

Pirton Recreation Ground and Pavilion Sport and Leisure Investment Strategy

V1.0 September 2026

Purpose

This strategy identifies the investment needed to protect and increase the capacity of Pirton's principal sport, recreation and community hub as the village grows. It establishes a programme that stands independently of any single planning application, while showing how the Blakeney Homes and Gladman proposals create both additional demand and specific opportunities to deliver it.

The Parish Sports and Social Club Ltd (PSSC) asks NHDC to recognise this programme when determining the scope and destination of Section 106 obligations now and in the future. Some specifications, designs and costs require further work, but that should not prevent the relevant projects, land and funding purposes from being identified and safeguarded before the applications and legal agreements are finalised.

Central request

NHDC should treat the Recreation Ground, Pirton Pavilion, Blakeney site and proposed Gladman sports land as connected local infrastructure. The two developments should each provide the land, facilities or proportionate contributions necessary to address their own effects. Where appropriate, the two developments should provide coordinated facilities, connections and funding. However, each development's Section 106 obligations must clearly identify and remain proportionate to the needs arising from that development.

1 The Recreation Ground and Pavilion

Pirton Recreation Ground is owned by Pirton Parish Council and serves as the village's main outdoor sport and recreation site. PSSC operates the Pavilion under licence from the Parish Council, working with the football and cricket clubs and other users. The Pavilion opened in March 2026 and provides modern changing rooms, toilets, a commercial kitchen, café, licensed bar and a function room seating about 100 people. PSSC employs staff, provides supported and general volunteering opportunities and reinvests surpluses in the facilities and community programme.

Sport and informal recreation

The Recreation Ground contains four physical football pitches, with a fifth youth pitch overmarked on the principal adult pitch. It also provides a cricket square and non-turf pitch, an existing multi-use games area used for tennis and pickleball, a basketball half court, children's play equipment and open space used for organised community events, informal recreation and dog walking. The site supports youth and adult football, junior and adult cricket, coaching, walking football, women's recreational football and other organised and informal activity.

Community activity and events

The Pavilion is a shared community facility rather than a sports clubhouse used only on match days. Its programme includes a community café (including a community work space), a weekly Friday Social evening, group meetings, family activity, private functions, screenings, community events, fundraising and volunteer-led activity. Regular football weekends bring large numbers of players and supporters to

the site. Major village events can attract much larger audiences; the annual fireworks event has attracted more than 2,000 people.

Existing constraints

- Lea Sports PSG FC operates 17 teams in 2026-27. Pitch 1 may carry up to five matches in a weekend and Pitch 2 a further four. In-season training at the Recreation Ground is virtually impossible, and youth training facilities in Hitchin cost the club more than £12,000 a year, in addition to adult teams arranging and funding their own winter training. NHDC's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy identifies the adult football pitch at Pirton Recreation Ground as overplayed and assigns the site's football actions a high priority.
- NHDC's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy records the Pirton cricket square as overplayed and identifies quality improvement as a high priority.
- The single-track Recreation Ground entrance creates congestion and conflicting vehicle movements during routine weekend sport and major events.
- The existing car park accommodates around 60 vehicles when parked efficiently, including two accessible bays and two EV-charging spaces. It is frequently full or overflowing on weekend mornings during the September-April football season. Its layout and surface also limit efficient use and present accessibility difficulties for some users.
- The current playground needs renewal and a broader, more inclusive range of equipment, while Pirton has little dedicated provision for teenagers and young adults.

The Recreation Ground is therefore an established and well-used destination with current capacity pressures. New housing will increase local participation and visits, but it also provides an opportunity to resolve constraints that cannot be addressed effectively through isolated or distant projects.

2 Investment principles

Principle	Application
Local capacity	Investment should increase the capacity or quality of the facilities that residents of the developments are likely to use.
Connected planning	The Pavilion, pitches, play facilities, parking, access and the proposed Gladman sports land should be designed as one functioning local hub.
Safe and inclusive access	Routes, surfaces, parking and facilities should work for disabled people, older residents, families with young children and users carrying sports equipment.
Protection of established use	Development design and mitigation should protect the lawful year-round operation of the Recreation Ground and Pavilion, consistent with the agent-of-change principle.
Proportionate obligations	Each development should contribute only towards measures needed to address its own impact, with the amount and nature of the contribution proportionate to the scale and type of development.
Durable delivery	Section 106 provisions should identify the land, projects, delivery triggers, community-use arrangements and lifecycle responsibilities needed for lasting capacity.
Evidence-led refinement	Named projects should be safeguarded now, with final specifications, costs and apportionment confirmed through surveys, design and consultation before expenditure.

3 Development impacts and opportunities

The two proposals would add up to 180 homes beside or close to the village's established recreation hub. Their effects should be assessed separately for legal purposes and together when considering practical capacity, access and the most effective local solution.

Gladman development

The Gladman proposal is for up to 130 homes east of Drovers Way. Its revised design material assumes a population of 312. It provides 840 square metres of informal play but identifies 780 square metres of equipped designated play as an offsite requirement and relies on nearby sport and play infrastructure. The site also offers the principal opportunity to secure land in recreation use for an additional full-size floodlit grass football pitch, with parking and access designed as part of the development. The land and supporting infrastructure should be capable of accommodating a future artificial-surface upgrade if feasibility and funding allow.

The March 2026 Playing Pitch Calculator identifies the additional demand for football, cricket and changing provision generated by the development and provides indicative contribution figures. These figures help demonstrate the relationship between the development and the need for additional sports capacity, but they do not represent the full cost of delivering the facilities required.

Blakeney Homes development

The Blakeney Homes proposal is for up to 50 homes immediately beside the Recreation Ground. The reported Section 106 package includes approximately £151,817 of sports contributions directed to projects elsewhere, including an apparent cricket allocation of about £8,000 for Ickleford. At its meeting on 3 September 2026, the Planning Control Committee delegated further consideration of sports and playing-pitch provision, including whether provision or a contribution should be secured for PSSC following consultation with Sport England and PSSC.

The adjacent Recreation Ground is the obvious local facility likely to absorb a material share of the development's recreation and sports demand. Pirton Parish Council must be included as landowner, alongside PSSC as Pavilion operator and the relevant sports clubs. Local projects should be assessed before any sports contribution is committed elsewhere.

The Blakeney reserved-matters design should retain the informal open space already proposed while safeguarding the following requirements before the housing, drainage and landscape layout is fixed:

- a continuous pedestrian and cycle connection across the site towards the Gladman sports land, at least along the eastern side, with compatible connection points between the developments;
- the opportunity for improved Recreation Ground access from Walnut Tree Road, including operational and emergency access where supported by detailed highways assessment;
- land capable of providing additional parking for Recreation Ground and Pavilion users, with the number of usable spaces established through design work; and
- an appropriately sized 3v3 mini-football area. The club now operates an Under-7 3v3 team, but there is no separate 3v3 provision at the Recreation Ground and it must share Pitch 4 with the 5v5 teams.

Cumulative practical effect

Residents living beside the facilities will have a strong opportunity to walk or cycle, and the developments should provide safe, direct routes that encourage this. Walking and cycling will reduce some local car journeys but will not remove the parking and access requirement. Growth in local participation allows more teams, fixtures, sessions and events. These activities bring visiting players, coaches, officials and supporters from outside Pirton. PSSC volunteers, staff and other Pavilion users may also travel from elsewhere. Some local families will use cars when accompanying children, carrying kit, travelling in poor weather, managing mobility needs or combining trips.

The appropriate test is therefore the demand arising during simultaneous weekend and evening activities after a realistic allowance for walking and cycling, rather than an assumption that proximity removes vehicle demand.

4 Planning policy and statutory justification

The investment programme is intended to address additional demand and delivery opportunities arising from the two developments. It does not assume that every existing need can be funded through

planning obligations. The precise obligation secured from each application must meet the statutory tests, be supported by proportionate evidence and avoid double funding.

CIL Regulation 122

Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, as amended, provides that a planning obligation may constitute a reason for granting permission only where it is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. The land, onsite works and financial contributions sought through this strategy must therefore be allocated to the development that gives rise to the requirement and limited to its proportionate share.

The two applications must satisfy the tests separately. Their combined practical effects may nevertheless be considered when establishing total capacity requirements and coordinating compatible land, access, parking and facility provision. A coordinated scheme must retain a clear evidence base, apportionment and delivery mechanism for each development.

National and local policy context

The August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework supports healthy communities, accessible local facilities and the provision and protection of sport, recreation and community infrastructure. Policies HC1, HC3, HC4 and HC7 provide relevant support for assessing the community infrastructure generated by additional population, providing necessary onsite or offsite improvements, improving community facilities and protecting recreational land and facilities.

North Hertfordshire Local Plan Policy SP7 supports the timely provision of infrastructure required to support development. Policy SP10 supports healthy communities and access to services and facilities. These policies are applied alongside NHDC's June 2026 Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document and the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy 2025.

The Active North Herts Strategy 2024-2028 provides additional strategic support for accessible opportunities to be active, connected routes, sustainable indoor and outdoor facilities and action addressing barriers faced by rural communities. It supports the case for facilities that residents can reach locally and for reducing the existing displacement of football training to hired facilities in Hitchin. It is supporting strategic context rather than a development-plan policy.

Local provision and additional capacity

The Recreation Ground and Pavilion are the established local facilities most likely to serve residents of both developments. The Blakeney site immediately adjoins the Recreation Ground, while the Gladman proposals rely on nearby sports and play infrastructure and include the principal opportunity for new sports land. NHDC should assess the identified Pirton projects before relevant contributions are committed elsewhere and provide reasons if it concludes that another project or location better satisfies the statutory tests.

The principal requests focus on capital provision that creates or expands usable capacity: an additional full-size floodlit grass pitch, a dedicated 3v3 area, additional and more efficient parking, safe connections, enhanced equipped play, cricket practice capacity, teenage activity and other defined facilities. Routine maintenance and the correction of historic deficiencies are not presented as development obligations unless the relevant work is demonstrably necessary to provide additional development-related capacity or resilience.

Regulation 122 assessment of principal requirements

Principal requirement	Development relationship	Capacity response	Regulation 122 basis
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Principal requirement	Development relationship	Capacity response	Regulation 122 basis
Gladman recreation land and full-size floodlit grass pitch	Additional football demand and a site-specific opportunity to secure suitable land beside the established sports hub.	Creates additional adult and youth match and training capacity and relieves pressure on the existing grass pitches.	The recreation land and a proportionate grass-pitch delivery requirement can be tied to the development's football demand. Final specification, delivery route and apportionment must be evidenced.
Gladman sports-site parking, access and connection	The new pitch and housing will generate trips and require safe access to the established changing and community facilities.	Provides dedicated parking, cycle spaces and safe operational, emergency, walking and cycling access.	Necessary components of usable onsite sports provision, subject to detailed design and highways assessment.
Blakeney link, access, parking and 3v3 provision	The site immediately adjoins the Recreation Ground and creates additional local sport, recreation and travel demand.	Preserves the planned informal space, creates a dedicated unmet 3v3 area and safeguards connections, access and parking opportunities.	The reserved-matters layout should secure development-specific land and works; any financial contribution must reflect Blakeney's proportionate demand.
Existing Recreation Ground car-park enhancement	Both developments will add visits to a facility whose parking already reaches capacity during simultaneous activity.	Reconfigures and improves the surface and layout to maximise usable spaces and provide a more accessible car park for all users.	Only the proportionate enhancement needed to accommodate development-related demand should be funded; concept design, surveys and cost apportionment are required.
Cricket capacity	Playing-pitch evidence identifies existing overplay and additional sessions generated by development.	Adds independent practice capacity and supports an eligible non-turf pitch improvement, reducing conflicts and protecting match capacity.	A phased contribution can be tied to quantified cricket demand, with scope and cost confirmed before expenditure.
Additional multi-use games area	The developments will increase demand for accessible sport and recreation across different ages and activities.	Creates flexible all-weather capacity for several sports, reducing reliance on grass pitches and facilities outside Pirton.	Any contribution must reflect the demand generated by the relevant development, with the location, specification, cost and delivery arrangements confirmed through further assessment.
Equipped play, teenage activity, basketball and outdoor fitness	The developments add children, teenagers and adults requiring accessible local informal recreation.	Expands the age range, inclusivity and amount of free-to-use activity available at the established local hub.	Each contribution must be based on the relevant development's population, onsite provision and evidenced offsite requirement; lower-priority elements require further feasibility work.

5 Priority investment programme

The following programme combines onsite provision within the Gladman and Blakeney schemes with improvements at the existing Recreation Ground and Pavilion. The priorities are intended to be delivered in phases and funded from the development or developments to which each element is properly related.

Priority	Project	Current cost basis	Delivery objective
1	Gladman recreation land and full-size floodlit grass football pitch	£200,000-£300,000 excluding VAT working allowance	Secure recreation land and developer delivery where possible, or a proportionate contribution and mechanism for hybrid-funded delivery. Preserve scope for a future artificial-surface upgrade.

Priority	Project	Current cost basis	Delivery objective
1	Blakeney link, access, parking and 3v3 provision	Cost and layout to be confirmed	Secure the land and connections through reserved matters before competing uses are fixed.
1	Existing car-park enhancement and development-side parking and access	Cost to be confirmed by concept design	Maximise the existing car park's usable capacity and accessibility, alongside dedicated parking and access within both development sites.
1	Cricket capacity and resilience	About £28,000 current capital opportunity	Provide a phased scheme led by fixed practice nets and an eligible non-turf match-pitch upgrade.
1	Enhanced children's play	£97,218.87 plus VAT current quotation	Renew and extend the Recreation Ground play area, coordinated with car-park options.
1	Skatepark and teenage activity	£68,500 excluding VAT current quotation	Provide dedicated local activity for teenagers and young adults.
2	All-weather external Pavilion capacity	Cost to be confirmed	Add durable covered capacity where occupancy and demand evidence supports it.
2	Basketball half-court renewal	£20,000-£40,000 working allowance	Renew or modestly extend the existing half court and replace the hoop and backboard, without fencing or lighting.
2	Inclusive outdoor fitness	£15,000-£45,000 working allowance	Provide free-to-use outdoor exercise equipment with suitable surfacing and access.
2	Second multi-use games area	About £100,000 early estimate	Safeguard space and progress feasibility and design work for a second multi-use games area, providing additional all-weather capacity for a range of sports and recreational activities. Seek delivery through Section 106 contributions and complementary funding.
3	Linked-container gym and studio	£70,000-£120,000 early feasibility range	Retain as a lower-priority ambition for two or three linked units, subject to need, planning and a sustainable operating case.

5.1 Additional full-size floodlit grass football pitch

Suitable land within the Gladman development should be secured for recreation use with the objective of delivering an additional full-size floodlit grass football pitch. The pitch should meet adult 11v11 requirements, allow appropriate youth use and include the playing surface, drainage, floodlighting, safety margins, ball-stop measures and supporting infrastructure required by the final design. A short, safe route should connect it to the Pavilion's existing changing rooms and toilets. The land, access,

parking, drainage, services and layout should be designed so that a future upgrade to a full-size 3G or future equivalent compliant artificial surface is not unnecessarily precluded.

Need and benefit. Lea Sports PSG FC operates 17 teams across adult, veterans' and youth formats on four physical pitches, with a fifth youth marking overlaid on the principal adult pitch. Pitch 1 may sustain up to five matches in a weekend and Pitch 2 a further four. Adult matches were cancelled last season after earlier 9v9 use damaged a wet Pitch 1. NHDC's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy identifies the adult pitch at Pirton Recreation Ground as already overplayed and assigns the football actions for the site a high priority.

In-season training at the Recreation Ground is virtually impossible following the loss of the former training area and two of its three lighting columns. The club therefore spends more than £12,000 a year hiring youth training facilities in Hitchin, while adult teams arrange and fund their own external winter training.

An additional full-size floodlit grass pitch would address the existing overplay by providing more match and training capacity, relieving pressure on the current pitches and reducing some of the training displaced outside Pirton. It would also provide capacity to accommodate additional demand generated by the proposed housing development, rather than placing that demand on facilities which are already under pressure. A future upgrade to an appropriate artificial surface remains a longer-term aspiration offering greater year-round capacity, but is not relied upon as the immediate delivery outcome.

The Gladman site represents the last realistic opportunity to secure additional recreation land nearby and capable of being integrated with the established Recreation Ground. Further expansion will be severely constrained by the Blakeney development along the northern boundary, the proposed development at 19 Walnut Tree Road at the eastern end, and agricultural land within the open countryside to the west and south. The Gladman layout should therefore safeguard enough suitably located land for the full-size pitch, floodlighting and necessary margins and supporting infrastructure. Failure to secure this land through the present application is likely to remove the only practical opportunity to expand Pirton's principal sports facility in direct response to existing overplay and future development-generated demand.

Parking and access. Dedicated car parking and cycle spaces should form part of the Gladman sports-site design. The concept should test parking along the southern perimeter adjacent to Hambridge Way and suitable access for users, maintenance vehicles and emergency services. It should avoid additional reliance on the Recreation Ground's constrained single-track entrance where practicable.

Cost basis. The present working allowance is £200,000-£300,000 excluding VAT for the full-size natural-grass pitch, drainage, establishment and floodlighting. This is a planning allowance rather than a quotation. Sport England's Facility Cost Guidance 4Q2025 gives a benchmark of £115,000 for a 106 x 70 metre senior natural-turf football pitch, including a notional allowance for external works, fees and 12 months' maintenance and grow-in, but not dedicated sports lighting. The wider allowance adds floodlighting and prudent provision for design development and site uncertainty. It excludes land, parking, access roads, long utility connections, abnormal ground conditions, major site remodelling, pump or sump systems, SuDS attenuation, biodiversity net gain, regional variations and inflation beyond the estimate base. Site investigations, feasibility design and a quantity-surveyor cost plan are required. The future artificial-surface aspiration will require a separate feasibility, capital and lifecycle assessment before it can form a funded project.

Delivery and funding. The preferred outcome is developer delivery of the grass pitch and supporting infrastructure. If full developer delivery cannot be secured, the alternative should combine the secured recreation land, a proportionate Section 106 contribution and other eligible partnership funding. This may include contributions from the Football Foundation, Parish Council, PSSC, the football club, governing bodies and external grant programmes. The obligation should provide a deliverable grass-pitch outcome and should not depend entirely on obtaining discretionary funding. The longer-term artificial-surface aspiration should be pursued separately through feasibility work and a future hybrid funding package.

Section 106 approach. The legal and planning arrangements should first secure the land for recreation use and prevent its loss to competing uses. They should then secure developer delivery of the full-size floodlit grass pitch where possible or, alternatively, a proportionate contribution and delivery mechanism

that allows the pitch to be completed through hybrid funding. The provisions should address specifications, triggers, community use, ownership, management and maintenance. The layout and supporting infrastructure should retain the ability to pursue a future artificial-surface upgrade without treating that later aspiration as the current minimum obligation.

5.2 Parking access and connections

Parking, access and connections are core capacity infrastructure. The programme distinguishes between enhancement of the existing Recreation Ground car park, development-side parking and access, and safe pedestrian and cycle links. These elements should be coordinated but assessed and secured as separate requirements.

Need and existing constraints. The existing car park can accommodate around 60 vehicles when efficiently parked, including two accessible bays and two EV-charging spaces. Between September and April, up to four youth home matches may be scheduled on a Saturday morning. Two simultaneous junior matches can each attract around 25–30 cars, while training sessions add approximately eight cars per session. On Sundays, the fixed 10.30 am adult fixture can overlap with two or more youth matches. Despite staggered kick-offs, scheduling controls and parking signs, vehicles frequently overflow onto Walnut Tree Road, and opposing traffic can cause gridlock on the single-track access.

The developments will create additional demand for the Recreation Ground and the new Gladman pitch. A coordinated parking, access and active-travel plan is therefore required. This should:

- Include representative weekend and evening surveys between September and April, covering simultaneous activities, arrivals and departures, vehicle drop-offs, pedestrian and cycle movements, parking demand and realistic assumptions about walking and cycling.
- Produce a concept design for the broader enhancement of the existing Recreation Ground car park. This should consider its layout, surface, drainage, circulation and relationship with the playground, with the objectives of maximising usable parking spaces and making the car park more accessible and usable for everyone.
- Provide dedicated vehicle and cycle parking within the Gladman sports site, including consideration of the southern perimeter adjoining Hambridge Way, together with suitable operational, maintenance and emergency access.
- Provide safe and accessible walking and cycling connections between both developments, the new sports pitch, the Recreation Ground and the Pavilion.
- Assess opportunities for additional parking and improved access to the Recreation Ground within or through the Blakeney site. This should complement, rather than replace, the proposed enhancement of the existing car park.

Cost basis. No reliable capital estimate is currently available for either the enhancement of the existing car park or the development-side parking and access works. Concept layouts, topographical and drainage surveys, representative parking counts and a cost plan are required. The absence of final designs and costs should not prevent the necessary land, access arrangements and eligible Section 106 funding purposes from being safeguarded at this stage.

Highways assessment. Once the coordinated sports, parking, access and connection proposals are sufficiently developed, a further highways and access assessment should test their combined operation. It should consider additional vehicle movements and drop-offs, pedestrian and cycle routes, simultaneous weekend and evening use, parking capacity, inclusive access, emergency and operational access, and the interaction between both developments and the Recreation Ground. The assessment should identify any necessary design or mitigation before the relevant layouts and obligations are finalised.

5.3 Blakeney onsite provision

The Blakeney reserved-matters process should translate the identified opportunities into a coordinated land-use requirement: retain the proposed informal open space; safeguard an east-side pedestrian and cycle link towards Gladman; test improved access from Walnut Tree Road; identify land and capacity

for additional parking; and provide or safeguard an appropriately sized 3v3 mini-football area. These requirements should be tested with the housing layout, drainage, landscaping and boundary treatment before detailed design choices make them unavailable.

The 3v3 requirement responds to current use, not only future growth. Lea Sports PSG FC operates an Under-7 Lions team in the new format, but there is no separate 3v3 space at the Recreation Ground and it must share the 5v5 pitch. The dimensions, run-offs, surface, drainage and management arrangements should be agreed with the club and Hertfordshire FA.

5.4 Cricket capacity and resilience

The cricket programme should create independent training capacity, protect match capacity and improve resilience to rain and overplay. Fixed practice nets are the first operational priority. At least two lanes should be provided, with three preferred if space, cost and technical advice allow. The programme should also permit an eligible replacement or substantial upgrade of the worn non-turf match pitch, followed by covers, irrigation and essential machinery where these are demonstrably required to operate the additional capacity.

NHDC's strategy records the Pirton square as overplayed by four match-equivalent sessions per season. The Gladman calculator adds 2.43 sessions before the Blakeney demand is counted. The club ran two junior teams in 2026, expects three in 2027 and considers four feasible if weekday-evening training capacity is available. Fixed lanes would allow practice while matches, football or square preparation are taking place and support progression towards a Saturday adult team.

Cost basis. The present capital opportunity is about £28,000, comprising £20,442 in the Gladman pitch calculation and an apparent Blakeney cricket element of about £8,000, subject to confirmation and indexation. This may not fund every component. The Section 106 wording should therefore allow a defined phased cricket-capacity project whose final mix follows quotations and professional advice. The Gladman calculator also identifies £3,761 a year for cricket lifecycle costs; its duration, trigger and permitted expenditure need to be agreed.

5.5 Enhanced children's play

The existing play area should be renewed and expanded so it can absorb additional use and provide a wider, more inclusive range of challenge. The current proposal retains serviceable equipment, extends the enclosure, adds climbing and bouldering equipment and springy rockers, relocates and replaces the zip wire, renews fencing and gates, improves safety surfacing and provides seating and inclusive access.

Gladman's design material identifies 780 square metres of equipped designated play as offsite and relies on nearby play infrastructure. The Recreation Ground is the established nearby destination. The present quotation is £97,218.87 plus VAT and should be refreshed following consultation and coordinated design. The final layout must be tested alongside options to extend the existing car park. Neither requirement should be fixed first, because both may need the same land.

5.6 Skatepark and teenage activity

Pirton has little dedicated active provision for teenagers and young adults. A local skatepark would provide free, informal activity outside organised club sport and reduce the need to travel to Hitchin. The current concept comprises a 250 square metre porous sports-tarmac base, quarter-pipe, flat-bank and in-line ramp elements, two grind rails, benches and safety signage.

Cost basis. The current quotation is £68,500 excluding VAT. It should be refreshed after youth consultation and review of the location, size, accessibility, noise, drainage, surveillance, inspection and maintenance requirements. Any contribution must be proportionate to the additional teenage and open-space demand attributable to the relevant development.

5.7 Additional multi-use games area

An additional multi-use games area should be progressed as a priority project to provide more all-weather capacity for organised sport, informal recreation and community activity. A suitable footprint

should be identified and safeguarded before other development or infrastructure decisions restrict the available options.

The final design and activity mix should be informed by consultation with local clubs, residents and potential users. It should consider suitable provision for sports such as netball, basketball, football and other compatible activities, together with the required playing surface, markings, fencing, access, drainage, storage and seating. The need for sports lighting should be assessed through the design and planning process rather than assumed at this stage.

Need and benefit. The developments will increase demand for accessible sports and recreation facilities across a wider range of ages and interests. An additional MUGA would provide flexible capacity that is not dependent on the condition of the grass pitches, support activity throughout more of the year and allow several sports to share one facility. It would complement the dedicated football, cricket, play, skatepark and basketball proposals rather than replace them. In particular, the MUGA would provide a bookable multi-sport space, while the separate basketball half court would continue to offer freely accessible informal provision.

Cost basis. The current early allowance is approximately £100,000, subject to confirmation of the location, size, surface, fencing, drainage, access, equipment and any lighting. A site assessment, consultation, outline specification and cost plan are required before a firm capital estimate can be established.

Delivery and funding. The project should be included as a priority use of eligible Section 106 sports and recreation contributions, supported where appropriate by Parish Council, sports-body and external grant funding. The relevant agreements should allow sufficient flexibility for the final specification to respond to consultation and technical assessment while retaining the clear objective of delivering additional all-weather multi-sport capacity.

5.8 All-weather external Pavilion capacity

A fixed or semi-permanent weather-resistant covering over the side patio, combined where necessary with an extension and durable seating, could extend the Pavilion's usable capacity during sport, community events and busy periods. This is most suitable for Section 106 support where booking, occupancy and event evidence demonstrates that new demand requires additional usable area.

Cost basis. A measured design, planning and fire review, options appraisal and capital and lifecycle cost plan are required. A portable marquee remains a possible operational fallback but is less suitable as the principal Section 106 project because it is movable and event-led.

5.9 Basketball half court

The well-used basketball half court should be renewed or modestly extended, with replacement of the hoop and backboard and renewal of the surface and markings as required. A full court, fencing and lighting are not proposed. The present working allowance is £20,000-£40,000, subject to a measured condition survey and quotation.

5.10 Community fitness and gym provision

Free-to-use outdoor fitness equipment could add accessible recreation capacity for adults and older residents. An initial allowance of £15,000-£45,000 should be tested through consultation, site assessment and quotations. PSSC also wishes to retain a lower-priority ambition for an indoor gym and fitness studio formed from two or three linked converted containers. The current early feasibility range is £70,000-£120,000. The indoor option requires a stronger case on need, public access, planning, Building Regulations, servicing, staffing and long-term operation before any Section 106 request is fixed.

6 Development specific delivery

The programme is designed to remain coherent while allowing each legal agreement to identify its own necessary and proportionate share. The final allocation should follow verified demand, design and cost evidence.

Gladman priorities

Requirement	Proposed treatment
Onsite football provision	Secure sufficient land in recreation use and deliver an additional full-size floodlit grass pitch, including drainage, lighting, safety margins, ball-stop measures and community use. The layout and supporting infrastructure should not unnecessarily preclude a future artificial-surface upgrade.
Sports-site parking and access	Include dedicated parking, cycle spaces and development-side access, testing the southern perimeter adjacent to Hambridge Way, with suitable maintenance and emergency access.
Connection to existing facilities	Provide a safe, direct walking and cycling route to the Recreation Ground and Pavilion changing rooms and toilets, coordinated with the Blakeney east-side link.
Playing-pitch contributions	Apply the calculator outputs to eligible football, cricket and lifecycle provision in Pirton. For the Gladman pitch, allow developer delivery or a proportionate contribution combined with other eligible partnership funding.
Equipped play	Contribute the proportionate cost of enhanced equipped play at the Recreation Ground because the application identifies its 780 square metre requirement as offsite.
Teenage and wider capacity	Consider proportionate support for the skatepark, basketball half court, outdoor fitness and durable Pavilion capacity where the assessed demand and statutory tests are met.

Blakeney priorities

Requirement	Proposed treatment
Reserved-matters layout	Retain the proposed informal open space while safeguarding the east-side Gladman connection, improved Recreation Ground access, additional parking and an appropriately sized 3v3 area.
Local sports allocation	Review the reported £151,817 sports package before it is committed elsewhere and assess eligible projects at the immediately adjoining Recreation Ground.
Cricket	Confirm the apparent £8,000 cricket allocation and consider it with the Gladman cricket share as part of one phased Pirton capacity project.
Football	Secure the dedicated 3v3 space and consider a proportionate contribution to other eligible local football capacity, including the Gladman grass pitch where the statutory tests and delivery arrangements are satisfied.

Requirement	Proposed treatment
Parking and access	Additional and more efficiently arranged spaces; improved accessibility and circulation in the existing car park; reduced overspill and queues; development-side access; safe walking and cycling connections; fewer conflicts and hazards.
Play and community use	Consider proportionate support for enhanced play, teenage activity, basketball, outdoor fitness and durable external Pavilion capacity where development-related demand is demonstrated.
Consultation	Include Pirton Parish Council as landowner, PSSC as Pavilion operator and the relevant sports clubs before projects and allocations are finalised.

Changing provision

Pirton Parish Council has committed approximately £1.5 million to the new Pavilion, including around £400,000 of borrowing. The Pavilion opened in March 2026 and already provides the modern changing rooms, toilets and community facilities on which the existing Recreation Ground and proposed development-related sports provision will rely. The Gladman calculator identifies £156,370 for changing provision across relevant sports, but no additional changing works are presently proposed. NHDC and Sport England should therefore review whether some or all of that element can lawfully support the new pitch or other eligible sports capacity. Direct repayment of existing debt should not be assumed to qualify as a Section 106 project, but any eligible Pavilion or community-facility contribution should take account of the substantial local investment and reduce the remaining local funding burden where it demonstrably provides development-related capacity. The separate £62,517 sports-hall figure should not be treated as a general Pavilion contribution unless NHDC and Sport England agree that a defined project provides relevant indoor-sport capacity.

7 Section 106 structure and safeguards

Each obligation must be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. The policy and project assessment in section 4 identifies a credible local programme against those tests. Final design, demand and costing evidence should determine the exact specification and proportionate share for each development, rather than allowing relevant land or delivery opportunities to be lost in the meantime.

1. Name Pirton Recreation Ground, the Pavilion and the proposed Gladman sports land as the intended locations for eligible provision or expenditure.
2. Identify the permitted projects broadly enough to allow phased delivery and evidence-led refinement, while keeping the purpose tied to added capacity, access, quality or resilience.
3. Safeguard the land and layout needed for the Gladman pitch and for the Blakeney east-side link, access, parking, retained informal open space and 3v3 area before reserved matters fix competing uses.
4. Require final specifications, cost plans, proportionate apportionment and delivery arrangements before contributions are spent, with no double funding.
5. Consult Pirton Parish Council, PSSC, the relevant sports clubs, Sport England and governing bodies on the factual need, design and final allocation.
6. Define payment and delivery triggers, indexation, spending periods, transfer arrangements, ownership, management, maintenance, community use and lifecycle responsibilities.
7. Provide reasons if NHDC concludes that an identified local project does not meet the statutory tests or that a contribution should instead be spent elsewhere.

8 Benefits and measures

Outcome	Measures
Football	Recreation land secured; full-size floodlit grass pitch delivered; dedicated 3v3 area delivered; weekly training and match hours; reduced pressure on existing pitches; reduced external hire and travel; adult, youth, girls' and walking-football use; future artificial-surface feasibility retained.
Cricket	Fixed practice lanes delivered; additional weekday training; more teams and completed fixtures; fewer conflicts with pitch preparation and football; fewer rain cancellations.
Parking and access	Additional and more efficiently arranged spaces; improved accessibility and circulation in the existing car park; reduced overspill and queues; development-side access; safe walking and cycling connections; fewer conflicts and hazards.
Play and teenagers	Additional equipped-play capacity and age range; skatepark use; basketball use; user satisfaction; reduced need to travel.
Multi-sport provision	Suitable site safeguarded; second multi-use games area delivered; number and range of sports accommodated; weekly booked and informal-use hours; increased all-weather capacity; participation across different ages and user groups; reduced reliance on grass pitches and facilities outside Pirton; user satisfaction.
Fitness and community use	Outdoor fitness use; increased Pavilion sessions and events; managed peak occupancy; wider participation; supported volunteering and employment.
Long-term operation	Funded maintenance plans; asset availability; operating costs and income monitored; responsibilities clearly assigned.

9 Cost status and evidence base

All figures in this strategy are current planning estimates or existing quotations. They are suitable for identifying the scale of the opportunity and framing Section 106 provisions, but they are not tender prices. VAT treatment, indexation, abnormal ground conditions, utility connections, planning requirements and lifecycle costs must be confirmed for each project.

Project	Current figure	Status
Full-size floodlit grass pitch	£200,000-£300,000 excluding VAT	Working allowance informed by Sport England's £115,000 4Q2025 natural-turf benchmark, with added provision for floodlighting and uncertainty. Site investigations, feasibility design and a cost plan are required.
Future artificial-surface upgrade	To be confirmed	Longer-term aspiration requiring separate feasibility, capital, lifecycle and funding assessment; not the current minimum delivery outcome.
Blakeney link, parking, access and 3v3 area	To be confirmed	Reserved-matters design, capacity assessment, surveys and cost plan required.
Cricket capacity programme	About £28,000 current capital opportunity	£20,442 Gladman calculator plus apparent £8,000 Blakeney allocation; scope, indexation and quotations to be confirmed.

Project	Current figure	Status
Cricket lifecycle	£3,761 a year	Gladman calculator output; duration and permitted expenditure to be agreed.
Enhanced playground	£97,218.87 plus VAT	Existing supplier quotation; refresh after coordinated design and consultation.
Skatepark	£68,500 excluding VAT	Existing quotation; refresh after consultation and design review.
Basketball half-court renewal	£20,000-£40,000	Working allowance; measured condition survey and quotation required. No fencing or lighting assumed.
Inclusive outdoor fitness	£15,000-£45,000	Working allowance; consultation, site assessment and quotations required.
Linked-container gym and studio	£70,000-£120,000	Lower-priority early feasibility range for two or three linked units; planning and operating case required.
Second multi-use games area	About £100,000	Early estimate only; site assessment, consultation, outline specification and cost plan required.
Existing car-park enhancement and development-site parking and access	To be confirmed	Concept designs, accessibility review, surveys, representative parking counts and quantity-surveyor cost plans required.

Principal evidence

- NHDC Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy 2025, including Pirton football and cricket needs and action plan.
- Active North Herts Strategy 2024-2028.
- NHDC Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document, June 2026.
- Gladman application 25/01696/OP material, including the March 2026 Playing Pitch Calculator and August 2026 design addendum.
- Blakeney Homes application 25/02064/OP officer material and Planning Control Committee resolution of 3 September 2026.
- Sport England Facility Cost Guidance 4Q2025, including the senior natural-turf football-pitch benchmark, together with relevant governing-body pitch design and floodlighting guidance.
- Hertfordshire FA indicative football-pitch costs, September 2026.
- Pirton Cricket Club programme and capacity information, September 2026.
- Lea Sports PSG FC Football Activities at Pirton Recreation Ground review, updated 16 September 2026, covering pitches, teams, training displacement, fixture organisation and car parking.
- Current playground and skatepark proposals and quotations supplied through the Parish Council and PSSC.

10 Request to NHDC

PSSC asks NHDC to accept this strategy as evidence of an established local investment programme and to use it when finalising both applications and their planning obligations. In particular, NHDC should:

- secure the Gladman land for recreation use and secure delivery of an additional full-size floodlit grass football pitch where possible, or a proportionate contribution and delivery mechanism supporting hybrid funding, together with parking, access and a safe connection;

- secure through Blakeney reserved matters the retained informal open space, east-side Gladman connection, improved access, additional parking and an appropriately sized 3v3 area;
- review the Blakeney sports allocations before they are committed elsewhere and assess the eligible Pirton projects set out here;
- secure proportionate contributions for cricket, play, broader enhancement of the existing Recreation Ground car park, teenage activity, an additional multi-use games area, basketball, outdoor fitness and other demonstrated capacity needs;
- allow final designs, costs and apportionment to be completed without losing the identified land or funding purposes;
- require a further highways and access assessment once the coordinated sports, parking, access and connection proposals are sufficiently developed, so that additional vehicle, drop-off, pedestrian, cycle, inclusive-access and operational requirements inform the final layouts and mitigation;
- consult Pirton Parish Council, PSSC and the relevant sports clubs before the obligations and allocations are finalised; and
- set out clear reasons for any decision not to support an identified local project.

The programme provides a practical route for both developments to meet their own impacts while leaving Pirton with additional, usable and maintainable community infrastructure. Early recognition is essential because the Gladman sports land, the Blakeney connection, access, parking and 3v3 opportunities, and the scope for coordinated enhancement of the existing car park and playground may be lost once development parameters and reserved-matters layouts are fixed.