



# Northamptonshire County Cricket Club

## PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW VENUE

November 2023

# Northamptonshire CCC

## New venue proposal

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# Summary

Northants CCC proposes to create a new state-of-the-art cricket facility to complement its existing headquarters at Wantage Road and dramatically increase its impact on the Northants community, the region and English cricket.

The facility will comprise: 2 first-class standard pitches, outdoor practice areas, a pavilion, an indoor cricket training school, hard-standing for temporary stands and parking areas.

The project offers a unique opportunity to design and build a sustainable, energy efficient venue, which can act as a valuable blueprint for future cricket facility development, while supporting our own environmental responsibilities and commitments.

It is proposed that the facility is sited adjacent to Boughton Lane in Moulton (as per attached architect's plan) and will provide:

- **A home for the NCCC Steelbacks Charitable Foundation**
- **A regional hub for women's and girls' cricket**
- **A regional hub for disability cricket**
- **A world class cricket academy venue**
- **A venue for youth pathway cricket at all age groups**
- **A venue for recreational cricket and community initiatives**
- **A high-quality playing area, capable of staging County 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> team cricket**

# Background

Over the past few years, Northants County Cricket Club has consolidated its position in English cricket both on and off the pitch.

Achievements include winning the T20 blast in 2013 and 2016 and promotion to Division One of the County Championship in 2019.

Recreational cricket management is fully merged into the county set-up and performing well – participation at recreational club level is extremely high – and the NCCC Academy is thriving.

The county club has also achieved a level of financial security through a combination of injecting new funding, prudent governance and high-quality executive management.

In recent years, the relationships between NCCC and West Northants Council have been cooperative, professional and very positive in pursuing the long-term aim of both of those organisations: to enhance the lives of people living in Northamptonshire.

It is now time for the NCCC to push forward with ambitious plans to increase both its influence and its contribution to English cricket and to the county of Northamptonshire.

The Board has a clear understanding of the current trends in the game, towards shorter formats and white ball cricket and the growth of women's cricket. It is keen to embrace the opportunities, while also continuing to nurture the traditions of the county championship, leading ultimately to test match cricket.

# Welcoming young people to cricket

A child's first experience of cricket, whether at school, local club All Stars programme or another community setting should, first and foremost, be fun. The child and parents need to feel the activity is being delivered in a safe and welcoming environment. The venue and facility where such a pivotal event in a child's life happens, needs to be accessible for all, well located and affordable to parents and carers.

The Steelbacks In The Community team are tasked with making sure all communities in Northamptonshire have chances to connect with cricket and to develop a lifelong association with the game, regardless of age, gender, wealth or ethnicity, making cricket a game for everyone.

# Meeting community needs

The proposed new Northamptonshire County Cricket Club venue, situated on the outskirts of Moulton village, has the potential to positively impact the lives of many people, especially those currently with no affiliation to the game.

The new site will the fast-changing needs of Northamptonshire recreational cricket, by supporting the following objectives.

- 1. Supporting the growth of women's and girls cricket**
- 2. Increasing cricket opportunities for people with disabilities**
- 3. Continuing the growth in junior cricket**
- 4. Reinvigorating state school cricket**
- 5. Extending cricket's reach to diverse communities**
- 6. Improving cricket's appeal to lower socio-economic groups**
- 7. Filling the gap in indoor cricket facilities**
- 8. An out ground where talented cricketers to thrive**

# Supporting the growth of sport for women & girls

In 2015, Sport England launched the ***This Girl Can*** campaign, as a response to Active Lives data suggesting that 39% of women aged 16 and over were not active enough to get the full benefits of sport and physical activity. This long running campaign celebrates women who exercise, challenging conventional stereotypes and reaching out to women of all backgrounds and ethnicities who may feel left behind by traditional exercise.

Sport England believes the increase in sporting activity since the launch of ***This Girl Can*** created significant economic benefits, with an estimated boost to the economy of £66 million from facilities, fees and sports clothing and equipment.

In addition, the economic value of health benefits is estimated at £320million, resulting from a reduction in treatment costs and the value of increased health-related quality of life.

Despite the increased profile of women's sport in recent times, women and girls remain less likely to be physically active than men and boys.

According to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Get Active Strategy in 2023. Furthermore, a 2022 Women in Sport survey found that 43% of teenage girls felt they were sporty at primary school, but no longer saw themselves this way.

The survey found that girls are far less likely than boys to take part in team sports after the age of 11, decreasing further once girls leave full time education.

The number of women who participate in any kind of sport or physical activity in England has steadily increased in recent years. In 2021, approximately 17.5 million women participated in sport or exercise at least twice a month.



# Growing cricket for women & girls

In 2019, the England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) launched the 5-year *Inspiring Generations* strategy with a key priority being to Transform Women's and Girls' cricket, through an investment of at least £20m by the end of 2021, and £50m during the whole period of 2020-24.

- **Grow the base through participation and facilities investment.**
- **Launch centres of excellence and a new elite domestic structure.**
- **Invest in girls' county age group cricket.**
- **Deliver a girls' secondary school programme.**

Steelbacks in the Community, responsible for managing recreational cricket for Northamptonshire County Cricket Club, has worked hard to increase the number of women playing and volunteering at local cricket clubs in the county.

Although the pandemic halted progress, between 2019 and 2022, Northamptonshire saw a 64% increase in women and girls playing cricket. In 2022, 489 girls aged 5-11 participated in ECB National Programmes (All Stars and Dynamos), a figure which rose again in 2023 to 551, 29% of all participants.



# Creating the right pathway

Girls in National Programmes	2022	2023
All Stars	312	324
Dynamos	177	226

In 2023, Steelbacks in the Community focussed specifically on increasing the number of girls playing competitively by forming two girls only leagues at U11 and U13.

Across the two leagues, 185 matches were played. In addition, 123 women's matches were played at club level in 2023.

League Format 2023	Number of matches played
U11 Girls' Softball	154
U13 Girls' Hardball	31
Women's Softball	21
Women's Hardball	102

After club cricket, the next step on the player pathway is county representative cricket for girls aged U11+. An increase in the number of girls now playing the game is expected to drive a growth in the volume and quality of women's performance cricket.

In 2023, the four girls' junior age group county teams and one women's open age county team played 61 home matches in the county. All fixtures relied on the goodwill of local clubs and schools to stage matches and training days.

Girls' Pathway Cricket	Home matches played
Under 11s	15
Under 13s	18
Under 15s	10
Under 18s	8
County Women (open age)	10

# New home for women's cricket

## Venue impact

The growth in women's sport, including cricket, is forecast to continue. This will increase the pressure on recreational cricket clubs to provide additional pitches and facilities at their sites, for use by women and girls.

Our proposed new venue is well located to host women's and girls' cricket events and matches. This will significantly ease the pressure on clubs and existing facilities, creating further opportunities for women and girls who are already playing or brand new to cricket.

The new venue will become a county-wide home for the development of women's cricket of all formats, including girls' and women's softball festivals, junior league matches (hard and softball), midweek league matches and a venue for girls' pathway cricket. It can also provide a cricket hub for local schools, which we will cover further later in this document.

We are confident that the new venue will add enormous value to women and girls' cricket in Northamptonshire and have a transformational impact on the volume and quality of cricket played.



# Increasing opportunities for people with disability

According to the DCMS Get Active Strategy (August 2023), participation in sport and physical activity by disabled people is well below levels for non-disabled people. The Annual Disability Survey showed that fewer than one in three (30%) of disabled people believe that sport is for someone like them.

There are approximately 130,000 people in Northamptonshire with a disability. Of those, 12,400 people are aged between 0-25. A further 3,500 children have a Special Educational Needs statement or Educational Health Plan.

Local Authority	Adult population with disability	Child population with disability
West Northamptonshire	61,300	7,460
North Northamptonshire	54,550	6,550

**Increase participation in cricket for all groups with a disability.**

Mission statement, Steelbacks in the Community Disability Cricket Plan 2021-2024.

# Disability cricket in Northamptonshire

In 2022, in partnership with the Lord's Taverners, three hubs for the Super1s disability cricket programme were opened to children and young adults aged between 12-25.

By September 2023, there were four hubs in Northamptonshire, with 60 regular participants. In addition, coordinated school visits promoted the Super 1s hubs and delivered softball cricket to SEND schools.

The inclusive Lord's Taverners Table Cricket programme uses table tennis tables to deliver a unique form of cricket that can be played in a wheelchair. Eleven schools and 200+ participants engaged in Table Cricket in 2022/23, and three Table Cricket Festivals were hosted at the County Ground.

Performance disability cricket in Northamptonshire is represented by a pan-disability squad, including players with physical, learning or hearing disabilities or impairments. The team plays 40-over hardball cricket within the ECB D40 Pursuit competition.

A Steelbacks visually impaired Squad competes in Blind Cricket England & Wales national competitions.

Both disability and visually impaired teams have, in recent seasons, played home fixtures at the County Ground.

Participation programmes	Settings 2022/23	Participants	Settings near the new venue
Table Cricket	11	201	4
SEND school softball cricket	10	147	5
Super 1s	4	55	1

Representative teams	Home matches	Participants
Pan-disability D40 hardball cricket	5	27
Visually impaired cricket	5	15

# Growing participation in disability cricket

As part of its response to the recent ICEC report into inequality in cricket, the ECB increased funding to existing inclusivity initiatives including their partnership with the Lord's Taverners. The stated goal is a 50% increase participation within SEND schools.

It is anticipated that the growing numbers of SEND schools playing softball cricket will lead to the launch of a further county representative squad, which will play in the ECB Super 9s softball competition.

Lack of accessible facilities can be a barrier and many traditional cricket sites in the county are not suitable for use by people with disabilities. The two representative teams currently use friendly, suitable club venues to host their home fixtures.

## Venue impact

Our new venue will be delivered through a fully inclusive design process. We will consult with disability sport experts and meet the standards set out in ECB and Sport England guidance. The venue will create a unique opportunity to bring together both participation and performance disability cricket in Northamptonshire.

The venue is close to several local SEND schools and could become a second Super 1s hub, and a home for the county representative disability teams.

The vision of a Super 1s participation session happening before a county disability match at the new venue would be an excellent way to showcase the pathway for a disabled cricketer in the county.

# Opportunities to grow junior cricket

The Sport England Active Lives Survey 2021/22 showed that only 47.2% of children met the UK Chief Medical Officers' guidelines. During school year 6 (aged 10-11), 25.5% of children are living with obesity and 15.4% are overweight.

In Northamptonshire, 49.4% of children are 'active' – getting at least 60 minutes of exercise and physical activity a day. This is a 6.2% increase on the previous year and 2.2% above national levels.

Children and young people in the less active bracket (30 minutes or less a day) has fallen by 3.8% since last year to 28.4%, against a national figure of 31.2%.

Since the ECB launched All Stars and Dynamos in 2017, there has been a significant growth in junior participation in cricket. In 2023, 1,900 children attended ECB programmes at local clubs and community settings and the result has been 7% growth in mixed junior hard ball teams across the county, with 38 junior teams from U10 age group, in Northampton alone.

Despite this, urban Northampton has only three cricket clubs with junior cricket (Northampton Saints CC in Birchfield Road, Old Northamptonians on Billing Road and St Crispin's and Ryelands CC near Duston). The map shows cricket clubs with a junior section sited within a 3-mile radius of the new venue site, which is highlighted by a black triangle. Clubs in green are ECB Clubmark accredited, which means reach benchmarks for safeguarding and structural organisation.



# Opportunities to grow junior cricket

ECB National Programmes are expected to sustain their current growth curve, bringing increasing numbers of participants into junior cricket. junior cricket and the new venue will offer a further facility to stage junior cricket at all levels, easing the burden on clubs that are at capacity with the amount of cricket being played.

The Steelbacks in the Community team offers a comprehensive programme of term time and school holiday activities to support and reinforce the great work being delivered by volunteers at local clubs.

These camps are held at existing venues, mainly cricket clubs and schools, across the county. Over the six-week summer holiday in 2023, Steelbacks In the Community programmes were attended by over 500 children, 35% of whom were girls.

## Venue impact

The new venue will enable Steelbacks in the Community to increase participation in junior cricket and remove pressure from local club facilities, by supporting a wide range of uses. These will include;

- **Centre for All Stars and Dynamos, targeting known areas of deprivation in urban areas close by.**
- **School holiday cricket camps,**
- **Venue for junior league or schools' finals days.**

As the area of highest population in the county, the demand for a Northampton venue to act as a focal point for the development of junior cricket has never been stronger.

# Reinvigorating state school cricket

The Steelbacks in the Community team visits approximately 100 schools across the county each academic year. In 2021/22, approximately 5,000 school children in Northamptonshire took part in at least one cricket session.

Most of this activity is aimed at Primary schools through the Chance Shine Programme and is closely linked to the delivery of ECB National Programmes (All Stars and Dynamos) at local clubs.

State funded Secondary school cricket in Northamptonshire is largely non-existent due to a lack of facilities and a lack of staff knowledge and experience in the sport. Competitive hardball competitions are available, but very few schools enter due to the lack of interest and demand from their students.

The recent response from the ECB to the ICEC report into inequality in cricket, references the development of a state schools action plan. Its prime objective is to increase the numbers of state school children playing cricket, especially those from lower socio-economic groups, and will target both primary and secondary schools.

The MCC Foundation hub scheme offers all state school children aged 11-16 the opportunity to take part in free coaching sessions. In 2023, over 3,000 school children benefitted from this programme across England and Wales, 30% of whom were girls. As part of its response to the ICEC report, in 2024 ECB support for this scheme will be doubled to 150 hubs nationally.

There are more than 35 primary schools and 7 secondary schools within a 3-mile radius of the proposed new venue.

The table overleaf highlights the primary schools within this area which contain the highest numbers of children on free school meals. Seven of these schools have more than 100 children receiving free school meals.



# Reaching state primary schools

This table shows the 13 secondary schools in a 3-mile radius of the new venue, 7 have more than 100 students on pupil premium/receiving free school meals. p

Primary school	Student numbers	Schools with over 21% on pupil premium	Students eligible for free school meals
Thorplands	203	41.5%	84
Rectory Farm	349	39.6%	138
Blackthorn	289	36.0%	104
Kings Heath	408	35.1%	143
Lings	341	30.9%	105
Eastfield Academy	239	30.7%	73
Lumbertubs	244	30.1%	73
Woodvale	470	27.0%	127
St Gregory's	372	26.1%	97
Ecton Brook	595	26.2%	156
The Arbours	344	23.7%	82
Headlands	467	21.6%	115
St Andrews	358	21.3%	76
<b>Total</b>	<b>4679</b>	<b>29.3%</b>	<b>1,373</b>

# Reaching state secondary schools

This table show the 7 secondary schools in a 3-mile radius of the new venue.

3 of these schools have levels of students on pupil premium and/or receiving free school meals higher than the national average, of 21%.

Secondary school	Student numbers	Schools with over 21% on Pupil Premium	Students eligible for free school meals
Kingsthorpe College	1,366		
Malcolm Arnold Academy	1,341		
Moulton School	1,349		
Northampton Academy	1,674	21%	351
Northampton School for Girls	1,754		
Thomas Becket Catholic School	840	23.5%	197
Weston Favell Academy	1,414	26.4%	373
<b>Total students</b>	<b>9,738</b>	<b>9.45%</b>	<b>921</b>

Northampton International Academy, situated on the Barrack Road, Northampton is an all-years through school which sits inside the 3-mile radius.

A further 200 children attending NIA receive free school meals, which is 25% of the school roll.

*(All school data obtained from Government sourced SPC Underlying data (Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics) 2021/22)*

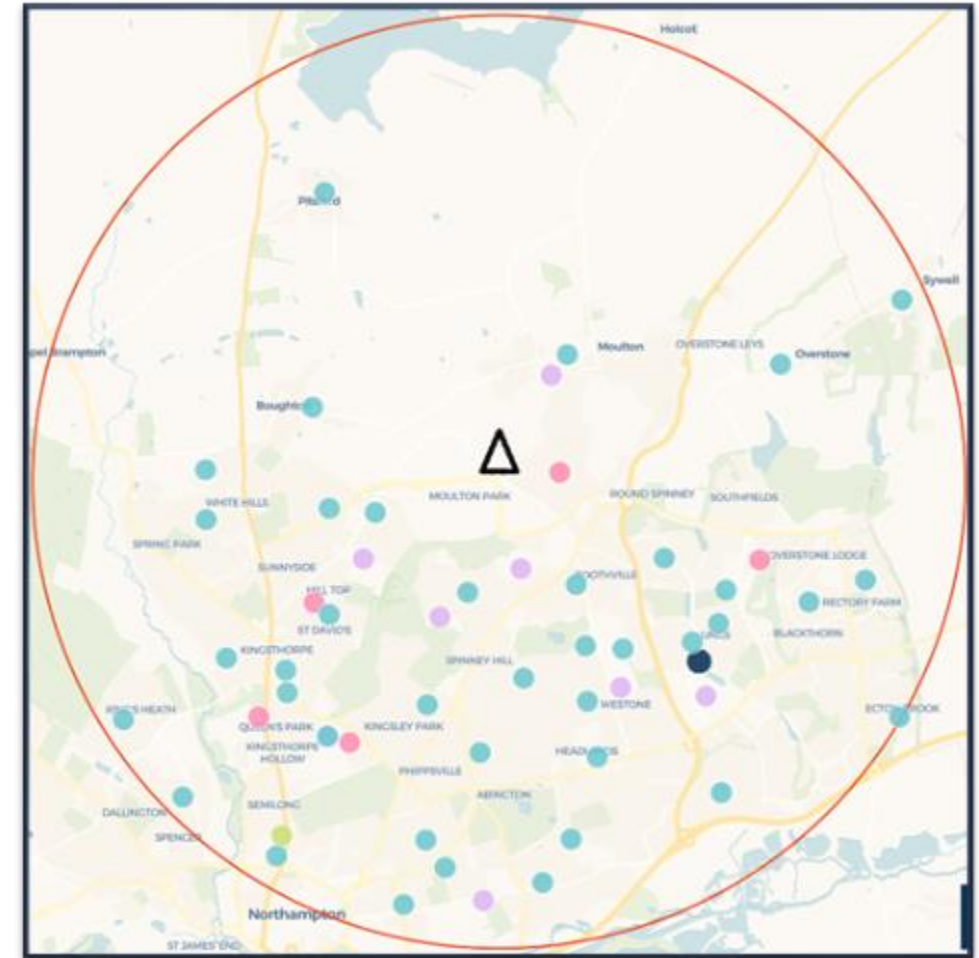
# Growing state school cricket

The new site is situated close to a large number of state primary, secondary and SEND school settings. A number of these schools are located in known areas of deprivation, which is reflected by the high number of children receiving free school meals and pupil premium.

## Venue impact

The new venue could provide a variety of different opportunities for state educated children across Northamptonshire to experience cricket for the first time, or to further increase their enthusiasm for the game.

The venue could support opportunities to both increase both participation and strengthen competition, depending on the age and experience of the child.



Map shows all state schools within a 3-mile radius of the new site (shown on the map by the black triangle).

Green: All school years  
Blue: Primary schools  
Purple: Secondary schools  
Pink: Other (SEND)

# Extending cricket's reach into diverse communities

The 2021 census recorded that levels of ethnically diverse population in Northamptonshire are below national average (12.5% compared to 18%). There are urban areas where the density of ethnic population is higher, including Northampton at 15.5%.

Sport England data shows that children and young people from Black, Asian and other ethnic groups are less likely to be active (41%), than White British and White other groups (50%).

This data extends into adulthood, with 64% white British adults active compared to 56% Black adults and 55% other ethnic groups.

The ECB Inspiring Generations Strategy sets out specific objectives to make cricket a game for everyone, extending the games' reach to more socially diverse audiences.

In 2021, a game-wide 12-point EDI action plan was developed and adopted by all of cricket's major governing bodies in the UK. The plan promotes equity, diversity and inclusion at all levels of cricket, focusing on four key areas;

- **Understanding and educating more**
- **Addressing dressing room culture**
- **Removing barriers in talent pathways**
- **Creating welcoming environments for all**

Northamptonshire Recreational Cricket Board rebranded as **Steelbacks In The Community**, retaining the primary objective of more people from all groups and all ages playing cricket. A Diverse Communities focus group was formed to bring ethnic groups together and understand barriers to engaging in cricket. Participation programmes were delivered to the Bangladeshi community and to Afghan refugees.

# Schools within 3 miles of new venue, with greater than 50% students from ethnic minorities

## 12 Primary schools

School	Total students	% students from ethnic minorities	No of students from ethnic minorities
Lumbertubs	244	68	166
The Good Shepherd	372	68	253
Eastfield Academy	239	64	152
St Gregory's	372	64	238
The Arbours	344	64	220
St Andrews	358	61	218
Blackthorn	289	58	168
Lings	341	59	201
Woodvale	470	59	277
Kingsthorpe Grove	492	58	285
Thorplands	203	54	110
Standens Barn	387	54	209
<b>Total</b>	<b>4111</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>2497</b>

## 4 Secondary schools

Thomas Beckett	840	62	521
Malcolm Arnold	1341	53	711
Northampton Academy	1674	52	870
Northampton School for Girls	1754	50	877
<b>Total</b>	<b>5609</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>2979</b>

An additional 1000+ students from ethnic minorities are educated at Northampton International Academy and Castle Academy, which are both within 3 miles.

*(All school data obtained from Government sourced SPC Underlying data (Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics) 2021/22)*

# Engaging diverse communities in Northampton

The Chance to Shine Street Cricket programme was launched at the Northampton International Academy in 2021/22, offering cricket sessions and competition to youngsters in a more casual format. In 2022/23, 49 children and young people participated at two Northampton locations.

Last Man Stands offers casual hardball cricket outside of the local club and league structure and is popular with the South Asian community. The games are played on non-turf pitches however these types of public facilities are not widely available.

Carib United is currently the only Afro-Caribbean cricket club in the county, playing home games in the Northamptonshire Cricket League at Overstone Park School. The club began as United Social Cricket Club, which in the 1980s/1990s played on council owned pitches that no longer exist. The club offers no junior cricket.

In August 2023, an Afro-Caribbean Festival of Cricket was held at the County Ground, Northampton, as part of an ECB initiative to re-invigorate interest in cricket within black communities across the Midlands.

In 2023, 1891 children participated in ECB National Programmes in Northamptonshire. Of these, 196 (10.36%) were from an ethnically diverse background, which is slightly below the 2021 census county ethnicity population figure of 12.5%.

Only 13 children (0.7%) from Black/African/Caribbean/Black British backgrounds participated in these programmes, which is much lower than the 4.5% overall population figure for the same ethnic group.

The ECB's recent response to the ICEC report into inequality in cricket proposes a Diverse Communities Action Plan that will be published in the next 12 months. This plan will include specific actions focused on engaging black communities, addressing specific needs and challenges identified through further analysis.

# A facility that connects cricket with diverse communities



This map shows a 3-mile radius from the new venue (triangle).

The darkest shaded areas of red highlight the most densely populated areas of ethnic minority communities in Northampton.

## **Venue impact**

The proposed venue will provide an ideal facility to host more casual forms of cricket, like the Street Cricket programme. This will increase cricket's appeal to more socially diverse groups, using surfaces that do not require traditional pitch preparation and require minimal equipment.

The site is also well situated between the existing Carib United club site at Overstone and urban Northampton, where a high proportion of our ethnically diverse communities live. It is a venue which is easily accessible and able to support the objectives of the ECB Diverse Communities Action Plan.

# Improving cricket's reach into lower socio-economic groups

Census data from 2021 shows that the average salary across Northamptonshire is greater than £35,000. The county is largely rural, with lower socio-economic groups living in the larger urban areas of Northampton, Kettering, Corby and Wellingborough and Rushden.

In Northampton, the largest areas of deprivation are concentrated to the east of the town, which fall within a three-mile radius of the new venue, which is highlighted by the black triangle.

Further areas at Kingsthorpe and Eastfield are also close-by. Within a 3-mile radius from the new venue, the 10% most deprived areas are shaded in blue on this map.





# Cricket as a force for social good

According to Sport England Active Lives Survey 2021/22, there is a negative correlation between deprivation and activity levels. Only 44% of children and young people in the most deprived areas meet Chief Medical Officer activity guidelines of 60 minutes per day, versus 49% in the least deprived areas.

Steelbacks in the Community focuses its junior participation efforts around the Department of Education's Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF), which helps local authorities to deliver a variety of activities that engage children during school holidays. In 2023, cricket was delivered to children through Steelbacks In The Community cricket camps which leveraged the HAF programme, coordinated by Northamptonshire Sport.

## Venue Impact

Using free school meals as an indicator of lower socio-economic status, the proximity of the new venue to areas of deprivation provides an excellent opportunity for the Steelbacks In The Community team to deliver cricket in many different forms, removing some of the barriers to cricket that adults and children within these groups may have experienced.



Map shows all state schools within a 3-mile radius of the new site, where >25% pupils receive free school meals.

Pink:

Green:

Blue:

Purple:

Other (SEND)

All school years

Primary schools

Secondary schools

# Fixing the gap in indoor cricket facilities

The 2023-2032 Steelbacks in the Community Facilities Strategy undertook detailed analysis into the provision of indoor cricket facilities in the county.

There are 41 known sites in Northamptonshire with indoor cricket practice facilities, however only 22 are used by local clubs and only one site, the Indoor Centre at the County Ground, is cricket-specific.

In Northampton, with 98 junior and senior teams, only 6 of 19 sites were available to book in 2021/22. This lack of availability has huge potential to impact player engagement during the close season and undo the good work delivered by volunteer coaches in the summer months.

Many indoor cricket facilities are located at multi-sport sites or are part of state school facilities and can be booked for community use. The lack of availability is mainly due to block bookings by other sports like badminton, that take up the entire sports hall.

Steelbacks in the Community successfully run junior Indoor Leagues at three age groups, with 66 teams competing in 2022/23. This is important to maintain the growth of junior cricket. Three different indoor sites are used around Northampton to run these leagues.

District	Northampton	Kettering & Corby	East Northants	South Northants	Total
No of cricket clubs	23	17	19	21	80
No of adult teams	60	50	49	40	199
No of junior teams	38	40	51	20	149
Population per club	10,700	10,250	9,170	7,600	
Sites with cricket practice facilities	19	9	8	5	41
Known sites actually used	6	6	5	5	22

This table shows the current availability of indoor facilities by county district.

# A new facility to meet a range of community needs

## Venue impact

The proposed new state of the art indoor training facility will offer a much needed second cricket-specific indoor facility in Northampton, that will be accessible to many different groups.

As well as a venue for local clubs to prepare in the close season and for the talent pathway to develop their skills, uses for the facility will be varied and satisfying several different need sets.

- **A second hub for Super 1s disability cricket.**
- **A women's and girls' indoor league and training venue.**
- **A junior participation camp venue linked to new groups and areas of deprivation.**
- **A junior indoor league venue.**
- **A hub for walking cricket to meet the needs of older generations, who need to stay active**
- **An indoor Street Cricket hub aimed at diverse communities.**

# An out ground where talented cricketers can thrive

To develop talented young cricketers we need outstanding facilities where they can train and play. Professional cricketers of the future need to experience playing on pitches that are as close to professional playing surfaces as possible, so as they move up the pathway, the transition in terms of playing surface is seamless.

## District cricket

This form of representative cricket is an important layer between junior club and pathway age group cricket, aimed to maintain interest and competition for children that have not quite reached county standard. Three age groups (U11,U13 & U15) across three districts play approximately 30 match days, all at local cricket clubs

## Boys' pathway

Six Northamptonshire age groups from U11 to U16 require an average of 22 day of home ground cricket, for matches and training days. U10s and U18s squads each require approximately 12 days of home ground cricket and training.

Currently around half of these matches and training days are staged at local private schools, mainly at Oundle School plus Wellingborough School and Stowe School.

## Girls' pathway

The four Northamptonshire age groups (6 x teams) currently require 44 days of home ground cricket for matches and training. Approximately 10 of these days are staged at private schools or indoors at the County Ground.

## Emerging Players Programme (EPP)

This programme forms a bridge between the boys age group squads and the Academy with the best young cricketers from the age group squads selected to be involved. Between November and April, there are 18-20 training sessions and during the summer, there are 12 matches, 6 being played at home.

## Academy

The Academy produces the next first class cricketers to play for Northamptonshire.

Format	Matches played at home
T20 shortest form	4 (two matches on the same day)
50 overs-a-side	3
3- day matches	Either 2 or 3
1-day friendlies	4-6

# Alignment with the ICEC report into inequality in cricket

In June 2023, the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) published its report into discrimination in the game. This report was commissioned by the ECB and followed a call for evidence to evaluate the state of equity in cricket and understand the realities of personal experiences within the sport. The ECB has since formally responded with an action plan.

The ICEC report suggests the removal of county age group cricket up to the age of Under 14 with the creation of a far more localised talent locating system in its place.

The ECB response was clear that a removal of financial barriers will increase opportunities for the talent pathway to be more inclusive, creating more accessibility and fluidity in selection. To achieve this will take time and requires close alignment with the State School Action plan.

Doubling the number of MCC Foundation Hubs is the first part of a long-term plan by ECB to level up opportunities and involve more state educated children in pathway cricket.

## Venue impact

With expected growth in girls cricket increasing the number of girls pathway teams in the future, the current total of 148 days cricket provided by local clubs and schools to stage District, County boys and girls age group Pathway Cricket is unsustainable.

The proposed new venue will provide a NCCC out-ground for performance cricket that will make the transition from playground to County Ground far more seamless. With less pitches to prepare for representative cricket across the county, it will reduce the workload for local volunteers and prevent overplay issues at local club pitches.

“ It is now time for NCCC to push forward with ambitious plans to increase both its influence and its contribution to English cricket and to the County of Northamptonshire.”

# Delivering our vision for NCCC

## To become the driving force of cricket in the East of England

NCCC, through our Steelbacks brand, is a well-established force in Northamptonshire and now provides focus for cricket across the whole region.

It has lasting partnerships with Buckinghamshire and 'Cricket East' (Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire) and is in discussions with other National Counties including Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Norfolk and Hertfordshire (previously called Minor Counties) about collaboration to give young players the best possible opportunities. Satellite coaching facilities are in place in Luton and Peterborough, and more are planned.

This reach gives Northants youth players the opportunity to experience cricket across a wider network and brings talented players of all ages into Northamptonshire, hopefully to become part of a First-Class County set-up.

## To facilitate the expansion of girls' and women's cricket in the county and region

Steelbacks in the Community is already working hard to expand the provision of girls' and women's cricket through the NCCC club structure. Our aim is to provide new facilities and resources centrally to underpin this right across the county.

The new ground will be a hub for the regional professional women's team, with players acting as role models for young players with ambition to become elite sports women.

The momentum behind women's and girls' cricket is growing at great speed. The number of clubs in the county offering an opportunity for women and girls to play cricket increases each year. The facility will create an inclusive environment to encourage more representation of women across the game, including players, officials, volunteers and administrators.

# Delivering our vision for NCCC

## **To provide a central facility for disability cricket in the county**

The Steelbacks in the Community team is already increasing playing opportunities for disability cricketers. The Wantage Road pitch recently welcomed pan-disability ECB D40 cricket and the BCEW Primary Club Heindrich Swanepoel Cup Final for visually impaired cricketers.

The club is investing in new initiatives for disability cricket and the proposed new state-of-the-art facilities and pitches would be a major step forward in growing the disability game.

## **To create a world class Academy**

Building on the strengths of the current set-up, we will broaden the Academy's scope and increase the size and impact of coaching.

We will look to incorporate best practice from around the world and invest in excellence, including more collaborative coaching in the National Counties as well as more intensive programmes in both the Academy and EPP.

The new facility, and particularly the indoor training school, is a crucial part of this.

## **To provide a home for youth pathway cricket and a venue for children's cricket festivals**

Currently, county youth teams have to negotiate use of facilities from local clubs and schools to stage matches. The two new pitches would ease some of the pressure to find suitable venues for that youth cricket.

With two pitches and plenty of outfield space, the facility would be an ideal venue for large numbers of young, and very young, players to participate in Kwik cricket festivals.

## **To provide a home for the Steelbacks Charitable Foundation**

NCCC has recently announced the formation of an ambitious foundation that will become its charitable and community arm.

Using the power of cricket, the foundation aims to make a lasting and positive impact on the lives of people living in Northamptonshire.

The foundation will spearhead community initiatives in the areas of education, participation and health and well-being.



# Protecting and investing in Wantage Road

The existing NCCC headquarters at Wantage Road has been upgraded over the past few years to improve the experience for everyone who uses it - employees, players, officials and visitors.

It is a much appreciated and respected venue, particularly for white ball cricket which includes T20 and 50-over games.

A match day capacity of 5,200 supporters enjoy upgraded seating, excellent hospitality areas and an intimate atmosphere, and our objective is for them to continue to do so while other parts of the ground are improved and utilised to generate incremental revenue through new commercial opportunities.

## Venue impact

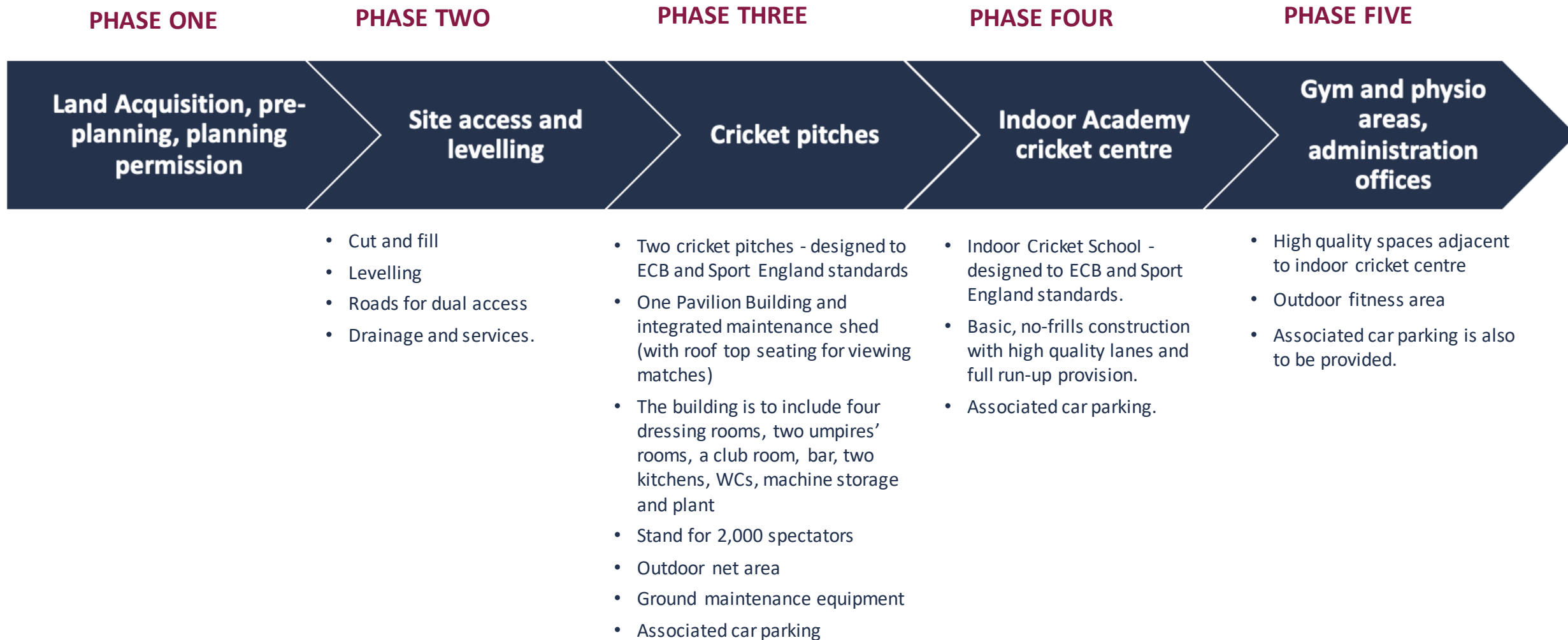
Once the new facility has been confirmed, we can start to realise our growth plans for Wantage Road.

- We will continue to host County Cricket matches , including all T20 and ODC 50 Over games.
- We will improve and expand the hospitality offerings.
- The cricket square will be extended to accommodate a minimum of 6 practice wickets.
- The Lynn Wilson Indoor Cricket Centre will to limited to adult training.
- We can maximise the opportunity to hire out the Hevey Suite (<100 Capacity) and The Curo Lounge (<200 Capacity) for more catered and hospitality events, generating valuable income for the club.

# Proposed facilities at the new venue

- Two pitches – one to County Championship standard and one for Academy/pathway cricket
- One double-sided pavilion with changing and catering areas for both pitches and machine shed
- One stand with capacity for 2,000 spectators
- One Academy indoor training facility to a functional design with 6 international quality lanes
- Outdoor net facility and fitness area
- Gym & physio facilities
- Grass viewing bank
- Landscaped and maintained walking area for local residents

# Overview of Phased Development



# Finance

## Financial Background

Since 2015, NCCC has raised £1.2m in new share capital, repaid on time a £900k loan from Northants Borough Council and stabilised all aspects of the club's financial management.

With the exception of a short-term Covid Bounce-back Loan (as yet unused) the club is now debt-free and profitable, with some cash reserves to cover operating requirements.

## Financial impact of the new venue plan

The base costs of the facility plan are as follows:

At this early stage

### Phase One – Land Acquisition

Planning and legal fees **£155k**

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### Phase Two - Site access and levelling

Access and levelling, drainage, services **£2m**

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### Phase Three – Cricket pitches

2 pitches, pavilion, equipment, fencing **£4.7m**

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### Phase Four – Indoor Academy cricket centre

Indoor Academy, parking **£1.5m**

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### Phase Five – Gym and physio areas, administration offices

Gym, physio, offices, parking **£4.7m**

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# Sources of funding

Although NCCC is financially stable and profitable, it does not have the necessary reserves to fund this vital project.

As described above, the club will be able to provide **£500k to £1m** 'seed' funding

Partner funding will be sought for the balance of the capital cost from grant financing from the ECB, the major UK sporting funds, charitable organisations with strong sporting connections and local government sources.

## Phasing

The project funding requirements are spread over 5 distinct build phases, which allow for graduated funding. The maximum timescale envisaged for completion is 5 years.

The estimated annual cost of maintenance for operating the new venue will be **£200k**, which includes;

- Ground Maintenance Pavilion upkeep
- Wider estate maintenance Utilities
- Additional Staffing









<b>Parking Schedule</b>	<b>Legend</b>
Overflow parking	Approx 700 Spaces
Main Site	Approx 24 Coaches
	Approx 200 Spaces
<b>Capacity Schedule</b>	
Junior Pitch	Approx 2,000 Seats
Senior Pitch	Approx 10,000 Seats
Pavilion Backery	Approx 500 Capacity

● Site Boundary  
- - - Secure Fence

0m 20m 40m 60m 80m 100m  
 VISUAL SCALE 1:1000 @ A1

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# What's happening in other First Class Counties?



The University of Worcester has secured part funding and planning approval for its international inclusive cricket education centre.

Supported by **Worcestershire CCC** and the ECB, the venue will provide a place where visually impaired and blind cricketers, physically disabled cricketers, deaf and those with a learning disability cricketers can play at all levels of ability.

The university has recently launched a new Masters Degree in Cricket Coaching and Management.



**Leicestershire CCC** has announced a £60m plan to expand existing ground capacity from 6,000 to 10,000, to increase opportunities to host events.

A working party is currently building a detailed stakeholder needs assessment and investigating funding sources.

This includes representatives from local authority and universities, who are keen to develop cricket linked education offers through the inclusion of an Academy of Cricket campus.



**Yorkshire CCC** announced the opening of an all-weather cricket dome in Bradford, which offers 10 cricket lanes to offer approximately 10,000 cricketers, all year round.

The project was funded jointly by City of Bradford Council, Sport England, the ECB, Football Foundation and Grounds Management Association.

The facility will be a hub for local community cricket, also acting as a training centre where clubs can improve their grounds management skills.

As cricket continues to transform the way it interacts with communities, and county clubs invest in new commercial and educational opportunities, it's important that Northamptonshire is not left behind and that we innovate to deliver against our ambition and vision.



**Northamptonshire County Cricket Club**

**Thank you.**