

Draft Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy  
Town and Parish webinar report



## Attendees

- Mike O'Mahony (East Devon District Council)
- Jack Hesketh (Strategic Leisure)
- Louie Belfield (East Devon District Council)
- Melissa Wall (East Devon District Council)
- Agnieszka Grzegorzczuk (East Devon District Council)
- Cllr Charlotte Fitzgerald (East Devon District Council)
- Lisa Staddon (Devon Moors Federation)
- Cllr Lisa Bowman (Exmouth Town Council)
- Stephen Hill (Honiton Town Council)
- Andrew Chapman-New (Cranbrook Town Council)
- Sophie Anderson (Cranbrook Town Council)
- Cllr John Pyne (Woodbury Parish Council)
- Cllr Jack Rowland (Seaton Town Council)
- James Penman (Plymtree Parish Council)
- Cllr Pauline Stott (Exmouth Town Council)
- Cllr Steve Craddock (Honiton Town Council)
- Kerry Kennell (Ottery St Mary Town Council)

## Purpose of the Webinar

- To present the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Action Plan for East Devon District Council, focusing on outdoor sports infrastructure.
- The session was specifically targeted at town and parish councils to ensure collaborative engagement and input into the strategy.
- To answer questions on the strategy and discuss any points raised.

## Objectives and What It Set Out to Achieve

- To explain the methodology behind the playing pitch strategy, including stakeholder engagement, facility audits, and demand analysis up to 2042, aligning with the local plan.
- To clarify the scope of the strategy, which covers core sports (football, rugby union, cricket, hockey, netball, tennis, bowls).

- To provide an evidence base for planning, investment, and funding decisions, including Section 106 and CIL contributions, and to support bids for sports infrastructure improvements.
- To outline the roles of East Devon District Council, town and parish councils, and other partners in delivering, supporting, or backing for sports facility projects.
- To present key findings and recommendations for facility protection, enhancement, and new provision. The webinar aimed to address current and future deficits and prioritising actions for short- and long-term delivery.
- To invite feedback from attendees to refine the strategy before final approval, emphasising ongoing consultation and annual reviews to keep the plan relevant and actionable.

### Q&A Summary

A variety of questions were asked during the webinar. The questions asked have been summarised to show what was asked by attendees.

### Purpose and Scope of the Strategy

- Cllr Charlotte Fitzgerald asked about the purpose, use, and applicability of the strategy. Jack clarified it identifies deficiencies in sport and leisure provision, informs planning and investment, and is not limited to council-owned land.
- Stephen Hill queried whether the strategy covers both district-wide and town-specific needs. Jack and Mike confirmed it does, with analysis at district, sub-area, and town levels.

### Inclusion of Athletics and Alternative Sports

- Cllr Jack Rowland questioned the absence of athletics/track and field. Jack and Mike explained it was not in scope, typically covered by built facility strategies, and referenced previous leisure strategy work.
- Ottery St Mary Town Council asked about skate/BMX/pump tracks. Jack confirmed these are also outside the playing pitch strategy scope.
- Cllr Pauline Stott shared a local anecdote about the Exmouth athletics track, noting maintenance challenges led to its removal.

### Facilities Database and Additions

- James Penman asked if omitted facilities can be added. Jack welcomed suggestions and explained the audit process, inviting follow-up for any missing sites.

### Multi-use and Community Facilities

- James Penman raised questions about village halls and multi-use spaces for sport. Jack and Mike explained these are covered by built facility or community facility strategies, not the playing pitch strategy.

### Technical Recommendations and Priorities

- Jack Hesketh summarised findings for each sport:

- Grass football: Major deficits, focus on pitch quality improvements and new provision, especially in large housing developments.
  - 3G/all-weather pitches: Significant shortfalls, priority sites identified (Cranbrook, Honiton, Exmouth, Sidmouth), with attention to rugby and football needs.
  - Cricket: Deficits in the West, need for additional pitches and targeted improvements.
  - Netball: Need for floodlighting and resurfacing to restore league activity, especially at Cranbrook and Honiton.
  - Tennis: Emphasis on LTA registration, online booking, court improvements, and paddle court expansion.
- Mike and Jack discussed balancing grass vs. 3G provision, noting cost, planning, and club preferences.

#### Local Plan and Housing Development Impacts

- Cllr Fitzgerald asked about Exmouth 20 housing site and Budleigh Salterton football needs. Melissa confirmed ongoing engagement with developers and Football Foundation, and Jack agreed to update the strategy to reflect cross-town impacts.

#### Pitch Standards and Maintenance

- Andrew asked about pitch standards/specifications. Jack explained the strategy uses non-technical site assessments, with technical details handled by pitch power assessments.

#### Catchment Areas and Cross-Boundary Use

- James Penman asked about catchment areas for sports facilities. Jack explained the strategy uses sub-areas but recognises people travel across boundaries, especially for less common sports.

#### Consultation Process and Feedback

- Stephen Hill asked about consultation with town/parish councils. Louie confirmed ongoing consultation via email, with a deadline for feedback, and outlined the process for incorporating comments before final approval.