



HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

MAY 2021

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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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.

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 23rd 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.

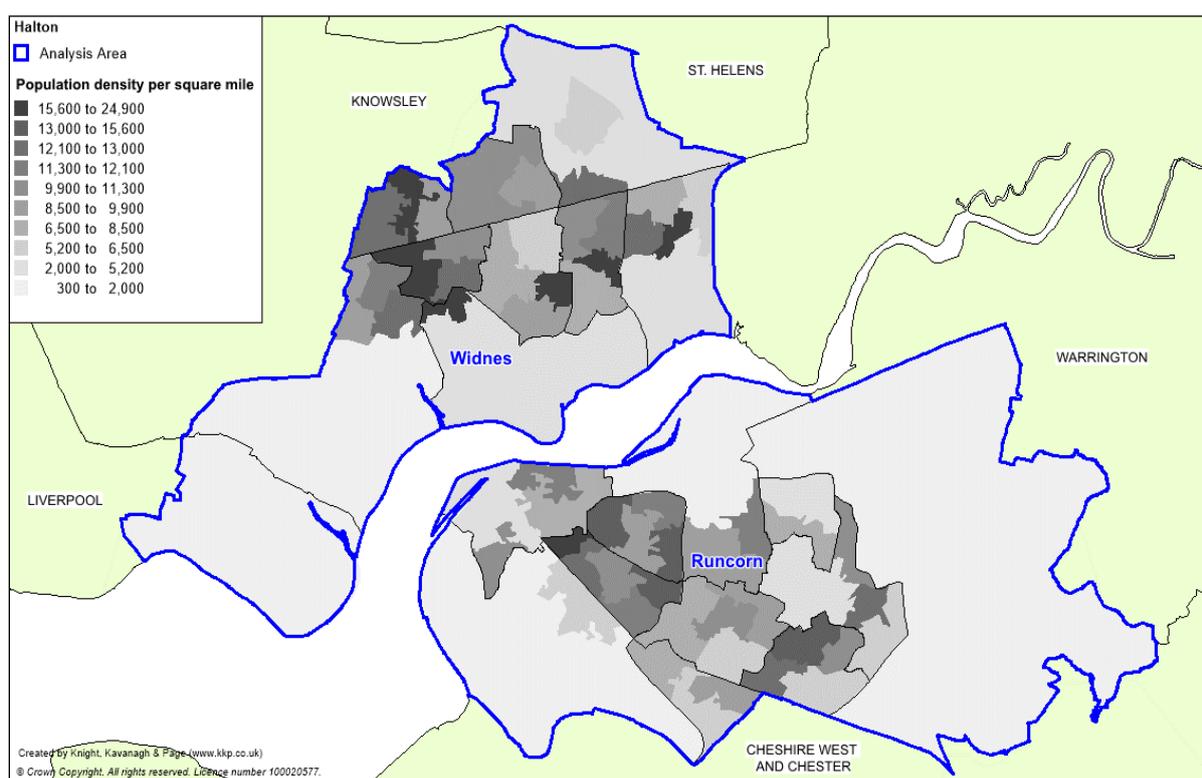
1.2: Study area

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.

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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 predicted 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

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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

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.

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 ^[1]	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) ^[2]	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

^[1] MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

^[2] 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 ^[1]	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 ¹ (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.

¹ 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.

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.

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

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 Principles².

AIM 1

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

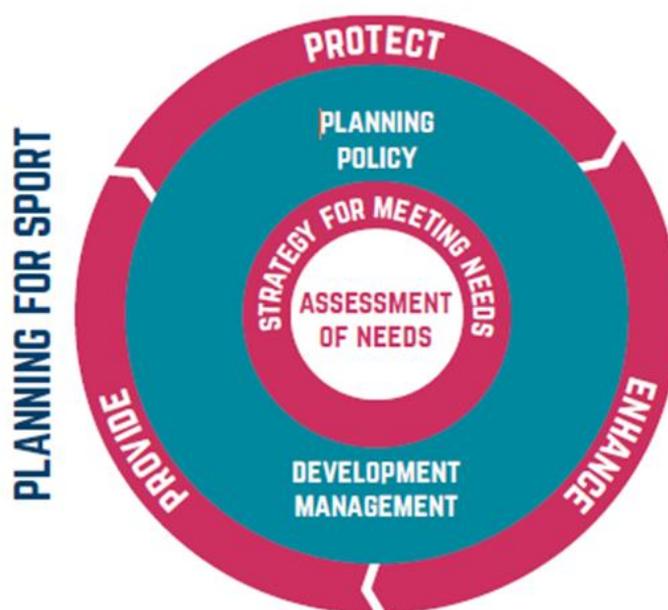
AIM 2

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)

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

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 ³
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.

³ 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:

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 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 ⁴	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.

⁴ 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 ⁵
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.

⁵ Match equivalent sessions

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Reinstatement of unused pitches

As mentioned in the proceeding 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

Football					
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	Number of pitches	Spare capacity created at peak period (MES)
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.

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
Total			100

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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.

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
Saturday PM					
Runcorn	-	-		14	14
Widnes	-	-		14	14
Total	-	-		28	28
Sunday PM					
Runcorn	8	-	8	8	
Widnes	8	-	8	8	
Total	16	-	16	16	
Junior (Midweek)					
Runcorn	-	-		4	4
Widnes	-	-		8	8
Total	-	-		12	12

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 transferal 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 (3rd XI Saturday Premier Division) whereas its second team played 12 matches in the Liverpool and District Competition (3rd 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 ⁶	Improved quality	New capacity rating ⁷
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.

⁶ Match equivalent sessions include both training and competitive demand

⁷ 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 ⁸	Improved quality	New capacity rating ⁹
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.

⁸ Match equivalent sessions include both training and competitive demand

⁹ 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) ¹⁰
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

¹⁰ 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.

- ◀ 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.

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.

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.

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
- ◀ Brookvale Bollingbroke Academy
- ◀ Cronton Sixth Form College
- ◀ Grange Academy
- ◀ Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy
- ◀ Ormiston Chadwick Academy
- ◀ St Michaels Catholic Primary School
- ◀ St Peter & St Paul Catholic College
- ◀ The Heath School
- ◀ Westfield Primary School
- ◀ Weston County Primary School
- ◀ 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)¹¹. 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

¹¹ <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.

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 in place.

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.

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 Service¹² 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.

¹² <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>

- ◀ 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. ¹³	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.

¹³ <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
Site location	Strategically located in the Borough. Priority sites for NGBs.	Strategically located within the analysis area or for a specific community.	Serves the local community.
Site layout	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.
Type of sport	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.
Management	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.
Maintenance regime	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Standard maintenance regime either by the club or in house maintenance contract.
Ancillary facilities	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).

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.**

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RUNCORN ANALYSIS AREA

Sport	Analysis area	Current demand (2020)		Future demand (2037)
		Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES ^[1]	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

^[1] 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 ¹⁴	Cost ¹⁵	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. 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.	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

¹⁴ (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

¹⁵ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above

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Runcorn Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹⁴	Cost ¹⁵	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. The Club has received a pitch maintenance grant which should improve the provision to good quality.	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 ¹⁴	Cost ¹⁵	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

**HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN**

Runcorn Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹⁴	Cost ¹⁵	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 ¹⁴	Cost ¹⁵	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 ^[1]	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

^[1] MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

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Widnes Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹⁶	Cost ¹⁷	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. Due to the relocation of Halton Simms Cross ARLFC ensure that	Council FF LFA	Key centre	H	S - M	H	Protect Provide

¹⁶ (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

¹⁷ (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 ¹⁶	Cost ¹⁷	Aim
					there is suitable pitch and ancillary provision to meet the clubs need (See Site ID 27: King George V Playing Fields).						
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. The CFA (2021) confirms the sites has enhances in maintenance and will be reinstated.	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. Club have received enhanced grass pitch maintenance grant to improve grass pitch quality.	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. 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.	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. 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.	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. 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.							

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Widnes Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹⁶	Cost ¹⁷	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.							
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 has received a pitch maintenance grant (2021) which should see pitch quality to improve to standard quality.	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.							
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.							

Widnes Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹⁶	Cost ¹⁷	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

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Widnes Analysis Area											
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹⁶	Cost ¹⁷	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 ¹⁶	Cost ¹⁷	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. Club has received enhanced grass pitch maintenance for the site which will help to maintain standard. 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

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 Rd¹⁸).
- ◀ **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.

¹⁸ <https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/pdf/eip/EL098.pdf>

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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 ¹⁹	Training demand ²⁰
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 ²¹	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ²²	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
Total	0	£108,829	£15,709	1.05	£176,350

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.

¹⁹ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

²⁰ Hours equate to access to a full size floodlit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

²¹ Sport England Facilities Costs Second Quarter 2020 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

²² 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 ²³	Training demand ²⁴
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 ²⁵	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ²⁶	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
Total	0	£150,550	£21,729	1.44	£243,954

²³ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

²⁴ Hours equate to access to a full size floodlit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

²⁵ Sport England Facilities Costs Second Quarter 2020 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

²⁶ 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 ²⁷	Training demand ²⁸
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.

²⁷ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

²⁸ 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 ²⁹	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ³⁰	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
Total	7 (6.78)	£779,685	£112,539	7 (7.47)	£1,263,428

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

²⁹ Sport England Facilities Costs Second Quarter 2020 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

³⁰ 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)

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.

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
Step 7: Develop the recommendations and action plan	✓	
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?	✓	
Step 8: Write and Adopt the Strategy		✓	
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
Step 9: Apply & deliver the strategy		
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?		
Step 10: Keep the strategy robust & up to date		
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/>

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.

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.

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>

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.

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

- ◀ **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 provides further information on:

- ◀ The RFL Community Facility Strategy
- ◀ Clean, Dry, Safe and Playable Programme
- ◀ Pitch Size Guidance

- ◀ 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

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.

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>1. Internal Steering Group Meeting</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"> • New pitch provision; • Pitch improvements; • Pitch re-configuration; • Pitch loss/threat; • Community Access agreements (e.g. education or private sites); • Plans for future provision. <p>Outcome of meeting and updates to documents recorded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton Sub-Group 	<p>Bi-Annually</p>
<p>2. Sport England and NGB Update Meetings</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"> • Any changes in club and team details; • Any changes in sport format; • Any site specific updates; • Changes to supply and demand data; • The application and use of the PPS e.g. in delivery of new or improved provision, funding opportunities, programmes and initiatives; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HBC Steering Group Chair • Sports NGBs 	<p>Annually for each sport:</p> <p>Football – October Rugby League – May Rugby Union – October Cricket – May Hockey – October</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any new issues and opportunities. 		
<p>3. Prepare Annual PPS Progress Paper</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"> The delivery of PPS recommendations and any changes in priority; Changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs in the area and other supply and demand information with implications for PPS's key findings; Details of any developments of a specific sport or particular format; Details of any new or emerging issues and opportunities; Any issues with the application of the PPS and lessons learnt; Actions needed to keep the PPS 'live' and up to date. <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"> PPS Steering Group 	<p>Annually</p>
<p>4. Circulation and Agreement</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"> PPS Steering Group 	<p>Annually</p>
<p>5. Publish Paper</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"> HBC 	<p>Annually – following Steering Group agreement on progress paper</p>