

02.06.23

## NewGen MiniTrack development at the Robert Smyth Academy, Market Harborough

Dear 

I am writing to offer England Athletics' formal support for the proposed NewGen MiniTrack at the Robert Smyth Academy, Market Harborough, LE16 7JG.

Ed Hunt – EA National Facilities and Planning Manager and Heidi Bradley – EA Regional Club Support Manager, have met and consulted with the representatives from the local athletics club – Harborough AC, to understand the club's drivers behind the 200m oval / 100m sprint straight NewGen MiniTrack facility at the school.

Having listened to the club's aspirations England Athletics believe that the MiniTrack facility would have a hugely positive impact not just for the school and club but also for the wider communities of Market Harborough, who currently must travel outside the local authority area to access athletics facilities.

In terms of strategic context, Market Harborough has been identified by England Athletics as a priority area for the development of a NewGen facility: <https://www.englandathletics.org/clubs-and-facilities/facilities/newgen-tracks> and the facility aligns with Strategic Priority 3 of EAs Facility Strategy:

---

*“Encourage innovative approaches to the location and design of facilities for individual components of the sport in order to increase reach and create sustainability and viability.”*

To support this priority England Athletics will:

- Support the development of MiniTracks / CompactTracks where there is an identified need and viable business case

Click [here](#) for a full version of the strategy

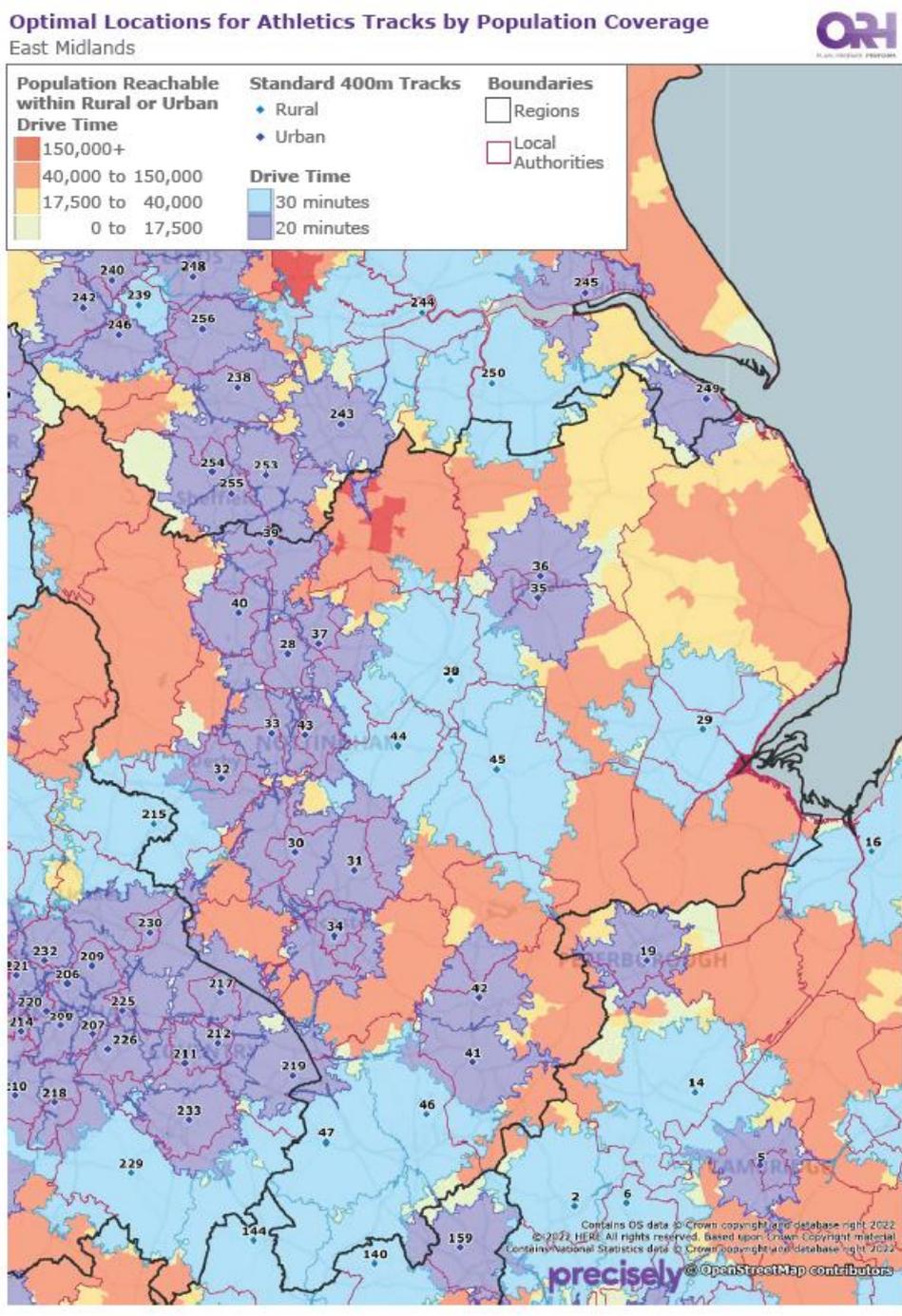
---

## Catchment analysis

Our facility insight data clearly shows the need for a facility in Harborough and the significant population catchment that would benefit:

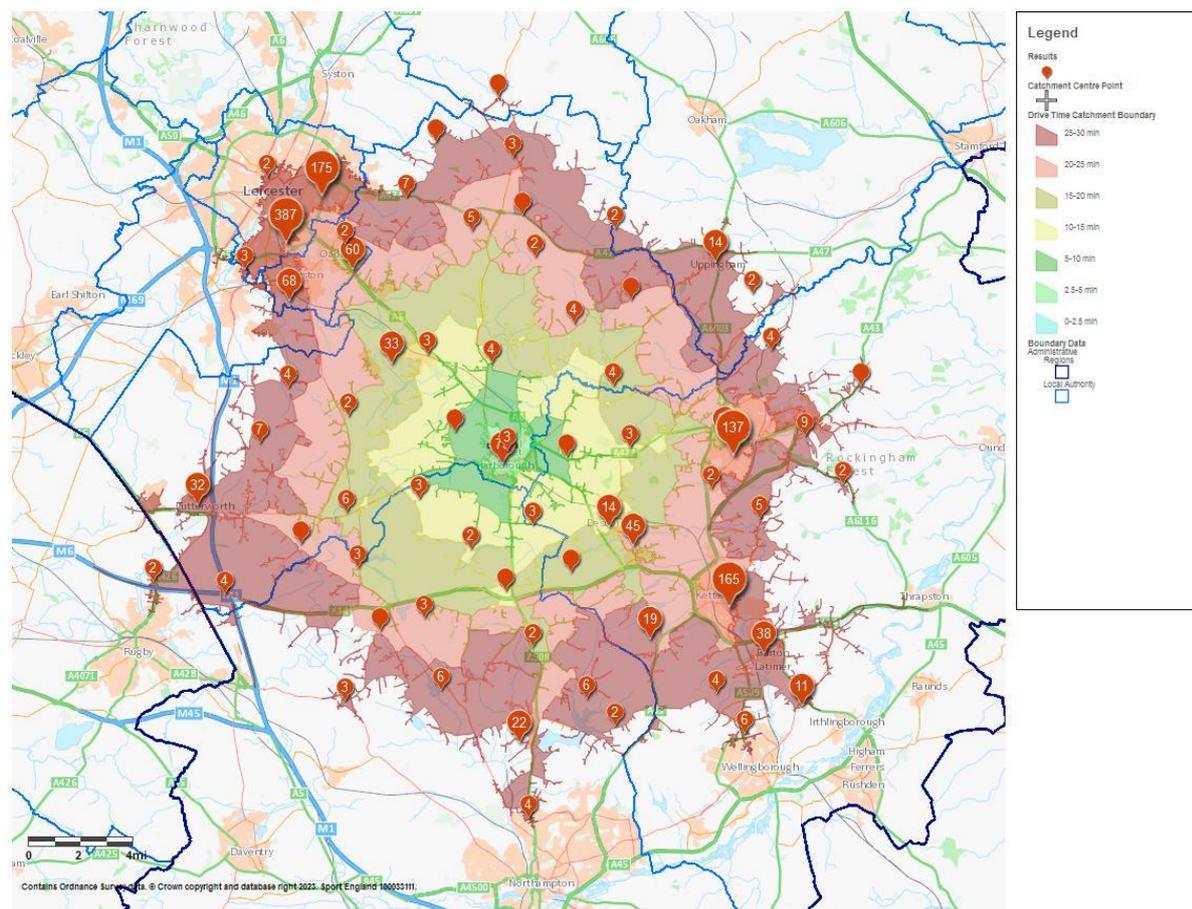
**Table 2: Population Not Covered in 20 or 30 minutes Drive Time by Local Authority**

EA Region	Local Authority		Not Covered in 20/30 mins - 2021 Population by Age Band							% Population Not Covered
	Name	ONS Code	0-14	15-24	25-39	40-59	60-79	80+	Total	
East Midlands	Harborough	E07000131	11,471	6,365	10,590	20,387	16,203	3,995	69,011	72%



Source: ORH Optimisation analysis (2022)

## Pindrop catchment report: Robert Smyth Academy



Sport England assumes no responsibility for the completeness, accuracy and currency of the information contained on this map/report. This information is taken from the Active Places Power website and its terms and conditions apply.

1/8/2023 09:04

Combined	0-14	15-24	25-39	40-59	60-79	80+	Total
0-2.5	777	652	793	1,357	1,343	494	5,416
2.5-5	2,569	1,221	2,786	4,101	3,251	1,051	14,979
5-10	1,826	821	1,809	3,100	2,404	511	10,471
10-15	3,940	1,882	3,577	5,960	4,661	1,046	21,066
15-20	8,133	4,344	7,667	12,596	10,953	2,480	46,173
20-25	32,976	19,240	33,236	45,272	32,200	8,309	171,233
25-30	51,977	48,977	55,733	63,569	45,755	10,951	276,962
<b>Total</b>	<b>102,198</b>	<b>77,137</b>	<b>105,601</b>	<b>135,955</b>	<b>100,567</b>	<b>24,842</b>	<b>546,300</b>

Source: Sport England Active Places Power (2023)

A MiniTrack facility in Market Harborough would provide the area with an affordable and sustainable model that would provide the school and community with many benefits including:

- Promote multi-sport usage at the school both for pupils during school time (curriculum PE), and for the wider community after school hours and during holiday periods.
- Increase the opportunity for community groups to use safe athletics facilities.
- Enable young people to have positive run, jump & throwing experiences.
- Serve as a hub for both inclusion and community athletics within Market Harborough.

**MiniTrack**

**Affordable, entry level, mini-oval track & field facility**

**CaseStudies**

**KEY POINTS**

- Visually attractive and inspiring
- Develops the fundamental athletics skills of run, jump & throw
- Age/ability appropriate environment
- Ideal for both school and community settings

Visit the **MiniTrack** webpage or scan the QR code for further examples.

**MiniTrack**

**WHAT?**

- Synthetic oval track (min 100m/max 200m)
- Floodlit
- Flexible infield options: mini-football, basketball, netball, volleyball, hockey quicksticks/hockey 5s, tennis/padel, parkour, bmx pumptrack, skate park, outdoor gym/fitness, play zones

**WHERE?**

- School or community settings

**WHO?**

- Young people and adults taking their first steps into running & athletics

**WHY?**

- Financially viable
- Multi-sport, year-round usage
- Age-appropriate layout

**TrackBuilder**

Visit the **TrackBuilder** portal to explore options - or scan the QR code.

Yours sincerely

Ed Hunt  
National Facilities Manager  
England Athletics

Heidi Bradley  
Club Support Manager  
England Athletics

## SUPPORTING EVIDENCE provided by Harborough AC

Harborough Athletic Club (HAC) has been an EA affiliated club since its formation in 1984. During this time the size of the club has varied but has always remained strong and sustainable. Since the end of the COVID pandemic the club has grown substantially to over 270 members (May 2023). 96 of these members are juniors (8-18). The number of juniors in June 2021 stood at 33 and growth since that time is clearly continuing.

The club has consistently demonstrated that through good coaching and commitment to grass roots development, plus the creation of the modest grass-based track and field facilities at its relatively recent relocation at Market Harborough Rugby Club, that there is significant demand for the sport despite the lack of a local athletics facility.

Whilst there are 400m tracks within 30 minutes travelling distance by car from anywhere in the district this is not an option for everyone and public transport to these locations is at best problematic. Additional travelling time on top of the time required to undertake a training session creates a significant barrier to accessing the sport for many people especially the young. Existing HAC athletes have very limited access to the facilities at other venues who are occupied by local clubs at the popular training times.

In conclusion, HAC has grown (from 191 members when the Built Sports Strategy was consulted on to 270+ in mid-2023 and still expanding). This is demonstration that a strong club at the heart of the community with good coaching can attract more people to athletics and running. There is sufficient demand, which will intensify with growth in the population, for a NewGen MiniTrack facility which will support the purpose, vision and strategic aims of EA as the national body for grass roots athletics and running clubs in England.

---

### Coaching and Officials Infrastructure Investment in capacity in the last 12 months

#### Coaching

- x5 additional Leaders in Running Fitness
- x1 additional Coach in Running Fitness
- x2 Currently upgrading from Coaching Assistant to Athletics Coach
- x1 Junior athlete commencing Coaching Assistant June 2023
- x1 currently upgrading to CiRF

The club does not have a waiting list for any age group and has an objective to avoid waiting lists and is able to continue recruiting additional members.

#### Officials

- X1 upgrading to L2 Field Official
- X2 currently qualifying L1 Official

#### Youth development

In addition, the club encourages and supports junior members and youth in the community in their own personal development:

- Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Volunteering x3
- Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Physical x2