uses the site. As a site in the town centre with easy access to all members of the community it is an ideal location for a sports club to exist. In order to continue being used by the rugby club and the school sports pitch drainage would need to be installed as a priority project at an indicative cost of around £100,000 for full primary and secondary drainage.

2E.48 As explained above there are no sites capable of taking the entire pitch requirements of Honiton RFC on a single site except for potentially Tower Hill, however this would be an unsustainable location contrary to a number of policies in the Local Plan. The only site capable of taking multiple rugby pitches otherwise that is entirely outside of the floodplain is the Former Showground (H4) however floodlights would likely not be appropriate in this location. Honiton RFC require a floodlit pitch to progress further through leagues and to enable training on winter evenings and as such All Hallows provides the most suitable location for this provision. Whilst the amenity of neighbouring properties would need to be a key consideration in the design and exact location of the floodlights, as well as the impact on various heritage assets within the town (including the Grade II\* listed St. Paul's Church amongst others), All Hallows represents the least sensitive location for floodlights in comparison to any new sites in wider landscape terms due to its location within the urban fabric adjacent to existing small floodlit hard courts and outside of the AONB. The full impact of floodlights on the AONB, heritage assets and amenity of neighbours will need to be fully considered as part of any planning application, but in principle it would appear to be the least sensitive location for floodlights between All Hallows and the Former Showground sites.

2E.49 One drawback of All Hallows in terms of sport is its open community access. This means that it is used for casual recreation and more importantly dog walkers. Despite significant action on behalf of the Council and the rugby club to deter dog walkers from using the pitches themselves and to pick up, the issue of dog fouling remains a concern. Due to their location in the town centre, and the lack of other available green spaces in this vicinity it is vital that All Hallows remains available for other community users including dog walkers, however, management of this will be vital.

### Recommendation

2E.50 Retain and enhance grass rugby pitches at All Hallows through the installation of primary and secondary sports pitch drainage and floodlights.

## **Sports**

### Football

2E.51 Currently the senior football club uses the pitches at Mountbatten Park (HA). The youth football club uses the pitches at St. Rita's (HB) plus mini pitches overmarking the second XI adult pitch on Mountbatten Park. In addition to improvements of the existing pitches (drainage, clubhouse and access to St. Rita's existing pitches), the senior club need access to an adult pitch all year round so that their season is not cut short by the cricket season and the youth club need access to additional pitches as they simply don't have enough capacity at present. The obvious solution is for additional pitches and/or capacity in close proximity to the existing pitches to encourage a football hub complex. The St. Rita's extension (H1) and Land between Mountbatten Park and the A30 (H9) present the opportunity to deliver this in a location that is less harmful than any other, will encourage club viability, and mean that users can easily walk to the site. Provision of these pitches would need to be accompanied by drainage and surface improvements to both existing sites, improvements to the access track round to the existing St. Rita's pitches, and the extension/replacement of clubhouse and parking facilities.

2E.52 A further issue is that the senior football club have aspirations to compete at Peninsula League level and this will in time require them to have access to a full-sized adult sized pitch all year round, full perimeter rail, covered stand and ability to install floodlights in due course. Sharing with the cricket club at Mountbatten Park restricts their ability to progress in this regard, even if they had access to additional pitches on site H1 for once the cricket season starts. That being the case, a preferential arrangement *could* be to relocate the cricket club to site H1. This would free up additional capacity on the ground which in combination with drainage and surface improvements on Mountbatten Park and the existing St Rita's pitches could then accommodate all football activity on the existing sites. It would, however, be less desirable for the cricket club.

2E.53 Other options for resolution of football issues in Honiton could have been on the Former Showground site (H4) or on land at Kings Arms Farm (H7). The Former Showground site would be suitable, however it would require additional clubhouse/changing facilities to be provided and it is the only suitable site capable of taking anywhere near the number of senior rugby pitches that are required for the town without using the floodplain. STRI potential plans for Kings Arms Farm show that more and a better range of football pitches could be provided here than on either site H1 or H9 without utilising the floodplain but it would mean splitting the club between the existing sites and one on the edge of the town and needing to provide additional clubhouse/changing facilities in a less accessible location. The benefits of co-locating all pitches at Mountbatten Park and St. Rita's far outweigh any other factor here.

2E.54 The combination of either additional football pitches on site H1 and new sports pitch drainage and surface improvements at Mountbatten Park (HA) and St. Rita's existing pitches (HB) or the improvements to the existing pitches in combination with the relocation of the cricket ground should ensure sufficient pitch space for football in Honiton for years to come. The table below sets out how the football demands for Honiton to 2024 could be met in comparison with the requirements arising from the

PPS. Potential provision on site H1 is shown in brackets as is the overall supply if site H1 is used for football. This shows sufficient adult 11v11 and youth 11v11 pitches but under provision of youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitch sizes if cricket is re-located to H1, but over-provision of youth 11v11 and sufficient provision of mini 5v5s if football provision is made on site H1. However, the PPS requirements were based on all pitches being of “standard” quality. The combined improvement of pitches at Mountbatten Park and St. Rita’s existing plus the relocation of the cricket ground would enable “good” quality pitches with higher capacity. Therefore, in this scenario it would likely be possible to meet the football pitch requirements for Honiton without laying out any additional pitches. If in due course additional capacity were required, either additional youth/mini pitches overmarking the relocated cricket ground on site H1 or additional mini pitches on site H9 could be considered.

Site	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5
Mountbatten Park (HA)	2				
St. Rita’s (HB)		2	1		
St. Rita’s extension (H1)		(2)			(2)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2 (4)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0 (2)</b>
Required by 2024	2	2	3	2	2
Difference	+0	+0 (+2)	-2	-2	-2 (+0)

2E.55 The clubhouse at Mountbatten Park would need to be either extended or preferably replaced with an up to two storey building comprising sufficient changing accommodation for all of the pitches across sites HA, HB and H1 and additional car parking provision made in the vicinity.

2E.56 Subject to agreement with the landowner, the Former Manor House School playing fields (H5) could be made available as temporary overflow provision until the above recommendations are completed.

### Cricket

2E.57 Currently the cricket club uses Mountbatten Park (HA). The main issue for the cricket club is sharing with football, the state of the outfield at the start of the season and the outdated clubhouse facilities. The cricket club are also in urgent need of new cricket practice nets. The provision of additional football pitches on the extension to St. Rita’s (H1) plus installation of drainage on Mountbatten Park and improved clubhouse facilities would enable a more effective football-cricket sharing arrangement to be established and ensure the outfield is in good condition at the start of the cricket season. During the initial consultation, this arrangement was supported by the cricket club, however objected to by the senior football club who felt it did not address their key issues. In addition to this, comments from the St. Rita’s Centre explained that these proposals would have an unacceptable impact on the centre’s existence as a retreat. That being the case, an alternative arrangement whereby the cricket ground is relocated across the road to St. Rita’s (site H1) would allow the cricket club to continue to run in its current format, address issues regarding sharing of facilities, and may lead to a more acceptable arrangement for the landowner and neighbours of the site. In order to deliver this, a small cricket pavilion would be required on the site but social facilities could remain at Mountbatten Park as part of an extended/replaced clubhouse facility there. This would be less acceptable to the cricket club than the original plans as detailed in the sections above but may resolve more issues with the football club and be more acceptable and ultimately deliverable with the landowner.

2E.58 The only other possible option for cricket would be to wholesale move the club to the Former Manor House School playing fields (H5), however, this would be unlikely to be appropriate in terms of club membership which would likely decline as a result of the out of town location and inability to walk to the site. Kings Arms Farm (H7) would only be able to accommodate a cricket square in the floodplain which would likely not be appropriate and have significantly higher maintenance costs per annum. The Former Showground (H4) is large enough to accommodate a cricket ground, however this would make it difficult to accommodate the required number of rugby pitches on the site and considering that is the only suitable site capable of taking enough rugby pitches that would not be a realistic opportunity.

### Rugby

2E.59 Currently the rugby club uses the pitches at All Hallows (HC). The main issue is that there are simply not enough pitches to accommodate all of the clubs needs and the pitches are of poor quality due to overuse and in desperate need of sports pitch drainage. The only site that has potential for the entire relocation of the rugby club is Tower Hill (H2), however, the above assessment is clear that Tower Hill is not a suitable or sustainable option. This means that the rugby club will have to be split across two sites in order to have access to a suitable number of pitches to support the number of teams it currently has and will need to have in the future. The Former Showground (H4) is the only suitable site large enough to take a significant number of additional rugby pitches without them being located in the floodplain. However, floodlights would likely not be appropriate in this location and full perimeter rail could be unlikely due to landscape impacts in the AONB. As such it would be important for the rugby club to retain All Hallows as the location for its main floodlit pitch which would be much less sensitive to such provision.

2E.60 The only other option would be to deliver additional rugby pitches at Kings Arms Farm (H7), however only a maximum of 1x senior and perhaps 2x midi pitches could be provided outside of the floodplain. For any further pitches (which the PPS states are required) then these would have to be delivered on the floodplain which has the potential to mean significant extra expense on an annual basis and acceptance that the pitches may not be available at the wettest time of the year (when they would need to be available the most). No other sites considered would be large enough to host senior rugby pitches. Delivering multiple rugby pitches of both senior and midi size and minimal changing provision at the Former Showground site (H4) in combination with drainage works and floodlights at All Hallows should ensure that Honiton has enough rugby pitch provision for years to come.

2E.61 The potential impact of plans for the realignment and upgrading of the A30 trunk road between Honiton and Devonshire Inn would mean that additional land immediately adjacent to the Former Showground site would likely need to be utilised in addition to site H4 itself in order to deliver the full suite of additional rugby pitches that are required in combination with the proposed new link road.

### **Overarching conclusion**

2E.62 Through the improvements to the existing pitches at Mountbatten Park (HA) and St. Rita's (HB) and either the provision of additional football pitches or relocating the cricket ground to the St. Rita's extension site (H1) all of the adult and junior football needs for Honiton should be capable of being accommodated in a single hub location. The co-location of pitches on a site located within the town that is easily accessible significantly outweighs the benefits of being able to accommodate more pitches on other sites which are more remote, less suitable, sensitive to

development, more readily available and which would require new clubhouse facilities to be delivered in the open countryside.

2E.63 Delivery of these plans would require an element of compromise on the part of either the senior football club or the cricket club depending on the final pitch arrangements for the St. Rita’s extension site (H1). However, the sustainability and suitability of this site cannot be overlooked. In either scenario, the cricket club would be able to continue at its current levels, although if they were to remain at Mountbatten Park then it may be possible to deliver additional wickets on site H1 to enable the club to grow. This would not be possible if the club relocated to site H1 in full. The final pitch arrangements for site H1 will be determined in due course, informed in part at least through negotiations with the landowner.

2E.64 Delivery of additional senior and midi rugby pitches on the Former Showground (H4) in addition to retention and enhancement of the existing rugby pitches at All Hallows (HC) through drainage and floodlighting would be the most appropriate way to meet the needs of rugby in Honiton to 2024. The benefits of locating additional pitches close to town and outside of the floodplain on a less sensitive site in landscape terms outweigh the possible benefits of using more remote, sensitive sites at Tower Hill (H2) or which would require use of the floodplain at Kings Arms Farm (H7).

### Draft Recommendations

2E.65 The table below shows the proposed total pitch provision for Honiton assuming that the recommendations of this report and the PPS are implemented. The alternative scenarios for sites HA and H1 are indicated through brackets and italics.

Site	Football	Cricket	Rugby	AGP
Mountbatten Park (HA)	2x adult 11v11	<i>(10x grass 1x artificial)</i>		
St. Rita’s (HB)	2x youth 11v11 1x youth 9v9			
All Hallows (HC)			2x senior rugby	
Honiton Community College				1x full size sand-based AGP
St. Rita’s extension (H1)	<i>(2x youth 11v11 2x mini 5v5)</i>	10x grass 1x artificial		
Former Showground (H4)			2x senior rugby 3x midi rugby	

2E.66 The table below shows the proposed provision against the requirements of the PPS by 2024. Whilst on the surface proposed provision does not appear to meet requirements, it is likely (whichever scenario is followed with regards to sites HA and H1) that the increased quality and capacity of pitches and the provision of an additional senior rugby pitch, will allow for more flexible spaces capable of being more intensively used and mean that all demand should be met in full.

Pitch type	Sport	Requirement by 2024	Proposed provision	Under/over supply
Adult 11v11	Football	2	2	0
Youth 11v11	Football	2	2 (4)	0 (+2)
Youth 9v9	Football	3	1	-2
Mini 7v7	Football	2	0	-2
Mini 5v5	Football	2	0 (2)	-2 (0)
Grass wicket	Cricket	11	10+1	0
Senior rugby	Rugby	3	4	+1
Mini/Midi rugby	Rugby	5	3	-2
Sand-based AGP	Hockey	1	1	0

### Land ownership and interest

- 2E.67 The draft recommendations set out in the table above are based on an objective assessment of the best locations for the delivery of sports pitches in and around Honiton to meet demands. This means they have not considered whether or not there is a willing landowner, the potential cost of purchasing or leasing that land, or who should enter into any such negotiations.
- 2E.68 Mountbatten Park (HA) and All Hallows (HC) are in Council ownership. However, St. Rita's (HB and H1) and the Former Showground site (H4) are not and are in private ownership.
- 2E.69 The Council currently leases the existing St. Rita's pitches (HB) and the lease is expiring. Whilst the landowners may be willing to extend the current lease they have been explicitly clear that they do not wish to see any further land in their ownership surrounding the St. Rita's Centre (H1) to be used for sports pitches as this would conflict with their purpose as a retreat. Comments submitted to the draft strategy consultation suggest that the main issue here is the potential amenity impact of the proposed football pitches on site H1 (particularly significant noise from football that would be in such close proximity to their buildings which are used as a retreat for convalescing priests amongst other uses). It is hoped that the identification of an alternative option whereby the cricket ground could relocate to site H1 instead might be more acceptable to St. Rita's and open up more constructive negotiations as the cricket season lasts only from May to September and is typically less noisy. However, this may still not be considered acceptable by the landowners. That being the case, it may be that a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) would be required to acquire this land.
- 2E.70 The owners of the Former Showground (H4) have stated that they would potentially be interested in accommodating pitch provision on their land.
- 2E.71 The owners of Tower Hill (H2) have stated that they would be willing to sell their land, however the above assessment clearly shows that delivering sports pitches in this location would be unsuitable and unsustainable.
- 2E.72 Despite multiple attempts, the owners of the Kings Arms Farm site (H7) have not responded to enquiries over the availability of their land to date, however, the assessment above suggests that this site would not be suitable for pitch provision when considering other more suitable and sustainable sites.

- 2E.73 The owners of the Former Manor House School playing fields (H5) have said that they would be willing to let their land be used for sports pitches so long as that use did not compromise the current/proposed use of the site for weddings and educational purposes. The above assessment recommends exploring whether the site could be used on a temporary and overflow basis until permanent solutions are delivered.
- 2E.74 The owners of the Land between Mountbatten Park and the A30 (H9) have stated that they would not be willing to allow use of their land for sports pitches. The strategy outlines that this site would be suitable, however, recommends other options in the first instance. If in due course through review of this strategy this site becomes required then CPO would likely be needed to acquire it.
- 2E.75 The purpose of the sustainability and suitability assessment is to ensure that the most appropriate sites are recommended for delivery. Therefore it essentially would not support delivery of pitches on alternative sites unless they were proven to be less sensitive or more suitable than those that have been recommended or the undesirable impacts could be mitigated effectively and appropriately.



## **STAGE 3 – FINALISING RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Step F – Public consultation**

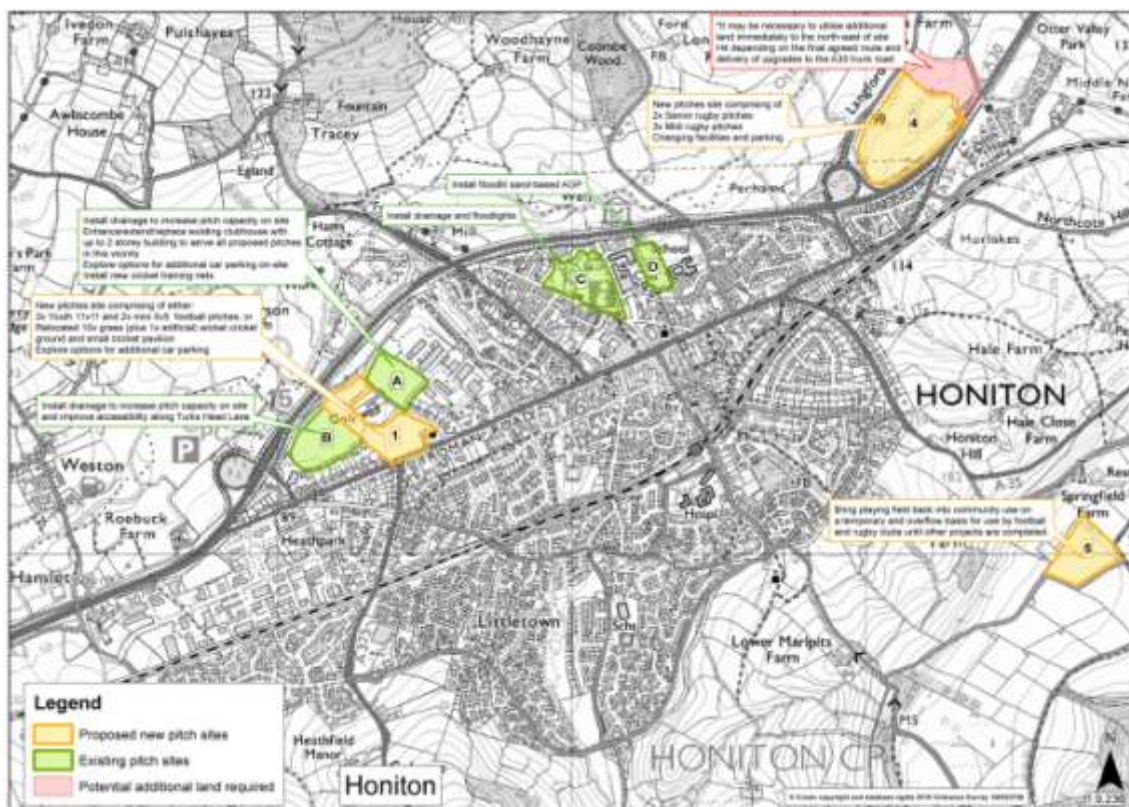
- 3F.1 An initial draft strategy was consulted on from Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016 through to Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2016. Statutory consultees, Sport England, relevant National Governing Bodies, sports clubs, town and parish councils, neighbours of sites and other interested parties were invited to comment and the consultation was published on the planning policy section of the East Devon Website together with a press release which was subsequently reported on in local newspapers so anyone could make a representation.
- 3F.2 The consultation received representations from 34 separate people, clubs or organisations regarding a range of sites, however, understandably most received were with regards to the Former Showground (H4) and the St. Rita’s extension site (H1). Comments were received objecting to and supporting the proposals with a range of views expressed, however no realistic or suitable alternatives were suggested.
- 3F.3 Key issues arising from the consultation were taken into account and the strategy revised in response. The Consultation Statement details the consultation which took place, summaries of comments received and changes made to the strategy in response.

### **Step G – Amendments to the strategy**

- 3G.1 Comments made in response to the initial draft strategy consultation have informed the production of this revised draft of the strategy. In particular the concerns of Honiton Town FC, the landowners of the St. Rita’s extension site (H1), Devon County Council and the Blackdown Hills AONB team have been taken into account in revised recommendations for Mountbatten Park (HA), St. Rita’s extension (H1) and the Former Showground (H4). The full set of changes are set out in the Consultation Statement but key changes with regards to recommendations at Mountbatten Park (HA), St. Rita’s (H1) and the Former Showground (H4) are explained below.
- 3G.2 The revised draft strategy revises the recommendations regarding Mountbatten Park (HA) and the St. Rita’s extension site (H1) to allow for the development of two alternative scenarios. These alternative options have been put forward in response to comments made during the consultation and recognise that there is a balance to be struck between the demands and aspirations of the senior football club, the cricket club and the potential deliverability of site H1.
- 3G.3 The revised strategy acknowledges the significance of the impacts that development of the Former Showground could have on the AONB and wider landscape. It explains that combined with the new link road being proposed as part of the project to upgrade and realign the A30 trunk road, it may be necessary to utilise the field immediately to the north-east of site H4 and to separate out the pitches on site to enable a more natural (or at least less harsh) landform to be developed.

## Step H – Recommendation of site(s) and strategy for delivering new pitches

3H.1 The table and plan below set out the revised draft recommendations to meet Honiton’s current and future sports pitch demands as set out in the PPS based on the sustainability and suitability of the options available.



Plan showing revised draft recommendations for pitch sites in Honiton (reproduced at Appendix 7)

Site	Revised Draft recommendations
Mountbatten Park (HA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install drainage to increase pitch capacity on site</li> <li>• Enhance/extend/replace existing clubhouse with up to 2 storey building to serve all proposed pitches in this vicinity</li> <li>• Explore options for additional car parking on-site</li> <li>• Install new cricket training nets</li> </ul>
St. Rita’s (HB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install drainage to increase pitch capacity on site</li> <li>• Improve accessibility along Turks Head Lane</li> </ul>
All Hallows (HC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install drainage and floodlights</li> </ul>
Honiton Community College (HD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install floodlit sand-based AGP</li> </ul>
St. Rita’s extension (H1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New pitches site comprising of <i>either</i>:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2x Youth 11v11 and 2x mini 5v5 football pitches;</li> <li><i>or</i></li> <li>○ Relocated 10x grass (plus 1x artificial) wicket cricket ground and small cricket pavilion</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Explore options for additional car parking</li> </ul>
Former Showground (H4)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New pitches site comprising of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2x Senior rugby pitches</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3x Midi rugby pitches</li> <li>• Changing facilities and parking</li> </ul>
Former Manor House School (H5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring playing field back into community use on a temporary and overflow basis for use by football and rugby clubs until other projects are completed.</li> </ul>

\*It may be necessary to utilise additional land immediately to the north-east of site H4 depending on the final agreed route and delivery of upgrades to the A30 trunk road.

3H.2 These recommendations are based on officer assessment of the sustainability and suitability of the sites that have been considered, public consultation and ongoing dialogue with landowners, clubs, National Governing Bodies and local Members.


3H.3 These recommendations and this strategy will be considered by the Council's Strategic Planning Committee in November 2016 and then subject to further consultation due to the nature of the changes from the initial draft.

3H.4 Consultation on the Revised Draft Honiton Sports Pitch Strategy will run from **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November until 5pm on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2016**. Any comments received after this point will not necessarily be taken into account.

Comments should be sent (preferably by email) to:

 [localplan@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@eastdevon.gov.uk)

 Planning Policy, East Devon District Council, Knowle, Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 8HL.

 01395 571533.

3H.5 It is intended that following consultation and any necessary amendments the final strategy will then be considered by Strategic Planning Committee in early 2017 and then be adopted as the Council's strategy for the delivery of sports pitches in Honiton. Adoption will ensure that the strategy acts as corporate policy across all areas of the Council and will act as evidence in the determination of planning applications. This essentially means it is planning guidance on the same level as the Playing Pitch Strategy and the Open Space Study and would be a material consideration on any future planning applications for sports pitches at Honiton or on land recommended for their delivery. In addition to this, the strategy will form part of the evidence base used in negotiating developer contributions (be they through S106 or CIL) from relevant housing sites in the Honiton area.

3H.6 It is important to note that the recommendations of this strategy are not a substitute for planning permission and do not mean that such proposals would necessarily gain planning permission. All planning applications are considered on their own merits against the development plan and any material considerations at the time (of which this would be one).

## STAGE 4 – IMPLEMENTATION

### Step I – Implementation

- 4I.1 Following adoption of the final strategy, the projects will move into the implementation stage. This will involve negotiating purchase/lease arrangements for the land; working up planning applications for the various sites; identifying and applying for funding streams; hiring contractors; working with clubs, NGBs and the public to ensure that projects deliver what is needed; and ultimately building out new facilities and improvements.
- 4I.2 This will be an ongoing project that will take a number of years to be fully realised. The significant costs involved plus the potential need to CPO land in order to deliver against the strategy means that unfortunately some of the larger projects may well take a long time to come to fruition. Conversely, some smaller projects including renewals of leases and improvements to existing facilities could be progressed relatively quickly.
- 4I.3 This strategy will need to be kept under review in response to progress against the recommendations. If, after five years it has not been possible to make progress on certain projects due to land ownership issues etc then the strategy will need to consider whether alternative sites should be progressed or not, noting the reasons why this strategy has chosen one site over another in the first place. However, until that point the strategy should be seen as the definitive plan for delivery of sports facilities at Honiton.
- 4I.4 The exact role of the Council going forwards is yet to be determined; however, at the least it would appear reasonable for the Council to perform a facilitating role. Where delivery requires CPO then the Council will perhaps have to take a more in-depth role due to the fact that other organisations would not be in a position to do so.
- 4I.5 The table below sets out the list of projects recommended by this strategy and the potential approximate costs for delivery. Some costs (for instance those for leasing or purchasing land) are unknown at present, and considering some may require CPO they are likely to be significant. Other costs are taken from the approximate costings set out in the STRI Stage 2 Report or are based on research / experience of similar projects.
- 4I.6 The Council is not obligated to fund or deliver any of these projects, however it will work closely with key partners towards their realisation.

Site	Project	Approximate cost
Mountbatten Park (HA)	Install primary sports pitch drainage system	£45,000
	Enhance/extend/replace clubhouse with an up to two storey extended facility to cater for all cricket, adult and junior football use across Mountbatten Park and St. Rita's	Unknown
	Explore options for additional car parking on-site	£30,000
	Purchase of new moveable goals, nets etc (including new cricket practice nets)	Unknown
St. Rita's (HB)	Renew lease or purchase land	Unknown

	Install primary and secondary sports pitch drainage system	£61,000
	Explore options for improvement of access track	£75,000
All Hallows (HC)	Install primary and secondary sports pitch drainage system	£100,000
	Install floodlights	£50,000
	Complete improvements to existing clubhouse	£65,000
Honiton Community College (HD)	Install floodlit sand-based AGP	£720,000
St. Rita's Extension (H1)	Lease or purchase land	Unknown
	Level and drain platform for the laying out of either 2x youth 11v11 and 2x mini 5v5 football pitches or a relocated cricket ground	£157,000
	Purchase of new moveable goals, nets etc	Unknown
	Explore options for additional car parking	£30,000
	Potential construction of new cricket pavilion	Unknown
Former Showground (H4)	Lease or purchase land	Unknown
	Level and drain platform(s) for the laying out of 2x senior and 3x midi rugby pitches	£475,000
	Construction of new changing facilities and car parking	£650,000
	Purchase of new goals etc	Unknown
	Improvements to foot/cycle access	Unknown

4I.7 These projects should be prioritised as follows. Timescales are indicative and cannot be guaranteed:

Priority	Project	Site	Timescale for delivery
1	Install primary and secondary sports pitch drainage system	All Hallows (HC)	2017/18
2	Install primary sports pitch drainage system	Mountbatten Park (HA)	2018/19
3	Renew lease or purchase land Install primary and secondary sports pitch drainage system	St. Rita's (HB)	2018/19
4	Complete improvements to existing clubhouse	All Hallows (HC)	2018/19
5	Install floodlit sand-based AGP	Honiton Community College (HD)	2019/20
6	Lease or purchase land Level and drain platform for the laying out of either 2x youth 11v11 and 2x mini 5v5 football pitches or a relocated cricket ground Potential construction of new cricket pavilion	St. Rita's extension (H1)	2020/21
7	Explore options for additional car parking on-site Enhance/extend/replace clubhouse with an up to two storey extended facility to cater for all cricket, adult and junior football use across Mountbatten Park and St. Rita's	Mountbatten Park (HA)	2020/21

8	Explore options for improvement of access track	St. Rita's (HB)	2020/21
9	Install floodlights	All Hallows (HC)	2021/22
10	Lease or purchase land Level and drain platform(s) for the laying out of 2x senior and 3x midi rugby pitches Construction of new changing facilities and car parking Purchase of new goals etc Improvements to foot/cycle access	Former Showground (H4)	2023/24