



**East Devon District Council**  
**Draft Exmouth Sports Pitch Strategy**

**Consultation Statement**

**October 2016**

## **Introduction**

The Draft Exmouth Sports Pitch Strategy has been developed as a means of implementing the action plans identified in the district-wide East Devon Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 (PPS) which was adopted in June 2015 following appropriate consultation as set out in the [PPS Consultation Statement](#).

## **Playing Pitch Strategy**

The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) was produced by a Steering Group comprising of officers and Members from the Council, Sport England, the FA, RFU, ECB, England Hockey and Active Devon, with other representatives being brought in at relevant times. The Steering Group met from the outset of the project on a regular basis and continues to meet periodically to consider implementation and review. Town and Parish Councils, local sports clubs and schools were surveyed in 2013/14 and so their comments helped shape the PPS from the very start. During the drafting of the PPS, it became obvious that there was a need to consider the additional pitch requirements for Exmouth on a strategic basis to ensure that collectively any new projects would meet demands and not be delivered piecemeal. To this end, the PPS recommended that a further piece of work was required to consider where new provision could be accommodated and the relationship of this provision with existing sites and clubs. The Draft Exmouth Sports Pitch Strategy is this piece of work.

The Draft PPS was subject to consultation from Friday 13 February 2015 until 12 Noon on Monday 16 March 2015. A number of changes were made to the strategy in response to comments received. More details of the comments received and changes made can be found in the [PPS Consultation Statement](#). The revised draft was then considered by Cabinet in June 2015 and subsequently adopted.

## **Early stages**

Following adoption of the PPS, officers began exploring site options for the delivery of new sports pitches in and around Exmouth in October 2015 (Step A of the methodology). As part of this, officers met with representatives of Exmouth Town Council in October 2015 to discuss the project and outline potential points of engagement. The town council suggested a number potential sites to consider which were visited and considered by the strategy.

Having identified potential sites to consider, the Council identified the relevant land owners through interrogation of Land Registry title deeds and wrote to them in November 2015 to let them know that their land was being considered and to find out if they had any interest in their land being used for sports pitch development. Minimal responses were received, though some expressed a clear preference one way or the other.

Following the initial identification of sites, the Council then appointed consultants STRI to assist in the rationalisation of options (Step B of the methodology).

Following this, as the project moved into Stage 2 of the methodology in December 2015 officers consulted Devon County Council's Highways and Historic Environment teams, and East Devon District Council's Landscape Architect and Countryside and Environmental Health teams over the potential sites. The comments that were received are detailed in Appendix 4 to the strategy.

The owners of sites proceeding to Stage 2 were then written to again in early February 2016 requesting access to their land to perform CAD surveys to help inform the production of site plans for consideration and informing them of a report being taken to Cabinet later in

February detailing progress on the project to date. Where there was no response to this letter a further letter was sent in late February 2016 enclosing a notice of intended entry to the land. At this stage Exmouth Town FC, Exmouth United FC, Exmouth Amateurs FC, Brixington Blues Youth FC, Brixington Soccer School, Number 9 FC, Lypstone FC, Woodbury FC, a number of other football clubs now understood to be defunct, Exmouth Cricket Club, Exmouth Rugby Club, Withycombe Rugby Club, Exmouth Town Council, Lypstone Parish Council, Exmouth Community College, Brixington Primary School and Littleham Primary School were also written to informing them of the report to February Cabinet detailing progress on the project.

### **Draft Exmouth Sports Pitch Strategy (May 2016)**

Following production of potential site plans, officers conducted a basic sustainability and suitability assessment and produced a Draft Exmouth Sports Pitch Strategy which was consulted on from Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016 to 5pm on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2016 (six weeks).

The following consultees were written to by email or letter inviting them to make comments on the draft strategy:

Land owners of sites being considered	Brixington Primary School	RSPB
Neighbours of sites being considered	Littleham Primary School	Devon Wildlife Trust
EDDC services	Devon FA	Forestry Commission
Ward Members	Devon RFU	Woodland Trust
Exmouth Town Council	Devon Cricket Board	Devon Local Nature Partnership
Lypstone Parish Council	The FA	South West Water
Woodbury Parish Council	The RFU	Western Power Distribution
Budleigh Salterton Town Council	The ECB	Wales and West Utilities
East Budleigh with Bicton Parish Meeting	England Hockey	National Grid
Exmouth Town FC	Sport England	Network Rail
Exmouth United FC	Active Devon	Office of Rail and Road
Exmouth Amateurs FC	LED Leisure	Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
Brixington Blues Youth FC	East Devon AONB	Devon and Cornwall Police
Brixington Soccer School	Natural England	NHS East Devon CCG
Number 9 FC	Environment Agency	Vodafone and O2
Lypstone FC	Highways England	EE
Woodbury FC	Historic England	Three
Exmouth Phoenix FC (defunct)	Devon County Council (Highways)	The Coal Authority
Bank Utd FC (defunct)	Devon County Council (Environment)	Marine Management Organisation
Dynamo Bank FC (defunct)	Devon County Council (Historic Environment)	Exmouth Citizen's Forum
Exiles FC (defunct)	Devon County Council (Education)	Exmouth Community Association

Fats FC (defunct)	Teignbridge District Council	Exmouth Community Organisations
Exmouth RFC	Exeter City Council	Exmouth Residents and Traders Association
Withycombe RFC	Heart of the SW LEP	Exmouth Civic Society
Exmouth Archery Club	CPRE	Transition Exmouth
Exmouth Community College	National Trust	Transition Towns Exmouth

These invites were accompanied by a press release which was published on the East Devon website midway through the consultation on 10<sup>th</sup> June at

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/news/2016/06/council-consults-on-its-draft-sports-pitch-strategies-for-honiton-and-exmouth/>. The press release was sent to all local media contacts ahead of publication and as such the strategy was reported on by local newspapers/outlets including the [Exmouth Journal](#) and [Bay FM](#). The [Devon FA](#) also reported it on their website.

The draft strategy was published on the East Devon website on the Planning Policy webpages and available to view at the Council offices reception in hard copy. A copy was also sent to the Exmouth Town Council offices on request. An officer also attended a meeting of Exmouth Town Council, Lypstone Parish Council and the Exmouth Regeneration Board to present the strategy and answer questions.

Comments were received from a total of 112 respondents. These comments are summarised in the following table:

Site	Summary of comments
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will any of the plans be implemented?</li> <li>• There is no local identified need for additional sports pitches.</li> <li>• The strategy has clearly looked at all sites from each possible angle to ensure the most viable sites have been chosen.</li> <li>• The sites highlighted in Exmouth have identified hub sites which meet the current and proposed future demand agreed as part of the East Devon PPS.</li> <li>• Moveable goals at any hub site to ensure flexibility at the site and allow pitches to be rotated to maintain the standard of the playing surface.</li> <li>• Support the delivery of additional sports facilities to meet the needs identified in the adopted Playing Pitch Strategy.</li> <li>• Concerned that the strategy is not accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) or Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).</li> <li>• Covenanted land within the Goodmore's Farm site should be used for sports pitches</li> <li>• Strategy does not cover the whole of the Exmouth sub-area or take account of the capacity of pitches at the CTCRM Lypstone and Winslade Park.</li> <li>• What provision is there for a replacement of the sand-based artificial pitch at Exmouth Community College? Loss of this facility would displace further hockey demand to Exeter.</li> </ul>
Withycombe Common (EA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking major issue and needs resolving</li> <li>• Single mini pitches are pointless on their own. Need to have them in pairs due to how league arrangements work</li> <li>• Not used to full capacity so why looking for more pitches?</li> <li>• Should expand / intensify use of Withycombe Common pitches site</li> <li>• Club would like additional clubhouse facilities including kitchen and more</li> </ul>

Site	Summary of comments
	<p>changing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Club have had to fold U11s team due to parking capacity.</li> </ul>
Exmouth Town FC (EB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noisy, foul language and parking issues already – additional pitch next door would exacerbate.</li> <li>• Potential to improve existing pitch, relocate car parking to derelict land and put new pitch on existing car park instead of on King George's Field.</li> </ul>
Former Rolle College playing fields (EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be utilised to their full potential with none lost to development.</li> <li>• Should be available to the community as a whole not just one football club.</li> <li>• Need to be pragmatic and allow for some development to bring pitches back into use</li> <li>• Access should not be off Douglas Avenue</li> <li>• Should be compulsory purchased</li> </ul>
Warren View (ED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground is a mess and noisy/antisocial behaviour of users a problem</li> <li>• 3G and Floodlights would not be acceptable to neighbours – light and noise pollution, parking issues, height of fencing.</li> <li>• Support for additional youth pitches</li> <li>• Required drainage improvements should not be underestimated</li> </ul>
Exmouth Cricket Club (EE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should remain as a premier cricket ground.</li> <li>• Overmarking of football pitches is only really acceptable in the short term.</li> </ul>
Imperial Ground (EF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of pitches at the Imperial Ground could be improved</li> <li>• Exmouth RFC require a 3G AGP to meet just their own needs so need for 2 in the town in total.</li> <li>• Exmouth RFC welcome retention and improvement of the Imperial Ground.</li> <li>• Why was the Imperial Ground not considered for 3G provision?</li> <li>• Masterplan proposals are potentially hindering the Rugby Club's ambitions for improvement and enhancement of its existing facilities via grant funding.</li> <li>• Imperial Ground could be improved and extended – cheaper to deal with contamination issues etc than buy up new land.</li> </ul>
Raleigh Park (EG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant amenity impact on neighbouring residents – noise, light, language, parking.</li> <li>• Many neighbouring residents are elderly or have life limiting conditions</li> <li>• Access is poor and on a dangerous bend.</li> <li>• Not enough room for an artificial pitch</li> <li>• Next door neighbour to the site interested in selling – would the Council be interested to help with plans and access?</li> <li>• Bats are present but location of roost unknown</li> <li>• AGP will extend usage – currently neighbours get a respite in the off-season.</li> <li>• Flood risk?</li> <li>• Essential need for drainage if no AGP</li> <li>• Withycombe RFC would prefer to remain at Raleigh Park as their home ground.</li> <li>• Careful logistical planning required if AGP at Raleigh Park is to be a communal facility.</li> <li>• The identification of a World Rugby AGP at this site would benefit the need of the Exmouth Community College but would not resolve the total lack of playing pitches that are required for Withycombe RFC's use</li> </ul>

Site	Summary of comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current club infrastructure needs to be improved dramatically to service the demands of an AGP. The current changing rooms are not compliant and not fit for purpose.</li> <li>• Car Parking and Access to the current site is problematic. The solution to share the College facilities on both this and changing facilities are not feasible due to the current demands placed on these current facilities at the college site.</li> </ul>
St. John's Road (E1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has been underused for years and is ripe for upgrading/improving</li> <li>• Support re-instatement of the pitch</li> <li>• Objection to clubhouse and parking on the site</li> <li>• Preference for clubhouse and parking to be located away from neighbouring residents – antisocial behaviour</li> <li>• No floodlighting should be allowed due to residents and wildlife (bats and badgers)</li> <li>• Protection of neighbouring properties from balls needs considering</li> <li>• Drainage is imperative</li> <li>• Dogs contaminate the field</li> <li>• Should remain available for local informal use</li> <li>• Traffic congestion will be exacerbated.</li> <li>• Drainage pipe running below the surface of the upper part of the field is very shallow under the surface – potential issue</li> <li>• Withycombe RFC not keen on relocating most of their activity to St. John's Road due to parking issues.</li> </ul>
Knapp Cross (E2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant private investment was put into this site to enable it to be used for youth football, shame to let that go to waste</li> <li>• Disappointed the site has been discounted as has potential worth pursuing</li> </ul>
King George's Field (E3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant impact on amenity of neighbouring residents – parking, traffic, noise, language, safety of children, lights if floodlit</li> <li>• Not enough parking as is, this will make the situation worse</li> <li>• Balls will be kicked into parked cars</li> <li>• Owned by / covenanted by Fields in Trust – has to stay as open space for the community in perpetuity</li> <li>• Field is used by families, dog walkers etc who would lose their space.</li> <li>• Could make improvements to Exmouth Town FC site instead.</li> <li>• Previous football usage ceased because it contravened a by-law for the field to be used by everyone</li> <li>• Soil is waterlogged so notion of bringing into use without any works is nonsense</li> <li>• Possibility of contamination from landfill</li> <li>• Support occasional use of the site so long as not fenced off or floodlit and not at the expensive of valuable public use</li> </ul>
Littleham Primary School (E4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments</li> </ul>
Brixington Park (E5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments</li> </ul>
Imperial Recreation Ground (E6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imperial Ground could be improved and extended – cheaper to deal with contamination issues etc than buy up new land.</li> </ul>
Brixington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would parking issues be created?</li> </ul>

Site	Summary of comments
Primary School (E7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No problem with site being used by juniors</li> <li>• Would require significant investment in drainage</li> <li>• Would have concerns if floodlit</li> <li>• Toilets/changing should be located away from neighbouring houses</li> </ul>
St. Joseph's Primary School (E8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments</li> </ul>
Salterton Road (E9 and E16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitches here would have no adverse effect on business and pleased to assist free of charge with any lighting designs for buildings or sport pitches and offer special net costs for any electrical equipment for these projects</li> <li>• Noise and light pollution from use of this site would be unacceptable to neighbouring residents and the AONB</li> <li>• Access to the site off Salterton Road would be difficult due to the existing access to Liverton and threat to the safety of road users and pedestrians</li> <li>• Access to the site off Capel Lane would lead to congestion due to narrowing of the lane to single track. Pedestrian safety would be compromised.</li> <li>• Site is perfectly situated on the edge of town</li> <li>• McDonalds and the busy Salterton Road have far more of an impact on the AONB than new pitches would.</li> <li>• Site is more suitable than Courtlands Cross as it would have minimal impact on existing housing, a wide main road on the edge of town with lighter traffic flows than the A376 and good visibility in both directions.</li> <li>• Floodlights may be suitable as it is remote enough to have little impact</li> <li>• Salterton Road is no more sensitive than Courtlands Cross yet has been discounted.</li> <li>• More sustainable than Courtlands Cross</li> <li>• There are precedents of more extensive AONB development across the district</li> <li>• Sports pitches would retain the open character of this area in perpetuity</li> <li>• There is understood to be a willing seller. This would make the strategy more achievable than other options.</li> <li>• Indicative costs are considerably cheaper for Salterton Road than for Courtlands Cross.</li> <li>• Disappointed the site will not be taken forward as has excellent accessibility and potential landowner co-operation</li> </ul>
Lower Halsdon Farm (E10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spurious reasons for discounting.</li> </ul>
Land north-west of Courtland's Cross (E11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will lead to coalescence between Exmouth and Lympstone and erode the integrity of the Green Wedge – lead to additional development</li> <li>• There will be retrospective pressure for floodlights</li> <li>• Restriction for floodlighting is a concern as it does not maximise potential of the site for rugby</li> <li>• Loss of prime agricultural land</li> <li>• Makes a mockery of the Lympstone Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan</li> <li>• Access along Courtlands Lane is poor and dangerous</li> <li>• Increased traffic along the A376 – it will increase car usage</li> <li>• Will result in flooding of Lympstone village</li> </ul>

Site	Summary of comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visually intrusive in all directions</li> <li>• Impact on wildlife (particularly bats)</li> <li>• Impact on setting of the East Devon Way PROW</li> <li>• Impact on A La Ronde, The Manse, and The Point in View (all Grade 1 and Historic Park and Garden) – views in and out (principal designated view). Breaches in vegetation border (e.g. access road) could lead to visual and noise impacts. Guidance included in the setting study should be consulted.</li> <li>• Poor value for money – will require CPO</li> <li>• Desperate need for new football pitches in Lympstone parish.</li> <li>• Potential for football pitches to be used by others when not used by Lympstone FC.</li> <li>• If pitches for Lympstone FC are not delivered at Courtlands then there is potentially a site at Meeting Lane that could be suitable.</li> <li>• Other sites are less sensitive and more suitable.</li> <li>• Appeal decision says land should not be developed for anything</li> <li>• Exmouth should meet its own needs in Exmouth and not in Lympstone</li> <li>• Retains green space between the settlements</li> <li>• Well located between Exmouth and Lympstone</li> <li>• Lympstone should be upper-most on signs</li> <li>• New roundabout for Dinan Way will reduce traffic issues</li> <li>• Need for football and cricket pitches in Lympstone but not here</li> <li>• Detrimental to neighbouring resident’s amenity</li> <li>• Would detract from listed buildings and prestigious new business at Lympstone Manor Hotel</li> <li>• Easier to redevelop sports pitches for housing than open fields</li> <li>• Contradicts EDDC case in Courtlands appeals</li> <li>• Fencing would be required to stop balls going into gardens of houses along Courtlands Lane and onto the A376.</li> <li>• Lympstone Cricket Club need a home ground and would like to see a cricket pitch included at Courtlands Cross.</li> <li>• Exposed site – has its own microclimate – particularly windy (not good for rugby)</li> <li>• Age group for pitch sports is projected to decline over the plan period so why more pitches?</li> <li>• Population projections should be re-visited post-Brexit</li> <li>• Council’s behaviour is disappointing</li> <li>• Slightly out of town pitches are better than in the residential areas - reduces impact of bad language , noise in general and parking issues on residential properties</li> <li>• Disappointed no cricket pitch included</li> <li>• Soils are heavy clay with poor drainage</li> <li>• Need a contingency in case preferred sites are undeliverable</li> <li>• Pitches proposed at Courtlands are welcome but viability impact of splitting Exmouth RFC across two sites needs considering.</li> <li>• Splitting the rugby club across two sites presents significant challenges</li> <li>• Should CPO Rolle site instead.</li> <li>• Development on E11 needs to be justified and harm assessed before judgement can be made over suitability and acceptability</li> <li>• Potentially the “least-worse” option</li> <li>• Need more consultation and detail</li> </ul>

Site	Summary of comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final ownership MUST rest with local community/parish council/charity to safeguard against inappropriate future development</li> <li>• Document should be retitled 'Exmouth and Lympstone Sports Pitch Strategy'</li> <li>• A cricket pitch should be added to the south east corner, for Lympstone CC</li> <li>• All drainage must be directed to the River Exe, not the Wotton Brook</li> <li>• No buildings should be constructed on the site, a clubhouse could be built on adjacent land</li> <li>• Costs, particularly for CPO, are significantly understated/not taken into account</li> <li>• E11 is not best site for sports pitches, and is not suited to rugby pitches</li> <li>• CPO not valid to meet needs of commercial body eg. Exmouth RFC</li> <li>• Lympstone FC needs could be met on a site adjacent to village</li> <li>• No significant visual relationship between the site and A la Ronde</li> <li>• Green wedge is not related to landscape sensitivity</li> <li>• E11 much better suited to meeting Exmouth's housing need</li> <li>• Landowner not prepared to make land available for sport on any tenure</li> <li>• Potential prehistoric activity in this location. Likely to require programme of archaeological work.</li> <li>• Foul sewer running across the central field which could be cut/filled as per the plan.</li> </ul>
<p>Land north of Hulham Road (E12)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will lead to coalescence between Exmouth and Lympstone and erode the integrity of the Green Wedge – lead to additional development</li> <li>• Makes a mockery of the Lympstone Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan</li> <li>• Will result in flooding of Lympstone village</li> <li>• Increase in traffic will make an already dangerous road worse</li> <li>• Access point is at an already very dangerous junction, numerous accidents there.</li> <li>• Too dangerous for young people to access on foot. Recent accident - if there were a footpath along Hulham Rd here then could have been fatalities.</li> <li>• Buildings in Lympstone should not have 'Exmouth' in their name</li> <li>• Increased noise will disturb residents and wildlife in the adjacent wood</li> <li>• Site is a long walk from Lympstone village, will serve residents of Exmouth</li> <li>• Hopefully the location of the water main could be avoided but see plan</li> <li>• Need roadside nets to prevent accidents</li> <li>• Should deliver pitches on land within the Goodmore's Farm allocation site instead</li> <li>• Should contact tenant farmer as this will affect his business</li> <li>• Wildlife impact and damage the ancient woodland ecosystem, which should be preserved</li> <li>• Rural activities such as horse riders on Exe View Rd and increased traffic do not mix.</li> <li>• Brixington Blues FC would be very interested in new football pitches at Hulham Road to run in conjunction with facilities at Withycombe Common but sharing grounds with other clubs is difficult.</li> <li>• Slightly out of town pitches are better than in the residential areas. It reduces impact of bad language , noise in general and parking issues on residential properties</li> </ul>

Site	Summary of comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs are understated</li> <li>• Green Wedge, acts as a wildlife corridor</li> <li>• Grade 3 land but still important in the landscape</li> <li>• Too far from Lympstone to be useful for residents</li> <li>• Heavy clay soil with poor drainage – fields next door (E14) discounted but these remain suitable?</li> <li>• Wooton Farm is agriculturally marginal, this will affect viability- speak to landowner and tenant</li> <li>• Report doesn't recognise the site falls within the setting of A la Ronde in the 'well wooded slopes' character type</li> <li>• The main football field should be relocated to Goodmores Farm or similar, where noise and future infrastructure (eg stands and floodlights) are more acceptable</li> <li>• 'Easily accessible' refers to Goodmore's Farm proximity, not ease of access to site</li> <li>• Access improvements will be very expensive/complicated</li> <li>• Potential prehistoric activity in this location. Likely to require programme of archaeological work</li> </ul>
Land north of Canterbury Way (E13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments</li> </ul>
Sowden Brake (E14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments</li> </ul>
Land north of Withycombe Barton (E15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments</li> </ul>
Exmouth Archery Club (E17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archery club refuse to allow parking along their driveway. Used to be designated as overflow parking but EDDC signage has been removed by the club.</li> <li>• Driveway should be absorbed into the car parking at Withycombe Common and dedicated access to the Archery Club provided.</li> </ul>
Land in the Littleham Brook Valley (E18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments</li> </ul>
Land opposite the Archery Club (E19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing pitches in this location would be dangerous in terms of traffic and access, especially for cyclists</li> <li>• Speed limit should be put in place for safety</li> <li>• Extending pitches around the existing Withycombe Common site would be sensible</li> <li>• The Archery Club is already a "blot on the landscape" and the AONB should not suffer further</li> <li>• Highly visible from far around</li> <li>• Proximity to Pebblebed Heaths in danger of losing their rural nature</li> <li>• Impact of increased pollution from traffic on the Pebblebed Heaths and biodiversity</li> <li>• Not accessible by foot or bike</li> <li>• Impact on amenity of the few neighbours there are would be significant.</li> </ul>