

# Public Document Pack



## Executive Board

Thursday, 16 September 2021 2.00 p.m.  
Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R'.

**Chief Executive**

### ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

#### PART 1

Item	Page No
<b>1. MINUTES</b>	
<b>2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b>	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
<b>3. CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO</b>	
<b>(A) TAXI LICENSING - POLICY UPDATES RELATING TO THE ASSESSMENT OF PREVIOUS CONDITIONS</b>	<b>1 - 28</b>
<b>(B) DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF</b>	<b>29 - 32</b>

*Please contact Ann Jones 0151 511 8276 or [ann.jones@halton.gov.uk](mailto:ann.jones@halton.gov.uk) for further information.*

*The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 14 October 2021*

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(C) 2021/22 BUDGET MONITORING AS AT 30 JUNE 2021	33 - 64
<b>4. ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO</b>	
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(A) PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY	97 - 295
<b>9. SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985</b>	
<b>PART II</b>	
<p>In this case the Board has a discretion to exclude the press and public and, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, it is <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, having been satisfied that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.</p>	
<b>10. ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO</b>	
(A) FOUNDARY LANE RESIDENTIAL	296 - 302

***In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.***

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	16 September 2021
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Corporate Services
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Taxi Licensing – Policy updates relating to the assessment of previous convictions
<b>WARDS:</b>	Borough wide

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To receive a report from the Regulatory Committee meeting recommending that the Executive Board approve amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers Assessment of Previous Convictions Policy (Assessment of Previous Convictions Policy') and the hackney carriage and private hire drivers condition ('Driver Conditions')

## **2. RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) The amendments to the "Previous Convictions Policy" be adopted
- (2) The amendment made to the hackney carriage and private hire driver's conditions on the requirement to report matters relating to their behaviour be adopted.

## **3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 On 30 June 2021 the Regulatory Committee considered amendments to the Assessment of Previous Convictions Policy. See attached Regulatory Committee agenda at Appendix 1
- 3.2 Following the introduction of the current policy in September 2020 it had been noted by Officers that there were gaps in the policy which provides little or no guidance as to what action (if any) should be taken by Officers and Members in certain circumstances.
- 3.3 The proposed additions to the policy not only give guidance on convictions but on other matters which may be taken into account when considering if a person can be deemed to be a fit and proper person

within the meaning of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

- 3.4 To accompany any potential changes to the policy the second proposal was to amend an existing drivers condition partly at the request of the Department for Transport as well as ensuring the condition is fit for purpose. The condition related to the 'duty to disclose convictions, cautions, reprimands, warning and fixed penalty notices'

#### **4 CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 As part of a consultation exercise the local taxi trade were contacted on 16 April 2021 by email for any comments on the matter. Details of the consultation were also posted on the Council's website with a closing dated for comments or opinions of 14 May 2021
- 4.2 Written responses were received from the taxi trade and these are set out in the attached Regulatory Committee agenda item.

#### **5 OPTIONS**

The options available to the Regulatory Committee at the meeting on 30 June 2021 were to recommend –

- Agreement to some or all of the potential changes
- Amendment to some or all of the potential changes or
- Rejection of the potential changes

The Regulatory Committee resolved to agree all of the potential changes set out in the agenda.

#### **6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The subject matter of this report is to adopt policy changes.

#### **7. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES**

##### **7.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

N/A

##### **7.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton**

N/A

##### **7.3 A healthy Halton**

N/A

##### **7.4 A Safer Halton**

N/A

**7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**  
N/A

**8. RISK ANALYSIS**  
N/A

**9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**  
N/A

**10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**APPENDIX 1**

<b>REPORT:</b>	Regulatory Committee
<b>DATE:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Resources
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Taxi Licensing Matter
<b>WARDS:</b>	Borough-wide

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the Committee on the Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards and to make a recommendation to the Executive Board on the assessment of previous convictions.

**2. RECOMMENDED: That -**

**2.1 The Executive Board be recommended to resolve as follows:**

- **The amendments to the “Previous Convictions Policy” put forward in this report be considered and adopted**
- **An amendment be made to the hackney carriage and private hire driver’s conditions relating to the requirement to report matters relating to their behaviour**

**3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3.1 On 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 this Committee recommended to adopt the Department for Transport’s (DFT) “Assessment of Previous Convictions” document as part of the hackney carriage and private hire driver’s licensing policy. This recommendation was subsequently adopted by the Executive Board. A copy of the current “Convictions Policy” can be found at Appendix A of this document.

3.2 At the same Committee hearing, Members were also notified that further matters from the DFT’s “Statutory Taxi & private Hire Vehicle

Standards” would be thoroughly examined by Officers of the Council and referred back to this Committee for consideration.

3.3 The Committee is responsible for determining the Council’s policies in connection with the grant, variation, suspension or revocation of licences relating to taxi and private hire.

3.4 However, the Constitution must now be interpreted in accordance with the case of R (On the application of 007 Stratford Taxis Limited v Stratford on Avon District Council 2011. This Court of Appeal decision interpreted the meaning of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities)(England) Regulations 2000 in respect of matters which must be dealt with by a Council’s Executive or by a committee of its council. Essentially, the court held that: (1) it was clear that individual applications relating to taxi matters must be dealt with by the equivalent of this Council’s Regulatory Committee and (2) matters calculated to facilitate, or be conducive or incidental to such applications must also be dealt with in the same way but (3) any “plan or strategy” associated with such a function would be an executive function and therefore have to be determined by a council’s executive. The Stratford case concerned the introduction of a wheelchair access policy. The decision was taken by the Council’s cabinet rather than its Licensing Committee. The challenge from the taxi trade was that the Licensing Committee should have adopted the policy. This element of the challenge was rejected by the court.

3.5 Consequently, any decision of the Regulatory Committee on matters contained in this agenda will be by recommendation to the Executive Board.

3.6 In deciding whether or not to adopt or to recommend the adoption of a policy the following questions should be addressed:

3.6.1 Has proper consultation been undertaken?

3.6.2 Are the proposals necessary and proportionate?

#### **4. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

4.1 Following the introduction of the current policy in September 2020 it has been noticed by Officers that there are gaps in the policy which provide little or no guidance as to what action (if any) is to be taken by Officers or Members in certain circumstances.

4.2 This is not to say that action must be taken against a driver who has committed a criminal offence however the necessity of having a clear and transparent policy benefits everyone.



4.3 The proposed additions to the policy not only give guidance on convictions but also on the following which may be taken into account when considering if a person can be deemed to be a fit and proper person within the meaning of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976:

- Matters which do not meet the threshold to be found guilty of an offence beyond all reasonable doubt
- Driving convictions/offences
- Formal or simple cautions
- Actions of a driver where they fall below a level to the extent that Members of the Regulatory Committee would not feel safe with a member of their family being carried in a vehicle driven by said driver.

4.4 The proposed policy (should it be approved) will be referred to as the “*Professional Standards Policy*”.

4.5 The proposed policy can be found at Appendix B of this document.

**4.6 To accompany the potential changes to the policy, the second proposal is to amend the existing hackney carriage/private hire driver licensing condition partly at the request of the Department for Transport as well as ensuring the condition is fit for purpose.**

4.7 The current licensing condition requiring licensed drivers to report indiscretions to the licensing section is as follows:

*“Duty to disclose convictions, cautions, reprimands, warnings, and fixed penalty notices*

*The holder shall immediately disclose to the Council Solicitor in writing details of any conviction, cautions, reprimands and warnings imposed on the holder during the currency of this Licence. (Convictions include road traffic offences and whether involving endorsements or not). This duty also extends to any fixed penalty notice following payment and simple and conditional cautions.”*

4.8 The Department for Transport have stated the following within the “Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards”:

*“Licence-holders should be required to notify the issuing authority within 48 hours of an arrest and release, charge or conviction of any sexual offence, any offence involving dishonesty or violence and any motoring offence.*

*Importantly, a failure by a licence holder to disclose an arrest that the issuing authority is subsequently advised of might be seen as behaviour that questions honesty and therefore the suitability of the licence holder regardless of the outcome of the initial allegation”.*

- 4.9 Details of the proposed new condition can be found at Appendix C of this document.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 As part of a consultation the local trade were contacted on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021 by email for any comments on this matter. Details of the consultation were also posted on the Council’s website with a closing date for comments or opinions to be made by 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

- 5.2 The following replies were made to the licensing team as part of the consultation process. Each person submitting their views on this matter has had their identities removed but has been referred to with a number for audit purposes only. No comment has been amended, corrected or rephrased.

- 5.2.1 Number 1

Reply to Point 6 of the proposed policy change

*Fixed penalty notices are issued as an alternative to a prosecution and where paid the case is subsequently closed. Each year over three million FPNs are issued by the police for motoring offences. These should not be included in the conditions. Clearly they have slipped in and now is the time to correct this injustice and remove it. A FPN as an alternative to conviction is a fundamental legal right. It does not appear on the DBS and is not a conviction.*

*Where is the reasoning behind these proposals? Is the gravity of such so severe that it warrants this change whilst ignoring all the other problems such as unlicensed and uninsured out of town vehicles?*

Reply to Point 13 of the proposed policy change

*Reference the 1974 Act and 2002 Order and quote from your consultation, 'allows the licensing authority to take into account all convictions recorded against an applicant or an existing licence holder, whether spent or not.' We accept this decision based on the Herefordshire District Council (stated case) v Prosser, however It does not include Fixed Penalty Notices which by way of being an*

*alternative to prosecution cannot be construed as a criminal record and therefore, neither can they be viewed as a spent conviction.*

*Note: FPNs are an alternative to a prosecution and are not a conviction subject to the penalty being paid. They are issued for low level singular offences. Offences of which it should be noted are not Specific Intent offences. Paradoxically, offences of theft; criminal damage etc share the requirement of intent.*

Reply to Point 19 of the proposed policy change

*Noted - maximum of 14 days*

Reply to Point 20 of the proposed policy change

*Noted*

Reply to the proposed policy change on types of offences

Crimes resulting in death (driving)

*We feel that this should not be an automatic reason to debar the grant of a licence where the offence is by way of careless or inconsiderate. The option to require a driver improvement course attendance or additional tuition should be available.*

Motoring Convictions

*We believe that the limit of a single offence (debar possibility) is too severe. Again referring back to specific intent and the ease by which a transgression of a speed limit for example can unintentionally be committed with the arsenal of enforcement measures thrown at the motorist, most drivers plead guilty to avoid court and legal costs. Given the number of invalid speed restrictions by way of non-compliance with the Road Signs and General Directions rules and/or the enormous TRO anomalies then drivers could lose their livelihoods unlawfully. There are plenty of signage and TOR irregularities in Halton (source: M Noone former HBC/Operational Director/Highways, Transport & Logistics to the Env & Urban Renewal PPB Chair meeting)*

Plying for Hire

*This is currently a persistent problem throughout Halton with out-of-town vehicles. Widnes is flooded with Knowsley and Sefton vehicles whereas Runcorn is overrun with Chester and Cheshire West vehicles.*

Proposed Amendment to Licensing Condition

*Fixed penalty notices should not be brought within the scope of this because these are not convictions; they are a conditional offer as an alternative to a prosecution for a low-level offence. They are not classed as a criminal conviction and provided you pay an FPN within the time limit one will not get a criminal record for it. The matter is then closed.*

*To proceed with this proposal is draconian, unnecessary.*

5.2.2 Numbers 2, 3 and 4 refer solely to the consultation to the proposed changes to the medical policy which was also conducted at the same time.

5.2.3 Number 5

*I would support these changes fully.*

5.3 Members of the Regulatory Committee may add any weight to the above comments as they see reasonable.

## **6. REGULATORS' CODE 2014**

6.1 The Regulators' Code 2014 requires regulators (such as the Council) to take into account a number of factors when introducing new policies.

6.2 For example, paragraph 1.2 of the Code states: "When designing and reviewing policies, operational procedures and practices, regulators should consider how they might support or enable economic growth for compliant businesses and other regulated entities, for example, by considering how they can best:

- understand and minimise negative economic impacts of their regulatory activities;
- minimise the costs of compliance for those they regulate;
- improve confidence in compliance for those they regulate, by providing greater certainty; and
- encourage and promote compliance."

6.3 The Code also states that regulators should base their regulatory activities on risk. In the present case the balancing exercise is to weigh any negative consequences on the taxi trade against the positive consequences on the public who use the services of the trade.

6.4 It is taken as read that unnecessary burdens should never be imposed and that all actions need to be proportionate.

## 7. OPTIONS

7.1 The options available to the committee are to **recommend**:

- Agreement to some or all of the potential changes or
- Amendment to some or all of the potential changes or
- Rejection of the potential changes.

7.2 Should the Committee recommend the second option to amend any of the potential changes to the policy and/or licensing condition then they will need to be altered. The Committee would therefore be requested to include within the resolution a delegation of the task of preparing detailed wording and other consequential matters to the Licensing Manager.

## 8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Any changes made would change elements of existing policy relating to applicants applying to hold a hackney carriage and private hire driver's licence (referred to as a Single Status Driver's Licence) issued by Halton Borough Council.

## 9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

## 10. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES

10.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**  
None

10.2 **Employment Learning and Skills in Halton**  
N/A

10.3 **A Healthy Halton**  
N/A

10.4 **A Safer Halton**  
None

10.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**  
N/A

**11. RISK ANALYSIS**

There are no associated risks which have been identified with this item.

**12. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

There are no equality or diversity issues related to a review

**13. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
1. Taxi Consultation File	Licensing Section	Kay Cleary Nick Wheeler
2. Current licensing policies		

## APPENDIX A

### Assessment of Previous Convictions Policy Document

Legislation specifically identifies offences involving dishonesty, inc violence as a concern when assessing whether an individual is 'fit a to hold a taxi or private hire vehicle licence. The following recommen licensing authorities on previous convictions reflect this.

**Authorities must consider each case on its own merits, and applicants/licensees are entitled to a fair and impartial consideration of their application. Where a period is given below, it should be taken to be a minimum in considering whether a licence should be granted or renewed in most cases.** The Department's view is that this places passenger safety as the priority while enabling past offenders to sufficiently evidence that they have been successfully rehabilitated so that they might obtain or retain a licence.

#### Crimes resulting in death

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime which resulted in the death of another person or was intended to cause the death or serious injury of another person **they will not be licensed**.

#### Exploitation

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime involving, related to, or has any connection with abuse, exploitation, use or treatment of another individual irrespective of whether the victim or victims were adults or children, **they will not be licensed**. This includes slavery, child sexual abuse, exploitation, grooming, psychological, emotional or financial abuse, but this is not an exhaustive list.

#### Offences involving violence against the person

Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence of violence against the person, or connected with any offence of violence, a licence will not be granted **until at least 10 years** have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

#### Possession of a weapon

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of a weapon or any other weapon related offence, a licence will not be granted until at **least seven years** have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

### **Sexual offences**

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence involving or connected with illegal sexual activity, **a licence will not be granted.**

In addition to the above, the licensing authority will not grant a licence to any applicant who is currently on the Sex Offenders Register or on any barred list.

### **Dishonesty**

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence where dishonesty is an element of the offence, a licence will not be granted until at **least seven years** have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

### **Drugs**

Where an applicant has any conviction for, or related to, the supply of drugs, or possession with intent to supply or connected with possession with intent to supply, a licence will not be granted until at **least 10 years** have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of drugs, or related to the possession of drugs, a licence will not be granted until **at least five years** have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. In these circumstances, any applicant may also have to undergo drugs testing for a period at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.

### **Discrimination**

Where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not be granted until **at least seven years** have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

### **Motoring convictions**

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers are professional drivers charged with the responsibility of carrying the public. It is accepted that offences can be committed unintentionally, and a single occurrence of a minor traffic offence would not prohibit the granting of a licence. However, applicants with multiple motoring convictions may indicate that an applicant does not exhibit the behaviours of a safe road user and one that is suitable to drive professionally.

Any motoring conviction while a licensed driver demonstrates that the licensee may not take their professional responsibilities seriously. However, it is accepted that offences can be committed unintentionally, and a single occurrence of a minor traffic offence may not necessitate the revocation of a



taxi or private hire vehicle driver licence providing the authority considers that the licensee remains a fit and proper person to retain a licence.

### **Drink driving/driving under the influence of drugs**

Where an applicant has a conviction for drink driving or driving under the influence of drugs, a licence will not be granted until **at least seven years** have elapsed since the completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed. In the case of driving under the influence of drugs, any applicant may also have to undergo drugs testing at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.

### **Using a hand-held device whilst driving**

Where an applicant has a conviction for using a held-hand mobile telephone or a hand-held device whilst driving, a licence will not be granted until **at least five years** have elapsed since the conviction or completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed, whichever is the later.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Proposed Policy on Professional Standards**

This document aims to provide guidance to any person with an interest in public and private hire licensing. In particular, but not exclusively:

- Applicants for drivers' licences
- Existing licensed drivers whose licences are being reviewed
- Licensing Officers
- Members of the Regulatory Committee / Regulatory Sub-Committee
- Magistrates hearing appeals against Halton Borough Council decisions

Thereby providing transparency and consistency in accordance with the principles of good enforcement and relevant regulatory compliance codes.

Where Licensing Officers have delegated powers to grant licences, they will utilise these guidelines when making a decision to grant a licence. In all other cases applications for licences will be referred to the Regulatory Committee / Regulatory Sub-Committee. Whilst Officers and the Committee/Panel will have regard to the guidelines contained in the policy, each case will be considered on its individual merits and, where the circumstances demand, the Committee/Officer may depart from the guidelines.

#### **Background**

1. In this policy the word applicant refers to either new applicants, or those existing licence holders who are seeking renewal. It also includes existing licence holders who are being considered by the Council by virtue of activity that questions their ability to continue to be considered a fit and proper person.
2. Licences for drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles may only be granted where the Council is satisfied that the applicant is a 'fit and proper person' to hold such a licence.
3. The policy is intended to give guidance on one aspect of whether a person is or is not a fit and proper person namely the situation where a person has previous convictions, formal/simple cautions, has been the subject of restorative justice and/or other matters.

4. The Council is concerned to ensure:
  - a. That a person is a 'fit and proper' person
  - b. That a person does not pose a threat to the public
  - c. That the public are safeguarded from dishonest persons
  - d. The safeguarding of children, young persons as well as vulnerable adults
5. The public do not normally attend licensing hearings for hackney carriage or private hire applications. The Regulatory Committee / Regulatory Sub-Committee however are required to take account of the public's human rights in reaching their decisions.
6. When submitting an application for a licence to drive a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle, applicants are required to declare all previous allegations and/or convictions they may have. This includes all formal cautions as well as providing details of all criminal matters of which they are currently being investigated or prosecuted for. This also extends to their driving record.
7. The information given will be treated in confidence and will only be taken into account in relation to the relevant application to assist the Council in determining whether the applicant is a 'fit and proper person' to hold a driver's licence for the purposes of sections 51 and 59 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, or whether the Council should exercise any of its powers under section 61 of the Act (i.e. suspension, revocation or refusal to renew a licence).
8. Applicants should be aware that the Council is empowered by law to check with the Disclosure & Barring Service (formerly the Criminal Records Bureau) for the existence and content of any criminal record and other intelligence held in their name. Information received from the DBS will be kept in strict confidence while the licensing process takes its course and will be retained no longer than is necessary and in any event will be destroyed in accordance with current data protection legislation after the application is determined or any appeal against such determination is decided.
9. The disclosure of a criminal record or other information relating to criminal matters will not necessarily debar an applicant from obtaining a driver's licence. Whether or not an applicant will be granted a licence will depend upon whether or not they can satisfy the Council that they are a fit and proper person to hold such a licence.
10. The Council may fail to be satisfied that an applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a driver's licence for any good reason. If adequate evidence that a person is a fit and proper person is not adduced or if there is good reason to question or doubt the evidence provided, then that could amount to good reason to refuse a licence. It is the requirement of the

applicant to prove that they are a fit and proper person except when reviewing a licence then the burden of proof reverts to the Council.

11. In considering evidence of an applicant's good character and fitness to hold a driver's licence, where previous allegations and/or convictions or other information relating to criminal matters is disclosed, the Council will consider the nature of the offence, when it was committed, the date of conviction, the applicant's age when the offence was committed and any other factors which might be relevant. Where an applicant has been convicted of a criminal offence, the Council cannot review the merits of the conviction [*ref. Nottingham City Council v. Mohammed Farooq (1998)*].
12. The Council has adopted the following guidelines relating to the relevance of convictions to which it refers in determining applications for drivers' licences.
13. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions)(Amendment) Order 2002, allows the licensing authority to take into account all convictions recorded against an applicant or an existing licence holder, whether spent or not. Therefore the Council will have regard to all relevant convictions, particularly where there is a long history of offending or a recent pattern of repeat offending.
14. In this policy the word "Conviction" is to be defined as including convictions, cautions, fixed penalties, warnings, reprimands and other relevant information. Where a complaint is considered by the Council and is upheld this will also be treated as a conviction for the purpose of this guidance.
15. These guidelines do not deal with every type of allegation / offence, but do not prevent the Council from taking into account offences not specifically addressed in the guidelines, or other conduct, which may be relevant to an individual's application. If an applicant has a conviction for an offence not covered by the guidelines, regard will be taken to the factors at paragraph 11 when deciding what action (if any) should be taken.
16. Offences described in the guidelines and similar offences, though differently entitled in any statutory provision, modification or re-enactment, will be taken into account in accordance with the guidelines.
17. A complaint relating to the conduct of a licensed driver will be investigated and where evidence is found that their behaviour falls below the standard that is expected, appropriate action will be taken by the relevant licensing officer or where applicable/necessary the matter will be referred to the Regulatory Committee / Regulatory Sub-Committee.
18. In some circumstances, matters originating from a complaint or enforcement action may result in prosecution proceedings as well as

being referred to the Regulatory Committee / Regulatory Sub-Committee for a decision.

19. This policy is not an attempt to define what a 'fit and proper person' is.
20. When determining an application or reviewing an existing licence the Council have the following options:
  - Approve the application
  - Refuse the application
  - Revoke the licence
  - Suspend the licence
  - Issue a warning
  - For existing drivers where their driving record continues to fall below any reasonable standard expected of a professional driver they will be required to successfully undertake the current approved taxi driving test, at their own expense
  - Take any further action as deemed reasonable
  - Take no further action
21. The purpose of suspending a licence will only be considered by Members of the Regulatory Committee / Regulatory Sub-Committee as a means of positive action for a transgression which is deemed to have fallen below the threshold for revoking the individual's licence.
22. By implementing a period of suspension the licence-holder will likely suffer a financial loss until their licence is re-instated. The relevance of an individual's financial circumstances cannot be considered when making a decision to suspend or revoke a licence. With this in mind, any suspension period considered by Halton Borough Council will be limited to a maximum of 14 days. Where Members of the Regulatory Committee / Regulatory Sub-Committee consider any period longer than 14 days, then it is likely the individual cannot be deemed a fit and proper person and revocation of the licence will be the relevant outcome.
23. Any applicant or existing licence-holder who is not satisfied with the Council's decision to grant, refuse, revoke or suspend a licence has a right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court within 21 days of the notice of refusal.
24. Any person applying for a new licence who has previously had a licence revoked by Halton Borough Council (or any other Authority responsible for the licensing of drivers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act and the Town Police Clauses Act 1847) will have their application referred to the Regulatory Committee / Regulatory Sub-Committee. The decision to revoke a licence is not taken lightly therefore any applicant wishing to regain a licence must provide evidence that their

circumstances have changed and that they can now be considered a “fit & proper person”.

## **Guidance on Types of Offences**

Where a period is given below, it should be taken to be a minimum in considering whether a licence should be granted or renewed in most cases. Passenger safety must be treated as the priority while enabling past offenders to sufficiently evidence that they have been successfully rehabilitated so that they might obtain or retain a licence.

### **Crimes resulting in death**

Where an applicant or license-holder has been convicted of a crime which resulted in the death of another person or was intended to cause the death or serious injury of another person they will not be licensed. This also applies to motoring offences.

### **Terrorism**

Terrorism means the use or threat of action where designed to influence the Government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

‘Action’ includes serious violence against a person, serious damage to property, endangering a person’s life, other than that of the person committing the action, creating a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or an act designed to seriously interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system, or the use of firearms or explosives.

This also includes any offence, act or omission linked to a terrorism offence. Applications with any offence(s)/conviction(s) or cautions relating to terrorism should be refused and any existing licence should be revoked.

### **Exploitation**

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime involving, related to, or has any connection with abuse, exploitation, use or treatment of another individual irrespective of whether the victim or victims were adults or children, they will not be licensed. This includes slavery, child sexual abuse, exploitation, grooming, psychological, emotional or financial abuse, but this is not an exhaustive list.

### **Offences involving violence against the person**

Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence of violence against the person, or connected with any offence of violence, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. This also extends to any conviction for offences of (or relating to) the harassment and/or stalking of an individual.

### **Possession of a weapon**

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of a weapon or any other weapon related offence, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

### **Sexual offences**

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence involving or connected with illegal sexual activity, a licence will not be granted.

In addition to the above, the licensing authority will not grant a licence to any applicant who is currently on the Sex Offenders Register or on any barred list.

### **Dishonesty**

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence where dishonesty is an element of the offence, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. This also applies to motoring offences.

Any dishonesty by an applicant or other person on the applicant's behalf which is discovered to have occurred in any part of any application process (e.g. failure to declare convictions, false names or addresses, falsified references) will result in a licence being refused, or if already granted, revoked and may result in prosecution.

### **Drugs**

Where an applicant has any conviction for, or related to, the supply of drugs, or possession with intent to supply or connected with possession with intent to supply, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of drugs, or related to the possession of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. In these circumstances, any applicant may also have to undergo drugs testing for a period at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs. This also applies to motoring offences.

## **Discrimination**

Where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

## **Motoring convictions**

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers are professional drivers charged with the responsibility of carrying the public. It is accepted that offences can be committed unintentionally, and a single occurrence of a minor traffic offence would not prohibit the granting of a licence. However, applicants with multiple motoring convictions may indicate that an applicant does not exhibit the behaviours of a safe road user and one that is suitable to drive professionally. Any motoring conviction while a licensed driver demonstrates that the licensee may not take their professional responsibilities seriously. However, it is accepted that offences can be committed unintentionally, and a single occurrence of a minor traffic offence may not necessitate the revocation of a taxi or private hire vehicle driver licence providing the authority considers that the licensee remains a fit and proper person to retain a licence.

## **MAJOR TRAFFIC OFFENCES**

### **Drink driving/driving under the influence of drugs**

Where an applicant has a conviction for drink driving or driving under the influence of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed. In the case of driving under the influence of drugs, any applicant may also have to undergo drugs testing at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.

A conviction for failing to provide a test for either alcohol or drug related driving will be treated as if the individual had been convicted of the offence of driving under the influence.

For the purposes of these guidelines the following motoring offences are classed as 'Major Traffic Offences and therefore a licence will not be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the conviction or completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed, whichever is the later.

AC10	Failing to stop after an accident
AC20	Failing to give particulars or to report an accident within 24 hours
AC30	Undefined accident offences
BA10	Driving while disqualified by order of Court



BA30	Attempting to drive while disqualified by order of Court
DD40	Dangerous driving
DR40	In charge of a vehicle while alcohol level above limit
DR50	In charge of a vehicle while unfit through drink
DR60	Failure to provide specimen for analysis in circumstances other than driving / attempting to drive
DR61	Failure to provide specimen for drug analysis in circumstances other than driving / attempting to drive
IN10	Using a vehicle uninsured against third party risks
LC20	Driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence
LC40	Driving a vehicle having failed to notify a disability
LC50	Driving after a licence has been revoked or refused on medical grounds
MS50	Motor racing on the highway
MS60	Offences not covered by other codes
MS80	Refusing to submit to an eyesight test
MS90	Failure to give information as to identity of driver, etc.
UT50	Aggravated taking of a vehicle

## INTERMEDIATE TRAFFIC OFFENCES

Any Intermediate Traffic Offence, which has attracted 4 or more penalty points will be treated as though it were a Major Traffic Offence. This is because the Court issuing the points, deemed the actual offence to be more severe than just merely reaching the legal threshold for the minimum amount of penalty points.

Where an applicant has a single Intermediate Traffic Offence within the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application, they will normally be expected to show a period of at least 6 months free from conviction before an application is considered.

For existing licence-holders where they hold no other driving convictions within a 2 year period prior to receiving an intermediate traffic offence **and** do not have a history of frequent motoring convictions then a written warning may be issued.

### Two or more Convictions

Where an applicant has 2 or more Intermediate Traffic Offences in the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application, the applicant will normally be expected to show a period of at least 12 months free from conviction before an application is considered.

If any conviction for an Intermediate Traffic Offence results in a disqualification, applicants should refer to the section of these guidelines entitled “disqualification”.

**For the purposes of these guidelines the following motoring offences are classed as ‘Intermediate Traffic Offences’:**

CU10	Using vehicle with defective brakes
CU20	Causing or likely to cause danger by reason of use of unsuitable vehicle or using a vehicle with parts or accessories (excluding brakes, steering or tyres) in a dangerous condition
CU30	Using a vehicle with defective tyres
CU40	Using a vehicle with defective steering
CU50	Causing or likely to cause danger by reason of load or passengers
CD10	Driving without due care and attention
CD20	Driving without reasonable consideration for other road users
CD30	Driving without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration of other road users
MS70	Driving with uncorrected defective eyesight

## MINOR TRAFFIC OFFENCES

Any Minor Traffic Offence which has attracted 4 or more penalty points will be treated as though it were an Intermediate Traffic Offence. This is because the Court issuing the points, deemed the actual offence to be more severe than just merely reaching the legal threshold for the minimum amount of penalty points.

Where an applicant has a single Minor Traffic Offence in the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application, the application will normally be granted with a letter of warning being placed on the file.

For existing licence-holders where they hold no other driving convictions within a 2 year period prior to receiving a minor traffic offence **and** do not have a history of frequent motoring convictions then a written warning may be issued.

### Two or more Convictions

Where an applicant has two or more Minor Traffic Offences in the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application an applicant will normally be expected to show a period of at least six months free from conviction before an application is considered.

For the purposes of these guidelines the following motoring offences are classed as 'Minor Traffic Offences':

MS10	Leaving a vehicle in a dangerous position
MS20	Unlawful pillion riding
MS30	Play street offences
MW10	Contravention of Special Road Regulations (excluding speed limits)
PC10	Undefined contravention of Pedestrian Crossing Regulations
PC20	Contravention of Pedestrian Crossing Regulations with moving vehicle
PC30	Contravention of Pedestrian Crossing Regulations with stationary vehicle
TS10	Failing to comply with traffic light signals
TS20	Failing to comply with double white lines
TS30	Failing to comply with a "Stop" sign
TS40	Failing to comply with direction of a constable or traffic warden
TS50	Failing to comply with traffic sign (excluding "Stop" sign, traffic lights or double white lines)
TS60	Failing to comply with school crossing patrol sign
TS70	Undefined failure to comply with a traffic direction sign
SP10	Exceeding goods vehicle speed limit
SP20	Exceeding speed limit for type of vehicle (excluding goods or passenger vehicles)
SP30	Exceeding statutory speed limit on a public road
SP40	Exceeding passenger vehicle speed limit
SP50	Exceeding speed limit on a motorway
SP60	Exceeding speed limit offence

### Information Regarding Offence Codes

Motoring conviction codes can change slightly if any of the offences were committed as follows:

- *Aiding, Abetting, Counselling or Procuring*  
Offences as coded above but with 0 changed to 2 (e.g. IN10 becomes IN12).

- *Causing or Permitting*  
Offences as coded above but with 0 changed to 4 (e.g. IN10 becomes IN14).
- *Inciting*  
Offences as coded above but with 0 changed to 6 (e.g. IN10 becomes IN16).

## **DISQUALIFICATION**

### **Totting Up**

TT99 offence code - Totting up. If the total of penalty points reaches 12 or more within 3 years the driver is liable to disqualification by the Court.

#### [Totting up with Disqualification](#)

An application will generally be refused unless the applicant can show a period of 5 years free from conviction has elapsed from the restoration of the DVLA licence.

Any licence-holder who gets disqualified under the totting up procedure will have their licence revoked as a primary requirement of holding a hackney/private hire driver's licence is to hold a DVLA issued licence.

#### [Totting up without Disqualification](#)

An applicant who has accrued sufficient points for disqualification, under totting up, to be considered by the Court, may argue exceptional hardship and not receive a disqualification from them. Under these circumstances the Court does not consider if a driver is a "fit and proper person" as per the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 but merely considers the drivers ability to hold a driving licence as issued by the DVLA.

In these circumstances the Council will treat the application as if a disqualification had been applied. This is because exceptional hardship cannot be taken into consideration by Local Authorities when considering hackney/private hire driver licence applications. The applicant has demonstrated that the standard of their driving is not of that what is expected by the general public to be deemed a professional driver.

Any licence-holder who holds 12 penalty points or more on their DVLA licence will be referred to the Regulatory Committee/Sub-Committee due to the fact that they still hold a DVLA licence.

## **PLYING FOR HIRE**

In the case of a licensed driver being found guilty by a court or by a Regulatory Committee/Sub-Committee (by way of a complaint) of an offence of plying for hire, a decision will normally be taken to revoke the licence.

## **BREACH OF LICENSING CONDITIONS / BY-LAWS**

Any serious or repeated breach of licensing conditions and/or by-laws by a licensed driver will be referred to the Regulatory Committee / Regulatory Sub-Committee.

## **RE-APPLICATION**

Applicants are advised that Council guidelines are that where an applicant has had an application refused or a licence revoked, the Regulatory Committee / Regulatory Sub-Committee would normally refuse any subsequent application made within 12 months of the date of the previous refusal or revocation unless there are substantial material changes in the applicant's circumstances.

Any person who has previously had a licence refused or revoked within the past 5 years must have any new application heard by the Regulatory Committee / Regulatory Sub-Committee in order to provide evidence that they are now a "fit and proper person" to hold such a licence.

## **OTHER OFFENCES**

Offences under the Town Police Clauses Acts and Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and Hackney Carriage Byelaws and Section 167 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

One of the main purposes of the licensing regime set out in the Town Police Clauses Acts and Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 ("the Acts") and Hackney Carriage Byelaws, is to ensure the protection of the public.

For this reason a serious view is taken of convictions for offences under the Acts (including illegally plying for hire and/or touting) when deciding whether an applicant is to be treated as a fit and proper person to hold a licence. In particular, an applicant will normally be refused a licence if he/she has been convicted of an offence under the Acts at any time during the 2 years preceding the application or has more than one conviction within the last 5 years preceding the date of the application.

## Proposed change to hackney carriage and private hire drivers (Single Status Drivers) licence conditions

Proposal	Purpose for changing	Arguments in favour of change	Arguments against change	Proportionality	Grandfather rights issues	Proposed Wording of condition
<p>To amend the current driver condition of reporting certain offences/issues to the licensing section.</p> <p><b>(para 4.6 of the report relates)</b></p>	<p>The Department for Transport (DFT) has provided guidance to require licence-holders to self-report specific matters. More clarity on who to report and how to report it have also been proposed.</p>	<p>There is a duty placed on each licensing authority to adopt the DFT's guidance unless there is good cause not to.</p>	<p>A single submission that any matter including motoring offences where a fixed penalty offer has been issued and accepted should not be reported to the licensing section.</p>	<p>There is no question of proportionality for this amendment. This proposal is to ensure a fairer judgement can be made in a timelier manner in line with the current policy.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p><b>Duty to report specific matters to the Licensing Manager</b></p> <p>Replace SSD condition 6 with the following -</p> <p><i>"The holder shall where possible, immediately disclose to the Council's Taxi Licensing Manager in writing (to include email) details of any of the following circumstances. Where it is not possible to do so immediately, notification any of the following <b>MUST</b> be received within 48 hours:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arrest and release (or charged) for any matter</li> <li>- Convictions by any Court</li> <li>- Road Traffic Offences whether the DVLA licence is endorsed or not</li> <li>- Cautions (of any kind including simple and conditional)</li> </ul>

Proposal	Mischief being addressed	Arguments in favour of change	Arguments against change	Proportionality	Grandfather rights issues	Proposed Wording of condition
						<p><b>Important:</b> Failure by a licence holder to disclose any of the above within 48 hours might be seen as behaviour that questions their honesty and therefore the suitability of the licence holder regardless of the outcome of the initial allegation.”</p>

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Corporate Services
<b>WARD(S):</b>	Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider an application for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

- (i) **That the request for 15% discretionary rate relief from Mersey Weaver District Scouts in respect of their premises at Unit 3, Ringway Road, Runcorn from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, be approved.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Under the amended provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council is able to grant up to 100% discretionary rate relief to any business ratepayer. This relief had previously only been available to organisations that were a registered charity, a community amateur sports club (CASC) or a not-for-profit organisation.
- 3.2 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 the Council became responsible for meeting the full cost of all mandatory and discretionary relief granted, as part of the Liverpool City Region 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme.
- 3.3 In most cases, only 15% discretionary top-up relief has been awarded for registered charities and CASC organisations. The organisations themselves then have to meet the remaining 5% of their business rates liability.
- 3.4 In instances where discretionary business rate relief is granted, the Council currently grants discretionary business rate relief to organisations for a three year period.



- 3.5 An application for 15% discretionary rate relief has been received as outlined below from Mersey Weaver District Scouts, in respect of their premises at 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Unit 3, Ringway Road, Runcorn.

**Mersey Weaver District Scouts**

**1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Unit 3, Ringway Road, Off Halton Road, Runcorn, WA7 1QU**

- 3.6 As a registered charity, Mersey Weaver District Scouts already receive 80% mandatory rate relief.
- 3.7 However, an application for 15% discretionary rate relief has now been received. The objectives of the charity as described on the charity commission website are to help young people learn and development life skills which they can use in their adulthood. They also offer opportunities to enjoy and adventure whilst learning these skills.
- 3.8 Mersey Weaver District Scouts also state their main objective is to prepare young people with skills for life and they encourage young people aged between 6 and 25 to have fun, adventure, develop skills, teamwork and leadership.
- 3.9 Currently, the Mersey Weaver District Scouts receives 80% mandatory relief totalling £3,276.80 per annum.
- 3.10 The additional cost to the Council of providing the 15% discretionary relief would be £614.40. If approved, the organisation themselves would be required to meet the remaining £204.80 of their rates liability.

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Board is required by the regulations to consider each application on its own merit. Any recommendations provided are given for guidance only, are consistent with Council policy and, wherever possible, previous decisions.

**5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Appendix presents the potential annual cost to the Council of granting discretionary rate relief.

**6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

**6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

Mersey Weaver District Scouts support young people in Halton.

**6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Mersey Weaver District Scouts skills to young people between 6 and 25 years of age in Halton.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**  
None

6.4 **A Safer Halton**  
None

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**  
None.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are no key risks associated with the proposed action.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The applicant offer their services to all sections of the community, without any prejudice.

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

9.1	Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
	Application form	Halton Suite, DCBL Stadium, Widnes	Louise Bate, Revenues Manager – Business Rates

**APPENDIX**

<b>Ratepayer</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Rates Liability 01/04/21- 31/03/22</b>	<b>Mandatory Rate Relief Awarded</b>	<b>Cost of Mandatory Rate Relief to HBC</b>	<b>Disc. Rate Relief Claimed</b>	<b>Cost of Disc. Rate Relief to HBC</b>
		£		£		£
Mersey Weaver District Scouts	1 <sup>st</sup> Floor, Unit 3 Ringway Road Off, Halton Road, Runcorn, WA7 1QU	4096.00	80%	3276.80	15%	614.40

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 16 September 2021

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Operational Director – Finance

**PORTFOLIO:** Corporate Services

**SUBJECT:** 2021/22 Budget Monitoring as at 30 June 2021

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report the Council's overall revenue net spending position as at 30 June 2021 together with a forecast outturn position.
- 1.2 To report on the financial impact of Covid-19 and to summarise Government funding made available to the Council to date.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That;**

- (i) **All spending continues to be limited to only absolutely essential items;**
- (ii) **Strategic Directors take urgent action to identify areas where spending could be reduced or suspended for the remainder of the current financial year;**
- (iii) **Council be requested to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 3.14.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

#### **Revenue Spending**

- 3.1 Appendix 1 presents a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 June 2021 and Appendix 2 provides detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms the outturn forecast for the year shows that net spend will be over the approved budget by £4.661m. This figure being based on current service demand and forecast of future costs and income levels.
- 3.2 The report excludes the majority of the forecast cost of the 2021 pay offer. In setting the 2021/22 budget, pay inflation of 1.5% was applied only to HBC grades 1-5. It is forecast the additional cost of the latest pay offer of 1.75% will be in the region of £0.730m, this cost will be met through the Council's contingency budget. Any increase in the pay offer above 1.75% will add further pressure to the forecast outturn position.

## Revenue - Operational Spending (Non Covid)

3.3 Operational net spending (excluding Covid) for the first three months of the year is £25.883m, higher than the approved budget to date by £0.261m. Based on current forecasts it is estimated net spend will be over the approved budget for the year by £4.661m as at 31 March 2022.

3.4 Within the overall budget forecast position for the quarter, the key budget variances are as follows;

(i) **Children and Families Department:-**

The projected outturn forecast is for the Department to overspend by £3.807m against a net budget of £24.924m.

Out of Borough Residential Care continues to be the main budget pressure for the Children and Families Department as the costs of residential care have continued to increase year on year. This budget was given additional budgetary growth of £0.682m for the current financial year to alleviate demand pressure, however residential care is currently £0.473m over spent at the end of Quarter 1, and forecasts for residential placements indicate an overspend of approximately £2.725m up to the end of the year. This does not include packages funded from the COVID budget, which are currently forecast at £1m for the full financial year.

The number of placements for residential care has increased over the past quarter from 65 to 68. The overall value of these packages over the past quarter has increased from £9.763m to £11.339m. Complex needs of young people going into care and increasing national demand is having a significant impact on cost of care packages.

Supplies and Services expenditure is £0.056m above budget profile at the end of Quarter 1. This overspend continues to be the result of high levels of expenditure against the Children in Care budget which includes many ongoing regular payments including children's respite and therapy, nursery fees and translation costs. Consultancy costs also contribute largely to the supplies and services overspend and are expected to be £0.212m over budget at the end of the financial year. The majority of these costs relate to the ongoing successful consultancy work currently undertaken in relation to in-house fostering.

The Early Years net divisional expenditure is £0.082m over budget profile at the end of the first quarter with the full year outturn position expected to be £0.377m over budget. This is due to the underachievement of parental income due to income targets based upon the Early Years provision having high occupancy levels.

(ii) **Adult Social Care Department:-**

The projected outturn forecast is for the Department to overspend by £1.146m against a net budget of £45.458m.

The main in-year budget pressures for the department are within the Care Homes Division and community care.

The 2021/22 forecast outturn position for the Care Homes Division is £0.224m over budget. The main budget pressure for the division is in relation to staffing. Net staffing costs for the four care homes to date are currently £0.036m above the approved budget, the forecast for the remainder of the year estimates staffing costs to be in the region of £0.140m above budget. Forecasts are based on the current staffing structure. It does not include the anticipated additional costs for St Luke's and St Patrick's staffing, once they transfer to Council terms and conditions.

The 2021/22 forecast outturn position for the community care budget is for net spend to be £0.922m over the approved annual budget of £18.199m. The main budget pressure being linked to Direct Payments where there have been a number of new and revised cost packages agreed over the first three months of the year at a cost of £0.231m. Supported living & domiciliary care packages have increased by 6% since the start of the financial year and residential care users have increased by 11%.

Covid funding of hospital discharge programmes over the past year has perhaps masked the financial impact of increased care packages falling on the Council. Community care remains a very volatile budget due to changes in demand and unit costs, the impact of which will be reviewed on a regular basis throughout the year.

(iii) **Community and Environment:-**

The projected outturn forecast is for the Department to overspend by £0.474m against a net budget of £23.616m.

The main pressure areas for the department continue to be around budgeted income targets, including schools meals, sales and fees & charges income.

It is extremely challenging to estimate the school meals income which is likely to be received during the rest of the year as the service has been subject to considerable disruption since resuming fully in late 2020. Many schools have had to send large numbers of children home to self-isolate which has had an impact on sales of school meals. Sales income will also be affected by the economic downturn due to a likely increase in free school meals numbers and possible reductions in the amount of household income available for discretionary spending.

Fees & charges income is currently forecast to be £0.950m under the income target by the end of the year. This relates to historic shortfalls in income in the leisure centres and the Stadium, offset

by an increase in income for cemeteries, the crematorium and green waste licences.

### Revenue – COVID - 19 Net Spending

- 3.5 Included within the tables at Appendix 1 and 2 is the forecast cost of Covid for the year. It is currently forecast the gross cost and loss of income over the year will be £12.544m. In meeting this cost, £7.332m will come from specific grants, £1.369m from the balance of 2020/21 general Covid grant and £4.376m general grant made available for 2021/22.
- 3.6 The balance of available Covid funding after all pressures have been met is £0.533m. A marginal position, with current costs only having to increase by a further 4% for the balance to be fully consumed. The position is summarised in the below table

### Forecast Covid Cost and Funding 2021/22

	£'000
Gross Costs	10.219
Loss of Income	2.325
<b>Total Cost and Loss of Income</b>	<b>12.544</b>
<i>Funded by:</i>	
Specific Grants	7.332
Balance of Funding 2020/21	1.369
General Covid Funding 2021/22	4.376
<b>Total Available Funding</b>	<b>13.077</b>
<b>Balance of Funding</b>	<b>0.533</b>

- 3.7 It should be noted that the financial information included in this report includes a high number of assumptions on costs and loss of income for the year. Whilst the vast majority of Covid restrictions were lifted by Government in July Finance Officers have continued to take a prudent view of future costs, some of which could continue through to the end of the year and beyond. The Council continue to provide monthly data to MHCLG on costs and loss of income as a result of the pandemic.
- 3.8 Examples of the costs the Council continue to incur and which are funded from General Covid grant include (with forecasts for the year):
- Loss of income for leisure and recreation services - £0.650m
  - Waste costs through maintained levels of working and entertaining from home - £0.300m
  - Increased demand and costs for supported housing - £0.240m
  - Staffing and agency demand within adult social care and care homes - £0.750m
  - Loss of income from external sources for community care placements - £1.400m
  - Demand and costs for children's residential care placements - £1.000m

- 3.9 Full advantage will be made of ringfenced Covid grants to ensure the available funding is fully utilised.

### **Collection Fund**

- 3.10 The in-year collection rate for council tax and business rates shows an improvement on the position at this time a year ago. This is not unexpected given the number of payment deferrals agreed to over the initial months of the pandemic. Overall it is expected that both council tax and business rates income over the year will be in line with the figure of £105.897m used in setting the 2021/22 net budget.
- 3.11 Council tax collection for the 1st quarter of the year is 27.89%, up 0.91% on this point last year and slightly down by 0.09% from that reported in 2019/20. Cash collection over the past quarter is £20.055m, this includes £0.790m collected in relation to previous year debts.
- 3.12 Business rates collection for the year to 30 June 2021 is 28.52%, up 1.54% on this point last year but down by 2.19% from that reported for the same period in 2019/20. Cash collected over the past quarter is £15.395m.

### **Review of Reserves**

- 3.13 As at 31 March 2021 the Council's General Reserve was £6.342m. This is considered to be a prudent level in order to ensure the Council remains in a financially sustainable position moving forward. Earmarked reserves of £131.958m were held by the Council on 31 March 2021, these reserves having been set aside for specific purposes. Generally they are not available for general use but regular reviews will identify where funds are no longer required.

### **Capital Spending**

- 3.14 The Capital Programme has been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles and funding as schemes have developed and these are reflected in the Capital Programme presented in Appendix 3. The schemes which have been revised within the programme are as follows;
- i. Grants – Disabled Facilities
  - ii. Stair Lifts
  - iii. Joint Funding RSL Adaptations
  - iv. ALD Bungalows
  - v. Millbrow Care Home
  - vi. Madeline McKenna
  - vii. St Lukes
  - viii. St Patricks
  - ix. Orchard House
  - x. Kingsway Learning Centre Equipment



- xi. Astmoor Regeneration
- xii. Runcorn Town Centre Fund
- xiii. Bridge and Highway Maintenance
- xiv. Silver Jubilee Bridge - Major Maintenance Scheme

3.15 Capital spending at 30 June 2021 totalled £2.990m, which is 97% of the planned spending of £3.071m at this stage. This represents 8% of the total Capital Programme of £35.118m (which assumes a 20% slippage between years).

#### **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

4.1 As at 30 June 2021 the forecast net spend outturn (including the net impact of Covid) will be £4.661m over the available budget.

4.2 To address day to day operational budget pressures Departments should ensure that all spending continues to be restricted and tightly controlled throughout the year, to ensure that the forecast outturn overspend is minimised as far as possible

4.3 Whilst forecast Covid costs are currently fully funded the position is marginal, therefore it remains imperative that lobbying of the Government continues in order for them to support Local Government in providing funding for the Covid pandemic.

#### **5.0 POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 There are no direct implications, however, the revenue budget and capital programme support the delivery and achievement of all the Council's priorities.

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are a number of financial risks within the budget. However, the Council has internal controls and processes in place to ensure that spending remains in line with budget.

7.2 In preparing the 2021/22 budget, a register of significant financial risks was prepared which has been reviewed and updated as at 30 June 2021.

#### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None.

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1072**

9.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.



## Summary of Revenue Spending to 30 June 2021

## APPENDIX 1

Directorate / Department	Annual Budget £'000	Budget To Date £'000	Actual To Date £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn (Overspend)
Community & Environment	24,413	4,536	4,520	16	(474)
Economy, Enterprise & Property	1,856	809	779	30	(52)
Finance	4,224	618	508	110	120
ICT & Support Services	-822	206	172	34	149
Legal & Democratic Services	469	171	145	26	103
Planning & Transportation	8,242	911	920	(9)	67
Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency	195	174	131	43	85
<b>Enterprise, Community &amp; Resources</b>	<b>38,577</b>	<b>7,425</b>	<b>7,175</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>(2)</b>
Adult Social Care (inc Community Care)	45,833	9,794	9,787	7	(1,146)
Children & Families	24,925	5,078	5,748	(670)	(3,807)
Complex Care Pool	4,359	299	299	0	0
Education, Inclusion & Provision	8,294	4,805	4,827	(22)	(96)
Public Health & Public Protection	716	421	374	47	191
<b>People</b>	<b>84,127</b>	<b>20,397</b>	<b>21,035</b>	<b>(638)</b>	<b>(4,858)</b>
Corporate & Democracy	-9,989	-2,250	-2,377	127	199
<b>Operational Net Spend</b>	<b>112,715</b>	<b>25,572</b>	<b>25,833</b>	<b>(261)</b>	<b>(4,661)</b>
Covid-19 Additional Costs	0	0	2,941	(2,941)	(10,219)
Covid-19 Shortfall in Budgeted Income Targets	-1,269	-952	0	(952)	(2,325)
Less: Government Non-Specific Grant	0	0	-1,735	1,735	5,212
Less: Specific Government Grants	0	0	-2,158	2,158	7,332
<b>Covid Net Spend</b>	<b>-1,269</b>	<b>-952</b>	<b>-952</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Net Spend (Including Covid-19)</b>	<b>111,446</b>	<b>24,620</b>	<b>24,881</b>	<b>(261)</b>	<b>(4,661)</b>



## Community &amp; Environment Department

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	14,976	3,444	3,234	210	650
Premises	2,279	877	827	50	320
Supplies & Services	1,394	336	317	19	(86)
Book Fund	105	72	72	0	(12)
Hired Services	537	44	43	1	(88)
Food Provisions	459	138	141	(4)	257
School Meals Food	1,835	200	212	(12)	(50)
Transport	115	25	25	0	32
Other Agency Costs	106	29	29	0	(10)
Waste Disposal Contract	6,312	0	0	0	200
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	67	-34	-34	0	12
Grant to Norton Priory	172	87	87	0	(1)
Rolling Projects	0	0	32	(32)	(32)
Capital Financing	0	0	0	0	7
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>28,357</b>	<b>5,217</b>	<b>4,984</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>1,199</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Sales Income	-1,294	-324	-146	(178)	(621)
School Meals Sales	-2,361	-620	-285	(335)	(336)
Fees & Charges Income	-4,474	-1,393	-1,360	(33)	(950)
Rents Income	-201	-44	-44	0	(16)
Government Grant Income	-31	-31	-412	381	412
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-597	-30	-30	0	49
Schools SLA	-2,183	0	0	0	(20)
Internal Fees Income	-333	-63	-18	(45)	(180)
School Meals Other Income	-251	-3	-3	0	(66)
Catering Fees	-28	-7	0	(7)	(23)
Capital Salaries	-173	0	0	0	1
Transfers from Reserves	-80	-1	-1	0	23
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-12,006</b>	<b>-2,515</b>	<b>-2,298</b>	<b>(217)</b>	<b>(1,728)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>16,351</b>	<b>2,701</b>	<b>2,686</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>(529)</b>

## Community &amp; Environment Department (continued)

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Covid Costs</b>					
Community Development	0	0	0	0	0
Community Safety	0	0	0	0	0
Leisure & Recreation	0	0	1	(1)	(16)
Open Spaces	0	0	22	(22)	(22)
Schools Catering	0	0	0	0	0
Waste & Environmental Improvement	0	0	0	0	(300)
Covid Local Support	0	0	120	(120)	(610)
<b>Covid Loss of Income</b>					
Commercial Catering	-25	-14	0	(14)	(25)
Community Development	-25	-14	0	(14)	(25)
Leisure & Recreation	-300	-177	0	(177)	(300)
Open Spaces	-350	-204	0	(204)	(350)
Schools Catering	-70	-70	0	(70)	(70)
Stadium	-27	-17	0	(17)	(27)
Waste & Environmental Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Government Grant Income</b>					
General Covid Funding	0	0	-519	519	1,135
Covid Local Support Grant	0	0	-120	120	610
<b>Net Covid Expenditure</b>	<b>-797</b>	<b>-496</b>	<b>-496</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	1,589	397	397	0	0
Transport Support	2,409	558	558	0	56
Central Support	4,419	1,105	1,105	0	0
Asset Rental Support	146	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-502	-225	-225	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>8,062</b>	<b>1,835</b>	<b>1,834</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>23,616</b>	<b>4,040</b>	<b>4,024</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>(474)</b>

## Economy, Enterprise &amp; Property Department

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	5,092	1,157	1,166	(9)	(43)
Repairs & Maintenance	1,926	356	353	3	(1)
Premises	81	77	77	0	0
Energy & Water Costs	714	107	106	1	4
NNDR	547	547	535	12	12
Rents	165	64	17	47	47
Economic Regeneration Activities	37	0	0	0	0
Security	476	85	85	0	0
Supplies & Services	329	110	112	(2)	(7)
Supplies & Services - Grant/External Funded	1,393	124	124	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisation	97	23	23	0	0
Covid-19 Discretionary Business Support Grants	1,518	1,518	1,518	0	0
Capital Financing	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to Reserves	193	46	46	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>12,568</b>	<b>4,214</b>	<b>4,162</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-1,195	-244	-244	0	(1)
Rent - Commercial Properties	-837	-227	-209	(18)	(52)
Rent - Investment Properties	-45	-12	-12	0	0
Rent - Markets	-751	-149	-145	(4)	(18)
Government Grant Income	-2,131	-1,456	-1,456	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Income	-1,475	-269	-269	0	7
Schools SLA Income	-420	-6	-6	0	0
Recharges to Capital	-280	-28	-28	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-1,006	-370	-370	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-8,140</b>	<b>-2,761</b>	<b>-2,739</b>	<b>(22)</b>	<b>(64)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>4,428</b>	<b>1,453</b>	<b>1,423</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>(52)</b>
<b>Covid Costs</b>					
Staffing	0	0	2	(2)	(3)
Repairs & Maintenance	0	0	4	(4)	(19)
Reopening High Street Safely	0	0	35	(35)	(114)
<b>Covid Loss of Income</b>					
Rent - Markets	-50	-50	0	(50)	(50)
<b>Government Grant Income</b>					
Covid Grant - Reopening High Street Safely	0	0	-35	35	114
Covid Grant Funding	0	0	-56	56	72
<b>Net Covid Expenditure</b>	<b>-50</b>	<b>-50</b>	<b>-50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	1,661	415	415	0	0
Transport Support	29	7	7	0	0
Central Support	2,136	534	534	0	0
Asset Rental Support	4	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-6,402	-1,600	-1,600	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-2,572</b>	<b>-644</b>	<b>-644</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>1,806</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>(52)</b>



## Finance Department

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	5,641	1,347	1,362	(15)	(59)
Supplies & Services	338	203	194	9	67
Insurances	1,081	520	514	6	23
Concessionary Travel	2,108	0	0	0	398
LCR Levy	2,241	2,241	2,241	0	0
Rent Allowances	35,500	6,923	6,923	0	0
Non HRA Rebates	70	18	18	0	0
Discretionary Housing Payments	528	85	85	0	0
Discretionary Social Fund	106	59	59	0	0
Bad Debt Provision	0	0	0	0	(89)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>47,613</b>	<b>11,396</b>	<b>11,396</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>340</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-254	-81	-77	(4)	(16)
SLA to Schools	-269	0	0	0	(3)
Business Rates Administration Grant	-154	0	0	0	0
Hsg Ben Administration Grant	-495	-124	-124	0	0
Rent Allowances	-35,500	-6,829	-6,719	(110)	(439)
New Burdens Grant	-59	-59	-256	197	197
Council Tax Admin Grant	-204	-204	-216	12	12
Non HRA Rent Rebates	-70	-33	-33	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grants	-90	-58	-63	5	18
Liability Orders	-406	-235	-235	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-46	-42	-42	0	0
Discretionary Housing Payments Grant	-528	-146	-146	0	0
Dedicated School Grant	-106	0	0	0	0
Universal Credits	-6	-6	-6	0	0
VEP Grant	0	0	-10	10	9
CCG McMillan Reimbursement	-80	0	0	0	2
LCR Reimbursement	-2,241	-2,241	-2,241	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-40,508</b>	<b>-10,058</b>	<b>-10,168</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>(220)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>7,105</b>	<b>1,338</b>	<b>1,228</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>Covid Costs</b>					
Rent Allowance	0	0	27	(27)	(242)
Covid Isolation Grant	0	0	33	(33)	(256)
Supplies & Services	0	0	4	(4)	(4)
<b>Covid Loss of Income</b>					
Reimbursements & Other Grants	-3	0	0	0	(3)
<b>Government Grant Income</b>					
Covid Isolation Grant	0	0	-33	33	256
Government Grant Income	0	0	-31	31	249
<b>Net Covid Expenditure</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	240	60	60	0	0
Central Support	2,316	579	579	0	0
Recharge Income	-5,437	-1,359	-1,359	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-2,881</b>	<b>-720</b>	<b>-720</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>4,221</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>120</b>

## ICT &amp; Support Services Department

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	6,873	1,779	1,797	(18)	(73)
Supplies & Services	976	197	150	47	187
Computer Repairs & Software	1,167	931	940	(9)	(37)
Communications Costs	17	8	9	(1)	(5)
Other Premises	65	51	53	(2)	(26)
Capital Financing	78	0	0	0	18
Transport Expenditure	3	0	0	0	0
Transfers to Reserves	15	0	0	0	15
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>9,194</b>	<b>2,966</b>	<b>2,949</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-612	-117	-128	11	45
SLA to Schools	-554	-56	-62	6	25
Transfer from Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-1,166</b>	<b>-173</b>	<b>-190</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>8,028</b>	<b>2,793</b>	<b>2,759</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Covid Costs</b>					
Supplies & Services	0	0	11	(11)	(11)
Capital Costs	0	0	7	(7)	(7)
<b>Government Grant Income</b>					
General Covid Funding	0	0	-18	18	18
<b>Net Covid Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	362	90	90	0	0
Transport Support	20	5	5	0	0
Central Support	1,019	254	254	0	0
Asset Rental Support	1,494	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-11,745	-2,936	-2,936	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-8,850</b>	<b>-2,587</b>	<b>-2,587</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>-822</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>149</b>

## Legal &amp; Democratic Services Department

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	1,796	505	505	0	(2)
Transport	8	6	6	0	2
Supplies & Services	265	46	26	20	83
Civic Catering & Functions	44	5	0	5	20
Legal Expenses	214	47	47	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,327</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Land Charges	-82	-19	-18	(1)	(3)
License Income	-258	-48	-49	1	2
School SLA's	-84	0	0	0	(6)
Fees & Charges Income	-63	-28	-29	1	2
Government Grants	0	0	0	0	5
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-487</b>	<b>-95</b>	<b>-96</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Covid Costs</b>					
Employees	0	0	14	(14)	(18)
Legal Expenses	0	0	10	(10)	(20)
Elections Covid Grant	0	0	17	(17)	(36)
<b>Government Grant Income</b>					
General Covid Funding	0	0	-24	24	38
Elections Covid Grant	0	0	-17	17	36
<b>Net Covid Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	55	14	14	0	0
Central Support	321	80	80	0	0
Recharge Income	-1,747	-437	-437	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-1,371</b>	<b>-343</b>	<b>-343</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>103</b>

## Planning & Transportation Department

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	4,743	1,086	1,068	18	485
Efficiency Savings	-100	0	0	0	0
Premises	161	71	72	(1)	(1)
Hired & Contracted Services	175	44	127	(83)	(341)
Supplies & Services	174	133	149	(16)	(92)
Street Lighting	1,653	175	105	70	309
Highways Maintenance	2,847	244	225	19	(333)
Fleet Transport	1,361	307	292	15	40
Bus Support - Halton Hopper Tickets	199	10	10	0	0
Bus Support	560	110	100	10	45
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	61	30	30	0	0
NRA Levy	68	68	68	0	0
LCR Levy	882	220	220	0	0
Contribution to Reserves	440	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>13,224</b>	<b>2,498</b>	<b>2,466</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Sales & Rents Income	-91	-23	-2	(21)	(28)
Planning Fees	-552	-198	-234	36	89
Building Control Fees	-219	-86	-86	0	(16)
Other Fees & Charges	-898	-252	-200	(52)	(131)
Grants & Reimbursements	-181	-81	-81	0	0
Government Grant Income	-61	-15	-6	(9)	0
Halton Hopper Income	-199	0	-2	2	0
School SLA's	-45	0	0	0	(4)
Recharge to Capital	-317	0	0	0	(77)
LCR Levy Reimbursement	-882	-220	-220	0	0
Contribution from Reserves	-412	-118	-142	24	24
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-3,857</b>	<b>-993</b>	<b>-973</b>	<b>(20)</b>	<b>(143)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>9,367</b>	<b>1,505</b>	<b>1,493</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>(31)</b>
<b>Covid Costs</b>					
PPE & Equipment	0	0	5	(5)	(5)
Staffing	0	0	2	(2)	(2)
Emergency Active Travel Fund Grant Expenditure	0	0	0	0	(306)
Additional Home to School Transport	0	0	6	(6)	(6)
Covid Bus Support Grant	0	0	19	(19)	(19)
<b>Covid Loss of Income</b>					0
Fees & Charges	-13	-13	0	(13)	(13)
<b>Government Grant Income</b>					
Covid Bus Support Grant	0	0	-19	19	19
Emergency Active Travel Fund Grant	0	0	0	0	306
Additional Home to School Transport Grant	0	0	-6	6	6
Government Grant Income	0	0	-20	20	20
<b>Net Covid Expenditure</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Recharges	516	129	129	0	0
Transport Recharges	707	177	174	3	0
Asset Charges	1,250	0	0	0	0
Central Recharges	1,560	390	390	0	0
Transport Recharge Income	-4,328	-1,082	-1,058	(24)	98
Central Recharge Income	-830	-208	-208	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-1,125</b>	<b>-594</b>	<b>-573</b>	<b>(21)</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>8,229</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>67</b>

## Policy, People, Performance &amp; Efficiency Department

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	2,068	492	464	28	111
Employee Training	126	39	34	5	18
Supplies & Services	139	56	58	(2)	(11)
Apprenticeship Levy	300	75	73	2	8
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,633</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-104	-21	-29	8	24
Reimbursement and Other Grants	0	0	-2	2	2
School SLAs	-464	0	0	0	(67)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-568</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>(41)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>2,065</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Covid Costs</b>					
Employees	0	0	0	0	24
<b>Government Grant Income</b>					
Government Grant Income	0	0	0	0	(24)
<b>Net Covid Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	68	17	17	0	0
Central Support	917	229	229	0	0
Recharge Income	-2,855	-713	-713	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-1,870</b>	<b>-467</b>	<b>-467</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>85</b>

### Adult Social Care Department (incl Care Homes and Community Care)

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	14,018	3,231	3,195	36	90
Premises	269	104	96	8	0
Supplies & Services	456	115	103	12	0
Aids & Adaptations	113	28	28	0	0
Transport	187	35	32	3	0
Food Provision	183	8	4	4	0
Agency	595	131	134	(3)	(10)
Supported Accommodation and Services	1,456	281	281	0	0
Emergency Duty Team	103	0	0	0	0
Contacts & SLAs	546	248	247	1	(20)
Capital Financing	43	21	21	0	0
Transfer To Reserves	353	0	0	0	0
Housing Solutions Grant Funded Schemes				0	
LCR Immigration Programme	250	9	10	(1)	0
Homelessness Prevention	345	5	5	0	0
Rough Sleepers Initiative	174	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>19,091</b>	<b>4,216</b>	<b>4,156</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-630	-138	-136	(2)	(10)
Sales & Rents Income	-317	-118	-111	(7)	(20)
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-959	-139	-126	(13)	(30)
Housing Strategy Grant Funded Schemes	-769	-342	-344	2	0
Capital Salaries	-111	-28	-30	2	0
Government Grant Income	-87	-22	-22	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-2,873</b>	<b>-787</b>	<b>-769</b>	<b>(18)</b>	<b>(60)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure Excluding Homes and Community Care</b>	<b>16,218</b>	<b>3,429</b>	<b>3,387</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0</b>
Care Homes Net Expenditure	6,363	1,526	1,584	(58)	(224)
Community Care Expenditure	18,199	3,576	3,812	(236)	(922)
<b>Net Operational Expenditure Including Homes and Community Care</b>	<b>40,780</b>	<b>8,531</b>	<b>8,783</b>	<b>(252)</b>	<b>(1,146)</b>

## Adult Social Care (inc Care Homes and Community Care) continued

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Covid Costs</b>					
Employees	0	0	356	(356)	(757)
Premises	0	0	9	(9)	(38)
Transport	0	0	8	(8)	(18)
Supplies (Including PPE)	0	0	73	(73)	(125)
Contracts	0	0	176	(176)	(225)
Infection Control	0	0	360	(360)	(360)
Rapid Test	0	0	241	(241)	(241)
Hospital Discharge Programme	0	0	241	(241)	(401)
<b>Covid Loss of Income</b>					
Community Care Income	-339	-339	0	(339)	(1,366)
Community Services Transport	-12	-12	0	(12)	(18)
Community Services Trading	-11	-11	0	(11)	(25)
Community Services Placements	-13	-13	0	(13)	(22)
<b>Government Grant Income</b>					
Infection Control Grant	0	0	-360	360	360
Rapid Test Funding	0	0	-241	241	241
CCG Hospital Discharge Programme	0	0	-241	241	401
Covid Grant Funding	0	0	-997	997	2,594
<b>Net Covid Expenditure</b>	<b>-375</b>	<b>-375</b>	<b>-375</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	402	101	101	0	0
Transport Support	599	150	157	(7)	0
Central Support	4,161	1,040	777	263	0
Asset Rental Support	13	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-122	-28	-31	3	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>5,053</b>	<b>1,263</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>45,458</b>	<b>9,419</b>	<b>9,412</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>(1,146)</b>

**Care Homes Division**

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
<b><u>Madeline McKenna</u></b>					
Employees	482	100	126	(26)	(104)
Other Premises	60	11	10	1	4
Supplies & Services	12	1	2	(1)	(2)
Food	30	8	8	0	0
<b>Total Madeline McKenna Expenditure</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>(26)</b>	<b>(102)</b>
<b><u>Millbrow</u></b>					
Employees	1,568	392	425	(33)	(131)
Other Premises	72	4	13	(9)	(36)
Supplies & Services	45	15	15	0	(1)
Food	61	13	13	0	0
<b>Total Millbrow Expenditure</b>	<b>1,746</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>(42)</b>	<b>(168)</b>
<b><u>St Luke's</u></b>					
Employees	2,133	524	548	(24)	(94)
Other Premises	83	2	9	(7)	(26)
Supplies & Services	40	9	9	0	(1)
Food	100	19	22	(3)	(12)
<b>Total St Luke's Expenditure</b>	<b>2,356</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>(34)</b>	<b>(133)</b>
<b><u>St Patrick's</u></b>					
Employees	1,463	383	336	47	189
Other Premises	82	17	22	(5)	(20)
Supplies & Services	32	7	8	(1)	(3)
Food	100	21	18	3	13
<b>Total St Patrick's Expenditure</b>	<b>1,677</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>6,363</b>	<b>1,526</b>	<b>1,584</b>	<b>(58)</b>	<b>(224)</b>



**COMMUNITY CARE BUDGET**

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Residential & Nursing	12,417	1,432	1,382	50	191
Domiciliary Care & Supported Living	8,822	1,056	1,194	(138)	(564)
Direct Payments	9,678	2,755	3,176	(421)	(1,730)
Day Care	381	77	73	4	14
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>31,298</b>	<b>5,320</b>	<b>5,825</b>	<b>(505)</b>	<b>(2,090)</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Residential and Nursing Income	-8,934	-1,057	-1,260	203	894
Domiciliary Income	-1,475	-254	-280	26	95
Direct Payment Income	-721	-105	-145	40	179
ILF Income	-656	0	0	0	0
Adult Social Care Grant	-1,200	-300	-300	0	0
Income from other CCG's	-113	-28	-28	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-13,099</b>	<b>-1,744</b>	<b>-2,013</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>1,168</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>18,199</b>	<b>3,576</b>	<b>3,812</b>	<b>(236)</b>	<b>(922)</b>

## Children &amp; Families Department

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	9,505	2,264	2,305	(41)	(187)
Premises	270	91	78	13	45
Supplies & Services	757	149	205	(56)	(395)
Transport	113	28	21	7	21
Direct Payments/Individual Budgets	904	240	236	4	11
Commissioned Services	224	56	30	26	54
Out of Borough Residential Placements	7,652	1,146	1,619	(473)	(2,725)
Out of Borough Adoption	7	2	0	2	7
Out of Borough Fostering	2,375	405	405	0	1
In House Adoption	357	36	32	4	8
Special Guardianship	1,756	425	422	3	16
In House Foster Carer Placements	2,347	613	658	(45)	(156)
Care Leavers	292	48	76	(28)	(73)
Family Support	53	19	18	1	0
Contracted Services	3	1	1	0	0
Early Years	130	35	117	(82)	(377)
Emergency Duty Team	116	0	0	0	0
Youth Offending Service	251	0	0	0	4
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>27,112</b>	<b>5,558</b>	<b>6,223</b>	<b>(665)</b>	<b>(3,747)</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-28	-3	-2	(1)	(7)
Sales Income	-4	-1	0	(1)	(2)
Rents	-41	0	0	0	1
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-538	-27	-24	(3)	(53)
Transfer from Reserves	-67	-67	-67	0	0
Dedicated School Grant	-50	0	0	0	0
Government Grant Income	-4,119	-1,047	-1,047	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-4,847</b>	<b>-1,145</b>	<b>-1,140</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(61)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>22,265</b>	<b>4,413</b>	<b>5,083</b>	<b>(670)</b>	<b>(3,807)</b>
<b>Covid Costs</b>					
Employees	0	0	125	(125)	(244)
Supplies & Services	0	0	3	(3)	(9)
Transport	0	0	0	0	(1)
Commissioned Services	0	0	8	(8)	(44)
Out of Borough Residential Placements	0	0	164	(164)	(1,000)
In House Foster Carer Placements	0	0	1	(1)	(1)
Care Leavers	0	0	2	(2)	(9)
Family Support	0	0	2	(2)	(3)
PPE	0	0	0	0	(2)
<b>Covid Loss of Income</b>					
Nursery Parental Income	-1	0	0	0	(1)
<b>Government Grant Income</b>					
Government Grant Income	0	0	-305	305	1,314
<b>Net Covid Expenditure</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	139	35	35	0	0
Transport Support	19	5	5	0	0
Central Support	2,626	656	656	0	0
Recharge Income	-124	-31	-31	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>2,660</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>24,924</b>	<b>5,078</b>	<b>5,748</b>	<b>(670)</b>	<b>(3,807)</b>

## Complex Care Pool

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Intermediate Care Services	6,478	1,322	1,072	250	1,047
Joint Equipment Store	783	0	0	0	0
Oakmeadow	1,125	269	289	(20)	(98)
Intermediate Care Beds	607	152	152	0	0
Sub-Acute Unit	1,990	0	0	0	0
Inglenook	125	21	4	17	92
CCG Contracts & SLA's	3,119	49	49	0	0
Carers Centre	365	91	91	0	0
Red Cross Contract	65	16	16	0	0
Carers Breaks	412	197	165	32	129
Intermediate Care Development Fund	1,205	0	0	0	0
Residential and Nursing	1,014	253	253	0	0
Domiciliary Care and Supported Living	2,401	582	584	(2)	(8)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>19,689</b>	<b>2,952</b>	<b>2,675</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>1,162</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Better Care Fund	-11,468	-1,650	-1,650	0	0
CCG Contribution to Pool	-3,196	-850	-850	0	0
Oakmeadow Income	-612	-153	-152	(1)	(4)
Other Income	-54	0	0	0	(54)
Contribution to Pool Reserve	0	0	276	(276)	(1,104)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-15,330</b>	<b>-2,653</b>	<b>-2,376</b>	<b>(277)</b>	<b>(1,162)</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>4,359</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## Education, Inclusion &amp; Provision Department

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
<b>Core Funded</b>					
Employees	3,105	829	815	14	61
Premises	3	1	1	0	0
Supplies & Services	825	284	262	22	98
Transport	6	1	0	1	1
Schools Transport	1,323	331	390	(59)	(256)
Commissioned Services	1,653	449	449	0	0
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	35	10	10	0	0
Capital Financing	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Grant Funded</b>					
Employees	3,401	971	971	0	0
Premises	24	0	0	0	0
Supplies & Services	374	66	66	0	0
Transport	1	0	0	0	0
Independent School Fees	5,422	1,558	1,558	0	0
Inter Authority Special Needs	383	0	0	0	0
Pupil Premium Grant	191	5	5	0	0
Nursery Education Payments	7,527	1,674	1,674	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>24,274</b>	<b>6,179</b>	<b>6,201</b>	<b>(22)</b>	<b>(96)</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges Income	-91	-23	-23	0	0
Government Grant	-17,356	-1,360	-1,360	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-489	-347	-347	0	0
Schools SLA Income	-350	-87	-87	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-211	-211	-211	0	0
Inter Authority Income	-55	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-18,552</b>	<b>-2,028</b>	<b>-2,028</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>5,722</b>	<b>4,151</b>	<b>4,173</b>	<b>(22)</b>	<b>(96)</b>
<b>Covid Costs</b>					
Emergency Childcare Payments	0	0	5	(5)	(20)
Schools Transport Contract Costs	0	0	3	(3)	(7)
<b>Government Grant Income</b>					
Government Grant Income	0	0	-8	8	27
<b>Net Covid Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	128	32	32	0	0
Transport Support	440	125	125	0	0
Central Support	1,987	497	497	0	0
Asset Rental Support	17	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>2,572</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>8,294</b>	<b>4,805</b>	<b>4,827</b>	<b>(22)</b>	<b>(96)</b>

## Public Health &amp; Public Protection Department

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	3,917	625	592	33	138
Premises	5	0	0	0	0
Supplies & Services	229	50	42	8	33
Contracts & SLA's	7,136	1,922	1,922	0	0
Transport	10	2	0	2	5
Agency	19	19	20	(1)	(1)
Transfer to Reserves	50	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>11,366</b>	<b>2,618</b>	<b>2,576</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Fees & Charges	-82	-12	-15	3	7
Reimbursements & Grant Income	-46	-18	-18	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-576	-32	-32	0	0
Government Grant Income	-10,840	-2,352	-2,352	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-11,544</b>	<b>-2,414</b>	<b>-2,417</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>-178</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>Covid Costs</b>					
Contain Outbreak Management Fund	0	0	650	(650)	(4,188)
LA Practical Support Framework	0	0	6	(6)	(145)
Community Based Testing	0	0	169	(169)	(389)
<b>Covid Loss of Income</b>					
Pest Control income	-10	-4	0	(4)	(10)
Exercise class income	-3	-12	0	(12)	(3)
Day trip income	-17	-2	0	(2)	(17)
<b>Government Grant Income</b>					
General Covid Funding	0	0	-18	18	30
Contain Outbreak Management Fund	0	0	-650	650	4,188
LA Practical Support Framework	0	0	-6	6	145
Community Based Testing	0	0	-169	169	389
<b>Net Covid Expenditure</b>	<b>-30</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Support	119	30	30	0	0
Transport Support	24	6	6	0	1
Central Support	751	181	179	2	8
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>191</b>

## Corporate and Democracy

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	324	81	83	(2)	(8)
Contracted Services	38	9	2	7	0
Supplies & Services	129	52	23	28	0
Premises Expenditure	5	5	16	(11)	0
Transport Costs	0	0	144	(144)	(200)
Members Allowances	884	221	219	2	0
Interest Payable - Treasury Management	1,099	275	275	0	0
Interest Payable - Other	303	76	10	66	274
Bank Charges	85	21	79	(58)	(150)
Audit Fees	128	32	32	0	0
Contingency	1,017	254	254	0	0
Capital Financing	1,888	0	0	0	0
Contribution to Reserves	6,194	0	0	0	0
Debt Management Expenses	34	9	10	(1)	0
Precepts & Levies	198	49	49	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>12,325</b>	<b>1,084</b>	<b>1,196</b>	<b>-112</b>	<b>-84</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Interest Receivable - Treasury Management	-1,236	-309	-280	(29)	22
Interest Receivable - Other	0	0	0	0	0
Other Fees & Charges	-117	-29	-10	(19)	0
Grants & Reimbursements	-115	-16	-42	26	0
Government Grant Income	-10,922	-2,730	-2,730	0	0
Transfer from Reserves	-8,143	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-20,532</b>	<b>-3,084</b>	<b>-3,063</b>	<b>(22)</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>-8,207</b>	<b>-2,001</b>	<b>-1,867</b>	<b>(134)</b>	<b>(62)</b>
<b>Covid Government Grant Income</b>					
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable	0	0	-261	261	261
<b>Net Covid Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-261</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>261</b>
<b>Recharges</b>					
Premises Recharges	3	1	1	0	0
Central Recharges	1,495	374	374	0	0
Recharge Income	-3,283	-624	-624	0	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-1,785</b>	<b>-249</b>	<b>-249</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>-9,992</b>	<b>-2,250</b>	<b>-2,377</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>199</b>



Capital Programme as at 30 June 2020

Appendix 3

Directorate/Department	2021/22 Capital Allocation	Allocation to Date	Actual Spend to 30 June 2021	Total Allocation Remaining		2022/23 Capital Allocation	2023/24 Capital Allocation
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000
<b>PEOPLE DIRECTORATE</b>							
Asset Management Data	25	0	0	25		0	0
Capital Repairs	1,111	50	52	1,059		0	0
Asbestos Management	12	7	1	11		0	0
Schools Access Initiative	50	2	3	47		0	0
Basic Needs Projects	606	0	0	606		0	0
Fairfield Primary School	6	0	0	6		0	0
Kitchen Gas Safety	0	0	0	0		0	0
Small Capital Works	7	15	7	0		0	0
SEND allocation	77	7	10	67		0	0
Healthy Pupil Capital Fund	753	0	0	753		0	0
Chesnut Lodge	986	0	0	986		0	0
Ashley at The Heath	0	0	10	-10		0	0
Woodside KS2 Resource Base	4	0	0	4		0	0
Grants – Disabled Facilities	650	160	114	536		600	600
Stair Lifts	250	60	49	201		270	270
Joint Funding RSL Adaptations	200	50	47	153		270	270
ALD Bungalows	0	0	0	0		0	0
Millbrow Care Home	1,450	10	2	1,448		0	0
Madeline McKenna	100	10	11	89		0	0
St Lukes	240	10	2	238		0	0
St Patricks	50	10	0	50		0	0
Orchard House	30	27	27	3		0	0
<b>TOTAL PEOPLE DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>6,607</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>6,272</b>		<b>1,140</b>	<b>1,140</b>



Capital Programme as at 30 June 2020...continued

Directorate/Department	2021/22 Capital Allocation	Allocation to Date	Actual Spend to 30 June 2021	Total Allocation Remaining		2022/23 Capital Allocation	2023/24 Capital Allocation
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000
<b>ENTERPRISE, COMMUNITY &amp; RESOURCES DIRECTORATE</b>							
Stadium Minor Works	30	5	4	26		30	30
Stadium Decarbonisation Scheme	1,200	70	67	1,133		0	0
Open Spaces Schemes	650	115	113	537		600	600
Upton Improvements	13	0	0	13		0	0
Crow Wood Park	50	0	0	50		5	0
Brookvale Pitch Refurbishment	500	0	0	500		0	0
Leisure Centre	10,897	50	16	10,881		8,000	0
Children's Playground Equipment	65	5	1	64		65	65
Landfill Tax Credit Schemes	340	0	0	340		340	340
Runcorn Town Park	280	5	5	275		300	300
Peelhouse Lane Cemetery	20	3	3	17		0	0
Litter Bins	20	0	0	20		20	20
IT Rolling Programme	700	193	193	507		700	700
Covid IT Capital Costs	0	0	46	-46		0	0
3MG	199	8	8	191		0	0
Murdishaw redevelopment	38	0	0	38		0	0
Equality Act Improvement Works	390	60	60	330		300	300
Widnes Market Refurbishment	44	0	0	44		0	0
Broseley House	389	2	2	387		15	0
Solar Farm Extension	146	35	35	111		0	0
Foundary Lane Residential Area	1,682	28	28	1,654		0	0

**Capital Programme as at 30 June 2020...continued**

<b>Directorate/Department</b>	<b>2021/22 Capital Allocation</b>	<b>Allocation to Date</b>	<b>Actual Spend to 30 June 2021</b>	<b>Total Allocation Remaining</b>	<b>2022/23 Capital Allocation</b>	<b>2023/24 Capital Allocation</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Kingsway Learning Centre Improved Facilities	37	0	0	37	0	0
Kingsway Learning Centre Equipment	8	8	8	0	0	0
Halton Lea TCF	1,062	6	6	1,056	0	0
Property Improvements	200	0	0	200	200	200
Astmoor Regeneration	110	22	22	88	0	0
Runcorn Town Centre Fund	1,050	0	0	1,050	0	0
Bridge and Highway Maintenance	4,910	613	613	4,297	0	0
Integrated Transport	3,119	102	102	3,017	0	0
Street Lighting - Structural Maintenance	710	21	21	689	200	200
Street Lighting - Upgrades	2,745	13	13	2,732	0	0
Widnes Loops	2,792	43	43	2,749	0	0
SUD Green Cycle / Walk Corridors	282	4	4	278	0	0
Windmill Hill flood Risk Management Scheme	212	25	25	187	0	0
Risk Management	404	0	0	404	120	120
Fleet Replacements	3,817	84	84	3,733	2,590	1,207
Silver Jubilee Bridge - Major Maintenance Scheme	320	0	0	320	0	0
Silver Jubilee Bridge - Decoupling / Runcorn Station Quarter	1,114	1,114	1,114	0	0	0
Silver Jubilee Bridge - Lighting	493	19	19	474	0	0
<b>TOTAL ENTERPRISE, COMMUNITY &amp; RESOURCES DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>41,038</b>	<b>2,653</b>	<b>2,655</b>	<b>38,383</b>	<b>13,485</b>	<b>4,082</b>

Capital Programme as at 30 June 2020...continued

Directorate/Department	2021/22 Capital Allocation	Allocation to Date	Actual Spend to 30 June 2021	Total Allocation Remaining		2022/23 Capital Allocation	2023/24 Capital Allocation
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>47,644</b>	<b>3,071</b>	<b>2,990</b>	<b>44,654</b>		<b>14,625</b>	<b>5,222</b>
Slippage (20%) Carried Forward	-9,529					-2,925	-1,044
Slippage Brought Forward						9,529	2,925
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38,115</b>	<b>3,071</b>	<b>2,990</b>	<b>35,125</b>		<b>21,229</b>	<b>7,103</b>

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, People

**PORTFOLIO:** Adult Social Care

**SUBJECT:** Full cost domiciliary care clients receiving support from two carers – outcome of consultation

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 A report was presented to Executive Board on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 outlining plans to undertake a consultation with regards to increasing charges for full cost domiciliary care clients who receive support from two carers because they are currently only charged for one carer with the Council covering the cost of the second carer.
- 1.2 Executive Board approved the proposal to undertake a consultation relating to full cost domiciliary care clients being charged for both of their carers, thus removing the subsidy provided by the Council.
- 1.3 As agreed at the meeting in June, the purpose of this report is to provide Executive Board with an update as to the outcome/feedback from the consultation process and outline the next steps.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board

- i) **Note the contents of the report, particularly the outcome of the consultation process (see 3.9 and 3.10); and**
- ii) **Approve implementation of charging full cost domiciliary care clients for both carers on the basis outlined at 3.16.**

## 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### Background

- 3.1 At the June meeting, Executive Board were advised of the Council's legislative obligations, as per the excerpt below from the Care & Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014:

***8.13 A person with more in capital than the upper capital limit can ask their local authority to arrange their care and support for them. Where the person's needs are to be met by care in a care home, the local authority may choose to meet those needs and arrange the care, but is not required to do so. In other cases, the authority must meet the eligible needs if requested. However, these people are not entitled to receive any financial assistance from their local authority and in any case, may pay***

***the full cost of their care and support until their capital falls below the upper capital limit.***

- 3.2 When we refer to 'full cost clients' we are referring to those with assets above the upper capital limit (currently £23,250); they are deemed able to afford the cost of their own care and whilst, in the case of domiciliary care, they may ask the Council to arrange services to meet their eligible needs, they are not entitled to receive financial assistance from the Council in doing so.
- 3.3 As previously advised, the financial impact of the Council subsidising costs for full cost domiciliary care clients with two carers is significant.
- 3.4 It was agreed at the June meeting that corrective action should be taken for the following reasons:
- The historic practice of only charging for one carer goes over and above the Council's legislative obligations;
  - Halton's practice is at odds with practice in other local authority areas;
  - No other full cost clients in receipt of care (residential or domiciliary) receive subsidy from the Council.

**The consultation process**

- 3.5 A consultation process took place between 5<sup>th</sup> July and 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021 consisting of two elements:
1. Consultation with existing clients who are directly affected;
  2. Consultation with the wider population.
- 3.6 Letters have been sent to 21 existing clients explaining how their charges would increase under the proposals, what alternative options there are and what support would be provided as charges increase. These letters have been followed up with telephone calls to have further discussions about the contents of the letter and understand the views of existing clients about the proposed changes.
- 3.7 A short survey seeking views from the general population (also open to existing clients) was available to complete online. The survey asked respondents about their views as to whether the Council should subsidise those with the means to fund their own care. The survey was promoted on the Council's website and social media.
- 3.8 In addition to the above, a briefing was shared with social care staff so they were aware of the consultation and could respond to queries from clients effectively.

**Outcome from the consultation**

- 3.9 A summary of the feedback from the consultation with existing clients (i.e. the letters and follow-up telephone conversations) is detailed below:
- Clients were offered a financial assessment and a reassessment of their care and support needs. Most clients declined to undergo a financial assessment but most felt that a reassessment of their

support needs would be beneficial.

- Numerous clients expressed a wish to have their needs reassessed to look at reducing the level of support.
- Some clients fed back that carers do not stay for the allocated time – i.e. they only stay for 15 minutes of a 30-minute call. Therefore, clients feel they are already paying for a service they are not receiving and increasing the cost would be unfair. Minute-by-minute billing would be preferable so that clients are only paying for the service they receive.
- It was felt that charges do not reflect the service being received.
- It is not the fault of clients that the Council has not been operating in line with legislation and the Council should continue to fund the cost of the second carer for existing clients (either in full or part) and only new clients should pay for both carers.
- Some clients reported being unaware that they were only paying for one carer.
- The proposed increase was felt to be unreasonable and it was suggested that the Council should look to make savings another way.
- One client suggested the increases being phased in over a six-month period was not long enough and they also felt the consultation was not meaningful or over a long enough time period.
- There was a feeling of unfairness in that those who have savings/property have to pay for their care whilst those who don't have any savings etc. are provided their care free of charge.
- Some clients indicated they didn't understand the letter and further support will need to be provided to these clients.

3.10 A summary of the feedback from the consultation with the wider population (i.e. the survey) is detailed below and a full summary of answers/text responses is available at appendix 1:

- There were 78 responses to the survey with 92% answering as a resident of Halton. 91% of respondents indicated that they were not currently receiving support from adult social services.
- Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the following statement – “The Council should subsidise residents who have the means to fund their own care”.
- 65% of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement and 29% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates that the majority of respondents felt that the Council should provide subsidy to full cost clients (i.e. those deemed able to afford their own care due to having savings/assets above the threshold of £23,250 as set out in the Care Act).
- Respondents were asked to explain why they agreed/disagreed with the statement – answers were provided in a free text box and common themes are summarised below:
  - Care should be free like the NHS;
  - People have paid tax and national insurance all their life so the care they need should be free;
  - It's not fair that those who have money saved have to pay for their own care whilst those who haven't saved get their care free of charge;
  - People are being penalised for being careful with their

finances;

- It isn't fair that people who have never worked and don't have savings won't have to pay their care;
- The help available should be equal for everyone regardless of their finances;
- There was a feeling that people have paid into the system all their lives and are being charged again;
- A smaller number of respondents commented that those who can afford to pay for their care should do so.

### Next steps

- 3.11 It was anticipated that the consultation feedback would be overwhelmingly opposed to increasing charges and it is understandable that existing clients are extremely unhappy at the prospect of their care charges doubling. Equally understandable are the views expressed by the wider population in relation to the principle that care should be free and the feeling of unfairness that assets have to be used to pay for care.
- 3.12 However, it is not the Council that sets the rules around at what point people are deemed able to pay for their own care. Nationally, social care is not a free service like the NHS. The Council must operate in line with legislation, as set by Government, just as all Councils must do. The Care Act states that those with assets above the upper capital limit (£23,250) are able to pay for their own care and must not receive financial assistance from the Council.
- 3.13 It therefore unfortunately remains necessary to charge full cost clients for both carers in order to ensure that the Council is operating in line with legislation. However, in doing this, the feedback from the consultation will be taken into account and clients will continue to be provided with support as the change is managed.
- 3.14 Issues raised by existing clients as part of the consultation discussions around the quality of service provision will be addressed (e.g. carers not completing a full 30-minute call).
- 3.15 Clients will be reassessed if this is something they have requested; this will require Care Management resource and prioritisation.
- 3.16 It is proposed that the increased charges are implemented on the following basis:
- With effect from 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021, **new** full cost clients receiving a domiciliary care service provided by two carers will be charged for both carers;
  - Charging for **existing** full cost clients receiving a domiciliary care service provided by two carers (including those who have begun to receive a service up to 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021) will be increased on an incremental basis (increases of 15% per month from October 2021 to March 2022).
- 3.17 As of April 2022, all full cost domiciliary care clients receiving support from two carers will be covering the costs of both carers, in line with the Care Act

2014.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The changes outlined within this and the previous June report represent a change to current practice, which needs to be carefully managed. Implementing the change is in line with the Council's existing policy relating to charging for adult social care services as well as legislation and practice in other areas.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The financial impact on the Council is significant as it is currently subsidising the cost of domiciliary care by paying for the second carer for those who are deemed able to meet the cost of their own care.

#### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

None identified.

##### 6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None identified.

##### 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The provision of domiciliary care makes an important contribution to the health and social care system in Halton.

##### 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

##### 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

#### 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 As anticipated, this proposed change has been met with dissatisfaction from existing clients who are faced with their care charges doubling and also from the wider population who feel that care should be free for all. However, we have to work within the system in place, as set out by the government as part of the Care Act, and this client group is deemed able to afford their own care; if their needs dictate that they require two carers then their charges should reflect the service they receive.

7.2 As part of the consultation process, existing clients were offered the option of undergoing a reassessment of their care and support needs and many indicated that they would like to do this as they felt their support could potentially be reduced. It will be necessary to ensure that there is capacity with Care Management to prioritise the reassessments of this group of



clients. However, given the pressures currently faced by social work teams there is a potential risk that the reviews may not be able to be completed in the immediate future.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

**9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

9.1 Executive Board approval is required to enable the Council to begin charging full cost domiciliary care clients with two carers for both carers (rather than just one as is currently the case) in line with the Care Act.

**10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

10.1 Continuing to subsidise the cost of domiciliary care provision for those with two carers who are deemed able to afford the cost of their own care is neither fair nor cost-effective. It is simply not equitable that full cost domiciliary care clients with two carers are only paying for one carer, which represents half the cost of the actual package of care.

**11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

11.1 New clients to be charged for both carers with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

11.2 Existing clients to have charges increased on an incremental basis of 15% per month from October 2021 to March 2022.

11.3 With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, all full cost domiciliary care clients receiving support from two carers will be charged for both carers.

**12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.

## Appendix 1: Survey responses



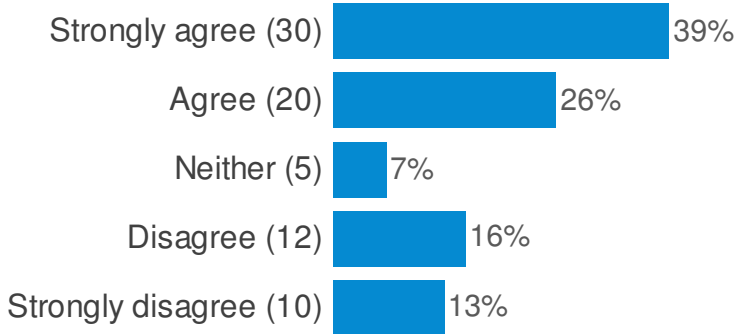
Cost of Home Care  
Summary Report 18.

*Summary of responses as at 18<sup>th</sup> August 2021. Closing date is 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021.  
Add updated report following closing date if further responses received.*

Number of responses: 78

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Please X one box only

The Council should subsidise residents who have the means to fund their own care



Please tell us why you said this in the box below

- 
- Some people may have the money but not the capacity It's a stressful time for people that need help with social care. Why would you not support someone in the decision?
- 
- What bothers me about this is how do you decide who can afford to pay for their own care, yes there may be some residents who can easily afford to pay themselves but there will be some who are barely over the threshold and it will be difficult for them. I'm glad I don't have to make the decision.
- 
- Dad fought for his country, worked and saved all his life. How is it justified that someone who did none of these gets the exact same care for free? He deserves to be cared for in his own home, he's paid enough tax, NI, etc to warrant free care at this time in his life.
- 
- Everyone should be entitled to the same, regardless of their funds. Many have worked for years to have the funds they have, and just because someone has these funds, does not mean they should have to pay for the care they need.
- 
- Because care like NHS care should be free at the point of delivery
- 
- Because simply they will be forced to sell the family home whilst you sit back and charge silly amounts for care
- 
- Why should people who have worked all their lives pay out for care, it should be free
- 
- Explain exactly how you define 'means to fund their own care.
- 
- If they are in a financial position to pay, then they should do so.
- 
- We should be helping our disabled and elderly not penalsing them
- 
- Care should be free at the point of need like the NHS
- 
- Because these people generally have paid taxes and national insurance all their working lives and people who haven't worked have had their national insurance paid for them by the state, they then go on to receive the exact same care and that's fine but should be equal for all.
- 
- Everyone should have equal help
- 
- Because they have probably worked hard and sacrificed things in earlier years for what they have saved.
- 
- The upper threshold needs to be 25k and over that they pay the maximum weekly charge. However, dimuition of capital should be carried out during all assessments. So a full cost device user is full cost for 2 weeks for example then back to assessed charge. However this will require more staff on the FAB team as full cost needs to be applied quickly and the new assessed charge applied quickly and the DD amended quickly.
- 
- These people have worked all their lives to be in this position, contributing via tax and national insurance. . The subsidy should be needs based, not means based.
-

**Please tell us why you said this in the box below**

The poor loves have probably saved all their lives to give their kids a bit of money and ended up having to pay for care for themselves!

Although they may be able to pay I feel that all their outgoings should be taken into account first including taxi costs if they have to use them and any medical costs they may have to pay for eg mobility scooter or wheel chair to enable them to get around

People who have paid into the system shd have help when need. Also, having help in their own home means they don't have to have residential care which in the long run could cost the council more money.

We paid more into the social care via council tax last month please use it.

Enough! People who can afford to pay should NOT be penalised for working hard all their lives when others haven't paid into the system + get it for free!

care should equate all joint income where relatives live in the same property are get carers allowance

Everyone should be entitled to subsidised care. Most people have paid into the pot for years, they shouldn't be penalised and charged again.

Because if they have any funds at all, they've probably worked hard all their lives & paid taxes all their lives. This should give them some entitlement to free care once they are aged. They shouldn't have to pay into "the system" twice.

People pay tax & national insurance to ensure adequate care throughout their lives. Their savings should not be used to pay for care that they've already more than paid for. It's time for the government and indeed local authorities to recognise the contributions that older generations make. Perhaps Councillors and MPs can take pay cuts to subsidise the money needed?

Totally uncaring towards residents needs.

I expect they have worked hard all their life to be in the position to have savings and paid taxes national insurance ect. Yet others who have failed to contribute to the taxes ect get for free. Im not judging but maybe all should be treated equally

Because you can't take it off them now once you've given it, regardless if they can afford it or not. That would be cruel.

Why should a person have to pay for care? If they have paid taxes ( worked all their life) then care should be free.

If they can afford to pay for it, they should

As a council tax payee my tax goes up year by year and includes a precept for social care. Why should people who have paid all their life into the system have to pay for assistance as they need it.

I feel if residents have worked hard, paid taxes and council tax then they should be eligible for some help with costs of care.

Because you pay in all your life should not be punished for having money you put the council tax up so use it

People who have worked hard all their life should not be discriminated against

I couldn't afford to pay for carers to come and help that's why I rely on my family but at times they sometimes their busy lives get in the way of looking or helping me out.

Because it is a health need and people shouldn't be punished for it and have to sell their homes when they have paid tax and worked hard.

An elderly vulnerable person should not be penalised just because they've been careful with their finances. There are some people who will deliberately fritter away their money so that local governments will pick up the tab. This does happen.

People are ill they don't choose to be ill and they have paid their taxes all their life for the care

The majority of these people will already have paid a lifetime of tax and council tax

Because they have paid all their lives and are paying extra council tax for social care unlike the ones who have sat back doing nothing .

**Please tell us why you said this in the box below**

We have paid our taxes and national insurance during our working lifetime so we should not have to pay fund our care when we need it.

They have probably paid for it in tax.

As an old person, the assets they have could be their children's inheritance., and should NOT be subject to any seizure in respect of their ongoing social care. It is grossly unfair to seize assets that could be a families inheritance to pay for something the council, I feel should provide free.

People have saved all their lives and paid national insurance and tax. This is an extra cost for people who have been careful with their financial planning

Social Care & health care should both be funded by taxes, even if this means increases in tax & both should be free for all

If they have paid council tax and national insurance contributions then the council should pay. Why as our council tax green and blue bins gone up. When we are park of the Mersey area and Liverpool does not pay also Liverpool residents get a bus pass at 60 our is 65 in Halton!! Why do we pay £25 or £27 towards Liverpool mayor????

It's not fair for those that have saved all their lives to not receive this. People who have never worked are entitled to it as well as subsidised council tax so how is that fair

Despite being able to afford it I feel these people will have paid their fair share into the system throughout their working life and should now be able to rely on the system now that they need it.

People who work and save all of their lives should not have to pay for services which are free to people who have seldom worked, saved for a pension or put money aside for their old age. Working people pay National Insurance, which should cover care costs. No insurance company would ever say "We're not paying your claim, you've got enough in the bank to cover it"

What do you mean by ' who have the means to pay '. Is that because of savings, investments or equity on there home ?

Who determines if a person has 'the means'? The threshold is set insufficiently and is likely to change to meet the financial need of the local authority. The financial impact on their spouse or other family is crippling. Money should be saved elsewhere

They have paid there taxes all their life so deserve to have care in their old age

People shouldnt be penalised for saving for there old age

People have saved all their lives and paid national insurance and tax. This is an extra cost for people who have been careful with their financial planning

Because the people who have worked hard all their lives and put money aside shouldn't be penalised. Just a small discount, but should get one nonetheless

I agree but it should be with boundaries, for example, if the individual has an income over a certain threshold.

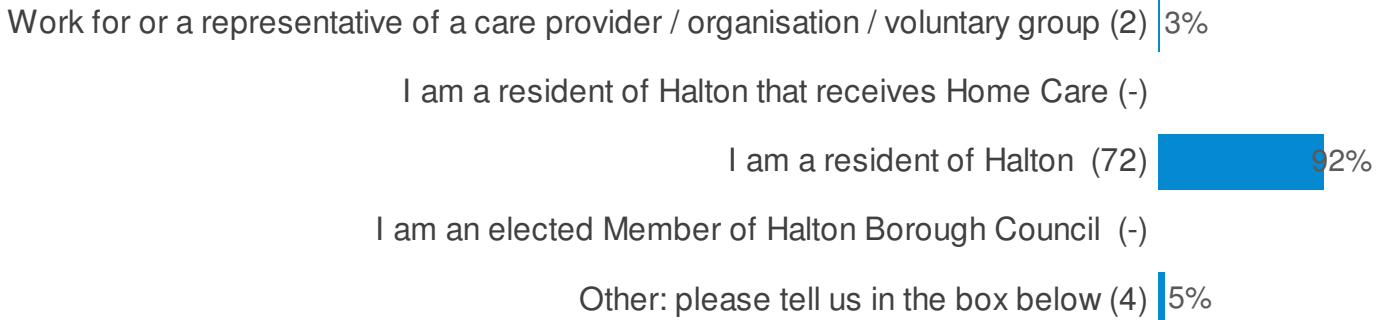
If people can afford it then they should pay

Not everyone can afford it.

if people can afford to they should pay, however this must be fair and equitable, without loopholes for people who can work it

## About You Section

### How are you completing this questionnaire? Please X one box only



Daughter of resident receiving care

Wife of someone who receives care

I have 20 plus years previous experience working with adults needing health and social care

My Father and Husband both had to fund their social care services.

I am a former resident with an elderly dependent who lives in the borough.

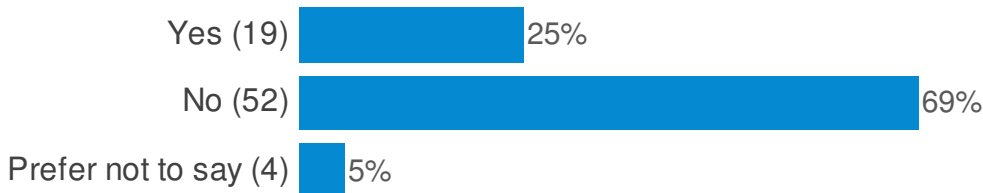
### Name of care provider / organisation / voluntary group:

I'd rather not disclose

### Your role for the care provider / organisation / voluntary group:

Care coordinator

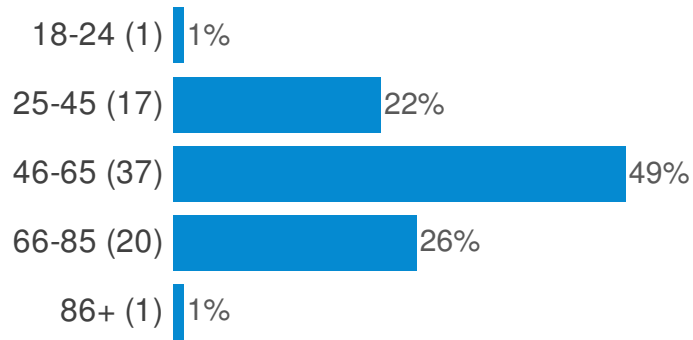
### Do you have a physical or mental health condition or illness expected to last 12 months or more? Please X one box only



### Do you receive any support from Social Services? Please X one box only



Which age group do you belong to? Please X one box only



Prefer not say (-)

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	September 2021
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Director of Public Health
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Health & Wellbeing
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Substance Misuse Service Waiver Request

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Executive Board of the Chief Executive's use of emergency powers, in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.2, to make a direct award for the Substance Misuse Service contract to cover the period 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive Board notes the contents of the report.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Halton Borough Council is responsible for commissioning services to support local people with substance (drugs and alcohol) misuse problems. The overall aim of this service is to improve health and social care outcomes, reduce the harm from addiction to legal and illicit substances and reduce health inequalities for local people.
- 3.2 The provision of an effective specialist community substance misuse service contributes towards the aim of the Safer Halton Partnership to ensure Halton is a pleasant, safe and secure place to live and work with attractive, safe surroundings, good quality local amenities and the ability of people to enjoy life where they live. The service also contributes towards the aim of the Halton Health and Wellbeing Board by promoting the health and wellbeing of all service users and their families and reducing alcohol-related harm locally.
- 3.3 In September 2015, the Executive Board granted authority to the Director of Public Health to carry out all necessary steps in relation to the open tendering and commissioning of Specialist Community Substance Misuse services. The contract was awarded in line with the Council's Procurement Policy to the provider 'Change, Grow, Live' (CGL) for a fixed period of five years expiring 31 March 2021. No contractual arrangement was provided for any extension to the contract.
- 3.4 It had been anticipated that a full procurement exercise would have taken place during 2020 to enable a new contract to be in place. However, the impact of the covid pandemic has placed a significant strain on the capacity of both providers and the wider public health including the Council workforce.



- 3.5 In addition, the Council has not sought to destabilise the current provision of essential services to some of the borough's most vulnerable clients during this difficult time.
- 3.6 An initial waiver was granted in December 2020 to allow continued provision by the incumbent provider for the period up to 30 September 2021 in the anticipation that the procurement exercise would be completed by this time. Unfortunately, whilst the procurement exercise is presently underway, it will not be completed within this timeframe.
- 3.7 The Chief Executive has therefore used emergency powers, in compliance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.2, to make another direct award to the incumbent provider for a further six month period to 31 March 2022. This will facilitate continued delivery of the specialist substance misuse service pending the completion of the current procurement process.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 These services are commissioned in pursuance of the local authority's statutory responsibility to improve the health and well-being of the local population through the delivery of specialist Public Health advice and the continued access to health improvement services for residents in Halton. The method of procurement complies with the Council's Procurement Standing Orders and Public Contract Regulations 2015. The service objectives are in line with the Health and Wellbeing and Clinical Commissioning Group Priorities.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL/RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The provision of substance misuse services and functions is an essential element of the Public Health Grant and the resources are included in the ring fenced budget. It is anticipated that the budget will not exceed £650,000 for the six month period.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

- 6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The proposal supports the delivery of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and elements of the Children's Plan.

- 6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Employment, Learning and Skills is a key determinant of health and wellbeing and is therefore a key consideration when developing strategies to address health inequalities.

- 6.3 A Healthy Halton

The proposal supports the council's delivery of the Health and Wellbeing strategy and contributes to the achievement of the council's outcomes,

including population health and reducing health inequalities as outlined in the priorities contained in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

6.4 A Safer Halton

The service contributes to a Safer Halton by supporting local people in reducing risk taking behaviour, such as alcohol, drugs, etc. Community services also play an important role in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The service will be monitored by means of regular contract meeting. Contract monitoring meetings will consider both overall activity and financial management alongside a review of key quality and performance indicators which will be agreed jointly with the provider. This will assist commissioners in establishing whether the service performing against intended outcomes and represents value for money.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required for this report.

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

9.1 None.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Community Safety Portfolio
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking – Governance and Support Arrangements in Halton
<b>WARDS:</b>	Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Executive Board about current arrangements in Halton to meet our requirements under the Modern Day Slavery Act 2015 and its review/changes in 2019/20.
- 1.2 To inform Executive Board of current arrangements in Halton to support victims of Modern Slavery (MS) and Human Trafficking (HT).
- 1.3 To inform Executive Board of Halton's Transparency Statement, which has been refreshed for 2021-2023.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Executive Board are asked to note the report's contents and agree the refreshed Transparency Statement so it can be published on the Council's website.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The term 'Modern Slavery' captures a whole range of types of exploitation, many of which occur together. These include but are not limited to:
  - sexual exploitation
  - domestic servitude
  - forced labour
  - criminal exploitation (including County Lines)
  - other forms of exploitation: organ removal; forced begging; forced benefit fraud; forced marriage and illegal adoption.

3.2 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 consolidated all offences relating to trafficking and slavery. Its key areas include:

- two new civil orders to prevent modern slavery
- an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner
- provision for the support and protection of modern slavery victims
- the requirement for certain commercial businesses to produce transparency statements.

3.3 Following a review of the Act in 2019, and a period of consultation in 2020, the Government has brought in some changes. The final report is 150 pages long with 80 recommendations. (Links provided below to reports.)

3.4 Whilst many of the recommendations relate to central government activity and the role of the Anti Slavery Commissioner, there are several that relate to procurement within the public sector, and the support and protection of victims.

3.5 This report pulls together the different strands of activity across Halton and Cheshire, to show how we are meeting our responsibilities.

## **4.0 Halton Specific Activities**

### **4.1 Transparency Statement**

The Council, at its meeting held on 17 October 2017, passed a Motion that supported the implementation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. That Motion, amongst other things, committed the Council to publishing annually, its own Modern Slavery Transparency Statement.

Section 54 of the Act was brought into force on 29 October 2015 and requires commercial organisations with an annual turnover in excess of £36m to produce a modern slavery statement for each financial year.

One of the new recommendations is that this should now apply to public sector organisations. In fact Halton Borough Council has had a Statement since 2018 published on our website. There are over 140 Councils across the Country who have done the same thing.

The Modern Slavery Act does not dictate what a statement must include or how it should be structured. It does, however, provide a non-exhaustive list of information that the employer's slavery and human trafficking statement might include, such as:

- its structure, business and supply chains;
- its policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking;
- its due diligence processes in relation to slavery and human trafficking in its business and supply chains;
- the parts of its business and supply chains where there is a risk of slavery and human trafficking taking place, and the steps that it has taken to assess and manage that risk;

- its effectiveness in ensuring that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in its business or supply chains, measured against such performance indicators as it considers appropriate;
- the training about slavery and human trafficking available to staff

Halton's Transparency Statement is attached as appendix 1, and the Executive Board is asked to approve this for publication.

#### 4.2 Victim Support Pathways/Protocols

The 'duty to notify' provision for specified public authorities is set out in the Modern Slavery Act. From 1 November 2015, local authorities have a duty to notify the Home Office of any individual encountered in England and Wales who they believe is a suspected victim of slavery or human trafficking.

Only First Responders (this includes local authorities and police) can refer into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) which is the process by which potential victims of modern slavery, including human trafficking, are identified – be they adults or children.

Home Office staff within UK Visas and Immigration, Border Force and Immigration Enforcement (amongst other agencies) are also required, as a matter of Home Office policy, to comply with the duty to notify.

The Duty to Notify, using the NRM is mandatory even if the victim wishes to remain anonymous and does not want to access specialist support. The Duty to Notify only applies to Adults, as any young person under the age of 18 should automatically be referred to NRM.

Across Cheshire colleagues are working together to produce a dedicated adult victim care pathway to ensure a consistent approach across the sub-region (there is already one in place for Children – although it does need to be refreshed as it is slightly out of date). Data is released on a calendar basis and for 2020, in Halton there was only one NRM referral, for a child under the age of 17 (this is extremely low for a local authority area – why is this? All being referred to Police maybe? Discussions are ongoing to understand and improve the reporting), whilst Cheshire Police investigated a total of 78 cases (51 adults 18+, 25 children 17 and under, and 2 unknowns).

Officers will follow the protocol and engage with Partners to ensure victims are supported in the best possible way.

#### 4.3 Procurement and Supply Chains

Officers within the Council's Procurement Team have been reviewing procedures to ensure compliance as follows:-

- The Tender process for the Council complies with Cabinet Office guidance by means of using the Standard Qualification Questionnaire (SQ) for the selection process. HBC has actually gone further and

extended the standard wording provided in the guidance to include full reference to section 54 Transparency in Supply Chains Provision (TISC) of the Act. This makes it clearer for potential suppliers to understand that it is not the contract that is the trigger for their annual statement but in fact their total turnover value of £36 million.

- Procurement colleagues are currently reviewing the Council's Social Value Framework looking to improve the way HBC captures Themes, Opportunities and Measures. They will be looking at including Modern Slavery into the framework and terms and conditions for new contracts.
- Arrangements are in place through various groups and networks to share best practice and knowledge in regard to Modern Slavery across the LCR Procurement Leads and the wider region.

There have been no reported incidents of slavery within the Council's supply chains. It should be noted that to undertake full monitoring and assessment of all the Council's supply chain, would be a massive task, extremely resource intensive and would not be achievable at present.

The Local Authority also commissions and contracts with a number of providers and will ensure that the above recommendations are incorporated into local activity to ensure compliance with the Act as appropriate, if this falls outside the normal procurement arrangements.

However, it is felt by officers involved that the arrangements currently in place are proportionate and HBC has gone further than just meeting the mandatory requirements. A full review of our approach should we become aware of instances of modern slavery in our supply chains is potentially an action to take in the future.

The MSAT is a modern slavery risk identification and management tool developed by the Cabinet Office. This tool has been designed to help public sector organisations work in partnership with suppliers to improve protections and reduce the risk of exploitation of workers in their supply chains. It also aims to help public sector organisations understand where there may be risks of modern slavery in the supply chains of goods and services they have procured. Public sector organisations are encouraged to use the MSAT with existing suppliers and procurement colleagues will be signposting suppliers to the toolkit.

Officers involved in managing contracts or regulatory functions (e.g. Trading Standards) are probably best placed to identify potential modern slavery situations, and it's been suggested that the best way to raise awareness of the issue wider is to develop or source an e-learning package.

#### 4.4 Strategic Focus

There is a Halton MS Group but it is mainly used to disseminate information and collect data on referrals and victim support, and case studies. The low numbers don't justify a group meeting for meeting's sake. This group includes internal colleagues along with external Partners such as CCG, DWP, CAB, VCA and

Chamber of Commerce. One sector which has been identified as missing are the Registered Social Landlords, and work is underway to address this.

Following a presentation to the Safer Halton Partnership Board in July 2018 it was agreed that overall responsibility for MS and HT would sit within Community Safety. The first point of contact for victims is the Council's Safeguarding processes. Other officers from community safety, housing and the partnership/policy team also available to provide advice, guidance and further signposting.

It is usually colleagues from Social Services who do the assessments and referrals, and would normally notify the Police if they have any concerns. The same applies for colleagues within Trading Standards and Enforcement.

#### 4.5 Monitoring and Accountability

There are no performance indicators in business plans. However the Contextual Safeguarding Strategic sub group is currently reviewing the data set it uses and NRM referrals are included in the drafts. But there is no mention of the Duty to Notify. And whilst this draft indicator sits with the Police, some discussion would be helpful to understand the local authority role and identifying who does what within a victim care pathway.

Below is a link to the victim care pathway used in Cleveland – and work has been started to create a similar document for Cheshire:-

<https://www.tsab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Victim-Pathway-2020-V6.pdf>

There were attempts to provide quarterly updates to the Safer Halton Partnership, however as the numbers were so low – this wasn't practical, although officers do provide briefings upon request or when there have been changes in legislation. This has included reports to Safer Halton PPB, along with a presentation from the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA). A suggestion is to use the Home Office NRM quarterly stats as a starting point – or to get quarterly data from the Police.

The performance information from the safeguarding boards will also now be shared with the Cheshire Anti Slavery Strategic Partnership (CASSP) on a quarterly basis. This can also be shared with the Safer Halton Partnership.

The Government produces NRM data on a quarterly and annual basis, across police and local authority areas, looking age, nationalities and types of exploitation. However, the data doesn't really provide an "on the ground" picture of what is happening across the patch.

## 5.0 HALTON'S PAN-CHESHIRE ROLE

5.1 Since 2016, funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner, there had been, working across Cheshire an Anti-Slavery Network, bringing together key Partners. Supported by an Independent Chair, who is a well-respected expert in the field, this network had worked towards developing training packages, ensuring clear victim pathways, and sharing best practice. This had ensured a consistent approach across Cheshire to support vulnerable victims.

In late 2019 it was agreed that the four local authorities in the Cheshire Sub-Region and the PCC would fund the Cheshire Anti-Slavery Network (CASN) for two years with a joint funding pot of a one off contribution of £4,000 each, totalling £20,000. Whilst this was a considerable reduction in funding than previously available, with some changes, and an additional offer of in-kind support from the Chester Diocese, it was agreed that it would be possible to continue with the Network.

The current pan-Cheshire governance structure has the modern day slavery agenda sitting under the Harmful Practices Sub-Group of the Pan Cheshire Protecting Vulnerable People Board (PVP).

Following a review of this sub-group it was agreed that it should be a 12 month task and finish group, working towards ensuring other more traditional Harmful Practices (such as Forced Marriage, Honour Based Violence and FGM) would be embedded across other groups. It was felt that due to the low numbers, as highlighted by data, this was a better use of resources as opposed to a dedicated group.

With that in mind, in early 2020, the Sub-Regional Leadership Board agreed to the creation of a strategic partnership to focus on Modern Slavery, which would provide direction and scrutiny for the operational Network. It was agreed that the Cheshire Anti-Slavery Strategic Partnership (CASSP) would report to the PVP Board, and be chaired by the Chief Executive of Halton who is currently the Chair of the PVP Board.

This group has only met twice due to the pandemic but is starting to understand the picture across Cheshire and confirming what its role will be.

Eventually a regular briefing, as per the attached Cleveland one, will be prepared on a quarterly basis for Cheshire (see appendix 2).

## 5.2 Operation Paddington

Operation Paddington was a multi-agency week of action planned in response to concerns regarding the increased number of migrants being located after Inland Clandestine Incidents across Cheshire. Individuals and families have been seen turning up on the roadside claiming to have been dropped off by Lorries/ other vehicles or persons being discovered hiding inside. There have also been recent incidents of migrants being found in the back of refrigerated vehicles who have



only been discovered due to noises being heard when they have been trying to escape when they have become fearful of becoming seriously unwell.

There has also been an increase in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (spontaneous arrivals as opposed to those who are placed in Cheshire through the National Transfer Scheme from Kent and Portsmouth councils) – e.g. Warrington currently have 20 UASC and 15 UASC care leavers.

The presence of the Inland Boarder at Appleton Thorn potentially increases the number of migrants who will be found in the County, most likely drop off points continuing to be existing hotspots. The presence of established organized crime groups causes concern as there is potential for these groups to target the vulnerable and to increase trafficking networks, drawing vulnerable migrants into criminal exploitation.

Following the week of activity, two separate funding applications were submitted to the Cheshire Resilience Forum to support the four Cheshire Local Authorities to respond to anticipated increased demand for adult and children's safeguarding services to respond to individuals at risk of exploitation as a result of trafficking and organized crime, including Modern Slavery and those who seek asylum. A total of £78k has been awarded and plans are currently being drawn up on how best to use this welcomed resource, which will include an All Age Exploitation Strategy.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS and RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 Whilst there is no direct financial implications for the Council – at the moment, it should be noted that the Act does introduce tougher penalties and sentencing rules, alongside a tough asset recovery regime, and if any profits made through slavery and/or human trafficking are identified – these can be seized and used to compensate victims.

And if victim numbers were to suddenly increase – this will impact on current resources, particularly around safeguarding budgets.

With regards to risk – there are a number of reputational risks that should be considered going forward, particularly in relation to the Council's supply chain. This supply chain has a potentially global reach and there may be many links in the chain which could potentially be involved in modern slavery and which would be almost impossible to monitor in their entirety. The Council can only realistically concentrate its resources on ensuring that an immediate (Tier 1) supplier does not support modern slavery, and through its contracts ensure that our supply chain is free from modern slavery.

A further risk is that there would be consequences if an LA does not comply with its obligations under the ACT ie duty to notify. For example a lawyer may sue the LA if they fail to identify a potential victim of trafficking (PVoT), and complete and NRM or Duty To Notify form (Dtn) and the person then goes on to be further exploited.

If a Commercial organisation covered by the Act fails to produce a slavery and human trafficking statement for a particular financial year the Secretary of State may seek an injunction through the High Court requiring the organisation to comply. Failure to comply with the injunction could constitute contempt of a court order, which is punishable by an unlimited fine. The reputational damage from the publicity this would attract could also be damaging.

And although the new changes will ensure public sector organisations need to produce a Transparency Statement, it's unclear what enforcement is in place. The LGA is also chasing the Government for clarification of the reporting requirements and the new online registry.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES**

- 7.1 The Modern Slavery Act has implications for the Health and Children and Young People priority in relation to issues relating to safeguarding.
- 7.2 The Act has implications for the Employment, Learning and Skills priority in relation to ensuring safe recruitment and fair pay and employment practices across the borough.
- 7.3 The Act has implications for the Safer Halton priority in relation to the direct combatting of slavery and human trafficking.
- 7.4 The Act has implications for Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency in relation to ensuring that the Council's supply chain is free from modern slavery and exploitation.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Halton Borough Council is committed to ensuring that it provides an environment with equality of opportunity that is free of discrimination, unfair or unlawful treatment. As such it fully supports the aims of the Modern Slavery Act and this is reflected through the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement.

## **9.0 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Appendix 1: Halton Borough Council's Transparency Statement

Appendix 2 : Cleveland Briefing

Link to Government's final report on the independent review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-the-modern-slavery-act-final-report>

Link to the Government's response to final report:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-independent-review-of-the-modern-slavery-act>

Link to a Council's Guide to the Act:

[https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/22.12%20Modern%20slavery\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/22.12%20Modern%20slavery_WEB.pdf)

Link to Counsellor's Guide to Tackling Modern Slavery:

<https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1318/2247-councillors-guide-on-modern-slavery-final.pdf>

**Halton Borough Council Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement**

Modern Slavery is a crime, and an abuse of human rights. The Modern Slavery Act became law on 26 March 2015. It is designed to tackle the offences of 'slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour' and 'human trafficking'.

The Act contains a '**Transparency in Supply Chains Clause**' (54) which aims to encourage businesses to be more transparent about what they are doing and increase their accountability for any slavery & human trafficking within their business and their supply chain(s).

Under this clause organisations with:

- a turnover of £36 million or more
- Supplies goods and/or services

**MUST** prepare and publish a 'Slavery & Human Trafficking' statement **each financial year**.

Modern slavery includes:

- Forced labour; Victims are forced to work against their will, often working very long hours for little or no pay in dire conditions under verbal or physical threats of violence.
- Debt bondage; Victims are forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they will never be able to.
- Sexual exploitation; Victims are forced to perform non-consensual or abusive sexual acts against their will, such as prostitution, escort work and pornography. Adults are coerced often under the threat of force, or another penalty.
- Criminal exploitation; Often controlled and maltreated, victims are forced into crimes such as cannabis cultivation or pick pocketing against their will.
- Domestic servitude; Victims are forced to carry out housework and domestic chores with little or no pay, restricted movement, very limited or no free time and minimal privacy often sleeping where they work.

Halton Borough Council supports the implementation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. This statement sets out the Council's actions to understand the potential modern slavery risks related to its business and the steps it has put in place to ensure that no slavery or human trafficking takes place in its own business or through its supply chains.

The Council provides a wide range of statutory and discretionary services for its residents, businesses, visitors and wider public and consequently purchases a wide range of goods and services from third party suppliers.

The Council recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking. In addition to the Council's responsibility as an employer, it also acknowledges its duty as a Council to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking as introduced by section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The Council is committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in its corporate activities and to ensuring that its supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking. And whilst there is currently no legal obligation for the Council to produce this Transparency Statement – we do so as a sign of our commitment.

### **Council Constitution**

The Council's Constitution sets out a range of policies and procedures relating to officer and member codes of conduct, as well as policies and standing orders relating to procurement and whistleblowing. The Constitution is reviewed on an annual basis.

<http://councillors.halton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=649&MId=5870&Ver=4&info=1>

### **Policies and Processes in relation to slavery and human trafficking**

The Council reviews its policies and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure they remain compliant and fit for purpose. The following policies and procedures are considered to be key in meeting the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act.

### **Safeguarding**

The Council embraces its responsibility to develop, implement and monitor policies and procedures to safeguard the welfare of children and 'adults at risk' of abuse, harassment, neglect or exploitation. A wide range of training relating to the safeguarding of both children and adults is also available.

The Council works within multi-agency partnerships, such as the Halton Safeguarding Children Board and the Halton Safeguarding Adults Board to protect and safeguard people.

<http://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/health/PDF/safeguard/Safeguardguidance.pdf>

<http://haltonsafeguarding.co.uk/>

## **Procurement**

The Council procures goods and services from various suppliers and this is governed by our procurement strategy.

Halton Borough Council operates a fair and open competition by following transparent and auditable procedures in all of its tendering and contracting activity. It aims to provide a wide range of businesses with a variety of commercial opportunities by publishing all its opportunities in excess of £1,000. To trade with the Council businesses need to register on the North West e tendering portal [The Chest](#).

Suppliers will also be signposted to the Cabinet Office's Modern Slavery Assessment Tool.

Further information about the Council's Procurement practices can be found here: <https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/business/doingbusinesswithus/doing-business-with-us.aspx>

## **Recruitment**

The Council's recruitment processes are transparent and reviewed regularly. They include robust procedures for vetting new employees, which ensures they are able to confirm their identities and qualifications, and they are paid directly into an appropriate, personal bank account. To comply with the Asylum, Immigration and Nationality Act 2006, all prospective employees are asked to supply evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK. References are also requested and followed up.

## **Agency Workers**

The Council uses only reputable employment agencies to source labour. The Council does this by using the Matrix Agency interface. Matrix checks the practices of any new agency it is using before accepting workers from that agency. Their Modern Slavery Statement can be found here: <http://www.matrix-scm.com/modern-slavery-act/>

## **Pay**

The Council operates a Job Evaluation Scheme to ensure that all employees are paid fairly and equitably. As part of its commitment to being a good employer, the Council has also extended its payment of the National Living Wage to all employees, not solely those over the age of 25.

## **Employee Code of Conduct**

The Council's Employee Code of Conduct makes clear to both employees the actions and behaviours expected of them when representing the Council. The Council strives to maintain the highest standards of employee conduct and ethical behaviour and breaches are investigated

## **Whistleblowing**

The Council encourages all its employees, contractors and other business partners to report any concerns related to the direct activities or to the supply chains of the Council. The Council's whistleblowing policy is designed to make it easy for employees to make disclosures, without fear of retaliation and is published on the staff intranet.

### **Members' Code of Conduct and Ethical Framework**

The Council expects all Councillors to demonstrate the highest standards of conduct and behaviour. All Councillors are required to abide by a formal Code of Conduct. Breaches are investigated by the Monitoring Officer. Further details of this are contained within the Council's Constitution, which is reviewed on an annual basis

### **Councillors' Declarations of Interests**

The Council requires all Councillors to record and declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other disclosable interests.

### **Due diligence processes and steps taken to assess and manage the risk of modern slavery in Halton Borough Council's business and supply chain**

In November 2016, the Cabinet Office introduced the Supplier Selection Questionnaire, which should be used in all tenders over the EU thresholds; this requires suppliers to declare any involvement in modern slavery.

The Council has included reference to the Act as a mandatory gateway – Pass/Fail question into all of the relevant tendering documents that are published as part of the procurement process for both above and below EU Threshold.

### **Training about slavery and human trafficking**

The Council provides training in safeguarding for staff and partners involved in person centred services, and also provides training sessions on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

Halton Borough Council is a member of a number of equality networks and actively work through these to raise awareness of the issues associated with modern slavery and human trafficking, and disseminate information accordingly.

Review Date: 22-04-23

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	16 September 2021
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community & Resources
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Environment and Urban Renewal
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Development of Priory Meadow, Runcorn for Housing
<b>WARDS:</b>	Halton Castle

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to market Priory Meadow for housing on a gifted homes basis.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board:**

- 2.1 Approves the marketing of Priory Meadow.**
- 2.2 Agrees to Officers testing the market for gifted homes and entering into legal agreements on this basis.**
- 2.3 Authorises the Operational Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property and the Operational Director for Legal & Democratic services, to ensure full legal compliance in relation to the project.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **3.1 Background**

The residential development of Priory Meadow, previously known as Canalside, has been a long standing aspiration of the Council. This site is one of the last pieces of the Castlefields masterplan and will make an important contribution to meeting the housing needs of the Borough.

Priory Meadow has been identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (R74). Prior to this the site was identified within the Castlefields Masterplan which was adopted by the Council in 2003. The masterplan highlights how Priory Meadow has a vital place-making role. This is in the terms of its relationship to Norton Priory, Town Park and the Bridgewater Canal. Priory Meadow creates a clear and well established link between Castlefields and the wider assets.



The total site area of Priory Meadow is circa 13.5ha (33.4 Acres) and the developable area is circa 5.8ha (13.3 Acres). The proposal is for the creation of 269 residential units of mixed size and tenure at Priory Meadow.

Priory Meadow sits within a wider parcel of land. Around 4ha of this land comprises of Haddock's Wood Pasture Local Wildlife Site, furthermore this then leads on to form part of Runcorn Town Park. In accordance with this the proposed development at Priory Meadow will need to positively contribute to the wider setting of Castlefields and complement the existing suburban vernacular.

### **3.2 Opportunity**

The Council would tender Priory Meadow and be offered a fixed number of homes by the bidders, rather than providing a capital receipt for the purchase of the land. As a benchmark we would expect to see in the region of 96 homes being gifted to the Council. It is important that the quality of the scheme is not jeopardised for quantity. On completion of the homes, the ownership would be transferred to the Council.

The Council would engage a Registered Provider (RP) to provide a complete management and maintenance service, the RP would have full responsibility for lettings, voids, repairs and major works, unless the RP at the outset excluded certain works, i.e. replacement roofs. A lease would be entered into with the RP on a peppercorn rent for 20 years at a time. To select an RP the Council would also tender this aspect of the project. RPs would bid to the Council to deliver this service and in doing so outline their offer of an annual fixed payment to the Council, this would take into account their full costs in managing the homes and the income from rentals. The RP would be in place to take the homes as soon as they were complete, to avoid any liability to the Council and would rent them out.

This route to market would secure a guaranteed revenue income to the Council over the lifetime of the homes, this would be the Council's primary objective. However, if circumstances changed and the Council wanted to generate a capital receipt, there would be nothing preventing the Council from selling the homes. Officers will take members through possible scenarios at the meeting.

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 New homes will make an important contribution to meeting the housing needs of the Borough.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Finance has considered the Gifted Homes option compared with the alternative of receiving a one-off capital receipt from sale of the land. Their evaluation concluded that the Gifted Homes approach is the preferred option in financial terms and it will provide a much needed annual revenue income stream to assist with funding Council services.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

No implications.

### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

No implications.

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

New homes will be provided adjacent to green space.

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

The housing will be well planned to provide natural surveillance.

### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

The Council's Affordable Housing Policy CS13 states "Affordable housing provision will be sought at 25% of the total residential units proposed". Based on the figures presented in this report, the affordable housing element will be in the region of 35%, thus meeting the requirement.

This project will complete the successful regeneration of Castlefields and improve the access arrangements to Norton Priory.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

The Council has undertaken some soft marketing testing and there is interest in this approach from developers. Cheshire West & Chester have used this approach on a number of sites. The Council has appointed a legal advisor who has experience and comes highly recommended in these agreements.

Homes England hold a clawback on the site. We have requested an agreement is reached quickly on the site. Homes England are also keen to see homes built throughout the country.

The RP takes the risk on lettings, therefore there is no risk to the Council in regards to voids. Having said that we want the homes to be fully let as possible to help with the housing shortage.

The homes would be leased to an RP for 20 years at a time. There is a risk that the RP provider goes out of business during this time and is unable to manage the homes. The homes would then revert back to the Council until such time that we could agree terms with a new RP. The Council has no resources to directly manage the homes. We are aware of one RP who operated within Halton going out of business. Whilst it is uncommon, it can happen. RPs are regulated by Homes England and it will be important to ensure we contract with an RP with a good covenant.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

Not applicable.

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	16 September 2021
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Employment, Learning, Skills and Community & Environment and Urban Renewal
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Playing Pitch Strategy
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval to Halton's Playing Pitch Strategy 2021 – 2037 (Appendix 1).

1.2 The Strategy is in two parts: an Assessment Report, (Appendix 2) setting out the latest background information for each sport; and a Strategy and Action Plan, setting out a series of initial recommendations for further consideration.

1.3 Halton's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) sets out the Council's strategy for identifying and meeting the playing pitch and associated facility needs of the Borough from now through to 2037. It considers how well the existing playing pitch provision and associated facilities meet the needs of communities in terms of supply and demand throughout this time period.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS: It is recommended that:**

- 1) the Assessment Report and the accompanying Strategy and Action Plan be approved;
- 2) the Assessment Report and the accompanying Strategy and Action Plan be published on the Council's website; and
- 3) the Halton Playing Pitch Strategy 2021 – 2037 be the basis for making strategic decisions on future playing pitch provision and associated facilities across the Borough.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Council commissioned Knight, Kavanagh and Page Ltd (KKP), specialist sport and leisure consultancy to produce a Playing Pitch Strategy for Halton.

- 3.2 The strategy has been produced in accordance with national planning guidance using the Sport England Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance. The guidance is very rigid in its approach and provides robust and objective justification for future playing pitch provision throughout Halton.
- 3.3 The National Governing Bodies of Sport and Sport England were members of the Council led steering group and were required to sign off the strategy.
- 3.4 The PPS identifies key areas of improvement to address the needs of the different sports and actions to improve existing sites.
- 3.5 The draft PPS formed part of the evidence base required for the emerging Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP), recently considered through the Examination in Public.
- 3.6 The PPS provides an audit of the quality, quantity and accessibility of playing pitches, establishes current levels of demand and whether pitches are being over/under-used.
- 3.7 Using population forecasts, the PPS projects forward demand likely to arise by the end of the strategy period so that the appropriate level of pitch provision can be planned and developed for the future.
- 3.8 The strategy is an enabling document and so does not commit the Council or any other body to funding any of the actions identified.
- 3.9 The Council and its partners are committed to supporting residents to be active.

#### **4.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The strategy is set in the context of the council's corporate plans and sets out how the PPS can help deliver the corporate objectives. It also looks at the changing national picture and priorities for sports and physical activity.
- 4.2 The Site by Site Action Plan identifies there is a need to either protect, provide or enhance existing facilities to address projected deficiencies over the lifespan of the strategy (2021 - 2037). The majority of sites have recommendations to maximise use through improved pitch quality and maintenance. There is also a need to secure long-term community use at some sites, such as schools, to sustain and grow affiliated sport and informal play.
- 4.3 Sports included in the strategy are:

##### **Priority Sports**

- Football
- Cricket
- Rugby League

- Rugby Union
- Hockey

#### **Other Pitch Sports**

- American Football
- Baseball

- 4.4 There is a general requirement to improve pitch quality, especially for grass playing pitches as well as improve the quality of changing provision located alongside pitches. Both poor pitch quality and poor quality changing room provision have a detrimental effect on participation in sport and therefore, is a key issue to address.
- 4.5 The current position for all pitch sports is either demand is being met or that there is a shortfall. The future position shows the creation of shortfalls for some pitch types and in some areas where demand is currently being met as well as the exacerbation of existing shortfalls.
- 4.6 Where shortfalls are not present and demand is being met, this does not necessarily equate to a surplus of provision, with any spare capacity instead considered a solution to overcoming the identified shortfalls. As such, there is a resultant need to protect all existing playing pitch provision until all demand is met, or there is a requirement to replace provision in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.7 There are current shortfalls of 3G pitches, senior rugby union pitches and senior and junior rugby league pitches as well as adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 football pitches. When taking into consideration future demand, existing shortfalls worsen and additional shortfalls arise on mini 5v5 football pitches, cricket pitches (for both senior and junior play) and senior rugby league pitches.
- 4.8 The shortfalls evidenced are relatively minimal when compared to other local authorities nationally. As such, it is considered that shortfalls can be alleviated through the better utilisation of existing provision, such as via pitch re-configuration, improving quality and encouraging or enabling access to unused/unavailable provision. This is particularly the case in relation to football, rugby union and rugby league.
- 4.9 In contrast, a shortfall of 3G pitches can only be met through increased provision. With resources to improve the quality of grass pitches being limited, an increase in 3G provision could also help reduce grass pitch shortfalls through the transfer of play, thus reducing overplay, which in turn can aid pitch quality improvements.
- 4.10 For cricket, in addition to sustaining and improving the quality of existing provision to reduce shortfalls, there is also a need for additional facilities. However, this does not necessarily mean new squares are required. Instead, non-turf pitches (NTPs) could be created to accompany grass wickets or lapsed/disused provision could be reinstated.

- 4.11 Whilst there is a suitable stock of hockey suitable AGPs, there are issues with quality which needs to be resolved. If this does not occur, there will be a need to create a new pitch to cater for demand.
- 4.12 In addition to the many grass roots sport clubs active in the borough, the Council works closely with local partner organisations, such as, Widnes Vikings and Everton Ladies. Some clubs play on Council owned playing pitches and do have active community / grassroots sport development and engagement programmes. They demonstrable willingness to work in partnership for the benefit of the borough.
- 4.13 The PPS provides Planning Officers with an assessment tool and evidence to help protect, mitigate for loss and lever developer contributions towards planned facilities to meet the future needs of a growing population.
- 4.14 All proposed developments for alternative use of playing field land would need to refer to the PPS to help determine what impact the development will have on the current supply and demand of playing field facilities in the area. If alternative plans are to be brought forward, a mitigation plan will need to be agreed and signed off by Sport England and relevant NGB's as statutory consultees for replacement of loss of recreational green space and / or playing field land. In this case, a sum will be agreed to re-provide and /or improve sport facilities in the locality area.
- 4.15 The PPS also highlights the need to ensure adequate provision for increased demand generated by housing developments. Sport England use the evidence base from Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Leisure Strategies to help determine what impact the new development will have on the demand and capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity, or if new provision is required. If there is a case for improvements or new provision, a Section 106 agreement and sum towards the required provision will be agreed before planning approval is granted.
- 4.16 On an annual basis, a review of the PPS will be undertaken and any significant changes reported to Executive Board, to ensure that identified local priorities continue to be achieved. Member engagement will be sought to ensure the local plans are kept up to date.
- 4.17 Officers will be delegated to engage with partners/organisations and tasked with presenting site specific business case and investment plans, for consideration for inclusion in the Councils Capital Programme.

## 5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The protection of sports facilities is a national priority.
- 5.2 The formal adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy will enable the Strategy to carry significant weight in future planning decisions and as evidence for

the Council's emerging Local Plan.

- 5.3 The PPS can support Climate Change objectives in a number of ways. Principally, through partnership working, improving health and wellbeing and supporting, infrastructure and skills.

## 6.0 **FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Strategy will be used by the Council, by Sports Governing Bodies and by individual sports clubs and teams, to support applications to secure additional external funding that would not otherwise be available in the absence of an approved up-to-date strategy

- 6.2 The Strategy will also enable the Council to secure additional private investment through developer contributions when planning applications are being considered and legal agreements negotiated.

- 6.3 The financial commitments arising from the adoption of the Strategy, including projects listed in the initial Action Plan, will need to be further assessed on a case by case basis and will be reported separately for approval as they arise.

## 7.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 High quality and appropriate places to play sport and be active are important in delivering increased participation in sport and physical activity, which is part of the foundation of improving health and wellbeing among Halton residents. However, it is not enough just to have the right facilities in the right places, they also need to be programmed and priced appropriately to ensure that activities are appropriate for specific target groups and that cost is not a barrier to access. The benefits gained from participation and being active contributes towards achieving wider council priorities.

- 7.2 An asset-based approach does not ignore the challenge faced by the borough: Borough activity levels are below county, regional and national averages, as identified in [Active Lives](#). Its 2019/20 survey identifies that 39.8% of adults aged 16+ in Halton are doing less than 30 minutes activity per week. This is a higher level of inactivity than the county (30.6%), regional (29.5%) and national (27.1%) averages.

## 8.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

- 8.1 There is a risk associated with not having open spaces.

- 8.2 A failure to adopt an up-to-date Playing Pitch Strategy could prevent both the Council and facility users from securing resources to provide and improve playing pitches, it would restrict the Council's ability to protect and improve these facilities or secure developer contributions through the statutory land use planning system.



8.3 While there is no direct risk to the Council in adopting the Strategy, the Strategy may have implications if the Council needed to dispose of surplus or disused sports facilities on the Council's own sites.

9.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 The Strategy and Action Plan should have no negative impacts for staff or Service users.

10.0 **REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

10.1 It is important that the Council have an up to date audit and review of all the outdoor sports assets and outdoor facilities including those managed by others.

10.2 The approval of the Strategy, which has been endorsed by Sport England, should reduce the time and cost involved in the determination of planning applications involving playing pitches.

11.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.



# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

**MAY 2021**

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

**Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd**  
Company No: 9145032 (England)

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

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**HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN**

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### ABBREVIATIONS

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
BARLA	British Amateur Rugby League Association
CCB	Cheshire Cricket Board
CFA	Cheshire Football Association
CUA	Community use agreement
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football club
FF	Football Foundation
FE	Further Education
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GMA	Grounds Management Association
HC	Hockey Club
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LCB	Lancashire Cricket Board
LMS	Last Man Stands
LFA	Liverpool Football Association
LFFP	Local Football Facility Plans
MES	Match Equivalent Sessions
MUGA	Multi use games area
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NTP	Non Turf Pitch
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
PQS	Performance Quality Standard
RFL	Rugby Football League
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RUFC	Rugby union football club
S106	Section 106
SE	Sport England
WR	World Rugby

Sport	Club consultation	Site assessments	Affiliation data
Football	January/February 2020	January/February 2020	2019/20
Cricket	September/ October 2020	August 2020	2019
Rugby union	January/February 2020	January/February 2020	2019/20
Rugby league	September/ October 2020	August 2020	2019
Hockey	January/February 2020	January/February 2020	2019/20

Population Data: ONS (2018 based) Sub-national Population Projections.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

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### PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for Halton. Building upon the preceding Assessment Report, it provides a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing playing pitches and accompanying ancillary facilities up to 2037 (in line with the Halton's emerging Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP)).

The Strategy has been developed to provide:

- ◀ A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of playing pitches.
- ◀ A number of aims to help deliver the recommendations and actions.
- ◀ A series of strategic recommendations which provide a strategic framework for the improvement, maintenance, development and, as appropriate, rationalisation of the playing pitch stock.
- ◀ A series of sport by sport recommendations which provide a strategic framework for sport led improvements to provision.
- ◀ A prioritised area-by-area Action Plan to address key issues on a site-by-site basis.

A PPS delivers the evidence required to ensure that sufficient land is available to meet existing and projected future playing pitch requirements. Its robust evidence base should inform and be implemented into planning policy and other relevant corporate strategies to enable local policies, planning and sport development criteria to work efficiently and effectively.

The Strategy's key objective are:

- ◀ To provide a carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs for playing pitches and pitch sports within the borough focusing on quantity and quality issues within the supply and demand equation
- ◀ To provide information to assist asset management planning of council owned playing fields and the associated buildings
- ◀ To provide information to assist in decisions associated with the provision of public playing pitches
- ◀ To provide information to underpin the protection, enhancement and quality improvement of the existing pitch stock and ancillary facilities
- ◀ To map out a process for improvements in community access to educational and non-local authority pitches to achieve an understanding on the nature of ownership of existing provision
- ◀ To consider the revenue implications of maintaining playing pitches and establish a benchmark on revenue and expenditure.
- ◀ To undertake an exercise to classify pitches and associated facilities in the following categories:
  - ◀ Pitches to be developed (new construction)
  - ◀ Pitches to be retained
  - ◀ Pitches to be improved / renovated
  - ◀ Pitches to be considered for alternative uses
- ◀ To develop specific action plans of sites to be improved from developer contributions. It will identify areas of search for new playing pitch provision associated with the sport and locality of the area of need.
- ◀ To review the current supply of AGP's for all sports and provide clear recommendations on where new pitches should be delivered in each sub area
- ◀ To review the quantity and quality of changing room and ancillary support facilities on pitch sites and make recommendations to ensure they are fit for purpose
- ◀ To establish and review ownership of playing pitch sites (e.g. potential for transfer of ownership and/or management to user groups/ community organisations)

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- ◀ To review and identify lapsed/disused sites and assess what their future role should be (allocate for medium-long term future use; improve and bring back into use short term; dispose of for another use)
- ◀ The Steering Group will use a number of scenarios to test the adequacy of current secure pitch provision to meet existing and future demand
- ◀ Develop a process for regular updating and monitoring of the PPS

The Strategy and Action Plan recommends a number of priority projects for Halton which should be realised over the DALP period. It provides a framework for improvement and, although resources may not currently be in place to implement it, potential partners as well as possible sources of external funding.

Partner organisations have a vested interest in ensuring that existing playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities are protected and enhanced. As such, many of the objectives and actions within this document need to be delivered and implemented by a wide range of bodies such as National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), sports organisations, education establishments and parish/town councils. In many instances, the Council will not be the agency which delivers these actions or recommendations; the PPS is not just for the Council to act upon, it applies to/for all of the stakeholders and partners that are involved.

### **Covid-19**

Following the production of the winter sport elements of Assessment Report (covering football, hockey and rugby union), the Country entered into an unprecedented state of lockdown (from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020) as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. With social distancing also required, this understandably led to all sporting activities, including all of those covered in the PPS, to cease until further notice.

Lockdown restrictions began to ease in July/August 2020, leading to a return to play for summer sports such as cricket and rugby league albeit with truncated seasons and new social distance regulations. How this impacted on the production of the PPS is explained in greater detail in the relevant sports sections throughout this document. It is also detailed within the relevant sections of the preceding Assessment Report and has the full agreement of the appropriate NGBs.

It is currently unknown what the future impact of Covid-19 and subsequent and potential future lockdowns will have on participation and the quality/quantity of provision for each sport referenced in the PPS. Therefore, it is acknowledged that this should form a key part of the Stage E process, with the review of the documents ensuring that any recommendations made are still accurate based on future levels of supply and demand.

It is important that there is regular monitoring and review against the actions identified in the original PPS. As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the work being signed off, or the data collection, whichever is sooner, Sport England and NGBs will consider it to be out of date. If the PPS is used as a 'live' document and kept up to date, its lifespan can be extended indefinitely.

### **1.1: Scope**

The following types of outdoor sports facilities were agreed by the steering group for inclusion in the Assessment and Strategy:

- ◀ Football pitches (including 3G pitches)
- ◀ Cricket pitches
- ◀ Rugby league pitches (including 3G pitches)

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- ◀ Rugby union pitches (including 3G pitches)
- ◀ Hockey pitches (sand based AGPs)
- ◀ Other grass pitch sports such as baseball / softball and American football

All facilities are included regardless of ownership and/or management i.e. whether in the public, private, education, or third sector. As far as possible the PPS aims to capture all of the playing pitches within Halton. However, there may be instances, for example, on school or private sites, where access was not possible and has led to omissions within the report (although facilities at sites not accessed are still included within the PPS where provision is known to exist from other data sources). Where pitches have not been recorded within the report they remain as pitches and for planning purposes continue to be so. Furthermore, exclusions of a pitch do not mean that it is not required from a supply and demand point of view.

Pitch sports are assessed using the guidance set out in Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

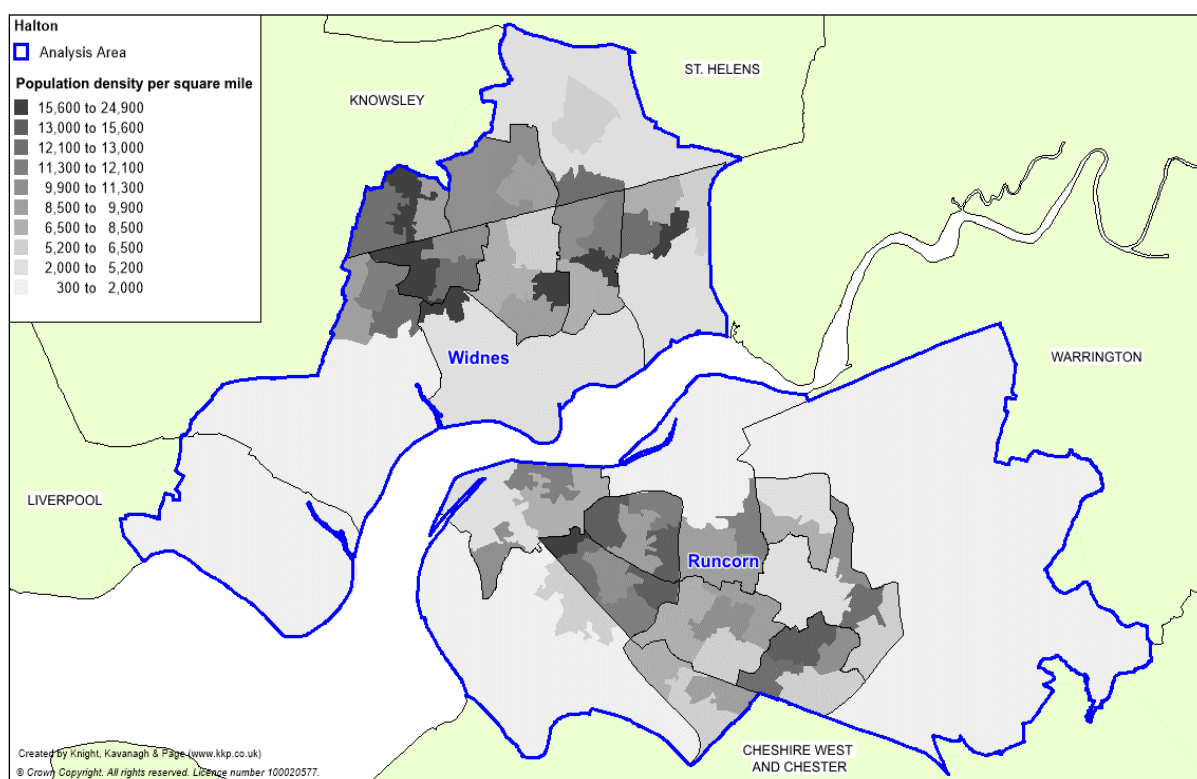
### 1.2: Study area

Although the Strategy reports on Halton as a whole, the Borough has also been divided into its two distinct localities, reflecting the geographical and demographical nature of the area, to allow for further analysis. These are:

- ◀ Runcorn
- ◀ Widnes

The Strategy also examines cross boundary issues to determine the level of imported and exported demand, recognising, for example, that people travel to and make use of strategic facilities irrespective of administrative boundaries. Neighbouring authorities are Cheshire West and Chester, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens and Warrington.

Figure 1.1: Analysis area map



### 1.3: Context

The rationale for undertaking this study is to identify current levels of provision within Halton across the public, education, voluntary and commercial sectors and to compare this with current and likely future levels of demand. The primary purpose of the PPS is therefore to provide a strategic framework that ensures the provision of playing pitch facilities meets the local needs of existing and future residents.

Concern at national government level over the loss of playing fields prompted the development of localised playing pitch assessments and strategies which identify current and future requirements for playing fields.



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

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Developing a strategic approach to the analysis of playing pitch supply and demand is necessary to:

- ◀ Protect playing pitches against development pressures on land in, and around, urban areas.
- ◀ Identify pitch (natural grass and artificial) supply and demand issues in relation to predicated population changes.
- ◀ Address 'demand' pressures created as a result of specific sports development pressures e.g. growth of mini soccer and wider use of artificial grass pitches.
- ◀ To ensure that future investment into facilities is proportionate, delivered at the right time and enhances the overall quality of outdoor sporting assets

This strategy provides an evidence base for planning decisions and funding bids and background evidence to support Local Plan policies in relation to formal recreation. It will ensure that this evidence is sound, robust and capable of being scrutinised through examination and meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

One of the core planning principles of the NPPF is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Section 8 of the NPPF deals specifically with the topic of healthy communities; Paragraph 96 discusses the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation that can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

Paragraphs 96 and 97 discuss assessments and the protection of "existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields". As such, the Halton PPS will provide the evidence required to help protect playing fields to ensure sufficient land is available to meet existing and projected future pitch requirements.

Paragraph 99 and 100 also promote the identification of important green spaces by local communities and the protection of these facilities. Such spaces may include playing fields.

### ***Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP)***

The PPS will support the delivery of outcomes in Halton's emerging Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP), 2014-2037. This was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination in March 2020. The DALP sets out how the Borough has developed over time and introduces the Borough's characteristics, including the issues and challenges that it now faces and those likely to have an impact and drive further change during the period to 2037 and beyond. Key challenges that the plan is seeking to address are to:

- ◀ Respond to the changing population structure including the Borough's ageing population
- ◀ Tackle issues of deprivation and health for the Borough's residents.
- ◀ Deliver and secure a balanced housing offer which is appropriate to local markets and ultimately supports the Borough's economic growth.
- ◀ Continue to create an environment where employers want to invest and create jobs.
- ◀ Attract skilled workers into the Borough and increase the proportion of Halton's working age population with appropriate qualifications.
- ◀ Support the Borough's economic growth sectors including science and technology, and logistics and distribution.
- ◀ Ensure all development is of a high quality of design and that areas of contaminated land are successfully remediated.
- ◀ Maintain and enhance Halton's natural and heritage assets including its sites of local, national, and international importance, waterside environments and distinctive character

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

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- ◀ Protect, enhance and, where appropriate, expand the Borough's green infrastructure network.
- ◀ Put in place mitigation and adaptation measures to deal with the threat of climate change.
- ◀ Utilise resources sustainably.
- ◀ Reduce congestion and support travel by sustainable modes.
- ◀ Maintain and enhance the retail and leisure offer of Widnes Town Centre, Shopping City and Runcorn Old Town.
- ◀ Minimise and respond to the potential risk of major accidents, flooding, contamination and pollution.

The DALP also sets out a vision, stating that "Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods."

A series of 13 strategic objectives are identified to help deliver the vision. These are:

- ◀ SO1 - Create and support attractive, accessible and adaptable residential neighbourhoods where people want to live.
- ◀ SO2 - Provide good quality, affordable accommodation and a wide mix of housing types to create balanced communities.
- ◀ SO3 - Create and sustain a competitive and diverse business environment offering a variety of quality sites and premises, with an emphasis on the revitalisation of existing vacant and underused employment areas.
- ◀ SO4 - Further develop Halton's economy around the logistics and distribution sector, and expand the science, creative and knowledge-based business clusters.
- ◀ SO5 - Maintain and enhance Halton's town, district, and local centres to create high quality retail and leisure areas that meet the needs of the local community, and positively contribute to the image of the Borough.
- ◀ SO6 - Ensure all development is supported by the timely provision of adequate infrastructure, with sufficient capacity to accommodate additional future growth.
- ◀ SO7 - Provide accessible travel options for people and freight, ensuring a better connected, less congested and more sustainable Halton.
- ◀ SO8 - Ensure that all development achieves high standards of design and sustainability and provides a positive contribution to its locality.
- ◀ SO9 - Minimise Halton's contribution to climate change through reducing carbon emissions and ensure the Borough is resilient to the adverse effects of climate change
- ◀ SO10 - Support the conservation and enhancement of the historic and natural environment including designated sites and species and the Borough's green infrastructure in order to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits.
- ◀ SO11 - Improve the health and well-being of Halton's residents throughout each of their life stages, through supporting the achievement of healthy lifestyles and healthy environments for all.
- ◀ SO12 - Prevent harm and nuisance to people and biodiversity from potential sources of pollution and foreseeable risks.
- ◀ SO13 - Support sustainable and effective waste and minerals management, reducing the waste generated and contributing to the maintenance of appropriate mineral reserves

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

### ***Future demand***

Alongside current demand, it is important for a PPS to assess whether the future demand for playing pitches can be met. Using Office of National Statistics (ONS) population projections and proposed housing growth, as well as likely participation growth informed through consultation, an estimate can be made of the likely future demand for playing pitches.

Team generation rates are used to provide an indication of how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group). This ratio is then applied to population growth to help estimate the change in demand for pitch sports that may arise in the future.

Other information sources that were used to help identify future demand include:

- ◀ Recent trends in the participation.
- ◀ The nature of the current and likely future population and their propensity to participate including the use of Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator.
- ◀ Feedback from clubs on their plans to develop additional teams / attract additional members.
- ◀ Any local and NGB specific sports development targets (e.g. increase in participation).

For the base year population ONS 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimates for Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) by single year of age and sex have been used. This was used to calculate the current population for each age group for each sport, for example, in Halton there were 21,198 Men aged 18-45 in 2018 (football).

To get the percentage change ONS 2016-based Subnational Population Projections (SNPP) for Local Authorities by single year of age and sex was used. Then the number of people in each sport age group for both 2018 and 2037 was calculated, and then worked out the percentage change between the two years, this percentage was then applied to the ONS mid-year population estimates, for example, for Men aged 18-45 (football) the percentage change is -2.5%.

*Table 1.1: Future population calculations*

Local Authority	2018 (ONS MYE) Men aged 18-45	2018 (SNPP) Men aged 18-45	2037 (SNPP) Men aged 18-45	% Change 2018 to 2037 (SNNPP)	% Change applied to ONS 2018 MYE
Halton	21,198	21,113	20,595	-2.5%	20,677

The final figure (20,677) is then used in the team generation rate calculations.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

### 1.4: Headline findings

The table overleaf highlights the quantitative headline findings identified for all main pitch sports included in the preceding Assessment Report. For qualitative findings and site-specific findings, please see Part 4: Sport Specific Recommendations and Scenarios, and Part 6: Action Plan.

When determining quantitative findings, Match Equivalent Sessions (MES) are used as the comparable unit; converting both the amount of play a site can accommodate (its carrying capacity) and how much play takes place there (its current use) into the same unit of demand enables a comparison to be undertaken. Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected. As the main usage of pitches is for matches, it is appropriate for the comparable unit to be MES.

Based on how matches tend to be played, the unit for football, rugby union and rugby league pitches relates to a typical week within the season, whereas for cricket pitches, it is appropriate to look at the number of MES over the course of a season. How much play a cricket pitch can accommodate is primarily determined by the number and quality of wickets on a pitch, with only one match generally played per pitch per day. As play is rotated across the wickets to reduce wear and to allow for repair, each wicket is able to accommodate a certain amount of play per season as opposed to per week.

For artificial surfaces (AGPs and 3G pitches), how much play can be accommodated is primarily determined by availability, rather than how much play can be accommodated before quality is adversely affected. Therefore, whole pitches are used as the comparable unit.

Table 1.2: Quantitative headline findings

Sport	Analysis area	Current demand (2019)		Future demand (2037)
		Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES <sup>[1]</sup>	Future capacity total in MES
Football (grass pitches)	Runcorn	Adult	Shortfall of 1	Shortfall of 1.5
		Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 4.5	Shortfall of 5.5
		Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 4.5
		Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1
		Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 1	Shortfall of 2
	Widnes	Adult	Spare capacity of 5	Spare capacity of 3
		Youth 11v11	Spare capacity of 4	Spare capacity of 2
		Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 2.5
		Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1
		Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 2	Shortfall of 2.5
Football (3G pitches) <sup>[2]</sup>	Runcorn	Full size	Shortfall of 2 full sized 3G pitch for team training	Shortfall of 2 full sized 3G pitch for team training
	Widnes		At capacity	At capacity

<sup>[1]</sup> MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

<sup>[2]</sup> Based on accommodating 38 teams on one full size pitch

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Sport	Analysis area	Current demand (2019)		Future demand (2037)
		Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES <sup>[1]</sup>	Future capacity total in MES
Cricket	Runcorn	Saturday PM	At capacity	Shortfall of 14
		Sunday PM	Spare capacity of 8	At capacity
		Junior	At capacity	Shortfall of 4
	Widnes	Saturday PM	At capacity	Shortfall of 14
		Sunday PM	Spare capacity of 8	At capacity
		Junior	At capacity	Shortfall of 8
Rugby union	Runcorn	Senior	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 1.5
	Widnes	Senior	Shortfall of 1.75	Shortfall of 2
Hockey <sup>1</sup> (sand AGPs)	Halton	Full size	Adequate provision (however quality needs to be improved)	Adequate provision (however quality needs to be improved)
Rugby league	Runcorn	Senior	At capacity	Shortfall of 0.5
		Junior	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
	Widnes	Senior	At capacity	At capacity
		Junior	Shortfall of 5.25	Shortfall of 6.75
Baseball/Softball	Halton	Baseball	Adequate provision	Adequate provision
American football	Halton	Baseball	Adequate provision	Adequate provision

### Conclusions

From a quantitative perspective, the existing position for all sports is either that demand is being met or that there is a shortfall, whereas the future position shows the creation of shortfalls for some pitch types and in some areas where demand is currently being met as well as the exacerbation of existing shortfalls.

Where shortfalls are not present and demand is being met, this does not necessarily equate to a surplus of provision, with any spare capacity instead considered to be a solution to overcoming the identified shortfalls. As such, there is a resultant need to protect all existing playing pitch provision until all demand is met, or there is a requirement to replace provision in accordance with the NPPF.

There are current shortfalls of 3G pitches, senior rugby union pitches and senior and junior rugby league pitches as well as adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 football pitches in at least one of the two analysis areas. When taking into consideration future demand, existing shortfalls worsen and additional shortfalls arise on mini 5v5 football pitches, cricket pitches (for both senior and junior play) and senior rugby league pitches.

Despite the above, it must be noted that the shortfalls evidenced are relatively minimal when compared to other local authorities nationally. As such, for the most part, it is considered that shortfalls can be alleviated through the better utilisation of existing provision, such as via pitch re-configuration, improving quality and encouraging or enabling access to unused/unavailable provision. This is particularly the case in relation to football, rugby union and rugby league.

<sup>1</sup> Due to the limited amount of hockey demand and provision across the Borough it has been summarised in the table across the authority as a whole rather than by Analysis Area.

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In contrast, a shortfall of 3G pitches can only be met through increased provision. With resources to improve the quality of grass pitches being limited, an increase in 3G provision could also help reduce grass pitch shortfalls through the transfer of play, thus reducing overplay, which in turn can aid pitch quality improvements.

For cricket, in addition to sustaining and improving the quality of existing provision to reduce shortfalls, there is also a need for additional facilities. However, this does not necessarily mean new squares are required. Instead, non-turf pitches (NTPs) could be created to accompany grass wickets or lapsed/disused provision could be reinstated.

Whilst there is a suitable stock of hockey suitable AGPs, there are issues with quality which needs to be resolved. If this does not occur, there will be a need to create a new pitch to cater for demand.

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### PART 2: VISION

#### Vision

Below is a vision for Halton which sets out to capture the corporate themes within the authority to provide an all-encompassing concept including outdoor sporting facilities.

“Improve the health and well-being of Halton’s residents throughout each of their life stages, through supporting the achievement of healthy lifestyles and healthy environments for all.”

To achieve this Vision, the strategy seeks to deliver the following objectives:

- ◀ To provide a carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs for playing pitches and pitch sports within the borough focusing on quantity and quality issues within the supply and demand equation
- ◀ To provide information to assist asset management planning of council owned playing fields and the associated buildings
- ◀ To provide information to assist in decisions associated with the provision of public playing pitches
- ◀ To provide information to underpin the protection, enhancement and quality improvement of the existing pitch stock and ancillary facilities
- ◀ To map out a process for improvements in community access to educational and non-local authority pitches to achieve an understanding on the nature of ownership of existing provision
- ◀ To consider the revenue implications of maintaining playing pitches and establish a benchmark on revenue and expenditure.
- ◀ To undertake an exercise to classify pitches and associated facilities in the following categories:
  - ◀ Pitches to be developed (new construction)
  - ◀ Pitches to be retained
  - ◀ Pitches to be improved / renovated
  - ◀ Pitches to be considered for alternative uses
- ◀ To develop specific action plans of sites to be improved from developer contributions. It will identify areas of search for new playing pitch provision associated with the sport and locality of the area of need.
- ◀ To review the current supply of AGP’s for all sports and provide clear recommendations on where new pitches should be delivered in each sub area
- ◀ To review the quantity and quality of changing room and ancillary support facilities on pitch sites and make recommendations to ensure they are fit for purpose
- ◀ To establish and review ownership of playing pitch sites (e.g. potential for transfer of ownership and/or management to user groups/ community organisations)
- ◀ To review and identify lapsed/disused sites and assess what their future role should be (allocate for medium-long term future use; improve and bring back into use short term; dispose of for another use)
- ◀ The Steering Group will use a number of scenarios to test the adequacy of current secure pitch provision to meet existing and future demand
- ◀ Develop a process for regular updating and monitoring of the PPS



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### PART 3: AIMS

The following overarching aims are based on three of the Sport England Planning for Sport objectives. It is recommended that they are adopted by the Council and partners to enable delivery of the overall PPS vision and Sport England Planning for Sports Principles<sup>2</sup>.

#### AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities where it is needed to meet current and future needs.

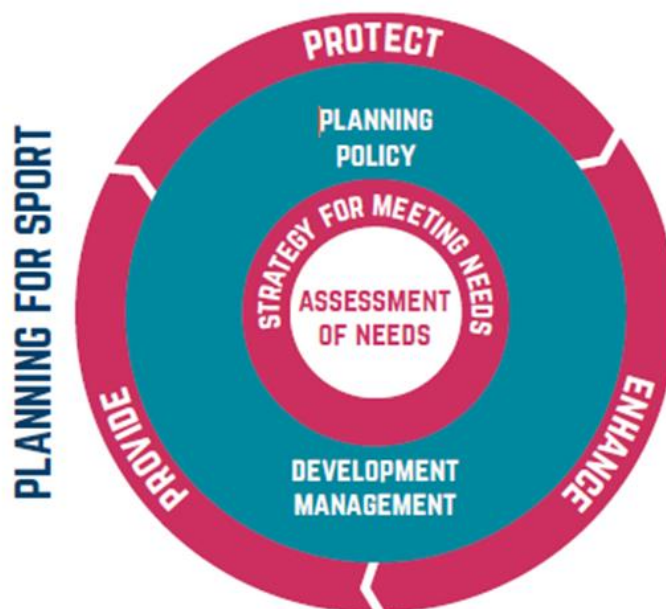
#### AIM 2

To **enhance** outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites.

#### AIM 3

To **provide** new outdoor sport facilities where there is current or future demand to do so.

Figure 3.1: Sport England Objectives



Source: Sport England, Planning for Sport Guidance (June 2019)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport>



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### PART 4: SPORT SPECIFIC ISSUES SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to help develop the recommendations/actions and to understand their potential impact, a number of relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues in this section for each playing pitch sport, resulting in sport specific recommendations.

**It should be noted that there have been some updates since the production of the Assessment Report and this report provided by the NGBs and the Council. These will be outlined in the Action Plan in bold text.**

#### 4.1: Football - grass pitches

##### *Supply and demand summary*

- ◀ It is determined that there is current minimal spare capacity on adult, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches; however, there is a shortfall of youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches.
- ◀ After factoring in future demand, shortfalls become evident on mini 5v5 pitches and worsen on youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches.
- ◀ Actual spare capacity totals 15.5 MES per week across 29 pitches and eight sites.
- ◀ A total of 14 pitches across seven sites are overplayed by a combined total of 13 MES per week.

##### *Supply summary*

- ◀ The audit identifies a total of 111 grass football pitches within Halton across 40 sites, with 97 pitches available for community use across 26 sites.
- ◀ The Council reports it has two sites which it is currently not marking out for football but that it will reinstate if the relevant demand arises (Arley Drive Playing Fields and Hale Park).
- ◀ Runcorn Linnets FC has received a grant from the Football Foundation to replace its stadia grass pitch and replace it with a hybrid pitch (Installed Summer 2020).
- ◀ Tenure of sites in Halton is generally secure i.e. through a long-term lease or a guarantee that pitches will continue to be provided over the next three years; however, Brookvale United FC and Beechwood JFC report issues.
- ◀ Widnes FC reports plans to develop a new ground with accompanying facilities, suitable for the football pyramid.
- ◀ In total, two community available pitches are assessed as good quality, 54 as standard quality and 41 as poor quality.
- ◀ Most ancillary facilities accompanying grass football pitches across the Borough is standard or good quality.
- ◀ Although ancillary facilities servicing Woodside Playing Fields, Runcorn Heath Playing Fields and Leigh Recreation Playing Fields are rated as standard quality, the clubs using the facilities report there is a general need for modernisation.

##### *Demand summary*

- ◀ Through the audit and assessment, 232 teams from within 36 clubs are identified as playing within Halton, consisting of 36 adult men's, five adult women's, 89 youth boys', 8 youth girls' and 94 mini teams.
- ◀ Most clubs which express latent demand indicate they would be able to increase the number of teams if they have access to more or better training provision including the use of floodlit 3G pitches.
- ◀ Through the clubs that quantified potential future demand, there is a predicted growth of 25 teams, whilst team generation rates predict a growth of three youth 11v11 teams.

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### Scenarios

#### *Alleviating shortfalls*

In the Borough there is capacity to accommodate current levels of demand on adult, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches, whereas there are shortfalls across youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitch types. When accounting for future demand, shortfalls also become evident on mini 5v5 pitches. The overall supply and demand analysis by area is shown below.

*Table 4.1: Summary of current and future pitch shortfalls by Analysis Area*

Football						
Analysis area	Pitch type	Demand (MES per week)				
		Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Runcorn	Adult	-	1	1	0.5	1.5
	Youth 11v11	-	4.5	4.5	1	5.5
	Youth 9v9	-	4	4	0.5	4.5
	Mini 7v7	1	-	1	-	1
	Mini 5v5	1	-	1	3	2
Widnes	Adult	6	1	5	2	3
	Youth 11v11	4	-	4	2	2
	Youth 9v9	0.5	2.5	2	0.5	2.5
	Mini 7v7	1	-	1	-	1
	Mini 5v5	2	-	2	4.5	2.5

Alleviating this level of shortfall can be achieved through a variety of methods including securing tenure at educational sites, improving pitch quality at overplayed and poor quality pitches and reinstatement of unused provision. The extent to which each of these has on addressing the shortfalls is explored in greater detail below.

#### *Securing access to education sites*

Education sites generally accommodate large areas of playing field and playing pitches. However, as tenure on these sites is generally considered to be unsecure, potential spare capacity has been discounted from the supply and demand analysis within the Assessment Report, even where community use is offered. Therefore, securing access to these sites could provide an opportunity to help address future shortfalls across Halton.

There are three community available education sites in the Borough that contain football pitches that are at least standard quality (and therefore not discounted for any other reason). These all have the potential to help address shortfalls if access can be secured through community use agreements (CUA), with a total of five MES of spare capacity able to be generated.

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Table 4.2: Summary of actual spare capacity at educational sites with community access

Football					
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	Number of pitches	Amount of peak time spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure <sup>3</sup>
9	Cronton Sixth Form College	Widnes	Adult	2	2
56	Wade Deacon High School	Widnes	Youth 11v11	2	2
60	Weston Point Community Primary School	Runcorn	Mini 7v7	1	1

Notwithstanding the above, there are currently no shortfalls of the pitch types at the three schools in the analysis areas that they are situated in, meaning no shortfalls would reduce albeit additional spare capacity would be created. That being said, in addition to securing access to the schools, there could also be an option to reconfigure the pitch types so that shortfalls are reduced. For example, one of the adult pitches at Cronton Sixth Form College and one of the youth 11v11 pitches at Wade Deacon High School could be converted to a youth 9v9 pitch, of which there is a shortfall in the Widnes Analysis Area. This could also better satisfy school users of the pitches.

One issue with this scenario is that it is often difficult to engage schools to agree to providing a CUA, with the providers generally wanting the flexibility to prioritise and protect their stock for curricular and extra-curricular usage. Partners to the Council can assist in this, such as relevant NGBs, particularly where the schools may want and benefit from a funding agreement. Secured access can be tied into the agreement through the terms and conditions.

### *Securing access and improving pitch quality at education sites*

In addition to having unsecure tenure, it should also be noted that four education sites accommodate one or more poor quality pitch. If quality was to be improved at these sites in addition to securing tenure, additional capacity across Halton would be created.

Table 4.3: Summary of community available poor quality pitches at education sites

Football					
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	Number of pitches	Amount of peak time spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure
11	Daresbury County Primary School	Runcorn	(5v5)	1	1
15	Grange Academy	Runcorn	(11v11)	1	0.5
58	Westfield Primary School	Runcorn	(5v5)	1	1
58	Westfield Primary School	Runcorn	(9v9)	1	0.5

If all this spare capacity could be secured, in addition to pitch quality improvements, future shortfalls in the Runcorn Analysis Area on youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches would be reduced to 3.5 MES, whereas future shortfalls of mini 5v5 pitches would be fully alleviated.

<sup>3</sup> Match equivalent sessions

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### *Improving pitch quality of overplayed pitches*

In total there are 13 pitches overplayed in Halton across six sites equating to 12 MES. Improving quality of such provision (i.e. through increased maintenance or improved drainage) will increase capacity at the sites and as a consequence reduce both current and future shortfalls. As a reminder, the capacity rating for each type and quality rating is:

<b>Football</b>					
<b>Adult pitches</b>		<b>Youth pitches</b>		<b>Mini pitches</b>	
<b>Pitch quality</b>	<b>Matches per week</b>	<b>Pitch quality</b>	<b>Matches per week</b>	<b>Pitch quality</b>	<b>Matches per week</b>
Good	3	Good	4	Good	6
Standard	2	Standard	2	Standard	4
Poor	1	Poor	1	Poor	2

Table 4.4 overleaf highlights that all current levels of overplay would be alleviated if quality improved to good at each site, whereas only three of the sites would contain overplayed pitches if quality improved to (or stayed at) standard.

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Table 4.4: Improving quality of overplayed football pitches

Football									
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Current quality	Current Capacity rating <sup>4</sup>	Standard capacity rating	Good capacity rating	Spare capacity in peak period
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields	Runcorn	Youth 11v11	2	Poor	3	1	3	-
			Youth 9v9	1	Poor	2	1	1	-
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	Youth 9v9	1	Poor	0.5	0.5	2.5	0.5
30	Millbank Linnets Stadium	Runcorn	Youth 11v11	2	Standard	1.5	1.5	2.5	-
			Youth 9v9	1	Standard	1	1	1	-
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Adult	2	Poor	1	1	3	1
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	Adult	3	Poor	1	2	5	0.5
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Widnes	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	2	2		-

If all overplayed pitches were improved to standard quality, total overplay in the Borough would reduce from 12 to 6.5 MES across Haddocks Wood Playing Fields, Millbank Linnets Stadium and St Peter & St Paul Catholic College.

Conversely, if all overplayed pitches were to be improved to good quality, all overplay would be alleviated, with actual spare capacity generated at King George V Playing Fields, Moorfield Sports and Social Club and Runcorn Heath Playing Field. Table 4.5 overleaf identifies the impact this would have on the overall supply and demand balance in the Borough.

<sup>4</sup> Match equivalent sessions

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Table 4.5: Summary of supply and demand balance if overplayed pitches were improved to good quality

Football						
Analysis area	Pitch type	Demand (MES per week)				
		Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Runcorn	Adult	-	-	-	0.5	0.5
	Youth 11v11	-	-	-	1	1
	Youth 9v9	-	-	-	0.5	0.5
	Mini 7v7	1	-	1	-	1
	Mini 5v5	1	-	1	3	2
Widnes	Adult	6	-	5	2	3
	Youth 11v11	4	-	4	2	2
	Youth 9v9	0.5	-	0.5	0.5	-
	Mini 7v7	1	-	1	-	1
	Mini 5v5	2	-	2	4.5	2.5

As seen, all existing shortfalls would be eradicated, whereas future shortfalls would significantly reduce in both analysis areas. Overall shortfalls in Runcorn would reduce from 13.5 MES to four MES, whilst the reduction in Widnes would be from nine MES to 4.5.

Enhancing pitch quality should not just be limited to overplayed sites, it should also be considered as an option for all poor quality pitches. This is because capacity is currently discounted at such sites due to the quality issues and because an improvement in quality is likely to result in an increase in demand. The table below examines the potential additional capacity at peak time that could be obtained.

Table 4.6: Summary of discounted peak time spare capacity due to poor quality

Football					
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Spare capacity in peak period <sup>5</sup>
10	Crow Wood Park	Widnes	Youth 11v11	1	1
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields	Runcorn	Adult	2	2
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	Adult	3	2
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	Mini 7v7	1	0.5
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	Youth 11v11	2	2

If the above pitches were to be improved to a standard or good quality, it would create an additional four MES of spare capacity on adult pitches, three MES on youth 11v11 pitches and 0.5 MES on mini 7v7 pitches.

This would alleviate Borough wide shortfalls on adult and youth 11v11 pitches, whilst creating additional capacity on mini 7v7 pitches.

<sup>5</sup> Match equivalent sessions

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### *Reinstatement of unused pitches*

As mentioned in the preceding Assessment Report, there are two sites which previously accommodated football pitches, which, if reinstated, could alleviate current and future levels of shortfalls across the Widnes Analysis Area. The table below identifies the sites and the previous pitch configurations.

*Table 4.7: Potential capacity created by reinstating provision*

<b>Football</b>					
<b>Site ID</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Pitch type</b>	<b>Number of pitches</b>	<b>Spare capacity created at peak period (MES)</b>
1	Arley Drive Playing Fields	Widnes	1	Mini 5v5	1
			1	Mini 7v7	1
			1	Youth 9v9	1
18	Hale Park	Widnes	1	Adult	1
			1	Youth 11v11	1

If the pitches at Arley Drive Playing Fields and Hale Park are re-provided to a minimum of standard quality to the configuration set out in the table above, it would alleviate current Borough wide shortfalls on adult and youth 11v11 pitches whilst reducing overall overplay on youth 9v9 pitches from six to five MES. In regards to mini pitches, additional capacity would be created on mini 7v7 pitches whereas the future shortfall on mini 5v5 pitches would be reduced from 4.5 to 3.5 MES.

### *Local Football Facilities Plan*

The Local Football Facilities Plan (November 2020) identified several key projects 3G, grass pitch improvements and ancillary provisions enhancements. These are as follows:

#### *Pitch Improvements*

- ◀ Frank Myler Pavilion
- ◀ Haddocks Wood Playing Fields
- ◀ King George V Playing Fields
- ◀ Leigh Recreation Playing Fields
- ◀ Wilmere Lane Playing Fields
- ◀ Runcorn Heath Playing Field

As an update from the CFA reports Wilmere Lane Playing Fields has recently received grant funding to improve pitch quality. If this takes place when scheduled it can be removed from the LFFP when it is updated. All the remaining projects are still identified within the PPS as required.

#### *Ancillary provision improvements*

- ◀ Haddocks Wood Playing Fields
- ◀ Leigh Recreation Playing Fields

Both of these projects are identified in the PPS as still being required. In addition, depending on when the LFFP is updated there will be a need to improve provision at King George V Playing Fields, if deemed necessary by the Council. This is due to the clubhouse being badly affected by a burst pipe.

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### *Full size 3G provision*

- ◀ Frank Myler Pavilion
- ◀ Runcorn Analysis Area

Both of these projects are identified in the PPS as still being required. It should be noted that during consultation for the PPS it has been identified that the best suited site for a 3G AGP in the Runcorn Analysis Area would be at Brookvale Recreation Centre through the conversion of the poor quality sand based AGP.

### **Recommendations**

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of pitches (including lapsed and disused provision) until all demand is being met (unless replacement provision meets Sport England requirements and is agreed upon and provided before a loss occurs).
- ◀ Sustain pitch quality and seek improvements where necessary via utilisation of the FA's grass pitch improvement resources.
- ◀ Where pitches are overplayed and assessed as poor or standard quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality.
- ◀ Transfer play from sites which remain overplayed to alternative sites with spare capacity or to sites which are not currently available for community use.
- ◀ Explore opportunities to gain long-term access to sites not currently offering secured use or where community use is not currently offered.
- ◀ Explore opportunities to provide clubs with long term tenure on sites if it is logistically feasible, sustainable and beneficial for all stakeholders.
- ◀ Work to accommodate future demand at sites which are not operating at capacity or at sites not currently available for community use that could be moving forward.
- ◀ Improve ancillary facilities where this is a clear need to do so.
- ◀ Ensure clubs playing within, or with aspirations to play within, the football pyramid can progress.
- ◀ Monitor the utilisation of the hybrid pitch at Millbank Linnets Stadium.
- ◀ If future demand warrants, look to reinstate pitch provision at Arley Drive Playing Fields and Hale Park when suitable and ensure appropriate pitch configuration.

## **4.2: Third Generation turf pitches**

### ***Supply and demand summary***

- ◀ There is an insufficient supply of full size 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated future demand for football in Halton in both the Runcorn and Widnes areas.
- ◀ There is no apparent demand for access to a World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant pitch for rugby union.
- ◀ There is limited apparent demand for access to a World Rugby Regulation 22 or RFL compliant pitches for rugby union or rugby league.

### ***Supply summary***

- ◀ There are four full size 3G pitches in Halton: three in Widnes and one in Runcorn.
- ◀ In addition, there is one smaller sized floodlit 3G pitch at Sandymoor School (measuring 88x56 metres).
- ◀ Despite being available to the community, the pitches at Grange Academy, Wade Deacon High School and Sandymoor School are unavailable at weekends.
- ◀ All community available full size 3G pitches in Halton are managed internally at education sites.



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- ◀ The majority of 3G provision currently servicing Halton is reported as operating at or close to capacity at peak times, especially during winter months.

### Quality summary

- ◀ Two of the full size 3G pitches are good quality (DCBL Stadium Halton and Ormiston Chadwick Academy), with the remaining two pitches rated as standard quality.
- ◀ The full size 3G pitches at DCBL Stadium Halton and Ormiston Chadwick Academy are both FIFA certified.
- ◀ The pitch at DCBL Stadium Halton is World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant.

### Scenarios

#### *Accommodating football training demand*

Identified in the Assessment report, through dialogue with the Council, football clubs, County Football Associations and the Football Foundation, there is a need to create one full size 3G pitch each in the Widnes and Runcorn analysis areas.

#### *Creating additional full size 3G pitches for football*

In the Widnes Analysis Area, the key site for football is Frank Myler Pavilion as this accommodates demand from one of the largest clubs in Halton (Pex Hill FC) in addition to demand from Ditton Athletic FC, Halton Borough Wolves FC and St Michaels DH FC. It is therefore considered to be the best location for 3G provision, although any investment should also acknowledge other sporting demand at the site i.e. rugby union and rugby league.

The best location for a full size 3G pitch in the Runcorn Analysis Area is anticipated to be at Brookvale Recreation Centre, via the conversion of the poor quality AGP currently on site. This project is still being discussed by relevant stakeholders, with the development of an application already in progress. CFA indicates that it is expecting an application in April 2021 with a potential opening in the first half 2022. If it does not come to fruition, anecdotal evidence suggests that other potential options are Runcorn Heath Playing Fields or Haddocks Wood Playing Fields.

#### *Moving match play to 3G pitches*

To further the use of 3G pitches for matches, the FA is particularly keen to work with local authorities to understand the potential demand for full size floodlit 3G pitches should all competitive matches that are currently played on council pitches be transferred. The following table therefore calculates the number of teams currently using local authority facilities in Halton for each pitch type at peak time.

*Table 4.8: Number of teams currently using council pitches (peak time)*

Football			
Pitch type	Pitch size	Peak period	No. of teams
Adult	11v11	Saturday PM	17
Youth	11v11	Saturday AM	27
Youth	9v9	Saturday AM	13
Mini	7v7	Saturday AM	21
Mini	5v5	Saturday AM	22
<b>Total</b>			<b>100</b>

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The FA suggests an approach for estimating the number of full size, floodlit 3G pitches required to accommodate the above demand for competitive matches, as seen below.

*Table 4.9: Full size 3G pitches required for the transfer of council pitch demand*

3G					
Format	No. teams at peak time	No. matches at peak time	3G units per match	Total units required formats	Total amount of 3G pitches required
Adult	17	8.5	32	272	4.25
11v11	27	13.5	32	432	6.75
9v9	13	6.5	10	65	1.01
7v7	21	11	8	84	1.31
5v5	22	13	4	44	0.68

Given that peak time is the same for youth 11v11, youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5, the number of 3G pitches required for these pitch types needs totalling together. This equates to demand for 10 full size 3G pitches (rounded up from 9.75). However, as this figure is substantially higher than the number of 3G pitches required to accommodate current and future training needs, it suggests that it is not a feasible option as creating so many 3G pitches will result in the stock being unsustainable (as midweek demand would be limited). As such, a less intensive approach could be to transfer specific forms of demand e.g. mini demand and youth 9v9 demand, with only three pitches being required for this.

### **Recommendations**

- ◀ Protect current stock of 3G pitches.
- ◀ Ensure issues surrounding community access of the pitch at Sandymoor School are resolved.
- ◀ Create two additional full size 3G pitches to alleviate football shortfalls with one each in Widnes and Runcorn.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches have CUAs in place.
- ◀ Ensure all current and future providers have in place a sinking fund to ensure long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches take into consideration rugby union and rugby league requirements, where applicable, when they are constructed.
- ◀ Ensure that all new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA/RFU/RFL recommended dimensions and quality performance standards.
- ◀ Encourage more match play demand to transfer to 3G pitches and ensure that pitches remain suitable to accommodate such demand through appropriate certification when it is required.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches are priced competitively against the cost of hiring a grass pitches and are aimed at local grassroots clubs, with associated sinking funds established.
- ◀ Ensure discussions take place between the Council, EH, SE, County FAs and FF before any conversion or creation of new provision in order to understand the potential effect on the sustainability of existing AGP stock.

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### 4.3: Cricket pitches

#### ***Supply and demand summary***

- ◀ Using 2019 demand data, cricket in Halton is currently played to capacity for Saturday PM and midweek cricket, whereas there is spare capacity to accommodate one additional team on each square on Sunday PM.
- ◀ Future demand cannot currently be accommodated on a Saturday PM or midweek. This being said summer junior (softball) fixtures can be played on the outfield so there could be capacity midweek to accommodate U9s games simultaneously.

#### ***Supply summary***

- ◀ There are two active grass wicket squares in Halton located across two sites: Runcorn Sports Club and Widnes Cricket Club.
- ◀ There have been previous grass squares maintained at Birchfield Sports and Social Club and Moorfields Sports and Social Club. Both are now disused.
- ◀ In Halton, there is just one NTP that accompanies the grass wicket square at Widnes Cricket Club (Good quality), in addition to one standalone NTP located at Cronton Sixth Form College (Poor quality).
- ◀ Both clubs have secure tenure with Widnes CC having a freehold at Widnes Cricket Club and Runcorn CC having recently obtained a new long term lease (30 years) at Runcorn Sports Club.
- ◀ The non-technical assessment of grass wicket squares in Halton found both squares to be good quality.
- ◀ The audit of ancillary facilities determines that both sites currently accessed for affiliated cricket in Halton are accompanied by good quality changing rooms.
- ◀ Both sites used by affiliated cricket clubs in Halton are serviced by fixed bay practice nets, these being Runcorn Sports Club and Widnes Cricket Club. Despite this each club indicates a need for additional training facilities.

#### ***Demand summary***

- ◀ There are two cricket clubs playing in Halton: Runcorn CC and Widnes CC. In 2019 each club fielded three senior men's teams and six junior boys' teams generating a total of 18 teams.
- ◀ In comparison, during the truncated 2020 season, both clubs fielded the same number of teams, however, Runcorn CC had a reduction of two junior boys' teams but developed one junior girls' team and one senior women's team.
- ◀ Widnes CC reports aspirations to increase its levels of participation by one senior men's team and two junior teams. In comparison Runcorn CC reports aspirations for one senior men's and one senior women's team.

#### ***Scenarios***

##### *Creating additional capacity for future demand*

As seen in the table below, cricket across Halton is finely balanced with provision on Saturdays and during midweek at capacity and with only minimal levels of spare capacity available for additional cricket on Sundays. When considering future demand from ECB initiatives such as Dynamos and All Stars, in addition to club aspirations, shortfalls become evident on Saturdays and during midweek, whereas Sundays would be played to capacity.

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Table 4.10: Current and future capacity for cricket across Halton

Cricket					
Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Demand (match sessions per season)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Future total
<b>Saturday PM</b>					
Runcorn	-	-		14	14
Widnes	-	-		14	14
<b>Total</b>	-	-		<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Sunday PM</b>					
Runcorn	8	-	8	8	
Widnes	8	-	8	8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	-	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
<b>Junior (Midweek)</b>					
Runcorn	-	-		4	4
Widnes	-	-		8	8
<b>Total</b>	-	-		<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>

### Saturday PM

For any new teams to be established on Saturdays, there would be a need to either create new or reinstate disused cricket provision.

Alternatively, if disused cricket provision can not be reinstated, the only remaining options would be for the clubs to either use provision outside of the Borough or for the future demand to play outside of peak time (i.e. on Sundays). However, the latter approach could have consequences on capacity for women's and junior cricket.

### Sunday PM

There is current spare capacity on Sundays to accommodate one additional team at both Widnes Cricket Club and Runcorn Cricket Club. This would allow for the anticipated future demand of one women's team to be actualised in addition to anticipated growth through ECBs initiatives for women's and girls' cricket. Any further increases in demand above and beyond this would encounter the same problem as accommodating further demand on Saturdays.

### Midweek (junior demand)

Although midweek cricket is currently at capacity it does not necessarily have the same issues as accommodating additional demand during weekends as most of the demand within this time period is from junior teams. These can generally be spread across numerous days and do not require access to grass wickets, with additional capacity able to be created through the transfer of demand onto NTPs.

At Widnes CC it is recommended that there is greater utilisation of the existing onsite NTP in order to reduce potential future overplay, whilst a solution at Runcorn CC is for an NTP to be installed (it does not currently have such provision).

### Reinstatement of Birchfield Park CC demand

There is anecdotal evidence to suggest a potential merger, or at a minimum a player share, between Widnes CC and Birchfield CC. The latter previously played within Halton at Birchfield

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Sports & Social Club before moving its fixtures to Northern Cricket Club in Sefton. That being said, it still has some activity within the Borough as it trains at Widnes CC when necessary.

In the 2019 season, Birchfield CC accommodated two senior men's teams. Its first team played 12 matches in the Liverpool and District Competition (3<sup>rd</sup> XI Saturday Premier Division) whereas its second team played 12 matches in the Liverpool and District Competition (3<sup>rd</sup> XI Saturday First Division). As both these teams play on Saturday, and with cricket already played at capacity on this day in Halton, additional provision would be required should the demand return to the Borough.

### **Recommendations**

- ◀ Protect all cricket squares in current use.
- ◀ Work with both Runcorn CC and Widnes CC and their grounds staff to review quality issues on squares and to ensure quality is sustained as good.
- ◀ Examine potential options to create additional capacity for cricket in the Borough including the reinstatement of lapsed/disused cricket provision in order to accommodate potential future demand and exported demand from Birchfield Park CC.
- ◀ Explore options to accommodate expressed future demand through the installation of NTP at Runcorn Cricket Club.
- ◀ Explore options to provide both clubs with suitable training provision at their home ground/s.
- ◀ Where new housing or building developments are under consideration adjacent to existing cricket facilities, ensure a ball strike risk assessment is undertaken and ensure any clubs which could be affected are signposted to the ECB.
- ◀ Continue to deliver the Dynamos and All Stars cricket as well as women & girls programmes and seek to increase junior and female participation as a result.
- ◀ Work to increase women and girls' participation in line with the emerging Inspiring Generations ECB Strategy and protect existing provision so that women and girls have a suitable place to practise and play.

### **4.4: Rugby union - grass pitches**

#### **Supply and demand summary**

- ◀ Overall, there is a current shortfall of 2.25 MES per week on senior rugby union pitches to meet current demand.
- ◀ When considering future demand, there is a shortfall of 3.5 MES.
- ◀ There are 3 sites which display potential spare capacity to accommodate additional play; however, in practice no pitches have actual spare capacity.
- ◀ There are 2 pitches across 2 sites in Halton which are overplayed by a total of 2.25 MES per week. One pitch at Moore RUFC is overplayed by 0.5 MES, whilst a pitch at Widnes RUFC is overplayed by 1.75 MES.

#### **Supply summary**

- ◀ Within Halton there are 7 rugby union pitches across 4 sites, all of which are senior size and available for community use.
- ◀ Moore and Widnes rugby clubs own their respective home venues whilst Widnes RUFC also has a freehold of pitches at Prescott Road Playing Fields.
- ◀ Birchfield RUFC is considered to have unsecure tenure at Birchfield Sports and Social Club as it only has an annual rental agreement in place; the site is recently under new ownership.
- ◀ Of the community available pitches in Halton, 4 are assessed as standard quality and 3 as poor quality; no pitches are assessed as good quality.

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- Moore and Widnes rugby clubs are serviced by good quality ancillary provision although Widnes RUFC indicates that the car park is in need of resurfacing, whilst Moore RUFC reports that it requires expanded facilities to accommodate planned mini, junior and women's growth.
- Ancillary facilities servicing Birchfield RUFC are deemed to be of adequate quality.

### **Demand summary**

- There are three community rugby union clubs based in Halton, providing a total of 15 teams.
- All three clubs are serviced by some form of floodlit provision, whether that be a match pitch or dedicated training area, to accommodate training demand.

### **Scenarios**

As there are only three rugby union clubs in Halton separate scenarios have been run for each.

#### *Birchfield RUFC*

Birchfield RUFC is the only rugby union club in Halton to have unsecure tenure at its home venue of Birchfield Sports and Social Club. If the Club were to lose access to the site, there would be a need to find another suitable pitch that has spare capacity of 0.5 MES. Currently there is no actual spare capacity in the Borough, therefore the demand would either be forced to disperse or be forced to look outside the Authority for provision. It is therefore recommended that as a priority the Club is assisted in securing onsite tenure, or alternative provision with associated security of tenure.

#### *Moore RUFC*

Moore RUFC has two senior pitches, one of which is floodlit. This pitch of standard quality rating (M1/D1) is overplayed by 0.5 MES as is used for both training and competitive demand. The pitch not accompanied by floodlights is also standard quality (M1/D2) and has minimal spare capacity of 0.5 MES.

The table below examines the effect of increasing maintenance on both pitches by one increment to understand if this will relieve the overplay identified

*Table 4.11: Increasing maintenance by one increment at Moore RUFC (Runcorn Analysis Area)*

Rugby union								
Site ID	Site name	No. of pitches	Pitch type	Floodlit?	Current quality	Current capacity rating <sup>6</sup>	Improved quality	New capacity rating <sup>7</sup>
32	Moore RUFC	1	Senior	Yes	Standard (M1/D1)	0.5	Good (M2/D1)	0.5
32	Moore RUFC	1	Senior	No	Standard (M1/D2)	0.5	Standard (M2/D2)	1.25

As shown above, if maintenance was improved by one increment, overplay would be fully alleviated. Furthermore, an additional 1.25 MES of spare capacity would be established.

<sup>6</sup> Match equivalent sessions include both training and competitive demand

<sup>7</sup> Match equivalent sessions



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Once the pitches have improved in quality, the feasibility to fully floodlight both pitches should be examined. If both pitches were to be floodlit, the Club would be able to disperse its training and competitive demand more equally in order to protect the longevity of provision.

### *Widnes RUFC*

Widnes RUFC currently spreads its demand across two sites, namely Widnes RUFC and Prescott Road Playing Fields, which are located adjacent to one another. The pitches at the former are standard quality, whereas the pitches at the latter site are poor quality, receiving limited amounts of maintenance and having issues with drainage. One of the pitches at Widnes RUFC is overplayed by 1.75 MES.

The table overleaf examines what would be the impact on capacity would be if the pitches at Prescott Road Playing Fields were improved by one maintenance increment.

*Table 4.12: Increasing maintenance by one increment at Prescott Road Playing Fields (Widnes Analysis Area)*

Rugby union								
Site ID	Site name	No. of pitches	Pitch type	Floodlit?	Current quality	Current capacity rating <sup>8</sup>	Improved quality	New capacity rating <sup>9</sup>
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	1	Senior	Yes	Poor (M0 / D0)		Poor (M1/D0)	1
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	1	Senior	No	Poor (M0 / D0)		Poor (M1/D0)	1
63	Widnes RUFC	1	Senior	No	Standard (M1/D1)	0.5	-	0.5
63	Widnes RUFC	1	Senior	Yes	Standard (M1/D2)	1.75	-	1.75

If each pitch at Prescott Road Playing Fields improved by one maintenance increment (M0 to M1) it would create two MES of spare capacity, one match equivalent session on each pitch. Overall, the spare capacity across the two sites would amount to more than the overplay on the floodlit pitch at Widnes RUFC. Therefore, if the pitches at Prescott Road Playing Fields improved to a minimum of M1/D0 rating, in addition to a more even distribution of training and competitive demand across the four pitches, overplay for Widnes RUFC could be fully alleviated.

It should be noted that improvements to the quality of the pitches at Prescott Road Playing Fields should not be limited to maintenance enhancements. Another potential option to increase the capacity would be to install drainage on the site, however, this is considered a more costly alternative. The potential options should be discussed with the RFU to understand the best suited option for the Club.

### **Recommendations**

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of rugby union pitches.
- ◀ Improve pitch quality at Moore RUFC and Prescott Road Playing Fields to alleviate overplay and create actual spare capacity for increased demand.
- ◀ Work with Moore RUFC to explore the feasibility of installing additional floodlighting on the second pitch.

<sup>8</sup> Match equivalent sessions include both training and competitive demand

<sup>9</sup> Match equivalent sessions

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- ◀ Assist Birchfield RUFC in securing tenure at Birchfield Sports and Social Club or support the Club to find alternative provision if an agreement can not be sought.
- ◀ Support ancillary facility developments at Moore RUFC.
- ◀ Continue to develop strong relationships between rugby union clubs and schools through curricular and extracurricular programmes in order to increase levels of mini and junior participation.

### 4.5: Hockey pitches (sand based AGPs)

#### ***Supply and demand summary***

- ◀ There is a need for one full size hockey suitable AGP to accommodate current and future demand.
- ◀ In order to adequately meet demand, there is a priority need to improve the poor quality pitch at the Heath School.

#### ***Supply summary***

- ◀ There are two full size hockey suitable AGPs in Halton (at the Heath School and Brookvale Recreation Centre), both located in Runcorn.
- ◀ Both hockey suitable pitches are considered to be of poor quality with each pitch over its recommended lifespan (ten years).
- ◀ The pitch at the Heath School is accessed for club hockey (by Runcorn HC), whereas the pitch at Brookvale Recreation Centre is unused for the sport.
- ◀ The AGP located at Brookvale Recreation Centre is managed by the Council, whilst the pitch at the Heath School is managed internally by the School which is in turn sub contracted.

#### ***Demand summary***

- ◀ Runcorn HC aspires to play at Runcorn Sports Club, where it already accesses clubhouse facilities on site; it believes that pitch quality at the Heath School is restricting the Club growing any further.
- ◀ There is partial imported demand from Warrington HC to the Heath School.
- ◀ The Club fields three senior men's, two senior women's and two junior teams.
- ◀ It states that issues with pitch quality at the Heath School have previously meant that the Club has had to export demand to Chester.
- ◀ Back to Hockey sessions are operated by Runcorn HC at the Heath School throughout the Summer.

#### ***Scenarios***

##### *Hockey suitable AGP at The Heath School*

The hockey suitable AGP at The Heath School is poor quality and has not been resurfaced since 2005. This means that it is substantially over its 10 year recommended lifespan, despite being deep cleaned in 2019.

The pitch is currently being used by Runcorn HC, which fields three senior men's, two senior women's and two junior teams. The senior men's and women's teams play on Saturdays whilst the junior teams play or train on Sundays. Senior training takes place on Tuesday evenings. If the pitch deteriorates to such a level where it cannot be used, the Club need to find an alternative venue.



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The only other suitable pitch within Halton where this demand could be relocated to is Brookvale Recreation Centre. However, this site is also poor quality having not been refurbished since 2003 and it has been identified as a suitable location for a 3G conversion. As a result, if the hockey suitable AGP becomes unusable at The Heath School, it is likely that the demand from Runcorn HC would either be forced to relocate out of the Borough or dissipate.

It is therefore imperative that the pitch at The Heath School is refurbished as soon as possible as a hockey suitable surface in order to retain demand for the sport within Halton. This has been recognised by Sports England, England Hockey and the Council with S106 monies from the mitigation of Sandy Lane (17/00468/FUL) intended for the site. It should be noted that the S106 requires a Feasibility Study and improvement works if application is approved.

### *Runcorn Sports Club*

As mentioned above, Runcorn HC aspires to play at Runcorn Sports Club, however, due to the sites size creating a full size hockey suitable AGP is not feasible This is due to the fact that any development would encroach onto the cricket outfield to such an extent it would make the cricket provision unusable.

As such the primary focus for hockey, as stated, should be the refurbishment of the pitch at The Heath School. Any refurbishment of the pitch moving forward should look to minimise any potential disruption to hockey demand and therefore take place out of season (Summer period).

### **Recommendations**

- ◀ As priority, seek to refurbish the pitch at The Heath School and ensure a sinking fund is in place for long-term sustainability utilising S106 monies (17/00468/FUL) if approved.
- ◀ Ensure any refurbishment of hockey suitable provision to 3G is completed through dialogue with all relevant stakeholders including but not limited to EH, FF, CFA and Sport England.
- ◀ Ensure that future demand from EH's initiative, Hockey Heroes (aimed at growing participation for under 10s), can be accommodated.
- ◀ When 3G pitch stock increases, encourage the transfer of football demand from the sand-based AGPs in order to free up increased capacity for hockey activity, whilst ensuring enough football demand is retained for long-term financial sustainability.
- ◀ Ensure discussions take place between the Council, EH, SE, County FAs and FF before any conversion or creation of new provision in order to understand the potential effect on the sustainability of existing AGP stock.

## **4.6: Rugby league – grass pitches**

### ***Supply and demand summary***

- ◀ Currently senior rugby league pitches across Halton are marginally overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions. However, when accounting for future demand of one senior men's team from Runcorn ARLFC, this shortfall increases to one match equivalent session.
- ◀ The current picture for junior pitches across Halton indicates an overall shortfall of 5.25 match equivalent sessions, all generated from the Widnes Analysis Area. When accounting for future demand, the Analysis Area and Borough-wide shortfall increases to 6.75 match equivalent sessions per week.

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### Supply summary

- ◀ In Halton, the audit identifies a total of 21 grass rugby league pitches (13 senior and eight junior) across nine sites. All but one of these pitches (a senior pitch at Ormiston Chadwick Academy) are available for community use.
- ◀ There was previous rugby league provision at Parklands Sports Club and Leigh Recreation Playing Fields
- ◀ Site ownership is varied between clubs renting a site from a wider sports club (or a sports and social club) and clubs which rent or lease pitches from the Council.
- ◀ In Halton, 57% (12) of all pitches are of standard quality with the remaining 43% rated as poor (nine pitches). There are no good quality pitches in the Borough.
- ◀ Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC is the only club through consultation that indicates issues with ancillary provision.

### Demand summary

- ◀ There is a total of 42 competitive rugby league teams playing in Borough, including the three teams from semi professional club Widnes Vikings ARLFC.
- ◀ Of the six community clubs within Halton, two (Halton Farnworth ARLFC and West Bank Bear ARLFC) report that they would be able to have more teams if they had access to more pitches.
- ◀ Three clubs intend to increase their number of teams for next season.

### Scenarios

#### Loss of unsecure sites used by community clubs

In total, there are three sites that accommodate rugby league demand in Halton that also are classified as having unsecure tenure, as identified in the table below.

Table 4.13: Summary of Rugby league demand on unsecure sites in Halton

Rugby league					
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Club	Demand	Demand (MES) <sup>10</sup>
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	Halton Simms Cross ARLFC	1 x senior men's team	0.5
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC	1 x senior men's team	0.5
				1 x U18s Boys	0.5
				1 x U14s Boys	0.5
				1 x U13s Boys	0.5
				1 x U12s Mixed	0.25
				1 x U9s Mixed	0.25
				1 x U8s Mixed	0.25
			1 x U7s Mixed	0.25	
			Widnes St Marie's ARLFC	1 x U14s boys' team	0.5
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	Runcorn ARLFC	1 x senior men's team	0.5

<sup>10</sup> For senior and youth teams, the current level of play per week is set at 0.5 match equivalent sessions (MES) per week for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis (assumes half of matches will be played away). For mini teams, play per week is set at 0.25 MES per week for each match played across half of one senior/junior pitch, based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis.

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If access were to be lost to these sites, there would be a need to relocate 3.5 MES of demand in the Widnes Analysis Area and 0.5 MES in the Runcorn Analysis Area. As there is no spare capacity in Halton to accommodate this demand, it would equate to a minimum requirement of establishing two senior pitches in Widnes and one in Runcorn.

When taking into consideration future aspirational demand, there would be a need to create a further pitch for Halton Simms Cross ARFLC and two further pitches for demand from Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC and Widnes St Marie's ARLFC.

### *Alleviating overplay*

At the moment, only ten rugby league pitches are considered to be overplayed within Halton. This is outlined in greater detail in the table below. The scenario examines what impact improving pitch quality by one increment will have on alleviating overplay.

*Table 4.15: Overplay summary (Widnes Analysis Area)*

Rugby league							
Site ID	Site name	Pitch Type	Number of pitches	Current quality	Current capacity (MES)	Improved quality	Improved capacity (MES)
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Junior	2	Poor	1	Standard	1
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Senior	1	Standard	0.5	Good	0.5
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Junior	5	Standard	2	Good	3
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Junior	1	Standard	-2.25	Good	-1.25
		Senior	1	Standard		Good	1

In general, improving pitch quality by one increment will alleviate overplay at all sites apart from at Ted Gleave Sports Ground.

If both pitches at Ted Gleave Sports Ground were improved to good quality, spare capacity of one match equivalent session would be established on the senior pitch with overplay on the junior pitch reducing to 1.25 MES. Even if the pitches were improved to good quality in addition to demand being equally dispersed, an overall shortfall of 0.25 MES would remain. In order to fully alleviate overplay on the site there would therefore be a need to create additional provision or transfer demand to an alternative site with spare capacity.

The RFL indicates its priority for Halton is to work on improving pitch quality with enhanced levels of maintenance. This will be done through working with the Grounds Maintenance Association to establish a volunteer workforce to carry out the required enhancements.

### **Recommendations**

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of rugby league pitches.
- ◀ Explore securing access to all community used sites through long term tenure agreements.

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- ◀ Improve poor and standard quality pitches to reduce overplay and create future spare capacity through work with the Ground Maintenance Association and volunteer workforce.
- ◀ Explore the best suited option to create additional provision at Ted Gleave Sports Ground to fully eradicate overplay.
- ◀ Support clubhouse developments at Moorfield Sports and Social Club.
- ◀ Continue to develop strong relationships between rugby clubs and schools through curricular and extracurricular programmes in order to increase levels of mini and junior participation.

### 4.7: Other sports (Baseball/Softball and American football)

#### ***Baseball/Softball supply and demand summary***

- ◀ There is considered to be suitable amounts of provision to meet current and future levels of demand for Baseball/softball demand in Halton.
- ◀ This being said there is a need to improve the quality of the Baseball diamond at John Mills Ballpark.
- ◀ Trojans Baseball Club reports that the current diamond at John Mills Ballpark is poor quality having been used sparingly over the previous couple of years. It therefore indicates that it will need to invest in the site to improve its quality and safety before it can be used.
- ◀ Trojans Baseball Club had two teams based within Liverpool although due to COVID-19 it did not host any matches in 2020. For the upcoming 2021 season, in addition to its two teams, it reports plans to host baseball within Halton, under the name of Halton Trojans. This team will be based at John Mills Ballpark, which was used by Halton Baseball Club prior to the merger.

#### ***American football supply and demand summary***

- ◀ There is considered to be suitable amounts of provision to meet current and future levels of demand for American Football demand in Halton.
- ◀ Halton Spartans American Football Club access the 3G pitch at DCBL Stadium to meet its demand requirements. Information regarding this pitch is within Part 3 of the report.
- ◀ Halton Spartans has one team that currently competes in the BAFA NFL NFC 1 South.

#### ***Scenarios***

N/A

#### ***Recommendations***

- ◀ Existing quantity of Baseball provision to be protected.
- ◀ Assist Trojans Baseball Club in improving the quality of the diamond at John Mills Ballpark.
- ◀ Ensure Halton Spartans has secured access to the 3G pitch at the DCBL Stadium to meet its demand requirements.

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### PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategic recommendations for the Strategy have been developed via the combination of information gathered during consultation, site visits and analysis which culminated in the production of an assessment report, as well as key drivers identified for the Strategy. They reflect overarching and common areas to be addressed, which apply across playing pitch facilities and may not be specific to just one sport.

#### AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities where it is needed for meeting current and future needs.

#### Recommendations:

- a. Ensure, through the use of the PPS, that outdoor sport facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy.
- b. Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.
- c. Maximise community use of education facilities where needed.

#### **Recommendation (a) – Ensure, through the use of the PPS, that playing pitch facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy.**

The PPS shows that all existing playing pitch sites require protection or replacement and therefore no provision can be deemed surplus to requirements because of shortfalls now and in the future. Local planning policy should therefore reflect this situation.

Where shortfalls are evident, a playing pitch facility can only be permanently lost when the current picture changes to the extent that the site in question is no longer needed as a result of excess pitch provision, or unless replacement provision is provided and agreed upon by all stakeholders.

NPPF paragraph 97 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- ◀ An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- ◀ The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- ◀ The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

The PPS should be used to help inform development management decisions that affect existing or new playing pitch provision and accompanying ancillary facilities particularly at sites such as Sandy Lane. All applications are assessed by the Local Planning Authority on a case-by-case basis taking into account site specific factors. In addition, Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications that affect or prejudice the use of playing field used within the last five years and will use the PPS to help assess that planning application against its Playing Fields Policy.

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### *Policy Exception E1:*

'A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated to the satisfaction of Sport England that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport'.

Where the PPS cannot demonstrate that the site, or part of a site, is clearly surplus to requirements then replacement of the site, or part of a site, will be required to comply with the remaining Sport England policy exceptions.

### *Policy Exception E2*

'The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity and quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use'.

### *Policy Exception E3*

The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- ◀ Reduce the size of any playing pitch;
- ◀ Result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- ◀ Reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain quality;
- ◀ Result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site;
- ◀ Prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site'.

### *Policy Exception E4:*

'The playing field or fields to be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new playing field site or sites:

- ◀ of equivalent or better quality and
- ◀ of equivalent or greater quantity;
- ◀ in a suitable location and;
- ◀ subject to equivalent or better management arrangements.

### *Policy Exception E5*

'The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice of use, of the area of playing field'.

Lapsed and disused sites should also be protected from development or replaced in accordance with Sport England's policy exceptions as they currently provide a solution to reducing identified shortfalls. Any disused/lapsed playing fields identified within this PPS are included within the Action Plan together with a recommendation in relation to bringing the site back into use or to mitigate the loss on a replacement site to address the shortfalls identified. Over the lifetime of the PPS other lapsed and disused playing fields may be identified that are not contained within the PPS. These sites remain playing field and should be afforded the same protection as sites contained within the PPS. Previously unidentified sites should be included in Annual Updates to the PPS.



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It may be appropriate to consider rationalisation of certain low value playing pitch sites (i.e. one/two pitch sites with no changing provision) to generate investment in creating bigger and better venues (hub sites). It is vital, however, that there is no net loss of facilities and that replacement provision is in place and available for use prior to existing provision being lost. Rationalisation needs to be carried out in accordance with paragraph 97 of the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy.

### **Recommendation (b) – Secure tenure and access to sites through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.**

A number of education sites are being used in the Borough for competitive play, predominately for football; however, this is not considered to be secure as many of the schools do not provide CUA and can therefore stop access at any point. The following schools used by the community to varying levels but have no secure usage:

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| ◀ Beechwood County Primary School | ◀ St Michaels Catholic Primary School   |
| ◀ Brookvale Bollingbroke Academy  | ◀ St Peter & St Paul Catholic College   |
| ◀ Cronton Sixth Form College      | ◀ The Heath School                      |
| ◀ Grange Academy                  | ◀ Westfield Primary School              |
| ◀ Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy    | ◀ Weston County Primary School          |
| ◀ Ormiston Chadwick Academy       | ◀ Weston Point Community Primary School |

Not having fully formalised usage presents a risk for clubs using these sites as community use could technically be terminated at any time. Securing community use will therefore help to create additional pitch capacity and could help to address deficiencies; currently, any spare capacity at unsecure sites is discounted. Further partnership working with NGBs can be carried out to encourage schools to put in place a CUA including access to changing provision where required.

Additionally, there are also some clubs playing on private sites in the Borough that are not considered to have secure tenure. This includes Birchfield RUFC at Birchfield Sports and Social Club as well as Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC and Widnes St Maries ARLFC at Moorfield Sports and Social Club.

NGBs, Sport England and other appropriate bodies such as Active Halton/Halton Sports Partnership can often help to negotiate and engage with providers where the local authority may not have direct influence. This is particularly the case at sites that have received funding from these bodies or are going to receive funding in the future as community access can be a condition of the agreement.

In the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review, which announced public spending cuts, it is increasingly important for the Council to work with voluntary sector organisations to enable them to take greater levels of ownership and support the wider development and maintenance of facilities. To facilitate this, where practical, the Council could support and enable clubs to generate sufficient funds, providing that this is to the benefit of sport.

The Council should explore opportunities to grant clubs security of tenure through lease agreements (minimum 25 years as recommended by Sport England and NGBs). The focus should be on clubs at poor quality local authority sites where there is opportunity to improve pitch and / or ancillary facilities. Security of tenure would encourage clubs to take more care of the site through responsible play. It would motivate them to look at ways of enhancing their facilities by using external funding mechanisms that the local authority may not be able to access. Clubs with lease arrangements already in place with other owners should review existing agreements when the term dips below 25 years.

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Each club interested in leasing a site should be required to meet service and/or strategic recommendations. An additional set of criteria should also be considered, which takes into account club quality, aligned to its long-term development objectives and sustainability, as seen in the table below.

*Table 5.1: Recommended criteria for lease of sport sites to clubs/organisations*

Club	Site
<p>Clubs should have NGB accreditation award.</p> <p>Clubs commit to meeting demonstrable local demand and show pro-active commitment to developing school-club links.</p> <p>Clubs are sustainable, both in a financial sense and via their internal management structures in relation to recruitment and retention policy for both players and volunteers.</p> <p>Ideally, clubs should have already identified (and received an agreement in principle) any match funding required for initial capital investment identified.</p> <p>Clubs have processes in place to ensure capacity to maintain sites to the existing, or better, standards.</p>	<p>Sites should be those identified as 'Local Sites' (recommendation d) for new clubs (i.e. not those with a Borough-wide significance) but that offer development potential.</p> <p>For established clubs which have proven success in terms of self-management 'Key Centres' are also appropriate.</p> <p>Sites should acquire capital investment to improve or be leased with the intention that investment can be sourced to contribute towards improvement of the site.</p>

Local sports clubs should be supported by partners including the Council and NGBs to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership work. All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC)<sup>11</sup>. They should also be encouraged to work with partners locally – such as volunteer support agencies or local businesses.

The Council could establish core outcomes to derive from clubs taking on a lease arrangement to ensure that the most appropriate are assigned sites. Outcomes may, for example, include:

- ◀ Increasing participation.
- ◀ Supporting the development of coaches and volunteers.
- ◀ Commitment to quality standards.
- ◀ Improvements (where required) to facilities, or at minimum retaining existing standards.

In addition, clubs should be made fully aware of the associated responsibilities/liabilities when considering leases of multi-use public playing fields. It is important in these instances that the site, to some degree, remains available for other purposes or for other users.

For clubs with lease arrangements already in place, these should be reviewed when fewer than 25 years remain to improve security of tenure and aid the attraction of funding; clubs with fewer than 25 years remaining on a lease agreement are unlikely to be eligible for external funding.

### **Recommendation (c) - Maximise community use of education facilities where needed**

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cascinfo.co.uk/cascbenefits>



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To maximise community use, development of a more coherent, structured relationship with schools is recommended. The ability to access good facilities within the local community is vital to any sports organisation, yet many clubs struggle to find good quality places to play and train. A key issue in Halton is a lack of access to high quality provision located at its several educational establishments.

A large number of sporting facilities are located on unavailable education sites, including but not limited to Bridgewater Park Primary School, Halton Lodge School, Ormiston Chadwick Academy, St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School and The Heath School, making these available to sports clubs can offer significant benefits to both the schools and local clubs. It is, however, common for school stock not to be fully maximised for community use, even on established community use sites.

In some instances, outdoors sports facilities are unavailable for community use due to poor quality and therefore remedial works will be required before it can be established. The low carrying capacity of these pitches sometimes leads to them being played to capacity or overplayed simply due to curricular and extra-curricular use, meaning they cannot accommodate any additional use by the community.

Although there is a growing number of academies over which the Council has little or no control, it is still important to understand the significance of such sites and attempt to work with the schools where there are opportunities for community use. In addition, the relevant NGB has a role to play in supporting the Council to deliver the strategy and communicating with schools where necessary to address shortfalls in provision, particularly for football pitches.

As detailed earlier, NGBs and Sport England can often help to negotiate and engage with schools where the local authority may have limited direct influence. This is particularly the case at sites that have received funding from the relevant bodies or are going to receive funding in the future as community access can be a condition of the funding agreement.

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### AIM 2

To **enhance** outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites.

#### Recommendations:

- d. Maintain quality and seek improvements where necessary
- e. Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites.
- f. Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding
- g. Secure developer contributions

#### ***Recommendation (d) – Improve quality***

There are a number of ways in which it is possible to improve quality, including, for example, addressing overplay and improving maintenance. Given that the majority of councils' face reducing budgets it is currently advisable to look at improving key sites as a priority (e.g. the largest sites that are the most overplayed or the poorest). The action plan within this document provides a starting point for this, identifying key sites, poor quality site and/or sites that are overplayed.

With such pressures on budgets, any wide-ranging direct investment into pitch quality is challenging and other options for improvements should be considered. This could be via asset transfer as highlighted in Objective 1, with clubs taking on maintenance, whilst other options may include equipment banks and the pooling of resources for maintenance.

#### ***Addressing quality issues***

Quality across Halton is variable but generally most pitches are assessed as poor or standard quality, with the exception of cricket squares, which are assessed as good quality. Where facilities are assessed as standard or poor quality and/or overplayed, maintenance regimes should be reviewed and, where possible, improved to ensure that what is being done is of an appropriate standard to sustain/improve pitch quality. Ensuring continuance of existing maintenance of good quality sites is also essential.

It is also important to note the impact the weather has on quality. The worse the weather, the poorer facilities tend to become, especially if no drainage systems are in place or if existing drainage systems are inadequate. This also means that quality can vary, year on year, dependent upon the weather and levels of rainfall.

Based upon an achievable target using existing quality scoring to provide a baseline, a standard should be used to identify deficiencies and investment should be focused on those sites which fail to meet the proposed quality standard (using the site audit database as provided in electronic format). The strategic approach to outdoor sports facilities achieving these standards should be to enhance quality and therefore the planning system should seek to protect them.

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For the purposes of quality assessments, outdoor sports facilities and ancillary facilities are separately reported as being of 'Good', 'Standard' or 'Poor' quality. Some good quality sites may have poor quality elements and vice versa (e.g. a good quality pitch may be serviced by poor quality changing facilities).

Good quality refers to pitches that have, for example, good grass cover, an even surface, are free from litter. For rugby, a good quality pitch is also pipe and/or slit drained. In terms of ancillary facilities, good quality refers to access for disabled people, sufficient provision for referees, juniors/women/girls and appropriate provision of showers, toilets and car parking.

Standard quality refers to pitches that have, for example, adequate grass cover, minimal signs of wear and tear and goalposts may be secure but in need of minor repair. For rugby, drainage is natural but adequate. In terms of ancillary facilities, standard quality refers to adequately sized changing rooms, storage provision and provision of toilets.

Poor quality refers to provision with, for example, inadequate grass cover, uneven surfaces and poor drainage. In terms of ancillary facilities, poor quality refers to inappropriate changing rooms with no showers, no running water and/or old, dated interiors. If a poor quality site receives little or no usage that is not to say that no improvement is needed, it may instead be the case that it receives no demand because of its quality, thus an improvement in said quality will attract demand to the site, potentially from overplayed standard or good quality sites.

Without appropriate, fit for purpose ancillary facilities, good quality pitches may be underutilised. Changing facilities form the most essential part of this offer and therefore key sites should be given priority for improvement.

### **Addressing overplay**

In order to improve the overall quality of the outdoor facility stock; it is necessary to ensure that provision is not overplayed beyond recommended carrying capacity. This is determined by assessing quality (via a non-technical site assessment) and allocating a match limit to each (daily for hockey, weekly for football and rugby union and seasonal for cricket).

The FA, RFU, RFL, ECB and EH all recommend a number of matches that pitches should take based on quality, as seen in the table below. For other grass pitch sports, no guidelines are set by the NGBs although it can be assumed that a similar trend should be followed.

*Table 5.2: Capacity of pitches*

Sport	Pitch type	No. of matches		
		Good quality	Standard quality	Poor quality
Football	Adult pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Youth pitches	4 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Mini pitches	6 per week	4 per week	2 per week
Rugby union	Natural Inadequate (D0)	2 per week	1.5 per week	0.5 per week
	Natural Adequate (D1)	3 per week	2 per week	1.5 per week
	Pipe Drained (D2)	3.25 per week	2.5 per week	1.75 per week
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	3.5 per week	3 per week	2 per week
Cricket	One grass wicket	5 per season	4 per season	0 per season
	One synthetic wicket	60 per season		
Hockey	Full size AGP	4 per day	4 per day	4 per day
	Senior	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week

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Sport	Pitch type	No. of matches		
		Good quality	Standard quality	Poor quality
Rugby league	Junior	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Mini	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week

It is imperative to engage with clubs to ensure that sites are not played beyond their capacity. Play should therefore be encouraged, where possible, to be transferred to alternative venues that are not operating at capacity. This may include transferring play to 3G pitches or to sites not currently available for community use but which may be in the future.

A cost-effective way to reduce unofficial use (and therefore overplay), particularly for football, could be to remove goalposts in between match days, principally at open access, high traffic sites that are managed by clubs. This will, however, require adequate, secured storage to be provided.

For cricket, an increase in the usage of NTPs is key to alleviating overplay as this allows for the transfer of junior demand from grass wickets. It also does not require any additional playing pitch space as NTPs can be installed in situ to existing squares.

For rugby union and rugby league, additional floodlighting can mitigate some of the overplay as it allows training demand to be spread across a greater number of pitches or unmarked areas. If permanent floodlighting is not possible, portable floodlighting is an alternative, as is the installation of a World Rugby / RFL compliant 3G pitch.

There are also sites that are poor quality but are not overplayed. These should not be overlooked as often poor quality sites have less demand than others but demand could increase if the quality was improved. It does, however, work both ways as potential improvements may make sites more attractive and therefore more popular; which in the long run can lead again to them becoming poor quality pitches if not properly maintained.

### ***Increasing maintenance***

Standard or poor grass pitch quality may not just be a result of poor drainage. In some instances, ensuring there is an appropriate maintenance for the level/standard of play can help to improve quality and therefore increase pitch capacity. Each NGB can provide assistance with reviewing pitch maintenance regimes.

The FA has a general pitch improvement programme which has been developed in partnership with Grounds Management Association (GMA) to develop a grass pitch maintenance service that can be utilised by grassroots clubs with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and therefore the quality of pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide clubs with advice/practical solutions in a range of areas, with the simple aim of improving playing surfaces. The programme is designed to help clubs on sites that they themselves manage and maintain but can also be used to advise council-maintained sites.

In addition, PIP also aims to focus on developing an improved maintenance programmes with local authorities that can be utilised at local authority maintained sites.

Further to the above, the Football Foundation and the FA have recently developed a new pitch maintenance grant fund that allows clubs and sports organisations to apply for funding for maintenance assistance, consumables and/or equipment. Local authorities are currently ineligible applicants through this fund; however, clubs, leagues and or charitable organisations using local authority sites can apply provided they have security of tenure and/or a proforma is in place.

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For cricket and the ECB, the equivalent is the Grounds and Natural Turf Improvement Programme, which is jointly funded by the ECB, FA, Football Foundation and the GMA. Its aim is to raise the standards of sports surfaces as well as the understanding of sports turf management practices among grassroots sports clubs across England Wales.

In relation to cricket specifically, maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of the sport. If the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and, in some instances, become dangerous. The ECB recommends full technical assessments of wickets and pitches available through a Performance Quality Standard Assessment (PQS). The PQS assesses a cricket square to ascertain whether it meets the standards that are benchmarked by the GMA.

### ***Improving changing provision***

There is a need to address changing provision at some sites in the Borough, these are generally centred at either club or Council managed sites.

Sites which predominantly accommodate adult and/or older junior age group sports should be prioritised for improvements, whilst there is a trend for younger junior age groups (particularly for football) not to require use of changing provision, with suitable male and female toilet provision for players and spectators considered to be of greater importance. For example:

- ◀ Haddocks Wood Playing Fields
- ◀ Leigh Recreation Playing Fields
- ◀ Runcorn Heath Playing Fields

### **Recommendation (e) – Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites**

To allow for facility developments to be programmed on a phased basis the Council should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of outdoor sport sites and associated facilities. Please refer to Part 6: Action Plan for the proposed hierarchy.

### **Recommendation (f) – Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding**

Partners, led by the Council, should ensure that appropriate funding secured for improved sports provision is directed to areas of need, underpinned by a robust strategy for improvement in outdoor sport provision and accompanying ancillary facilities.

To address community need, priority areas should be targeted and, to reduce provision duplication, a coordinated approach to strategic investment is required. In delivering this recommendation, the Council should maintain a regular dialogue with local partners through the PPS Steering Group.

Although some investment in new provision will not be made by the Council directly, it is important that the Steering Group directs and leads a co-ordinated approach to facility development whether made at/by education sites, NGBs, sports clubs and the commercial sector. This is to ensure that the extent to which it addresses community need is optimised and duplication is avoided.

One of sport's key contributions is its positive impact on public health. It is therefore important to lever in investment from other sectors such as, for example, health and wellbeing. Sport and physical activity can have a profound effect on peoples' lives, and plays a crucial role in improving community cohesion, educational attainment and self-confidence.

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### Recommendation (g) – Secure developer contributions

This strategy should inform policies and supplementary planning documents by setting out the approach to securing sport and recreational facilities through new housing development, which is especially pertinent to Halton given the level of identified housing growth within the Borough.

A development located within an accessible distance from a high-quality playing pitch facility does not necessarily negate need for further provision or improvement to existing provision in the locality to accommodate additional demand arising from that development. The PPS should be used to help determine the likely impact of a new development on demand, the capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity or new provision is required.

For playing pitches, the Council should use Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPCC) (see Part 7) as a tool to determine the additional demand for pitches and estimate the likely developer contribution required linking to sites within the locality. This uses the current number of teams by sports pitch type contained within the Assessment Report and calculates the percentage within each age group that play that sport. That percentage is then applied to the population growth. The additional teams likely to be generated are then converted into Match Equivalent Sessions and pitch requirements for each sport alongside the associated costs. The calculator splits the requirement into peak time demand for natural turf pitches, training demand for artificial grass pitches, and the number of new changing rooms required.

It is recommended the Council work with Sport England to develop a process and guidance for obtaining contributions.

The guidance should be the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions for new sustainable provision or enhancement of appropriate playing fields and subsequent maintenance on existing sites within the locality. On-site provision is not generally supported unless it is accompanied by ancillary facilities with a management and maintenance scheme and community use agreement. Section 106 contributions can also be used to improve the condition and maintenance regimes of pitches which, in turn, will increase pitch capacity to accommodate more matches.

A number of planning policy objectives should be implemented to enable the above to be delivered:

- ◀ Planning consent should include appropriate conditions and/or be subject to specific planning obligations. Where developer contributions are applicable, a Section 106/CIL Agreement or equivalent must be completed that specifies, when applied, the amount that will be linked to Sport England's Building Cost Information Service<sup>12</sup> from the date of the permission and timing of the contribution/s to be made. To ensure deliverability the developer contribution must be linked to a specific site and set of works.
- ◀ Contributions should also be secured towards the first ten years of maintenance on new pitches. NGBs and Sport England can provide further and up to date information on the associated costs.
- ◀ External funding should be sought/secured to achieve maximum benefit from the investment into appropriate outdoor sport facility enhancement and its subsequent maintenance.
- ◀ Where new multiple pitches are provided, appropriate changing rooms and associated car parking should be located on site.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>



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- ◀ All new or improved outdoor sport facilities on school sites should be subject to CUAs.

### AIM 3

To **provide** new outdoor sport facilities where there is current or future demand to do so.

#### Recommendations:

- h. Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.
- i. Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock.

#### **Recommendation (h) - Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand**

The Steering Group should use the Action Plan within this Strategy for improvements to the Council's own playing pitch provision whilst recognising the need to support partners. The Action Plan lists improvements to be made to each site focused upon both qualitative and quantitative improvements as appropriate on an area by area basis.

Although there are identified shortfalls of MES, most current and future demand is currently being met and most shortfalls can be addressed via quality improvements and/or improved access to sites that are presently used minimally or currently unavailable. Adding to the current stock, particularly in the short term, is therefore not recommended as a priority, except in the case of 3G pitches where there is a discrete need, where there is significant housing growth, or where sites fall out of use and require mitigation.

Where new schools are provided in major new residential developments, they should be designed to facilitate community access, with opportunities for meeting the community's outdoor sports needs explored at the planning stage to maximise potential demand and ensure the correct facility provision. For example, full size 3G pitches are often best suited to secondary school sites, whereas mini football pitches and MUGAs/small sided AGPs on primary school sites.

#### **Recommendation (i) - Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock**

The Council and its partners should work to rectify identified inadequacies and meet identified shortfalls as outlined in the preceding Assessment Report and the sport by sport specific recommendations (Part 3) as well as the following Action Plan (Part 6).

It is important that the current levels of provision are protected, maintained and enhanced to secure provision now and in the future. For most sports the current and future demand for provision identified in Halton can be overcome through maximising use of existing stock through a combination of:

- ◀ Improving quality in order to improve the capacity to accommodate more demand.
- ◀ Transferring demand from overplayed sites to sites with spare capacity.
- ◀ The re-designation/configuration of facilities.
- ◀ Securing long term community use at school sites including those currently unavailable.
- ◀ Working with commercial and private providers to secure tenure and increase usage.

Unmet demand, changes in sport participation and trends, and proposed housing growth should be recognised and factored into future facility planning. Assuming an increase in participation and housing growth occurs, it will impact on the future need for certain types of sports facilities. Sports development work also approximates unmet demand which cannot

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currently be quantified (i.e. it is not being suppressed by a lack of facilities) but is likely to occur. The following table highlights the main development trends in each sport and their likely impact on facilities. However, it is important to note that these may be subject to change.

Furthermore, retaining some spare capacity allows some pitches to be rested to protect overall pitch quality in the long-term. Therefore, whilst in some instances it may be appropriate to re-designate a senior pitch where there is low demand identified a holistic approach should be taken to re-designation for the reasons cited. The site-by-site action planning will seek to provide further clarification on where re-designation is suitable.

*Table 5.3: Likely future sport-by-sport demand trends*

Sport	Future sports development trend	Strategy impact
Football	Demand for adult football is likely to be sustained with the FA focusing on retention. There is also likely to be some continued movement towards small sided football for adults.	Additional need for 3G pitches. Sustain current pitch stock but give consideration to pitch reconfiguration to accommodate youth 11v11 football. Qualitative improvements.
	Demand for mini and youth football is likely to increase and the FA has a key objective to deliver 50% of mini and youth football on 3G pitches.	Sustain current stock and consideration given to reconfigure pitches if required. Qualitative improvements. Where possible utilise new or existing 3G pitches to further accommodate this demand and ensure FA testing.
	The FA's has recently released its new strategy for Women's and Girls' football: 2020 – 2024 in October 2020. One of the major goals of the new strategy will give every girls the earliest opportunity to play the game. <sup>13</sup>	Demand for grass pitches and 3G pitches is likely to increase.
3G pitches	Demand for 3G pitches for football is high and will continue to increase. It is likely that future demand for the use of 3G pitches will increase for both training and match play purposes.	Requirement for new 3G pitches to be provided and a need for CUAs to be in place for any new pitches as well as sinking funds. Requirement for 3G pitches to be FA/FIFA tested to host competitive matches. Utilise Sport England/NGB guidance on choosing the correct surface.
Cricket	Except for grounds identified as poor quality, ECB predicts further growth in cricket demand for pitch use over the next few years.	Pitches that are already identified in the PPS as being at capacity will not be able to accommodate additional playing demand generated and it is predicted there will be demand for additional cricket playing facilities.
	All Stars Cricket, the ECB national programme for 5-8 year olds, is engaging large numbers of children and has already been delivered over the past 3-4 years, with increasing numbers of participants year on year, alongside Chance to Shine cricket delivery in primary schools.	Greater usage of outfielders to accommodate demand from All Stars Cricket. Shorter formats of cricket, and additional formats including softball cricket, are also driving up demand for pitches. An increase stock of NTPs likely to be required to accommodate demand.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.thefa.com/news/2020/oct/19/sue-campbell-inspiring-positive-change-191020>



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Sport	Future sports development trend	Strategy impact
	Dynamos Cricket is the latest launch by the ECB, building on the existing All Stars programme for 5-8-year-olds. Participants will continue to develop their skills and be introduced to a countdown style of cricket match.	
	Women's and girls' cricket is a national ECB priority and there is a target to establish more female teams in every local authority.	Increased requirement for peak time access to pitches. Need to ensure access to good quality facilities including, segregated changing and toilet provision.
Rugby union	Locally, the RFU want to ensure access to pitches satisfies existing demand and predicted growth. It is also an aim to protect and improve pitch quality, as well as ancillary facilities.	Clubs are likely to field more teams in the future. It is important, therefore, to work with the clubs to maintain the current pitch stock and support facility development. In particular, capital improvements are required to the existing natural turf pitches as is improvements to the quality of changing rooms, where appropriate. All clubs should have access to high quality floodlit pitches to support training and match play demand.
Rugby league	Working towards the Rugby Football League National Facilities Strategy. High profile events (Rugby League World Cup 2021 Legacy)	Identify opportunities for investment and facility development through the Rugby League World Cup 'Inspired by 2021' Legacy Programme.
Hockey	Current playing level is likely to increase.	Ensure continued use of sand-based AGPs to accommodate current demand and ensure sinking funds are in place for long-term sustainability. Ensure that no 3G pitch conversions take place that are detrimental to hockey.
	High profile events (Hockey World Cup 2018 Legacy)	These high profile events aim to raise the profile of the game within England and there will be community events in the build-up within clubs and a promotional programme through clubs and local schools. This will inevitably raise the profile of the game with the aim to increase participation.
	New 2019 launched England Hockey initiative, Hockey Heroes (aimed at growing participation for under 10s).	Ensure that outfielders are able to accommodate additional future demand.

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### PART 6: ACTION PLAN

The site-by-site action plan seeks to address key issues identified in the preceding Assessment Report. It provides recommendations based on current levels of usage, quality and future demand, as well as the potential of each site for enhancement. It should be reviewed in the light of staff and financial resources in order to prioritise support for strategically significant provision and provision that other providers are less likely to make. The Action Plan is separated by analysis area.

The Council should make it a high priority to work with NGBs and other partners to comprise a priority list of actions based on local priorities, NGB priorities and available funding. To allow for facility developments to be programmed within a phased approach, the Council should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of outdoor facility sites and associated provision.

The identification of sites is based on their strategic importance within the Borough i.e. they accommodate the majority of demand, or the recommended action has the greatest anticipated impact on addressing shortfalls (identified either on a sport-by-sport basis or across the Council area as a whole).

*Table 6.1: Proposed tiered site criteria*

Criteria	Hub sites	Key centres	Local sites
<b>Site location</b>	Strategically located in the Borough. Priority sites for NGBs.	Strategically located within the analysis area or for a specific community.	Serves the local community.
<b>Site layout</b>	Accommodates three or more grass pitches, including provision of an AGP.	Generally accommodates two or more grass pitches, but can be smaller if serving high levels of demand or specific communities.	Accommodates one or more pitches.
<b>Type of sport</b>	Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision.
<b>Management</b>	Management control remains within the local authority/other provider or with an appropriate lease arrangement through a committee or education owned.	Management control remains within the local authority/provider or with an appropriate club on a lease arrangement.	Management control remains within the local authority/provider or with an appropriate club on a lease arrangement.
<b>Maintenance regime</b>	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Standard maintenance regime either by the club or in house maintenance contract.
<b>Ancillary facilities</b>	Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	No changing room access on site or appropriate access to accommodate both senior and junior use concurrently (if required).

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**Hub sites** are of strategic Borough wide importance where users are willing to travel to access the range and high quality of facilities offered and are likely to be multi-sport. These have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the issues identified in the assessment.

**Key centres** are more community focused sites, although some are still likely to service a wider analysis area. There may be more of a focus on a specific sport.

Additionally, it is considered that some financial investment may be necessary to improve the ancillary facilities at both hub sites and key centre sites to complement the pitches in terms of access, flexibility (i.e. single-sex changing if necessary), quality and that they meet the rules and regulations of local competitions.

**Local sites** refer to those sites offering minimal provision or that are of minimal value to the wider community. Primarily they are sites with one facility or a low number of facilities that service just one or two sports. The level of priority attached to them for external investment may be relatively low.

For local authority sites, consideration should be given, on a site-by-site basis, to the feasibility of a club taking on a long-term lease (if not already present), in order that external funding can be sought. Such sites will require some level of investment, either to the outdoor sport facilities or ancillary facilities, and is it anticipated that one of the conditions of offering a hire/lease is that the Club would be in a position to source external funding to improve/extend the provision.

Other sites considered in this tier may be primary school sites or secondary school sites that are not widely used by the community or that do not offer community availability.

Some local sites are suitable for rationalisation providing that capital receipts are allocated to replace the lost provision at larger, multi-pitch sites.

### Management and development

The following issues should be considered when undertaking sports related site development or enhancement:

- ◀ Financial viability.
- ◀ Security of tenure.
- ◀ Planning permission requirements and any foreseen difficulties in securing permission.
- ◀ Adequacy of existing finances to maintain existing sites.
- ◀ Business Plan/Masterplan – including financial package for creation of new provision where need has been identified.
- ◀ Analysis of the possibility of shared site management opportunities.
- ◀ The availability of opportunities to lease sites to external organisations.
- ◀ Options to assist community groups to gain funding to enhance existing provision.
- ◀ Negotiation with landowners to increase access to private hub sites.
- ◀ Football investment programme/3G pitch development with the FA and Football Foundation

### Partners

The column indicating partners refers to the main organisations that the Council would look to work with to support delivery of the actions. Given the extent of potential actions it is reasonable to assume that partners will not necessarily be able to support all of the actions identified but where the action is a priority and resource is available the partner will endeavour to provide support.

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Whilst the Council is considered to be a partner within each action to a lesser or greater extent, it is only referenced where it is considered to be a key stakeholder (e.g. at council operated sites).

### **Priority**

Although hub sites are mostly likely to have a **high** priority level as they have wide importance, high priority sites have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the key issues identified in the assessment. Therefore, some key centres and local sites are also identified as having a high priority level. It is these projects/sites which should generally, if possible, be addressed within the short term (1-2 years).

The majority of key centres are a **medium** priority, have analysis area importance and have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the issues identified in the assessment.

The **low** priority sites tend to be single pitch or single sport sites and often club or education sites with local specific importance but that may also contribute to addressing the issues identified in the assessment for specific users.

### **Costs**

The strategic actions have also been ranked as low, medium or high based on cost. The brackets are:

- ◀ (L) -Low - less than £50k;
- ◀ (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k;
- ◀ (H) -High £250k and above.

These are based on Sport England's estimated facility costs which can be found at:  
<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>

### **Timescales**

The Action Plan has been created to be delivered over a ten-year period. The information within the Assessment Report, Strategy and Action Plan will require updating as developments occur.

The indicative timescales relate to delivery times and are not priority based:

- ◀ (S) -Short (1-2 years);
- ◀ (M) - Medium (3-5 years);
- ◀ (L) - Long (6+ years).

### **Aim**

Each action seeks to meet at least one of the three aims of the Strategy; **Enhance, Provide, Protect.**

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

### RUNCORN ANALYSIS AREA

Sport	Analysis area	Current demand (2020)		Future demand (2037)
		Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES <sup>[1]</sup>	Future capacity total in MES
Football (grass pitches)	Runcorn	Adult	Shortfall of 1	Shortfall of 1.5
		Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 4.5	Shortfall of 5.5
		Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 4.5
		Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1
		Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 1	Shortfall of 2
	Halton	Adult	Spare capacity of 4	Spare capacity of 1.5
		Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 3.5
		Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 6	Shortfall of 7
		Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 2	Spare capacity of 2
		Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 3	Shortfall of 4.5
Football (3G pitches)	Runcorn	Full size, floodlit	Shortfall of 2 full sized 3G pitch for team training	Shortfall of 2 full sized 3G pitch for team training
Cricket	Runcorn	Saturday PM	At capacity	Shortfall of 14
		Sunday PM	Spare capacity of 8	At capacity
		Junior	At capacity	Shortfall of 4
	Halton	Saturday PM	At capacity	Shortfall of 14
		Sunday PM	Spare capacity of 16	At capacity
		Junior	At capacity	Shortfall of 12
Rugby union	Runcorn	Senior	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 1.5
	Halton	Senior	Shortfall of 2.25	Shortfall of 3.5
Hockey (sand AGPs)	Halton	Full size, floodlit	Adequate provision (however quality needs to be improved)	Adequate provision (however quality needs to be improved)
Rugby league	Runcorn	Senior	At capacity	Shortfall of 0.5
		Junior	At capacity	At capacity
	Halton	Senior	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 1
		Junior	Shortfall of 5.25	Shortfall of 6.75
Baseball/softball	Halton	Pitches	Adequate provision	Adequate provision

<sup>[1]</sup> MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

Runcorn Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>14</sup>	Cost <sup>15</sup>	Aim
3	Beechwood County Primary School	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch that is played to capacity at peak time. Used by Beechwood JFC.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Look to secure access for Beechwood JFC through a CUA.	Education FF CFA	Local	M	L	L	Enhance Protect
5	Bridgewater Park Primary School	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
7	Brookvale Recreation Centre (LFFP Priority site)	Hockey suitable AGP	Council	One full size poor quality floodlit hockey suitable AGP that is available for community use. Recent dialogue between the Council, EH and Football Foundation suggests there is potential to convert the pitch to 3G in order to alleviate the shortfall in the Runcorn Analysis Area, however, due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic the timeframe for a decision regarding this is currently unknown.	Seek to convert the surface to 3G ensuring that all stages of the process are transparent with all relevant stakeholder including but not limited to EH, FF, CFA and Sport England. <b>CFA is expecting an application for funding in April 2021 which could potentially see the opening of a 3G facility in first half of 2022.</b>	Council EH FF CFA	Key centre	H	S	M	Protect Provide
11	Daresbury County Primary School	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 5v5 pitch that has spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
15	Grange Academy	Football	Education	One youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, one mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitch all of which are poor quality and have unsecure tenure. The youth 9v9 pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent session. Spare capacity on the youth 11v11 pitch has been discounted due to unsecure tenure and poor quality, whereas, both mini pitches are play to capacity at peak time. Pitches are used by Heath Rangers FC.	Improve pitch quality with an enhanced maintenance regime. Explore securing community access for Heath Rangers FC through a CUA.	Education FF CFA	Key centre	L	S - M	L - M	Protect Enhance
		3G		One standard quality full size floodlit 3G pitch that is not available at the weekend due to staffing issues. Pitch was installed in 2013 and is not on the FA pitch register.	Explore options to allow the pitch to be fully available for community use. Look to refurbish the pitch when appropriate. Explore the potential of putting the pitch on the FA register.						
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields (LFFP Priority site)	Football	Council	Two adult, two youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, three mini 7v7 and two mini 5v5 pitches all of which are poor quality. The youth 11v11 pitches are overplayed by three MES with the youth 9v9 pitches overplayed by two MES, whereas the adult pitches have spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. Beechwood JFC has aspirations for a long term arrangement on site.	Improve pitch quality with a continual enhanced maintenance regime. Explore the feasibility of a long term arrangement for Beechwood JFC on the site. Explore potential options to improve the quality and access to onsite ancillary provision. Explore potential options to reduce levels of dog fouling.	Council FF CFA Sports clubs	Key centre	M	M	M	Enhance Protect

<sup>14</sup> (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

<sup>15</sup> (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above



Runcorn Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>14</sup>	Cost <sup>15</sup>	Aim
21	Halton Lodge School	Football	Education	One standard quality youth 9v9 pitch that is not available for community use.	Sustain quality through appropriate maintenance and retain as current use.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Protect
30	Millbank Linnets Stadium	Football	Sports club (leased from Council)	Two adult pitches (one of which is suitable for Step 4 football), two youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, two youth 7v7 and three mini 5v5 pitches all of which are standard quality. The youth 11v11 pitches are overplayed by 1.5 MES whilst the youth 9v9 pitches are overplayed by one match equivalent session. Conversely, the mini 5v5 pitches have actual spare capacity amounting to 0.5 MES, whereas spare capacity on the adult pitches is discounted due to planned pitch developments. The club's stadia pitch has recently been converted to a hybrid surface. Its main clubhouse for its senior teams is good quality, however, the ancillary facilities for its youth and mini teams is poor quality.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Monitor the utilisation and impact/success of the hybrid pitch. Explore the feasibility to improve pitch drainage on the remaining pitches. Explore the feasibility of improving the quality of ancillary provision for youth and mini teams. Ensure pitch and ancillary provision continues to meet the relevant requirement for the level of Step football being played on the site. <b>The Club has received a pitch maintenance grant which should improve the provision to good quality.</b>	Sports club FF CFA Council	Key centre	M	S - M	M - H	Protect Provide Enhance
32	Moore RUFC	Rugby union	Sports club	Two senior pitches one which is fully floodlit. The floodlit pitch has the quality rating of M1/D1 with the other pitch being M1/D2 quality. The floodlit pitch is overplayed by 0.5 MES whereas there is no spare capacity on the remaining pitch. Site is owned by Moore RUFC; the Club indicates ancillary facilities are of good quality but its clubhouse needs expanding in order to accommodate planned establishment of mini, junior and female sections. The Club also hopes to improve showers and boiler.	Improve levels of pitch maintenance in order to reduce identified overplay. Explore installing floodlights on the other pitch in order for competitive and training demand to be evenly dispersed. Explore the feasibility of enhancing changing provision in order to better accommodate mini, junior and female demand. Assist the Club in improving the quality of its boiler and showering facilities.	Sports club RFU	Local	M	M	L - M	Protect Enhance
36	Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy	Football	Academy	Three poor quality adult pitches that have spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. Pitches are used by Brookvale United JFC.	Improve pitch quality with an enhanced maintenance regime. Explore securing tenure for Brookvale United JFC through a CUA.	Academy FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance Protect
38	Palace Fields Primary Academy	Football	Academy	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Academy FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
39	Pavilions Club (Runcorn Town FC and Bowling Club)	Football	Commercial	One poor quality adult pitch with spare capacity discounted due to quality. Mitigation for the loss at Sandy Lane (17/00468/FUL) is intended for this site.	Explore potential options for mitigation monies including lease for Runcorn Town FC, improving pitch and ancillary provision such as floodlighting, fencing and lighting.	Commercial FF CFA	Local	M	L	L	Enhance
40	Pewithall Primary School	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
42	Runcorn Boys Club	Football	Sports club	One standard quality adult pitch that is played to capacity.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	Education FF	Local	M	L	L	Enhance

Runcorn Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>14</sup>	Cost <sup>15</sup>	Aim
						CFA					
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields (LFFP Priority site)	Football	Council	Three adult and two youth 11v11 pitches that are all poor quality. The adult pitches are overplayed by one match equivalent session with spare capacity on the youth 11v11 pitches discounted due to poor quality. Ancillary provision needs to be modernised. Mitigation for the loss at Sandy Lane (17/00468/FUL) is intended for this site	Improve pitch quality through enhanced levels of maintenance. Explore the feasibility of improve the quality of the onsite ancillary provision. S106 requires a Feasibility Study and improvement works if application is approved.	Council FF CFA RFL	Local	M	S	L – M	Enhance Protect
		Rugby league		One poor quality senior pitch that is played to capacity with training and competitive demand from Runcorn ARLFC. Tenure for the club is considered unsecure as the Council may change where it plays on an annual basis. Ancillary provision needs to be modernised. Mitigation for the loss at Sandy Lane (17/00468/FUL) is intended for this site	Improve pitch quality to better accommodate levels of training and competitive demand from Runcorn ARLFC. Ensure the Club has suitable pitch provision for its levels of demand. Explore the feasibility of improve the quality of the onsite ancillary provision. S106 requires a Feasibility Study and improvement works if application is approved.						
44	Runcorn Sports Club	Cricket	Sports club	One good quality square with 13 grass wickets. Spare capacity to accommodate additional Sunday PM and Junior demand. Runcorn CC has recently obtained a new long term lease on the site. The Club reports aspirations for a NTP on its main square for both competitive and training purposes.	Sustain square quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Utilise spare capacity to accommodate future women's and junior demand. Explore the feasibility of installing a NTP onsite.	Sports club ECB CCB	Local	L	L	L	Protect Provide
45	Sandymoor School	Football	Academy	One poor quality youth 11v11 pitch that is played to capacity. Pitch is used by Sandymoor FC.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Look to secure access for Sandymoor FC through a CUA.	Academy FF CFA Parish Council	Key centre	H	S - M	L	Protect Enhance
		3G		One good quality small size floodlit 3G pitch (85x55) that is FA registered. The pitch at Sandymoor School is owned by Sandymoor Parish Council which reports awaiting a shared use agreement with the School which will run the provision on a day to day basis including the hiring of the pitch. The completion of this agreement has been delayed due to issues surrounding COVID-19.	Sustain pitch quality through appropriate levels of maintenance and ensure it remains on the FA register. Ensure the pitch is accessible for both educational and community access through an appropriate shared use agreement.						
48	St Chad's Catholic and Church Of England High School	Football	Education	Two poor quality youth 11v11 pitches that are played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular activity. Pitches are not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
49	St Clement's Catholic Primary School	Football	Education	One poor quality youth 9v9 pitch that is played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular activity. Pitch is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance



Runcorn Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>14</sup>	Cost <sup>15</sup>	Aim
50	St Martin's Catholic Primary School	Football	Education	One poor quality youth 9v9 pitch that is played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular activity. Pitch is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
51	St Mary's Church Of England Primary School	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
54	The Brow Community Primary School	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 5v5 pitch that is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
55	The Heath School	Football	Academy	Two poor quality youth 11v11 pitches that are played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular activity. Pitches are not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA EH	Key centre	L	L	L	Enhance
		Hockey suitable AGP		One full size floodlit hockey suitable AGP that is available for community use. Runcorn HC currently rents the use of the pitch on an annual basis. It is considered to be poor quality as it has not been refurbished since installation in 2005, despite being deep cleaned 2019. There is some imported demand on the pitch from Warrington HC. Mitigation for the loss at Sandy Lane (17/00468/FUL) is intended for this site.	As a priority, protect and refurbish the pitch as a hockey suitable surface. Look to secure tenure for Runcorn HC on the site. Ensure a sinking fund is in situ once refurbished. S106 requires a Feasibility Study and improvement works if application is approved.			H	S	H	Enhance Protect
58	Westfield Primary School	Football	Education	One youth 9v9 and one mini 5v5 pitch both of which are poor quality. Spare capacity on each pitch is discounted due to unsecure tenure. Pitches are used by Weston Point Juniors FC.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Look to secure access for Weston Point Juniors FC through a CUA.	Education FF CFA	Local	M	L	L	Enhance Protect
59	Weston County Primary School	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 5v5 pitch that is played to capacity at peak time. Pitch is used by Futbol Olè.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Look to secure access for Futbol Olè through a CUA.	Education FF CFA	Local	M	L	L	Enhance Protect
60	Weston Point Community Primary School	Football	Education	One standard quality mini 7v7 pitch that has spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. Pitches are used by Weston Point Juniors FC.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Look to secure access for Weston Point Juniors FC through a CUA.	Education FF CFA	Local	M	L	L	Enhance Protect
68	Woodside Playing Fields	Football	Council	One youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, one mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitch all of which are standard quality. The youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches are played to capacity at peak time. The mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches both have spare capacity at peak time. All of the pitches suffer from waterlogging. Brookvale United FC has requested a lease for the site from the Council, reporting that if it is successful it would explore potential funding options to improve quality. Onsite ancillary provision is standard quality albeit modernisation is required.	Sustain pitch quality through appropriate levels of maintenance. Utilise spare capacity to alleviate overplayed sites or to accommodate future demand. Explore the feasibility of giving long term tenure to Brookvale United FC as long as the agreement is agreeable for all stakeholders. Explore the feasibility of improving onsite ancillary provision.	Council FF CFA Sports club	Local	M	S - M	L - M	Protect Enhance

Runcorn Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>14</sup>	Cost <sup>15</sup>	Aim
72	Sandy Lane	Disused	Commercial	There is an undetermined planning application (17/00468/FUL) to build houses on disused playing fields at Sandy Lane, which previously accommodated both football and rugby league pitches as well as clubhouse provision. If the site was lost, it would be subject to appropriate mitigation to address the loss in line with the NPPF Paragraph 97 and Sport England's Playing Field Policy. Site was last used during the 2016/17 season.	The PPS confirms the playing field land is required to meet identified shortfalls and mitigation is required if the site is to be developed. If the planning application is not approved then SE would seek to find a way of bringing it back into use. This would require additional conversations between SE and the Council.	-	-	-	-	-	-

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

### WIDNES ANALYSIS AREA

Sport	Analysis area	Current demand (2020)		Future demand (2037)
		Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES <sup>[1]</sup>	Future capacity total in MES
Football (grass pitches)	Widnes	Adult	Spare capacity of 5	Spare capacity of 3
		Youth 11v11	Spare capacity of 4	Spare capacity of 2
		Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 2.5
		Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1
		Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 2	Shortfall of 2.5
	Halton	Adult	Spare capacity of 4	Spare capacity of 1.5
		Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 3.5
		Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 6	Shortfall of 7
		Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 2	Spare capacity of 2
		Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 3	Shortfall of 4.5
Football (3G pitches)	Widnes	Full size, floodlit	At capacity	At capacity
Cricket	Widnes	Saturday PM	At capacity	Shortfall of 14
		Sunday PM	Spare capacity of 8	At capacity
		Junior	At capacity	Shortfall of 8
	Halton	Saturday PM	At capacity	Shortfall of 14
		Sunday PM	Spare capacity of 16	At capacity
		Junior	At capacity	Shortfall of 12
Rugby union	Widnes	Senior	Shortfall of 1.75	Shortfall of 2
	Halton	Senior	Shortfall of 2.25	Shortfall of 3.5
Hockey (sand AGPs)	Halton	Full size, floodlit	Adequate provision (however quality needs to be improved)	Adequate provision (however quality needs to be improved)
Rugby league	Widnes	Senior	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
		Junior	Shortfall of 5.25	Shortfall of 6.75
	Halton	Senior	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 1
		Junior	Shortfall of 5.25	Shortfall of 6.75
American football	Halton	Pitches	Adequate provision	Adequate provision

<sup>[1]</sup> MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

Widnes Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>16</sup>	Cost <sup>17</sup>	Aim
1	Arley Drive Playing Fields	Football	Council	The Council reports that the site currently does not accommodate any football pitches although they can be reinstated if demand arises. The site was previously configured with one mini 5v5, one mini 7v7 and one youth 9v9 pitch, going back to 2018. Alternatively, the Council reports that the site has the capacity to accommodate two youth 11v11 pitches.	Look to reinstate provision on the site in a suitable configuration to alleviate identified current and future shortfalls, particularly for youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitch types.	Council FF LFA	Local	M	S - M	L	Protect
4	Birchfield Sports and Social Club	Rugby union	Sports club	One poor quality (M0/D1) senior pitch that is not floodlit. Spare capacity discounted due to poor quality. Pitch is rented by Birchfield RUFC; the Club states that the new owners are looking to provide new changing rooms on site but have seen no evidence regarding this at the time of writing.	Since the production of the initial draft of the PPS the site has since become unavailable for community use. Loo to secure tenure for Birchfield RUFC on the site with a long term agreement. If a new agreement can not be sought then work with the club to secure access to provision elsewhere in the Analysis Area. The PPS confirms the playing field land is required to meet identified shortfalls and mitigation is required if the site is to be developed.	Sports club RFC Council	Local	H	M	L - M	Protect Enhance Provide
		Cricket		There has previously been a grass square with six wickets maintained at Birchfield Sports and Social Club; however, this was not provided by the owners of the site for the 2020 season. Birchfield Park CC formerly utilised the provision but has since relocated to play friendly fixtures at Northern Cricket Club in the authority of Sefton.							
9	Cronton Sixth Form College	Football	Education	Two standard quality adult pitches that have spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain quality with appropriate levels of maintenance and retain as current use.	Education FF LFA ECB RFL	Local	L	L	L	Protect
		Cricket		One standalone NTP that is poor quality and considered disused by the College.	Retain as current use.						
		Rugby league		One standard quality senior pitch that has spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. Pitch is available for community use but is currently unused.	Sustain quality with appropriate levels of maintenance and retain as current use.						
10	Crow Wood Park	Football	Council	One poor quality adult pitch that is available for community use but currently unused. Spare capacity discounted due to pitch quality.	Improve pitch quality with enhanced levels of maintenance. Once pitch has improved in quality look to maximise community use.	Council FF LFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
13	Frank Myler Pavilion (LFFP Priority site)	Football	Council	Three adult, two youth 9v9, two mini 7v7 and two mini 5v5 pitches all of which are standard quality and all of which contain actual spare capacity. Pitches suffer from dog fouling. There are aspirations to create a full size floodlit 3G pitch on the site.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Utilise spare capacity via transferal of demand from overplayed sites. Explore the feasibility of creating a fully size floodlit pitch on the site. Explore the potential to create rugby league provision for demand from Halton Simms Cross ARLFC. <b>Due to the relocation of Halton Simms Cross ARLFC ensure that</b>	Council FF LFA	Key centre	H	S - M	H	Protect Provide

<sup>16</sup> (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

<sup>17</sup> (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above

Widnes Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>16</sup>	Cost <sup>17</sup>	Aim
					<b>there is suitable pitch and ancillary provision to meet the clubs need (See Site ID 27: King George V Playing Fields).</b>						
18	Hale Park	Football	Council	The Council reports that the site currently does not accommodate any football pitches; however, they can be reinstated if demand arises. The last known layout at Hale Park was one adult and one youth 11v11 pitch. Furthermore, the site is also accompanied by changing rooms, although the water system has been drained due to infrequent use.	Look to reinstate provision on the site in a suitable configuration to alleviate identified current and future shortfalls particularly for youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitch types.  If football returns to the site look to make relevant improvements to accompanying ancillary facilities. <b>The CFA (2021) confirms the sites has enhances in maintenance and will be reinstated.</b>	Council FF LFA	Local	M	S - M	L	Protect
19	Halebank Recreation Ground	Football	Sports club (leased from Council)	One standard quality adult pitch that is played to capacity at peak time.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. <b>Club have received enhanced grass pitch maintenance grant to improve grass pitch quality.</b>	Sports club FF LFA	Local	M	S	L	Enhance
26	Jaguar Land Rover Sports and Social Club	Football	Commercial	One adult and one mini 5v5 pitch both of which are good quality. The adult pitch is played to capacity at peak time whereas the mini 5v5 pitch has actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance.  Look to utilise spare capacity for future demand and transfer of demand off overplayed sites.	Commercial FF LFA	Local	L	L	L	Protect
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes) (LFFP Priority site)	Football	Council	Three adult, one youth 9v9, one mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitch all of which are poor quality. The youth 9v9 pitch is overplayed by 0.5 MES, whilst spare capacity on the remaining pitches has been discounted due to poor quality. Pitches suffer from poor drainage and dog fouling. Widnes FC (Step 4 club) has plans to obtain a long-term lease/freehold at the site in order to create its own home ground. It indicates this venture would be funded through private investment and sponsorship revenue. <b>Since the production of the reports a burst water pipe has severely damaged the ancillary facilities. Resulting in the building being unavailable for community access.</b>	Explore the feasibility of Widnes FC obtaining a long term lease on the site. If long term tenure is given to Widnes FC, assist the Club in creating the appropriate facilities for Step 4 football in addition to improving pitch quality. Ensure Halton Simms Cross ARLFC has access to equal or greater quantity/quality of provision within the locality to meet its current and future levels of demand with appropriate ancillary facilities.  If Widnes FC does not obtain a long term lease, improve poor quality football pitches with an enhanced maintenance regime and sustain quality of the rugby league pitch.  Ensure secure tenure for Halton Simm Cross ARLFC through a long term agreement at the site. <b>The Council and Widnes FC will hold discussions to determine the future of the ancillary facilities whilst Halton Simms Cross ARLFC have been relocated to Frank Myler Pavilion.</b>	Council FF LFA	Local	H	S - M	M - H	Protect Provide
		Rugby league		One standard quality senior pitch that has spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. Pitch is used by Halton Simms Cross ARLFC; if Widnes FC takes control of the site, the rugby league club will have to transfer off site. <b>Since the production of the reports a burst water pipe has severely damaged the ancillary facilities. Resulting in the building being unavailable for community access.</b>							



Widnes Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>16</sup>	Cost <sup>17</sup>	Aim
28	Leigh Recreation Playing Fields (LFFP Priority site)	Football	Council	Four adult and two youth 11v11 pitches all of which are standard quality. The adult pitches have two MES of actual spare capacity whereas the youth 11v11 pitches are played to capacity at peak time. Onsite ancillary facilities are standard quality albeit in need of modernisation.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Look to utilise spare capacity for future demand and transferal of demand off overplayed sites. Explore the feasibility of modernising onsite ancillary provision.	Council FF LFA RFL	Local	M	S - M	L - M	Protect Enhance Provide
		Rugby league		The site previously accommodated one senior rugby league pitch (circa 2012); however, the site is now solely used for football. That being said, there is potential to reinstate the pitch if required based on levels of demand and the reconfiguration of pitch types at other Council sites.	If required, reinstate rugby league provision on the site to meet future levels of demand from local clubs.						
33	Moorfield Primary School	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF LFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Football	Sports club	Two poor quality adult pitches that are overplayed by one match equivalent session.	As a priority look to secure tenure for all community clubs on the site. Ensure any potential future loss of the site meets NPPF guidelines. If access to the site is lost look to provide suitable provision elsewhere in the locality. If tenure can be secure explore options to improve poor quality playing and ancillary provision. Improve pitch quality with enhanced levels of maintenance.	Sports club FF LFA	Local	H	S	L	Enhance Protect
		Cricket		There was previously a grass square with six wickets. The was the home venue for Moorfield CC before the club folded in 2016. Anecdotal evidence suggests there is an aspiration for this piece of playing field land to be sold for housing, however, to date (December 2020), no official planning application has been submitted.							
		Rugby league		Two senior and two junior pitches all of which are poor quality. Senior pitch is played to capacity whereas the junior pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent session. Pitches are used by Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC and Widnes St Marie's ARLFC. Onsite ancillary provision is poor quality. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is an aspiration for land to be sold for housing, however, to date (December 2020), no official planning application has been submitted.	<b>Sports club has received a pitch maintenance grant (2021) which should see pitch quality to improve to standard quality.</b>						
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	Football	Academy	One poor quality youth 9v9 that is played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular demand.	Improve pitch quality to better meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Academy FF LFA RFL	Local	L	L	L	Protect
		3G		One full size floodlit 3G pitch that is good quality having been built in 2017. Pitch is available for community use and is FIFA certified.	Sustain quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Ensure there is a sinking fund in place for the eventual refurbishment. Ensure the pitch remains community available.						

Widnes Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>16</sup>	Cost <sup>17</sup>	Aim
		Rugby league		One poor quality senior pitch that is played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular demand.	Improve pitch quality to better meet curricular and extra curricular demand.						
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Football	Council	Two mini 7v7 and two mini 5v5 pitches all of which are poor quality. The mini 5v5 pitches are played to capacity whereas the mini 7v7 pitches are played to capacity at peak time. Pitches suffer from poor drainage, waterlogging and dog fouling.	Improve poor quality football and rugby union pitches with enhanced levels of maintenance. In the longer term, explore the feasibility of improving onsite drainage for both football and rugby union pitches.	Council Sports clubs Private FF LFA RFU	Key centre	M - H	S - M	L - M	Protect Provide
		Rugby union	Sports club	Two poor quality senior pitches (M0/D0), one of which is floodlit. Widnes RUFC has a freehold of the pitches, which are played to capacity. The pitches are only maintained to a basic level as the Club cannot fully access the site with its maintenance equipment.							
		Lapsed / Disused	Private	Separate parcel of land which is privately owned. It previously accommodated three youth 11v11 pitches, going back to 2013. Pex Hill FC indicates that it would want to reinstate the provision in order to accommodate all of its teams at one location.	Explore the feasibility of reinstating the football pitches on the privately owned area of land to meet current and future demand from Pex Hill FC. If the pitches cannot be reinstated, ensure any permanent loss of playing field land meets NPPF and SE playing field policy guidelines.	Private CFA FF	Key centre	L	L	L	Protect
46	DCBL Stadium Halton	3G	Council	One full size floodlit 3G that is FIFA, World Rugby and RFL Stadium compliant. The pitch was built in 2019 and is good quality. It is home to Widnes Vikings RLFC, Widnes FC and Halton Spartans. The football club currently rents the site, at a perceived substantial cost, as this is the only site in its locality which meets the requirements for the level of football it plays (Step 4).	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Ensure the site continues to meet the relevant requirements for the standard of rugby league, football and American football being played. Ensure the provision remains accessible for community users, where applicable. Ensure a sinking fund is in place for long-term sustainability. Support Widnes FC in its aspirations to have its own site, with appropriate ground grading (e.g. King George V Playing Fields).	Council Sports club FF LFA	Key centre	L	L	L	Protect
52	St Michaels Catholic Primary School	Football	Education	One poor quality adult pitch that is played to capacity. St Michael's DH FC reports that it struggles to gain funding due to only renting pitches at the School. It aspires to have long-term tenure on the site (or an alternative site) so that it can apply for funding to help the growth of the Club.	As a priority assist St Michaels DH FC in obtaining security of tenure on the site so it can access relevant funds/grants to improve pitch quality.	Education FF LFA	Local	M	S	L	Protect Enhance
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Football	Education	Two youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, two mini 7v7 and two mini 5v5 pitches all of which are standard quality. The youth 9v9 pitches are overplayed by two MES whereas all the mini pitches are played to capacity at peak time. The youth	Sustain pitch quality with an appropriate maintenance regime. Explore transfer of demand off the overplayed pitch to a site in the locality with spare capacity.	Education FF LFA	Local	L	L	L	Protect

Widnes Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>16</sup>	Cost <sup>17</sup>	Aim
		Rugby league		11v11 pitches have actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES at peak time. Widnes FC reports having long term tenure on the site. Two standard quality senior pitches that have spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Ensure Widnes FC has security of tenure on the site. Sustain pitch quality and retain as current use.						
56	Wade Deacon High School	Football	Education	Two standard quality youth 11v11 pitches that have spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. Issues with unauthorised access.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Council and FF/LFA need to engage with the School to ensure the existing CUA is being implemented.	Education FF LFA	Local	M	S	L	Protect Provide Enhance
		3G		One standard quality full size floodlit 3G pitch which was built in 2013. Pitch is not FA/FIFA certified. Pitch is unavailable at the weekend for community use which is a breach of an agreement made when it was constructed.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Ensure the pitch is retested FA/FIFA compliancy when appropriate. Ensure there is a sinking fund in place. Examine why the pitch is unavailable at the weekend and look to re-establish community use within this time period.						
		Rugby league		Three poor quality senior pitches that are played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular usage.	Improve pitch quality to better sustain curricular and extra curricular usage.						
61	Widnes Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports club	One good quality square with 15 grass wickets accompanied by an NTP. Spare capacity to accommodate additional Sunday PM and junior demand. Site is owned by Widnes CC, with the Club suggesting that its grass netting area would benefit from some fencing and new grass practice nets. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Club is keen to explore a merger with Birchfield CC, or at a minimum a player share, although this has stalled recently due to the ongoing pandemic. Birchfield CC currently uses Widnes Cricket Club for training purposes.	Sustain square quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Explore greater utilisation of onsite NTP to create more capacity for future demand. Assist the Club in providing improving the quality of training provision. If the Club merges with Birchfield CC or actualises its future demand, ensure access to additional provision (i.e. via the potential reinstatement of cricket provision at Birchfield Sports and Club).	Sports club ECB CCB	Local	M	S	L	Protect Enhance
63	Widnes RUFC	Rugby union	Sports club	Two senior rugby union pitches, one of which is floodlit. The floodlit pitch has quality rating M1/D2 and is overplayed, whereas the other pitch has a M1/D1 rating and is played to capacity. A nearby housing development has disrupted the drainage system of the floodlit pitch, causing significant waterlogging issues. Ancillary facilities on site are good quality although the car park needs refurbishment.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Ensure issues with waterlogging are resolved. Once pitches at Prescott Road Playing Fields have improved in quality, look at dispersing demand equally across all pitches to minimise overplay. Assist the Club in improving the surface of its carpark.	Sports club RFU	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields (LFFP Priority site)	Football	Sports club (leased from the Council)	One adult, four youth 11v11 and one youth 9v9 pitch all of which are standard quality. The adult pitch has actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES at peak time, with the youth 11v11 pitches having spare	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Look to utilise spare capacity where possible whilst also protect pitch quality.	Sports club FF LFA RL	Key centre	M	L	L	Protect Provide



Widnes Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>16</sup>	Cost <sup>17</sup>	Aim
		Rugby league		capacity of 2.5 MES. There is clubhouse provision at Wilmere Lane Playing Fields; however, AFC Cronton reports that this is not readily available unless the long-term tenants at the site (Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC) are utilising the facilities at the same time.  One senior and five junior pitches all of which are standard quality. Senior pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions whereas the junior pitches are overplayed by two match equivalent sessions. Site is lease to Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC; the Club reports that it could accommodate more demand if it had more pitches. Football users on the site report ancillary provision is not readily available.	Ensure ancillary provision is readily available for all community users. <b>Club has received enhanced grass pitch maintenance for the site which will help to maintain standard.</b>  Improve pitch quality with enhanced levels of maintenance. Ensure ancillary provision is readily available for all community users. Explore the feasibility of creating additional provision for Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC to access to actualise latent demand.						
69	Parklands Sports Club	Football	Commercial	One youth 11v11 and one adult pitch that are both standard quality. Each pitch has actual spare capacity of one match equivalent session. The leaseholders are ineligible for grant funding, the Council is in discussions with current leaseholders with regards to a Sports Club lease. The sports club would be eligible	Assist in establishing a lease with the sports club in order to access grant funding. Sustain pitch quality with appropriate maintenance. Utilise spare capacity for future demand or to alleviate identified shortfalls. to apply for grant funding.	Sports club FF LFA	Local	L	L	L	Protect
		Rugby league		Until 2018, the site accommodated one senior rugby league pitch which was previously the home site for Widnes St Maries ARLFC. The Club reports that it had to relocate to Moorfield Sports and Social Club as the operators indicated that it would no longer be maintaining the rugby league provision. The area of playing field land is now utilised as an adult football pitch.	Examine the feasibility of reinstating rugby league provision at the site.						
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Rugby league	Sports club (leased from the Council)	One senior and one junior pitch both of which are standard quality and are floodlit. The senior pitch is played to capacity whereas the junior pitch is overplayed by 2.25 MES. Site is leased to West Bank Bears ARLFC.	Assist the Club in improving pitch quality through enhanced levels of maintenance. Assist the Club in creating additional pitches, or facilitate access to alternative provision in order to alleviate overplay.	Sports club RFL	Local	M	M	L - M	Enhance Provide

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

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### PART 7: HOUSING GROWTH SCENARIOS

The PPS provides an estimate of demand for pitch sport based on population forecasts and club consultation to 2037 (in line with the emerging Delivery and Allocation Local Plan period). This future demand is translated into teams likely to be generated, rather than actual pitch provision required. The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) adds to this, updating the likely demand generated for pitch sports based on housing increases and converts the demand into MES and the number of pitches required. It also gives the associated costs of supplying the increased pitch provision. The PPC splits the total pitch requirement into natural turf pitches to meet peak period demand, artificial grass pitches to meet training demand, and the additional number of changing rooms required to support the new demand.

The scenarios below are examples of how the PPC can be used in order to understand the potential additional demand for pitch sports from housing growth in addition to potential associated costs. It is recommended that the Council work with Sport England to develop a process and guidance to obtain developer contributions from single or cumulative housing developments.

Scenarios one and two are based on a specific number of dwellings where the additional population is not known. These use an occupancy rate of 2.4 people per dwelling to estimate what the likely resident population will be:

- ◀ **Scenario One** - additional demand for pitch sports generated from housing growth from 350 dwellings (the yearly requirement identified in the Local Plan but only applied to a single year for this scenario).
- ◀ **Scenario Two** - additional demand for pitch sports generated from housing growth from 484 dwellings (a “real world” example linked to the development of West of Hale Gate Rd<sup>18</sup>).
- ◀ **Scenario Three** - additional demand for pitch sports generated from housing growth covering the entire Local Plan period (2021-2037)). Total an additional population of 6,018.

#### **Scenario One**

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth from 350 dwellings with an occupancy rate of 2.4 per household is 840 people. This population increase equates to 0.87 MES of demand per week for football, rugby union and rugby league, 0.03 MES of demand per week on AGPs for hockey and 1.02 MES of demand per season for cricket. Training demand equates to 1.50 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and to 0.06 hours of use per week for hockey on AGPs. There are also 0.14 MES per week of training for rugby demand (union and league) on a floodlit grass pitch.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/pdf/eip/EL098.pdf>

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

Table 7.1: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 350 dwellings

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 350 dwellings	
	Match demand (MES) per week <sup>19</sup>	Training demand <sup>20</sup>
Adult football	0.13	1.50 hours
Youth football	0.31	
Mini soccer	0.30	
Rugby union	0.04	0.04 MES
Rugby league	0.09	0.10 MES
Adult hockey	0.02	0.05 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0.01	0.01 hours
Cricket	1.02	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifecycle costs. The PPC estimates the total capital cost for the anticipated growth across all pitch types would be £108,829 which would require an annual lifecycle cost of £15,709 per annum.

Table 7.2: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost <sup>21</sup>	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) <sup>22</sup>	Number	Capital cost
Adult football	0 (0.13)	£13,029	£2,749	0.27	£44,950
Youth football	0 (0.31)	£24,660	£5,179	0.39	£65,781
Mini soccer	0 (0.30)	£7,468	£1,568	0	£0
Rugby union	0 (0.04)	£5,672	£1,214	0.08	£13,978
Rugby league	0 (0.09)	£9,867	£2,181	0.18	£29,601
Cricket	0 (0.02)	£6,227	£1,258	0.04	£7,283
Sand based AGPs	0 (0.00)	£3,297	£102	0.01	£1,370
3G	0 (0.04)	£38,609	£1,458	0.08	£13,387
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£108,829</b>	<b>£15,709</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>£176,350</b>

The calculator also estimates that there will be a need to provide 1.05 changing rooms to support the new pitch provision in the table above. The total capital cost to deliver this level of provision is estimated to be £176,350. The small amount of additional demand generated suggests improvements to existing sites within the locality may be required rather than new provision.

<sup>19</sup> As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

<sup>20</sup> Hours equate to access to a full size floodlit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

<sup>21</sup> Sport England Facilities Costs Second Quarter 2020 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

<sup>22</sup> Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

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### Scenario Two

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth from 484 dwellings with an occupancy rate of 2.4 per household is 1,162 people. This population increase equates to 1.22 MES of demand per week for football, rugby union and rugby league, 0.03 MES of demand per week on AGPs for hockey and 1.42 MES of demand per season for cricket. Training demand equates to 2.08 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and to 0.08 hours of use per week for hockey on AGPs. There are also 0.20 MES per week of training for rugby demand (union and league) on a floodlit grass pitch.

Table 7.3: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 484 dwellings

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 484 dwellings	
	Match demand (MES) per week <sup>23</sup>	Training demand <sup>24</sup>
Adult football	0.18	2.08 hours
Youth football	0.44	
Mini soccer	0.42	
Rugby union	0.06	0.06 MES
Rugby league	0.12	0.14 MES
Adult hockey	0.02	0.07 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0.01	0.01 hours
Cricket	1.42	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifecycle costs. The PPC estimates the total capital cost for the anticipated growth across all pitch types would be £150,550 which would require an annual lifecycle cost of £21,729 per annum. The relatively small amount of additional demand generated suggests improvements to existing sites within the locality may be required rather than new provision.

Table 7.4: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost <sup>25</sup>	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) <sup>26</sup>	Number	Capital cost
Adult football	0 (0.18)	£18,024	£3,803	0.37	£62,181
Youth football	0 (0.44)	£34,113	£7,164	0.54	£90,997
Mini soccer	0 (0.42)	£10,331	£2,169	0	£0
Rugby union	0 (0.06)	£7,847	£1,679	0.11	£19,337
Rugby league	0 (0.12)	£13,650	£3,017	0.24	£40,949
Cricket	0 (0.03)	£8,615	£1,740	0.06	£10,075
Sand based AGPs	0 (0.01)	£4,561	£141	0.01	£1,896
3G	0 (0.05)	£53,409	£2,016	0.11	£18,519
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£150,550</b>	<b>£21,729</b>	<b>1.44</b>	<b>£243,954</b>

<sup>23</sup> As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

<sup>24</sup> Hours equate to access to a full size floodlit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

<sup>25</sup> Sport England Facilities Costs Second Quarter 2020 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

<sup>26</sup> Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

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The calculator also estimates that there will be a need to provide 1.44 changing rooms to support the new pitch provision identified in the table above. The total capital cost to deliver this level of provision is estimated to be £243,954.

### **Scenario Three**

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth from 350 dwellings, per annum for 17 years is a total of 5,950 dwellings. As the likely population increase is known using ONS population projection data this represents a population increase of 6,018. This population increase equates to 6.31 MES of demand per week for football, rugby union and rugby league, 0.31 MES of demand per week on AGPs for hockey and 7.34MES of demand per season for cricket. Training demand equates to 10.78 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and to 0.41 hours of use per week for hockey on AGPs. There are also 1.05 MES per week of training for rugby demand (union and league) on a floodlit grass pitch.

*Table 7.5: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 5,950 dwellings*

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 5,950 dwellings	
	Match demand (MES) per week <sup>27</sup>	Training demand <sup>28</sup>
Adult football	0.95	10.78 hours
Youth football	2.25	
Mini soccer	2.18	
Rugby union	0.30	0.31 MES
Rugby league	0.63	0.74 MES
Adult hockey	0.12	0.35 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0.05	0..06 hours
Cricket	7.34	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifestyle costs. The PPC estimates the total capital cost for the anticipated growth across all pitch types would be £1,850,100 which would require an annual lifecycle cost of £267,042 per annum. The figures indicate there may be a need for new provision in some sports (youth and mini football) and improvements to existing pitches for others.

<sup>27</sup> As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

<sup>28</sup> Hours equate to access to a full size floodlit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

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Table 7.6: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

itch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost <sup>29</sup>	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) <sup>30</sup>	Number	Capital cost
Adult football	1 (0.95)	£93,344	£19,696	2(1.9)	£322,036
Youth football	2 (2.25)	£176,670	£37,101	3(2.79)	£471,272
Mini soccer	2 (2.18)	£53,502	£11,235	0	£0
Rugby union	0 (0.3)	£40,639	£8,697	1 (0.59)	£100,145
Rugby league	1 (0.63)	£70,691	£15,623	1(1.25)	£212,072
Cricket	0 (0.15)	£44,615	£9,012	0(0.31)	£52,177
Sand based AGPs	0 (0.03)	£23,621	£732	0(0.06)	£9,818
3G	0 (0.28)	£276,604	£10,443	1(0.57)	£95,908
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 (6.78)</b>	<b>£779,685</b>	<b>£112,539</b>	<b>7 (7.47)</b>	<b>£1,263,428</b>

The calculator also estimates that there will be a need to provide 7 changing rooms to support the new pitch provision identified in the table above. The total capital cost to deliver this level of provision is estimated to be £2,043,113 (excluding lifecycle costs).

### Conclusions

For scenarios One and Two, the tables above show that through housing growth, demand will be generated for each pitch sport to a lesser or greater extent. It is unlikely there will be a requirement for new provision. Instead, as the demand generated from the housing growth does not equate to a whole pitch for any of the sports, contributions would be better focused on improving existing sites to increase capacity to an appropriate level. The PPS and in particular the Action Plan, as well as future consultation with NGBs, should be used to inform this (e.g. to select suitable sites).

Scenario Three indicates that, over the course of the Local Plan period, housing growth will result in increased demand equating to the need for one adult, two youth and two mini football pitches. In addition, there is demand generated for other pitch sport types which indicate improvements to existing pitches are required. Whilst this initially seems substantial, it must be noted that these figures are based upon the whole of Halton and account for 17 years of development. In reality, the requirements will be staggered, with existing provision able to meet some if not all of the needs when developments are considered on a case-by-case basis. This would be achieved through contributions being directed towards improvements rather than new provision.

Experience shows that only significantly large housing sites are likely to generate demand for new provision to be created in their own right. However, the scenarios above do show the progression and that the cumulative impact of development on existing pitch provision needs to be taken into account. Where new pitches are required, consideration should be given to providing multi-pitch sites with suitable ancillary provision, including appropriate clubhouse/changing facilities and car parking. Single pitch sites which have been provided traditionally by developers are not considered to offer long-term sustainability. As such, if

<sup>29</sup> Sport England Facilities Costs Second Quarter 2020 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

<sup>30</sup> Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

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numerous developments in an area warrant new pitch provision, consideration should be given to pooling resources to create one larger site, rather than numerous smaller sites.

It is strongly recommended the Council work with Sport England to develop a process and guidance to calculate and obtain developer contributions.



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### PART 8: DELIVER THE STRATEGY AND KEEP IT ROBUST AND UP TO DATE

*The section below is a suggested approach on how to deliver a PPS Strategy & Action Plan whilst also keeping it robust and up to date. However, it has been agreed with Sport England and the NGBs to have a more tailored approach for Halton. This would be in line with the processes adopted by other Local Authorities in the North West. (Appendix 3)*

#### **Delivery**

The PPS provides guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across Halton. By addressing issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in this Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of the Borough can be met. The Strategy identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and identifies how best to resolve this in the future.

Production of this Strategy is the start of the planning process. Successful implementation and the benefits to be gained depend upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a mutually bought into strategic approach. It is important that this document is used in a practical manner, supports engagement with partners and encourages partnerships to be developed. This is to ensure that outdoor sports facilities are regarded as a vital aspect of community life and which contribute to the achievement of Council priorities.

Each member of the Steering Group should take the lead to ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence. The role of the Steering Group should not end with the completion of the PPS document.

To help ensure that the PPS is well used it should be regarded as the key document within the study area guiding the improvement and protection of playing pitch provision. It needs to be the document to which people and agencies regularly turn to for information in respect of how current demand should be met and what actions are required to improve the situation and meet future demand. To ensure that this is achieved the Steering Group need to have a clear understanding of how the PPS can be applied and therefore delivered.

The process of PPS development has already led to a number of benefits that assist its application and delivery. These include enhanced partnership work across different agendas and organisations, pooling of resources along with strengthened relationships and understanding between stakeholders, members of the Steering Group and the sporting community. The drivers behind the PPS and the work to develop the recommendations and action plan will have also highlighted, and helped the Steering Group to understand, the key areas to which its influence should be applied and strategy delivered enhanced.

#### **Monitoring and updating**

It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This should be led by the Council and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the Steering Group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPS has been applied should be a key component of monitoring its delivery and be an on-going role of the steering group.

As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPS being signed off by the steering group, Sport England and the NGBs will consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date.



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The nature of the supply and in particular the demand for outdoor sports facilities will likely to have changed over the three years. Therefore, without any form of review and update within this time period it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

The PPS should be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the Steering Group. A review will help to maintain the momentum and commitment built up during its development and, taking into account the time to develop the PPS, will ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

A review should not be regarded as a particular resource intensive task. However, it should highlight:

- ◀ How delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase or reduce following the delivery of others).
- ◀ How the PPS has been applied and the lessons learnt.
- ◀ Any changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs in the area (e.g. the most used or high quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues.
- ◀ Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport.
- ◀ Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

Once the PPS is complete the role of the Steering Group should evolve so that it:

- ◀ Acts as a focal point for promoting the value and importance of the PPS and outdoor sports provision in the area.
- ◀ Monitors, evaluates and reviews progress with the delivery of the recommendations and action plan.
- ◀ Shares lessons learnt from how the PPS has been used and how it has been applied to a variety of circumstances.
- ◀ Ensures that the PPS is used effectively to input into any new opportunities to secure improved provision and influence relevant programmes and initiatives.
- ◀ Maintains links between relevant parties with an interest in local outdoor sports provision;
- ◀ Reviews the need to update the PPS along with the supply and demand information and assessment work on which it is based. Further to review the group should either:
  - ◀ Provide a short annual progress and update paper;
  - ◀ Provide a partial review focussing on particular sport, pitch type and/or sub area; or
  - ◀ Lead a full review and update of the PPS document (including the supply and demand information and assessment details).

Alongside regular Steering Group meetings a good way to keep the PPS up to date and maintain relationships is to hold annual sport specific meetings with pitch sport NGBs and other relevant parties. These could be part of a process of updating key supply and demand information plus, if necessary, amending assessment work, tracking progress in respect of implementing action plan recommendations and highlighting new issues and opportunities.

Meetings could be timed to coincide with annual NGB affiliation processes. This would help to signal changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area. Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites should also feed into these meetings.

NGBs will also be able to confirm any further performance quality assessments undertaken within the study area. Discussions with league secretaries may also indicate annual league

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meetings may be useful to attend to pick up on specific issues and/or enable a review of the relevant club details to be undertaken.

The Steering Group should regularly review and refresh the Action Plan, taking account of any changes in pitch quality (and hence changes in pitch capacity) and demand as well as new provision that has been created or any new negotiations for community use of education sites in the future.

It is important that the Council maintains the data contained within the accompanying PPS database. This will enable it to refresh and update the work on a regular basis. The accompanying database is intended to be refreshed on a season by season basis and it is important that there is cross-departmental work encompassing, for example, grounds maintenance and sports development departments, to ensure that this is achieved and that results inform subsequent annual sports facility development plans. Results should be shared with partners via a consultative mechanism.

### Checklists

In order for this Strategy to be signed off by the steering group, a Stage D Checklist: Develop the Strategy, is signed off.

Stage D <u>Checklist</u> : Develop the Strategy	Tick ✓	
	Yes	Requires Attention
<b>Step 7: Develop the recommendations and action plan</b>	✓	
1. Have a number of study area specific scenarios been looked at to help explore key issues and findings along with possible recommendations and actions?	✓	
2. Have any recommendations and actions regarding AGP provision taken into account the guidance in the 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface' document and any NGB specific information?	✓	
3. Do the recommendations reflect the drivers, vision and objectives of the work?	✓	
4. Are the recommendations precise enough to enable the development of clear individual area, sport and site specific actions to help achieve them?	✓	
5. Have all relevant parties been engaged with the development of, and are signed up to the delivery of, the recommendations and actions?	✓	
6. Are the recommendations and actions clearly presented?	✓	
7. Has particular attention been paid to the situation at priority sites and those which are being significantly overplayed?	✓	
8. Have area, sport and site specific solutions been proposed to protect, enhance, and provide playing pitch provision to meet the current and future demand?	✓	
9. Has guidance on the future of any sites highlighted as being at risk been provided?	✓	
10. Do the recommendations and actions seek to make the best use of existing pitches?	✓	
11. Has the detriment and benefit of proposals to relocate provision been presented?	✓	
12. Has the level and type of any new playing pitch provision required been presented?	✓	

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13.	Has the importance of providing appropriate and fit for purpose ancillary facilities been highlighted in order to maximise the potential benefit to sport of any pitches?	✓	
14.	Have the recommendations sought to ensure an adequate amount of spare capacity in the provision of accessible pitches with secured community use?	✓	
15.	Does the PPS provide a steer as to the future of any spare capacity and any provision that may be genuinely surplus to requirements (paragraphs D12 to D15)?	✓	
16.	Does the action plan cover the points listed in paragraph D17?	✓	
17.	Does the action plan provide the most appropriate actions to improve provision in the study area rather than just those which the local authority can deliver?	✓	
18.	Does the action plan represent an infrastructure plan for playing pitches with deliverable area, sport and site specific actions and projects?	✓	
<b>Step 8: Write and Adopt the Strategy</b>		✓	
1.	Does the PPS document provide the reader with a clear understanding of the areas listed in paragraph D20?	✓	
2.	Is it clear from the PPS document why the recommendations and actions have been included, how they are to be delivered and what they will achieve?	✓	
3.	Does the PPS document indicate how it should be used and applied in different areas and circumstances along with the benefits of doing so?	✓	
4.	Has the PPS document been subject to appropriate consultation?	✓	
5.	Do all members of the steering group and other relevant parties endorse the PPS and recognise its lead role in guiding the improvement of pitches in the study area?	✓	
6.	Has the PPS document been formally adopted by the local authority and is its status recognised across all relevant departments?	✓	

To help ensure the PPS is delivered and is kept robust and up to date, the steering group can refer to the new methodology Stage E Checklist: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date:

Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date	Tick ✓	
	Yes	Requires Attention
<b>Step 9: Apply &amp; deliver the strategy</b>		
1. Are steering group members clear on how the PPS can be applied across a range of relevant areas?		
2. Is each member of the steering group committed to taking the lead to help ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence?		
3. Has a process been put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered and the PPS is being applied?		
<b>Step 10: Keep the strategy robust &amp; up to date</b>		
1. Has a process been put in place to ensure the PPS is kept robust and up to date?		
2. Does the process involve an annual update of the PPS?		
3. Is the steering group to be maintained and is it clear of its on-going role?		

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4. Is regular liaison with the NGBs and other parties planned?		
5. Has all the supply and demand information been collated and presented in a format (i.e. single document that can be filtered accordingly) that will help people to review it and highlight any changes?		
6. Have any changes made to the Active Places Power data been fed back to Sport England?		

For more information, see:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>

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### APPENDIX ONE: GLOSSARY

**Capacity** is the amount of play a site can regularly accommodate (in the relevant comparable unit) for community use without adversely affecting its quality and use. This is typically outlined by the NGB

**Overplay** is when a pitch is used over the amount that the carrying capacity will allow, (i.e. more than the site can accommodate). Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected.

**Spare capacity** is the amount of additional play that a pitch could potentially accommodate in addition to current activity. There may be reasons why this potential to accommodate additional play should not automatically be regarded as actual spare capacity, for example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below its carrying capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of friendly matches and training activity. This needs to be investigated before the capacity is deemed **actual spare capacity**.

**MES** is an appropriate comparable unit for pitch usage. For football, rugby union and rugby league, pitches should relate to a typical week within the season and one match = one match equivalent session if it occurs every week or 0.5 MES if it occurs every other week (i.e. reflecting home and away fixtures). For cricket pitches, it is appropriate to look at the number of MES over the course of a season and one match = one match equivalent session.

**Displaced demand** generally relates to play by teams or other users of playing pitches from within the study area (i.e. from residents of the study area) which takes place outside of the area. This may be due to issues with the provision of pitches and ancillary facilities in the study area, just reflective of how the sports are played (e.g. at a central venue for the wider area) or due to the most convenient site for the respective users just falling outside of the local authority/study area.

**Unmet demand** is demand that is known to exist but unable to be accommodated on current supply of pitches. This could be in the form of a team with access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa. This could also be due to the poor quality and therefore limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement. League secretaries may be aware of some unmet demand as they may have declined applications from teams wishing to enter their competitions due to a lack of pitch provision which in turn is hindering the growth of the league.

**Latent demand** is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. This could include feedback from a sports club who may feel that they could set up and run an additional team if they had access to better provision.

**Future demand** is an informed estimate made of the likely future demand for pitches in the study area. This is generally based on the most appropriate current and future population projections for the relevant age and gender groupings for each sport. Key trends, local objectives and targets and consultation also inform this figure.

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**Casual use** or other use could take place on natural grass pitches or AGPs and include:

- ◀ Regular play from non-sports club sources (e.g. companies, schools, fitness classes)
- ◀ Infrequent informal/friendly matches
- ◀ Informal training sessions
- ◀ More casual forms of a particular sport organised by sports clubs or other parties
- ◀ Significant public use and informal play, particularly where pitches are located in parks/recreation grounds.

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### APPENDIX TWO: SPORTING CONTEXT

The following section outlines a series of national, regional and local policies pertaining to the study and which will have an important influence on the Strategy.

#### **National context**

The provision of high quality and accessible community outdoor sports facilities at a local level is a key requirement for achieving the targets set out by the Government and Sport England. It is vital that this strategy is cognisant of and works towards these targets in addition to local priorities and plans.

#### ***Department of Media Culture and Sport Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation (2015)***

The Government published its strategy for sport in December 2015. This strategy confirms the recognition and understanding that sport makes a positive difference through broader means and that it will help the sector to deliver five simple but fundamental outcomes: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of 23 performance indicators under nine key headings, as follows:

- ◀ More people taking part in sport and physical activity.
- ◀ More people volunteering in sport.
- ◀ More people experiencing live sport.
- ◀ Maximising international sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ A more productive sport sector.
- ◀ A more financially and organisationally sustainable sport sector.
- ◀ A more responsible sport sector.

#### ***Sport England: Uniting the Movement (2021-2031)***

Sport England has recently published a 10-year strategy called 'Uniting the Movement'. We believe sport and physical activity has a big role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities, and rebuilding a stronger society for all. More than anything, it seeks to tackle the inequalities we've long seen in sport and physical activity. Providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity, has never been more important. <https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement>

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### ***National Planning Policy Framework (2019)***

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

The NPPF states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

The 'promoting healthy communities' theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies or surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

As a prerequisite the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- ◀ An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown that the open space, buildings or land is surplus to requirements.
- ◀ The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.
- ◀ The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

In order for planning policies to be 'sound' local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities.

### ***The FA National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)***

The Football Association's (FA) National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a ten-year period.

The Strategy sets out shared aims and objectives it aims to deliver on in conjunction with The Premier League, Sport England and the Government, to be delivered with support of the Football Foundation.

These stakeholders have clearly identified the aspirations for football to contribute directly to nationally important social and health priorities. Alongside this, the strategy is clear that traditional, affiliated football remains an important priority and a core component of the game, whilst recognising and supporting the more informal environments used for the community and recreational game.

Its vision is: *"Within 10 years we aim to deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed"*



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£1.3 billion has been spent by football and Government since 2000 to enhance existing football facilities and build new ones. However, more is needed if football and Government's shared objectives for participation, individual well-being and community cohesion are to be achieved. Nationally, direct investment will be increased – initially to £69 million per annum from football and Government (a 15% increase on recent years).

The NFFS investment priorities can be broadly grouped into six areas, recognising the need to grow the game, support existing players and better understand the different football environments:

- ◀ **Improve 20,000 Natural Turf pitches**, with a focus on addressing drop off due to a poor playing experience;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 3G AGP 'equivalents'** (mix of full size and small sided provision, including MUGAs - small sided facilities are likely to have a key role in smaller / rural communities and encouraging multi-sport offers), enhancing the quality of playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 changing pavilions/clubhouses**, linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development;
- ◀ **Support access to flexible indoor spaces**, including equipment and court markings, to support growth in futsal, walking football and to support the education and skills outcomes, exploiting opportunities for football to positively impact on personal and social outcomes for young people in particular;
- ◀ **Refurbish existing stock to maintain current provision**, recognising the need to address historic under-investment and issues with refurbishment of existing facilities;
- ◀ **Support testing of technology and innovation**, building on customer insight to deliver hubs for innovation, testing and development of the game.

### *Local Football Facility Plans*

To support in delivery of the NFFS, The FA has commissioned a national project. Over the next two years to 2020, a Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) will be produced for every local authority across England. Each plan will be unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation, including currently underrepresented communities.

Identifying strategic priorities for football facilities across the formal, recreational and informal game, LFFPs will establish a ten-year vision for football facilities that aims to transform the playing pitch stock in a sustainable way. They will identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all will be identified via LFFPs. LFFPs will guide the allocation of 90% of national football investment (The FA, Premier League and DCMS) and forge stronger partnerships with local stakeholders to develop key sites. This, together with local match-funding will deliver over one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next 10-years.

It is important to recognise that a LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Therefore, it cannot be used as a replacement for a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and it will not be accepted as an evidence base for site change of use or disposal.

A LFFP will; however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

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### ***The FA: National Game Strategy (2018-2021)***

The FA launched its new National Game Strategy in July 2018 which aims to inspire a life-long journey in football for all. To achieve this, the strategy will focus on five key aspects of the game:

- ◀ A high quality introduction to football
- ◀ Developing clubs and leagues
- ◀ Embrace all formats of football and engage all participants
- ◀ Recruit, develop and support the workforce
- ◀ Develop sustainable facilities

Through these five pillars, The FA's objectives are to:

- ◀ Increase the number of male affiliated and recreational players by 10%.
- ◀ Double the number of female affiliated and recreational players via a growth of 75%.
- ◀ Increase the number of disability affiliated and recreational players by 30%.
- ◀ Ensure affiliated Futsal is available across the country in order to increase the number of Futsal affiliated and recreational players.

The sustainable football facilities should provide support to an agreed portfolio of priority projects that meet National Football Facility Strategy (NFFS) investment priorities.

### ***England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Inspiring Generations (2020-2024)***

The England and Wales Cricket Board unveiled a new strategic plan in 2019. The strategic plan aims to connect communities and improve lives by inspiring people to discover and share their passion for cricket

The plan sets out six important priorities and activities, these are:

- ◀ ***Grow and nurture the core***
  - ◀ Create an infrastructure investment fund for First Class County Clubs (FCCs)
  - ◀ Introduce a new Community Investment Funding for FCCs and County Cricket Boards (CCBs)
  - ◀ Invest in club facilities
  - ◀ Develop the role of National Counties Cricket
  - ◀ Further invest in County Competitions
- ◀ ***Inspire through elite teams***
  - ◀ Increase investment in the county talent pathway
  - ◀ Incentivise the counties to develop England Players
  - ◀ Drive the performance system through technology and innovation
  - ◀ Create heroes and connect them with a new generation of fans
- ◀ ***Make cricket accessible***
  - ◀ Broaden crickets appeal through the New Competition
  - ◀ Create a new digital community for cricket
  - ◀ Install non-traditional playing facilities in urban areas
  - ◀ Continue to deliver South Asian Action Plans
  - ◀ Launch a new participation product, linked to the New Competition

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- ◀ **Engage children and young people**
  - ◀ Double cricket participation in primary schools
  - ◀ Deliver a compelling and coordinated recreational playing offer from age five upwards
  - ◀ Develop our safeguarding to promote safe spaces for children and young people
- ◀ **Transform women's and girls' cricket**
  - ◀ 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
- ◀ **Support our communities**
  - ◀ Double the number of volunteers in the game
  - ◀ Create a game-wide approach to Trust and Foundations through the cricket network
  - ◀ Develop a new wave of officials and community coaches
  - ◀ Increase participation in disability cricket

### ***The Rugby Football Union Strategic Plan (2017-2021)***

The RFU has released its new strategic vision for rugby in England. The strategy is based on four main elements which are; Protect, Engage, Grow and Win. It covers all elements of rugby union ranging from elite rugby to grassroots, although the general relevancy to the PPS is centred around growing the game.

The RFU exists to promote and develop rugby union in England and ensure the long-term sustainability of clubs by growing player numbers and retaining them across all age groups. Responding to wider market influences, work will continue on developing new ways to take part in all forms of the game, without comprising the sports traditions. This will ensure a lasting legacy from elite success by attracting new players and encouraging current male and female adult players to play.

The four key aims to ensure long term sustainability are to:

- ◀ Improve player transition from age grade to adult 15-a-side rugby
- ◀ Expand places to play through Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)
- ◀ Engage new communities in rugby
- ◀ Create a community 7's offering

### ***The Rugby Football League Facility Strategy***

The RFL's Facilities Strategy was published in 2011. The following themes have been prioritised:

- ◀ Clean, Dry, Safe & Playable
- ◀ Sustainable clubs
- ◀ Environmental Sustainability
- ◀ Geographical Spread
- ◀ Non-club Facilities

The RFL Facilities Trust website [www.rflfacilitiestrust.co.uk](http://www.rflfacilitiestrust.co.uk) provides further information on:

- ◀ The RFL Community Facility Strategy
- ◀ Clean, Dry, Safe and Playable Programme
- ◀ Pitch Size Guidance

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- ◀ The RFL Performance Standard for Artificial Grass Pitches
- ◀ Club guidance on the Annual Preparation and Maintenance of the Rugby League Pitch

Further to the 2011 Strategy detail on the following specific programmes of particular relevance to pitches and facility planning are listed below and can be found via the trust link (see above):

- ◀ The RFL Pitch Improvement Programme 2013 – 2017
- ◀ Clean, Dry and Safe programmes 2013 - 2017

### ***Rugby League World Cup ‘Inspired by 2021’ Legacy Programme***

The Rugby League World Cup 2021 will develop a £10 million legacy programme with funds driven into local clubs and community projects. The government investment, delivered by Sport England, is part of RLWC 2021’s ambitious plan to grow the sport and make it more visible, engaging and welcoming to current and potential participants.

The funding will be split into large transformational community projects, such as changing room improvements and new artificial grass pitches with the remaining funding used for smaller scale initiatives such as supplying new kit and equipment to promote club and community development. The investment will focus on the following four key areas:

- ◀ Creating welcoming environments
- ◀ Encouraging participation growth
- ◀ Building community engagement
- ◀ Cultivating further investment

### ***England Hockey (EH) - A Nation Where Hockey Matters 2013***

The vision is for England to be a ‘Nation Where Hockey Matters’.

We know that delivering success on the international stage stimulates the nation’s pride in their hockey team and, with the right events in place, we will attract interest from spectators, sponsors and broadcasters alike. The visibility that comes from our success and our occasions will inspire young people and adults to follow in the footsteps of their heroes and, if the right opportunities are there to meet their needs, they will play hockey and enjoy wonderful experiences.

Underpinning all this is the infrastructure which makes our sport function. We know the importance of our volunteers, coaches, officials, clubs and facilities. The more inspirational our people can be, the more progressive we can be and the more befitting our facilities can be, the more we will achieve for our sport. England Hockey will enable this to happen and we are passionate about our role within the sport. We will lead, support, counsel, focus and motivate the Hockey Nation and work tirelessly towards our vision.

As a governing body, we want to have a recognisable presence to participants of the game, be that through club or association website or their communications, or through the work of the many outstanding coaches in our game, so that players understand that their club is part of a wider team working together to a common goal.

The core objectives are as follows:

1. Grow our Participation
2. Deliver International Success

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

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3. Increase our Visibility
4. Enhance our Infrastructure
5. For England Hockey to be proud and respected custodians of the sport

### *Club participation*

Our club market is well structured and clubs are required to affiliate to England Hockey to play in community leagues. As a result only relatively few occasional teams lie outside our affiliation structure. Schools and Universities are the other two areas where significant hockey is played.

Hockey is clearly benefiting from a double Olympic legacy. After Great Britain's women won bronze in front of a home crowd in London in 2012 the numbers of young girls playing the sport doubled and a historic gold in Rio 2016 saw more than 10,000 players promptly joining clubs. These triumphs have inspired the nation to get active and play hockey. Thanks to the outstanding work of the network of clubs across the country, England Hockey has seen unprecedented growth at both ends of the age range. There has been an 80% increase in the number of boys and girls in clubs, as well as a 54% increase in players over the age of 46.

Hockey clubs have reaped the rewards of the improved profile of the sport, focussing on a link with schools to provide excellent opportunities for young players. Programmes such as Quick sticks – a small-sided version of hockey for 7-11 year olds – in Primary Schools have been hugely successful in allowing new players to take part in the sport from an early age. The growth in the sport since the eve of London 2012 has been seen across the country, examples being a 110% increase in under 16s club participation in London, and a 111% growth in the North West in the same age bracket.

### ***England Hockey Strategy***

England Hockey's Facilities Strategy can be found [here](#).

**Vision:** For every hockey club in England to have appropriate and sustainable facilities that provide excellent experiences for players.

**Mission:** More, Better, Happier Players with access to appropriate and sustainable facilities

The 3 main objectives of the facilities strategy are:

#### **1. PROTECT: To conserve the existing hockey provision**

- There are currently over 800 pitches that are used by hockey clubs (club, school, universities) across the country. It is important to retain the current provision where appropriate to ensure that hockey is maintained across the country.

#### **2. IMPROVE: To improve the existing facilities stock (physically and administratively)**

- The current facilities stock is ageing and there needs to be strategic investment into refurbishing the pitches and ancillary facilities. England Hockey works to provide more support for clubs to obtain better agreements with facilities providers & education around owning an asset.

#### **3. DEVELOP: To strategically build new hockey facilities where there is an identified need and ability to deliver and maintain. This might include consolidating hockey provision in a local area where appropriate.**

**HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN**

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England Hockey has identified key areas across the country where there is a lack of suitable hockey provision and there is a need for additional pitches, suitable for hockey. There is an identified demand for multi pitches in the right places to consolidate hockey and allow clubs to have all of their provision catered for at one site.

## APPENDIX THREE: TAILORED APPROACH FOR HALTON STAGE E

What?	Who?	When?
<p><b>1. Internal Steering Group Meeting</b></p> <p>Meeting between HBC internal Steering Group members to discuss and log key changes in playing pitch and facility provision, covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New pitch provision;</li> <li>• Pitch improvements;</li> <li>• Pitch re-configuration;</li> <li>• Pitch loss/threat;</li> <li>• Community Access agreements (e.g. education or private sites);</li> <li>• Plans for future provision.</li> </ul> <p>Outcome of meeting and updates to documents recorded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halton Sub-Group</li> </ul>	<p>Bi-Annually</p>
<p><b>2. Sport England and NGB Update Meetings</b></p> <p>HBC Steering Group Chair to hold series of update meetings with individual sports NGBs to discuss and log:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any changes in club and team details;</li> <li>• Any changes in sport format;</li> <li>• Any site specific updates;</li> <li>• Changes to supply and demand data;</li> <li>• The application and use of the PPS e.g. in delivery of new or improved provision, funding opportunities, programmes and initiatives;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HBC Steering Group Chair</li> <li>• Sports NGBs</li> </ul>	<p>Annually for each sport:</p> <p>Football – October  Rugby League – May  Rugby Union – October  Cricket – May  Hockey – October</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any new issues and opportunities.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>3. Prepare Annual PPS Progress Paper</b></p> <p>Based on the outcome of actions above, prepare a short Annual PPS Progress and Update paper highlighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The delivery of PPS recommendations and any changes in priority;</li> <li>Changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs in the area and other supply and demand information with implications for PPS's key findings;</li> <li>Details of any developments of a specific sport or particular format;</li> <li>Details of any new or emerging issues and opportunities;</li> <li>Any issues with the application of the PPS and lessons learnt;</li> <li>Actions needed to keep the PPS 'live' and up to date.</li> </ul> <p>Based on the above, the Annual Progress Paper will also consider if a partial or full update of the PPS is required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PPS Steering Group</li> </ul>	<p>Annually</p>
<p><b>4. Circulation and Agreement</b></p> <p>Circulate Annual Progress Paper to Steering Group for comment and agreement with opportunity to hold Steering Group Meeting to discuss findings and issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PPS Steering Group</li> </ul>	<p>Annually</p>
<p><b>5. Publish Paper</b></p> <p>Make Annual Progress paper available online. Report any significant findings to appropriate committee if considered necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HBC</li> </ul>	<p>Annually – following Steering Group agreement on progress paper</p>





# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## DRAFT ASSESSMENT REPORT NOVEMBER 2020

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

**Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd**

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**HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT**

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## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### ABBREVIATIONS

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
CFA	County Football Association
DALP	Delivery and Allocations Local Plan
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FF	Football Foundation
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FPM	Facilities Planning Model
GMA	Grounds Management Association
HBC	Halton Borough Council
HC	Hockey Club
IOG	Institute of Groundmanship
JFC	Junior Football Club
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LFFP	Local Football Facilities Plan
NFFS	National Football Facilities Strategy
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PIP	Pitch Improvement Programme
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
RDO	Rugby Development Officer
RFL	Rugby Football League
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RUFC	Rugby Union Football Club
U	Under

Sport	Club consultation	Site assessments	Affiliation data
Football	January/February 2020	January/February 2020	2019/20
Cricket	September/ October 2020	August 2020	2019
Rugby union	January/February 2020	January/February 2020	2019/20
Rugby league	September/ October 2020	August 2020	2019
Hockey	January/February 2020	January/February 2020	2019/20

It was agreed with the NGBs for Cricket and Rugby league that 2019 Affiliation data was used due to on COVID-19 Pandemic. For more in depth details regarding club consultation please see the relevant sporting sections.

Population Data: ONS (2018 based) Sub-national Population Projections.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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### PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) has been commissioned by Halton Borough Council (HBC) to undertake a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). This report presents a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch facilities within the Borough in accordance with Sport England's PPS Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a PPS. The guidance details a stepped approach to developing a PPS, with these steps separated into five distinct sections:

- ◀ Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach (1)
- ◀ Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision (2 & 3)
- ◀ Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views (4, 5 & 6)
- ◀ Stage D: Develop the strategy (7 & 8)
- ◀ Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (9 & 10)

Stages A to C are covered in this report, with stage D covered in the proceeding Strategy document. The guidance has been followed to develop a clear picture of the balance between the local supply of and demand for playing pitches.

#### ***Covid-19***

Since the production of the winter sports elements of this Assessment Report (covering football, hockey and rugby union) there has been global pandemic from the spreading of Covid-19 (Coronavirus).

This led England to enter an unprecedented state of Lockdown from the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. Lockdown requires the general public to remain at home and only leave their households for food, health reasons or work (only if work cannot be carried out at home). In addition, if people are to go outside, they are to remain two metres apart. This understandably led to all sporting activities including all those covered in the Playing Pitch Strategy documents to cease until further notice.

Lockdown restrictions began to ease in July/August 2020 which led to a return to play for summer sports such as cricket and rugby league but with truncated seasons and new social distance regulations. These are explained in greater detail in the relevant sports sections below.

It should be noted that due to a further increase in Covid-19 cases, England re-entered a state of Lockdown on November 5<sup>th</sup> 2020 till at least December 5<sup>th</sup> 2020. This saw the reintroduction of the above mentioned rules and as such grassroots sports ceased again, impacting on the new winter sports season.

It should be noted that any changes to the approach used to analyse supply and demand data for summer sports is detailed in the relevant sections (Part 4: Cricket and Part 7: Rugby League) and have been agreed with the appropriate NGB.

It is currently unknown what the future impact of Covid-19 and the Lockdown will have on participation and the quality of provision for each sport referenced in the documents. Therefore, it is acknowledged that as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy Stage E process, the review of the documents should ensure that any recommendations made are still accurate based on future levels of supply and demand.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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As part of Stage E, the PPS should be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the Steering Group. A review will help to maintain the momentum and commitment built up during its development. Given current circumstances an annual meeting, which could coincide with the annual NGB affiliation process, would be beneficial to understand what impact, Covid-19 and the Lockdowns have had within Halton.

For more information regarding the Stage E process please see Part 8: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date or see <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport>

### 1.1: Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach

#### *Why the strategy is being developed*

Concern at national government level over the loss of playing fields prompted the development of localised playing pitch assessments and strategies which identify current and future requirements for playing fields. Developing a strategic approach to the analysis of playing pitch supply and demand is necessary to:

- ◀ Protect playing pitches against development pressures in, and around, urban areas.
- ◀ Identify pitch (natural grass and artificial) supply and demand issues in relation to predicated population changes.
- ◀ Address 'demand' pressures created as a result of specific sports development pressures e.g. growth of mini soccer and wider use of artificial grass pitches.
- ◀ Address budget pressures and public-sector cuts.

The Halton PPS will provide an evidence base for planning decisions and funding bids and will ensure that this evidence is sound, robust and capable of being scrutinised through the Local Plan examination whilst meeting the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

One of the core planning principles of the NPPF is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Section 8 of the NPPF deals specifically with the topic of healthy communities; Paragraph 96 discusses the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation that can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

Paragraph 97 discusses assessments and the protection of "existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields". As such, the Halton PPS will provide the evidence required to help protect playing fields to ensure sufficient land is available to meet existing and projected future pitch requirements.

Paragraph 99 and 100 also promote the identification of important green spaces by local communities and the protection of these facilities. Such spaces may include playing fields.

In addition, the PPS will support the delivery of outcomes in Halton's emerging Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP), 2014-2037. This was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination in March 2020. The DALP sets out how the Borough has developed over time and introduces the Borough's characteristics, including the issues and challenges that it now faces and those likely to have an impact and drive further change during the period to 2037 and beyond. Key challenges that the plan is seeking to address are to:

- ◀ Respond to the changing population structure including the Borough's ageing population
- ◀ Tackle issues of deprivation and health for the Borough's residents.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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- ◀ Deliver and secure a balanced housing offer which is appropriate to local markets and ultimately supports the Borough's economic growth.
- ◀ Continue to create an environment where employers want to invest and create jobs.
- ◀ Attract skilled workers into the Borough and increase the proportion of Halton's working age population with appropriate qualifications.
- ◀ Support the Borough's economic growth sectors including science and technology, and logistics and distribution.
- ◀ Ensure all development is of a high quality of design and that areas of contaminated land are successfully remediated.
- ◀ Maintain and enhance Halton's natural and heritage assets including its sites of local, national, and international importance, waterside environments and distinctive character
- ◀ Protect, enhance and, where appropriate, expand the Borough's green infrastructure network.
- ◀ Put in place mitigation and adaptation measures to deal with the threat of climate change.
- ◀ Utilise resources sustainably.
- ◀ Reduce congestion and support travel by sustainable modes.
- ◀ Maintain and enhance the retail and leisure offer of Widnes Town Centre, Shopping City and Runcorn Old Town.
- ◀ Minimise and respond to the potential risk of major accidents, flooding, contamination and pollution.

The DALP also sets out a vision, stating that "Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods."

A series of 13 strategic objectives are identified to help deliver the vision. These are:

- ◀ SO1 - Create and support attractive, accessible and adaptable residential neighbourhoods where people want to live.
- ◀ SO2 - Provide good quality, affordable accommodation and a wide mix of housing types to create balanced communities.
- ◀ SO3 - Create and sustain a competitive and diverse business environment offering a variety of quality sites and premises, with an emphasis on the revitalisation of existing vacant and underused employment areas.
- ◀ SO4 - Further develop Halton's economy around the logistics and distribution sector, and expand the science, creative and knowledge-based business clusters.
- ◀ SO5 - Maintain and enhance Halton's town, district, and local centres to create high quality retail and leisure areas that meet the needs of the local community, and positively contribute to the image of the Borough.
- ◀ SO6 - Ensure all development is supported by the timely provision of adequate infrastructure, with sufficient capacity to accommodate additional future growth.
- ◀ SO7 - Provide accessible travel options for people and freight, ensuring a better connected, less congested and more sustainable Halton.
- ◀ SO8 Ensure that all development achieves high standards of design and sustainability and provides a positive contribution to its locality.
- ◀ SO9 - Minimise Halton's contribution to climate change through reducing carbon emissions and ensure the Borough is resilient to the adverse effects of climate change
- ◀ SO10 Support the conservation and enhancement of the historic and natural environment including designated sites and species and the Borough's green infrastructure in order to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits.
- ◀ SO11 - Improve the health and well-being of Halton's residents throughout each of their life stages, through supporting the achievement of healthy lifestyles and healthy environments for all.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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- ◀ SO12 - Prevent harm and nuisance to people and biodiversity from potential sources of pollution and foreseeable risks.
- ◀ SO13 - Support sustainable and effective waste and minerals management, reducing the waste generated and contributing to the maintenance of appropriate mineral reserves.

### ***Management arrangements***

A project team from the Council has worked with KKP to ensure that all relevant information is readily available and to support the consultants as necessary to ensure that project stages and milestones are delivered on time.

In addition to the project team, a strong and effective steering group has and will continue to lead and drive this PPS forward during its development and also to ensure the delivery of its recommendations and actions. The membership of the group is balanced and representative of the different parties and key drivers behind the work and the providers and users of playing pitches in the study area. It is made up of representatives from the Council, Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs).

The steering group is and has been responsible for the direction of the PPS from a strategic perspective and for supporting and checking and challenging the work of the project team. It will be important for the steering group to continue once the PPS has been finalised for several reasons, including a continuing responsibility to:

- ◀ Be a champion for playing pitch provision in the area and promote the value and importance of the PPS.
- ◀ Support implementation of the PPS's recommendations and action plan.
- ◀ Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the PPS.
- ◀ Ensure that the PPS is kept up to date and refreshed.

### ***Agreed scope***

The scope of the PPS focuses geographically on all local provision, regardless of ownership and management arrangements. Provision included within the project is as follows:

- ◀ Football pitches (including 3G pitches)
- ◀ Cricket pitches
- ◀ Rugby union pitches (including 3G pitches)
- ◀ Rugby league pitches (including 3G pitches)
- ◀ Hockey pitches (artificial grass pitches (AGPs))
- ◀ American football pitches
- ◀ Baseball pitches

### ***Study area***

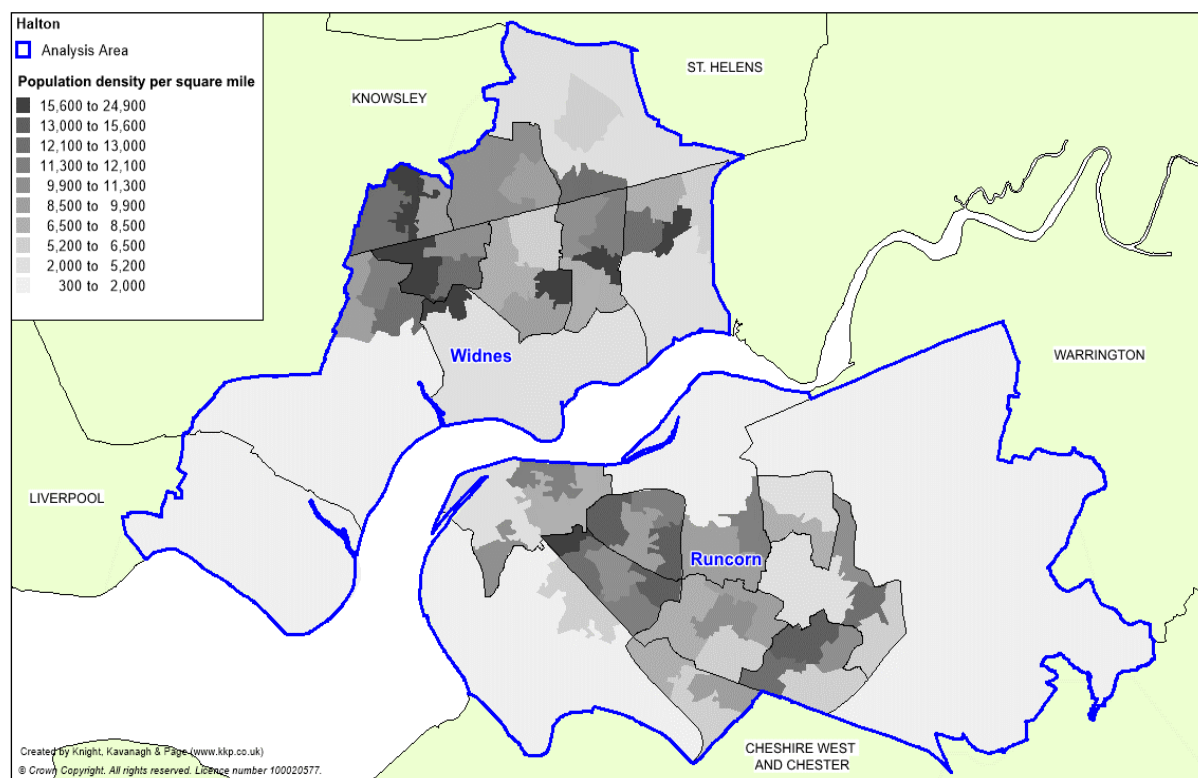
The study area is the whole of Halton Borough Council's administrative area. In addition, cross-boundary issues are also explored to determine the level of imported and exported demand from neighbouring authorities.

In addition, analysis areas (or sub areas) are used to allow for a more localised analysis in addition to the analysis for Halton as a whole. As the Borough comprises of two distinct localities, these will be used for the purpose of creating the analysis areas – Runcorn and Widnes.



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Figure 1.1: Analysis areas



### 1.2: Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision

A clear picture of supply and demand for playing pitches in Halton needs to be provided to enable an accurate assessment of quantity and quality. This is achieved through consultation with key stakeholders to ensure that they inform the subsequent strategy. It informs current demand, adequacy, usage, future demand and strategies for maintenance and investment for playing pitches.

#### ***Gather supply information and views – an audit of playing pitches***

PPS guidance uses the following definitions of a playing pitch and playing field. These definitions are set out by the Government in the 2015 'Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order'.<sup>1</sup>

- ◀ ***Playing pitch*** – a delineated area of 0.2ha or more which is used for association football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, American football, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.
- ◀ ***Playing field*** – the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch.

Although the statutory definition of a playing field sets out a minimum size, this PPS takes into account smaller sized pitches that contribute to the supply side; for example, a site containing a mini 5v5 football pitch. This PPS counts individual grass pitches (as a delineated area) as the basic unit of supply. The definition of a playing pitch also includes AGPs.

As far as possible the assessment report aims to capture all of the playing pitches within Halton. However, there may be instances, for example, on school sites, where access was not possible and has led to omissions within the report (although facilities at sites not accessed are still included within the PPS where provision is known to exist from other data sources). Where pitches have not been recorded within the report they remain as pitches and for

<sup>1</sup> [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)>Facilities and Planning> Planning Applications



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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planning purposes continue to be so. Furthermore, exclusions of a pitch does not mean that it is not required from a supply and demand point of view.

### *Quantity*

Where known, all playing pitches are included within the PPS, irrespective of ownership, management and use. Sites were initially identified using Sport England's Active Places web-based database, with the Council and NGBs supporting the process by checking and updating this initial data as well as supplying their own. This was also verified against club information supplied by local leagues.

For each site, the following details are recorded in the project database:

- ◀ Site name, address (including postcode) and location
- ◀ Ownership and management type
- ◀ Security of tenure
- ◀ Total number, type and quality of outdoor sports facilities

### *Accessibility*

Not all playing pitches offer the same level of access to the community. The ownership and accessibility of provision also influences actual availability for community use. Each site is assigned a level of community use as follows:

- ◀ **Community use** - pitches in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire and currently in use by teams playing in community leagues.
- ◀ **Available but unused** - pitches that are available for hire but are not currently used by teams which play in community leagues; this most often applies to school sites but can also apply to sites which are expensive to hire.
- ◀ **No community use** - pitches which as a matter of policy or practice, are not available for hire or used by teams playing in community leagues. This should include professional club pitches along with some semi-professional club pitches, where play is restricted to the first or second team.
- ◀ **Disused** – sites that are not being used at all by any users and are not available for community hire either. Once these sites are disused for five or more years they will then be categorised as 'lapsed sites'.
- ◀ **Lapsed** - last known use was as a playing field more than five years ago. These fall outside of Sport England's statutory remit but still have to be assessed using the criteria in paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Sport England would nonetheless challenge a proposed loss of playing pitches/playing field which fails to meet such criteria. It should be emphasised that the lawful planning use of a lapsed site is still that of a playing field.

In addition, there should be a good degree of certainty that the pitch will be available to the community for at least the following three years. A judgement is made based on the information gathered and a record of secured or unsecured community use put against each site.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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### *Quality*

The capacity of provision to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by their quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of provision affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of a sport. In extreme circumstances it can result in a facility being unable to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.

It is not just the quality itself which has an effect on its capacity but also the quality, standard and range of ancillary facilities. The quality of both the playing pitches and the ancillary facilities will determine whether provision is able to contribute to meeting demand from various groups, and for different levels and types of play.

The quality of all playing pitches identified in the audit and the ancillary facilities supporting them are assessed regardless of ownership, management or availability. Along with capturing any details specific to the individual facilities and sites, a quality rating is also recorded within the audit for each. These ratings are used to help estimate the capacity to accommodate competitive and other play within the supply and demand assessment.

In addition to undertaking non-technical assessments (using the templates provided within the guidance and as determined by NGBs), users and providers have also been consulted on the quality and in some instances the quality rating was adjusted to reflect this.

### ***Gather demand information and views***

Presenting an accurate picture of current demand for playing pitches (i.e. recording how and when provision is used) is important when undertaking a supply and demand assessment. Demand for outdoor sports facilities in the Borough tends to fall within the following categories:

- ◀ Organised competitive play
- ◀ Organised training
- ◀ Informal play

Current and future demand for playing pitches is presented on a sport-by-sport basis within the relevant sections of this report.

In addition, unmet, latent, imported and exported demand for provision is also identified within each section. Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to pitches. It is usually expressed, for example, when a team is already training but is unable to access a match pitch, or when a league has a waiting list due to a lack of pitch provision, which in turn is hindering the growth of the league.

In comparison latent demand is defined as the number of additional teams that could be fielded if access to a sufficient number of outdoor sports facilities (and ancillary provision) was available, whereas exported and imported demand refers to those that are playing outside of their local authority area of choice.

A variety of consultation methods were used to collate such demand information. Firstly, face-to-face consultation was carried out with key clubs from each sport, thus allowing for the collection of detailed demand information and an exploration of key issues to be interrogated and more accurately assessed. For all remaining clubs, an online survey (converted to postal if required) was utilised.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Local sports development officers, county associations and regional governing body officers advised which of the clubs to include in the face-to-face consultation and Sport England was also included within the consultation process prior to the project commencing. Issues identified by clubs returning questionnaires have been followed up by telephone or face-to-face interviews.

As key providers and users of playing pitches, educational establishments were also consulted. This involved face-to-face meetings with secondary schools and colleges and an online survey being sent to primary schools, special schools and independent schools.

### **Future demand**

Alongside current demand, it is important for a PPS to assess whether the future demand for playing pitches can be met. Using Office of National Statistics (ONS) population projections and proposed housing growth, as well as likely participation growth informed through consultation, an estimate can be made of the likely future demand for playing pitches.

Team generation rates are used to provide an indication of how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group). This ratio is then applied to population growth to help estimate the change in demand for pitch sports that may arise in the future.

Other information sources that were used to help identify future demand include:

- ◀ Recent trends in the participation.
- ◀ The nature of the current and likely future population and their propensity to participate including the use of Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator.
- ◀ Feedback from clubs on their plans to develop additional teams / attract additional members.
- ◀ Any local and NGB specific sports development targets (e.g. increase in participation).

For the base year population ONS 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimates for Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) by single year of age and sex have been used. This was used to calculate the current population for each age group for each sport, for example, in Halton there were 21,198 Men aged 18-45 in 2018 (football).

To get the percentage change ONS 2016-based Subnational Population Projections (SNPP) for Local Authorities by single year of age and sex was used. Then the number of people in each sport age group for both 2018 and 2037 was calculated, and then worked out the percentage change between the two years, this percentage was then applied to the ONS mid-year population estimates, for example, for Men aged 18-45 (football) the percentage change is -2.5%.

*Table 1.1: Future population calculations*

Local Authority	2018 (ONS MYE) Men aged 18-45	2018 (SNPP) Men aged 18-45	2037 (SNPP) Men aged 18-45	% Change 2018 to 2037 (SNNPP)	% Change applied to ONS 2018 MYE
Halton	21,198	21,113	20,595	-2.5%	20,677

The final figure (20,677) is then used in the team generation rate calculations.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### 1.3: Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views

Supply and demand information gathered is used to assess the adequacy of playing pitch provision in Halton and to identify key issues, challenges and aspirations.

#### *Understand the situation at individual sites*

Qualitative pitch ratings are linked to a pitch capacity rating derived from NGB guidance and tailored to suit a local area. The quality and use of each pitch is assessed against the recommended pitch capacity to indicate how many match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket) a pitch could accommodate. This is compared to the number of matches actually taking place and categorised as follows, to identify:

Potential spare capacity: Play is below the level the site could sustain.	
At capacity: Play is at a level the site can sustain.	
Overused: Play exceeds the level the site can sustain.	

As a guide, the FA, RFU and the ECB have set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its quality.

*Table 1.2: Capacity of playing pitches*

Sport	Pitch type	No. of match equivalent sessions		
		Good	Standard	Poor
Football	Adult pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Youth pitches	4 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Mini pitches	6 per week	4 per week	2 per week
Rugby union*	Natural Inadequate (D0)	2 per week	1.5 per week	0.5 per week
	Natural Adequate (D1)	3 per week	2 per week	1.5 per week
	Pipe Drained (D2)	3.25 per week	2.5 per week	1.75 per week
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	3.5 per week	3 per week	2 per week
Cricket	One grass wicket	5 per season	4 per season	0 per season
	One synthetic wicket	60 per season	60 per season	60 per season

For other grass pitch sports included (i.e. rugby league, American football and baseball), no guidelines are set by the NGBs although it can be assumed that similar principles should be followed. This, however, does not apply to hockey as there is no limit to how often an AGP can be used, with capacity instead limited by availability and current usage levels. A pitch without floodlighting or capacity restrictions can generally be accessed for four matches on one day.

#### *Develop the current picture of provision*

Once capacity is determined on a site-by-site basis, actual spare capacity is calculated on a Borough wide and an area-by-area basis via further interrogation of temporal demand. This then identifies whether there is overall spare capacity on pitches or whether there is a shortfall. Although spare capacity may be identified, it does not necessarily mean that there is surplus provision. For example, spare capacity may not be available when it is needed, or the site may be retained in a 'strategic reserve' to enable pitch rotation to reduce wear and tear.

#### *Identify the key findings and issues*

By completing Steps 1-5 it is possible to identify several findings and issues relating to the supply, demand and adequacy of playing pitch provision in Halton. This report seeks to identify

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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and present the key findings and issues prior to development of the Strategy and Action Plan for the Borough.

### ***Develop the future picture of provision (scenario testing)***

Modelling scenarios to assess whether existing provision can cater for unmet, latent, exported and future demand is made after the capacity analysis. This will also include, for example, removing sites with unsecured community use to demonstrate the impact this would have if these sites were to be decommissioned in the future.

Most of the scenario testing generally occurs in the strategy reports that proceed this document and therefore does not form part of the Assessment Report.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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### PART 2: FOOTBALL

#### 2.1: Introduction

The organisations primarily responsible for the development of football in Halton are Cheshire FA and Liverpool FA. They are also responsible for the administration, in terms of discipline, rules and regulations, cup competitions and representative matches, development of clubs and facilities, volunteers, referees, coaching courses and delivering national football schemes. All clubs in the area affiliate to one of the two County Football Associations (CFA).

This section of the report focuses on the supply and demand for grass football pitches. Part 3 captures supply and demand for third generation pitches (3G pitches) which are the preferred AGP (artificial grass pitch) surface type for football. There is a growing demand for the use of 3G pitches for competitive football fixtures, especially to accommodate mini and youth football.

#### ***Local Football Facility Plans (LFFPs)***

To support in delivery of both the current and superseding FA National Games Strategy (NGS), the FA has commissioned a nationwide consultancy project which is now nearing completion. A Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) has been or will be produced for every local authority across England, with each plan being unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation.

The LFFP is strategically aligned to the National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS); a 10-year plan to change the landscape of football facilities in England. The NFFS represents a major funding commitment from the national funding partners (the FA, Premier League and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and delivered through the Football Foundation to inform and direct an estimated one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next ten years.

Each LFFP builds upon PPS findings (where present and current) regarding the formal and affiliated game and includes strategic priorities for investment across small-sided football (including recreational and indoor activity). The LFFP also incorporates consultation with groups outside of formal football, as well as under-represented communities. This includes those which may be key partners with regards to using football for behavioural change, plus groups which may be key drivers of FA priorities around participation in the likes of women and girls' football, disability football and futsal.

The LFFP is a 'live' document that can be updated following the completion of a PPS, if required. An up-to-date supply and demand assessment may present findings and recommendations that need to be incorporated into the LFFP for investment purposes. LFFPs identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all national football investment through the funding partners will be identified via LFFPs.

Notwithstanding the above, it is important to recognise that the LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment; it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a PPS and is not an accepted evidence base for site change of use or disposal. A LFFP will, however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

The LFFP for Halton was produced in 2019 and identifies eight priority projects for investment. These are discussed in greater detail in the Part 2: Football (pitch Quality) and Part 3: Third Generation Turf (3G) Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) (Future Provision).

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### Consultation

In addition to face-to-face consultation with key football clubs, an electronic survey was sent to all clubs playing within Halton. Contact details were provided by both Liverpool FA and Cheshire FA and the invitation to complete the survey was distributed via email. Assistance with circulating the survey and increasing the response rate was also provided by the Widnes Football Forum.

Through both face-to-face meetings and survey responses, 21 of 36 clubs playing in Halton responded, equating to a 75% team response rate (173 out of 232). It should be noted that the majority of clubs which did not respond to consultation only have a solitary team. As a result, with most larger clubs responding to consultation, in addition to information provided by the Widnes Football Forum, Football Foundation, Cheshire FA and Liverpool FA it is accepted that this is representative of football in Halton.

Face-to-face consultation was carried out with the following five clubs:

- ◀ Beechwood JFC
- ◀ Halton Borough Wolves FC
- ◀ Pex Hill FC
- ◀ Runcorn Linnets FC
- ◀ Widnes FC

### 2.2: Supply

The audit identifies a total of 111 grass football pitches within Halton across 40 sites. Of these, 97 pitches are available, at some level, for community use across 26 sites. All 14 unavailable pitches are located at school sites.

As can be seen in the table below, community available pitches in the Borough are split fairly evenly across the two analysis areas. Widnes accommodates 52 community available pitches (54%), whereas Runcorn accommodates 45 community available pitches (46%).

Table 2.1: Summary of grass football pitches available to the community

Football						
Analysis area	No. of pitches available for community use					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Runcorn	12	9	5	9	10	45
Widnes	19	12	5	7	9	52
<b>Halton</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>97</b>

Most available pitches across Halton (31 pitches) are adult size, despite youth 11v11 football being the most common format of play. This leads to many youth 11v11 teams playing on adult pitches, which, whilst sometimes preferable for clubs, is not ideal for players at U13-U16 level and is not in line with the FA Youth Review.

In accordance with the FA Youth Review, U17 and U18 teams can play on adult pitches. The FA's recommended pitch size for adult football is 100x64 metres, whilst it is 91x55 metres for U15 and U16 teams and 82x50 metres for U13 and U14 teams.

Please refer to the table overleaf for more detail relating to pitch sizes for each format of play.



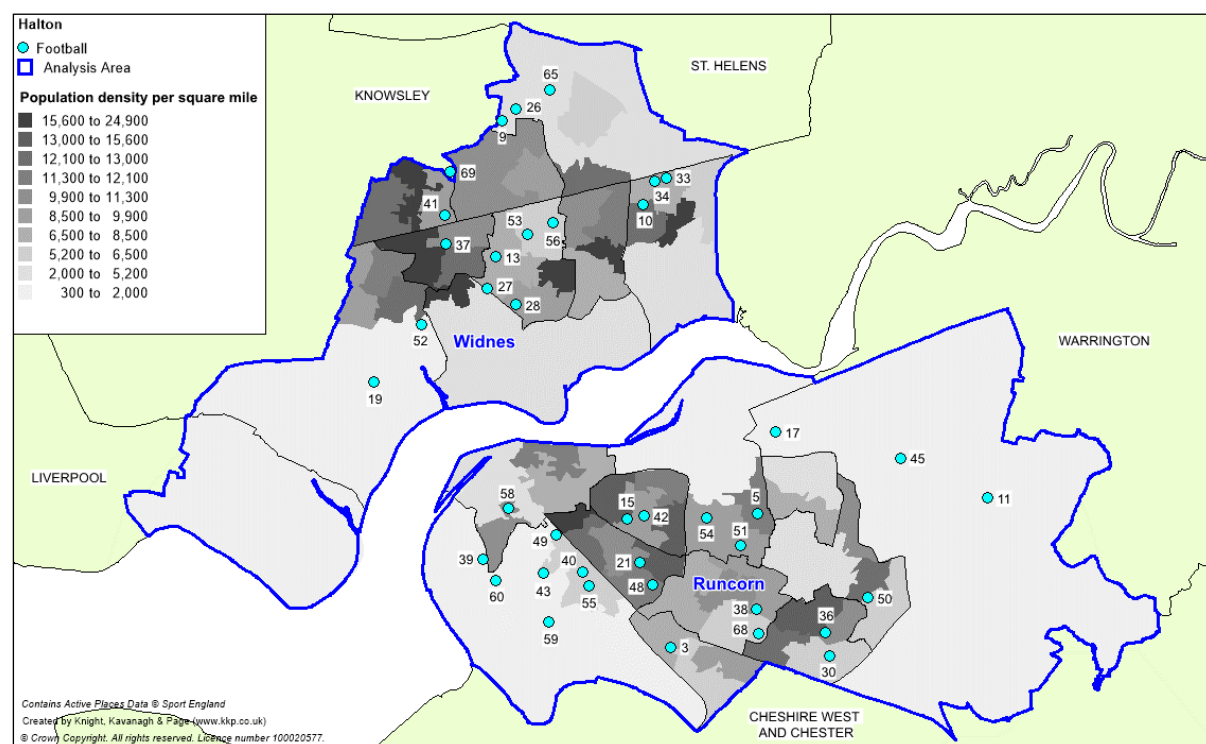
## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 2.2: Recommended football pitch sizes

Football		
Format	Age group	Recommended pitch size (metres)
Adult	U17s+	100 x 64
Youth 11v11	U15s-U16s	91 x 55
	U13s-U14s	82 x 50
Youth 9v9	U11s-U12s	73 x 46
Mini 7v7	U9s-U10s	55 x 37
Mini 5v5	U7s-U8s	37 x 27

Figure 2.1 below identifies the location of all football pitches in Halton, regardless of community use. For a key to the map, please see Table 2.13.

Figure 2.1: Location of all football pitches in Halton



### Unused provision

The Council reports that it has two sites which it has retained and can be reinstated if the relevant demand arises; Arley Drive Playing Fields and Hale Park.

Arley Drive Playing Fields was previously configured with one mini 5v5, one mini 7v7 and one youth 9v9 pitch, going back to 2018. Alternatively, the Council reports that the site has the capacity to accommodate two youth 11v11 pitches. In addition, it is accompanied by changing rooms; however, these are no longer available to community users due to vandalism issues.

The last known layout at Hale Park was one adult and one youth 11v11 pitch. Furthermore, the site is also accompanied by changing rooms, although the water system has been drained due to infrequent use.



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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### ***Lapsed/disused provision***

Playing fields which have previously accommodated formal pitch provision are categorised as being either disused or lapsed. A disused site is a playing field which is not being used at all by any users and is not available for community hire either. Once these sites are disused for five or more years, they will then be categorised as lapsed sites.

As mentioned, a lapsed site was as a playing field more than five years ago. These fall outside of Sport England's statutory remit but still have to be assessed using the criteria in paragraph 97 of the NPPF and Sport England would nonetheless challenge a proposed loss of playing pitches/playing field which fails to meet such criteria.

### ***Disused provision***

There is an undetermined planning application (17/00468/FUL) to build houses on disused playing fields at Sandy Lane, which previously accommodated both football and rugby league pitches as well as clubhouse provision. If the site was lost, it would be subject to appropriate mitigation to address the loss in line with the NPPF Paragraph 97 and Sport England's Playing Field Policy. As such, the Council reports that it is in dialogue with the Sport England regarding the site and is awaiting the completion of the 2020 PPS to assist.

### ***Lapsed provision***

Prescot Road Playing Field currently is separated into three parcels of land which are under three separate tenures: the Council, Widnes RUFC and private ownership. The parcel of land which is owned by the Council, currently accommodates four mini pitches that are used by Pex Hill FC.

The Club reports that it previously had access to an additional three youth 11v11 pitches at the site, before these were sold in 2013 from a private ownership to another to private owner. They have not been used since and are now considered to be lapsed. As a result, the Club now uses alternative sites for its youth 11v11 teams; it indicates that it would want to reinstate the provision in order to accommodate all of its teams at one location.

### ***Future provision***

Runcorn Linnets FC has received a grant from the Football Foundation, in March 2020, to replace its stadia grass pitch with a hybrid pitch. This project forms part of Sport England's hybrid pitch pilot scheme (see below). The Club is one of only two sites in the North West of England to receive a grant, although it should be noted that a schedule of works is yet to be agreed in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The concept of a hybrid pitch is to create additional capacity whilst ensuring it is accessible in various conditions. Current grass pitches are designed for one to three matches per week based on quality, and at times become unusable such as throughout the winter or during periods of wet weather. Comparatively, a hybrid pitch should be able to support approximately 20 hours of usage whilst maintaining reasonable quality in various playing conditions.

### ***Security of tenure***

Tenure of sites in Halton is generally secure i.e. through a long-term lease or a guarantee that pitches will continue to be provided over the next three years. This relates to most pitches operated by the Council, with such provision protected as part of an ongoing commitment to providing a leisure offering.

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A common exception to providing security of tenure is found at schools and academies each have their own lettings policies which are more likely to restrict levels of community use. In total, 12 educational providers in Halton do not allow community use of some or all of their pitches. The reasons for not allowing community use varies; the most common example is that the schools want to protect pitches for curricular and extra-curricular purposes due to existing quality issues. Other reasons include staffing issues, health and safety issues and a perceived lack of profitability.

Moreover, some schools that do provide community access do so without providing security of tenure, meaning they can stop the external use at any point devoid of any warning. An example of this is found at Sandymoor School, which is heavily used by Sandymoor FC. The Club only rents the use of the pitches on site and reports that restrictive opening times for community access is causing a major issue. To prevent such issues, it is recommended that club users enter community use agreements with the schools that they access, where possible.

Similarly, St Michael's DH FC reports that it struggles to gain funding due to only renting pitches at St Michaels Catholic Primary School. It aspires to have long-term tenure on the site (or an alternative site) so that it can apply for funding to help the growth of the Club. Generally, funding bodies will require clubs to have long-term security of tenure (often in the form of a lease arrangement with at least 25 years remaining) before awarding grants.

The only known secured usage at an education site in Halton is at St Peter & St Paul Catholic College, which is accessed by Widnes FC. The Club reports through consultation that it has long term tenure on the site.

Aside from schools, Brookvale United FC reports that it has requested a lease for Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields from the Council; however, it states that it has not had a response as of yet. If it obtains a long-term agreement, it reports that it would explore potential funding options to improve pitch quality.

Similarly, Beechwood JFC has aspirations for a long-term arrangement at Haddocks Wood Playing Fields. The Club indicates that if it could obtain an agreement, it would apply for potential grant funding to improve pitch quality and make improvements to ancillary provision.

### ***Pitch quality***

The quality of football pitches across Halton have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the FA<sup>2</sup>) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

Pitch quality primarily influences the carrying capacity of a site; often pitches lack the drainage and maintenance necessary to sustain levels of use. Pitches that receive little to no ongoing repair or post-season remedial work are likely to be assessed as poor, therefore limiting the number of games they are able to accommodate each week without it having a detrimental effect on quality. Conversely, well maintained pitches that are tended to regularly are likely to be of a higher standard and capable of taking a number of matches without a significant reduction in surface quality.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for football pitches

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows: Good (>80%), Standard (50-80%), Poor (<50%). The final quality ratings assigned to the sites also take into account the user quality ratings gathered from consultation.

The table below summarises the quality of pitches that are available for community use in Halton. In total, only two pitches are assessed as good quality (both located at Jaguar Land Rover Sports and Social Club), 54 as standard quality and 41 as poor quality.

Table 2.3: Football pitch quality assessments (community use pitches)

Football									
Analysis area	Adult pitches			Youth pitches			Mini pitches		
	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor
Runcorn	-	3	9	-	5	9	-	10	9
Widnes	1	12	6	-	15	2	1	9	6
<b>Halton</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>

Most of the poor quality pitches are either located at educational or local authority sites. Such provision often receives limited amounts of dedicated maintenance due to budgetary restraints and are heavily used for community, curricular and extracurricular activities meaning they have less time to remediate. For example, the Council is limited to only grass cutting on its sites and cannot carry out in depth maintenance such as aeration, weed killing or fertilising.

The following sites accommodate at least one poor quality pitch:

- ◀ Beechwood County Primary School
- ◀ Crow Wood Park
- ◀ Daresbury County Primary School
- ◀ Grange Academy
- ◀ Haddocks Wood Playing Fields
- ◀ King George V Playing Fields
- ◀ Moorfield Sports and Social Club
- ◀ Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy
- ◀ Prescott Road Playing Fields
- ◀ Runcorn Heath Playing Fields
- ◀ Sandymoor School
- ◀ St Michaels Catholic Primary School
- ◀ Westfield Primary School
- ◀ Weston County Primary School

When broken down further, 40% of pitch provision in the Runcorn Analysis Area is standard quality with the remaining 60% poor quality. Comparatively, 69% of the pitches in the Widnes Analysis Area are standard quality with the remaining provision either poor (30%) or good quality (1%). For a full breakdown of quality ratings at each site, see Table 2.13.

It should also be noted that almost all the pitches rated as standard quality are all within 10% of being categorised as poor quality through non-technical assessments, this includes taking into consideration each sites maintenance regime, which is mostly limited. Similar to the poor quality pitches these sites have some issues with insufficient drainage, unauthorised access and dog fouling/littering.

Specific comments relating to the pitch conditions at individual sites can be seen in the table below. These are either taken from club consultation or from site assessments.

Table 2.4: Summary of football pitch quality comments

Football			
Site ID	Site name	Stakeholder/s	Comments
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	Ditton Athletic FC	Pitches suffer from dog fouling.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Football			
Site ID	Site name	Stakeholder/s	Comments
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields	Beechwood JFC BPR Leiria JFC Sandymoor FC	Pitches suffer from water logging, dog fouling, unauthorised access and poor drainage.
26	Jaguar Land Rover Sports and Social Club	Avon Villa FC	Pitches require drainage improvements.
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Halton Borough FC	Pitches suffer from poor drainage and dog fouling.
30	Millbank Linnets Stadium	Runcorn Linnets FC	Pitches are well maintained however suffer from drainage issues and waterlogging.
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Pex Hill FC	Pitches suffer from poor drainage, waterlogging and dog fouling.
52	St Michaels Catholic Primary School	St Michaels DH FC	Pitches have slightly improved in quality due to verti draining however bad weather is affecting pitch quality.
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Widnes FC	Pitches have improved in quality due to investment from the School, however, there are issues with unauthorised access.
56	Wade Deacon High School	Wade Deacon High School	Issues with unauthorised access.
68	Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields	Brookvale United FC	Pitches suffer from waterlogging and drain poorly

In conjunction with the aforementioned hybrid pitch grant, Runcorn Linnets FC also reports having recently been awarded (April 2020) pitch improvement grant in order to improve the quality of drainage on its remaining onsite grass pitches.

As also mentioned previously, St Michaels DH FC reports that it has plans to improve pitch quality at St Michaels Catholic Primary School. The Club wants to carry out in depth maintenance, such as verti-draining. It has recently had the FA identify a Pitch Improvement Programme (PIP) for the site.

### *Local Football Facility Plan*

The LFFP for Halton identifies key sites considered a priority to improve, with these selected based on the rationale of identifying sites that are the poorest in quality and that are the best utilised, or that have the greatest potential for increased utilisation following quality enhancements. Emphasis is on sites with three or more pitches, although scope exists for the inclusion of smaller sites if they are deemed to be strategically important. The following sites were identified:

- ◆ Frank Myler Pavilion
- ◆ Haddock Woods Playing Fields
- ◆ King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)
- ◆ Leigh Recreation Playing Fields
- ◆ Wilmere Lane Playing Fields
- ◆ Runcorn Heath Playing Fields

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### *FA Pitch Improvement Programme (PIP)*

With quality of grass pitches becoming one of the biggest influences on participation in football, the FA has made it a priority to work towards improving the quality of grass pitches across the country. This has resulted in the creation of the PIP. As part of this, grass pitches identified as having quality issues undergo a pitch inspection from a member of the Ground Management Association (formally known as the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG)).

Following a PIP report, clubs can work towards the recommended dedicated maintenance regime identified in order to improve the quality of their pitches. Clubs can also utilise the report as an evidence base to acquire potential funding streams to obtain the relevant maintenance equipment.

In addition to the above, the Football Foundation and the FA have recently developed a new pitch maintenance grant fund that allows clubs and sports organisations to apply for funding for maintenance assistance, consumables and/or equipment. Local authorities are currently ineligible applicants through this fund; however, clubs, leagues and or charitable organisations using local authority sites can apply provided they have security of tenure and/or a proforma is in place. This fund was available until the end of March 2020, however, due to ongoing circumstances surrounding Covid-19 it has been extended indefinitely.

Funding is awarded over a ten-year period for up to 66% of the total cost required to bring the pitches up to an appropriate standard, following a site assessment. The level of funding decreases year on year, with the expectation that the Club is then able to take on the works independently.

### **Ancillary facilities**

The quality of ancillary facilities across Halton has been assessed via a combination of site visits and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

Ancillary facility ratings are primarily influenced by the type and quality of amenities which are available on a site, such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, showering provision, car parking, dedicated official and spectator facilities and boundary fencing. The table below identifies the findings for sites that are actively utilised for football across Halton.

*Table 2.5: Summary of community available ancillary facility quality at active football sites*

<b>Football</b>			
<b>Site ID</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Ancillary facility quality</b>
3	Beechwood County Primary School	Runcorn	N/A
9	Cronton Sixth Form College	Widnes	Good
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	Widnes	Good
15	Grange Academy	Runcorn	Standard
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields	Runcorn	Standard
19	Halebank Recreation Ground	Widnes	Standard
26	Jaguar Land Rover Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Good
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	Good
28	Leigh Recreation Playing Fields	Widnes	Standard

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Football			
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Ancillary facility quality
30	Millbank Linnets Stadium	Runcorn	Good
34	Moorfield Sports & Social Club	Widnes	Standard
36	Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy	Runcorn	Standard
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	Widnes	Good
39	Pavilions Club	Runcorn	Standard
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Widnes	Standard
42	Runcorn Boys Club	Runcorn	Standard
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	Standard
45	Sandymoor School	Runcorn	Standard
46	DCBL Stadium Halton	Widnes	Good
52	St Michaels Catholic Primary School	Widnes	N/A
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Widnes	Standard
56	Wade Deacon High School	Widnes	Standard
58	Westfield Primary School	Runcorn	N/A
60	Weston Point Community Primary School	Runcorn	N/A
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Good
68	Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields	Runcorn	Standard
69	Parklands Sports Club	Widnes	Standard

Across the Borough, most ancillary facilities accompanying grass football pitches is standard or good quality; however, this does not mean there are not any ancillary facility issues within Halton. For example, it should be stated that even though there are changing rooms at Beechwood County Primary School, St Michaels Catholic Primary School, Westfield Primary School and Weston Point Community Primary School, these are not often accessible for teams using the sites. As such, quality could not be obtained through consultation.

Changing rooms at Haddocks Wood Playing Fields are open on a Saturday due to high levels of demand at this time period. In comparison the facilities are not available on a Sunday due to lower levels of demand. The Council indicates when clubs hire the facilities on a Sunday there are aware there will be no provision available.

There is clubhouse provision at Wilmere Lane Playing Fields; however, AFC Cronton reports this is not readily available unless the long-term tenants at the site (Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC) are utilising the facilities at the same time.

Runcorn Linnets FC reports that the main clubhouse which services its senior teams at Millbank Linnets Stadium to be good quality, although the youth and mini teams do not have access to this provision. These teams utilise poor quality changing rooms in a different, unattached building. The Club therefore has aspiration to improve the quality of this building to better accommodate its junior teams.

Although provision at Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields, Runcorn Heath Playing Fields and Leigh Recreation Playing Fields is rated as standard quality, the clubs using the provision (Brookvale Utd, Halfway Rangers FC and West Bank FC) report that there is a need to modernise the building as it is particularly dated and showing signs of wear and tear.



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### Local Football Facility Plan

As with grass pitch improvements, the LFFP for Halton identifies sites considered as priority sites for changing facility improvements. It identifies Haddocks Wood Playing Fields and Leigh Recreation Playing Fields.

### 2.3: Demand

Through the audit and assessment, 232 teams from within 36 clubs are identified as playing within Halton. This consists of 36 adult men's, five adult women's, 89 youth boys', eight youth girls' and 94 mini teams. Youth 11v11 football is the most prominent format of play, whilst youth 9v9 football is the least common.

Table 2.6: Summary of competitive Football teams currently playing in Halton

Football						
Analysis area	No. of teams					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Runcorn	15	31	19	25	30	120
Widnes	26	29	18	17	22	112
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>232</b>

There is marginally more football being played in Runcorn (52%) when compared to Widnes (48%). As mentioned earlier, Widnes accommodates 54% of the provision in Halton.

### Football pyramid demand

The National League System is a series of interconnected leagues for adult men's football clubs in England. It begins below the football league (the National League) and comprises of seven steps, with various leagues at each level and more leagues lower down the pyramid than at the top. The system has a hierarchical format with promotion and relegation between the levels, allowing even the smallest club the theoretical possibility of rising to the top of the system.

Clubs within the step system must adhere to ground requirements set out by the FA. The higher the level of football being played the higher the requirements. Clubs cannot progress into the league above if the ground requirements do not meet the correct specifications. Ground grading assesses grounds from A to H, with 'A' being the requirements for Step 1 clubs.

There are no professional clubs that plays above the football pyramid with Halton; however, there are a total of three clubs which play within the football pyramid, as seen in following table.

Table 2.7: Summary of teams playing within the football pyramid structure

Football		
Team	League	Level
Runcorn Linnets FC	Northern Premier League – North West Division	Step 4
Widnes FC	Northern Premier League – North West Division	Step 4
Runcorn Town FC	North West Counties League – Premier Division	Step 5

A common issue for clubs entering the pyramid is changing facilities. For Step 7 football (ground grading H), changing rooms must be a minimum size of 18 square metres, exclusive of shower and toilet areas.

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The general principle for clubs in the football pyramid is that they must achieve the appropriate grade by March 31<sup>st</sup> of their first season after promotion, which therefore allows a short grace period for facilities to be brought up to standard. This, however, does not apply to clubs being promoted to Step 7 (as they must meet requirements immediately).

Widnes FC currently rents the DCBL Stadium Halton, at a perceived substantial cost, to play its home fixtures, as this is the only site in its locality which meets the requirements for the level of football it plays (Step 4). As such, the Club has plans to obtain a long-term lease/freehold at King George V Playing Fields (Widnes) in order to create its own home ground. It indicates this venture would be funded through private investment and sponsorship revenue.

Neither Runcorn Town FC nor Runcorn Linnets FC report any issues with ground grading.

### **Women's National League System**

There is also a Women's National League System similar to the adult men's football pyramid, providing structure to the women's game. As seen in the table overleaf, this ranges from Step 1 to Step 6 with each step requiring differing ground grading requirements. The system is also hierarchical format with promotion and relegation between the levels.

*Table 2.8: Summary of ground grading for women's football*

Football		
Level	League	Grading category
Step 3 and 4	Women's Super League 1	Grade A
Step 3 and 4	Women's Super League 2	Grade B
Step 5	Northern and Southern Women's Premier League	Grade A
Step 6	Women's Combination Leagues	Grade B
Step 7	Women's Regional Leagues – Premier Divisions	Grade C

Brookvale United, Pex Hill, Widnes Dragons, Weston Point Juniors and Runcorn Linnets football clubs all field teams within Halton which play in the Women's National League System. This is a substantial number when compared to other local authorities of a similar size, nationally.

Although women's clubs are still required to meet ground requirements set out by the FA, these differ from the men's National League System. Ratings range from grade A to C, each with differing minimum requirements. Steps 1 and 2 in the Women's National League System is akin to steps 3 and 4 of the men's National League System, although not exactly the same.

### **Imported demand**

Imported demand refers to any demand from neighbouring local authorities that accesses facilities within the Halton study area due to a lack of available facilities in other local authorities where such team or club is based. There is no identified imported demand into Halton.

### **Exported demand**

Exported demand refers to teams that are currently accessing pitches for home fixtures outside of Halton, despite being registered to the Borough. Beechwood, Brookvale United, Avon Villa, Widnes and Weston Point football clubs all have youth teams that export into hub sites within Liverpool (Heron Eccles), although they are not specifically quantified. As these teams use central venues, none of the clubs report aspirations to return demand back into Halton.



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### ***Latent demand***

Latent demand refers to potential demand; individuals who would like to participate within the sport but do not do so. This can be for a variety of reasons including a lack pitches or appropriate facilities. Clubs that report latent demand and the reasons provided for this latent demand can be seen in the table below.

*Table 2.9: Football clubs that report latent demand and the reasons provided*

<b>Football</b>			
<b>Club</b>	<b>Need for more match pitches</b>	<b>Need for more/better training facilities</b>	<b>Need for better/more appropriate changing provision</b>
AFC Cronton	-	Yes	-
Avon Villa FC	-	Yes	-
Beechwood JFC	Yes	Yes	Yes
BPR Leiria JFC	-	Yes	Yes
Brookvale Utd	-	Yes	Yes
Ditton Athletic	-	Yes	-
Ford Motors FC	-	-	-
Halton Borough FC	-	Yes	Yes
Halton Borough Wolves JFC	Yes	Yes	-
Halton Sports FC	-	Yes	Yes
Pexhill FC	Yes	Yes	-
Sandymoor FC	-	Yes	Yes
St Michaels DH FC	-	Yes	Yes
West Bank FC	-	Yes	Yes
Widnes FC	-	Yes	Yes
West Point JFC	-	Yes	-

Most clubs which express latent demand indicate they would be able to increase the number of teams if they have access to more or better training provision including the use of floodlit 3G pitches. This is followed by a perceived need for more or better quality changing provision, which can be a particular issue for clubs looking to field women's and girls' teams.

Only three clubs across the Borough report that they would be able to increase playing numbers through increasing the number of available pitches.

### ***Unmet demand***

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to pitches. It is usually expressed, for example, when a team is already training but is unable to access a match pitch, or when a league has a waiting list due to a lack of pitch provision, which in turn is hindering the growth of the league. No unmet demand is expressed by responsive clubs in Halton.

### ***Future demand***

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and by using population forecasts.

The Strategy & Action Plan will contain housing growth scenarios that will estimate the additional demand for football arising from housing development within Halton.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### Participation increases

Ten clubs' report aspirations to increase the number of teams they provide. Through the clubs that quantified *potential* increase, there is a predicted growth of 25 teams, as seen below.

Table 2.10: Potential team increases identified by football clubs

Football				
Club	Analysis area	Future demand (teams)	Pitch size	Match equivalent sessions <sup>3</sup>
Avon Villa FC	Widnes	1 x women's	Adult	0.5
		2 x youth boys'	Youth 11v11	1
		1 x mini	Mini 5v5	0.5
Beechwood JFC	Runcorn	2 x mini	Mini 5v5	1
		1 x men's	Adult	0.5
BPR Leiria JFC	Runcorn	1 x youth girls'	Youth 9v9	0.5
Brookvale United FC	Runcorn	2 x mini	Mini 5v5	1
Halton Borough FC	Widnes	1 x men's	Adult	0.5
		1 x youth boys'	Youth 11v11	0.5
Halton Borough Wolves FC	Widnes	2 x mini	Mini 5v5	1
Pex Hill FC	Widnes	2 x mini	Mini 5v5	1
		1 x youth boys'	Youth 9v9	0.5
Runcorn Linnetts FC	Runcorn	2 x mini	Mini 5v5	1
St Michaels DH FC	Widnes	1 x mini	Mini 5v5	0.5
Widnes FC	Widnes	1 x men's	Adult	0.5
		1 x women's	Adult	0.5
		3 x mini	Mini 5v5	1.5
<b>Total</b>				<b>12.5</b>

The total future demand expressed by clubs amounts to 12.5 match equivalent sessions (as two teams equates to one match equivalent sessions to account for matches being played on a home and away basis). The majority of this is identified in Widnes, equating to 8.5 match equivalent sessions. Four match equivalent sessions are identified in Runcorn.

Broken down by pitch type, 2.5 match equivalent sessions are identified on adult pitches, 1.5 match equivalent sessions on youth 11v11 pitches, one match equivalent session on youth 9v9 pitches and 7.5 match equivalent sessions on mini 5v5 pitches. No future demand is identified for mini 7v7 pitches, although such provision is likely to be required as future mini 5v5 teams progress.

Further to the above, SSE Wildcats centres work with County FA qualified coaches to deliver local weekly sessions, providing opportunities for girls aged five to 11 to develop fundamental skills and experience football in a safe and fun environment.

All organisations delivering Wildcats centres receive a £900 start-up grant and 30 branded footballs in their first year of running the programme to help develop and increase girl's participation.

In light of both FA aspirations to double female participation in football through its Game Changer strategy and the establishment and foreseen future effect of the SSE Wildcats programme, it is likely that the growth in affiliated women's and girl teams may exceed that

<sup>3</sup> Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, 0.5 pitches can therefore be seen in the table where there is latent demand for one team.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

shown through team generation rates. To what extent is not currently quantifiable, however, this increase in female demand is likely to be captured within the club aspirational future demand figures expressed in Table 2.10.

### *Population increases*

Team generation rates are used to calculate the number of teams likely to be generated in the future (2037) based on population growth. Using this, it is predicted that there will be a possible increase of three youth 11v11 boys' teams across Halton as a whole. This equates to an increase of 1.5 match equivalent sessions.

*Table 2.11: Borough wide football team generation rates*

Football						
Age group	Current population within age group <sup>4</sup> (2018)	Current no. of teams <sup>5</sup>	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group (2037)	Predicted future number of teams (2037)	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Men (18-45)	21,198	36	1:589	20,677	35.1	0
Senior Women (18-45)	22,257	5	1:4,451	21,204	4.8	0
Youth Boys (12-17)	4,584	56	1:82	4,849	59.2	3
Youth Girls (12-17)	4,489	4	1:1,122	4,474	4.0	0
Youth Boys (10-11)	1,733	33	1:53	1,576	30.0	0
Youth Girls (10-11)	1,647	4	1:412	1,439	3.5	0
Mini-Soccer Mixed (8-9)	3,453	42	1:82	2,985	36.3	0
Mini-Soccer Mixed (6-7)	3,332	52	1:64	2,873	44.8	0

When broken down by analysis area, population growth equates to an increase of two teams in Runcorn (one match equivalent session) and one team in Widnes (0.5 match equivalent sessions).

Notwithstanding the above, it is important to note that team generation rates are based on population figures and cannot account for specific targeted development work within certain areas or focused towards certain groups, such as NGB initiatives or coaching within schools.

In total in the Runcorn Analysis Area future demand from participation increases and population increases equate to one adult team (0.5 match equivalent sessions), four youth 11v11 teams (two match equivalent session), one youth 9v9 team (0.5 match equivalent sessions) and six mini 5v5 teams (three match equivalent sessions).

Comparatively in the Widnes Analysis Area future demand from participation increases and population increases equate to four adult teams (two match equivalent sessions), four youth 11v11 teams (two match equivalent session), one youth 9v9 team (0.5 match equivalent sessions) and nine mini 5v5 teams (4.5 match equivalent sessions). This demand will be factored in later in the section for the overall supply and demand analysis for each pitch type.

### **2.4: Capacity analysis**

<sup>4</sup> Current population information is based upon Mid 2018 ONS data.

<sup>5</sup> Age group team numbers differ from Table 2.6 as forecasts are based on age rather than playing format. U17 and U18 teams affiliate to their respective County FA as juniors, however, are generally considered to play on and require adult pitches and are considered by age boundaries to be in the adult age group

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

The capacity for pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affect the playing experience and people's enjoyment. In extreme circumstances, it can result in the inability of a pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off peak times.

As a guide, the FA has set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without it adversely affecting its quality. Taking into consideration the guidelines on capacity, the following ratings were used in the Halton:

Football					
Adult pitches		Youth pitches		Mini pitches	
Pitch quality	Matches per week	Pitch quality	Matches per week	Pitch quality	Matches per week
Good	3	Good	4	Good	6
Standard	2	Standard	2	Standard	4
Poor	1	Poor	1	Poor	2

Table 2.13 applies the above pitch ratings against the actual level of weekly play recorded to determine a capacity rating as follows:

<b>Potential capacity</b>	Play is below the level the site could sustain
<b>At capacity</b>	Play matches the level the site can sustain
<b>Overused</b>	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

### ***Match equivalent sessions***

Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected. As the main usage of pitches is likely to be for matches, it is appropriate for the comparable unit to be match equivalent sessions but may for example include training sessions and informal use.

### ***Education sites***

To account for curricular/extra-curricular use of education pitches it is likely that the carrying capacity at such sites will need to be adjusted. The only time this would not happen is when a school does not use its pitches at all and the sole use is community use. The adjustment is typically dependent on the amount of play carried out, the number of pitches on site and whether there is access to an on-site AGP.

In some cases, where there is no identified community use, there is little capacity to accommodate further play. Internal usage often exceeds recommended pitch capacity, which is further exacerbated by basic maintenance regimes that may not extend beyond grass cutting and line marking. As such, where not overplayed as a result of community use, school sites are considered to have no spare capacity to accommodate further usage based on assumed curricular and extracurricular activity.

For school sites which are available for community use but that currently do not have any external hirers, current play has been enlarged on a site-by-site basis following consultation with the providers. Generally, usage is increased by one match equivalent session per pitch; however, in some cases, further use is added when it is known that a particular provider uses a particular pitch heavily.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### **Informal use**

A number of football pitches in the area are on open access sites. As such, these pitches are subject to informal use in the form of dog walkers, unorganised games of football and exercise groups. It must be noted, however, that informal use of these sites is not recorded and it is therefore difficult to quantify on a site-by-site basis. Instead, it is recommended that open access sites be protected through an improved maintenance regime.

### **Peak time**

Spare capacity can only be considered as actual spare capacity if pitches are available at peak time. In Halton, peak time is Saturday AM for all youth and mini pitches, whereas its Saturday PM for adult pitches.

In Table 2.13, please note that, on occasion, spare capacity in the peak period is identified despite the pitch being played to capacity or overplayed, or more spare capacity is identified in the peak period. This is because most of the use on those particular pitches occurs outside of the peak period. The identified spare capacity at peak time should not be utilised over and above overall capacity unless quality improvements are made that increases overall capacity.

### **Actual spare capacity**

To determine 'actual spare capacity', each site with 'potential capacity' has been reviewed. A pitch is only said to have 'actual spare capacity' if it is available for community use and available at the peak time for that format of the game. Any pitch not meeting this criterion has consequently been discounted.

There may also be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

Pitches that are of a poor quality are not deemed to have actual spare capacity due to the already low carrying capacity of the pitches. Any identified spare capacity should be retained in order to relieve the pitches of use, which in turn will aid the improvement of pitch quality. Furthermore, any pitches with unsecured tenure are not considered to have actual spare capacity as no further play should be encouraged on such sites given that future access cannot be guaranteed. The way this will be represented in the Table 2.13 is as follows:

*Table 2.12: Spare capacity examples*

<b>Spare capacity in peak period (examples)</b>	<b>Explanation of spare capacity</b>
1	If the cell is highlighted in green with a number, it means that the pitch/es has actual spare capacity at peak time.
-	If the cell has a dash in it, it means the pitch is played to capacity during the peak period.
1	If the cell has a number in it but is not highlighted, it means the pitch has spare capacity at peak period; however, this is discounted. This could be due to unsecure tenure, poor pitch quality, the pitch not being available for community use, or the pitch already being played to capacity or being overplayed (outside of peak time).

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 2.13: Football pitch capacity analysis

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use availability	Management	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play <sup>6</sup>	Site capacity <sup>7</sup>	Capacity balance <sup>8</sup>	Spare capacity in peak period	Comments
3	Beechwood County Primary School	Runcorn	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	Pitch is played to capacity at peak period
5	Bridgewater Park Primary School	Runcorn	No	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1	2	1	1	No community use
9	Cronton Sixth Form College	Widnes	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	2	0.5	4	3.5	2	Spare capacity of 2 match equivalent session discounted due to unsecure tenure
10	Crow Wood Park	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Spare capacity of 1 match equivalent session is discounted due to poor quality
11	Daresbury County Primary School	Runcorn	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	1	2	1	1	Spare capacity of 1 match equivalent session discounted due to unsecure tenure
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	3	1.5	6	4.5	2.5	Actual spare capacity of 2.5 match equivalent sessions
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	3	1.5	12	10.5	1.5	Actual spare capacity of 1.5 match equivalent sessions
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	1	8	7	1	Actual spare capacity of 1 match equivalent sessions
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	2	1.5	4	2.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions
15	Grange Academy	Runcorn	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	3	4	1	-	Pitch is played to capacity at peak period
15	Grange Academy	Runcorn	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1.5	4	2.5	-	Pitch is played to capacity at peak period
15	Grange Academy	Runcorn	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	Spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent session discounted due to unsecure tenure
15	Grange Academy	Runcorn	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	2	1	1	-	Pitch is overplayed by 1 match equivalent session.
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields	Runcorn	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	2	1.5	2	0.5	2	Spare capacity of 2 match equivalent session is discounted due to poor quality
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields	Runcorn	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	2	4	4		-	Pitches are played to capacity at peak period
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields	Runcorn	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	3	3.5	6	2.5	-	Pitches are played to capacity at peak period
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields	Runcorn	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	2	4	2	3	-	Pitches are overplayed by three match equivalent sessions
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields	Runcorn	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	3	1	2	-	Pitch overplayed by 2 match equivalent sessions
19	Halebank Recreation Ground	Widnes	Yes	Sports club	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	1	2	1	-	Pitch is played to capacity at peak period
21	Halton Lodge School	Runcorn	No	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1	2	1	1	No community use
26	Jaguar Land Rover Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Yes	Commercial	Secure	Adult		Good	1	1	3	2	-	Pitch is played to capacity at peak period
26	Jaguar Land Rover Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Yes	Commercial	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Good	1	0.5	6	5.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity at peak period
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	3	2	3	1	2	Spare capacity of 2 match equivalent session is discounted due to poor quality
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	1	2	1	-	Pitch is played to capacity at peak period
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1.5	2	0.5	0.5	Spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions is discounted due to poor quality
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1.5	1	0.5	0.5	Pitches are overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions

<sup>6</sup> Match equivalent sessions

<sup>7</sup> Match equivalent sessions; based on pitch quality - the FA recommends a maximum number of match equivalent sessions to be accommodate per pitch type. Please refer to Section 2.4 for the full breakdown.

<sup>8</sup> Red indicates overplay, green indicates potential spare capacity and amber indicates at capacity.



**HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT**

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use availability	Management	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play <sup>6</sup>	Site capacity <sup>7</sup>	Capacity balance <sup>8</sup>	Spare capacity in peak period	Comments
28	Leigh Recreation Playing Fields	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	4	3.5	8	4.5	2	Actual spare capacity at peak period
28	Leigh Recreation Playing Fields	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	2	3.5	4	0.5	-	Pitches are played to capacity at peak period
30	Millbank Linnets Stadium	Runcorn	Yes	Sport club	Secure	Adult		Standard	2	1	4	3	1.5	Actual spare discounted due to ongoing pitch developments
30	Millbank Linnets Stadium	Runcorn	Yes	Sport club	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	3	4	12	8	0.5	Actual spare capacity at peak period
30	Millbank Linnets Stadium	Runcorn	Yes	Sport club	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	3.5	8	4.5	-	Pitches played to capacity at peak period
30	Millbank Linnets Stadium	Runcorn	Yes	Sport club	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	2	5.5	4	1.5	-	Pitches overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions
30	Millbank Linnets Stadium	Runcorn	Yes	Sport club	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	3	2	1	-	Pitch overplayed by one match equivalent session
33	Moorfield Primary School	Widnes	No	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1	2	1	1	Not available for community use
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Yes	Sport club	Secure	Adult		Poor	2	3	2	1	1	Pitches overplayed by 1 match equivalent session
36	Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy	Runcorn	Yes	Academy (in house)	<b>Unsecure</b>	Adult		Poor	3	1.5	3	1.5	3	Spare capacity of 3 match equivalent sessions discounted due to unsecure tenure
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	Widnes	No	Academy (in house)	<b>Unsecure</b>	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	1		1	Not available for community use
38	Palace Fields Primary Academy	Runcorn	No	Academy (in house)	<b>Unsecure</b>	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1	2	1	1	Spare capacity of 1 match equivalent session discounted due to unsecure tenure
39	Pavilions Club	Runcorn	Yes	Commercial	<b>Unsecure</b>	Adult		Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	Spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent session discounted due to poor quality
40	Pewithall Primary School	Runcorn	No	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1	2	1	1	Not available for community use
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	2	4	4		-	Pitches played to capacity
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Widnes	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	2	3	4	1	-	Pitches are played to capacity at peak period
42	Runcorn Boys Club	Runcorn	Yes	Sport club	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	2	2		0.5	Pitch played to capacity
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	3	4	3	1	0.5	Pitches overplayed by one match equivalent session
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	2	1	2	1	2	Spare capacity of 2 match equivalent session discounted due to poor quality
45	Sandy Moor School	Runcorn	Yes	Academy (in house)	<b>Unsecure</b>	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	1	1		1	Pitch is played to capacity.
48	St Chad's Catholic and Church Of England High School	Runcorn	No	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	2	2	2		2	Not available for community use
49	St Clement's Catholic Primary School	Runcorn	No	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	1		1	Not available for community use
50	St Martin's Catholic Primary School	Runcorn	No	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	1		1	Not available for community use
51	St Mary's Church Of England Primary School	Runcorn	No	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1	2	1	1	Not available for community use
52	St Michaels Catholic Primary School	Widnes	Yes	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Adult		Poor	1	1	1		-	Pitch is played to capacity
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Widnes	Yes	Education	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	2	8	6	-	Pitches are played to capacity at peak period
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Widnes	Yes	Education	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	2	8	6	-	Pitches are played to capacity at peak period
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Widnes	Yes	Education	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	2	1.5	4	2.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity at peak period
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Widnes	Yes	Education	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	4	2	2	-	Pitch is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions
54	The Brow Community Primary School	Runcorn	No	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	1	2	1	1	Spare capacity of 1 match equivalent session discounted due to unsecure tenure

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use availability	Management	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play <sup>6</sup>	Site capacity <sup>7</sup>	Capacity balance <sup>8</sup>	Spare capacity in peak period	Comments
55	The Heath School	Runcorn	No	Academy (in house)	<b>Unsecure</b>	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	2	2	2		2	Pitches are played to capacity
56	Wade Deacon High School	Widnes	Yes	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	2	2	4	2	2	Spare capacity of 2 match equivalent sessions discounted due to unsecure tenure
58	Westfield Primary School	Runcorn	Yes	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	1	2	1	1	Spare capacity of 1 match equivalent session discounted due to unsecure tenure
58	Westfield Primary School	Runcorn	Yes	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	Spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent session discounted due to unsecure tenure
59	Weston County Primary School	Runcorn	Yes	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	Pitch is played to capacity at peak period
60	Weston Point Community Primary School	Runcorn	Yes	Education	<b>Unsecure</b>	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	2.5	4	1.5	1	Spare capacity of 1 match equivalent session discounted due to unsecure tenure
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Yes	Sports club	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	0.5	2	1.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity at peak period
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Yes	Sports club	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	4	2.5	8	5.5	2.5	Actual spare capacity at peak period
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Yes	Sports club	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	Pitch is played to capacity at peak period
68	Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields	Runcorn	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	0.5	4	3.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity at peak period
68	Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields	Runcorn	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	1.5	4	2.5	-	Pitch is played to capacity at peak period
68	Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields	Runcorn	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	Pitch is played to capacity at peak period
68	Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields	Runcorn	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	0.5	2	1.5	1	Actual spare capacity at peak period
69	Parklands Sports Club	Widnes	Yes	Sports club	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	0	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity at peak period
69	Parklands Sports Club	Widnes	Yes	Sports club	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	0	1	1	1	Actual spare capacity at peak period



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### 2.5: Supply and demand analysis

Having considered supply and demand, the tables below identify current demand (i.e. spare capacity taking away overplay and any exported demand) in each of the analysis areas for each pitch type, based on match equivalent sessions. Future demand is based on team generation rates, which are driven by population increases, in addition, to club aspirational future growth plans.

#### **Adult pitch analysis**

Table 2.14: Supply and demand balance of adult pitches

Football					
Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>9</sup>	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Runcorn	-	1	1	0.5	1.5
Widnes	6	1	5	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>

There is currently an adequate supply of adult pitches to meet demand, with four match equivalent sessions of spare capacity when looking at the position Borough wide; however, overplay is identified in Runcorn amounting to one match equivalent session.

When considering future demand, the shortfall increases in Runcorn, with spare capacity in Widnes reducing. This leads to overall spare capacity amounting to 1.5 match equivalent sessions.

#### **Youth 11v11 pitch analysis**

Table 2.15: Supply and demand balance of youth 11v11 pitches

Football					
Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>10</sup>	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Runcorn	-	4.5	4.5	1	5.5
Widnes	4	-	4	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.5</b>

There is currently a marginal shortfall across the Borough on youth 11v11 pitches totalling 0.5 match equivalent session per week, with shortfalls evident in Runcorn. When accounting for future demand, the shortfalls increase to 3.5 match equivalent sessions per week, although some minimal spare capacity remains in Widnes.

It must also be noted that several youth 11v11 teams are playing on adult pitches, meaning shortfalls would greatly increase should these sides transfer to the correct pitch type.

<sup>9</sup> In match equivalent sessions

<sup>10</sup> In match equivalent sessions

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### Youth 9v9 pitch analysis

Table 2.16: Supply and demand balance of youth 9v9 pitches

Football					
Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>11</sup>	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Runcorn	-	4	4	0.5	4.5
Widnes	0.5	2.5	2	0.5	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

Overall, there is current shortfall on youth 9v9 pitches totalling 6 match equivalent sessions across the Borough, equating to a shortfall of 4 match equivalent sessions in Runcorn and 2 match equivalent sessions in Widnes.

When taking into consideration future demand, there is an overall shortfall of 7 match equivalent sessions arises. This accounts for a shortfall of 4.5 match equivalent sessions in Runcorn and 2.5 match equivalent sessions in Widnes.

### Mini 7v7 pitch analysis

Table 2.17: Supply and demand balance of mini 7v7 pitches

Football					
Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>12</sup>	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Runcorn	1	-	1	-	1
Widnes	1	-	1	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>

Across Halton there is currently minimal spare capacity of 2 match equivalent sessions on mini 7v7 pitches, with 1 match equivalent session of spare capacity existing in both analysis areas.

As there is no identified future demand from clubs for mini 7v7 pitches, the level of spare capacity is projected to remain at two match equivalents session per week.

### Mini 5v5 pitch analysis

Table 2.18: Supply and demand balance of mini 5v5 pitches

Football					
Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>13</sup>	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Runcorn	1	-	1	3	2
Widnes	2	-	2	4.5	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>

<sup>11</sup> In match equivalent sessions

<sup>12</sup> In match equivalent sessions

<sup>13</sup> In match equivalent sessions

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Currently, mini 5v5 pitches have minimal spare capacity of 3 match equivalent sessions, which broken down equates to 1 match equivalent session in Runcorn and 2 match equivalent sessions in Widnes.

When accounting for future demand, there is a predicted overall shortfall of 4.5 match equivalent sessions and a shortfall in both analysis areas.

### **Overall pitch supply and demand capacity**

Using the supply and demand analysis tables above, it is determined that there is current spare capacity across adult, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 and a shortfall of youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches in Halton. After factoring in future demand, a shortfall also becomes evident for mini 5v5 pitches whilst it worsens for youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches.

Table 2.19: Summary of supply and demand

Football					
Pitch type	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)				
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Adult	6	2	4	2.5	1.5
Youth 11v11	4	4.5	0.5	3	3.5
Youth 9v9	0.5	6.5	6	1	7
Mini 7v7	2	-	2	-	2
Mini 5v5	3	-	3	7.5	4.5

Most current overplay across the various pitch types is generated from high levels of demand accessing poor quality pitches. This is worsened when accounting for future demand.

### **Spare capacity**

The table below identifies actual spare capacity by site and pitch type across Halton. It should be noted that a total of 8 match equivalent sessions of spare capacity has been discounted due to poor pitch quality, whereas, 13 match equivalent sessions has been discounted due to unsecure tenure.

Table 2.20: Summary of actual spare capacity

Football					
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match sessions)
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	Widnes	Adult	3	2.5
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	Widnes	(5v5)	3	1.5
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	Widnes	(7v7)	2	1
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	Widnes	(9v9)	2	0.5
26	Jaguar Land Rover Sports and Social Club	Widnes	(5v5)	1	0.5
28	Leigh Recreation Playing Fields	Widnes	Adult	4	2
30	Millbank Linnets Stadium	Runcorn	(5v5)	3	0.5
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Widnes	(11v11)	2	0.5
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Adult	1	0.5
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	(11v11)	4	2.5
68	Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields	Runcorn	(5v5)	1	0.5

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Football					
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match sessions)
68	Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields	Runcorn	(7v7)	1	1
69	Parklands Sports Club	Widnes	(11v11)	1	1
69	Parklands Sports Club	Widnes	Adult	1	1
<b>Total</b>					<b>15.5</b>

Actual spare capacity totals 15.5 match equivalent sessions per week on 29 pitches across 8 sites. This has been aggregated up by area and by pitch type below.

Table 2.21: Summary of actual spare capacity by Analysis Area

Football						
Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions per week)					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Runcorn	-	-	-	1	1	2
Widnes	6	4	0.5	1	2	13.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15.5</b>

Most actual spare capacity is identified on adult pitches, although some is identified on each pitch type. Most of the spare capacity is in Widnes, with 13.5 match equivalent sessions, whereas Runcorn contributes only two match equivalent sessions.

### Overplay

Overplay occurs when there is more play accommodated on a site than it is able to sustain, which can often be due to the low carrying capacity of pitches. In Halton, 14 pitches across 7 sites are overplayed by a combined total of 13 match equivalent sessions per week.

As can be seen overleaf, when broken down, 9.5 match equivalent sessions of overplay takes place in Runcorn and 3.5 match equivalent sessions takes place in Widnes.

Table 2.22: Summary of overplay

Football					
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match sessions)
15	Grange Academy	Runcorn	(9v9)	1	1
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields	Runcorn	(11v11)	2	3
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields	Runcorn	(9v9)	1	2
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	(9v9)	1	0.5
30	Millbank Linnets Stadium	Runcorn	(11v11)	2	1.5
30	Millbank Linnets Stadium	Runcorn	(9v9)	1	1
34	Moorfield Sports & Social Club	Widnes	Adult	2	1
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	Adult	3	1
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Widnes	(9v9)	1	2

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Football					
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match sessions)
<b>Total</b>					<b>13</b>

Most overplay is generated from demand accessing poor quality pitches. In total 8.5 match equivalent sessions of overplay is on poor quality pitches.

In total, there are 2 match equivalent sessions of overplay on adult pitches, 4.5 match equivalent sessions on youth 11v11 pitches and 6.5 match equivalent sessions on youth 9v9 pitches. No overplay is identified on the mini pitches.

In addition to overplayed pitches, it should be noted that there are seven community available pitches across 5 sites that are played to capacity. These are Haddocks Wood Playing Fields (two mini 5v5 pitches), Prescott Road Playing Fields (two poor quality mini 5v5 pitches), Runcorn Boys Club (one standard quality adult pitch), Sandymoor School (one poor quality youth 11v11 pitch) and St Michaels Catholic Primary School (one poor quality adult pitch). Any additional play on these pitches would result in overplay.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### Football – grass pitch supply and demand summary

- ◀ It is determined that there is current minimal spare capacity on adult, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches; however, there is a shortfall of youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches.
- ◀ After factoring in future demand, shortfalls become evident on mini 5v5 pitches and worsen on youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches.
- ◀ Actual spare capacity totals 15.5 match equivalent sessions per week across 29 pitches and 8 sites.
- ◀ A total of 14 pitches across 7 sites are overplayed by a combined total of 13 match equivalent sessions per week.

### Football – supply summary

- ◀ The audit identifies a total of 111 grass football pitches within Halton across 40 sites, with 97 pitches available for community use across 26 sites.
- ◀ The Council reports it has two sites which it is currently not marking out for football but that it will reinstate if the relevant demand arises (Arley Drive Playing Fields and Hale Park).
- ◀ Runcorn Linnets FC has received a grant from the Football Foundation to replace its stadia grass pitch and replace it with a hybrid pitch.
- ◀ Tenure of sites in Halton is generally secure i.e. through a long-term lease or a guarantee that pitches will continue to be provided over the next three years; however, Brookvale United FC and Beechwood JFC report issues.
- ◀ Widnes FC reports plans to develop a new ground with accompanying facilities, suitable for the football pyramid.
- ◀ In total, two community available pitches are assessed as good quality, 54 as standard quality and 41 as poor quality.
- ◀ Most ancillary facilities accompanying grass football pitches across the Borough is standard or good quality.
- ◀ Although ancillary facilities servicing Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields, Runcorn Heath Playing Fields and Leigh Recreation Playing Fields are rated as standard quality, the clubs using the facilities report there is a general need for modernisation.

### Football – demand summary

- ◀ Through the audit and assessment, 232 teams from within 36 clubs are identified as playing within Halton, consisting of 36 adult men's, five adult women's, 89 youth boys', eight youth girls' and 94 mini teams.
- ◀ Most clubs which express latent demand indicate they would be able to increase the number of teams if they have access to more or better training provision including the use of floodlit 3G pitches.
- ◀ Through the clubs that quantified potential future demand, there is a predicted growth of 25 teams, whilst team generation rates predict a growth of three youth 11v11 teams.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### PART 3: THIRD GENERATION TURF (3G) ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES (AGPS)

#### 3.1: Introduction

Competitive football can take place on 3G surfaces that have been FIFA or International Matchball Standard (IMS) tested and approved by the FA for inclusion on the FA pitch register. As such, a growing number of 3G pitches are now used for competitive match play, providing that the performance standard meets FIFA quality (previously FIFA One Star), as well as for training purposes.

World Rugby produced the 'Performance Specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby', more commonly known as 'Regulation 22' that provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union. The artificial surface standards identified in Regulation 22 allows matches to be played on surfaces that meet the standard, meaning full contact activity, including tackling, rucking, mauling and lineouts, can take place.

Competitive rugby league play and contact practice is permitted to take place on 3G pitches which are deemed by the RFL to meet its Performance Standard for Synthetic Turf Pitches. Pitches fall under two categories; community club pitches which require retesting every two years and elite stadia pitches which require an annual retest. Much of the criteria within the RFL performance standard test also forms part of the World Rugby test, consequently World Rugby certified 3G pitches are considered by the RFL to be able to meet rugby league requirements and are deemed suitable for rugby league use subject to passing an additional exclusive RFL performance standard test.

England Hockey's (EH) Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy (June 2016) advises that 3G pitches should not be used for hockey matches or training and that they can only be used for lower level hockey (introductory level) as a last resort when no sand-based or water-based AGPs are available.

*Table 3.1: 3G type and sport suitability*

Surface	Sport	Comments
Rubber crumb	Rugby	Long pile surface (60mm) that is compliant to World Rugby regulation 22 and/or RFL Community Standard
Rubber crumb	Football	Performance standard to meet FIFA Quality after FIFA or IMS testing with the preferred surface medium pile (55-60mm)
Rubber crumb	Hockey	Short pile surface (40mm) for lower level hockey only

Many test contractors are able to offer reduced rates through efficiency savings to carry out multiple performance tests in the same session, therefore providers seeking 3G pitch compliancy for a number of sports would be recommended to consider this opportunity.

#### 3.2: Current provision

A full size 3G pitch is considered by the FA to measure at least 100 x 64 metres (106 x 64 metres including run offs); however, for the purposes of this report, all pitches measuring over 94 x 55 metres (exclusive of run offs) are considered to be full size due to the amount of demand they can accommodate. Nationally, many 3G pitches are slightly undersized due to being converted from sand-based provision (dimensions for hockey are smaller than for football).

There are four full size 3G pitches in Halton that fully comply with the above specification. Three of these are in Widnes, with the remaining pitch located in Runcorn.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 3.2: Full size 3G pitches in Halton

3G / AGP						
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Floodlit?	Size <sup>14</sup>	Certification
15	Grange Academy	Runcorn	Yes	Yes	100 x 62	-
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	Widnes	Yes	Yes	108 x 64	FIFA
46	DCBL Stadium Halton	Widnes	Yes	Yes	103 x 70	FIFA / World Rugby / RFL Stadium Standard
56	Wade Deacon High School	Widnes	Yes	Yes	106 x 70	-

The pitch located at the DCBL Stadium Halton considered to be available for community use, however outside of the usage from professional rugby league club Widnes Vikings RLFC.

All remaining full size 3G pitches in Halton are available for community use.

In addition to the full size pitches, there is one smaller sized floodlit 3G pitch at Sandymoor School. The pitch is measures 88x56 metres.

Table 3.3: Additional supply of 3G pitches

3G / AGP						
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Community use?	Floodlit?	Size (metres)
45	Sandymoor School	Runcorn	1	No	Yes	85 x 55

The pitch at Sandymoor School is owned by Sandymoor Parish Council which reports awaiting a shared use agreement with the School which will run the provision on a day to day basis including the hiring of the pitch. The completion of this agreement has been delayed due to issues surrounding Covid-19.

As the pitch is FA approved, if accessibility issues can be resolved, it can be used to accommodate youth and mini matches up to and including U14 level (the FA's recommended size of a youth pitch is 82 x 50 metres for u14s and u13s). However, more commonly, smaller sized 3G pitches are used to accommodate training demand, commercial football leagues and social/recreational play.

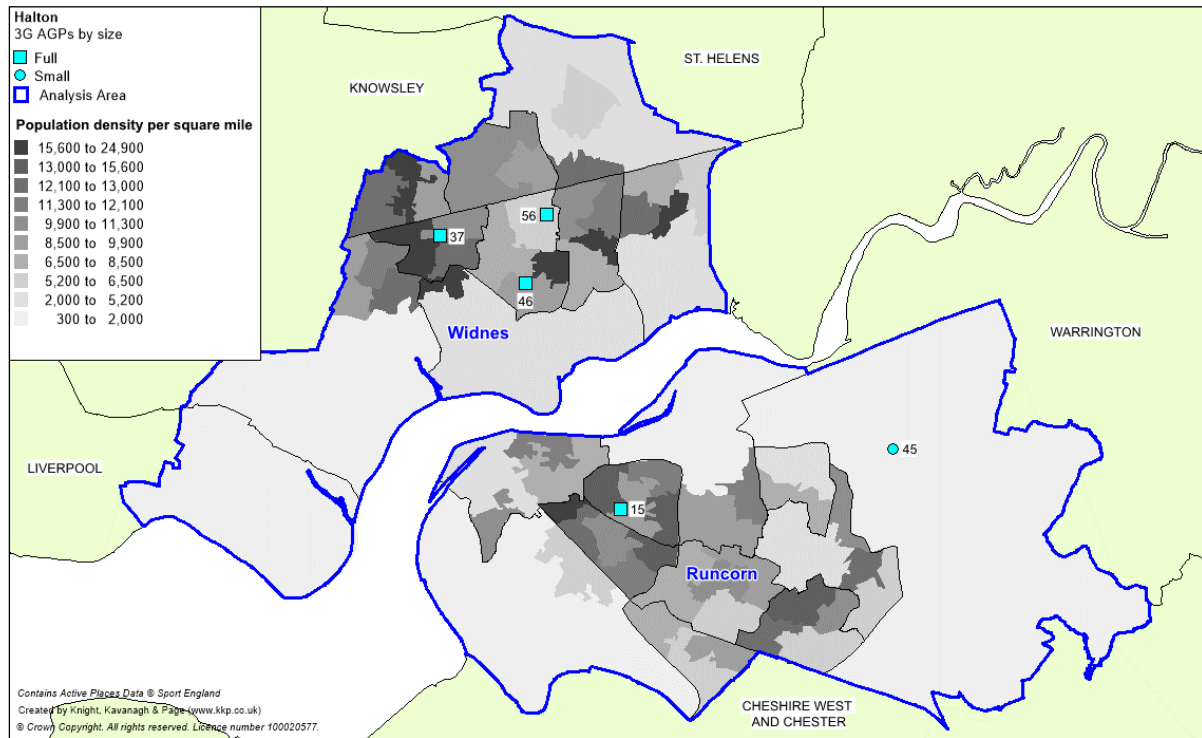
Figure 3.1 overleaf identifies the location of all 3G pitches in Halton, regardless of size.

<sup>14</sup> Size is in metres  
November 2020



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Figure 3.1: Location of 3G AGPs in Halton



### Future provision

The LFFP for Halton proposes two priority projects for the creation of two full size 3G pitches: one at Frank Myler Pavilion and one within the general Runcorn area. Recent dialogue between England Hockey, the Council and Football Foundation suggests there is potential to convert the poor quality hockey suitable AGP at Brookvale Recreation Centre to a 3G surface in order to accommodate the shortfall in the Runcorn Analysis Area, however, due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic the timeframe for a decision regarding this is currently unknown.

### Conversion to 3G surfaces

Since the introduction of 3G pitches and given their popularity for football, providers have seen this as a way to replace a worn sand or water based carpet and generate increased revenue from hiring out a 3G pitch to football and rugby clubs and commercial football providers. This has often come at the expense of hockey, with players now travelling further distances to gain access to a suitable pitch and many teams consequently displaced from their preferred local authority.

Due to its potential to impact on hockey, it is appropriate to ensure that sufficient sand based AGPs are retained for the playing development of hockey. To that end, a change of surface may require planning permission and the applicants will need to show that there is sufficient provision available for hockey in the locality. Advice from Sport England and EH should also be sought prior to any planning application being submitted.

It should also be noted that, if the surface type is changed, it could require the existing floodlighting to be changed and in some instances noise attenuation measures may need to be put in place. Conversion to a 3G surface will likely require a size increase; along with floodlighting improvements, the addition of a shock pad, fencing and noise attenuation.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

A 3G surface is limited in the range of sport that can be played or taught on it. Providers proposing a conversion should take advice from the appropriate sports' governing bodies or refer to Sport England guidance and in particular 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface': <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/outdoor-surfaces>

### ***FA pitch register***

In order for competitive matches to be played on 3G pitches, the pitch should be FIFA or IMS tested and approved and added to the FA pitch register, which can be found at: <http://3g.thefa.me.uk/>.

Pitches undergo testing to become a FIFA Quality pitch (previously FIFA One Star) or a FIFA Quality Pro pitch (previously FIFA Two Star), with pitches commonly constructed, installed and tested in situ to achieve either accreditation. This comes after FIFA announced changes to 3G performance in October 2015 following consultation with member associations and licenced laboratories.

The changes are part of FIFA's continued ambition to drive up performance standard in the industry and the implications are that all 3G pitches built through the FA framework will be constructed to meet the new criteria.

The changes from FIFA One Star to FIFA Quality will have minimal impact on the current hours of use guidelines, which suggests that One Star pitches place more emphasis on the product's ability to sustain acceptable performance and can typically be used for 60-85 hours per week with a lifespan of 20,000 cycles. In contrast, pitches built to FIFA Quality Pro performance standards are unlikely to provide the hours of use that some FIFA Two Star products have guaranteed in the past (previously 30-40 hours per week with a lifespan of 5,000 cycles). Typically, a FIFA Quality Pro pitch will be able to accommodate only 20-30 hours per week with appropriate maintenance due to strict performance measurements.

In Halton, none of the full size 3G pitches are FA certified, however, the pitches at the DCBL Stadium Halton and Ormiston Chadwick Academy are both FIFA certified. Although there are no full size pitches which are FA certified the small size pitch at Sandymoor School is on the FA register.

### ***RFL Compliant pitches<sup>15</sup>***

The RFL in 2018 amended its rules to allow the use of 3G pitches in all of its competitions providing a pitch holds a Fields Test Certificate showing it fully complies with the relevant field test requirements of the RFL Performance and Construction Standards for Pitches. These can be seen in the table below.

*Table 3.4: RFL 3G pitch certification*

Level of competition		Category of field certification
Club Tiers One and Two (Super League and Championship)		Stadium
Club Tiers Three and Four (Community and training)	New provision	Community
	Existing provision	Community or World Rugby Turf Performance Specification

<sup>15</sup> [https://secure.rugby-league.com/ign\\_docs/RFLPerformanceStandardforsyntheticurf pitches2018.pdf](https://secure.rugby-league.com/ign_docs/RFLPerformanceStandardforsyntheticurf pitches2018.pdf)

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

The 3G pitch at DCBL Stadium Halton has a RFL Stadium certification as Widnes Vikings RFLC previously played at the Championship Tier, however, the Club has recently been relegated meaning the club is now semi-professional.

### ***World Rugby compliant pitches***

To enable 3G pitches to host competitive rugby union matches, World Rugby has developed the Rugby Turf Performance Specification. This is to ensure that the surfaces replicate the playing qualities of good quality grass pitches, provide a playing environment that will not increase the risk of injury and are of an adequate durability.

The specification includes a rigorous test programme that assesses ball/surface interaction and player/surface interaction and has been modified to align the standard with that of FIFA. Any 3G pitch used for any form of competitive rugby must comply with this specification and must be tested every two years to retain compliance.

In Halton, the 3G pitch at DCBL Stadium Halton is also World Rugby compliant, with retesting required in October 2020.

### ***Management***

All community available full size 3G pitches in Halton are managed internally at education sites. This in turn affect each pitches availability, which is outlined below.

### ***Availability***

As seen in the table below, each community available pitch is considered widely accessible between 17:30 to 21:00 during weekdays; however, the pitches at Grange Academy and Wade Deacon High School are not available at the weekend. This is due to issues with staffing and costing as both schools let their facilities in house.

It should be noted that a community use agreement was established at Wade Deacon High School on the construction of the 3G pitch in 2013 which allows the pitch to be used both midweek and in the evening by the community. The pitch not being available at the weekend is in breach of this agreement.

*Table 3.5: Summary of 3G pitch availability*

<b>3G</b>			
<b>Site ID</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Availability</b>
15	Grange Academy	Runcorn	The pitch is available from 17:30- 21:00 Monday to Friday. Not available at the weekend.
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	Widnes	The pitch is available from 17:00-21:30 Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 16:00 Saturday and Sunday.
46	DCBL Stadium Halton	Widnes	The pitch is available from 09:00-22:00 Monday to Friday and 10:00 to 16:30 Saturday and Sunday.
56	Wade Deacon High School	Widnes	The pitch is available from 17:30- 21:00 Monday to Friday. Not available at the weekend.

As mentioned previously, the full size pitch at DCBL Stadium Halton is considered unavailable for community use.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### Quality

It is considered that the carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately ten years and it is the age of the surface, combined with maintenance levels, which most commonly affects quality. It is therefore recommended that sinking funds be put into place by providers to enable long-term sustainability, ongoing repairs and future refurbishment beyond this period.

In Halton, the full size 3G pitches at Ormiston Chadwick Academy and DCBL Stadium Halton are currently considered to be good quality, with no issues identified following user consultation. In contrast, the pitches at Grange Academy and Wade Deacon High School are both standard quality, with some signs of wear and tear being apparent.

Table 3.6: Age and quality of full size 3G pitches

3G				
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Year installed/resurfaced	Quality
15	Grange Academy	Runcorn	2013	Standard
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	Widnes	2017	Good
46	DCBL Stadium Halton	Widnes	2019	Good
56	Wade Deacon High School	Widnes	2013	Standard

The smaller size pitch at Sandymoor School is considered to be good quality having been installed in 2019.

### Ancillary facilities

The ancillary facilities at Sandymoor School, Grange Academy and Wade Deacon High School are considered to be relatively dated and tired with both sites accommodating community, curricular and extracurricular demand. In contrast, good quality changing facilities are available at Ormiston Chadwick and DCBL Stadium Halton with no issues highlighted through consultation.

### 3.3: Demand

The majority of 3G provision currently servicing Halton is reported as operating at or close to capacity at peak times, especially during winter months. However, usage is somewhat impacted upon by a lack of availability during weekends and because two of the pitches are not approved for competitive football or rugby matches.

#### Current demand

##### Football

There is some usage of the 3G pitch at Ormiston Chadwick Academy and DCBL Stadium Halton by teams to play matches, with potential demand perceived to be much higher if availability was better. Nationally, many 3G pitches are used to accommodate matches, particularly for youth and mini football, and there is an increasing number being used to host central venue matches. This is the case in Liverpool and Cheshire West and Chester (Northwich), with numerous Halton teams exporting demand to access such provision.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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For training, accessing affordable floodlit facilities is a key issue for most clubs in the Borough, particularly those with a large number of youth and mini teams. Sand based AGPs that are heavily used for training also accommodate hockey demand and operate commercial small sided football leagues which limits availability. In addition, some teams export demand to neighbouring authorities to access full size 3G pitch provision, detailed later in this section.

In total, 21 football clubs that responded to consultation requests state a demand for additional training facilities, with all of them specifically identifying a need for increased access to 3G pitches.

### *Other sports*

The pitch at DCBL Stadium Halton is the home venue for Widnes Vikings RLFC and Halton Spartans AFC (American football), which fields all its competitive and training demand onsite. There is no known rugby union usage of 3G pitches in Halton, with no clubs reporting a demand to access such provision.

### **Key trends and changes in demand for pitches**

#### *Football*

Demand from football for 3G pitches has increased in recent years due to demand from clubs for training but also due to a growing acceptance by local leagues of use for competitive matches, where play on 3G pitches is now included within the FA Standard Code of Rules. This considered, the general condition of local authority pitches and increasingly limited budget for regular and adequate maintenance may lead more teams to consider AGPs as a possible alternative should it be financially viable.

A number of leagues around the country now use 3G pitches as central venues where all play takes place. Mini soccer leagues especially are increasingly adopting this approach either for whole seasons or a number of months throughout the winter because they can continually offer a high quality playing experience, in many cases beyond that of grass pitches which are generally of comparatively poorer quality. It also allows leagues to continue to run throughout the winter, largely unaffected by poor weather which has disrupted the football season over recent years, causing it to run into summer and clash more often with summer sports. The above trend is likely to increase in the future and more mini soccer, flexi and vets' leagues could be played exclusively on 3G pitches.

#### *Rugby union*

Given the inclement weather often experienced throughout the winter months of the rugby union season, more clubs are becoming increasingly receptive towards training on artificial pitches. Clubs traditionally train on match pitches where floodlights are in place or one pitch designated for all training in particular, unless there is a separate floodlight grass training area. It often results in deterioration in pitch quality coupled with decreasing maintenance budgets.

The recent RFU strategy on investment in 3G pitches both at club and community based sites is indicative of the growing acceptance of 3G pitches amongst clubs nationally. Nationally clubs identify the use of 3G pitches for training as a method of protecting the match pitches and providing a high quality surface for full contact practice. Competitive play continues to take place on grass pitches for the most part, with ad hoc use of 3G pitches for fixtures in the case of unsuitable pitches due to waterlogging or frost.

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### *Rugby league*

Since rugby league switched from the winter to summer season in March 2012, the majority of teams have moved towards playing in summer. The improved weather and longer daylight hours throughout the summer mean that clubs tend to train on grass pitches or areas in order to reduce additional costs of hiring facilities because they require less access to floodlighting. This often leads to overuse of match pitches by clubs which consistently train on them, especially those which have several teams and train twice a week.

Nationally, excluding professional demand from Widnes Vikings RLFC, the use of 3G pitches for rugby league typically extends to pre-season or early season training when weather is often still poor and floodlights are required. It is likely that demand for 3G pitches for training will increase in future but that teams will continue to prefer grass training provision during most months of the season when weather is forgiving.

Rugby league is still played throughout the winter in schools, colleges and universities where 3G pitches are used often for both training and matches, where certified.

### **3.4: Supply and demand analysis**

#### ***FA training scenario***

The FA considers high quality 3G pitches as an essential tool in promoting coach and player development. The FA can support intensive use and as such, pitches are great assets for both playing and training. Primarily such facilities have been installed for community use and training, however, are increasingly used for competition which The FA wholly supports.

The FA's long-term ambition is to provide every affiliated team in England the opportunity to train once per week on floodlit 3G surface, together with priority access for every Charter Standard Community Club through a partnership agreement. The FA standard is calculated by using the latest Sport England research "AGPs State of the Nation March 2012" assuming that 51% of AGP usage is by sports clubs when factoring in the number of training slots available per pitch at peak times. It is estimated that one full size AGP can service 38 teams.

Using the above methodology, the table below considers the number of full size 3G pitches required if every team was to remain training within the analysis area in which they play. The 3G requirement is rounded to the nearest whole number. However, it must be noted that the model assumes that all pitches are fully available for club use at peak time when in practice a number of pitches operate commercial small sided leagues which can reduce availability. It also projects all football teams as training on full size 3G pitches when in practice a proportion of football training demand should be retained on sand based AGPs in order to sustain the financial and commercial sustainability of these pitches.

*Table 3.7: Current demand for 3G pitches in Halton for affiliated football team training (38 teams per pitch)*

<b>3G</b>				
<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Current number of teams</b>	<b>3G requirement<sup>16</sup></b>	<b>Current number of 3G pitches</b>	<b>Current shortfall</b>
Runcorn	120	3.15 - 3	1	2
Widnes	112	2.94 - 3	3	-

<sup>16</sup> Rounded to the nearest whole number



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As seen in the table above, using the FA Training Scenario there is a theoretical current need for two additional full size 3G pitches to accommodate training demand in the Runcorn Analysis Area.

When factoring in future demand, the theoretical need for additional pitches remains unaltered, although the increase may result in the need for additional smaller sized provision to cater for the excess demand.

*Table 3.8: Future demand for 3G pitches in Halton for affiliated football team training (38 teams per pitch)*

<b>3G</b>				
<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Future number of teams</b>	<b>3G requirement<sup>17</sup></b>	<b>Current number of 3G pitches</b>	<b>Current shortfall</b>
Runcorn	130	3.42 – 3	1	2
Widnes	130	3.42 – 3	3	-

It should be noted that the above need for 3G provision in Halton is calculated on the theoretical FA Training Scenario. In actuality, dialogue with the Council, football clubs, County Football Associations and Football Foundation report a clear need to create additional full size 3G provision within the Widnes Analysis Area. This is based on the level of teams operating in the Analysis Area and the anticipated future growth from key clubs.

### 3.5: Conclusion

For football, there is an insufficient supply of full size 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated future training demand based on the FA training model. As such, it is determined that an increase in provision is required. The proceeding Strategy and Action Plan will provide an indication of where new AGPs should be located in order to best address current unmet and future demand.

In addition, increasing access to the existing supply should be sought, especially during weekends to enable more match play to transfer from grass pitches. Only one of the existing pitches is readily available on Saturdays and Sundays.

Given that the 3G pitch at the Halton Stadium is not fully available for community use, it is likely that there is some demand from community rugby league clubs to access provision for contact elements of training, if not for match play. However, a more in depth analysis for rugby league demand can be seen later in the report in Part 7: Rugby League.

For rugby union, there is no apparent demand for access to a World Rugby compliant pitch.

<sup>17</sup> Rounded to the nearest whole number

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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### **3G summary – supply and demand summary**

- ◀ There is an insufficient supply of full size 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated future demand for football in Halton in both the Runcorn and Widnes areas.
- ◀ There is limited apparent demand for access to a World Rugby or RFL compliant pitches for rugby union or rugby league.

### **3G summary – supply summary**

- ◀ There are four full size 3G pitches in Halton: three in Widnes and one in Runcorn.
- ◀ In addition, there is one smaller sized floodlit 3G pitch at Sandymoor School (measuring 88x56 metres).
- ◀ Despite being available to the community, the pitches at Grange Academy, Wade Deacon High School and Sandymoor School are unavailable at weekends.
- ◀ All community available full size 3G pitches in Halton are managed internally at education sties.
- ◀ The majority of 3G provision currently servicing Halton is reported as operating at or close to capacity at peak times, especially during winter months.

### **3G summary – quality summary**

- ◀ Two of the full size 3G pitches are good quality (DCBS Stadium Halton and Ormiston Chadwick Academy), with the remaining two pitches rated as standard quality.
- ◀ The full size 3G pitches at DCBL Stadium Halton and Ormiston Chadwick Academy are both FIFA certified.
- ◀ The pitch at DCBL Stadium Halton is World Rugby compliant



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### PART 4: CRICKET

#### 4.1: Introduction

Cheshire Cricket serves as the main governing and representative body for cricket across Halton as both of the clubs in the Authority (Runcorn CC and Widnes CC) affiliate to them. Its aim is to promote the game at all levels through partnerships with professional and recreational cricketing clubs, and other appropriate agencies.

For reference Lancashire Cricket Foundation has historically provided support for Birchfield Park CC (now exported out of Halton) and Moorfield CC (now folded), however, this was until the county of Lancashire restructured approximately 10 years ago.

The ECB's refreshed strategy called 'Inspiring Generations' was announced in January 2019 and is further detailed within Appendix One: Sporting Context.

It should be noted that due to the Covid-19 Pandemic the decision has been made to utilise 2019 demand data to inform this section of the report in order to give an accurate representation for the analysis of the sport across Halton. The Pandemic and subsequent lockdown/social distancing measures meant that the cricket season in 2020 was truncated with a reduced numbers of matches taking place. In addition, ECB initiative Dynamos did not take place whereas All Stars did, however, at reduce capacity level due to Covid imposed restrictions. Where identified through consultation, 2020 information will be referenced as relevant and for comparison purposes.

#### **Consultation**

There are two cricket clubs playing in Halton; Widnes CC and Runcorn CC. Both responded to an online survey, resulting in an 100% response rate.

#### 4.2: Supply

There are two grass wicket squares in Halton located across two sites: Runcorn Sports Club and Widnes Cricket Club. Each lies within its respective analysis area, with the former hosting 13 wickets and the latter hosting 15.

*Table 4.1: Summary of grass wicket squares*

<b>Cricket</b>	
<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>No. of grass squares</b>
Widnes	1
Runcorn	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>

#### **Lapsed/disused provision**

Playing fields which have previously accommodated formal pitch provision are categorised as either disused or lapsed. A disused site is a playing field which is not being used at all by any users and is not available for community hire either. Once these sites are disused for five or more years they will then be categorised as 'lapsed sites'.

As mentioned, a lapsed site was as a playing field more than five years ago. These fall outside of Sport England's statutory remit but still have to be assessed using the criteria in paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Sport England would nonetheless challenge a proposed loss of playing pitches/playing field which fails to meet such criteria.

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There has previously been a grass square with six wickets maintained at Birchfield Sports and Social Club; however, this was not provided by the owners of the site for the 2020 season. Birchfield Park CC formerly utilised the facility but has since relocated to play friendly fixtures at Northern Cricket Club in the authority of Sefton.

Similarly, until 2016, there was a grass square with six wickets at Moorfield Sports & Social Club. This was the home venue for Moorfield CC before the club folded in the same year. Anecdotal evidence suggests there is an aspiration for this piece of playing field land to be sold for housing, however, to date (December 2020), no official planning application has been submitted.

### *ECB Ball Strike*

Where there is either new cricket provision being put in place, or more commonly where there is a development which may prejudice the use of an existing cricket facility, there is a requirement for a full ball strike risk assessment to be undertaken and appropriate mitigation put in place as part of the development. As such, the ECB recommends that the clubs and organisations seek to have a ball strike risk assessment undertaken; further information can be provided by the ECB.

### **Non-turf pitches (NTPs)**

The ECB highlights that NTPs which follow its TS6 guidance on performance standards are suitable for high level, senior play and are considered able to take 60 matches per season, although this may include training sessions via the use of mobile nets.

In Halton, there is just one NTP accompanying a grass wicket square. This is at Widnes Cricket Club. In addition, there is one standalone NTP located at Cronton Sixth Form College albeit this is poor quality and considered disused by the College.

*Table 4.2: Summary of cricket pitches*

Cricket						
Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Community use?	No. of squares	No. of wickets	
					grass	non-turf
44	Runcorn Sports Club	Runcorn	Yes	1	13	-
61	Widnes Cricket Club	Widnes	Yes	1	15	1

### **Security of tenure**

Both clubs have secure tenure with Widnes CC having a freehold at Widnes Cricket Club and Runcorn CC having recently obtained a new long-term lease (30 years) at Runcorn Sports Club.

### **Pitch quality**

As part of the PPS guidance, there are three levels to assessing the quality of cricket pitches: good, standard and poor. Maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of cricket; if the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous.

The non-technical assessment of grass wicket squares in Halton found both squares to be good quality, with no significant issues identified.

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Table 4.3: Quality ratings for grass wicket squares (site by site)

Cricket				
Site ID	Site	Analysis area	No. of squares	Square quality
44	Runcorn Sports Club	Runcorn	1	Good
61	Widnes Cricket Club	Widnes	1	Good

Widnes CC reports that its square has improved in quality over the previous three seasons due to a new groundsman creating better wickets. In comparison, Runcorn CC reports that its square is good quality despite there being an issue with a steep incline.

To obtain a full technical assessment of wicket and pitches, the ECB recommends a Performance Quality Standard (PQS) assessment. The PQS looks at a cricket square to ascertain whether the pitch meets the Performance Quality Standards, which are benchmarked by the Institute of Groundsman.

Table 4.4: Performance Quality Standard ratings

Cricket	
Quality rating	Details
Premier (High)	Where the surface is intended for Premier League play, with those within the top quartile capable of holding minor county and 1st class one day matches. May include some of the better schools and university pitches
Club (Standard)	A Club pitch suitable for league, school and junior cricket
Basic	An acceptable level suitable for recreational cricket and where the surface is designed and maintained within tight financial limitations such as local authorities
Unsuitable	This is where the surface is deemed unfit or unsafe for play

Clubs can contact the ECB to arrange for a pitch advisor to complete three different reports (comprehensive/mini/verbal) that vary in cost. A fully comprehensive report includes soil testing and guidance on machinery and corrective procedures, a mini report includes guidance on machinery and corrective procedures and a verbal report is a spoken version of a mini report.

### Ancillary facilities

The audit of ancillary facilities determines that both sites currently accessed for affiliated cricket in Halton are accompanied by good quality changing rooms.

Table 4.5: Changing room quality

Cricket				
Site ID	Site	Analysis area	No. of squares	Changing room quality
44	Runcorn Sports Club	Runcorn	1	Good
61	Widnes Cricket Club	Widnes	1	Good

Widnes CC reports no particular issues regarding the quality of its clubhouse, although it indicates that during the Covid-19 Lockdown imposed across the Country in 2020, its facilities have experienced some minimal vandalism.

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It should be noted that Runcorn CC indicates a desire to replace/reconfigure its changing room space to become more accommodating to its growing women and girls participation.

### *Training facilities*

Access to cricket nets is important, particularly for pre-season/winter training. Both sites used by affiliated cricket clubs in Halton are serviced by fixed bay practice nets, these being Runcorn Sports Club and Widnes Cricket Club. Despite this, both clubs indicate a need for additional training facilities, with Widnes CC suggesting that its grass netting area would benefit from some fencing and new grass practice nets. The Club also reports that its practice facilities are utilised, on occasion, by Birchfield Park CC (please see the exported demand section).

Runcorn CC reports a need for a NTP to accompany its grass square in addition to a mobile netting cage. The Club also reports that it has to travel outside of Halton to access suitable indoor provision to use throughout the winter. It ideally would prefer for this to remain onsite or at a minimum within the Borough.

### **4.3: Demand**

There are two cricket clubs playing in Halton: Runcorn CC and Widnes CC. In 2019, each club fielded three senior men's teams and six junior boys' teams generating a combined total of 18 teams. As referenced above, these are the figures which will be considered for the supply and demand analysis below as these teams played a full compliment of league, cup and friendly fixtures.

By means of comparison, during the truncated 2020 season, both clubs fielded the same number of teams. However, Runcorn CC had a reduction of two junior boys' teams that was offset by the development of one junior girls' team and one senior women's team.

*Table 4.6: Summary of teams*

<b>Cricket</b>					
<b>Club name</b>	<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>No. of competitive teams</b>			
		<b>Senior men's</b>	<b>Senior women's</b>	<b>Junior boys'</b>	<b>Junior girls'</b>
<b>2019</b>					
Runcorn Sports Club	Runcorn	3	-	6	-
Widnes Cricket Club	Widnes	3	-	6	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>2020</b>					
Runcorn Sports Club	Runcorn	3	1	4	1
Widnes Cricket Club	Widnes	3	-	6	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>

### *Exported demand*

Displaced or exported demand refers to Halton based teams that are currently accessing facilities outside of the local authority for their home fixtures, normally because their pitch requirements cannot be met. This is usually because of a lack of access to squares, in some cases quality issues, or stipulated league requirements for access to a certain standard of provision.

As previously mentioned, Birchfield Park CC previously accessed a square at Birchfield Sports & Social Club; however, for the past couple of seasons this has not been maintained by the

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Social Club, leading to the Club relocating to Northern Cricket Club in Sefton. That being said, the Club still utilises practice facilities within Halton at Widnes Cricket Club.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Widnes CC is keen to explore a merger with Birchfield CC, or at a minimum a player share, although this has stalled recently due to the ongoing Pandemic.

### ***Imported demand***

Imported demand refers to any demand from neighbouring local authorities that accesses facilities within Halton due to a lack of available facilities in other local authorities where such team or club is based. There is no known imported demand into the Borough.

### ***Future demand***

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts.

In addition, the ECB has recently announced new five-year media rights deals, from 2020-2024. The new deals include a continuation of the ECB relationship with Sky Sports, now extending beyond broadcasting as a genuine partnership to secure significant investment and commitment to increase participation and drive engagement. Together, significant investment in participation and increased free to air media coverage could see future demand increase to levels in excess of those anticipated through the PPS and the impact should therefore be reviewed over coming years. This being said, it is unknown if the Covid-19 pandemic will affect this.

### ***Participation increases***

Widnes CC reports aspirations to increase its levels of participation by one senior men's team and two junior teams. In comparison, Runcorn CC reports aspirations for one additional senior men's and one additional senior women's team.

### ***Population forecasts***

Team generation rates are used overleaf as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future (2037) based on population growth. Both 2019 and 2020 demand data are analysed.

*Table 4.7: Boroughwide Team generation rates*

<b>Cricket</b>						
<b>Age group</b>	<b>Current population within age group (2018)</b>	<b>Current no. of teams</b>	<b>Team Generation Rate<sup>18</sup></b>	<b>Future population within age group (2037)</b>	<b>Predicted future number of teams</b>	<b>Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population</b>
<b>2019</b>						
Senior Men's (18-55)	30,042	6	1:5,007	28,674	5.7	0
Senior Women's (18-55)	31,404	0	0	29,793	0	0
Junior Boys (7-18)	9,655	12	1:805	9,534	11.8	0
Junior Girls (7-18)	9,402	0	0	8,775	0	0

<sup>18</sup> Please note TGR figures are rounded to the lowest whole number.

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2020						
Senior Men's (18-55)	30,042	6	1:5,007	28,674	5.7	0
Senior Women's (18-55)	31,404	1	1:31,404	29,793	0.9	0
Junior Boys (7-18)	9,655	10	1:966	9,534	9.9	0
Junior Girls (7-18)	9,402	1	1:9,402	8,775	0.9	0

Using both sets of demand data there is no anticipated team increases from population growth across Halton.

Although no women and girls' teams are predicted to be created via population growth alone, consultation with the ECB suggests that further development of female cricket in the Borough is likely as it is currently a national priority to increase women and girls participation.

Widnes CC indicates a desire to run a junior girl's section and is open to the possibility of a joint venture with Runcorn CC until demand is of a sufficient levels to operate teams within each respective club.

It is important to acknowledge that whilst application of team generation rates project team growth as a factor of population and existing teams, there are plans and strategies to increase the number of teams at some formats beyond what current trends suggest.

### *All Stars Cricket*

In partnership with the ECB and Chance to Shine cricket clubs in Halton can register to become an ECB All Stars Cricket Centre. Once registered, a club can deliver the programme which aims to introduce cricket to children aged from five to eight. Subsequently, this may lead to increased interest and demand for junior cricket at clubs. The programme seeks to achieve the following aims:

- ◀ Increase cricket activity for five to eight year olds in the school and club environment
- ◀ Develop consistency of message in both settings to aid transition
- ◀ Improve generic movement skills for children, using cricket as the vehicle
- ◀ Make it easier for new volunteers to support and deliver in the club environment
- ◀ Use fun small sided games to enthuse new children and volunteers to follow and play the game

Both clubs operated All Stars programmes in 2019 and anticipate re-establishing them in the 2021 season. It should be noted that Runcorn CC did in fact run a successful All Stars initiative in 2020 although with reduce levels of participation due to capacity limits imposed through Covid regulations.

### *Dynamos cricket*

A key development area for the ECB in delivering on the outcomes of 'Inspiring Generations' will be the Dynamos Cricket programme for 8-11 year olds which originally aimed to launch in 2020. It plans on building on the significant growth of the All Stars Cricket programme for 5-8 year olds established in 2017 and will develop the pathway to retain juniors progressing from All Stars Cricket into Dynamos Cricket.

Where All Stars Cricket seeks to engage children in cricket activity and learning the skills, Dynamos Cricket seeks to engage children in learning how to play, introducing a modified soft ball format as competitive progression with a view to eventual transition through to hardball cricket. The programme will be strongly linked to The Hundred, a new short format competition which also aimed to launch in 2020 (pre-Covid).



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Dynamos cricket activity will generally take place midweek to coincide with junior training sessions. Similarly, to All Stars, both clubs are anticipated to run it in 2021.

### *Softball cricket*

Softball cricket is an ECB initiative aimed at women and girls to increase participation in cricket as a sport. The aim of softball cricket sections is enjoyment and participation, without pads, a hardball, a heavy bat and limited rules. Sessions are played on the outfield and follow a festival format with each session running for a maximum of two and half hours, shorter than traditional formats.

In Halton, Runcorn CC has recently developed women's and girls' teams in the 2020 season with anecdotal evidence suggesting that it will continue to develop this demand in 2021. Cheshire Cricket may encourage Widnes CC to partner with Runcorn CC to increase women's and girls' participation across Halton if the Club cannot commit to supplying its own demand.

It should be noted that All Stars, Dynamos and Softball cricket generally takes place on the cricket outfields rather than the actual squares. Although this does not impact the carrying capacity of the square it does influence the accessibility of the squares as whilst the outfield is in use the main square cannot be used to accommodate fixtures. Therefore, this may limit the potential spare capacity whilst these activities are taking place, generally on midweek evenings or Sunday mornings.

### *Future demand summary*

Using the above information, in cohesion with the supply and demand analysis below, the following teams will be brought forward as future demand.

- ◀ Widnes Analysis Area – One senior men's, one senior women's and two junior teams (one boys and one girls)
- ◀ Runcorn Analysis Area - One senior men's, one senior women's and one junior girls team

This is a mixture between club aspirational demand and the anticipated demand growth in women's and girls' cricket through ECB initiatives.

Please note the future demand of one senior women's team in the Runcorn Analysis Area has not been included as the clubs has seen this growth between the 2019 and 2020 season.

The potential impact on current and future demand due to Covid-19 will be run in greater detail, as a scenario, in the proceeding Strategy & Action Plan.

### ***Peak time demand***

An analysis of match play identifies peak time demand for cricket in Halton as Saturday PM for senior men's, Sunday PM for senior women and Midweek for junior teams.

For junior cricket, peak time demand varies between Sundays and midweek, with clubs generally arranging the fixtures to best suit their needs. As a result, squares have greater capacity to carry junior demand as play can be spread across numerous days (providing the squares are not overplayed).

### **4.4: Capacity analysis**

Capacity analysis for cricket is measured on a seasonal rather than a weekly basis. This is due to playability (as only one match is generally played per pitch per day at weekends or

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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weekday evening) and because wickets are rotated throughout the season to reduce wear and tear and to allow for repair.

The capacity of a square to accommodate matches is driven by the number and quality of wickets. This section of the report presents the current pitch stock available for cricket and illustrates the number of competitive matches per season per square.

For good quality squares, capacity is considered to be five matches per wicket per season, whilst for a standard quality square, capacity is four matches per wicket per season. For poor quality squares, no capacity is considered to exist as such provision is not safe for play.

The number of matches played by each team has been derived from consultation with the clubs. Where consultation was not possible, the assumption has been made that all senior teams play between ten and 12 home matches per year and all junior teams play between four and eight matches per year depending on their age and level of competition.

The above is used to allocate capacity ratings as follows:

<b>Potential capacity</b>	Play is below the level the site could sustain
<b>At capacity</b>	Play matches the level the site can sustain
<b>Overused</b>	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

Please note that non-turf wickets have been discounted from the table overleaf. No non-turf wicket squares are recorded as accommodating more than 60 matches per season; therefore, all non-turf wickets are considered to have spare capacity. This translates to actual spare capacity for junior cricket as peak time is midweek, whereby non-turf wickets are more commonly used and matches can be played on a variety of days.

The capacity analysis assumes that all clubs rotate their wickets evenly. However, this may not be the case at all sites, with central wickets potentially used more commonly than outer wickets that are closer to a boundary, especially for senior matches. The idea is to showcase what the capacity is or could be if best practice is followed for the whole square, rather than doing it on a wicket-by-wicket basis.



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Table 4.8: Capacity of cricket squares (2019 demand)

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Com use?	Security of tenure	No. of squares	Pitch quality	No. of grass wickets	Capacity (sessions per season)	Actual play (sessions per season)	Capacity rating (sessions per season)	Potential spare capacity for senior cricket? (Saturday PM)	Potential spare capacity for senior cricket? (Sunday PM)	Potential spare capacity for junior cricket?
44	Runcorn Sports Club	Runcorn	Yes	Secure	1	Good	13	65	49	16	No	Yes	Yes
61	Widnes Cricket Club	Widnes	Yes	Secure	1	Good	15	75	47	28	No	Yes	Yes

It should be noted that even if 2020 demand data were to be used, on the basis that all teams played a full competitive season, there would be little change to the above table. In fact, the only difference would be that the current capacity rating at Runcorn Sports Club would reduce from 16 match equivalent sessions per season to eight match equivalent sessions per season.

Spare capacity is shown in the Capacity ratings (sessions per season) column as this is overall spare capacity on the square across the entire season. This, however, does not mean there is spare capacity at certain peak times. For example, there is no spare capacity at Saturday PM although there is spare capacity at Sunday PM. This is explained in greater detail below.

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### 4.5: Supply and demand analysis

Consideration must be given to the extent to which provision can accommodate current and future demand. As discussed above, the current overview of cricket across Halton includes the following future demand:

- ◀ Widnes Analysis Area – One senior men’s, one senior women’s and two junior teams (one boys and one girls)
- ◀ Runcorn Analysis Area - One senior men’s and one junior girls team

This is a mixture between club aspirational demand and the anticipated demand growth in women’s and girls’ cricket through ECB initiatives.

It should be noted that future demand of teams will affect the following peak times capacity; senior men’s (Saturday PM) senior women’s (Sunday PM) and junior (Midweek) as this is generally when these team would play.

Match equivalent sessions for future demand are based on the estimated average number of matches played per season by the respective team type (14 matches for senior men’s, eight matches for senior women’s matches and four matches for junior girls).

#### **Senior cricket capacity balance (Saturday PM)**

The below looks at actual spare capacity during the peak period (Saturday PM) for senior cricket against overplay.

*Table 4.9: Capacity balance of grass cricket squares for senior cricket*

<b>Cricket</b>					
<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Actual spare capacity (match sessions per season)</b>	<b>Demand (match sessions per season)</b>			
		<b>Overplay</b>	<b>Current total</b>	<b>Future demand</b>	<b>Future total</b>
Runcorn	-	-		14	14
Widnes	-	-		14	14
<b>Total</b>	-	-		<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>

Analysis suggests that senior peak time (Saturday PM) cricket is currently operating at capacity across the Borough. As such, any future growth in senior men’s cricket, teams would either need to play in a Sunday or midweek league. Alternatively, any future demand on a Saturday PM would need to access an alternative suitable venue.

With the only cricket squares in Halton currently played to capacity on a Saturday, this means that any future growth at peak time would require the creation or reinstatement of provision, or demand would have to export.

It should be noted that if any future senior men’s teams are established, playing either on a Sunday PM or Midweek, this would reduce potential spare capacity for women’s or junior future demand.

#### **Senior cricket capacity balance (Sunday PM)**

The table below looks at actual spare capacity on Sunday PM for cricket against overplay and identified future demand. For this, as actual spare capacity exists, please note that it is converted from the number of squares to match equivalent sessions. This is calculated by

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

using the average number of matches played per season by senior teams (eight) multiplied by the number of additional teams that can be fielded at peak time (one team per 0.5 squares that are available). The entirety of spare capacity available at each site is not used as this number of matches may not be able to be accommodated at peak time (the maximum amount of spare capacity that can be accommodated on one square at peak time is 16 match equivalent sessions per season).

Table 4.10: Capacity balance of grass cricket squares for Sunday PM

Cricket					
Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Demand (match sessions per season)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Future total
Runcorn	8	-	8	8	
Widnes	8	-	8	8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	-	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	

With each square already used by one team on a Sunday, there is capacity to accommodate one additional team each. Therefore, the potential future demand of one women's team within each Analysis Area could be accommodated; however, this would mean each square would then be played to capacity.

### Junior cricket capacity balance

The table below looks at actual spare capacity during the peak period (midweek) for junior cricket. For this, actual spare capacity equates to the total spare capacity at each available site or, if it is lower, the total number of additional junior teams that could be fielded on each available square (on the assumption that one square can accommodate six midweek teams playing home and away) multiplied by four (the average number of matches a junior team plays). This is because additional demand at peak time is not limited to one day.

Table 4.11: Capacity balance of grass cricket squares for junior cricket

Cricket					
Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Demand (match sessions per season)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Future total
Runcorn	-	-		4	4
Widnes	-	-		8	8
<b>Total</b>	-	-		<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>

Each club operates six junior teams' midweek which means there is no actual spare capacity to accommodate any further demand at peak time, in addition to any anticipated All Star and Dynamos cricket demand. Therefore, similar to Saturday peak time demand, analysis suggests that junior peak time cricket is currently operating at capacity across the Borough.

It should be noted that additional capacity could be created with the installation or greater utilisation of an NTP. Alternatively, some junior demand could relocate to Saturday or Sunday mornings. Scenarios on potential options to accommodate future demand will be explored in detail in the proceeding Strategy & Action Plan.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### Cricket –supply and demand summary

- ◀ Using 2019 demand data, cricket in Halton is currently played to capacity for Saturday PM and midweek cricket. In comparison there is spare capacity to accommodate one additional team on each square on Sunday PM.
- ◀ Therefore, future demand can not currently be accommodated on a Saturday PM or midweek. This being said summer junior (softball) fixtures can be played on the outfield so there could be capacity midweek to accommodate U9s games simultaneously.

### Cricket – supply summary

- ◀ There are two active grass wicket squares in Halton located across two sites: Runcorn Sports Club and Widnes Cricket Club.
- ◀ There have been previous grass squares maintained at Birchfield Sports and Social Club and Moorfields Sports and Social Club. Both are now disused.
- ◀ In Halton, there is just one NTP that accompanies the grass wicket square at Widnes Cricket Club (Good quality), in addition to one standalone NTP located at Cronton Sixth Form College (Poor quality).
- ◀ Both clubs have secure tenure with Widnes CC having a freehold at Widnes Cricket Club and Runcorn CC having recently obtained a new long term lease (30 years) at Runcorn Sports Club.
- ◀ The non-technical assessment of grass wicket squares in Halton found both squares to be good quality.
- ◀ The audit of ancillary facilities determines that both sites currently accessed for affiliated cricket in Halton are accompanied by good quality changing rooms.
- ◀ Both sites used by affiliated cricket clubs in Halton are serviced by fixed bay practice nets, these being Runcorn Sports Club and Widnes Cricket Club. Despite this each club indicates a need for additional training facilities.

### Cricket– demand summary

- ◀ There are two cricket clubs playing in Halton: Runcorn CC and Widnes CC. In 2019 each club fielded three senior men's teams and six junior boys' teams generating a total of 18 teams.
- ◀ In comparison, during the truncated 2020 season, both clubs fielded the same number of teams, however, Runcorn CC had a reduction of two junior boys' teams but developed one junior girls' team and one senior women's team.
- ◀ Widnes CC reports aspirations to increase its levels of participation by one senior men's team and two junior teams. In comparison Runcorn CC reports aspirations for one senior mens and one senior women's team

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### PART 5: RUGBY UNION

#### 5.1: Introduction

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is split into six areas across the country with a workforce team that covers development, coaching, governance and competitions. A Rugby Development Officer (RDO) and a team of community rugby coaches deliver core programmes in schools and clubs within the Halton area.

Its variety of programmes, which include 15 aside, 10 aside, 7 aside, Tag and the O2 Touch programme, all aim to increase and retain participation within the game. In order to sustain and increase participation, facilities need to be appropriate, affordable and accessible.

#### **Consultation**

There are three clubs currently playing within Halton: Birchfield RUFC, Moore RUFC and Widnes RUFC. All three clubs were met with face-to-face, resulting in a 100% response rate.

#### 5.2: Supply

Within Halton there are seven rugby union pitches across four sites. All of the pitches are of senior size (as opposed to junior or mini) and all are available for community use.

Of the seven pitches, five are located in Widnes, with only the two pitches (at Moore RUFC) located in Runcorn.

The audit only identifies dedicated, line marked pitches. However, it is common for junior and mini matches to be played on senior pitches via the use of cones and this is the case across Halton. For rugby union pitch dimension sizes please see the table below.

Table 5.1: Pitch dimensions

Rugby union		
Age	Pitch type	Maximum pitch dimensions (metres) <sup>19</sup>
U7	Mini	20 x 12
U8	Mini	45 x 22
U9	Mini	60 x 30
U10	Mini	60 x 35
U11	Mini	60 x 43
U12	Mini	60 x 43
U13	Junior	90 x 60 (60 x 43 for girls)
U14 +	Senior	100 x 70 <sup>20</sup>

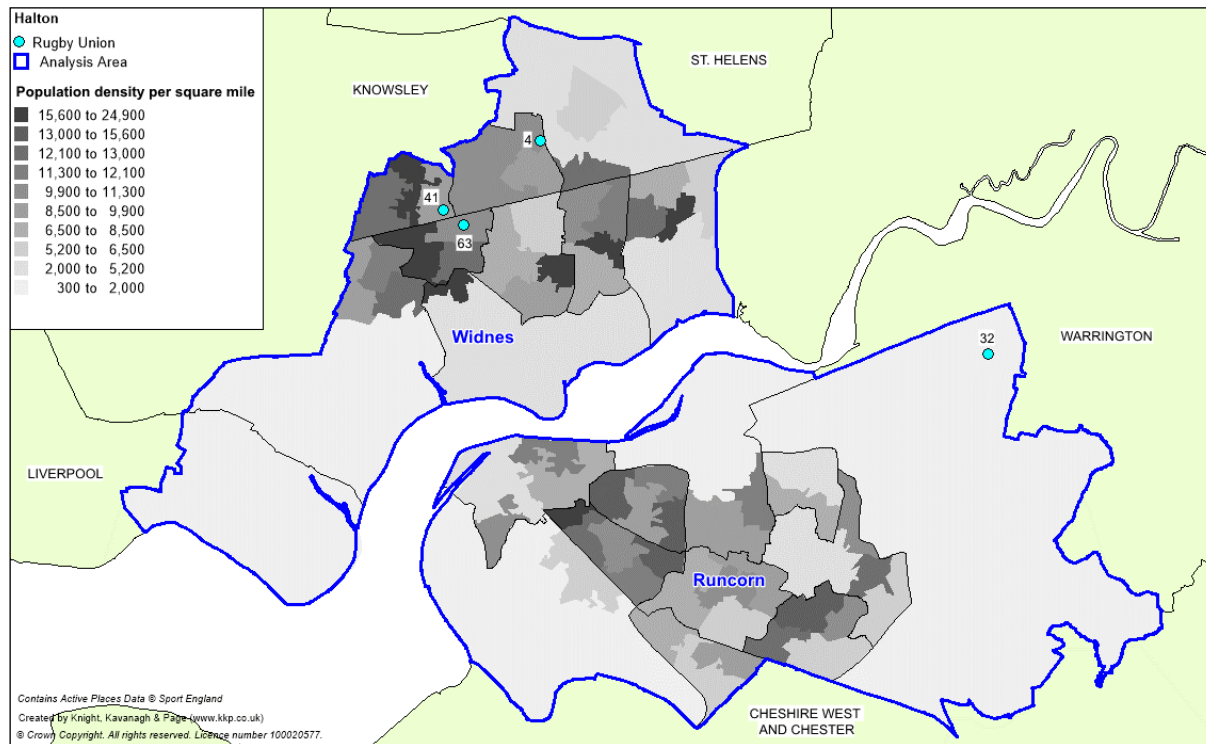
Figure 5.1 identifies the location of the rugby union pitches. For a key to the map, see Table 5.5.

<sup>19</sup> Recommended run off area for all pitch types requires five-metres each way and a minimum in-goal length of six metres.

<sup>20</sup> Minimum dimensions of 94 x 68 metres are accepted.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Figure 5.1: Location of rugby union pitches within Halton



### **Lapsed/disused pitches**

No rugby union pitches are identified as lapsed or disused in Halton.

### **Security of tenure**

Birchfield RUFC rents the pitch at Birchfield Sports and Social Club on an annual basis although the site has recently been purchased by new owners. The Club does not know what the new owners have planned for the site. As such, the existing agreement is determined to be unsecure.

Both Moore and Widnes rugby clubs own their respective home venues. The former has a freehold at Moore RUFC, whereas the latter owns both Widnes RUFC and a parcel of land which contains two pitches at Prescott Road Playing Fields. The remaining area of land at Prescott Road Playing Fields is split between private ownership and owned by the local authority.

### **Pitch quality**

The assessment of rugby pitch quality looks at two key elements: the maintenance programme and the level of drainage on each pitch. An overall quality based on both drainage and maintenance can then be generated. The agreed rating for each pitch type also represents actions required to improve pitch quality.

A breakdown of actions required based on the ratings can be seen in the tables overleaf.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 5.2: Definition of maintenance categories

Rugby union	
Category	Definition
M0	Action is significant improvements to maintenance programme
M1	Action is minor improvements to maintenance programme
M2	Action is no improvements to maintenance programme

Table 5.3: Definition of drainage categories

Rugby union	
Category	Definition
D0	Action is pipe drainage system is needed on pitch
D1	Action is pipe drainage is needed on pitch
D2	Action is slit drainage is needed on pitch
D3	No action is needed on pitch drainage

Table 5.4: Quality ratings based on maintenance and drainage scores

Rugby union				
		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	Poor	Poor	Standard
	Natural Adequate (D1)	Poor	Standard	Good
	Pipe Drained (D2)	Standard	Standard	Good
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	Standard	Good	Good

The figures are based upon a pipe drained system at 5m centres that has been installed in the last eight years and a slit drained system at 1m centres that has been installed in the last five years.

Of the community available pitches in Halton, four are assessed as standard quality and three as poor quality. No pitches are assessed as good quality.

The single pitch at Birchfield Sports and Social Club is assessed as poor quality. It is maintained to a basic level, with cutting and line marking undertaken by Birchfield RUFC. The Club reports that the pitch drains adequately, despite no system being in place.

The pitches at Widnes RUFC are verti-drained, fertilised and reseeded four times per season and chain harrowed in the off-season, in addition to regular grass cutting and line marking. The first team pitch on site naturally drains well whilst the second pitch has pipe drainage installed on account of it being newly established. That being said, a nearby housing development has disrupted the system, causing significant waterlogging issues.

In contrast, the pitches on Prescott Road Playing Fields are only maintained to a basic level by Widnes RUFC as it can not fully access the site with its maintenance equipment. Both suffer from poor drainage and have no system in place.

The pitches at Moore RUFC are maintained to a relatively high level by the Club. The first team pitch on site has pipe drainage installed whilst the second team pitch drains adequately without a system. Both are assessed as standard quality.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 5.5: Site quality ratings

Rugby union								
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Number of pitches	Pitch type	Floodlit?	Non-technical assessment score	Quality rating
4	Birchfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Yes	1	Senior	No	M0/D1	Poor
32	Moore RUFC	Runcorn	Yes	1	Senior	Yes	M1/D1	Standard
32	Moore RUFC	Runcorn	Yes	1	Senior	No	M1/D2	Standard
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Widnes	Yes	1	Senior	Yes	M0/D0	Poor
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Widnes	Yes	1	Senior	No	M0/D0	Poor
63	Widnes RUFC	Widnes	Yes	1	Senior	Yes	M1/D2	Standard
63	Widnes RUFC	Widnes	Yes	1	Senior	No	M1/D1	Standard



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### ***Ancillary facilities***

The quality of ancillary facilities at Widnes RUFC is good although the car park is reported to be in need of resurfacing. Similarly, Moore RUFC indicates that ancillary facilities are of good quality at its site although the Club states that its clubhouse needs expanding in order to accommodate planned establishment of mini, junior and female sections. The Club also hopes to improve the showers and the boiler.

Ancillary facilities at Birchfield Sports and Social Club are deemed to be of adequate quality with no specific issues highlighted through consultation. Birchfield RUFC states anecdotally the new owners are looking to provide a new block of changing rooms on site but have seen no evidence regarding this at the time of writing.

Additionally, Widnes RUFC hire Council owned facilities at Prescott Road Playing Fields on Sunday mornings to accommodate its junior demand.

### **5.3: Demand**

#### ***Competitive play***

There are three community rugby union clubs based in Halton, providing a total of 15 teams. Broken down, this equates to six senior men's, one senior women's, five junior boys and three mini teams. The largest club in the Borough is Widnes RUFC which fields 11 teams (73% of the Borough's demand), whereas Birchfield and Moore rugby clubs currently only field senior teams.

*Table 5.6: Summary of club demand*

<b>Rugby union</b>				
<b>Club</b>	<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>No. of rugby union teams</b>		
		<b>Senior (19+)</b>	<b>Junior (13-18)</b>	<b>Mini (6-12)</b>
Birchfield RUFC	Widnes	1	-	-
Moore RUFC	Runcorn	3	-	-
Widnes RUFC	Widnes	3	5	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>

It should be noted that one of the senior teams at Moore RUFC is a women's team which trains and plays in friendly fixtures. As it trains on a regular basis it has been included in the above mentioned demand.

The team started to play competitive fixtures partially through the 2019/20 season with it aspiring to make it a dedicated competitive team for the 2020/21 season.

#### ***Training***

Throughout the Country, many rugby teams train at their home ground on match pitches. As a result, usage is concentrated which reduces the capacity for match play on these pitches and means they are more likely to be overplayed. A key factor in determining the extent of training on match pitches is the presence of floodlighting.

In Halton, Birchfield RUFC utilises a small floodlit training area on site, separate to its match pitch, which accommodates all of the Club's training demand. Widnes RUFC also reports that it has a floodlit training area on site, although its new pitch is also utilised for 1 training session per week.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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Moore RUFC trains across both of its match pitches. This equates to 3.5 match equivalent sessions a week.

### *Use of artificial pitches*

The alternative to training on grass pitches is the use of 3G pitches. World Rugby produced the 'Performance Specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby', more commonly known as 'Regulation 22' that provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union. A World Rugby compliant pitch also enables the transfer of match demand from grass pitches onto 3G pitches, which alleviates overplay of grass pitches and as a result protects quality.

Nationally, clubs identify the use of 3G pitches for training as a method of protecting the match pitches and providing a high quality surface for full contact practice. Competitive play continues to take place on grass pitches for the most part, with ad hoc use of 3G pitches for fixtures in the case of unsuitable pitches due to waterlogging or frost. Further detail on use of 3G pitches can be found in Part 3 of this report.

### ***Exported demand***

Displaced or exported demand refers to Halton based teams that are currently accessing pitches outside of the local authority for their home fixtures, normally because their pitch requirements cannot be met, which is usually because of pitch supply, in some cases quality issues or stipulated league requirements for access to certain facilities. There is no known exported demand outside of the Borough.

### ***Imported demand***

Imported demand refers to any demand from neighbouring local authorities that accesses facilities within the Halton study area due to a lack of available facilities in other local authorities where such team or club is based. There is no known imported demand into the Borough.

### ***Future demand***

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts.

The proceeding Strategy & Action Plan document will contain housing growth scenarios that will estimate the additional demand for rugby union arising from housing developments within Halton.

### *Population increases*

Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth (2037).

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Table 5.7: Team generation rates (2037)

Rugby union						
Age group	Current population within age group (2018)	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group (2037)	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Mens (19-45)	20,427	6	1:3,405	19,879	5.8	0
Senior Womens (19-45)	21,555	1	1:21,555	20,462	0.9	0
Junior Boys (13-18)	4,458	5	1:892	4,854	5.4	0
Junior Girls (13-18)	4,366	0	0	4,487	0.0	0
Mini Mixed (7-12)	10,233	3	1:3,411	2,271	0.7	0

As seen in the table above, no additional rugby union teams are expected to be generated in Halton through population growth alone. However, both Widnes RUFC and Moore RUFC report aspirations to increase their team numbers.

### *Participation increases*

Widnes RUFC indicates an aspiration to add another mini team for the 2020/21 season. This will be fielded at U7 age level.

As mentioned previously, Moore RUFC plans on fielding a senior women's team from next season. The Club also aspires to add mini and junior teams although it did not specify potential team numbers. It reports that clubhouse enhancements are required to satisfy its growth plans.

### ***The peak period***

In order to fully establish actual spare capacity, the peak period needs to be established for all types of rugby. For senior teams, it is considered to be Saturday PM as all senior men's teams play at this time. Peak time for mini and junior rugby is Sunday AM.

## **5.4: Capacity analysis**

The capacity for pitches to regularly accommodate competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of playing rugby. In extreme circumstances, it can result in the inability of a pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.

To enable an accurate supply and demand assessment of rugby pitches, the following assumptions are applied to site by site analysis:

- ◀ All sites that are used for competitive rugby matches (regardless of whether this is secured community use) are included on the supply side.
- ◀ All competitive play is on senior sized pitches (except for where mini pitches are provided).
- ◀ From U13 upwards, teams play 15 v 15 and use a full pitch.
- ◀ Mini teams (U6-U12) play on half of a senior pitch i.e. two teams per senior pitch or a dedicated mini pitch.

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- ◀ For senior and youth teams the current level of play per week is set at 0.5 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis (assumes half of matches will be played away).
- ◀ For mini teams playing on a senior pitch, play per week is set at 0.25 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis and playing across half of one senior pitch.
- ◀ Senior men's rugby generally takes place on Saturday afternoons.
- ◀ Senior women's rugby generally takes place on Sunday afternoons.
- ◀ Junior rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings.
- ◀ Mini rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings.
- ◀ Training that takes place on club pitches is reflected by the addition of match equivalent sessions to current usage levels.

As a guide, the RFU has set a standard number of matches that each pitch should be able to accommodate, set out below.

*Table 5.8: Pitch capacity (matches per week) based on quality assessments*

Rugby union				
		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2
	Natural Adequate or Pipe Drained (D1)	1.5	2	3
	Pipe Drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2	3	3.5

Capacity is based upon a basic assessment of the drainage system and maintenance programme ascertained through a combination of the quality assessment and consultation. This guide, however, is only a very general measure of potential pitch capacity. It does not account for specific circumstances at time of use and it assumes average rainfall and an appropriate end of season rest and renovation programme.

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 5.9: Capacity table for rugby pitches in Halton

Rugby union													
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Number of pitches	Pitch type	Quality rating	Floodlit?	Non-tech score	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Training equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Comments
4	Birchfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Yes	1	Senior	Poor	No	M0 / D1	0.5		1.5	1	One poor quality mini pitch which is utilised for match play by Birchfield RUFC.
32	Moore RUFC	Runcorn	Yes	1	Senior	Standard	Yes	M1 / D1	0.5	2	2	0.5	One standard quality senior pitch which is overplayed due to training demand from Moore RUFC.
32	Moore RUFC	Runcorn	Yes	1	Senior	Standard	No	M1 / D2	0.5	1.5	2.5	0.5	One standard quality senior pitch which has minimal spare capacity through match play and residual training demand.
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Widnes	Yes	1	Senior	Poor	Yes	M0 / D0	0.5	-	0.5		Two poor quality senior pitches that are used on an ad-hoc basis by Widnes RUFC.
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Widnes	Yes	1	Senior	Poor	No	M0 / D0	0.5	-	0.5		
63	Widnes RUFC	Widnes	Yes	1	Senior	Standard	No	M1 / D1	1.5	-	2	0.5	One standard quality senior pitch that is has minimal spare capacity through match play by Widnes RUFC.
63	Widnes RUFC	Widnes	Yes	1	Senior	Standard	Yes	M1 / D2	2.25	1	1.5 <sup>21</sup>	1.75	One standard quality senior pitch that is overplayed due to match play and training demand from Widnes RUFC.

<sup>21</sup> Even though the pitch is rated as M1/D2 which has a capacity of 2.5 match equivalent sessions, its capacity has been altered due to aforementioned drainage issues to M1/D0 which has a capacity of 1.5 match equivalent sessions.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### 5.4: Supply and demand analysis

Having considered supply and demand, the table below identifies the overall spare capacity in each of the analysis areas for rugby union pitches based on match equivalent sessions per week. Future demand is based on both team generation rates, which are driven by population increases, as well as reported club development plans.

Table 5.10: Summary of supply and demand balance on rugby union pitches

Rugby union					
Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>22</sup>	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand <sup>23</sup>	Future total
Runcorn	-	0.5	0.5	1	1.5
Widnes	-	1.75	1.75	0.25	2
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>2.25</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>1.25</b>	<b>3.5</b>

Overall, there is a current minimal shortfall of 2.25 match equivalent sessions per week on senior rugby union pitches to meet current demand across Halton. This is further exacerbated when considering future demand, resulting in a future shortfall of 3.5 match equivalent sessions. Current and future shortfalls are evident in both Runcorn and Widnes.

#### Spare capacity

There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

Furthermore, any pitches that are used to capacity at peak time, that are poor quality or that provide unsecure tenure are not considered to have actual spare capacity. As such, the table below ascertains whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be used to accommodate an increase in senior play.

Table 5.11: Summary of actual spare capacity

Rugby union						
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Number of pitches	Potential capacity	Actual spare capacity	Comments
4	Birchfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	1	1	-	Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality and unsecure tenure.
32	Moore RUFC	Runcorn	1	0.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity discounted as it will make the pitch played to capacity.

<sup>22</sup> In match equivalent sessions per week

<sup>23</sup> Anticipated future junior demand is represented as 0.5 MES on a senior pitch whereas anticipated mini future demand is represented as 0.25 MES on a senior pitch.

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Rugby union						
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Number of pitches	Potential capacity	Actual spare capacity	Comments
63	Widnes RUFC	Widnes	1	0.5	-	Pitch is played to capacity at peak time.

There are three sites which display potential spare capacity to accommodate additional play in Halton totalling two match equivalent sessions; however, there is no actual spare capacity.

For mini and junior rugby, the programming of matches can be unclear with regards to ascertaining spare capacity, especially at peak time as it varies from week to week. Junior rugby sections tend to play regular matches as part of a league format, whereas, minis play organised friendly fixtures. Clubs organise a number of their mini age groups to play those from another club at once either at home or away. Teams will generally hold training sessions instead on the weeks that mini / junior sections do not have a fixture event arranged. This means that mini/junior sections require use of all home pitches for two or three mornings a month but may play an away fixture one week meaning none of the pitches are used that particular morning.

### Overplay

There are two pitches across two sites in Halton which are overplayed by a total of 2.25 match equivalent sessions per week. One pitch at Moore RUFC is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions, whilst a pitch at Widnes RUFC is overplayed by 1.75 match equivalent sessions.

Table 5.12: Summary of supply and demand balance on senior rugby union pitches

Rugby union					
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	Number of pitches	Overplay (match equivalent sessions per week)
32	Moore RUFC	Runcorn	Senior	1	0.5
63	Widnes RUFC	Widnes	Senior	1	1.75
<b>Total</b>				<b>2</b>	<b>2.25</b>

Both overplayed pitches are used to accommodate training demand as well as match play demand.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### Rugby union – supply and demand summary

- ◀ Overall, there is a current shortfall of 2.25 match equivalent sessions per week on senior rugby union pitches to meet current demand.
- ◀ When considering future demand, there is shortfall of 3.5 match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ There are 3 sites which display potential spare capacity to accommodate additional play; however, in practice no pitches have actual spare capacity.
- ◀ There are 2 pitches across 2 sites in Halton which are overplayed by a total of 2.25 match equivalent sessions per week. One pitch at Moore RUFC is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions, whilst a pitch at Widnes RUFC is overplayed by 1.75 match equivalent sessions.

### Rugby union – supply summary

- ◀ Within Halton there are 7 rugby union pitches across 4 sites, all of which are senior size and available for community use.
- ◀ Moore and Widnes rugby clubs own their respective home venues whilst Widnes RUFC also has a freehold of pitches at Prescot Road Playing Fields.
- ◀ Birchfield RUFC is considered to have unsecure tenure at Birchfield Sports and Social Club as it only has an annual rental agreement in place; the site is recently under new ownership.
- ◀ Of the community available pitches in Halton, 4 are assessed as standard quality and 3 as poor quality; no pitches are assessed as good quality.
- ◀ Moore and Widnes rugby clubs are serviced by good quality ancillary provision although Widnes RUFC indicates that the car park is in need of resurfacing, whilst Moore RUFC reports that it requires expanded facilities to accommodate planned mini, junior and women's growth.
- ◀ Ancillary facilities servicing Birchfield RUFC are deemed to be of adequate quality.

### Rugby union – demand summary

- ◀ There are three community rugby union clubs based in Halton, providing a total of 15 teams.
- ◀ All three clubs are serviced by some form of floodlit provision, whether that be a match pitch or dedicated training area, to accommodate training demand.



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### PART 6: HOCKEY

#### 6.1: Introduction

Competitive league hockey matches and training can only be played on sand filled, sand dressed or water based artificial grass pitches (AGPs). Although competitive, adult and junior club training cannot take place on third generation turf pitches (3G), 40mm pitches may be suitable at introductory level, such as school curriculum low level hockey. EH's Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy details suitability of surface type for varying levels of hockey, as shown below.

Table 6.1: England Hockey guidelines on artificial surface types suitable for hockey

<b>Hockey</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>Surface</b>	<b>Playing Level</b>	<b>Playing Level</b>
England Hockey Category 1	Water surface approved within the FIH Global/National Parameters	<b>Essential</b> International Hockey - Training and matches	<b>Desirable</b> Domestic National Premier competition Higher levels of EH Player Pathway Performance Centres and upwards England
England Hockey Category 2	Sand dressed surfaces within the FIH National Parameter	<b>Essential</b> Domestic National Premier competition Higher levels of player pathway: Academy Centres and Upwards	<b>Desirable</b> All adult and junior League Hockey Intermediate or advanced School Hockey EH competitions for clubs and schools (excluding domestic national league)
England Hockey Category 3	Sand based surfaces within the FIH National Parameter	<b>Essential</b> All adult and junior club training and league Hockey EH competitions for clubs and schools Intermediate or advanced schools hockey	<b>Desirable</b>
England Hockey Category 4	All 3G surfaces	<b>Essential</b> None	<b>Desirable</b> Lower level hockey (Introductory level) when no category 1-3 surface is available.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

In addition to the above pitch types England Hockey reports it is currently trialling a different multi sport surface in order to better accommodate lower levels of hockey demand and other sports such as netball and tennis. The surface type known as Gen 2<sup>24</sup> is a versatile surface that will ensure sports do not need to compromise on the playing experience. It will be a sand dressed synthetic turf with a compatible shock pad. The concept is designed to provide facilities, including schools, with a dynamic surface which reduces the amount of space required and utilised provision to full potential.

For senior teams, a full sized pitch for competitive matches must measure at least 91.4 x 55 metres excluding surrounding run off areas which must be a minimum of two metres at the sides & three metres at the ends. England Hockey preference is for four metre side and five metre end run offs, with a preferred overall area of 101.4 x 63 metres though a minimum overall area of 97.4 x 59 metres is accepted.

It is considered that a hockey pitch can accommodate a maximum of four matches on one day (peak time) provided that the pitch has floodlighting. Training is generally midweek and requires access to a pitch and floodlights.

### **Consultation**

There is a single hockey club identified as playing with Halton; Runcorn HC. The Club was consulted with during a face-to-face meeting, resulting in a 100% response rate.

### **6.2: Supply**

The audit identifies two hockey suitable AGPs in Halton. Both are full size, floodlit, available for community use and located in Runcorn.

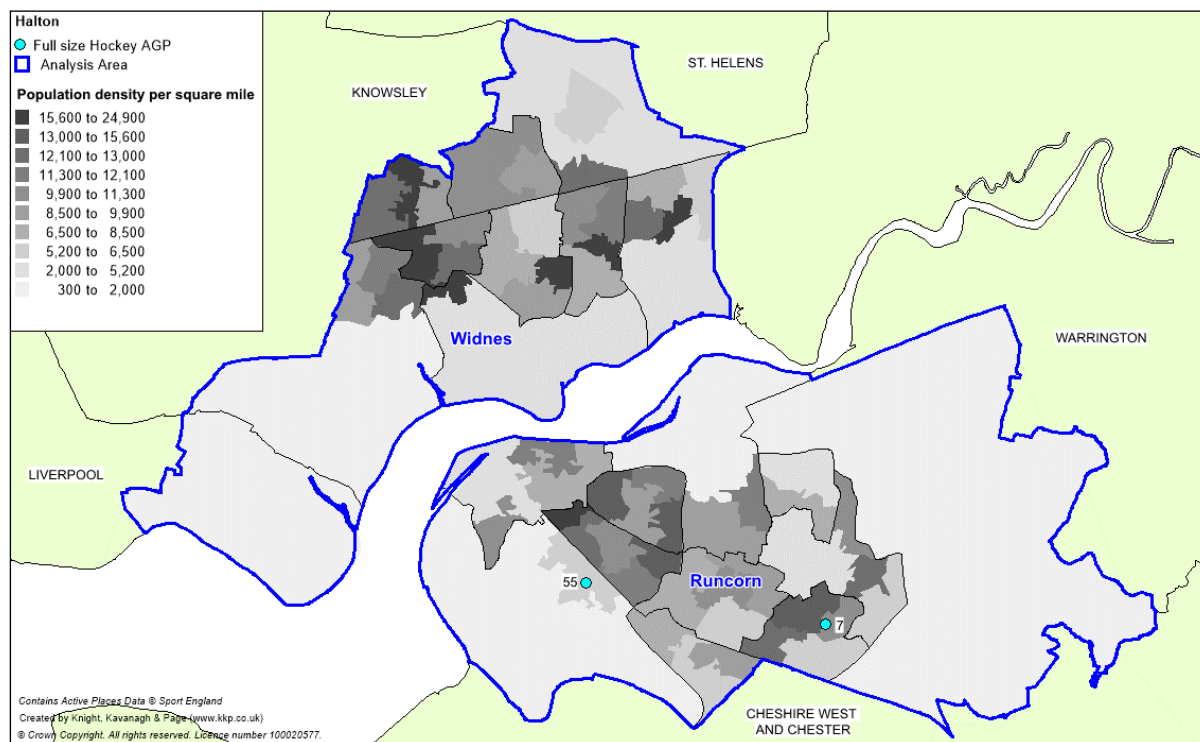
*Table 6.2: Full size hockey suitable pitches in Halton*

<b>Hockey</b>					
<b>Site ID</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Community use?</b>	<b>Floodlit?</b>	<b>Size (metres)</b>
7	Brookvale Recreation Centre	Runcorn	Yes	Yes	100x60
55	The Heath School	Runcorn	Yes	Yes	100x60

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.englishhockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=2596&sectionTitle=Gen+2+Playing+Surface>

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Figure 6.1: Location of full size hockey suitable AGPs in Halton



### Future developments

Recent dialogue between the Council, England Hockey and Football Foundation suggests there is potential to convert the hockey suitable AGP at Brookvale Recreation Centre to a 3G surface in order to accommodate the shortfall in the Runcorn Analysis Area, however, due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic the timeframe for a decision regarding this is currently unknown.

#### Conversion to 3G surfaces

Since the introduction of 3G pitches and given their popularity for football, providers have seen this as a way to replace a worn sand or water based carpet and generate increased revenue from hiring out a 3G pitch to football and rugby clubs and commercial football providers. This has often come at the expense of hockey, with players now travelling further distances to gain access to a suitable pitch and many teams consequently displaced from their preferred local authority.

Due to its potential to impact on hockey, it is appropriate to ensure that sufficient sand based AGPs are retained for the playing development of hockey. To that end, a change of surface may require planning permission and the applicants will need to show that there is sufficient provision available for hockey in the locality. Advice from Sport England and EH should also be sought prior to any planning application being submitted.

It should also be noted that, if the surface type is changed, it could require the existing floodlighting to be changed and in some instances noise attenuation measures may need to be put in place. Conversion to a 3G surface will likely require a size increase; along with floodlighting improvements, the addition of a shock pad, fencing and noise attenuation.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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A 3G surface is limited in the range of sport that can be played or taught on it. Providers proposing a conversion should take advice from the appropriate sports' governing bodies and refer to Sport England guidance, in particular 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface': <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/outdoor-surfaces>

### ***Management and security of tenure***

The AGP located at Brookvale Recreation Centre is managed by the Council, whilst the pitch at the Heath School is managed internally by the School which is in turn sub contracted to School Lettings Solutions (SLS).

Runcorn HC currently rents the pitch at the Heath School on an annual basis. As there is no long-term agreement in place for the Club's usage, tenure on site is considered to be unsecure.

The pitch at Brookvale Recreation Centre is currently unused for hockey.

### ***Availability***

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) applies an overall peak period for AGPs of 34 hours per week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00).

At the Heath School, the AGP is reserved for curricular use from 09:00-17:00 Monday to Friday, before opening to the community from 17:00 to 21:00. At weekends the pitch is available to the community from 08:00–21:30. Therefore, the pitch is available for the full 34 hours per week of peak period.

The AGP at Brookvale Recreation Centre is reserved for private use from 09:00–16:00 before opening to the community from 16:00–21:30. At weekends, the pitch is available to the community from 08:00-20:00. As such, it is also available for the full 34 hours per week.

### ***Quality***

Depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately ten years and it is the age of the surface, together with maintenance levels, that most commonly affects quality. An issue for hockey nationally is that many providers did not financially plan to replace the carpet when first installed.

Both full size hockey suitable pitches in Halton are considered to be poor quality in addition to being over their recommended lifespan. The pitch at The Heath School was built in 2005 and has not been resurfaced since its construction, although it has been deep cleaned in January 2019. Similarly, the AGP at Brookvale Recreation Centre is poor quality having not been resurfaced since construction in 2003 and following heavy usage from the community.

### ***Ancillary provision***

Runcorn HC reports that it is able to access external changing facilities at the Heath School which are of good quality. In addition, the Club utilises a clubhouse at Runcorn Sports Club as its home base. It utilises this for post-match refreshments.

Changing facilities are also available at Brookvale Recreation Centre, with no issues raised through consultation albeit they are not currently used by hockey clubs.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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### **6.3: Demand**

As mentioned previously, Runcorn HC is the only identified hockey club in Halton. It fields three senior men's, two senior women's and two junior teams. The senior men's and women's teams play on Saturdays whilst the junior teams play or train on Sundays. Senior training takes place on Tuesday evenings. All activity takes place at the Heath School.

It is reported by the Club that pitch quality at the Heath School is restricting the Club's growth. Ideally, the Club would like to play at Runcorn Sports Club and therefore holds an aspiration for a suitable pitch to be established.

#### ***Participation trends***

Runcorn HC reports that membership has increased considerably over the last three years at all levels. However, the Club is now concerned that pitch quality is restricting any further growth, as well as reporting that capacity is becoming an issue.

#### ***Future demand***

Growing participation is a key aim within England Hockey's Strategic Plan and key drivers include working with clubs, universities and schools, working with regional and local leagues, developing opportunities for over 40s and delivering a quality programme of competition. Overall, it has an aim to double participation over the next ten years.

Runcorn HC is in the process of putting together a hockey development plan which entails increasing the Club's membership base although this was not quantified in terms of team numbers.

The proceeding Strategy & Action Plan document will contain housing growth scenarios that will estimate the additional demand for hockey arising from housing development in Halton.

#### ***Latent demand***

Latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision.

As mentioned previously, Runcorn HC believes that pitch quality at the Heath School is restricting the Club growing any further. However, it has not been turning players away suggesting limited latent demand at this time.

#### ***Imported demand***

Imported demand refers to any demand from neighbouring local authorities that accesses facilities within Halton due to a lack of available facilities in other local authorities where such team or club is based.

There is currently occasional use of the pitch at the Heath School from Warrington HC. The Club, which is based in the neighbouring borough of Warrington, normally utilises provision at Priestley College. England Hockey (EH) indicates it can not access this site outside of school term time and therefore has to import partial training and competitive demand into Halton. EH reports it is trying to resolve this issue.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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### ***Exported demand***

Exported demand refers to teams that are currently accessing provision for home fixtures outside of Halton, despite being from the Borough. Previously, Runcorn HC has exported demand to Chester due to the quality issues at the Heath School, although this is only occasional.

### ***Hockey Heroes***

Hockey Heroes is a six-week hockey programme aimed at beginners (children aged five to eight) that not only focuses on helping children develop some physical hockey skills such as dribbling, passing and goal scoring, but also places as much emphasis on character development including teamwork, communication, perseverance and respect.

There are currently no Hockey Heroes courses operating in or around Halton. This being said Runcorn HC plans to start the initiative in the 2020/21 season.

### ***Back to Hockey***

Back to Hockey sessions are fun, social and informal and are aimed at people who either have not played for a number of years or that are looking to play for the first time. They are generally hosted by clubs, with EH providing guidance on how to deliver the programme. Benefits of clubs being involved include:

- ◀ More members
- ◀ More casual players
- ◀ Additional income
- ◀ Extra publicity
- ◀ New volunteers

Runcorn HC operates Back to Hockey sessions at the Heath School on Friday evenings throughout the Summer.

### ***Peak time demand***

For matches, all senior hockey activity in Halton takes place on a Saturday, whereas junior activity occurs on a Sunday. For training, peak time is midweek evenings, although preference is generally given for Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. As mentioned previously, Runcorn HC currently trains on Tuesday evenings.

## **6.4: Supply and demand analysis**

### ***Match play***

The PPS Guidance suggests that a floodlit pitch is able to accommodate four match equivalent sessions on a Saturday. With teams playing on a home and away format, this equates to one AGP being able to cater for eight 'home' teams. One team requires 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week on its 'home' AGP.

Based on the above information, with Runcorn HC fielding five senior teams at peak time, there is a need for one full size hockey suitable AGP to accommodate current demand. As such, with two pitches currently available, supply is deemed sufficient. However, to ensure this remains the case, quality improvements are urgently needed, particularly in relation to the pitch at the Heath School given current usage levels.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

For junior hockey, the provision of one full size AGP is also considered sufficient to accommodate match play demand. This is because there are fewer junior teams and because there is no conflict with senior demand with matches mostly being played on a Sunday. Furthermore, some of the younger aged participants only require half of a pitch, meaning multiple matches can be played at the same time should demand increase to a point where that becomes necessary.

If quality improvements are not possible in relation to the pitches at Heath School and/or Brookvale Recreation Centre, consideration must go towards the creation of an additional pitch i.e. at Runcorn Sports Club.

### ***Training***

Runcorn HC reports no issues with fielding its training demand on the one pitch at the Heath School. As such, current supply is also deemed to be sufficient to meet demand for training, subject to quality improvements taking place.

#### **Hockey – supply and demand summary**

- ◀ There is a need for one full size hockey suitable AGP to accommodate current and future demand. This being said this may alter when taking into consideration housing growth scenarios in the proceeding Strategy & Action Plan document.
- ◀ In order to adequately meet demand, there is a priority need to improve the poor quality pitch at the Heath School.

#### **Hockey – supply summary**

- ◀ There are two full size hockey suitable AGPs in Halton (at the Heath School and Brookvale Recreation Centre), both located in Runcorn.
- ◀ Both hockey suitable pitches are considered to be of poor quality with each pitch over its recommended lifespan (ten years).
- ◀ The pitch at the Heath School is accessed for club hockey (by Runcorn HC), whereas the pitch at Brookvale Recreation Centre is unused for the sport.
- ◀ The AGP located at Brookvale Recreation Centre is managed by the Council, whilst the pitch at the Heath School is managed internally by the School which is in turn sub contracted to School Lettings Solutions (SLS).

#### **Hockey – demand summary**

- ◀ Runcorn HC aspires to play at Runcorn Sports Club, where it already accesses clubhouse facilities on site; it believes that pitch quality at the Heath School is restricting the Club growing any further.
- ◀ There is partial imported demand from Warrington HC to the Heath School.
- ◀ The Club fields three senior men's, two senior women's and two junior teams.
- ◀ It states that issues with pitch quality at the Heath School have previously meant that the Club has had to export demand to Chester.
- ◀ Back to Hockey sessions are operated by Runcorn HC at the Heath School throughout the Summer.



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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### PART 7: RUGBY LEAGUE

#### 7.1: Introduction

The Rugby Football League (RFL) is the governing body for rugby league in England. It administers the England national rugby league team, the Challenge Cup, Super League and the championships which form the professional and semi-professional structure of the game in the UK. The RFL also administers the amateur and junior game across the country in association with the British Amateur Rugby League Association (BARLA).

Most community club rugby league is now played throughout the summer season (from February to October). However, rugby league is considered as a winter season sport within schools, colleges and universities and therefore pitch provision for matches and training is required throughout the winter months.

Senior rugby league is played on a field measuring 100 x 68 metres. The preferred pitch size for u7s, u8s and u9s is 60 x 40 metres, whereas for u10s and u11s it is 80 x 30 metres. U12s and above generally play on senior pitches. Teams from u7s to u11s are known as primary teams, with teams from u12s to u18s known as junior teams.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all rugby league matches and training sessions were cancelled throughout summer 2020. This meant that very few matches were played in relation to the normal summer season, whilst the final fixtures of the North West Counties Men's League and North West Counties Junior League were played in March 2020. As such, similar to approach for cricket, this section of the report utilises 2019 demand data in order to give a more accurate representation for the analysis of rugby league across Halton.

#### **Consultation**

There are six community clubs playing in Halton which are:

- ◀ Halton Farnworth ARLFC
- ◀ Halton Simms Cross ARLFC
- ◀ Runcorn ARLFC
- ◀ West Bank Bears ARLFC
- ◀ Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC
- ◀ Widnes St Maries ARLFC

All of these clubs were sent an online survey with all of them responding resulting in a 100% response rate.

In addition, there is one semi-professional club in the Borough, Widnes Vikings ARLFC, which compete in the Betfred Championship. These are not considered to form part of this study due to the level they play at although they are referenced throughout.

#### 7.2: Supply

Nationally, most rugby league pitches are classified as being senior sized, with cones used to mark out pitches for primary and junior teams. However, there may be instances (particularly on school sites and large club sites) where designated junior or primary pitches are provided.

In Halton, the audit identifies a total of 21 grass rugby league pitches (13 senior and eight junior) across nine sites. All but one of these pitches (a senior pitch at Ormiston Chadwick Academy) are available for community use.



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The large majority of community available provision (95% or 19 pitches) are located in the Widnes Analysis Area. The remaining community pitch is located at Runcorn Heath Playing Field (Runcorn Analysis Area).

### ***Disused/lapsed provision***

Playing fields which have previously accommodated formal pitch provision are categorised as being either disused or lapsed. A disused site is a playing field which is not being used at all by any users and is not available for community hire either. Once these sites are disused for five or more years, they will then be categorised as lapsed sites. Whilst lapsed sites fall outside of Sport England's statutory remit, they are still assessed using the criteria in paragraph 97 of the NPPF and Sport England would still challenge a proposed loss of playing pitches/playing field which fails to meet such criteria.

Whilst there are no disused or lapsed rugby league sites in Halton (as all sites that previously provided rugby league pitches are still in sporting use), there are two that previously hosted provision that no longer do so having been reconfigured to accommodate other sports. This relates to Parklands Sports Club and Leigh Recreation Playing Fields.

Until 2018, Parklands Sports Club accommodated one senior rugby league pitch which was previously the home site for Widnes St Maries ARLFC. The Club reports that it has recently had to relocate to Moorfield Sports and Social Club as the operators at Parklands Sports Club indicated that it would no longer be maintaining rugby league provision on the site. The area of playing field land is now utilised as an adult football pitch.

Leigh Recreation Playing Fields previously accommodated one senior rugby league pitch (*circa 2012*); however, the site is now solely used for football. That being said, there is potential to reinstate the pitch if required based on levels of demand and the reconfiguration of pitch types at other Council sites.

There was also a rugby league pitch located at Widnes RUFC, however, after Widnes St Maries ARLFC relocated to Moorfields Sports and Social Club, the pitch began to be utilised by Widnes RUFC for rugby union.

### ***Ownership/management***

Site ownership is varied between clubs renting a site from a wider sports club (or a sports and social club) and clubs which rent or lease pitches from the Council. Tenure of sites in Halton is considered secure if a club has a long-term lease or there is a guarantee that pitches will continue to be provided over the next three years.

*Table 7.1: Summary of security of tenure*

<b>Rugby league</b>					
<b>Site ID</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Analysis Area</b>	<b>Club</b>	<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Comments</b>
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	Halton Simms Cross ARLFC	<b>Unsecure</b>	Rent from Halton Borough Council
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC	<b>Unsecure</b>	Rented from Sports and Social Club
			Widnes St Maries ARLFC	<b>Unsecure</b>	Rented from Sports and Social Club
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	Runcorn ARLFC	<b>Unsecure</b>	Rent from Halton Borough Council

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Rugby league					
Site ID	Site Name	Analysis Area	Club	Tenure	Comments
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC	Secure	Leased from Halton Borough Council
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Widnes	West Bank Bears ARLFC	Secure	Leased from Halton Borough Council

Halton Simms Cross ARLFC and Runcorn ARLFC rent provision from the Council and are considered to have unsecure tenure at their existing sites. This is due to the clubs having to hire a pitch on an annual basis with pitch allocations subject to change based on site reconfiguration, site works or changes in management. Therefore, whilst the clubs may always be guaranteed access to a pitch, it may not necessarily be at their current sites of King George V Playing Fields and Runcorn Heath Playing Fields.

As mentioned in Part 2: Football, Widnes FC has plans to obtain a long-term lease/freehold at King George V Playing Fields in order to develop a suitable Step football facility. If this progresses, anecdotal evidence suggests the current rugby league pitch would relocate to either Leigh Recreation Playing Fields or Frank Myler Pavilion. Nevertheless, it should be noted that due to current circumstances (Covid-19 restrictions) this is on hold. Halton Simms Cross ARLFC reports that it would want to remain at King George V Playing Fields moving forward.

Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC and Widnes St Maries ARLFC are also considered to have unsecure tenure as they rent their provision from Moorfield Sports and Social Club. Anecdotal evidence suggests there is an aspiration for this piece of playing field land to be sold for housing, however, to date (December 2020), no official planning application has been submitted.

In comparison, both Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC and West Bank Bears ARLFC are considered to have secure tenure as both clubs have a long-term lease to use Wilmere Lane Playing Fields and Ted Gleave Sports Ground, respectively.

### **Pitch quality**

Non-technical site assessments were carried out for all rugby league pitches in the Borough and assessed as one of three categories, 'good', 'standard' or 'poor'. Carrying capacity of a pitch is dependent upon the quality of a pitch which is outlined below:

*Table 7.2: Summary of quality and carrying capacity for rugby league pitches*

Rugby league	
Category	Capacity
Good	3 matches per week
Standard	2 matches per week
Poor	1 match per week

The table below summarises pitch quality following the site visits to all pitches (including those not available for community use).

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Table 7.3: Summary of pitch quality

Rugby league					
Site Id	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch size	Number of pitches	Quality
9	Cronton Sixth Form College	Widnes	Senior	1	Standard
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	Senior	1	Standard
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Junior	2	Poor
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Senior	2	Poor
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	Widnes	Senior	1	Poor
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	Senior	1	Poor
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Widnes	Senior	2	Standard
56	Wade Deacon High School	Widnes	Senior	3	Poor
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Senior	1	Standard
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Junior	5	Standard
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Widnes	Senior	1	Standard
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Widnes	Junior	1	Standard

In Halton, 57% (12) of all pitches are of standard quality with the remaining 43% rated as poor (nine pitches). There are no good quality pitches in the Borough.

West Bank Bears ARLFC signifies that the pitches at Ted Gleave Sports Ground generally get overused through competitive and training demand resulting in them having bare patches and the playing surface becoming damaged. This, in turn, can lead to the pitches becoming hard in periods of hot weather.

Widnes Moorfields Tigers ARLFC reports that the pitches at Moorfield Sports and Social Club are poor quality with particular concern in relation to waterlogging. Additionally, the Club indicates that pitch playing surface can become damaged throughout the winter due to them being used for football.

Comparatively the pitches at Ormiston Chadwick Academy, Runcorn Heath Playing Fields and Wade Deacon High School are all rated as poor quality due to evidence of litter, inadequate lengths of grass and issues with pitches being uneven or having a moderate slope. Additionally, each of these pitches have limited amounts of maintenance carried out, with no in depth works taking place, mainly due to cost implications.

### **Ancillary facilities**

Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC is the only club through consultation that indicates issues with ancillary provision. It reports that the facilities at Moorfields Sports and Social Club are poor quality because of vandalism to the roof and building within the last year.

All remaining ancillary provision accessed by rugby league clubs is either standard or good quality, with no further issues detailed during the assessment or consultation process.

### **7.3: Demand**

Demand for rugby league pitches in Borough tends to fall within the categories of organised competitive play and organised training.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### **Competitive play**

There is a total of 42 competitive rugby league teams playing in Borough, including the three teams from semi professional club Widnes Vikings ARLFC. There are three one team clubs consisting of Widnes St Maries ARLFC which fields an u14s boys' team and both Runcorn ARLFC and Halton Simms Cross ARLFC which field a senior men's team.

Comparatively, the three remaining clubs each accommodate multiple mini, junior and senior teams with Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC being the largest club in Halton with 18 teams. This is then followed by West Bank Bears ARLFC with nine teams and Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC with eight teams.

*Table 7.4: Summary of demand by analysis area*

<b>Rugby league</b>				
<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>No. of competitive rugby league teams</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>Senior</b>	<b>Junior</b>	<b>Primary</b>	
<b>Runcorn</b>	1	-	-	<b>1</b>
<b>Widnes</b>	7	14	20	<b>41</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>42</b>

The majority of demand is based in the Widnes Analysis Area where there are 41 teams (98%). This corresponds with the analysis area also accommodating the majority of rugby league provision (95%).

Clubs that responded to consultation were asked whether there had been a change in the number of teams over the previous three years.

In regard to the number of senior teams, West Banks Bears ARLFC and Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC report a growth in the number of teams they field. The latter Club reports it has seen a growth due to its recent merger with Widnes Tigers ARLFC. In comparison Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC reports a decrease in teams at this age group because of declining memberships. All remaining clubs indicate the number of senior teams they accommodate has remained the same.

Only one club, West Bank Bears ARLFC, reports a growth in a number junior teams within the previous three years. All other clubs indicate their number of junior teams have stayed the same within in the same time period.

Finally, Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC and Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC each report an increase in participation at a mini age group with all remaining clubs indicating their participation at this age range has remained the same within the last three years.

The highest increase in teams is seen at primary and senior level, with exactly a third (33%) of clubs reporting an increase over the last three years compared to 17% of clubs reporting an increase in junior teams. No Clubs state that there has been a decrease in primary or junior teams. Trends for participation at senior level indicate demand has remained reasonably static with reported increases somewhat balanced by reported decreases.

### **Training**

Winter rugby league training is accommodated across a combination of AGPs, indoor sports halls and gyms. Little training takes place on competitive pitches in the winter as few clubs have floodlit facilities. However, since the transition to a summer season, clubs tend to train

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

on match pitches when extended daylight hours allow, eliminating the need for access to floodlighting. Many clubs attempt to train on grass areas around the perimeter of pitches to reduce impact on surface quality, but in practice a significant proportion of training takes place on the competitive pitches.

The training processes for the clubs in Halton is detailed in Table 7.6 overleaf.

### 7.5: Summary of training demand

<b>Rugby league</b>				
<b>Club</b>	<b>Site ID</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>Training provision</b>	<b>Usage MES<sup>25</sup></b>
Halton Farnworth ARLFC	46	DCBL Stadium Halton	3G	Unknown
	65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Grass rugby league	5
Halton Simms Cross ARLFC	27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Grass rugby league	1
Runcorn ARLFC	43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Grass rugby league	0.5
West Bank Bears ARLFC	70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Floodlit grass rugby league	3.25
Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC	34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Grass rugby league	2.5
Widnes St Maries ARLFC	34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Grass rugby league	0.5

As seen, all six of the clubs utilise some form of grass pitch provision, which is likely to impact significantly on the carrying capacity of these pitches for matches. This is reflected through consultation with the clubs, with many revealing high demand for additional floodlit grass pitches in order to take usage away from existing pitches that are also needed for matches. A number of clubs report making use of smaller sized AGPs for training outside of the summer months due to a lack of other floodlit grass facilities.

There is a RFL Community Standard 3G pitch in Halton at DCBL Stadium Halton. This is utilised by Halton Farnworth ARLFC in addition to use of a grass pitch. More information regarding 3G provision is detailed in Part 3: Third Generation Turf (3G) Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs).

#### **Widnes Vikings ARLFC**

As mentioned, Widnes Vikings ARLFC is a semi professional club operating within Halton. The Club has a tenant's agreement with the Council which covers specific areas of the DCBL Stadium Halton for training and match days for its three teams (1<sup>st</sup> Men's, Reserves and Academy). Additional details, such as times of use, are subject to change by an operational group. It should be noted that this is a relatively new agreement and reflects the clubs move into the Championship from Superleague

Details surrounding DCBL Stadium Halton and its provision can be found in greater detail in Part 3: Third Generation Turf (3G) Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs).

<sup>25</sup> Match equivalent sessions (MES)

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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### *Vikings Sports Foundation*

In addition to its competitive demand, Widnes Vikings ARLFC also utilises the 3G pitch at the DCBL Stadium Halton for a number of programmes run through its charity, Vikings Sports Foundation. The Vikings Sports Foundation has been set up as the affiliated charity of Widnes Vikings ARLFC with a goal, alongside key partners from the public, private and third sector, to engage, educate and inspire the local community to bring about positive change and new opportunities for all through rugby league.

The charity offers a number of opportunities to the people from the local community, which includes a monthly Dementia Support event, to represent Widnes Vikings as part of the Learning Disability Rugby League team and delivery of sports sessions to Primary and Secondary School children across the Borough.

There are also a number of educational programmes aimed at helping young people who are out of work and education to regain their confidence, learn valuable skills to use when applying for jobs and become more employable thanks to the Vikings Learning Centre.

More information regarding the Vikings Sports Foundation and multiple community programmes can be found at <https://widnesvikings.co.uk/education/>

### ***Latent demand***

Latent demand refers to potential demand; individuals who would like to participate within the sport but do not do so. This can be for a variety of reasons including a lack of pitches or appropriate facilities.

Of the six community clubs within Halton, two (Halton Farnworth ARLFC and West Bank Bear ARLFC) report that they would be able to have more teams if they had access to more pitches. Halton Farnworth ARLFC reports that it would look to start a youth set up if it had access to more provision whereas West Bank Bears ARLFC indicates that it would be able to continue its yearly organic growth in addition to potentially starting a dedicated girls section.

### ***Displaced/exported demand***

Displaced or exported demand refers to Halton based teams that are currently accessing pitches outside of the local authority for their home fixtures, normally because their pitch requirements cannot be met, which is usually because of pitch supply, in some cases quality issues or stipulated league requirements for access to certain facilities. There are no known instances of displaced/exported rugby league demand outside of the Borough.

### ***Future demand***

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts. Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth.

#### *Population increases*

Team generation rates based on future population to Halton as a whole suggest there is not sufficient enough growth to create any additional demand. This being said, there is some anticipated growth within the Junior Boys (12-18) age group albeit this does not amount to one full team and will likely be amalgamated into current levels of participation across the multiple clubs in the Borough.



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 7.6: Team generation rates (Borough wide)

Rugby league						
Age group	Current population within age group (2018)	Current number of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group (2037)	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Men's (19-45)	20,427	8	1:2,553	19,879	7.8	0
Senior Women (19-45)	21,555	0	0	20,462	0.0	0
Junior Boys (12-18)	5,355	12	1:446	5,648	12.7	0
Junior Girls (12-18)	5,191	2	1:2,596	5,216	2.0	0
Primary rugby mixed (7-11)	8,511	20	1:426	7,446	17.5	0

It is important to note that team generation rates are based on population figures and cannot account for specific targeted development work within certain areas or focused towards certain groups, such as NGB initiatives, such as social rugby or coaching within schools, or the forthcoming Rugby League World Cup.

### *Social Rugby*

Consultation with the RFL anticipates a growth in participation through social rugby programmes above those suggested by TGRs. The RFL is expanding formats such as Touch Rugby, Primary Rugby, Tag Rugby, X League and Masters Rugby as a method to increase levels of demand above those associated with affiliated clubs. It anticipates that this demand will assist in the growth of the clubs within Halton however at this stage it is difficult to quantify.

### *Rugby League World Cup 2021*

The Rugby League World Cup is set to take place in 2021 between Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October and Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November. This to date (December 2020) has not yet been affected by the Pandemic and will historically have men's, women's and wheelchair tournaments taking place at the same time. In total there will be 61 matches played across venues in Bolton, Coventry, Doncaster, Hull, Kirklees, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Preston, Sheffield, St Helens, Tees Valley, Trafford, Warrington, Wigan & Leigh and York.

Following the World Cup, the RFL plans to identify opportunities for investment and facility development through the Rugby League World Cup 'Inspired by 2021' Legacy Programme. This comprises of three key strands; volunteers, facilities and community engagement and will look to use the tournament as a catalyst to develop the game.

It is currently unknown what impact this will have for participation within Halton; however, it is anticipated that it will only be positive in growing the sport within the Authority.

### *Participation increases*

Three clubs intend to increase their number of teams for next season. This is summarised in the table below. However, where clubs do not presently have access to primary pitch provision it is considered that primary teams will play on senior or junior pitches currently accessed and as such will require only half of a senior/junior pitch, equating to 0.25 match equivalent sessions per week.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 7.7: Summary of future demand reported by clubs

Rugby league				
Club	Future demand	Pitch type	Analysis area	Match equivalent sessions per week
Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC	Two primary teams	Senior	Widnes	0.5
Runcorn ARLFC	One senior men's team	Senior	Runcorn	0.5
West Bank Bears ARLFC	One junior boys' team	Senior	Widnes	0.5
	One primary team	Senior	Widnes	0.25
Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC	One primary team	Senior	Widnes	0.25

### The peak period

In order to fully establish actual spare capacity, the peak period needs to be established. For senior rugby league matches the peak period is considered to be Saturday afternoon as all senior teams play at this time. In comparison peak period for junior and mini rugby league teams is Sunday AM.

School pitches are used regularly to accommodate curricular use and school training sessions and matches. In order to reflect this, an additional one match equivalent session per week of play has been added per pitch at school sites where applicable (shown in bold) in Table 7.10 below.

### 7.4: Supply and demand analysis

Having considered supply and demand, the tables below identify the overall spare capacity in each of the analysis areas for the different pitch types, based on match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 7.8: Supply/demand balance of senior pitches at senior peak time

Rugby league					
Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (Match Equivalent Sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total demand
Runcorn	-	-		0.5	0.5
Widnes	-	0.5	0.5	-	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1</b>

The table above shows that currently senior rugby league pitches across Halton are marginally overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions. However, when accounting for future demand of one senior men's team from Runcorn ARLFC, this shortfall increases to one match equivalent session.

In comparison, the table overleaf examines the supply and demand analysis of junior rugby league pitches within Halton. This includes future demand generated from club aspirations with one junior team represented as 0.5 match equivalent sessions and one mini team as 0.25 match equivalent sessions (on account of them requiring less pitch space).



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 7.9: Supply/demand balance of junior pitches at junior peak time

Rugby league					
Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Demand (Match Equivalent Sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total demand
Runcorn	-	-		-	
Widnes	-	5.25	5.25	1.5 <sup>26</sup>	6.75
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>5.25</b>	<b>5.25</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>6.75</b>

The current picture for junior pitches across Halton indicates an overall shortfall of 5.25 match equivalent sessions, all generated from the Widnes Analysis Area. When accounting for future demand, the Analysis Area and Borough-wide shortfall increases to 6.75 match equivalent sessions per week.

### 7.5: Capacity analysis

The capacity for pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of playing. In extreme circumstances, it can result in the inability of the pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.

As a guide, The RFL has set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its current quality (pitch capacity). Taking into consideration the guidelines on capacity the following was concluded in the Borough:

Rugby league	
Pitch quality	Match equivalent sessions (MES) per week
Good	3
Standard	2
Poor	1

Table 7.10 applies the above pitch ratings against the actual level of weekly play recorded to determine a capacity rating as follows:

<b>Potential capacity</b>	Play is below the level the site could sustain
<b>At capacity</b>	Play matches the level the site can sustain
<b>Overused</b>	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

The next step is to ascertain whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be deemed 'actual capacity'. There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

For senior and youth teams, the current level of play per week is set at 0.5 match equivalent sessions (MES) per week for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis (assumes half of matches will be played away). For mini teams, play

<sup>26</sup> This equates to one junior team (0.5 match equivalent sessions) and four mini teams (one match equivalent session).

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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per week is set at 0.25 MES per week for each match played across half of one senior/junior pitch, based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis.

### ***Actual spare capacity***

To determine 'actual spare capacity', each site with 'potential capacity' has been reviewed. A pitch is only said to have 'actual spare capacity' if it is available for community use and available at the peak time for that format of the game. Any pitch not meeting this criterion has consequently been discounted.

There may also be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

Pitches that are of a poor quality are not deemed to have actual spare capacity due to the already low carrying capacity of the pitches. Any identified spare capacity should be retained in order to relieve the pitches of use, which in turn will aid the improvement of pitch quality. Furthermore, any pitches with unsecured tenure are not considered to have actual spare capacity as no further play should be encouraged on such sites given that future access cannot be guaranteed.

Table 7.10: Rugby league pitch provision and level of current use within Halton

Rugby league													
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Security of tenure	Community use	Pitch type	Floodlit	Quality rating	Number of pitches	Current competitive demand (MES per week)	Current training demand (MES per week)	Site capacity (MES per week)	Capacity rating (MES per week)	Comments
9	Cronton Sixth Form College	Widnes	Unsecure	Yes-unused	Senior	No	Standard	1	1	-	2	1	Potential spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
27	King George V Playing Fields	Widnes	Unsecure	Yes	Senior	No	Standard	1	0.5	1	2	0.5	Potential spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Unsecure	Yes	Senior	No	Poor	2	1.5	0.5	2		Pitches are considered played to capacity.
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Unsecure	Yes	Junior	No	Poor	2	3	-	2	1	Pitches are overplayed by one match equivalent session.
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	Widnes	Unsecure	No	Senior	No	Poor	1	1	-	1		Pitch is not available for community use and considered played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular demand.
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	Unsecure	Yes	Senior	No	Poor	1	0.5	0.5	1		Pitch is considered played to capacity through competitive and training demand.
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Widnes	Unsecure	Yes	Senior	No	Standard	2	2	-	4	2	Potential spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
56	Wade Deacon High School	Widnes	Unsecure	Yes	Senior	No	Poor	3	3	-	3		Pitches are considered played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular demand.
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Secure	Yes	Senior	No	Standard	1	1.5	1	2	0.5	Pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Secure	Yes	Junior	No	Standard	5	8	4	10	2	Pitches are overplayed by two match equivalent sessions.
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Widnes	Secure	Yes	Senior	Yes	Standard	1	1	1	2		Pitch is considered played to capacity through competitive and training demand.
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Widnes	Secure	Yes	Junior	Yes	Standard	1	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	Pitch is overplayed by 2.25 match equivalent sessions from competitive and training demand.

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### ***Spare capacity***

A number of sites are shown to have potential spare capacity, however, across Halton, no rugby league pitches have any actual spare capacity at peak time. This is due to pitches either being played to capacity at peak time or spare capacity being discounted due to unsecure tenure.

### ***Overplay***

Overplay occurs when there is more play accommodated on a site than it is able to sustain, which can often be due to the low carrying capacity of pitches.

In total across Halton only three sites are overplayed. This equates to 5.75 match equivalent sessions all located in the Widnes Analysis Area. This is predominantly a result of training and competitive demand taking place on the pitch.

*Table 7.11: Overplay summary*

<b>Rugby league</b>				
<b>Site ID</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>Analysis Area</b>	<b>Pitch Type</b>	<b>Overplay (match equivalent sessions per week)</b>
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Junior	-1
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Senior	-0.5
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Junior	-2
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Widnes	Junior	-2.25
<b>Total</b>				<b>-5.75</b>

Overplay can only be alleviated by improving pitch quality or providing more pitches or areas to be used for training. Potential options on how overplay can be alleviate will be examined in greater detail in the proceeding Strategy & Action Plan.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

### **Rugby league –supply and demand (2019) summary**

- ◀ Currently senior rugby league pitches across Halton are marginally overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions. However, when accounting for future demand of one senior men's team from Runcorn ARLFC, this shortfall increases to one match equivalent session.
- ◀ The current picture for junior pitches across Halton indicates an overall shortfall of 5.25 match equivalent sessions, all generated from the Widnes Analysis Area. When accounting for future demand, the Analysis Area and Borough-wide shortfall increases to 6.75 match equivalent sessions per week.

### **Rugby league – supply summary**

- ◀ In Halton, the audit identifies a total of 21 grass rugby league pitches (13 senior and eight junior) across nine sites. All but one of these pitches (a senior pitch at Ormiston Chadwick Academy) are available for community use.
- ◀ There was previous rugby league provision at Parklands Sports Club and Leigh Recreation Playing Fields
- ◀ Site ownership is varied between clubs renting a site from a wider sports club (or a sports and social club) and clubs which rent or lease pitches from the Council.
- ◀ In Halton, 57% (12) of all pitches are of standard quality with the remaining 43% rated as poor (nine pitches). There are no good quality pitches in the Borough.
- ◀ Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC is the only club through consultation that indicates issues with ancillary provision.

### **Rugby league– demand summary (2019)**

- ◀ There is a total of 42 competitive rugby league teams playing in Borough, including the three teams from semi professional club Widnes Vikings ARLFC.
- ◀ Of the six community clubs within Halton, two (Halton Farnworth ARLFC and West Bank Bear ARLFC) report that they would be able to have more teams if they had access to more pitches.
- ◀ Three clubs intend to increase their number of teams for next season.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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### **PART 8: OTHER SPORTS**

#### **8.1: American football**

The British American Football Association (BAFA) is the National Governing Body for the sport of American football in Great Britain and is responsible for all regulatory, competition, performance and development aspects of the game.

Halton Spartans is the only known club based in Halton. Consultation attempts were made; however, the Club was non-responsive. Therefore, information to inform this study was gathered from online research, where possible.

The Club has one team that currently competes in the BAFA NFL NFC 1 South and plays out of the DCBL Stadium Halton (Widnes). It plays its competitive fixtures on Sundays afternoons and trains on the 3G pitch midweek. For more information regarding the provision at this site please see Part 3: Third Generation Turf (3G) Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs).

With demand for American Football likely to be limited in Halton, it is considered that Halton Spartans can accommodate all demand for the sport across the Authority. This is especially the case given that it accesses 3G provision, meaning capacity issues are less likely.

#### **8.2: Baseball**

Baseball Softball UK (BSUK) is the development agency for baseball and softball in the United Kingdom. Since 2000, BSUK has provided services to the sports' governing bodies, the British Baseball Federation (BBF) and British Softball Federation (BSF) with the aim of developing and increasing the levels of participation, skill and achievement in baseball and softball. This occurs at both junior and adult levels, from school and grassroots through to domestic adult clubs up to the Great Britain national teams. A baseball season typically operates between April to September in England.

In November 2019, Halton Baseball Club merged with Trojans Baseball Club, after years of declining membership. Before its merger, Trojans Baseball Club had two teams based within Liverpool although due to Covid-19 it did not host any matches in 2020. For the upcoming 2021 season, in addition to its two teams, it reports plans to host baseball within Halton, under the name of Halton Trojans. This team will be based at John Mills Ballpark, which was used by Halton Baseball Club prior to the merger.

Since the merger, Trojans Baseball Club has taken on the previous lease of the site, which was previously between Halton Baseball Club and the Council although anecdotal evidence suggests that it only has a few years remaining on it. By agreeing to take on the lease, the Club settled all the outstanding costs owed by Halton Baseball Club. Trojans reports that it has plans to extend this lease when needed.

The Club also reports that the current diamond on the site is poor quality having been used sparingly over the previous couple of years. It therefore indicates that it will need to invest in the site to improve its quality and safety before it can be used.

The Club indicates that it expects the site will be used on Sundays by Halton Trojans and has expectations that the site will eventually be used for training and maybe a fourth team as demand increases.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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With the above taken into consideration, it is considered that Trojans Baseball Club can accommodate all demand for the sport across the Borough although there maybe some investment required at the site to ensure that quality is suitable.

### **Other sports –supply and demand summary**

- ◀ There is considered to be suitable amounts of provision to meet current and future levels of demand for both American Football and Baseball demand in Halton.
- ◀ This being said there is a need to improve the quality of the Baseball diamond at John Mills Ballpark.

### **Other sports – supply summary**

- ◀ Halton Spartans American Football Club access the 3G pitch at DCBL Stadium to meet its demand requirements. Information regarding this pitch is within Part 3: Third Generation Turf (3G) Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs).
- ◀ Trojans Baseball Club reports that the current diamond at John Mills Ballpark is poor quality having been used sparingly over the previous couple of years. It therefore indicates that it will need to invest in the site to improve its quality and safety before it can be used.

### **Other sports– demand summary**

- ◀ Trojans Baseball Club had two teams based within Liverpool although due to Covid-19 it did not host any matches in 2020. For the upcoming 2021 season, in addition to its two teams, it reports plans to host baseball within Halton, under the name of Halton Trojans. This team will be based at John Mills Ballpark, which was used by Halton Baseball Club prior to the merger.
- ◀ Halton Spartans has one team that currently competes in the BAFA NFL NFC 1 South.

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### APPENDIX 1: SPORTING CONTEXT

The following section outlines a series of national, regional and local policies pertaining to the study and which will have an important influence on the Strategy.

#### National context

The provision of high quality and accessible community outdoor sports facilities at a local level is a key requirement for achieving the targets set out by the Government and Sport England. It is vital that this strategy is cognisant of and works towards these targets in addition to local priorities and plans.

#### ***Department of Media Culture and Sport Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation (2015)***

The Government published its strategy for sport in December 2015. This strategy confirms the recognition and understanding that sport makes a positive difference through broader means and that it will help the sector to deliver five simple but fundamental outcomes: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of 23 performance indicators under nine key headings, as follows:

- ◀ More people taking part in sport and physical activity.
- ◀ More people volunteering in sport.
- ◀ More people experiencing live sport.
- ◀ Maximising international sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ A more productive sport sector.
- ◀ A more financially and organisationally sustainable sport sector.
- ◀ A more responsible sport sector.

#### ***Sport England: Towards an Active Nation (2016-2021)***

Sport England's five year strategy 'Towards an Active Nation' aims to target the 28% of people who do less than 30 minutes of exercise each week and will focus on the least active groups; typically women, the disabled and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Sport England will invest up to £30m on a plan to increase the number of volunteers in grassroots sport. Emphasis will be on working with a larger range of partners with less money being directed towards National Governing Bodies.

The Strategy will help deliver against the five health, social and economic outcomes set out in the Government's Sporting Future strategy.

- ◀ Physical Wellbeing
- ◀ Mental Wellbeing
- ◀ Individual Development
- ◀ Social & Community Development
- ◀ Economic Development



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### ***National Planning Policy Framework (2019)***

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

The NPPF states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

The 'promoting healthy communities' theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies or surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

As a prerequisite the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- ◀ An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown that the open space, buildings or land is surplus to requirements.
- ◀ The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.
- ◀ The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

In order for planning policies to be 'sound' local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities.

### ***The FA National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)***

The Football Association's (FA) National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a ten-year period.

The Strategy sets out shared aims and objectives it aims to deliver on in conjunction with The Premier League, Sport England and the Government, to be delivered with support of the Football Foundation.

These stakeholders have clearly identified the aspirations for football to contribute directly to nationally important social and health priorities. Alongside this, the strategy is clear that traditional, affiliated football remains an important priority and a core component of the game, whilst recognising and supporting the more informal environments used for the community and recreational game.

Its vision is: *"Within 10 years we aim to deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed"*

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£1.3 billion has been spent by football and Government since 2000 to enhance existing football facilities and build new ones. However, more is needed if football and Government's shared objectives for participation, individual well-being and community cohesion are to be achieved. Nationally, direct investment will be increased – initially to £69 million per annum from football and Government (a 15% increase on recent years).

The NFFS investment priorities can be broadly grouped into six areas, recognising the need to grow the game, support existing players and better understand the different football environments:

- ◀ **Improve 20,000 Natural Turf pitches**, with a focus on addressing drop off due to a poor playing experience;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 3G AGP 'equivalents'** (mix of full size and small sided provision, including MUGAs - small sided facilities are likely to have a key role in smaller / rural communities and encouraging multi-sport offers), enhancing the quality of playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 changing pavilions/clubhouses**, linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development;
- ◀ **Support access to flexible indoor spaces**, including equipment and court markings, to support growth in futsal, walking football and to support the education and skills outcomes, exploiting opportunities for football to positively impact on personal and social outcomes for young people in particular;
- ◀ **Refurbish existing stock to maintain current provision**, recognising the need to address historic under-investment and issues with refurbishment of existing facilities;
- ◀ **Support testing of technology and innovation**, building on customer insight to deliver hubs for innovation, testing and development of the game.

### *Local Football Facility Plans*

To support in delivery of the NFFS, The FA has commissioned a national project. Over the next two years to 2020, a Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) will be produced for every local authority across England. Each plan will be unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation, including currently underrepresented communities.

Identifying strategic priorities for football facilities across the formal, recreational and informal game, LFFPs will establish a ten-year vision for football facilities that aims to transform the playing pitch stock in a sustainable way. They will identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all will be identified via LFFPs. LFFPs will guide the allocation of 90% of national football investment (The FA, Premier League and DCMS) and forge stronger partnerships with local stakeholders to develop key sites. This, together with local match-funding will deliver over one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next 10-years.

It is important to recognise that a LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Therefore, it cannot be used as a replacement for a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and it will not be accepted as an evidence base for site change of use or disposal.

A LFFP will; however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

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### ***The FA: National Game Strategy (2018-2021)***

The FA launched its new National Game Strategy in July 2018 which aims to inspire a life-long journey in football for all. To achieve this, the strategy will focus on five key aspects of the game:

- ◀ A high quality introduction to football
- ◀ Developing clubs and leagues
- ◀ Embrace all formats of football and engage all participants
- ◀ Recruit, develop and support the workforce
- ◀ Develop sustainable facilities

Through these five pillars, The FA's objectives are to:

- ◀ Increase the number of male affiliated and recreational players by 10%.
- ◀ Double the number of female affiliated and recreational players via a growth of 75%.
- ◀ Increase the number of disability affiliated and recreational players by 30%.
- ◀ Ensure affiliated Futsal is available across the country in order to increase the number of Futsal affiliated and recreational players.

The sustainable football facilities should provide support to an agreed portfolio of priority projects that meet National Football Facility Strategy (NFFS) investment priorities.

### ***England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Inspiring Generations (2020-2024)***

The England and Wales Cricket Board unveiled a new strategic plan in 2019. The strategic plan aims to connect communities and improve lives by inspiring people to discover and share their passion for cricket

The plan sets out six important priorities and activities, these are:

- ◀ ***Grow and nurture the core***
  - ◀ Create an infrastructure investment fund for First Class County Clubs (FCCs)
  - ◀ Introduce a new Community Investment Funding for FCCs and County Cricket Boards (CCBs)
  - ◀ Invest in club facilities
  - ◀ Develop the role of National Counties Cricket
  - ◀ Further invest in County Competitions
- ◀ ***Inspire through elite teams***
  - ◀ Increase investment in the county talent pathway
  - ◀ Incentivise the counties to develop England Players
  - ◀ Drive the performance system through technology and innovation
  - ◀ Create heroes and connect them with a new generation of fans
- ◀ ***Make cricket accessible***
  - ◀ Broaden crickets appeal through the New Competition
  - ◀ Create a new digital community for cricket
  - ◀ Install non-traditional playing facilities in urban areas
  - ◀ Continue to deliver South Asian Action Plans
  - ◀ Launch a new participation product, linked to the New Competition

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- ◀ **Engage children and young people**
  - ◀ Double cricket participation in primary schools
  - ◀ Deliver a compelling and coordinated recreational playing offer from age five upwards
  - ◀ Develop our safeguarding to promote safe spaces for children and young people
- ◀ **Transform women's and girls' cricket**
  - ◀ 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
- ◀ **Support our communities**
  - ◀ Double the number of volunteers in the game
  - ◀ Create a game-wide approach to Trust and Foundations through the cricket network
  - ◀ Develop a new wave of officials and community coaches
  - ◀ Increase participation in disability cricket

### ***The Rugby Football Union Strategic Plan (2017-2021)***

The RFU has released its new strategic vision for rugby in England. The strategy is based on four main elements which are; Protect, Engage, Grow and Win. It covers all elements of rugby union ranging from elite rugby to grassroots, although the general relevancy to the PPS is centred around growing the game.

The RFU exists to promote and develop rugby union in England and ensure the long-term sustainability of clubs by growing player numbers and retaining them across all age groups. Responding to wider market influences, work will continue on developing new ways to take part in all forms of the game, without comprising the sports traditions. This will ensure a lasting legacy from elite success by attracting new players and encouraging current male and female adult players to play.

The four key aims to ensure long term sustainability are to:

- ◀ Improve player transition from age grade to adult 15-a-side rugby
- ◀ Expand places to play through Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)
- ◀ Engage new communities in rugby
- ◀ Create a community 7's offering

### ***The Rugby Football League Facility Strategy***

The RFL's Facilities Strategy was published in 2011. The following themes have been prioritised:

- ◀ Clean, Dry, Safe & Playable
- ◀ Sustainable clubs
- ◀ Environmental Sustainability
- ◀ Geographical Spread
- ◀ Non-club Facilities

The RFL Facilities Trust website [www.rflfacilitiestrust.co.uk](http://www.rflfacilitiestrust.co.uk) provides further information on:

- ◀ The RFL Community Facility Strategy
- ◀ Clean, Dry, Safe and Playable Programme
- ◀ Pitch Size Guidance

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- ◀ The RFL Performance Standard for Artificial Grass Pitches
- ◀ Club guidance on the Annual Preparation and Maintenance of the Rugby League Pitch

Further to the 2011 Strategy detail on the following specific programmes of particular relevance to pitches and facility planning are listed below and can be found via the trust link (see above):

- ◀ The RFL Pitch Improvement Programme 2013 – 2017
- ◀ Clean, Dry and Safe programmes 2013 - 2017

### ***Rugby League World Cup ‘Inspired by 2021’ Legacy Programme***

The Rugby League World Cup 2021 will develop a £10 million legacy programme with funds driven into local clubs and community projects. The government investment, delivered by Sport England, is part of RLWC 2021’s ambitious plan to grow the sport and make it more visible, engaging and welcoming to current and potential participants.

The funding will be split into large transformational community projects, such as changing room improvements and new artificial grass pitches with the remaining funding used for smaller scale initiatives such as supplying new kit and equipment to promote club and community development. The investment will focus on the following four key areas:

- ◀ Creating welcoming environments
- ◀ Encouraging participation growth
- ◀ Building community engagement
- ◀ Cultivating further investment

### ***England Hockey (EH) - A Nation Where Hockey Matters 2013***

The vision is for England to be a ‘Nation Where Hockey Matters’.

We know that delivering success on the international stage stimulates the nation’s pride in their hockey team and, with the right events in place, we will attract interest from spectators, sponsors and broadcasters alike. The visibility that comes from our success and our occasions will inspire young people and adults to follow in the footsteps of their heroes and, if the right opportunities are there to meet their needs, they will play hockey and enjoy wonderful experiences.

Underpinning all this is the infrastructure which makes our sport function. We know the importance of our volunteers, coaches, officials, clubs and facilities. The more inspirational our people can be, the more progressive we can be and the more befitting our facilities can be, the more we will achieve for our sport. England Hockey will enable this to happen and we are passionate about our role within the sport. We will lead, support, counsel, focus and motivate the Hockey Nation and work tirelessly towards our vision.

As a governing body, we want to have a recognisable presence to participants of the game, be that through club or association website or their communications, or through the work of the many outstanding coaches in our game, so that players understand that their club is part of a wider team working together to a common goal.

The core objectives are as follows:

1. Grow our Participation
2. Deliver International Success

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3. Increase our Visibility
4. Enhance our Infrastructure
5. For England Hockey to be proud and respected custodians of the sport

### *Club participation*

Our club market is well structured and clubs are required to affiliate to England Hockey to play in community leagues. As a result only relatively few occasional teams lie outside our affiliation structure. Schools and Universities are the other two areas where significant hockey is played.

Hockey is clearly benefiting from a double Olympic legacy. After Great Britain's women won bronze in front of a home crowd in London in 2012 the numbers of young girls playing the sport doubled and a historic gold in Rio 2016 saw more than 10,000 players promptly joining clubs. These triumphs have inspired the nation to get active and play hockey. Thanks to the outstanding work of the network of clubs across the country, England Hockey has seen unprecedented growth at both ends of the age range. There has been an 80% increase in the number of boys and girls in clubs, as well as a 54% increase in players over the age of 46.

Hockey clubs have reaped the rewards of the improved profile of the sport, focussing on a link with schools to provide excellent opportunities for young players. Programmes such as Quick sticks – a small-sided version of hockey for 7-11 year olds – in Primary Schools have been hugely successful in allowing new players to take part in the sport from an early age. The growth in the sport since the eve of London 2012 has been seen across the country, examples being a 110% increase in under 16s club participation in London, and a 111% growth in the North West in the same age bracket.

### ***England Hockey Strategy***

England Hockey's Facilities Strategy can be found [here](#).

**Vision:** For every hockey club in England to have appropriate and sustainable facilities that provide excellent experiences for players.

**Mission:** More, Better, Happier Players with access to appropriate and sustainable facilities

The 3 main objectives of the facilities strategy are:

#### **1. PROTECT: To conserve the existing hockey provision**

- There are currently over 800 pitches that are used by hockey clubs (club, school, universities) across the country. It is important to retain the current provision where appropriate to ensure that hockey is maintained across the country.

#### **2. IMPROVE: To improve the existing facilities stock (physically and administratively)**

- The current facilities stock is ageing and there needs to be strategic investment into refurbishing the pitches and ancillary facilities. England Hockey works to provide more support for clubs to obtain better agreements with facilities providers & education around owning an asset.

#### **3. DEVELOP: To strategically build new hockey facilities where there is an identified need and ability to deliver and maintain. This might include consolidating hockey provision in a local area where appropriate.**

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England Hockey has identified key areas across the country where there is a lack of suitable hockey provision and there is a need for additional pitches, suitable for hockey. There is an identified demand for multi pitches in the right places to consolidate hockey and allow clubs to have all of their provision catered for at one site.



# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

## APPENDIX 2: NON TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT SHEETS

### Grass football pitch non-technical assessment sheet

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Football						
Please complete one form per pitch						
Site reference:			Site Name:			
6 figure grid reference			Pitch ID(s):			
Number of football pitches on site:			Pitch size:	(Adult 11v11, Youth 11v11, 9v9, 7v7 Mini, 5v5, 7v7)		
Availability			Are any other pitches marked out over this pitch?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Weather at time of visit & date of visit			If yes, please indicate what pitches are overmarked? (i.e. one youth pitch is overmarked on a adult pitch) in Pitch Issues			
Pitch Issues:						
Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)						
Element (Gathered via a non technical site assessment)	Rating			Guidance notes		Comments
<b>Playing surface</b>						
Grass Cover	Good >80%		Adequate 60-80%		Poor <60%	Advice is to walk through the middle of the pitch
Does the pitch meet The FA minimum size?	Yes - as per the FA recommended size		Within FA recommended guidelines		No	See size chart below for recommended dimensions
Slope of pitch (gradient and cross fall)	Flat		Moderate		Severe	
Length of grass	Good		Too long		Too short	Good 30mm-50mm, Too long 51mm plus, Too short 29mm less
Evenness of pitch	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Problem Areas: Evidence of dog fouling/glass/litter/vehicle tracks	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots	
Problem Areas: Evidence of unofficial use/damage to the surface	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots	
Problem Areas: Evidence of poor drainage	No evidence of standing water or poor drainage		Some evidence of poor drainage		Yes, poor drainage	
<b>Maintenance programme (information from maintenance schedule/grounds team/club survey)</b>						<b>Section total</b>
Grass cutting	Yes, as required		Yes, but not frequent enough		No	
Seeded	Yes, as required		Not known		No	
Aerated (per year)	Three or more times		Once/ twice		No	
Sand dressed	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No	
Fertilised	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No	
Weed killed	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No	
						<b>Section total</b>
NB If none of this information is provided you should assume that only the grass is being cut and the rest of the maintenance items should be marked with the lowest score option.						
			PITCH SCORE	0.0%	RATING	Poor



# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

## Rugby pitch non-technical assessment sheet

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Rugby Union										
Please complete one form per pitch										
Site reference				Site Name						
6 figure grid reference				Pitch ID(s)						
Date of assessment				Pitch size	(Senior, Mini/Midi)					
Number of pitches on site				Are any other pitches marked out over this pitch?						
Availability				<i>If yes, please indicate what pitches are overmarked? (i.e. one mini/ midi pitch is overmarked on a senior pitch) in Pitch Issues</i>						
<small>Community Use - used, Community Use - unused, No Community Use, Available but Unused</small>										
Weather at time of visit										
General comments/observations										
<b>Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)</b>										
Qualitative information (gathered on site)	Rating					Guidance notes	Comments			
Grass Coverage	Good		Adequate		Poor		>90% = good. <80% = poor			
Size of pitch	Acceptable (between recommended minimum and maximum sizes)		Flag for further investigation (below recommended minimum size)		Unacceptable (above maximum size)		Maximum size = width 70m, goal line to goal line 100m, in goal area 22m, run offs 5m where practical. Recommended minimum size = width 68m, goal line to goal line 94m, in goal area 6m, run offs 5m where practical.			
Length of grass	Too Long		Good		Too short		Too long = >75mm. Too short = <50mm			
Problem Areas: Evidence of glass/litter/vehicle tracks/dog fouling	None		Yes - some		Yes lots					
<b>GOALPOSTS</b>										
Are goalposts installed?	Yes		No							
Is there any obvious danger on posts?	Yes		No							
Are the posts stable in the ground?	Yes		No							
Is the crossbar fixed securely?	Yes		No							
Is there evidence of rust on the posts?	Yes		No							
<b>ANCILLARY</b>										
Is the pitch floodlit?	Yes		No							
Is there changing accommodation for the pitch?	Yes		No							
Is an appropriate level of car parking available?	Yes		No							
<b>Pitch maintenance (information gathered via club survey/ pitch provider consultation) - refer to the guidance notes below</b>										
Aerated (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never			
Sand dressed (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never			
Fertilised (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never			
Weed killed (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never			
Chain harrowed	every week		fortnightly		monthly		never			
							<b>Pitch Maintenance Score</b>			
Drainage	Natural (inadequate) SCORE D0		Natural (adequate) SCORE D1		Pipe drained SCORE D2		Pipe and slit drained SCORE D3		Unknown SCORE D0	Natural (adequate) = 3 or less training/match cancellations per season Natural (inadequate) = 4 or more training match cancellations per season *Based on a pipe drained system at 5m centres that has been installed in the previous eight years **Based on a slit drained system at 1m centres completed in the previous five years.

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Artificial grass pitches non-technical assessment (including third generation turf pitches)

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Artificial grass pitches									
Site reference			Site Name						
6 figure grid reference			Pitch ID						
Number of AGPs on site			Pitch size	Full (i.e., 100m x 60m)			Half (i.e., 60m x 40m)		
Availability			Community Use - used, Community Use - unused, No Community Use, Available but Unused						
Type of pitch	Long Pile 3G (65mm with shock pad)		Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)		Short Pile 3G (40mm)				
	Sand Dressed		Sand Filled		Water based				
<b>Assessment Criteria</b> (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)									
Element	Rating						Guidance notes	Site comments	
Age of Surface	less than 2 years		2-5 years		5-10 years		over 10 years		
Evidence of moss/lichen (all surfaces)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Loose gravel (macadam surface)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Holes or rips in surface (macadam, art. grass or polymeric surfaces)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Grip underfoot	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Line markings - quality	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Problem Areas: Evidence of Glass/ stones/ litter	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Problem Areas: Evidence of inappropriate use	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Problem Areas: Evidence of damage to surface	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots		If no evidence, assume none.		
Access for disabled players. i.e.: ramps onto courts, width of gates	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Condition of posts/ nets/ goals	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Surrounding fencing	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Adequate safety margins (w here appropriate)	Yes - fully		No- but adequate		No - not adequate				
Is the AGP floodlit?	Yes		No						
Is the AGP left open at all times?	Yes		No						
Are there dug outs?	Yes		No						
Are there youth shelters/spectator seating around AGP?	Yes		No						
Is there changing accommodation for the AGP?	Yes		No						
Maximum score	<b>93</b>	Scoring:	Poor <=50	Total Score	<b>0</b>				
			Standard 51-79	Potential Rating	<b>Poor</b>				
			Good 80+						

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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