

## **8. Outdoor sports facilities**

### **Introduction and definition**

- 8.1 This section considers the provision of outdoor sports facilities across Charnwood. Outdoor sports facilities are a wide-ranging category of open space which includes both natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation that are either publicly or privately owned.
- 8.2 Outdoor sports facilities are often a focal point of a local community, functioning as a recreational and amenity resource in addition to a formal sports facility. This is particularly true of pitches, which often have a secondary function of a local dog walking and ball kickabout area and some even function as small parks.
- 8.3 Facilities included within this category are:
- playing pitches
  - synthetic turf pitches (STPs)
  - tennis courts
  - bowling greens
  - athletics tracks
  - golf courses.
- 8.4 Sport England has developed a separate methodology for assessing demand for playing pitches and this is set out in 'Towards a Level Playing Field'. This provides a more detailed assessment of pitches and enables detailed analysis of surplus and shortfalls. It builds on the key aspects of the PPG17 process, specifically the audit of existing provision and local needs consultation. As part of this open space, sport and recreation study an assessment of pitches has been carried out in line with the methodology set out in Towards a Level Playing Field. The findings for Playing Pitches are therefore set out in Section 9. All other types of outdoor sports facility are covered within this section.
- 8.5 While this study provides a strategic overview of existing outdoor sports facilities and future priorities across the Borough, in light of the demand led nature of outdoor sports facilities, specific studies should be carried out relating to each type of facility and an overall strategy for the future delivery of sport should be developed. In addition to providing a strategic overview, this study draws on the key issues identified as part of the Charnwood BC Sports Ground Option Appraisal (2007).
- 8.6 This options appraisal investigated all Charnwood BC owned sports grounds in the Loughborough area specifically:
- Shelthorpe Pitch and Putt Golf Course
  - Queen's Park
  - Park Road Sports Ground
  - Lodge Farm Playing Fields
  - Derby Road Playing Fields
  - Nanpantan Sports Ground.

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- 8.7 It also appraised the possibility of the development of a Football Development Centre and / or multi sport and active recreation hub at Nanpantan Sports Ground.
- 8.8 The effective provision of formal and informal facilities for sports will be instrumental if participation is to increase in line with national and local targets. This will place greater demand on the facility stock and emphasises the need to ensure that facilities are fit for purpose.
- 8.9 The Sport England National Strategy is set out under three headings, specifically Grow, Sustain and Excel. If Charnwood Borough Council is to achieve the long term ambition of excelling, it will be essential to ensure that all facilities at all levels are of the highest quality and are fit for purpose.

### **Context**

#### ***Active People Survey results***

- 8.10 The Active People Surveys (conducted in 2005/06 and repeated in 2007/08 and 2008/2009) included a widespread survey of adults aged 16 and over living in England. The Survey gathered data on the type, duration and intensity of people's participation in different types of sport and active recreation, as well as information about volunteering, club membership (member of a club where they play sport), people receiving tuition from an instructor or coach, participation in competitive sport and satisfaction with local sports provision.
- 8.11 The key results for Charnwood are set out in Table 8.1, highlighting that Charnwood residents have above average participation rates in all key performance indicators comprising:
- participation rates in sport/physical activity (minimum of *30 minutes moderate intensity sport/physical activity on three or more days per week*)
  - levels of volunteering in sport
  - levels of club membership
  - levels of tuition in sport
  - levels of engagement in competitive sport
  - satisfaction with sports facilities.

**Table 8.1 – Active People Survey key data**

	Charnwood Borough			East Midlands			England		
	AP1	AP2	AP3	AP1	AP2	AP3	AP1	AP2	Ap3
Participation	22.7%	26.0%	23.9%	20.8%	21.6%	21.8%	21.0%	21.3%	21.6%
Volunteering	5.7%	4.7%	4.1%	5.1%	5.3%	5.8%	4.7%	4.9%	4.7%
Club membership.	27.4%	25.8%	20.6%	24.1%	24.1%	23%	25.1%	24.7%	24.1%
Tuition	19.6%	20.7%	19.5%	16.9%	17.6%	17.2%	18.0%	18.1%	17.5%
Competition	18.9%	18.8%	12.3%	15.3%	15.1%	14.3%	15.0%	14.6%	14.4%
Satisfaction with facilities	76.3%	77.0%	72.9%	67.7%	66.2%	69.1%	69.5%	66.6%	68.4%

NB AP 1 = Active Places 1 (2005/2006) AP 2 = Active Places 2 (2006 – 2007) AP 3 = Active Places 3 (2008 – 2009).

- 8.12 Recently released data from the Active People 3 survey indicates that participation in Charnwood has declined from figures in Active People 2 survey although the decline is not statistically significant. Performance against the other indicators has also declined, although only the decrease in club membership and competition is statistically significant.

**Market Segmentation**

- 8.13 Sport England has developed nineteen sporting segments to help us understand the nation’s attitudes and motivations – why they play sport and why they don’t. This facilitates decision making to ensure that facilities cater for the needs and expectations of local residents.
- 8.14 The research builds on the results of Sport England’s Active People Survey, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport’s Taking Part survey and the Mosaic tool from Experian. It informs Sport England’s Strategy and Business Plan 2008-2011 and helps ensure that money is invested into areas that will have the greatest impact.
- 8.15 Residents are classified according to their key characteristics and analysis of the dominant market segments provides an indication as to the type of facilities that may be required if certain groups are to become active. The key characteristics of some of the dominant population groups in Charnwood are illustrated in Table 8.2 overleaf
- 8.16 Market segmentation shows that ‘Tim’ and ‘Phillip’ are the most dominant market segment. The ‘Philip’ segment is the most above the national average (1.8%).

**Table 8.2 – Dominant market segments in Charnwood**

<b>Label</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
<b>Ben (Segment 1)</b>	18 – 25	Single	Sporthy Recent graduate, hard work/play hard attitude Enjoys taking part in sport
<b>Tim (Segment 6)</b>	26 – 35	Single/ married May have children Professional	Sporthy Settling down with partner, buying a house Enjoys technical sports. Likely to have private gym membership, and compete in some sports
<b>Phillip (Segment 11)</b>	45 - 55	Married Professional Older children	Sporthy Has more time for himself Most active type within this Peer Group, enjoys participating in a number of activities, including team sports, racquet games and technical sports
<b>Helena (Segment 5)</b>	26 – 35	Single	Sporthy Professional female
<b>Alison (Segment 7)</b>	36 - 45	Married	Sporthy Busy mum
<b>Roger and Joy (Segment 13)</b>	56 - 65	Married Retired or part time	Free-time couples nearing the end of their careers Participate one/two times a week. Enjoy activities such as walking, swimming, table tennis or golf, and also keep fit classes
<b>Chloe (Segment 3)</b>	18 – 25	Single Graduate/ professional	Image conscious, likes to keep fit/trim Makes friends at fitness classes etc Likely to volunteer within sports/the arts

### **Strategic context**

- 8.17 At national level, particularly in the run up to the London 2012 Olympics, sport and active recreation is a particular priority. It is hoped that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games can be the catalyst for increased participation across the country and leave a legacy of high participation and high quality facilities. Of particular relevance to the Borough is that Loughborough University has identified its own offer as a pre-games training camp for 2012 and recently announced that it will play host to the Japanese and Great Britain teams. This is likely to stimulate local interest in sport and recreation and may therefore have a knock on impact on demand for facilities. This intensifies demand for higher quality facilities.
- 8.18 Of particular relevance to this assessment of outdoor sports facilities in Charnwood are the following key factors:
- there are national and regional targets to increase participation and to get one million people more active – the successful achievement of these targets will impact on the demand for facilities
  - participation is no longer just about sport – in order to reduce health inequalities and address issues of health decline there are moves to increase the contribution of sport and active recreation to overall levels of physical activity – this includes maximising the roles of parks and other open spaces (as highlighted in other sections of this report) as well as building on formal sports participation
  - agencies are now working to reduce the participation gap and increase voluntary and community sector involvement
  - the national Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF) and the Extended Schools' Agenda.

### **Regional context for sport facility provision**

- 8.19 The 'Change 4 Sport' in England's East Midlands A Regional Plan for Sport 2004 to 2008, identifies the following priorities:
- to build a more efficient and effective sporting system within the East Midlands
  - to increase participation in sport and active recreation to meet national government targets
  - to make the East Midlands the most successful sporting region in England and to maximise its' contribution towards national (England and UK/GB) success
  - to tackle inequality by increasing participation in sport and active recreation by under-represented groups and communities
  - to reduce health inequalities and improve the health and well being of the inhabitants of the East Midlands
  - through sport and active recreation make communities in the East Midlands stronger and safer

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- maximise the contribution of sport and active recreation to and from education and lifelong learning
  - to benefit the local economy and realise the potential sport and active recreation has to contribute to the development of the regional and local economy, 'the East Midlands Development Agency has produced a Regional Economic Strategy 'Destination 2010' which sits under the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS)
  - the strategy has two high-level aspirations of equal weight – to deliver a competitive region and at the same time to ensure that the region has sustainable communities.
- 8.20 This strategy therefore recognises the wider benefits which sports participation can provide to the local community such as sport and community development and improving health and well being.

### **Leicestershire and Rutland Sports Facilities Strategic Framework (November 2009)**

- 8.21 A County-wide sports facilities strategic framework has been developed by Leicestershire and Rutland Sport. The study involved extensive research and consultation to assess existing provision in terms of quantity, quality and access.
- 8.22 The document sets out a vision that 'Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland aspire to have a mix of sports facilities across the sub-region which reflects its wider aspiration to be a place where residents enjoy the quality of life they expect, in an environment which is diverse, safe, health, attractive and prosperous'.
- 8.23 The strategic framework considers the following facilities:
- Swimming Pools
  - Sports Halls
  - Synthetic Turf Pitches
  - Athletics Facilities
  - Indoor Bowls
  - Indoor Tennis
  - Major sports facilities including ice rinks, ski centres and arenas.
- 8.24 The document advocates the provision of a facility hierarchy including:
- core facilities – that are strategically significant with a wide range of activity areas, fully staffed, a focus on sports development and competition and provide a key contribution to the quality of life in the area
  - key community facilities – which have core staffing
  - local community facilities – which have minimal or peripatetic staffing.

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- 8.25 The document highlights a range of key issues across the County including:
- the need for major investment into swimming pools and sports halls
  - the need to maximise opportunities of the BSF programme
  - the need to increase the number of 3G synthetic pitches
  - the demand for provision of additional athletics provision (ie training straights or 'Js' and technical throwing or jumping areas)
  - the need for more accessible indoor tennis facilities
  - the need to develop more indoor bowls facilities in North West Leicestershire, Hinckley, Rutland and Oadby and Wigston as a priority
  - the need to consider the feasibility of providing a specialist sport/entertainment facility (eg ice skating, skiing or 3-5,000 seat arena).
- 8.26 At present, the document does not make any recommendations in relation to the need for additional facilities in the Borough, but suggests the need for qualitative/access improvements on some school sites.
- 8.27 The remainder of this section will consider the provision of outdoor sports facilities across Charnwood, considering firstly the broad distribution of facilities as a whole and then each facility type in turn.

### Quantity of provision

- 8.28 The overall amount of land dedicated to outdoor sports facilities across Charnwood is summarised in Table 8.3. Calculations exclude golf courses outside of the settlement boundaries which will skew figures. The figures include school sites. Formal sports provision included within larger parks is also included. It also includes playing pitches although these will be considered in more detail in Section 9. Consideration will be given to the specific type of facility provided during the application of local standards.

**Table 8.3 – Provision of outdoor sports facilities in Charnwood**

Settlement hierarchy	Current provision (hectares)	Number of sites	Smallest site (hectares)	Largest site (hectares)
Larger settlements	176.34	64	0.04	16.10
Service centres	175.15	58	0.05	18.08
Smaller settlements	54.52	28	0.15	6.57
<b>Overall</b>	<b>406.01</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>18.08</b>

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8.29 The key issues emerging from Table 8.3 and consultations relating to the quantity of outdoor sports facilities across the Borough are as follows:

- overall, there are 406 hectares of outdoor sports facilities spread across 150 sites. The highest quantity of provision is found in the larger settlements followed by the service centres, although provision per 1000 population is highest within the smaller settlements
- household survey results show that of the facility types surveyed, dissatisfaction with the quantity of provision was highest for synthetic turf pitches and tennis courts, although in both cases the proportion of respondents who said that they don't consider there to be enough provision currently is relatively small:
  - STPs: 19% sufficient, 21% insufficient (60% no opinion)
  - tennis courts: 28% sufficient, 22% insufficient (50% no opinion)
  - bowling greens: 36% sufficient, 11% insufficient (53% no opinion)
  - golf courses: 39% sufficient, 15% insufficient (46% no opinion)
- responses show that there are differences in opinion across the settlement hierarchies, with:
  - the greatest level of dissatisfaction with STP provision amongst residents from the larger settlements, where 23% indicate that there is 'not enough' provision
  - the greatest levels of satisfaction (40%) for bowling greens amongst residents in the larger settlements
  - the greatest level of dissatisfaction with golf courses amongst residents within the larger settlements, where 35% consider current provision to be insufficient. Satisfaction levels are highest amongst residents in the smaller settlements (55% deem provision adequate)
- from the general sports club survey, it should be noted that:
  - of those bowls clubs that responded to the survey, 75% indicate that the provision of bowling greens is good. The remaining 25% of clubs state that the quantity of bowling greens is excellent. No clubs indicated that they would prioritise additional provision over qualitative improvements. In addition, 75% of clubs indicated that their club membership has been either static or increasing suggesting that demand is likely to remain stable. None of the clubs are looking to expand the range of facilities provided

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- all responding tennis clubs indicated that the quantity of provision is average or above. 71% of tennis clubs indicated that their facilities currently meet league regulations. No club suggested that the quantity of match facilities was an issue and only one club felt that training facilities inhibited club development. Despite this, over half of all clubs indicated that expanding the range of facilities provided was one of their key priorities moving forward and 57% of clubs suggested that quantitative improvements were a greater priority than either quality or access improvements
- there was no clear consensus of opinion with regards to the quantity of sports provision from children and young people, with:
  - 36% of children stating that they feel that there are 'some facilities but that there could be more', whilst 30% indicated that there are 'not enough' and 24% stated that there are 'a lot of facilities'
  - 21% of young people think that there are 'enough' outdoor sports facilities in Charnwood, whilst 17% think there are 'enough but not the right type' and 17% said that there are 'not enough' outdoor sports facilities
- at the stakeholder workshop, the range of high quality facilities, particularly for elite level sport was seen as a key strength of the Borough although to an extent these facilities are centred in Loughborough. There was also acknowledgement that ancillary provision at some outdoor sites needs increasing/improving. It was highlighted that there is good sport specific provision and in particular it was considered that there are high levels of synthetic turf pitches
- access to school sites was perceived to be a key priority going forward as the infrastructure is believed to be in place to provide a high quality network of sports facilities if school sites were opened up to the local community outside of school hours
- residents and stakeholders indicated that there are some localised deficiencies in sports provision, in particular in Shepshed and Birstall. The need for Shelthorpe Pitch and Putt Golf Course was also questioned. Other issues identified related to the quantity of ancillary accommodation
- attendees at Parish Council workshops indicated that additional provision would be a priority although many of these comments related to ancillary accommodation as well as to alternative sports facilities including trim trails. Similar to the stakeholder's workshop, Parish Clerks felt that sports facilities were one of the main strengths in Charnwood Borough. The involvement of the voluntary sector and Parish Councils was also referenced.

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### Setting provision standards – quantity

- 8.30 The recommended local quantity standard for outdoor sports facilities has been derived from the local needs consultation and audit of provision and is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix E.
- 8.31 The standard should be applied for broad planning need only, and used to determine the amount of space that should be set aside for outdoor sports facilities. Localised decisions as to the type of facilities that are required should then be taken.
- 8.32 For playing pitches, the playing pitch strategy calculations (set out in Section 9) enable a specific calculation determining the amount of community pitches required. This concludes that 1.09 hectares of pitch provision should be dedicated to pitches which are available for community use.

### Quantity Standard (see Appendices D and E – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)

Existing level of provision (hectares per 1000 population)	Recommended standard (hectares per 1000 population)
2.60 hectares	2.60 hectares (of which 1.09 hectares is dedicated for community playing pitches)
Justification	
<p>The application of the Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) suggests that overall, the quantity of provision is sufficient to meet needs although there are some localised deficiencies as well as issues relating to the supply for specific sports.</p> <p>For other sports, priorities revolve around improving access to existing facilities as well as enhancing the quality of sites. The standard has therefore been set at the existing level of provision. This reflects the need to focus on improved quality facilities and also takes into account the abundance of facilities located at school sites which are not currently open to the general public. While additional pitches might be required, existing sites can be reconfigured to increase their capacity.</p>	

### Current provision - quality

- 8.33 The quality of existing outdoor sports facilities was assessed through site visits undertaken by the Borough Council. The key issues arising from site assessments are discussed later in this section. Site quality scores are contained in Appendix D.
- 8.34 In general however, the quality of outdoor sports facilities is relatively high, indicated by an overall average score of 68%. The average quality of provision is consistent across the three settlement hierarchies, although there is a range in the quality of provision in the service centres.

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- 8.35 The key issues emerging from consultation relating to the quality of outdoor sports facilities are as follows:
- a large proportion of household survey respondents did not have an opinion on the quality of outdoor sports facilities, however of those that did, the majority consider provision to be average/good, with
    - STPs: 14% rate STPs as average, 11% rate them good and 5% rate them poor
    - tennis courts: 20% rate tennis courts as average, 9% rate them good and 8% rate them poor
    - bowling greens: 17% rate bowling greens as average, 14% rate them good and 2% rate them poor
    - golf courses: 15% rate golf courses as average, 15% rate them good and 5% rate them poor
    - athletics tracks: 10% rate tracks as average, 12% rate them good and 6% rate them poor
  - findings across the different settlement hierarchies are generally consistent with the overall results although it should be noted that a slightly higher proportion of respondents in the larger settlements consider bowling greens (37%) to be average/good, whilst a slightly higher proportion of respondents in the smaller settlements consider golf (31%) and athletics tracks (19%) to be good
  - workshop sessions with Parish Council representatives highlighted that there is a need for some sites to be upgraded, particularly where there is a lack of changing/ancillary facilities and inadequate car parking provision (eg Birstall Sports Ground was highlighted as being in need of upgrade)
  - 46% of children said that they consider outdoor sports facilities to be 'clean, safe and nice to use', whilst 38% said that they are 'sometimes unclean'
  - 33% of young people consider outdoor sports provision to be average, 16% consider them to be 'clean, tidy and well maintained' whilst 11% perceive them to be of 'poor quality and in need of extensive improvement'
  - research carried out by the Council with golf course users at Shelthorpe Pitch and Putt course during 2009 highlighted that the site is highly valued and people make regular use of the facility. Most aspects are well regarded and value for money provided is considered to be good.

### **Setting provision standards – quality**

- 8.36 The recommended local quality standard for outdoor sports facilities is summarised overleaf. Full justifications and consultation relating to the quality of provision for the local standard is provided within Appendix E.
- 8.37 There are two key components to the effective provision of outdoor sports facilities in Charnwood, specifically:

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- ensuring that facilities are fit for purpose in terms of the construction of the pitch / court / green
- ensuring that the management of these facilities is effective and meets local aspirations.

8.38 The quality standard highlights the key aspirations for sports facilities emerging from public consultation. In addition to this, focus should be placed on ensuring that facilities meet National Governing Body and Sport England quality criteria. These criteria are summarised in Appendix K.

### Quality Standard (see Appendix E)

Recommended standard	
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents. These key issues should be incorporated into an overall quality vision.	
Essential	Desirable
Clean and litter free	Dog free area
Well kept grass / playing surface	Adequate site boundaries
Level surface	Main entrance
Appropriate maintenance and marking out of lines	Security and safety
Toilets	Seating
Parking	Lighting
Changing facilities	

### Setting provision standards – accessibility

8.39 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage as well as providing an opportunity for all people to use the site. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultations.

8.40 Local consultation highlighted that:

- of the household survey respondents that use outdoor sports facilities more frequently than any other open space, 65% travel by car and 76% travel for fifteen minutes or under
- the preferred method of travel was by car. This is reflective of the rural nature of the Borough, with many residents expecting to travel to access an outdoor sports facility. Responses were as follows:
  - STPs: walk (26%), car (58%)
  - tennis courts: walk (40%), car (44%)
  - bowling greens: walk (37%), car (49%)
  - golf courses: walk (16%), car (73%)
  - athletics tracks: – walk (15%), car (69%).

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- research carried out by the Council with Shelthorpe Pitch and Putt users during 2009 highlighted that users generally drive to use the facility; with most travelling less than 20 minutes
- young people use a range of modes to travel to outdoor sports facilities – with 39% walking, 32% travelling by car, 13% cycling and 16% by bus
- the majority of sports clubs indicated that their members would usually drive to access to outdoor sports facilities
- at the stakeholder workshop, the need to increase access to facilities on school sites was highlighted. The facilities at Loughborough University were perceived to offer good access to local residents and it was suggested that the university offers a positive role model, encouraging people to participate in sport. The shared use of facilities for curricular and community purposes was a key theme of the workshop
- the opportunities to increase access to schools were also raised by Parish Councils. It was also indicated that rising maintenance costs will result in increased costs for pitch hire (in particular in Syston) and this may become a barrier to access longer term.

8.41 Many residents indicated that access to outdoor sports facilities across the Borough is good, although reference was made to limited access for residents in some settlements. In particular residents felt that access to provision in Shepshed and Birstall is poor. The price of facilities was also perceived to be prohibitive by a small number of residents.

8.42 The recommended local accessibility standard for outdoor sports facilities is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix E.

**Accessibility Standard (see Appendix E)**

Recommended standard – outdoor sports facilities
<b>10 minute drive time to all facilities</b>
Justification
<p>Analysis of consultation with residents demonstrates that the majority of users currently travel to outdoor sports facilities and with the exception of grass pitches, residents also expect to drive to other facilities.</p> <p>Consultation highlights the expectation that facilities will be provided local to the home, however it is clear that the quality of sites and the degree to which they are fit for purpose takes on greater importance. A 10 minute drive time standard has therefore been set for all types of outdoor sports facilities, except grass pitches. This will promote the provision of high quality facilities and will be treated as a minimum standard of provision.</p> <p>Good access to school facilities will be essential if this standard is to be achieved.</p>

**Applying provision standards**

8.43 In order to provide an overview of sports provision in Charnwood, the quantity standard has been applied.

**Quantity**

8.44 Table 8.4 illustrates the application of the standard against the current provision in each of the three settlement hierarchies.

8.45 As highlighted, the wide range of facilities included within this typology means that the application of an overarching quantity standard provides an indication of provision for broad planning need only.

8.46 Where shortfalls of provision are evident, the type of facility that is most appropriate for a given area should be derived from expressed demand and local participation trends as well as gaps in the existing network of provision. The playing pitch component within the quantity standard sets out a specific recommendation as to the area of pitches (in hectares) that should be provided.

8.47 The adequacy of specific facilities in Charnwood is discussed later in this section.

**Table 8.4 – Application of quantity standard**

Analysis area	Current shortfall / surplus against local standard (1.76 hectares per 1000 population)	Future shortfall / deficit against local standard (1.76 hectares per 1000 population)
Larger Settlements	-60.33 hectares	-87.22 hectares
Service Centres	30.91 hectares	14.52 hectares
Smaller Settlements	25.91 hectares	22.66 hectares
<b>Overall</b>	<b>-3.51 hectares</b>	<b>-50.03 hectares</b>

8.48 As highlighted, the broad standard for outdoor sports facilities should be applied for planning need only. Table 8.4 indicates that:

- the provision of outdoor sports facilities is insufficient to meet current demand. Based on future population projections, there will be a shortfall of 50.03 hectares overall. This covers the whole range of outdoor sports facilities and represents an indicative shortfall only
- based on the indicative standard, provision within the service centres and smaller settlements is sufficient to meet demand. Only within the larger settlements is the provision of outdoor sports facilities insufficient to meet demand. There are however localised areas of deficiency and gaps in provision for specific sports which will be returned to later in this section.

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- 8.49 These calculations do not take into account any increases in participation, which are a key local and regional target. If participation was to increase, pressure on existing facilities would rise significantly.

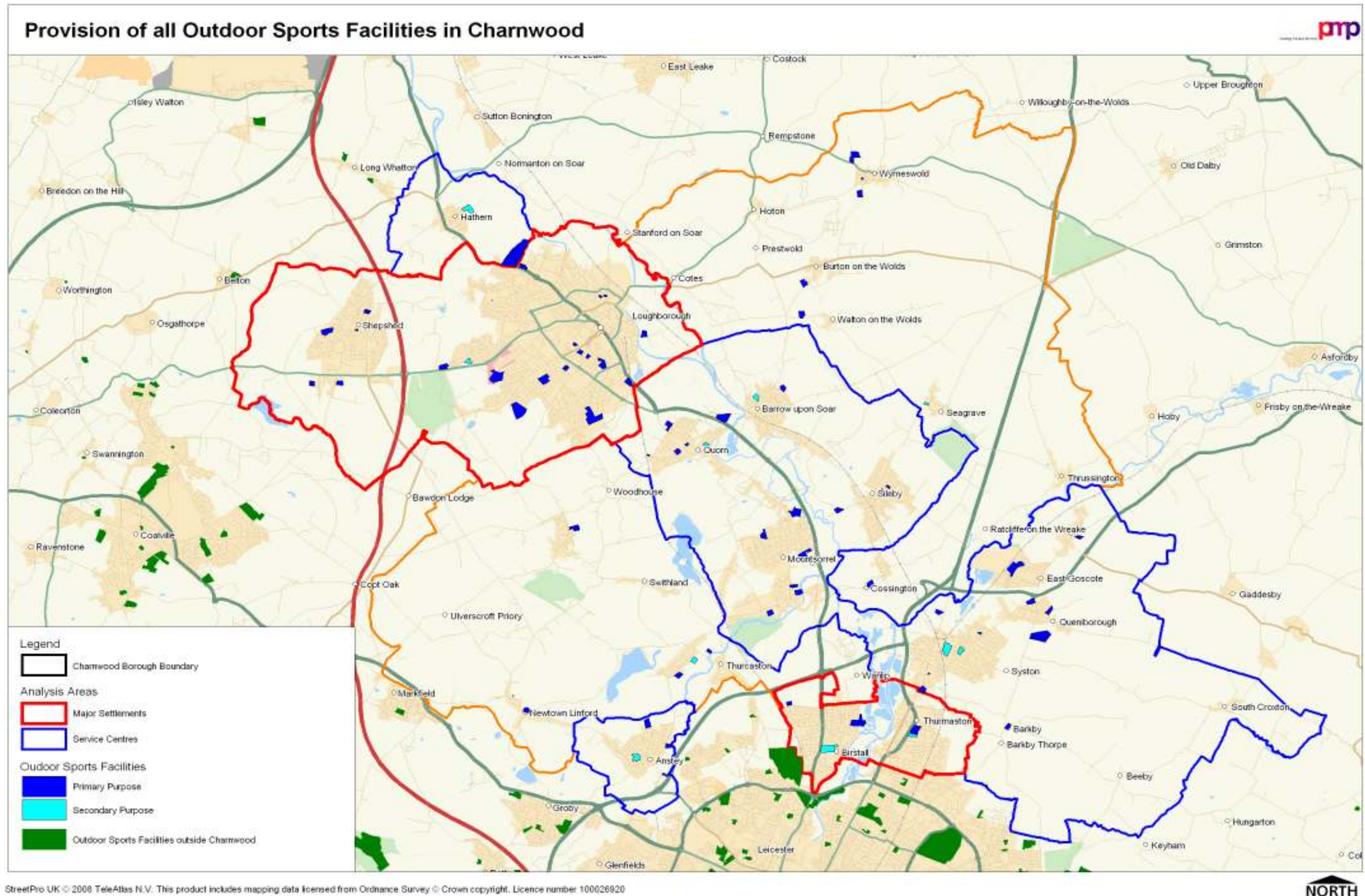
### **Accessibility**

- 8.50 Map 8.1 summarises the distribution of outdoor sports facilities across Charnwood. It can be seen that there is a good distribution of outdoor sports facilities across the Borough. Significantly higher amounts of facilities are located in the larger settlements and service centres, however all of the service centres have at least one facility.

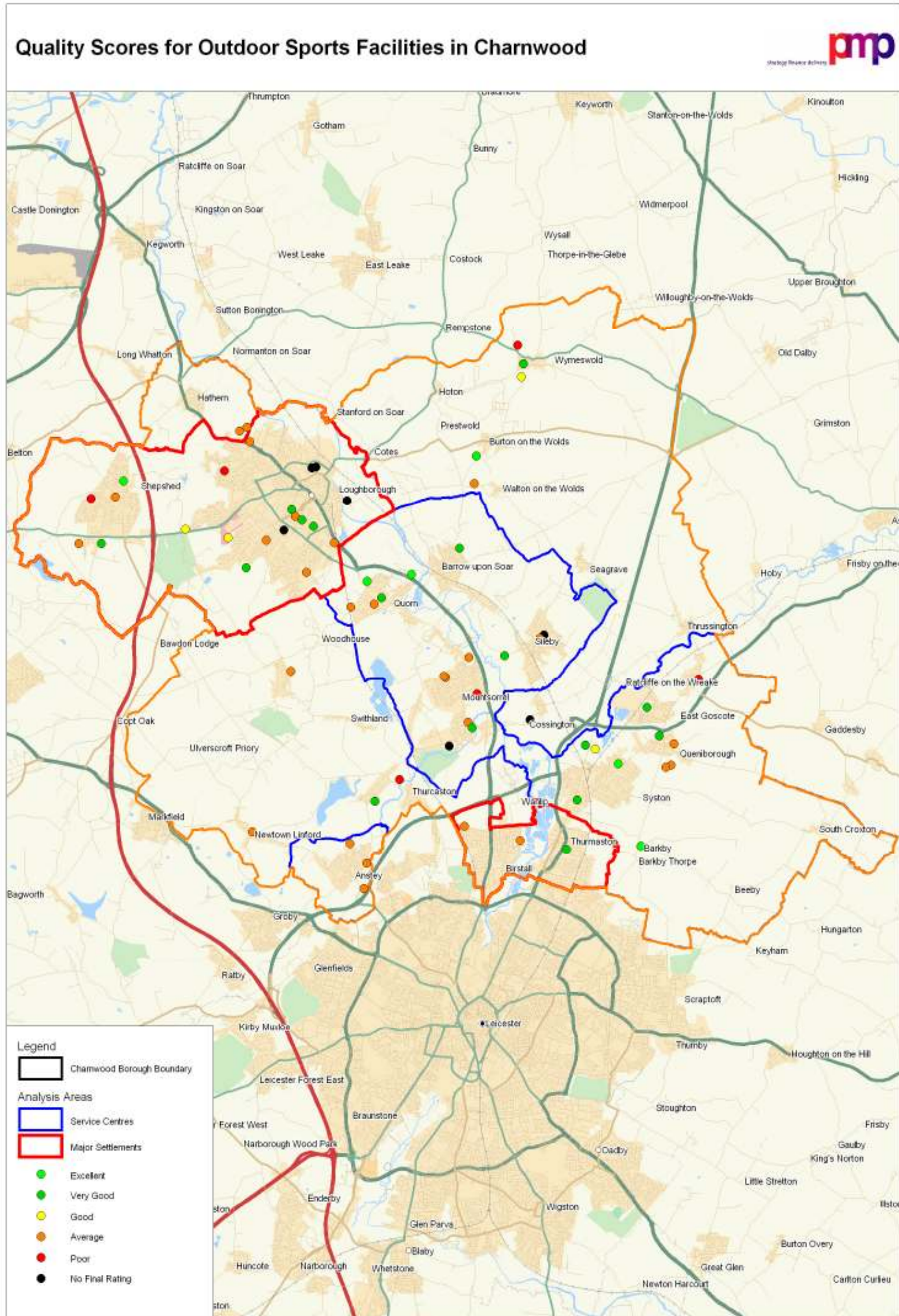
### **Quality**

- 8.51 Map 8.2 summarises the quality of sports facilities across the Borough. There are no clear patterns in the distribution of high and low quality facilities. The quality of specific types of facility will be returned to later in this section.

Map 8.1 - Outdoor sports facilities in Charnwood



Map 8.2 – Quality of outdoor sports facilities in Charnwood



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**Priorities for Future Delivery**

**Borough Wide Issues**

**Quantity**

- 8.52 In light of the importance of outdoor sports facilities to residents, and their role in increasing physical activity, it will be important to ensure that all sites are protected from development unless it can be proven that the site is surplus to demand, or that development of one site will result in improved facilities at a nearby site. Paragraph 10 of PPG 17 requires that before any open space can be built on, it must be demonstrated that it is surplus to requirements, not only in terms of its existing use, but also in respect of any other functions of open space which it can perform. Sport England planning guidance highlights this point and reinforces that this requirement should be considered prior to the recommended disposal of any site. These principles should be incorporated through the provision of appropriate policies in the LDF and is referenced further in Section 15.

**OSF1**

Protect all outdoor sports facilities from development unless criteria set out in Sport England policy are met. This should be carried out through the incorporation of appropriate policies in the LDF.

**Biodiversity**

- 8.53 In addition to the quality of sites for sports participation, the role of outdoor sports facilities in terms of nature conservation and biodiversity should not be ignored. The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan highlights the importance of urban habitats. While outdoor sports facilities are not referenced specifically, many of these sites are within or have a similar function to parks and may therefore contain habitats of particular value.

**OSF2**

Improvements to outdoor sports facilities should give consideration to the habitats provided at these sites and the species that are evident.

**Sport specific facility issues**

- 8.54 The remainder of this section considers sport specific issues arising from the application of standards.
- 8.55 Table 8.5 summarises the distribution of tennis courts, bowling greens, athletics tracks and synthetic turf pitches across Charnwood. It must be noted that if participation was to increase significantly, demand would increase and higher pressure would be placed on existing facilities
- 8.56 With the exception in the reduction of a junior playing pitch at Lodge Farm, pitch, bowling and tennis provision is consistent with that that was recorded in the 2007 Options Appraisal although some pitches were not marked out at the time of the initial site visits.

**Table 8.5 – Specific sports facilities across Charnwood**

Settlement hierarchy	Tennis Courts	Bowling Greens	Athletics tracks	Full Size Synthetic pitches
Larger Settlements	40	6	1	8
Service Centres	34	6	0	2
Smaller Settlements	6	1	1	2
<b>Overall</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>

8.57 Table 8.5 above indicates the following:

- there is an uneven distribution of outdoor sports facilities in Charnwood. The majority of facilities are located in the larger settlements and service centres - the main urban settlements of the Borough
- there is limited provision of more specialised outdoor sports facilities in the smaller settlements eg tennis courts and bowling greens
- synthetic turf pitches are located across the Borough.

**Tennis courts**

**Context**

8.58 There is currently no national strategy for tennis, although there is a National Facilities Plan. At a national level, of the 2600 existing clubs, 303 have indoor courts and the remainder are based at outdoor facilities only.

8.59 In order to facilitate tennis development, the LTA intend to develop a hierarchy of provision which will include international High Performance Clubs (10 nationally), High Performance Clubs and County Accredited clubs, which will be the satellite and feeder clubs. The LTA are now focussing their investment in facilities around a club structure through their ‘Club Vision’ initiative.

8.60 The key objectives of the strategy in underpinning and enhancing the overall vision of the LTA are:

- develop a comprehensive network of training and competition facilities
- continue developing all year round playing facilities – emphasising covered courts and floodlighting
- accelerate the building of acrylic and clay courts – the LTA’s preferred performance surfaces
- assist development programmes at a local level by supporting the provision of enhanced facilities.

## ***SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES***

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8.61 Priority facility types identified include:

- covered courts
- clay courts
- floodlighting
- practice walls.

8.62 Tennis Leicestershire Ltd support the LTA national priorities.

8.63 There are three strong Tennis Clubs in Loughborough, all of which are affiliated with the LTA. Charnwood Tennis Club, Loughborough Town Tennis Club and Loughborough Greenfields all have priorities of increasing their membership at all levels and improving their standard of performance.

8.64 In addition to tennis clubs in Loughborough, there are several strong clubs based in the Market Towns around the Borough, specifically Syston Northfield TC, Birstall Watermead Tennis Club and Quorn LTC, Rothley Ivanhoe LTC, Newtown Linford LTC, Sileby LTC and Gynsill Lawn Tennis Club, Anstey.

### **Context**

8.65 The current club membership is increasing year on year and facility improvements at a local level are aimed at increasing participation further.

8.66 The Dan Maskell Tennis Centre at the University provides a high quality indoor tennis centre accessible to the general public as well as to university students. The LTA Academy, on the same sites provides a high quality regional tennis development centre.

8.67 The following sites contain outdoor tennis facilities:

- Bowls Club off Collingwood Drive (Sileby)
- Staddon Road and Sports Ground (Anstey)
- Gynsill Close (Gynsill Tennis Club – Anstey)
- Towles Fields (Burton on the Wolds)
- Northfields (Syston)
- Woodhouse Road Tennis, Manor House Hotel ( Woodhouse)
- Mountsorrel Lane (Rothley)
- King George's Field, Queniborough Road (Queniborough)
- Syston Rugby Club (Queniborough)
- Elizabeth Park, Redhill Lane (Thurmaston)
- Cricket Ground (Newtown Linford)
- King George V Playing Fields, Main Street (Woodhouse)

## **SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

- Nanpantan Sports Ground, Brook Lane (Loughborough)
- Forest Road Tennis Club (Loughborough)
- Holt Drive Sports Ground (Loughborough)
- Leicester Road Playing Fields (Loughborough)
- Park Road Sports Ground (Loughborough)
- Burleigh Community College (Loughborough)
- Roundhills Community College (Thurmaston)
- Hind Leys Community College (Shepshed)
- Stonehill School Campus (Birstall)
- Humphrey Perkins High School and Community Centre (Barrow Upon Soar).

8.68 Table 8.6 summarises the provision of tennis facilities across the Borough.

**Table 8.6 – Tennis courts in Charnwood**

Area	Number of Sites	Number of Courts
Larger Settlements	10	40
Service Centres	9	34
Smaller Settlements	3	6
<b>Overall</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>80</b>

8.69 Table 8.6 indicates that tennis courts are unevenly distributed across the Borough with the majority of sites located in the larger settlements and service centres.

8.70 In total, there are 22 tennis court sites containing a total of 80 courts. This equates to 0.5 courts per 1000 population or one court for every 1994 residents. This level of provision is high in comparison to averages in other areas in which PMP have undertaken similar studies.

8.71 The largest public sports facility containing tennis courts is Nanpantan Sports Ground. This facility is also used by Charnwood Tennis Club. Courts at this site are only available at certain times and not all courts are available for public pay and play.

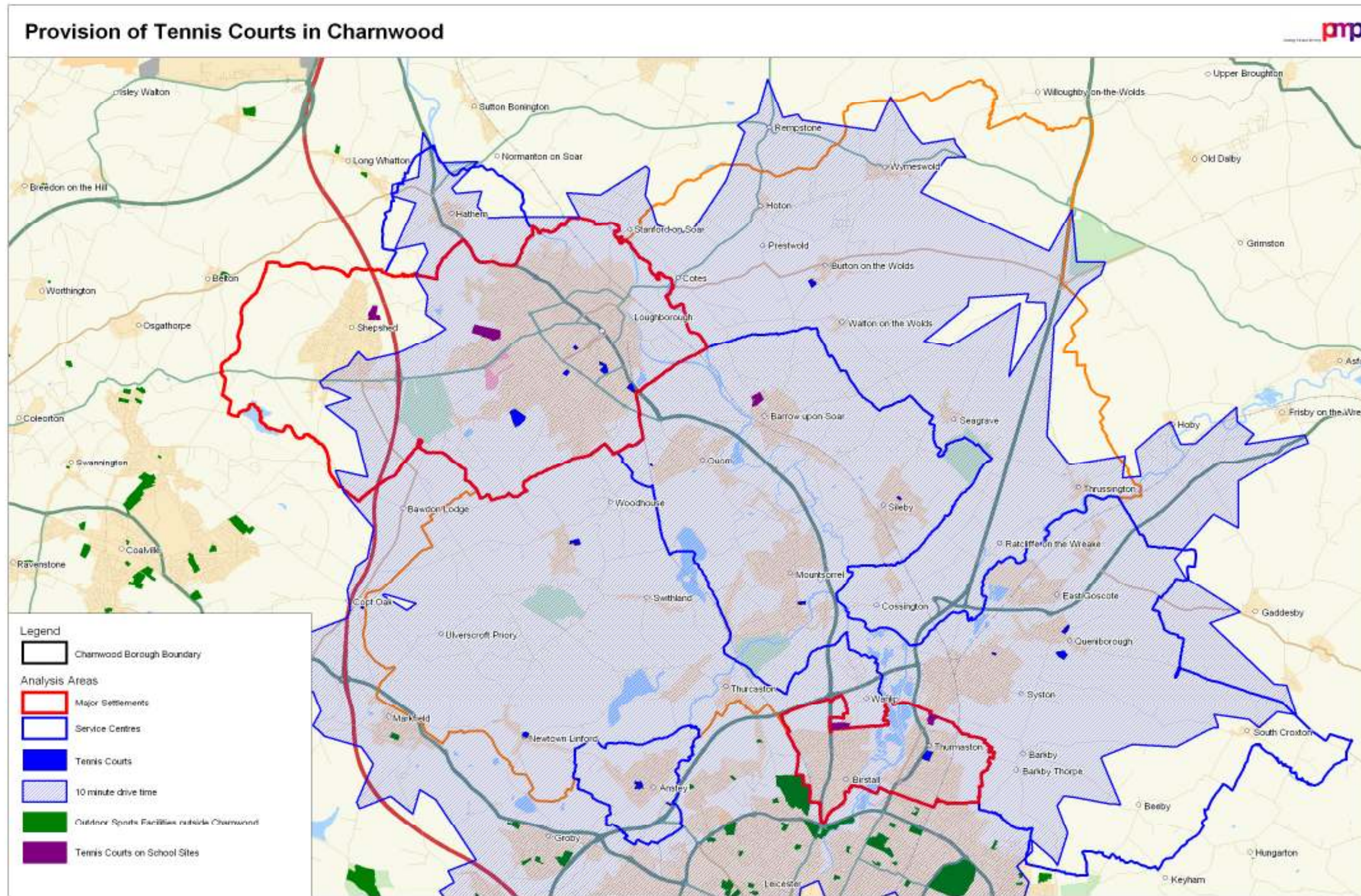
8.72 In addition to public and club tennis courts, there are also several facilities at school sites. The 2007 Options Appraisal indicates that there is a lot of interaction between clubs and schools, meaning that children in the Borough are exposed to tennis at an early age.

## ***SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES***

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- 8.73 Charnwood Borough Council, along with clubs and schools are the main providers of tennis courts in the Borough. Outside of Loughborough however, there are relatively few pay and play opportunities with most facilities requiring membership of the club. Consultation undertaken as part of the 2007 Options Appraisal indicated that membership of clubs is growing. The survey undertaken as part of this survey suggests that membership varies across the Borough. While half of clubs suggested that membership is increasing, some clubs suggested that is decreasing. A lack of internal and external funding was perceived to be the key challenges facing clubs.
- 8.74 The quality of tennis courts in Charnwood is good. Four sites containing tennis were rated as excellent or very good, specifically Towles Playing Field (Burton on the Wolds), Northfields Tennis Club (Syston), Forest Road Tennis Club (Loughborough) and Elizabeth Park (Thurmaston).
- 8.75 The distribution of tennis courts is illustrated overleaf on Map 8.3. This map indicates that all residents have access to a tennis court within the recommended 10 minute drive time.

Map 8.3 – Tennis courts in Charnwood



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### **Adequacy of Existing Provision**

- 8.76 Application of the local accessibility standard demonstrates that most residents have access to a tennis court within the recommended 10 minute drive time. There is a particular gap of provision in Shepshed, where residents are outside of the catchment of a public facility. The school facility in Shepshed is of particular importance, as without this facility, residents are unable to access any tennis courts.
- 8.77 Despite high levels of provision in comparison to other areas, the household survey suggests that tennis is popular and that in some areas, there is demand for additional provision. This is supported particularly in the service centres and smaller settlements and may be reflective of the more limited casual pay and play provision in these areas. Parish plans for Thrussington, East Goscote, Sileby, Wymeswold and Mountsorrel all reference the popularity of or demand for tennis facilities. In Rothley, the Parish Council require the club to permit casual access to two of its facilities. Dissatisfaction with quantity of tennis courts was higher in the household survey than for any other type of facility.
- 8.78 To an extent the sports club survey supports this. While clubs suggested that the quantity of provision is average and is not currently inhibiting participation, over half of all clubs indicated that expanding the range of facilities provided was one of their key priorities moving forward and 57% of clubs suggested that quantitative improvements were a greater priority than either quality or access improvements. This suggests that while provision is sufficient at the current time, there may be a need to increase capacity at existing sites to meet demand in future years. The Hallam Fields development in Birstall is likely to see an improvement in the quality of provision through a S106 agreement.
- 8.79 Newtown Linford Tennis Club indicated that their club is constrained by the facilities that they use and that they do not meet league requirements. Floodlights are required and additional capacity at the club site would also help the club to realise its plans.
- 8.80 The 2007 Options appraisal indicated that despite high demand for tennis (and an above average propensity to participate in tennis), the public facility at Park Road in Loughborough is under used. It is also of poor quality. The appraisal highlighted that while maintaining the status quo is the short term option, longer term and following the redevelopment of the town centre, reconfiguration of the site may be appropriate and this may result in the loss of the tennis courts. These courts are regularly hired by local schools and are also used occasionally as netball courts. Further exploration of other pay and play opportunities at better quality courts throughout the Borough should therefore be explored.
- 8.81 In the event of the loss of provision, qualitative improvements to existing sites, alongside improvements to the capacity of facilities should be prioritised. Exploration of other pay and play opportunities as above at other higher quality facilities in partnership with other providers will also be essential.
- 8.82 Unless analysis of usage demonstrates that existing facilities are not required, all sites should be protected from development. Where usage is low, the reasons for this should be investigated prior to the disposal of a site, and any facilities lost should be replaced at an alternative location. Given the role that the courts at Park Road play an important role in providing opportunities for casual play, the loss of these facilities would leave a gap in provision in Loughborough.

<b>TENNIS</b>	<p>Improvements are required to the quality of some (public) tennis facilities. Additionally, in order to improve capacity at existing sites, consideration should be given to the provision of covers over some courts to ensure that facilities are playable all year around. This is particularly important longer term.</p> <p>Monitor demand for additional facilities, particularly in Parishes where demand has previously been expressed and provide new sites where appropriate. Additional community provision in these areas could be supplied by improving access to facilities at school sites.</p> <p>New development is likely to generate demand for additional provision. The potential impact of new development can be investigated using the current Boroughwide level of provision (0.5 courts per 1000 population).</p>
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**Bowling greens**

- 8.83 There are 35 affiliated Counties to the English Bowling Association (EBA), to which a total of 2,700 clubs are in membership nationwide. The current national priority remains to generate interest in the game from and increase participation figures of young people. The scheme is a partnership initiative with the purpose of providing a pathway to enable children and young people to participate in the sport of bowls and to develop their potential to whatever appropriate level they so wish. The EBA are anticipating that all Counties will be involved during this next year so there is no reason why any young person with potential to progress in the sport should not be afforded an opportunity to be considered for these events.
- 8.84 The main rationale behind encouraging young people to the game is the declining membership figures across the country.
- 8.85 The priorities of Leicestershire and Rutland Bowling Association (L&RBA) reflect those of the National Body and aim to promote these key aims and objectives to all clubs. During consultation undertaken as part of the 2007 Options Appraisal, it was commented that the L&RBA support local clubs to maintain membership figures, encourage new members and have a priority of attracting women and more young people to the game.
- 8.86 This is particularly important as clubs in Leicester and Rutland have experienced the same declining participation as has been found nationally.

**Context**

- 8.87 There are 16 bowling greens distributed across 15 sites in Charnwood, specifically:
  - Bowls Club off Collingwood Drive (Sileby)
  - Shepshed Town Bowls Club, Charnwood Road (Shepshed)
  - Birstall Playing Fields, School Lane, (Birstall)
  - Syston Bowling club, Central Park, St. Peters Street (Syston)

**SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

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- Fosse Way (Syston)
- Clay Street Bowling Green (Wymeswold)
- High Street Bowling Green (Quorn)
- Loughborough Road Playing Fields (Rothley)
- Mountsorrel Lane (Rothley)
- Elizabeth Park, Red Hill Lane (Thurmaston)
- Granby Bowls Club, Park Road Sports Ground (Loughborough)
- Loughborough Bowls Club , Mayfield Drive, Beacon Road (Loughborough)
- Queen’s Park Bowling Green (Loughborough)
- Loughborough GreenFields Sports and Social Club, Holt Drive Sports Ground (Loughborough)
- Nanpantan Sports Ground (Loughborough).

8.88 Table 8.7 summarises the distribution of these facilities.

**Table 8.7 – Bowling Greens in Charnwood**

Area	Number of Sites	Number of greens
Larger Settlements	7	8
Service Centres	6	6
Smaller Settlements	1	1
<b>Overall</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>

8.89 Similar to the findings for tennis courts, Table 8.7 indicates that the majority of bowling greens are located within the larger settlements and service centres. Only one bowling green is found in the smaller settlements. Residents in these areas therefore have to travel further to reach a facility.

8.90 The current provision of bowling greens is equivalent to 0.1 bowling greens per 1000 residents or one bowling green per 10,500 residents.

**Adequacy of existing levels of provision**

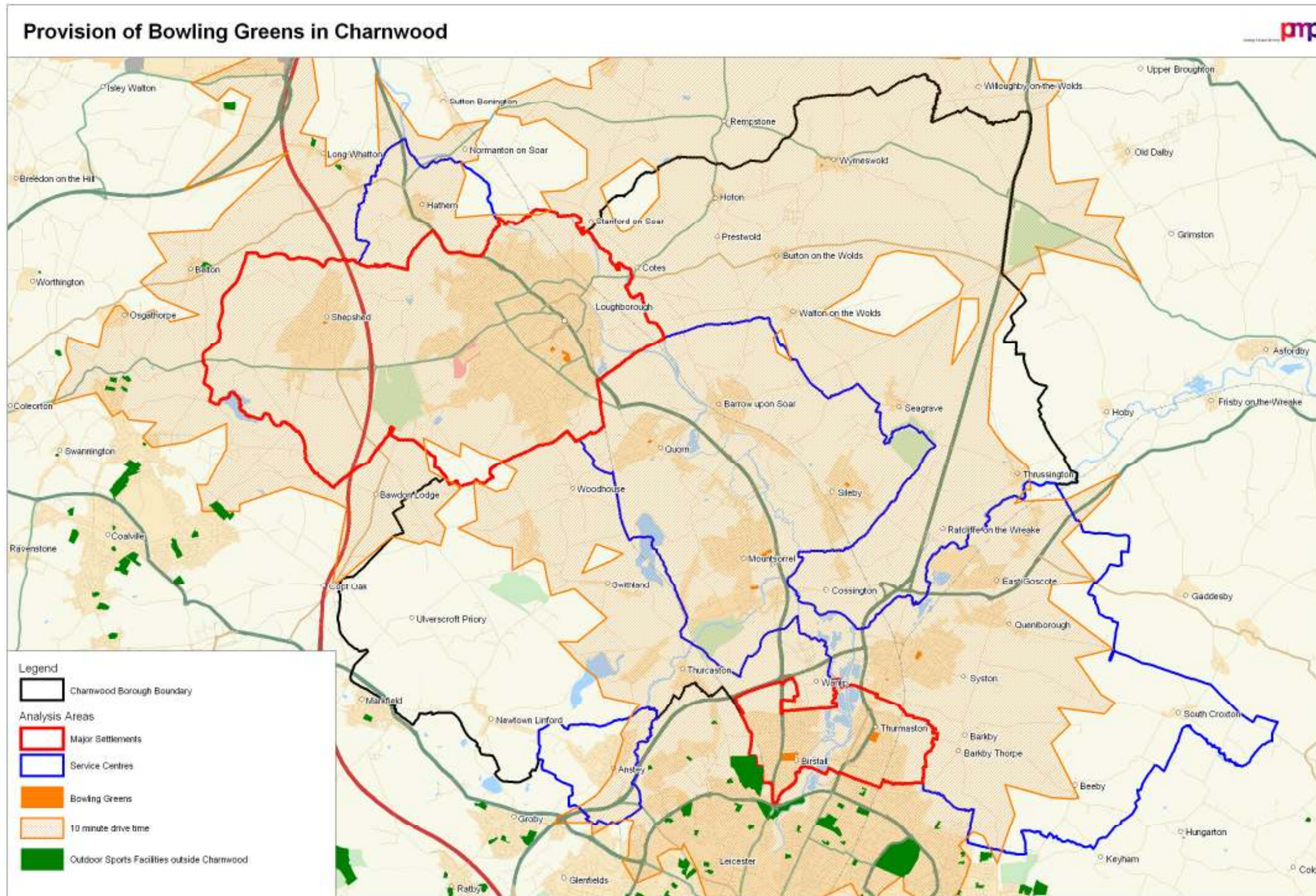
- 8.91 The findings of the household survey highlight that residents are satisfied with the current level of provision. Only 11% of respondents to the household survey consider provision to be insufficient. Furthermore, all bowling clubs responding to the sports club survey stated that the quantity of bowling greens is good or excellent. All clubs indicated that qualitative improvements should be prioritised over the provision of additional bowling greens.
- 8.92 In addition to the satisfaction with current provision, all but one bowling club indicated that membership had remained static and that they are not looking to expand the size of their club. Only one club suggested that membership was increasing. No evidence of latent demand has emerged and one club recently held an open day, but new members served only to replace members lost in recent years.
- 8.93 The distribution of bowling greens is illustrated on Map 8.4 overleaf. It demonstrates that nearly all residents have access to a bowling green within a 10 minute drive time. Only residents in Newtown Linford and the west of Anstey are outside the catchment of a bowling green.
- 8.94 With regards the quality of provision, 31% of respondents to the household survey consider the quality to be either average or good. Quality assessments suggest that the quality of bowling greens is good. As highlighted, the findings of the sports club survey suggest that qualitative improvements are the highest priority. Issues relating to security are seen to be particularly important, as well as improvements to the provision and ancillary accommodation. Loughborough Granby Bowling Club also indicated that the quality of the green required improving if the site was to be suitable to host county matches. The quality of pavilions is perceived to be particularly important if new players are to be encouraged.
- 8.95 At the time of the 2007 Options Appraisal, plans for the redevelopment of Loughborough Town Centre included changes to the boundary of Queen's Park, which would impact on the bowls green. The Options Appraisal therefore highlights the long term potential to relocate this green at Queen's Park as part of a wider plan to create a bowling hub at Park Road. Although clubs are in agreement with the benefits of creating a hub, the need to maintain club identity was reinforced. Economies of scale would be achieved by joining the clubs, however the loss of the Bowling Green from Queen's Park would detract from its heritage.
- 8.96 The 2007 Options Appraisal also indicated that the current supply of bowling greens in Loughborough was sufficient to meet the needs of clubs stated that the green at Park Road was currently being used to capacity on the peak day of usage. Any future growth at the club, or the relocation of the Queen's Park club to Park Road, would therefore place unwanted pressures on the one green and that the long-term sustainable development of the club (or clubs) would be dependent on the provision of a further green. The club using Park Road was the only club to indicate that membership was expanding although they suggest that qualitative improvements are more important at the current time.
- 8.97 Longer term, if efforts to increase participation in bowls are successful (and due to the impact of population growth), additional provision may be required.

**BOWLING**

The existing level of provision is currently sufficient to meet demand. Focus should be on qualitative improvements, in particular on ancillary provision, enhancing security and improving the quality of the greens.

In the long term, monitor the demand for bowling greens and react to opportunities to improve provision. The impact of new development can be investigated based on the current provision of 0.01 per 1000 population.

Map 8.4 – Bowling greens in Charnwood



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**Synthetic turf pitches**

**Context**

- 8.98 Sport England research into the use of STPs indicates that they play two principal roles, midweek training for football and weekend matches for hockey.
- 8.99 Active Places Power indicates that the quantity of synthetic turf pitches (STPs) in Charnwood is above average, with the total quantity equating to 0.06 STPs per 1000 population. This figure is above both the regional (0.04) and national (0.03) averages.
- 8.100 Table 8.8 illustrates provision in Charnwood in comparison to national and regional averages. The Leicestershire and Rutland sports facilities strategic framework study outlines the need for more 3G pitches, although no specific requirements are made for Charnwood BC. It is also worth noting that not all pitches in Charnwood are included on the Active Places database at the current time and in reality provision is therefore higher than expressed below (data in table 8.8 is taken from Active Places). Taking all pitches into account, pitch provision in Charnwood equates to 0.08 STPs per 1000 population.

**Table 8.8 – Synthetic turf pitch provision in the region (according to Active Places)**

Geographical area	STPs/1000 population (pitches)
National	0.03
East Midlands	0.04
<b>Charnwood</b>	<b>0.06</b>

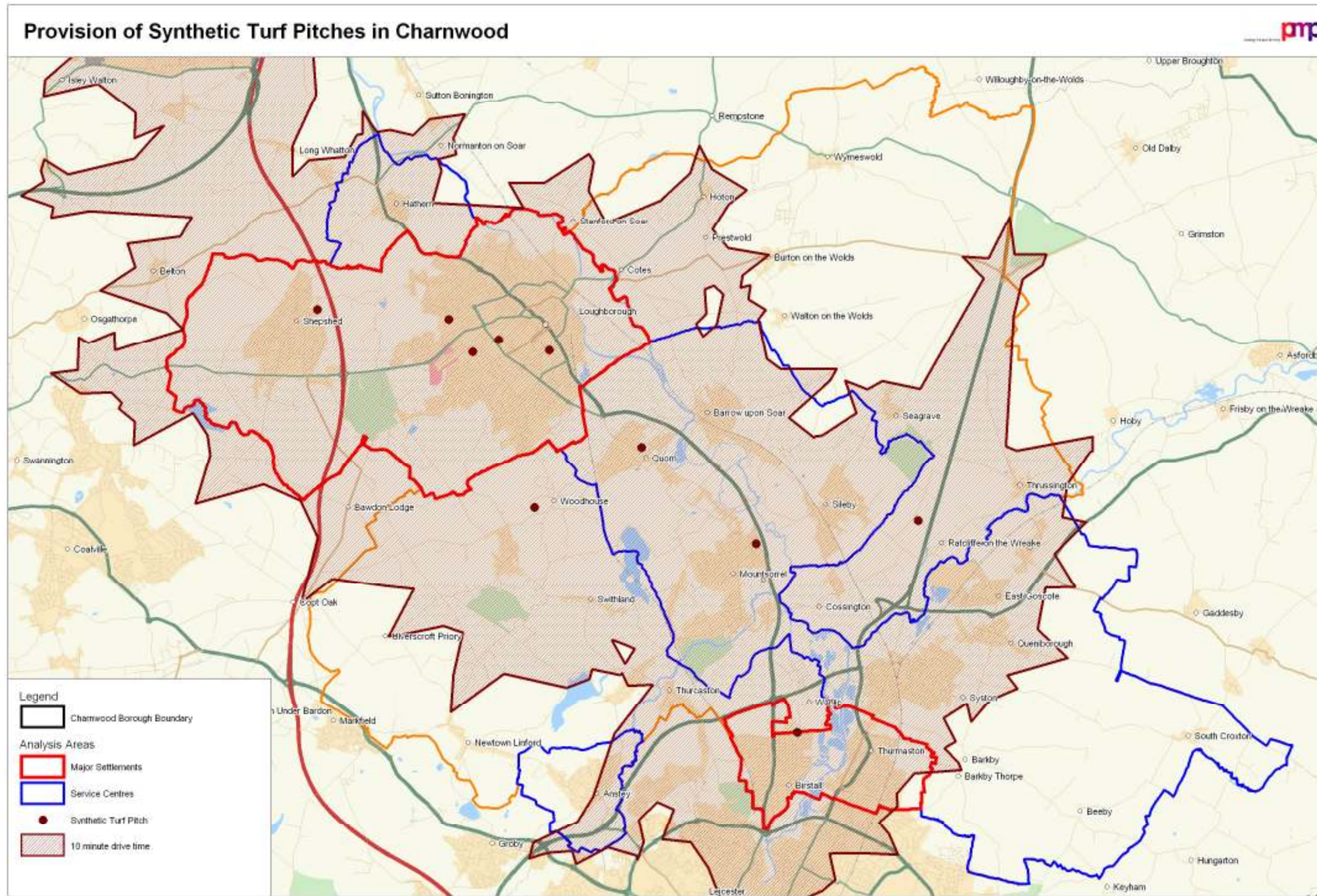
- 8.101 There are 12 full sized synthetic turf pitches meeting with Sport England definitions (and included within Active Places) in Charnwood, eight of which are located in the larger settlements, two in the service centres and two in the smaller settlements. Specifically, these sites are:
- Loughborough College (Loughborough)
  - Loughborough University (3 – one sand based, one 3g pitch and one water based pitch)
  - Loughborough Grammar School (Loughborough)
  - Ratcliffe College (Ratcliffe on the Wreake)
  - Rawlins Community College (3g pitch) (Quorn)
  - Soar Valley Leisure Centre (Mountsorrel)
  - Wellbeck Defence Sixth Form College (Woodhouse Eves)
  - Hind Leys Community College (Shepshed)
  - Burleigh Community College (Loughborough)

## ***SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES***

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- Longslade Community College (Birstall).
- 8.102 Soar Valley Leisure Centre is the only Borough Council owned site, with the other eleven STPs located on education sites. Three of the above full size pitches are 3g pitches, namely Loughborough University, Loughborough College and Rawlins Community College.
- 8.103 Map 8.5 illustrates the existing distribution of provision, indicating that most residents have access to an STP within a 10 minute drive time. Some residents in more rural parts of the Borough are not within a 10 minute drive time of a facility. There is a particular concentration of provision in Loughborough.

Map 8.5 – Synthetic turf pitches in Charnwood



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### **Adequacy of Existing Provision**

- 8.104 Consultation indicated that the quantity of STPs is perceived to be insufficient by 21% of respondents to the household survey. Only 19% of residents stated that the provision of STPs was sufficient. Despite this, the amount of synthetic turf pitches in the Borough was highlighted as a key strength at the Stakeholder workshop.
- 8.105 27% of football club respondents indicated that they have problems accessing local training facilities. When looking at responses in more detail the key reason was that STPs are often fully booked, with block bookings being a particular issue for clubs. The current problem is therefore access to facilities, particularly at peak time.
- 8.106 The capacity of existing facilities, and the limited access to existing facilities for the general public (particularly in Loughborough) means that additional facilities are likely to be required in the short - medium term. In the interim, alternative management may be required to increase the number of teams that can use synthetic turf pitches for training. Calculations and consultation suggest that the current stock of facilities are sufficient to meet the needs of competitive hockey clubs. At the time of the compilation of the site audit by the Borough Council, overuse of the Loughborough Carillion Sports Ground was identified as a key issue and was attributed to the fact that the hockey club are unable to find a synthetic turf pitch with sufficient capacity for them to use.
- 8.107 The FA has identified a gap to the South of the Borough (and to the north of Leicester). There is also less provision to the east of the Borough around Syston and Thurmaston, indicating that this area is potentially of higher priority. The 2007 Options Appraisal identified the potential to provide an additional synthetic turf pitch on Nanpantan Sports Ground and demand from clubs was evident. This facility would facilitate training for both rugby and football. The sports club survey carried out as part of this assessment indicated that 65% of clubs would like to see a new synthetic turf pitch and that access to pitches is currently problematic. This would address existing capacity issues in Loughborough.
- 8.108 The Leicestershire and Rutland Sports Facility Strategic Framework considered the need for additional synthetic pitches. It did not highlight specific need in Charnwood at the current time.
- 8.109 The household survey, as well as surveys with sports clubs found that the quality of STPs is generally perceived to be average or good. Site assessments undertaken as part of the *Leicestershire and Rutland Sports Facility Strategic Framework Study* indicate that the quality of STPs is generally good, with the quality of STPs at Loughborough College and Soar Valley Leisure Centre perceived to be very good. However, the quality of the STP at Hind Leys Community College was identified as poor and therefore opportunities for improving the quality of provision at this site should be explored. The quality of pitches at Burleigh Community College and Longslade Community College was also indicated to be poor.

<b>STP</b>	<p>Evidence suggests that facilities are close to capacity at peak times. In the short term, providers should therefore consider dividing pitches to accommodate more than one team at a time during a one hour slot.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for improving the quality of the STP at Hind Leys Community College, Burleigh Community College and Longslade Community College.</p> <p>In the short to medium term, new provision is required, particularly in the event of population growth. Current provision of 0.08 facilities per 1000 can be used to project the likely impact of population growth.</p>
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**Athletics**

**Context**

- 8.110 There are two athletics tracks in Charnwood both of which are located on educational sites.
- 8.111 The athletics track at Loughborough University is a 400 metre, 8 lane synthetic track and the athletics track at Ratcliffe College is a cinder track.
- 8.112 The facility at Ratcliffe College offers no pay and play access, and the track at Loughborough University is available for pay and play on Mondays and Wednesdays through access arrangements with Charnwood Athletics Club.
- 8.113 The current provision of athletics tracks equates to 0.09 lanes per 1000 population. This figure is above both regional and national averages (0.05). Table 8.9 below outlines the provision of athletics tracks in comparison the regional and national average. Provision in Charnwood is significantly above the level expected.

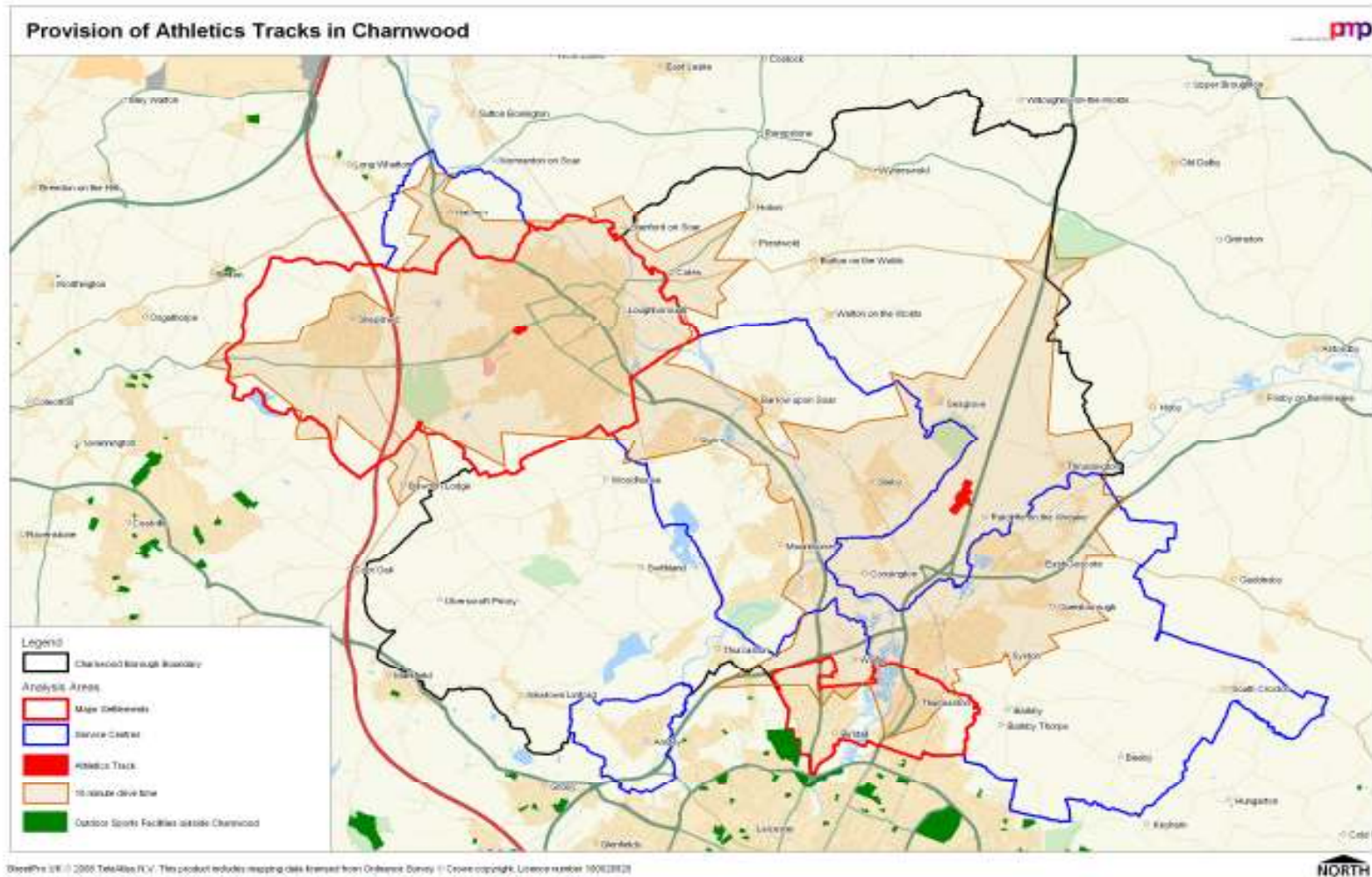
**Table 8.9 – Athletics tracks in the East Midlands region**

Geographical area	Athletics tracks/1000 population (lanes)
National	0.05
East Midlands	0.05
<b>Charnwood</b>	<b>0.09</b>

- 8.114 Map 8.6 illustrates the distribution of athletics tracks.

**SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

**Map 8.6 – Athletics tracks in Charnwood**



## **SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

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- 8.115 It can be seen that the majority of residents are within the recommended 10 minute drive time (although these facilities are not available for use by the general public). Key areas of deficiency are located in the smaller settlements. The tracks are well distributed, located at either side of the Borough.
- 8.116 Although a number of residents in the smaller settlements are outside the catchment of athletics track the current provision of athletics tracks is significantly above both national and regional averages.
- 8.117 While no evidence emerged as part of this study to suggest additional athletics tracks are required, the lack of access to an athletics track permitting casual use for local residents is a concern. This should be monitored and new provision (or enhancement of the existing sites) should be prioritised if demand becomes evident. In this event, in light of the distribution of existing facilities, the facility at Ratcliffe College, currently a cinder track, could be refurbished and opened to the community.

### **ATHLETICS**

There is limited opportunity for pay and play access to athletics facilities in the Borough. Demand for athletics should therefore be monitored and additional provision provided if required.

### **Golf Courses**

- 8.118 Golf courses are particularly important in terms of biodiversity as well as providing residents with the opportunity to play golf. The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan indicates that biodiversity at Charnwood Forest Golf Course is particularly high.

### **Context**

- 8.119 The vision for golf in England is the result of a partnership between the EGU, ELGA and PGA developed to meet the challenges faced in the game. The vision is:

*“To allow England to become the leading golfing nation in the world by providing more opportunities for participants to start, stay and succeed in the game.”*

- 8.120 The following are identified as the key challenges for golf in England:
- the need to overcome perceptions that golf is time consuming
  - the need to maximise club membership – there is the target to grow the active members of affiliated clubs by 50,000 over the next five years
  - retention of 18-30 year olds – perceived as low when compared to other groups
  - the need to constantly review the impact of introductory programmes – **golf ranges** are acknowledged as crucial facilities within the ‘start’ or FUN-fundamentals phase of the development pathway as identified by the Long Term Athlete Development Model. The ELGA views them as important facilities in increasing female participation levels.
  - in overall terms the target is to attract an additional 400,000 golfers into the game over the next five years – a 10% increase on the current 4.2 million, to 4.9 million by 2009.

**English Golf Union: Golf Development Strategic Plan – A Framework for Golf in England 2004-2014**

- 8.121 At present there is no facility strategy for golf in England although a Golf Development Strategy has been produced to feed into the Whole Sport Plan for golf.
- 8.122 The main aims of EGU golf development include:
- to promote the game of golf and increase people's awareness
  - to introduce more people to golf regardless of age, gender or background
  - to provide opportunities for people to sustain their involvement and regularly participate in golf
  - to make it easier to join a golf club by improving accessibility and affordability.
- 8.123 In the context of Sport England's objectives this strategy encompasses 'start' (recruitment) and 'stay' (retention). The EGU define three main sections in golf development:
- junior golf (under 18) – promotion and developing opportunities
  - 18-30 year olds – retention of golfers and sustaining participation
  - introducing people of any age – 'Get into Golf' structure.
- 8.124 Specifically in relation to facility provision the strategy is looking to strengthen the accessibility, affordability and quality of affiliated golf clubs in England and to develop relationships with golf ranges and other golfing facilities.

**Regional priorities**

- 8.125 Leicestershire and Rutland Golf Union are governed by the English Golf Union, adopting the national priorities and delivering them on a regional level. LRGU rely heavily on co-operation from affiliated clubs to promote grass roots golf and target groups such as women and children.
- 8.126 Consultation with LRGU undertaken as part of the 2008 Options Appraisal found that there is a trend of declining membership within many of the 32 clubs throughout Leicestershire. It was commented that the three affiliated clubs within Loughborough also have vacancies for membership and the uptake of pay and play opportunities at these clubs and throughout the whole of the region is limited.

***Adequacy of existing provision***

- 8.127 There are eight golf courses within Charnwood. Of these sites, according to Active Places, six sites offer pay and play access (one of which is pitch and putt). The remaining two sites only allow registered membership use. The eight courses are as follows:
- Beedles Lake Golf Centre - pay and play (East Goscote)
  - Charnwood Country Club - pay and play (Loughborough)
  - Charnwood Forest Golf Club - pay and play (Woodhouse Eves)

## SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- Lingdale Golf Club - pay and play (Woodhouse Eves)
- Longcliffe Golf Club - pay and play (Loughborough)
- Park Hill Golf Club - membership only (Seagrave)
- Rothley Park Golf Club - membership only (Rothley)
- Shelthorpe Pitch and Putt Golf Course - pay and play (Loughborough).

8.128 Analysis of the quantity of golf courses in comparison to the national and regional picture is set out in Table 8.10. It can be seen that the number of holes per 1000 population in Charnwood is above both the national and regional averages. This data is taken from Active Places Power.

**Table 8.10 – Golf Courses across the region**

Geographical area	Golf courses/ 1000 population (holes)
National	0.67
East Midlands	0.71
<b>Charnwood</b>	<b>0.76</b>

8.129 The 2007 Options appraisal supports this, indicating that provision is above the level that might be expected, stating specifically that:

- with 57,666 residents within Loughborough, population per golf course (including Shelthorpe) is 14,416, in comparison with 25,875 in England. ***This shows that the number of golf courses is high in relation to the national average.***
- with 5881 regular adult golfers within Loughborough, capacity of golfers per golf course is 1,470, in comparison with 2,015 in England. ***This shows that the number of golf courses is high in relation to the number of golfers.***

8.130 Supporting the above comparisons, 39% of respondents to the household survey indicated that provision was sufficient. Only 15% of respondents consider provision to be insufficient. The majority of the remainder had no opinion. Application of the accessibility standard indicates that all residents are within the appropriate distance threshold of at least one golf course, and indeed many courses are located in close proximity to each other.

8.131 It can therefore be concluded that the existing supply of golf courses is more than sufficient to meet local need both now and in the future.

8.132 Shelthorpe Pitch and Putt Golf Course is the only Borough Council owned golf course in Charnwood. This site is an 18 hole pitch and putt course that allows pay and play access. Research carried out by the Council with golf course users during 2009 highlighted that users value this site highly and make regular use of the facility. Most aspects are well regarded and value for money provided is considered to be good. The site is predominantly used for casual use and practice.

## **SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

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- 8.133 The long term demand for Shelthorpe Pitch and Putt Golf Course was questioned during consultation. The high levels of provision in close proximity mean that provision is above the demand in the local area. In line with the 2007 Options Appraisal, the loss of this site (or part of the site) may be justifiable. Shelthorpe Pitch and Putt Golf Course uniquely provides affordable pay and play facilities in a social housing area. Affordable access to a golf course also reduces anti social behaviour from golf played on parks and amenity spaces. The reconfiguring of Shelthorpe Pitch and Putt Golf Course should be subject to further public consultation, and a more detailed analysis / comparison of other pay and play opportunities should be presented before considering alternative uses.
- 8.134 The Options Appraisal indicates that the preferred option is to maintain part of the site as golf and to dedicate the remainder as open space, potentially a new district park, as this would provide open space in the area to meet an identified deficiency. No evidence has been collected as part of this assessment to suggest that this does not remain appropriate.
- 8.135 Longer term, in the event that the facility is no longer required as a golf course, consideration should be given to the other open spaces uses that this site could have as there is potential for the site to be used to provide additional open space in the area to meet the identified deficiencies.

<b>GOLF</b>	Maintain adequate levels of golf provision in line with national and regional standards. Continue to ensure that pay and play opportunities are available to residents.
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### **Summary**

- 8.136 Outdoor sports facilities are a wide ranging category of open space which includes both natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation. Facilities can be owned and managed by councils, sports associations, schools and individual sports clubs, with the primary purpose of participation in outdoor sports. Examples include:
- playing pitches
  - athletics tracks
  - bowling greens
  - tennis courts.
- 8.137 A local standard has been set for outdoor sports facilities in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility. This should be applied for broad planning need only.
- 8.138 Further consideration has also been given to the priorities arising for tennis, bowls, synthetic turf pitches and golf courses. There is limited evidence to suggest that additional provision is required at the current time (with the exception of tennis courts) and it is clear that there are an abundance of facilities across the Borough for all sports although participation increases and population growth will impact on demand. Current issues are therefore predominantly around ongoing improvements to the quality of facilities. Key issues for each sport include:
- improvements to the quality of bowling greens are of higher priority than the provision of additional facilities. Club members indicated that ancillary

## **SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

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provision, security and safety and improvements to the actual green were particularly important if new members were to be encouraged

- tennis courts are distributed evenly across the Borough and all residents are within the appropriate distance of at least one facility. Despite this, demand is higher for additional tennis courts within the household survey than any other facility. There is demand identified in several Parish Plans and additional provision in these areas should therefore be considered
- while the quantity of athletics tracks is above the national average, neither track provides pay and play opportunities. Although consultation did not reveal any evidence of latent demand at the current time, this should be monitored to ensure that opportunities are provided if residents wish to participate in athletics
- there are currently sufficient synthetic turf pitches to meet demand although the quality of the facility at Hind Leys Community College, Burleigh Community College and Longslade Community College is poor and needs upgrading. Longer term, additional provision will be required
- the quantity of golf facilities is significantly above the national and regional averages and most sites provide pay and play opportunities. The current level of provision is sufficient to meet demand.

8.139 It is therefore recommended that the key priorities for the future delivery of provision for outdoor sports facilities in Charnwood that should be addressed through the Local Development Framework include:

- protect all outdoor sports facilities from development in line with Sport England policies. Ensure that policy only permits sites to be lost where it can be proven that there is no demand for the facility or where the capacity will be improved or enhanced at another site
- seek to improve the quality of outdoor sports facilities. Sites should meet National Governing Body criteria. This includes the provision of appropriate changing facilities. Focus for improvement should be on public tennis facilities, as well as bowling greens and the synthetic turf pitch at Hind Leys Community School
- review the implications of population growth and changes in the participation profile on the demand for facilities regularly. Facilitate the creation of new facilities where they are required, in particular new synthetic turf pitches and tennis courts.