

WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL DRAFT PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

APPENDIX 4

WEST LANCASHIRE DRAFT PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

2015 - 2025

Integrity, Innovation, Inspiration

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WEST LANCASHIRE DRAFT PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) element of the West Lancashire Leisure Strategy and builds upon the preceding Assessment Report. It provides strategic direction for WLBC's Department of Leisure and Cultural Services and replaces the Council's existing Playing Pitch Strategy 2004. The overarching vision is:

'New priorities to be inserted'

The PPS covers the following playing pitches and outdoor pitch sports:

- ◀ Football pitches (grass and third generation turf (3G))
- ◀ Cricket pitches
- ◀ Rugby union pitches
- ◀ Hockey pitches (artificial grass pitches (AGPs))
- ◀ Bowling greens

The Strategy and Action Plan recommends a number of priority projects for West Lancashire, which should be implemented from 2015 to 2025. It is outlined to provide a framework for improvement and, although resources may not currently be in place to implement it, potential partners and possible sources of external funding will be identified.

The recommendations that come out of this strategy may inform local planning policy and can support the local planning evidence base so there is a policy mechanism to support delivery and secure provision/investment where the opportunity arises.

It is important to acknowledge that improvements identified in this strategy together with the delivery of aims and resulting actions can only be achieved where funding and resources are secured and available. As the availability of internal funding reduces and financial constraints on local government continue it will be increasingly important to secure partnership funding to deliver the strategy aims.

There is a need to build key partnerships between the Council, National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), Sport England, schools, further education providers, community clubs and private landowners to maintain and improve playing pitch provision. In these instances, the potential for the Council to take a strategic lead is more limited (except in terms of Section 106 Agreements/future Community Infrastructure Levy). This document will provide clarity about the way forward, and allow key organisations to focus on the key issues that they can directly influence and achieve.

Structure

The Strategy has been developed from research and analysis of playing pitch provision and usage within Lancashire to provide:

A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of playing pitches (including ancillary facilities).

- ◀ 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 (where action is deemed necessary).

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PART 2: AIMS

It is recommended that the following Strategy Aims are adopted by the Council and its partners to enable it to achieve the overall vision of the Strategy:

AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of sports facilities where it is needed for meeting current or future needs

AIM 2

To **enhance** outdoor sports facilities through improving quality and management of sites

AIM 3

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

The three main themes of the strategy also reflect Sport England's planning aim and objectives for sport; namely:

Figure 1: Sport England Planning for Sport objectives



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PART 3: 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 the playing pitch sports resulting in the sport specific recommendations.

Football pitches

Key issues

- ◀ Most football pitches available for community use are assessed as being of good quality (49%) or standard quality (34%), with less than a quarter (17%) assessed as poor.
- ◀ There is current unmet demand of two teams, one team each at mini 5v5 and youth 11v11 pitch formats.
- ◀ There is exported demand totalling 35 teams, mostly at mini and youth levels from teams accessing the Hightown League outside of West Lancashire, due to the central venue basis on which the league operates within the Sefton area. This reduces some demand for pitches within West Lancashire.
- ◀ There is a total of 40.5 match sessions of actual spare capacity across the Borough, of which 35 are on adult pitches. There are nine pitches within West Lancashire that are available for community use but are unused (excluding school sites).
- ◀ Five sites are overplayed by a total of 8.5 match sessions per week, most of which is on school pitches (6.5 match sessions).
- ◀ There is a shortfall of youth match sessions to accommodate current and future demand on youth 11v11 and mini 5v5 pitches, whilst increases in future demand would cause a shortfall at the youth 9v9 format.

Scenarios

- ◀ Although overall in West Lancashire there is a shortfall of youth and mini pitches, improving pitch quality (either through increased maintenance or drainage improvements in order to increase pitch capacity) together with reconfiguring some adult pitches to youth/mini size.
- ◀ Given the cost of doing such work for all poor and standard quality pitches the continued maintenance required (and associated costs) alternatives need to be considered that can offer a more sustainable model for the future of football in the longer term. The alternative to grass pitches is the use of AGPs for competitive matches and this is something that the FA is supporting, particularly for mini football.

Recommendations

- ◀ Where pitches are assessed as standard or poor quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain/improve pitch quality.
- ◀ Reconfigure some adult pitches to accommodate a shortfall of match sessions for youth matches as a priority and mini matches in the longer term.
- ◀ Work to accommodate displaced, latent and overplay on sites which are not operating at capacity or work with providers of sites to open up sites which are currently unavailable for community use.
- ◀ Work with schools to maximise access to secondary schools and academies to address latent, displaced or future demand and to develop school-club links.
- ◀ Where appropriate, develop partnership and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded clubs to manage their own 'home' sites thus facilitating club development.

Cricket pitches

Key issues

- ◀ There are 10 standard quality pitches and two poor quality.
- ◀ Five sites are overplayed, to a total of 72 match sessions at Burscough CC, Newburgh Sports Club, Ormskirk CC, Ormskirk School Playing Field and Skelmersdale CC.
- ◀ Most of the Council sites are underutilised and have spare capacity. However; not all would be considered suitable by some of the higher level Saturday leagues
- ◀ There are reports of latent demand which is limited by a lack of accessible council pitches.
- ◀ Dalton CC has unsecured use of their home ground which is rented from a local brewery and may therefore require access to a ground within West Lancashire in the future should this arrangement change.
- ◀ There is sufficient capacity within West Lancashire to accommodate overplay, unmet and future demand; however, it must be considered that not all of the spare capacity will be usable by all clubs due to league facility standards/requirements.

Scenarios

- ◀ Spare capacity expressed at Memorial Field (53 match sessions) could accommodate overplay from Burscough CC (25 match sessions) and spare capacity at William Arnold Silcock Memorial Playing Field (63 match sessions) could accommodate overplay from Ormskirk CC (22 match sessions). However, further investigation is required to ascertain whether these clubs would travel to use a second home ground. Alternatively additional grass wickets would on the homeground would be required.
- ◀ Due to its location from sites with spare capacity, overplay at Newburgh Sports Club needs to be accommodated through provision of additional wickets at the homeground.
- ◀ Smaller amounts of overplay at Ormskirk School (two match sessions) and Skelmersdale CC (eight match sessions) can be accommodated through improvements in maintenance.

Recommendations

- ◀ Work with clubs to address quality issues on those pitches assessed as average and poor quality.
- ◀ Work to secure access to a homeground for Dalton CC, as a priority at its current site or seek options for access to an alternative site with spare capacity.
- ◀ Maximise the use of Memorial Field and William Arnold Silcock Memorial Playing Field to cater for overplay particularly at Burscough CC and Ormskirk CC.
- ◀ Address overplay on grass wickets through ensuring that maintenance levels are appropriate to current usage and where possible increasing the number of wickets on squares.
- ◀ Seek to improve access to schools or provide new artificial pitches to meet possible future demand from Last Man Stands (LMS).
- ◀ Ensure all clubs have access to appropriate ancillary facilities in order to sustain and increase participation

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Rugby union pitches

Key issues

- ◀ There are two clubs in West Lancashire; Ormskirk RFC and Tarleton RFC. Student rugby union is played by Edge Hill University.
- ◀ Demand is imported from nearby Wigan by Orrell RFC, which accesses a senior pitch at Up Holland High School for junior rugby.
- ◀ The majority of pitches (six) in West Lancashire are assessed as poor quality. Three pitches are assessed as standard quality and one as good.
- ◀ There is actual spare capacity at Ormskirk School and Sporting Edge for two match equivalent sessions each at the weekend, but not on Wednesdays at Sporting Edge when the University teams play albeit there are accessibility issues relating to ancillary facilities and cost.
- ◀ Ormskirk RFC is overplayed by just over two matches per week. The pitches are of differing quality and the poor quality of pitch two in particular means that the significant amount of use is in excess of the recommended capacity.
- ◀ Up Holland High School is overplayed by over one match per week. The pitch is poor quality, has drainage issues and receives a consistent amount of school use throughout the week.
- ◀ Up Holland High School has plans to relocate to a new school building on neighbouring land, which would see Orrell RFC based there with their own clubhouse facilities.
- ◀ Tarleton Academy is also looking to add a rugby union pitch onsite but requires funding for posts. The Academy is looking to work alongside Tarleton RFC to develop rugby at the school.
- ◀ Overall there are insufficient pitches in West Lancashire to service current and future demand. At present there is minimal overplay equivalent to one mini match per week, though this should be able to be accommodated by the current pitch stock.

Scenarios

- ◀ Ormskirk RFC has two grass pitches of poor and standard (main pitch) quality and are both overplayed by 1.5 and 0.75 match sessions per week. A subsequent increase in pitch quality would help to reduce the current level of overplay on this site and if both pitches were improved to good quality (M2/D3) this would address overplay and create additional capacity for one match session on the main pitch and 0.5 match sessions on the other pitch.
- ◀ The Club is keen to take ownership of the site from the Council via asset transfer, with intentions to install a surrounding fence should it be permitted, to prevent the current unofficial use which is contributing to pitch quality issues. Should this be the case, along with a successful clubhouse refurbishment the Club would be able to generate further revenue to reinvest back into pitch maintenance work, with increased confidence that money and time spent on pitch rejuvenation is less likely to be rendered worthless by surface damage caused by unauthorised use.
- ◀ An alternative solution to addressing overplay at Ormskirk RFC may be to access another site in the area. There is spare capacity at senior peak time at Sporting Edge, where the grass pitch is only used midweek for BUCS matches. The Club already has strong links with the University through combined training sessions and coaching and a good relationship could present this arrangement as a viable option. The pitch is of good quality and well maintained, with access to good quality changing rooms. One potential issue may be the incurring of extra costs to the Club, as pitch hire is currently priced at £87 per match. Ormskirk RFC is currently fundraising for planned clubhouse refurbishment so it is likely that a reduced rate would need to be negotiated if possible.

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Recommendations

- ◀ Address overplay through improving pitch quality at Ormskirk RFC. Capital improvements to the pitches (i.e. new drainage system) are required to raise the quality coupled with an increase in the level of maintenance also required. Also explore options to alleviate some capacity through secured access to Sporting Edge.
- ◀ Support Tarleton RFC to develop rugby at Tarleton Academy including options for funding for new posts in order to cater for potential future demand.
- ◀ Work to secure access at Up Holland High School for Orrell RFC and ensure pitch quality can cater for school and rugby club use.
- ◀ Further investigate the need for improved ancillary facilities (including clubhouse and car parking) at Ormskirk RFC and Tarleton RFC as these are currently representing barriers to participation at these clubs in particular.

Hockey pitches (AGPs)

Key issues

- ◀ There are two AGPs suitable for competitive hockey within West Lancashire at Ormskirk School and Sporting Edge, both with sand filled surfaces.
- ◀ There is one community hockey club within the Borough; Ormskirk HC. Edge Hill University also fields three senior teams which currently play in the midweek BUCS leagues.
- ◀ Ormskirk HC has no plans to expand and has access to sufficient slots for its needs; however, use of the changing rooms at the home ground Ormskirk School can be congested due to several sports teams using the pitches.
- ◀ Ormskirk School pitch is six years old and is assessed as standard quality. Ormskirk HC report that it receives little maintenance and that lines are not marked properly.
- ◀ The pitch at Sporting Edge is just a year old and is assessed as good quality with FIH certification.
- ◀ Sporting Edge has capacity for Saturday peak time hockey and the pitch is underused. Ormskirk School is also likely to have capacity and the Club report no problems with booking.
- ◀ To conclude, West Lancashire is adequately provided for with regards to AGPs suitable for hockey matches, both at present and with the prospect of any future increase in demand.

Recommendations

- ◀ Ensure that existing access to AGPs for Ormskirk HC is protected and that community use agreements are in place to secure the use.
- ◀ Ensure that appropriate sinking funds are in place to maintain the quality of the AGP in the long term.

Bowling greens

Key issues

- ◀ The number of greens in West Lancashire has decreased in recent years. Greens have been lost at Comrades Club, Hare & Hounds, Dog & Gun and St Anne's Parish Centre.
- ◀ The quality of greens in West Lancashire is good, however, there is a general perception that the quality and maintenance of privately/club owned and maintained greens are of a better standard than greens at pub sites. This is likely to be due to cost of upkeep or a lack of equipment and knowledge of maintenance.

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- ◀ There are 30 clubs using bowling greens in West Lancashire. Generally clubs and leagues in West Lancashire report that membership levels have either remained static or decreased in the last three years due to aging players. The majority of clubs plan to increase membership levels in the future; however, no clubs report that they would have more teams if there were more greens.
- ◀ There are four greens showing evidence of overplay at Dog & Gun Pub, Saracens Head Hotel and St Stephen's Sports & Social Club. Overplay at Burscough British Royal Legion BC is minimal and can comfortably be absorbed by the current green capacity.
- ◀ There are plans for the development of two new greens beside Ormskirk Cricket Club, for use by Ormskirk BC. This will include one crown green and one artificial green
- ◀ Another green is under threat at the Windmill Inn which may be sold for development. Windmill BC is a key site for junior development and loss of this green could further limit the long term prospects for bowling in the area
- ◀ West Lancashire is generally well served for bowling greens at present, although closure of many greens at pub sites is a key issue and any potential further closures would likely put pressure on Council greens or loss of teams.

Recommendations

- ◀ Address spare capacity and maximise the availability of bowling greens for pay and play in order to raise the profile of the game, increase levels of membership and the revenue generated by sites.
- ◀ Support clubs which plan to attract younger people through hosting events such as family days as well as establishing links with local primary schools.
- ◀ Where demand exists, ensuring that quality is sustained or improved.

PART 4: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategic recommendations for the Strategy have been developed from the key issues cutting across all outdoor sports and categorised under each of the Strategy Aims. They reflect overarching and common areas to be addressed which apply across outdoor sports facilities and may not be specific to just one sport.

AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of sports facilities where it is needed for meeting current or future needs

Recommendations:

- a. Protect sports facilities where there is a need to do so through 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 outdoor sports facilities where there is a need to do so.

Recommendation a – Protect sports facilities where there is a need to do so through local planning policy

Based on the outcomes of the playing pitch strategy enhance local planning policy and emphasise the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF paragraph 73) and highlight Sport England’s statutory consultee role on planning applications that affect playing field land.

NPPF paragraph 74 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 West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 guides future development within West Lancashire over the 15 year period to 2027. Policy EN3 ‘Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space’ states that the Council ‘will provide open space and sports facilities in line with an appraisal of local context and community need.’ The Policy seeks to effectively protect all parks, natural assets, sports facilities and open space and to manage the existing provision in the most effective way.’ In addition it also recognises the importance of school playing fields.

Future local plan policies should seek to protect facilities and the scope to legally safeguard long term use of strategically important sites to the community such as the strategic sites and key centres should be considered. For example, through the Fields in Trust programme (www.fieldsintrust.org).

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Lapsed and disused – pitches that were formerly playing pitches but are no longer used for formal or informal sports use within the last five years (lapsed) or longer (disused).

It is important to understand that where a pitch is identified as being lapsed, underused or of poor quality this does not necessarily mean that the facility is surplus to requirements. Equally where proposed development is located within access of a high quality playing pitch, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further pitch provision or improvements to existing pitches. The Playing Pitch Strategy may, if appropriate, be used to inform a Development Management decision. However, all applications are assessed by the Council on a case by case basis.

Sport England's playing field policy only allows for development of lapsed or disused playing fields if a PPS shows a clear excess in the quantity of playing pitch provision at present and in the future across all sports, the site concerned has no special significance to sport and the development involves measures to address any deficiencies in terms of quality or accessibility identified by the PPS. Playing Pitch Strategy guidance similarly states that loss of such sites without appropriate replacement should not be considered except in very limited circumstances where the assessment has clearly shown:

1. That there is an excess of accessible provision with secured community use in the study area, and;
2. The particular provision at a site to be surplus to requirements identify any is not of special interest to sport.

Where there is no need to protect facilities and the assessment shows scope for rationalisation, the following should be considered as a first stage when making any decisions about disposal:

- ◀ Is the facility surplus to requirements not only now but also in the future?
- ◀ Could the facility be used for another type of sport for which there is a deficit?
- ◀ Can current users be sufficiently accommodated at another appropriate site taking into consideration access, cost and locality?
- ◀ Consideration as to the quality of the facilities (including ancillary facilities).
- ◀ The long term sustainability of the facility.
- ◀ The level of current use and the impact on the spatial distribution of facilities across West Lancashire of closing a facility.

It may be appropriate to dispose of some existing playing field sites (that are of low value i.e. one/two pitch sites with no changing provision) to generate investment towards creating bigger better quality sites (Strategic Sites) in order to develop the hierarchy of sites (see recommendation e).

The following criteria should be established as the basis for negotiations to mitigate the loss of playing field provision:

- ◀ Ensure that where playing fields are lost through alternative development or closure, that the type of provision of the same or improved standard is provided to meet demand identified.
- ◀ Where pitches are lost due to redevelopment of the site, compensatory re-provision or an equivalent or better contribution for re-investment into new pitches will be sought as appropriate in an alternative accessible location.

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- ◀ Where opportunities exist to additionally increase pitch quality (and therefore pitch capacity to accommodate more matches) this should be a priority (please refer to the action plan to identify quality deficiencies in the appropriate area).
- ◀ All negotiations and mitigation packages should be raised and discussed in partnership with the relevant NGB and Sport England through the Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group.

For further information please refer to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy - 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England' Policy Exception E4 which can be found at:

<http://www.sportengland.org/media/123579/policy-exception-4.pdf>

In terms of mitigation it is important, where possible and appropriate for a particular sport, that this takes place in an area that is accessible to the playing field that is lost to avoid a scenario where a redundant playing field is lost in an area which has deficiencies and is replaced on the other side of the authority.

Furthermore any potential school sites which become redundant over the lifetime of the Strategy may offer potential for meeting community needs on a localised basis. Where schools are closed their playing fields may be dedicated to community use to help address any unmet community needs. Closed school playing fields should be considered in the first instance for becoming community playing fields for meeting the needs identified in the Strategy before being considered for other uses.

The following should be considered when assessing the suitability of conversion of former school playing fields for community use:

- ◀ Location and willingness of LA/club or other party to take on ownership/lease /maintenance
- ◀ Size
- ◀ Quality
- ◀ Physical accessibility
- ◀ History of community access
- ◀ Availability of ancillary facilities

Recommendation b – Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs through a range of solutions and partnership agreements

Local sports clubs should be supported by partners including the Council, NGBs or the County Sports Partnership (CSP) to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership working. For example, support club development and encourage clubs to develop evidence of business and sports development plans to generate an income through their facilities. All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC)¹. Clubs should also be encouraged to work with partners locally whether volunteer support agencies or linking with local businesses.

¹ <http://www.cascinfo.co.uk/cascbenefits>

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As well as improving the quality of well-used, local authority sites, there are a number of sites which have poor quality (or no) ancillary facilities. It is recommended that security of tenure should be granted to the clubs playing on these sites (minimum 25 years as recommended by Sport England and NGBs) so the clubs are in a position to apply for external funding to improve the ancillary facilities.

There are a number of sites in West Lancashire where security of tenure for the club/user needs to be secured (on private or industrial playing fields for example). This also often refers to education sites where formal community use agreements are not in place. NGBs can often help to negotiate and engage with schools, particularly academies where the local authority may not have direct influence. For further information on this, please refer to Objective g.

In addition there are a number of examples in West Lancashire where long term leases could be put into place for the continued use of a site. Each club should be required to meet service and/or strategic recommendations. However, an additional set of criteria should be considered, which takes into account the quality of the club, aligned to its long term development objectives and sustainability.

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 in order that they may be able to take greater levels of ownership and support the wider development and maintenance of facilities. To facilitate this, the Council should support and enable clubs to generate sufficient funds to allow this.

Recommended criteria for lease of sport sites to clubs/organisations

| Club | Site |
|--|---|
| <p>Clubs should have Clubmark/FA Charter Standard 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 'Club Sites' (recommendation d) for new clubs (i.e. not those with a City wide significance) but which offer development potential. For established clubs which have proven success in terms of self-management 'Key Centres' are also appropriate.</p> <p>As a priority, sites should acquire capital investment to improve (which can be attributed to the presence of a Clubmark/Charter Standard club).</p> <p>Sites should be leased with the intention that investment can be sourced to contribute towards improvement of the site.</p> <p>An NGB/Council representative should sit on a management committee for each site leased to a club.</p> |

The Council can further recognise the value of Clubmark/Charter Standard by adopting a policy of prioritising the clubs that are to have access to these better quality facilities. This may be achieved by inviting clubs to apply for season long leases on a particular site as an initial trial.

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The Council should establish a series of core outcomes to derive from clubs taking on a lease arrangement to ensure that the most appropriate clubs are assigned to sites. As an example outcomes may include:

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

Community Asset Transfer

The Council should continue to work towards adopting a policy which supports community management and ownership of assets to local clubs, community groups and trusts. This presents sports clubs and national governing bodies with opportunities to take ownership of their own facilities; it may also provide non-asset owning sports clubs with their first chance to take on a building.

The Sport England Community Sport Asset Transfer Toolkit is a bespoke, interactive web based tool that provides a step by step guide through each stage of the asset transfer process: http://www.sportengland.org/support__advice/asset_transfer.aspx

Recommendation c – Maximise community use of outdoor sports facilities where there is a need to do so

Education sites

In order to maximise community use of educational facilities it is recommended to establish a more coherent, structured relationship with schools. 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. Pricing policies at facilities can be barrier to access at some of the education sites but physical access and resistance from schools, especially academies, to open up 3G provision is also an issue.

A large number of sporting facilities are located on education sites and making these available to sports clubs can offer significant benefits to both the school/college and the local clubs. The Council and other key partners must work with schools and colleges to develop an understanding of the issues that restrict or affect community access. Support should be provided, where appropriate, to address underlying problems. Consideration should be given to a centralised booking system for community use of schools and colleges to minimise administration and make access easier for the users.

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It is not uncommon for school pitch stock not to be fully maximised for community use. Even on established community use sites, access to grass pitches for community use is limited. The Assessment Report identified several issues relating to the use of school facilities:

- ◀ Many sites are underutilised, especially for competitive play for football.
- ◀ Community use is limited and often based on informal agreements between individual schools and clubs.
- ◀ There is no strategic guidance as to which clubs are allocated the use of playing pitch facilities (i.e. in accordance with a strategic need).
- ◀ There are a number of school sites where a community use agreement is in place but it is not clear whether the agreement is being upheld.
- ◀ There are management issues inherent in developing, implementing and managing community use agreements. Advice and guidance can be obtained from Sport England's Schools toolkit and Sports organisations toolkit.
(www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning)

Where appropriate, it will be important for schools to negotiate and sign formal and long-term agreements that secure community use. This need to be examined against these issues:

- ◀ The analysis provides a clear indication of the future pitch requirements and provides a basis for partners to negotiate.
- ◀ Community use should not impact on the needs of schools to deliver curricular and extracurricular activities

Sport England has also produced guidance, online resources and toolkits to help open up and retain school sites for community use and can be found at:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/accessing-schools/>

It is recommended that a working group, led by a partner from the education sector but supported by a range of other sectors including sport and leisure is established to implement the strategic direction in relation to the increased/better use of school facilities. Broadly speaking, its role should be to:

- ◀ To better understand current community use, practices and issues by 'auditing' schools.
- ◀ Ensure community use agreements are upheld
- ◀ Identify and pilot one school/club formal community use agreement with a view to rolling out the model across the area.
- ◀ Ensure that funding to improve the quality of the facilities is identified and secured.
- ◀ As part of any agreement secure a management arrangement for community access, which does not rely on existing school staff structures.
- ◀ Ensure that pitch provision at schools is sufficient in quality and quantity to be able to deliver its curriculum. Once this has been achieved provision could contribute to overcoming deficiencies in the area.

Although there are a growing number of academies and college sites, which the Council has no control over the running of, 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.

AIM 2

To **enhance** outdoor sports facilities through improving quality and management of sites

Recommendation:

- d. Improve quality
- e. Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) for the management and improvement of sites.
- f. Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding

Recommendation d – Improve pitch quality

There are a number of ways in which it is possible to increase pitch quality, including for example, addressing overplay and improving maintenance. These are explored in more detail below.

Addressing quality issues

Priority in the short term (given limited resources) should be directed to overplayed, poor quality sites.

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

For the purposes of the Quality Assessments, this Strategy will refer to pitches and ancillary facilities separately as Good, Standard or Poor quality. In West Lancashire, for example, some good quality sites have poor quality elements i.e. changing rooms or a specific pitch.

Good quality refers to pitches that have, for example, a good maintenance regime coupled with good grass cover, an even surface, are free from vandalism, litter etc. 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. For rugby union, a good pitch is also pipe and/or slit drained.

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

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Poor quality refers to pitches that have, for example, poor levels of maintenance coupled with inadequate grass cover, uneven surface and damage. In terms of ancillary facilities, poor quality refers to inappropriate size of changing rooms, no showers, no running water and old dated interior. For rugby union, drainage is natural and inadequate.

Please refer to the Sport England/NGB quality assessments. Sites played beyond capacity may require remedial action to help reduce this.

For improvement/replacement of AGPs refer to Sport England and the NGBs 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface for Hockey, Football and Rugby Union' document for a guide as to suitable AGP surfaces:

www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/

Addressing overplay

In order to improve the overall quality of the playing pitches stock; it is necessary to ensure that pitches are not overplayed beyond recommended weekly carrying capacity. This is determined by assessing pitch quality (via a non-technical site assessment) and allocating a weekly match limit to each. Each NGB recommends a number of matches that a good quality pitch should take:

| 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 | N/A | N/A |
| | One synthetic wicket | 60 per season | | |

* Please note that the RFU believes that it is most appropriate to base the calculation of pitch capacity upon an assessment of the drainage system and maintenance programme afforded to a site.

There are also a number of sites that are poor quality but are not overplayed. These sites should not be overlooked as often poor quality sites have less demand than other sites but demand could increase if the quality was to increase. Improving pitch quality should not be considered in isolation from maintenance regimes.

Whilst it works both ways in so much as poor pitch condition is a symptom of pitches being over played, potential improvements may make sites more attractive and therefore more popular.

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

There is also a need to balance pitch improvements alongside the transfer of play to alternative pitch sites. Therefore, work with clubs to ensure that sites are not played beyond their capacity and encourage play, where possible, to be transferred to alternative venues which are not operating at capacity.

Increasing pitch 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.

For example, the FA has recently introduced a Pitch Advisor Scheme and has been working in partnership with Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) to develop a Grass Pitch Maintenance service that can be utilised by grassroots football clubs with the simple aim of improving the quality of grass pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide football clubs with advice/practical solutions on a number of areas, with the simple aim of improving the club's playing surface.

In relation to cricket, maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of cricket. If the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous. The 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 the pitch meets the Performance Quality Standards that are benchmarked by the Institute of Groundsmanship. Please note that PQS assessments are also available for other sports.

Recommendation e – Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) for the management and improvement of sites

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 playing pitch sites and associated facilities. Please refer to Part 7: 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 playing pitch facilities.

In order to address the community's needs, to target priority areas and to reduce duplication of provision, there should be a coordinated approach to strategic investment. In delivering this recommendation the Council should maintain a regular dialogue with local partners and through the Playing Pitch Steering Group.

Some investment in new provision will not be made by the Council directly, it is important, however, that the Council therefore seeks to direct and lead a strategic and co-ordinated approach to facility development by education sites, NGBs, sports clubs and the commercial sector to address community needs whilst avoiding duplication of provision.

Please refer to Appendix Two for further funding information which includes details of the current opportunities, likely funding requirements and indicative project costs.

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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. However, one of sport's greatest contributions is its positive impact on public health. It is therefore important to lever in investment from other sectors such as health through, for example, the PCT.

AIM 3

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

Recommendations:

- g. Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock.
- h. Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.

Recommendation g - Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock

The Council and its partners should work to rectify identified inadequacies and meet identified shortfalls as outlined in the Assessment Report and the sport by sport specific recommendations.

It is important that the current levels of grass pitch provision are protected, maintained and enhanced to secure provision now and in the future. For most sports the future demand for provision identified in West Lancashire can be overcome through maximising use of existing pitches through a combination of:

- ◀ Improving pitch quality in order to improve the capacity of pitches to accommodate more matches.
- ◀ The re-designation of pitches for which there is an oversupply.
- ◀ Securing long term community use at school sites.
- ◀ Working with commercial and private providers to increase usage.

While maximising the use of existing pitches offers scope to address the quantitative deficiencies for most sports, new or additional cricket squares on public or private fields, as well as improving existing wickets is required to meet the levels of demand identified for cricket both now and in the future.

There may be a requirement to protect some senior football pitches as this provides the flexibility to provide senior, junior or mini pitches (through different line markings/coning areas of the pitch). However, further work should be undertaken on this as an action for the Council/NGBs. Furthermore the re-designation of adult pitches that are not currently used may lead to a deficiency of adult pitches in the medium to longer term as younger players move up the ages. It is likely that for some sports, particularly football, that the provision of new pitches and facilities will be required in the future to support the predicted future demand.

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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 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.

Likely future sport-by-sport demand trends

| Sport | Future development trend | Strategy impact |
|--------------|--|--|
| Football | The needs of the game will change significantly from the 2013/14 season with the implementation of the FA Youth Development Review. As a result, pitch demands will change. This could also see changes in the seasonal demand of pitches (youth football). | Consider re-allocating leases to Community Charter Standard clubs with a large number of teams. Work with clubs to identify facility development opportunities. Work with clubs in relation to their pitch demands as a result of the FA Youth Development Review. |
| | Demand for senior football is likely to be sustained based on current trends and the move to small sided football. County FA focus to maintain growth of youth football through to adults. | Sustain current stock but consideration given to reconfigure pitches if required. |
| | An increase in women and girls football following £2.4m investment over the next two years (2014-2016) from Sport England to increase the number of women and girls taking part in football sessions. | A need to provide segregated ancillary facilities and the potential need for more pitches. |
| | 3G pitches in West Lancashire are operating at capacity for football training. Demand for 3G pitches for competitive football will increase. It is likely that future demand for the use of 3G pitches to service competitive football, particularly mini and youth will result in some reduced demand for grass pitches. | Ensure that existing AGP provision across the Borough is maximised and that community use agreements are in place. Utilise Sport England/NGB guidance on choosing the correct surface: http://www.sportengland.org/media/30651/Selecting-the-right-artificial-surface-Rev2-2010.pdf |

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

| Sport | Future development trend | Strategy impact |
|-------------|--|---|
| Cricket | Last Man Stands (LMS) does not currently operate in West Lancashire but is a potential target area for 2015 and beyond. LCCB sees West Lancashire as a good location for a possible LMS league due to the existing clubs and schools network already in place. | A likely increase in demand for non turf wickets if LMS is established in the Borough. LCCB is looking to work with a club to host this and funding for an artificial wicket is accessible through the ECB should the chosen site not have one at present. |
| | Women's and girls' cricket is a national priority and there is a target to establish two girls' and one women's team in every local authority over the next five years. | Support clubs to ensure access to segregated changing and toilet provision and access to good quality cricket pitches to support growth. |
| Rugby union | The Rugby World Cup (2015) is predicted to see a further increase in the demand for rugby provision. | Clubs are likely to field more teams in the future, and therefore have a demand for more pitches. It is important, therefore, to work with the clubs to maintain the current pitch stock and to support facility development where appropriate. |
| Hockey | Ormskirk HC has no plans to expand and has access to sufficient slots for its needs. Further to this supply and demand analysis (including FPM findings) highlights that West Lancashire is currently well served for hockey suitable AGPs. | Ensure that existing access to AGPs for hockey is protected and that community use agreements are in place. |
| Bowls | General trend of demand for bowling greens remaining static or slightly decreasing. Locally bowls appears to be declining in terms of club membership. | Current demand for bowling greens is being met by provision in West Lancashire. It is evident that there is some spare capacity across greens which could accommodate more play. However, further site by site capacity analysis is required to fully determine the extent of this. |

Recommendation h - Identify opportunities to add to the overall pitch stock to accommodate both current and future demand

The Council should use, and regularly update, the Action Plan within this Strategy for improvements to its own pitches 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 for each area.

Furthermore any potential school sites which become redundant over the lifetime of the Strategy may offer potential for meeting community needs on a localised basis. Where schools are closed their playing fields may be converted to dedicated community use to help address any unmet community needs.

Some sites in West Lancashire also have the potential to accommodate more football pitches which may be a solution to meeting shortfalls identified as is further explored within the action plan.

PART 5: ACTION PLAN

Introduction

The site-by-site action plan list seeks to address key issues identified in the accompanying 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. Recommendation e below explains the hierarchy of priorities on the list. It is imperative that action plans for priority projects should be developed through the implementation of the strategy.

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.

Recommendation e - Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites

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 playing pitch sites and associated facilities.

West Lancashire has a number of 'key centres', which are sites that are considered to be the most popular and therefore need to be of a high standard in order that they can accommodate a sufficient number of matches per week. This applies mostly to football pitch hire. However, the Council should extend this provision model to recognise the supply and demand issues identified throughout the Assessment Report (i.e. current levels of overplay) and the investment necessary to improve sites based on current levels of usage. The identification of sites is based on their strategic importance in a Borough-wide context (i.e. they accommodate the majority of play). In addition to this, there are a number of sites which have been identified as accommodating both senior and junior matches, sometimes concurrently. Not only could such sites require a mixture of mini, youth and senior pitches, but they also require split-level ancillary facilities, in order to maximise their usage at all times.

In the context of developing a tiered model approach to the management of sports facilities West Lancashire has a large number of multi-team junior clubs which place a great demand on the pitch stock. There are therefore a number of sites which are still owned and maintained by the local authority, but are actually booked by the clubs for the entire season. The sites are then recognised as the 'home ground' of the club. Such sites are fundamentally different from those which can be hired on a regular basis because they are in effect, 'allocated' to a certain club and management responsibility, in terms of allocating teams to pitches, is transferred to the individual club.

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Proposed tiered site criteria

| Strategic sites | Key centres | Local sites | Reserve sites |
|---|---|--|---|
| Strategically located in the Borough. Priority sites for NGB. | Strategically located within the analysis area. | Serves the local community. | Serves the local community. |
| Accommodates three or more grass pitches. Including provision of an AGP. | Accommodates two or more grass pitches. | Accommodates more than one pitch. | Likely to be single-pitch site. |
| 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. | Supports informal demand and/ or training etc. |
| 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 or with an appropriate club on a lease arrangement. | Club either has long-term lease/hires the pitch for the entire season or owns the site. Management control remains within the local authority/other provider or with an appropriate lease arrangement through a committee or education owned. | Management control remains with the Council or existing management body. |
| Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines. | Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines. | Standard maintenance regime either by the club or in house maintenance contract. | Basic level of maintenance i.e. grass cutting and line marking as required. |
| 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. | Appropriate access changing to accommodate both senior and junior use concurrently (if required). | No requirement for access changing to accommodation. |

Strategic sites are of 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.

The financial, social and sporting benefits which can be achieved through development of strategic sites (also known as hub sites) are significant. Sport England provides further guidance on the development of community sports hubs at:

http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/planning_tools_and_guidance/sports_hubs.aspx

Key centres

Although these sites are more community focused, some are still likely to service a wider analysis area (or slightly wider). However, there may be more of a focus on a specific sport i.e. a dedicated site.

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

From a football perspective, these sites already seek to accommodate the growing emphasis on football venues catering for youth football (especially mini-soccer) matches. The conditions recommended for mini and youth football are becoming more stringent. This should be reflected in the provision of a unique tier of pitches for mini and youth football solely that can ensure player safety, as well as being maintained more efficiently. It is anticipated that both youth and mini-football matches could be played on these sites. Initial investment could be required in the short term and identified in the Action Plan.

Additionally, it is considered that some financial investment will be necessary to improve the ancillary facilities at both Strategic 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 which are hired to clubs for a season, or are sites which have been leased on a long-term basis. Primarily they are sites with more than one pitch. The level of priority attached to them for Council-generated investment may be relatively low and consideration should be given, on a site-by-site basis, to the feasibility of a club taking a long-term lease on the site (if not already present), in order that external funding can be sought.

It is possible that sites could be included in this tier which are not currently hired or leased to a club, but have the potential to be leased to a suitable club. Such sites will require some level of investment, either to the pitches or ancillary facilities, and it is 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 the facilities.

Reserve sites could be used as overspill for neighbouring sites and/or for summer matches/competitions, training or informal play. They are most likely to be single-pitch sites with no ancillary facilities.

In addition to above, **potential surplus sites** are those which are to be considered for disposal and which release reinvestment for further up the hierarchy.

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 strategic sites.
- ◀ Football investment programme/3G pitches development with The FA.

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Action plan

Partners

The column indicating Partners refers to the main organisation that the Council will liaise with in helping to deliver the actions. The next stage in the development of the action plan will be to agree a Lead Partner to help deliver the actions.

Site hierarchy tier and priority level

Strategic sites have a **high** priority level as they have borough wide importance and have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the key issues identified in the assessment.

Key centres are a **medium** priority and 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.

Low priority sites are club or education sites with local specific importance and have been identified on a site by site basis as issues appertaining to individual sites but that may also contribute to addressing the issues identified in the assessment

Costs

The strategic actions have also been ranked as low, medium or high based on cost. The brackets in which these sit 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 www.sportengland.org/media/198443/facility-costs-4q13.pdf

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 timescales relate to delivery times and are not priority based.

Timescales: (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.**

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

NORTHERN PARISHES AREA

Football – grass pitches

Summary of pitches required to meet current and future demand

| Analysis area | Actual spare capacity ² | Demand (match equivalent sessions) | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| | | Overplay | Unmet demand | Current total | Future demand | Total |
| Adult pitches | 10 | 1 | - | -9 | - | -9 |
| Youth pitches 11v11 | - | 2.5 | - | 2.5 | 0.5 | 3 |
| Youth pitches 9v9 | 1 | - | - | -1 | - | -1 |
| Mini pitches 7v7 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Mini pitches 5v5 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 |

- Current shortfall of 2.5 match sessions on youth 11v11 pitches.
- Future demand for youth 11v11 exacerbates the current shortfall. Future demand for youth 11v11 and mini 5v5 pitches cannot be accommodated.
- Actual spare capacity of nine match sessions expressed on adult pitches as well as one match session available on youth 9v9 pitches.

AGPs

- There are three small sized AGPs in the area, all available for community use. There are two pitches located at Bank Leisure Centre, both of which are sand filled 5v5 cages
- There is one 3G surface at 3G All Weather Football Limited which is operated by Hesketh Bank FC, mainly to accommodate training demand for its various teams.

Cricket

- Most overplay is at Burscough CC where the 12 wicket square is overplayed by 25 matches per season. Newburgh Sports Club has 12 grass wickets of standard quality and is overplayed by a total of 15 matches per season.

Rugby union

- Tarleton RFC is the only community club in the area where two standard quality pitches are played to capacity.
- There is one other pitch at Burscough Priory Science College which is poor quality and unavailable for use.

Rugby league

- There is one poor quality senior rugby league pitch at Alder Lane Playing Fields, used heavily Shevington Sharks ARLFC which imports demand from neighbouring Wigan.

² In match equivalent sessions

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Bowls

- ◀ There are two greens overplayed in the Northern area, St Stephen's Sport & Social Club by 20 members and Burscough Royal British Legion Bowls Club by just two members.

**WEST LANCASHIRE
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

| Site ID | Site | Sport | Management | Current status | Recommended actions | Partners | Hierarchy | Timescales | Cost ³ | Aim |
|---------|---|--------------|----------------------|--|--|----------------|------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 3G All Weather Football Limited | AGP | Private/ Sports Club | One small sized 3G pitch, operated and primarily used by Hesketh Bank FC for training, though available to let. | Ensure that the pitch continues to cater for the clubs training needs and maximise use by other clubs or groups. | FA | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 4 | Alder Lane Playing Field | Football | Parish Council | One standard quality adult pitch, currently unused with subsequent peak time capacity | Consider conversion to youth 11v11 to accommodate area shortfall. | Parish Council | Local | M | M | Provide Enhance |
| | | Rugby league | | One poor quality senior pitch with poor drainage used heavily for training by Wigan based team Shevington Sharks ARLFC | Seek options to improve pitch quality through further maintenance in order to reduce overplay | | | | | |
| 5 | Appley Bridge Football Club | Football | Sports Club | One good quality adult pitch with spare capacity at peak time, used by Appley Bridge FC. | Retain spare capacity in order to protect and sustain quality. | FA | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 6 | Aveling Drive Playing Fields | Football | Local Authority | One standard quality adult pitch with spare capacity at peak time. Only used for 0.5 sessions per week by Banks FC. Isolated location and serves a specific community. | Retain existing use and work with the Club to maximise use of the site. Explore options for lease arrangements. | FA WLBC | Local | M | L | Protect |
| 7 | Banks Leisure Centre | AGP | Local Authority | Two standard quality sand dressed 5v5 pitches. | Explore options for use by mini and youth teams to accommodate training demand. | WLBC | Local | S | L | Protect |
| 12 | Burscough Cricket Club | Cricket | Sports Club | One standard quality pitch with twelve wicket square, overplayed by 22 match sessions per season. | Ascertain feasibility of using spare capacity at Memorial Field to alleviate overplay. Alternatively, investigate possibility of adding further grass wickets to the existing square or an artificial wicket which may be able to accommodate some junior or potential LMS use. | LCCB | Local | S | M | Protect |
| | | Bowls | | One good quality crown green used by Burscough BC. | Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality. | Club | | L | L | |
| 13 | Burscough Football Club (Victoria Park) | Football | Sports Club | Step 4 compliant ground with good quality floodlit pitch. 0.5 sessions available at peak time. | Retain minimal available capacity in order to protect pitch quality as some midweek fixtures can bring persistent use over a short time. | Club FA | Key Centre | M | M | Enhance |
| 14 | Burscough Priory Science College | Football | Education | Three poor quality youth 11v11 pitches. No formal community use albeit there is some use by Burscough JFC. Pitches are overplayed as a result of school use. | Seek to improve maintenance in order to reduce the level of overplay/general quality. | School | Reserve | S | L | Enhance |
| | | Rugby union | | One poor (M0/D1) quality pitch which is unavailable for community use due to weekend staffing issues. | | | | | | |

³ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WEST LANCASHIRE
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

| Site ID | Site | Sport | Management | Current status | Recommended actions | Partners | Hierarchy | Timescales | Cost ⁴ | Aim |
|---------|--------------------------|----------|----------------|--|---|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 15 | Carr Lane Playing Field | Football | Sports Club | Three good quality pitches (although those behind the clubhouse drain poorly) with 6 match sessions available at peak time. One good quality youth 9v9 pitch with 3 matches available, 0.5 matches of which are at youth peak time. Pitches leased to Tarleton Corinthians FC from the Parish Council. | Convert one or more adult pitches to youth 11v11, as only two adult teams play on Saturday whilst four youth 11v11 currently play on Sundays on adult pitches. In the longer term investigate options to improve pitch drainage as required. | FA Club | Strategic | S-L | M | Protect Enhance |
| | | Cricket | | Two good quality squares with 12 and 7 wickets respectively, marked in between football pitches with outfield overlapping them. Aggregated site capacity of 15 matches per season but none available at peak time. Currently used by Tarleton CC and Bedford Park CC. | Uphold current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued wicket quality. Retain available capacity available on Sunday mornings. | LCCB Club | | L | L | |
| 21 | Dalton Cricket Club | Cricket | Sports Club | One standard quality square with 11 wickets. 19 matches of available capacity though only available at junior peak time. Unsecured tenure and no agreement on sporting use of the site. | Work towards establishing security of the current site to enable continued tenure. Alternatively, identify other sites with capacity should the Club have to move from the current site. | LCCB Club | Local | S | L | Protect |
| 24 | Eagle & Child Pub | Bowls | Private | One poor quality crown green used by Eagle & Child BC, capacity unknown. | Engage with the Club to identify capacity. Seek to improve green quality through improved maintenance and access to required equipment. | WLBC | Local | S | L | Enhance |
| 25 | Hall Green | Bowls | Parish Council | One standard quality crown green used by three different clubs. Identified spare capacity of approx. 48 members. | Uphold current maintenance regime in order to improve green quality. Maximise potential for pay and play to help develop interest. | Parish Council Club | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 29 | Hesketh Bank Sports Club | Cricket | Sports Club | One standard quality square with 10 wickets, used by Hesketh Bank CC. Minimal capacity of 4 matches per year but none available at peak time. | Retain existing capacity to account for any additional fixtures such as cup competition progress, whilst working towards improvement in square quality through increased maintenance. | LCCB Club | Key Centre | S | L | Protect Enhance |
| | | Bowls | | Two good quality crown greens used by Hesketh Bank BC. Total available capacity of 31 members. | Uphold current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality | Club | | L | L | |
| 31 | Holmeswood Bowling Club | Bowls | Sports Club | One standard quality crown green played to capacity. | Uphold current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality. | Club | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 39 | Newburgh Sports Club | Football | Sports Club | One standard quality adult pitch used by Newburgh Harrock United FC. One match equivalent available at peak time. | Retain spare capacity in order to help sustain/improve pitch quality and for potential club growth. | FA Club | Key Centre | L | L | Protect |
| | | Cricket | | Standard quality square with 12 wickets, overplayed by 15 matches. Used by Newburgh CC. | Investigate potential to add further grass wickets to the existing square in order to help alleviate overplay. | LCCB Club | | S | M | Provide |

⁴ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WEST LANCASHIRE
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

| Site ID | Site | Sport | Management | Current status | Recommended actions | Partners | Hierarchy | Timescales | Cost ⁵ | Aim |
|---------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|---|--|-----------------|-----------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 46 | Richmond Park | Football | Local Authority | One good quality adult pitch used by Burscough Richmond FC. Peak time capacity for one session per week. | Maximise use of the site and accommodate play from Victoria Park (ID 63). Investigate funding options to make required improvements and maximise use. | WLBC | Local | S | L | Protect Enhance |
| | | Bowls | | One green identified as below the standard expected on which to play league matches. Used St John's Church BC and has spare capacity. | | | | M | M | |
| 47 | Rufford Cricket Club | Cricket | Sports Club | Standard quality 12 wicket square with 8 matches of spare capacity, none of which are available at peak time. Poor quality changing provision | Retain existing capacity to account for any additional fixtures such as cup competition progress, whilst working towards improvement in square quality through further maintenance. Explore options for funding to improve quality of changing provision. | LCCB Club | Local | M | M | Enhance |
| 50 | Shore Road Recreation Ground | Football | Local Authority | One good quality adult pitch with youth 9v9 marked in the middle. Available capacity of 0.5 matches for youth 9v9 at peak time. | Reduce over making. No need to retain adult pitch markings. | WLBC | Local | S | L | Enhance |
| 58 | Station Road Centurion Sports Ground | Football | Sports Club | One good quality adult pitch, home to Hesketh Bank FC (Step 7A Club). Minimal spare capacity. No floodlighting and though not required for Step 7 football, would prove an obstacle to progression up the football pyramid should the Club achieve future success. | Retain spare capacity in order to maintain good quality pitch. In the longer term consider options for pitch floodlighting. | FA Club WLBC | Local | S-M | L-M | Protect |
| 59 | Tarleton Academy | Football | Education | Two poor quality adult pitches currently unused by community clubs due to poor quality. Overplayed by one match per week when accounting for school use. | Seek to improve pitch quality through improved maintenance and management of pitch usage. | School | Reserve | M | L | Enhance |
| | | Rugby union | | Academy is also looking to add a rugby union pitch onsite but requires funding for posts. The Academy is looking to work alongside Tarleton RFC to develop rugby at the school. | Support Tarleton RFC to develop rugby at Tarleton Academy including options for funding for new posts in order to cater for potential future demand. | RFU | Local | S | L-M | Provide |
| 60 | Tarleton Rugby RFC | Rugby union | Sports Club | Two standard (M0/D3) quality pitches. Currently played to capacity by senior and junior matches with no training use. Poor quality clubhouse and car parking are inhibiting future growth of the club. | Explore options for increased maintenance of the pitches in order to improve quality. Further investigate the need to improve ancillary facilities. Establish links with Tarleton Academy in order to explore possible use of any potential new rugby pitch as an additional venue to build future capacity to accommodate growth. | RFU | Local | S-M | L | Protect Enhance |
| 63 | Victoria Park | Football | Local Authority | One standard quality pitch with only 0.5 matches in use by Burscough Bridge FC and available at peak time. | Transfer play to Richmond Park (ID 46) and retain this site as a future reserve. | WLBC | Reserve | M | L | - |

⁵ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WEST LANCASHIRE
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

| Site ID | Site | Sport | Management | Current status | Recommended actions | Partners | Hierarchy | Timescales | Cost ⁶ | Aim |
|---------|---|-------|-------------|---|---|----------|-----------|------------|-------------------|---------|
| 69 | Tarleton Bowling Club | Bowls | Sports Club | Two good quality crown greens with spare capacity for approx. 46 members. | Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality. | Club | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 71 | St Stephen's Sport & Social Club | Bowls | Sports Club | One good quality crown green overplayed by approx. 20 members. | Ensure quality is sustained through maintenance in order to accommodate any overplay. | Club | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 73 | Burscough Royal British Legion Bowls Club | Bowls | Sports Club | One standard quality crown green. Minimal level of overplay amounting to two members. | Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality, allowing small level of overplay to be absorbed on current green. | Club | Local | L | L | Protect |

⁶ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

ORMSKIRK, AUGHTON & WESTERN AREA

Football – grass pitches

Summary of pitches required to meet current and future demand

| Analysis area | Actual spare capacity ⁷ | Demand (match equivalent sessions) | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| | | Overplay | Unmet demand | Current total | Future demand | Total |
| Adult pitches | 16 | 0.5 | - | -15.5 | 1 | -14.5 |
| Youth pitches 11v11 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Youth pitches 9v9 | 1.5 | - | - | -1.5 | - | -1.5 |
| Mini pitches 7v7 | 2 | - | - | -2 | - | -2 |
| Mini pitches 5v5 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

- ◀ No current shortfall of pitches and minimal overplay.
- ◀ Future demand for adult pitches can be accommodated comfortably.
- ◀ Large amount of actual spare capacity expressed on adult pitches and to a lesser extent on youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 pitches.

AGPs

- ◀ There are three full sized AGPs in the area, made up of two sand filled surfaces and one 3G surfaces. All pitches are operating to capacity at midweek football peak time
- ◀ There is one FIH certified pitch and one World Rugby Reg22/FA certified 3G pitch located at Sporting Edge
- ◀ There is a sand filled pitch at Ormskirk School which is not widely available for community use at weekends, though Ormskirk HC play there and use is available on request. The Club only has one senior team and therefore there is spare capacity for further hockey use
- ◀ A number of small sided cages add to the available provision and a number of mini and youth football teams report making use of them for training, for example the three 5v5 cages at Sporting Edge

Cricket

- ◀ Three sites are overplayed, much of which is at Ormskirk CC where the good quality square with 14 wickets is overused by 22 matches per year. Ormskirk School Playing Pitches and Skelmersdale CC are also overplayed by two and eight matches respectively.
- ◀ Memorial Field has spare capacity of 53 matches with availability at junior peak time. William Arnold Silcock Memorial Playing Field has 63 match sessions available across two pitches at both senior and junior peak time.

⁷ In match equivalent sessions

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Rugby union

- ◀ The two pitches at Ormskirk RFC are overplayed to the sum of just over two match sessions per week due to poor/standard quality pitches both in relation to drainage and maintenance.
- ◀ Two sites evidence actual spare capacity. Ormskirk School and Sporting Edge each have two match sessions available and pitches are available at both senior and junior peak time albeit accessibility issues in relation to availability of appropriate ancillary facilities and cost respectively pose a threat to securing use of these pitches.

Rugby league

- ◀ There is one good quality pitch at Sporting Edge which is also used for football. Only student teams play matches here and it is not in use by community clubs. Capacity is subsequently influenced by balance of football use.

Hockey

- ◀ One full size sand based AGP at Ormskirk School used by Ormskirk HC Club which can accommodate current hockey use, although it is only available on request. One other sand based pitch at Sporting Edge is unused by community clubs and has capacity for hockey use at weekends.

Bowls

- ◀ There are twelve crown greens in the area, six of which indicate available spare capacity
- ◀ Two greens are overplayed at Dog & Gun Pub and Saracens Head Hotel by 40 and 22 members respectively. Both greens are assessed as good quality.

**WEST LANCASHIRE
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

| Site ID | Site | Sport | Management | Current status | Recommended actions | Partners | Hierarchy | Timescales | Cost ⁸ | Aim |
|---------|--------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|---|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 2 | Abbey Lane Playing Field | Football | Local Authority | Six good quality pitches with current minimal use by Burscough JFC. The Club is in discussions with the Council regarding the proposed long term lease of the site. Although the configuration of pitches is subject to change the priority will be for junior pitches. It would act as operator, though the site will remain open to further community use. Intentions are for the site to be ready and operational for the 2015/16 season, however, the Club has also registered its interest in providing a 3G pitch onsite. | Assist the Club in establishing asset transfer and management of the site. Re-assess capacity and usage of other sites once all Burscough JFC transfer to this site. Work to re-establish use of the cricket pitches. | WLBC FA | Strategic High Priority | M | M | Protect Provide |
| 9 | Bickerstaffe Recreation Ground | Football | Local Authority | Two good quality pitches; one adult (used by Bickerstaffe AFC) with some spare capacity and one mini 7v7 used. The Club has plans for growth and as such will utilise spare capacity available. | Retain spare capacity in order to protect quality in the short term and in readiness to accommodate potential future growth. Consider the site for a lease agreement. | WLBC FA | Local | M | L | Protect |
| 10 | Aughton Institute | Bowls | Sports Club | One good quality crown green, capacity unknown. | Engage with the Club to identify capacity. Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality. | Club | Local | S | L | Protect |
| 17 | Churchfields | Rugby union | Local Authority | One poor (M0/D1) quality mini pitch, played to capacity by Ormskirk RUFC junior section. | Seek to improve maintenance and subsequent pitch quality in order to increase capacity available to accommodate projected future demand from Ormskirk RFC. | WLBC RFU | Local | M | M | Protect |
| 18 | Cockbeck Tavern | Bowls | Private | One good quality crown green, available capacity of 10 members. | Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality. | Club | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 19 | Coronation Park | Bowls | Local Authority | One good quality crown green used by four clubs, available capacity of 15 members. | Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality. Maximise potential for pay and play to help develop interest. | WLBC | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 23 | Dog & Gun Pub | Bowls | Private | One good quality crown green overplayed by 40 members. | Ensure quality is able to sustain current membership levels. | Club | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 26 | Halton Castle Inn | Bowls | Private | One good quality crown green used by two clubs, available capacity of 24 members. | Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality. | Club | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 32 | Hurlston Hall Golf Club | Bowls | Sports Club | One good quality crown green, available capacity of 12 members. | Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality. | Club | Local | L | L | Protect |

⁸ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WEST LANCASHIRE
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

| Site ID | Site | Sport | Management | Current status | Recommended actions | Partners | Hierarchy | Timescales | Cost ⁹ | Aim |
|---------|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|---|---|------------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|---------|
| 36 | Memorial Field | Football | Parish Council | One good quality pitch used by Halsall FC and available for 0.5 match sessions at peak time. | Investigate options for other teams to use the pitch in order to maximise use of the site, especially on Saturdays when the pitch is unused. | Parish Council FA | Local | S | L | Protect |
| | | Cricket | | One standard quality square with 15 wickets one artificial wicket outfield overlapping football pitches. 53 matches per season of spare capacity but only available at junior peak time. Used by Halsall West End CC. | Seek opportunities to improve quality/maintenance and utilise spare capacity by transferring play from overused sites i.e. Burscough CC. | Parish Council LCCB | | M | M | |
| 40 | Ormskirk Cricket Club | Cricket | Sports Club | One good quality square with 14 wickets. Overplayed by 22 matches per season. | Ascertain feasibility of using spare capacity at William Arnold Silcock Memorial Playing Field to alleviate overplay. Alternatively, investigate possibility of adding further grass wickets to the existing square or an artificial wicket which may be able to accommodate some junior or potential LMS use. | LCCB | Key Centre | S | L | Protect |
| 42 | Ormskirk RFC | Rugby union | Sports Club | Ormskirk RFC has two grass pitches of poor and standard (main pitch) quality and are both overplayed by 1.5 and 0.75 match sessions per week. A subsequent increase in pitch quality would help to reduce the current level of overplay on this site and if both pitches were improved to good quality (M2/D3) this would address overplay and create additional capacity for one match session on the main pitch and 0.5 match sessions on the other pitch. The Club is keen to take ownership of the site from the Council via asset transfer, with intentions to install a surrounding fence should it be permitted, to prevent the current unofficial use. Poor quality clubhouse and car parking are inhibiting future growth of the club. | Address overplay through improving pitch quality at Ormskirk RFC. Capital improvements to the pitches (i.e. new drainage system) are required to raise the quality coupled with an increase in the level of maintenance also required. Also look to improve floodlit training facilities. In addition explore options to alleviate some capacity through secured access to Sporting Edge (cost issues would need to be overcome). Assist the Club in continuing to work towards desired asset transfer and management of the site and provide support towards any applications for funding opportunities for improved ancillary facilities. | WLBC RFU Club | Key Centre | M | M | Enhance |

⁹ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WEST LANCASHIRE
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

| Site ID | Site | Sport | Management | Current status | Recommended actions | Partners | Hierarchy | Timescales | Cost ¹⁰ | Aim |
|---------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--|--|-------------|------------|------------|--------------------|---------|
| 43 | Ormskirk School | Football | Education | Three poor quality adult pitches overplayed by 0.5 sessions when taking into account school use. Community use by Georges FC. | Work to improve pitch quality through increased maintenance to better accommodate school fixtures and community use. | School FA | Local | M | L | Enhance |
| | | Rugby union | | Two poor (M0/D1) quality senior pitches available but no community use. Capacity of two matches available at both senior and junior peak times. | Work to improve pitch quality through increased maintenance to better accommodate school fixtures and community use (Ormskirk RFU if needed). | School RFU | | M | L | |
| | | AGP | | One standard quality sand filled pitch used by Ormskirk HC. Available capacity at weekends but community use only available upon request. Use of the changing rooms can be congested due at peak times. | Improve quality and frequency of maintenance, particularly line marking. Investigate potential to increase hours available and secure use for the Club including arrangements for priority access to changing for matches. | School EH | | S | M | |
| 44 | Ormskirk School Playing Pitches | Football | Education | Three poor quality adult pitches used by Ormskirk FC Junior section. 0.5 sessions available at peak time. | Retain spare capacity and work to improve pitch quality to better accommodate school fixtures and community use. | School FA | Local | S | M | Enhance |
| | | Cricket | | One standard quality square with eight wickets. Also two artificial wickets onsite. Used by Ormskirk Occasionals CC and as an alternative venue by Ormskirk CC. Minimal level of overplay amounting to two matches per season. | Seek to accommodate existing overplay by improvement in pitch quality through increased maintenance. | School LCCB | | M | L | |
| 48 | Saracens Head Hotel | Bowls | Private | One good quality crown green overplayed by 22 members. | Ensure quality is sustained in order to accommodate overplay. | Club | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 49 | Scarlsbrick Hall School | Football/ rugby union | Private Education | One standard quality adult football pitch and one standard quality mini rugby pitch unavailable for community use. | Retain for school use. | School | Reserve | L | L | Protect |
| 51 | Skelmersdale Cricket Club | Cricket | Sports Club | One good quality square with 16 wickets and one artificial wicket. Overplayed by eight matches per season. | Maintain/improve pitch quality through maintenance in order to absorb overplay. Further usage would require access to additional pitch. | Club LCCB | Key Centre | S | L | Protect |

¹⁰ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WEST LANCASHIRE
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

| Site ID | Site | Sport | Management | Current status | Recommended actions | Partners | Hierarchy | Timescales | Cost ¹¹ | Aim |
|---------|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|--|---|----------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 55 | Sporting Edge | Football | University | Five standard quality adult pitches with 9.5 matches of capacity, of which all are available at peak time. One pitch is dual use and also used for rugby league but only currently by midweek student teams. | Maintain/improve quality of pitches whilst increasing community use in order to maximise use of capacity available. | University FA | Strategic | M | M | Protect Enhance |
| | | Rugby league | | One good quality pitch marked which is also used for football. 0.5 matches of current play by student teams and capacity is available however football use must also be considered in order to ascertain how much. | Seek to increase rugby league use by students and continue to develop the sport, whilst managing the balance between football and rugby league use. | University RFL | | M | L | |
| | | Rugby union | | One good (M2/D3) quality pitch used midweek by student teams though no current community users. Two matches of capacity available for use in senior and junior peak time. | Continue to develop rugby union at the University and facilitate growth in participation. Investigate the potential and affordability for use by Ormskirk RFC as an alternate venue to reduce overplay at its home ground. | University RFU | | S | L | |
| | | AGP | | One good quality World Rugby Reg 22 certified 3G pitch and one good quality sand filled pitch both operating at capacity to accommodate football demand. University hockey usage but no current community hockey use. Three standard quality 5v5 size 3G cages used by students and some mini soccer teams for training. | Maximise weekend use of 3G pitch for competitive football and rugby union play, as it is not currently used by community clubs for matches on a regular basis. Identify any potential Clubs which may wish to play on 3G as a home venue. | University FA RFU | | S | L | |
| 57 | St Bede's Catholic High School | Football | Education | Two poor quality adult pitches played to capacity when accounting for school use. | Work to improve pitch quality through increased maintenance to better accommodate school fixtures and community use. | School | Local | M | M | Enhance |
| | | AGP | | One standard quality 3G currently operating at capacity to accommodate community football training demand. | Ensure AGP receives required and regular maintenance in order to uphold quality from high demand. | School | | S | M | |
| 66 | Whittle Drive Playing Fields | Football | Local Authority | Leased to on a three year basis to Ormskirk West End FC (Charter Standard Development Club). Two standard quality adult pitches used as a summer training venue (as its teams play at central venues) and the Club which reports issues with maintenance of the site. The ancillary facilities are particularly poor and the lack of parking is also a key challenge. The Club is keen to have girls' teams playing from the site but is limited by changing rooms that are very small. | Work with the Club to ascertain future demand to develop the site for use by competitive teams. This would require an improvement to ancillary facilities and parking. Consider options for the Club to take on maintenance of the site within a longer term lease agreement. | Club FA WLBC | Local | M | M | Enhance |

¹¹ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WEST LANCASHIRE
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

| Site ID | Site | Sport | Management | Current status | Recommended actions | Partners | Hierarchy | Timescales | Cost ¹² | Aim |
|---------|---|----------|----------------|---|--|--------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------------|---------|
| 67 | William Arnold Silcock Memorial Playing Field | Football | Parish Council | Site is home to Town Green FC. Two mini 5v5 pitches, three mini 7v7 and two youth 9v9, all of standard quality. All with some spare capacity at peak time. | Maintain and improve quality through increased maintenance, in order to allow for future growth. | Parish Council Club FA | Key Centre | S | L | Enhance |
| | | Cricket | | Two standard quality squares with 11 and six wickets respectively, used by Aughton CC. Total available capacity of 63 matches available at both senior and junior peak times. Overmarked by football pitches. | Maintain and improve quality of squares through further maintenance and maximise use of the site to accommodate overplay from other sites. | Parish Council Club LCCB | | S | L | |
| | | Bowls | | One good quality crown green, capacity unknown. | Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure green quality. | Parish Council | | L | L | |
| 68 | Windmill Inn | Bowls | Private | One standard quality crown green, almost played to capacity. Pub has closed and green may be under threat. Key club actively involved in junior development. | Seek to establish security of tenure or alternatively identify local provision to accommodate users. Investigate possibility of using new greens to be developed at Ormskirk Cricket Club. | WLBC | Local | S | L | Protect |
| 70 | Asmall House | Bowls | Private | One good quality crown green, available capacity of 28 members. | Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality and maximise use through offering play and play. | Club | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 72 | Stanley Arms Pub | Bowls | Private | One good quality crown green, capacity unknown. | Engage with the Club to identify capacity. Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality. | Club | Local | S | L | Protect |
| 76 | Scarisbrick NSC | Bowls | Private | One good quality crown green, capacity unknown. | Engage with the Club to identify capacity. Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality. | Club | Local | S | L | Protect |

¹² (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

SKELMERSDALE & UP HOLLAND AREA

Football – grass pitches

Summary of pitches required to meet current and future demand

| Analysis area | Actual spare capacity ¹³ | Demand (match equivalent sessions) | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| | | Overplay | Unmet demand | Current total | Future demand | Total |
| Adult pitches | 9 | 2 | - | -7 | - | -7 |
| Youth pitches 11v11 | - | - | 0.5 | 0.5 | - | 0.5 |
| Youth pitches 9v9 | - | 2.5 | - | 2.5 | 2 | 4.5 |
| Mini pitches 7v7 | 1 | - | - | -1 | - | -1 |
| Mini pitches 5v5 | - | - | 0.5 | 0.5 | 3 | 3.5 |

- Current shortfall of pitches at youth 11v11 and mini 5v5 formats caused by unmet demand, as well as at youth 9v9 format due to existing overplay.
- Future demand for youth 11v11, 9v9 and 5v5 pitches cannot be accommodated.
- Actual spare capacity expressed on adult pitches as well as one match session on mini 7v7 pitches.
- Majority of AGPs accommodating football demand are located in the area. All 3G pitches are operating at capacity.

AGPs

- There are three full sized AGPs situated across two sites at JMO Sports Park (two pitches) and Activ 8 at Glenburn Sports College. All three pitches at FA certified 3G surfaces.
- All three pitches are operating at capacity during football peak time however competitive match use is largely limited to ad hoc usage when required including some imported demand from St Helens.
- Provision is supplemented by nine small sided AGP cages at JMO Sports Park of varying sizes, used for training by some mini and youth teams.

Cricket

- There is no cricket provision in the area, though neither is there demand as there are no teams.

Rugby union

- There is only one pitch in the area at Up Holland High School which is assessed as poor quality. It is widely unavailable for community use but agreed use by Orrell RUFC mini section causes it to be overplayed.

Rugby league

- There is no rugby league provision in the area, though neither is there demand as there are no teams.

¹³ In match equivalent sessions

WEST LANCASHIRE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Bowls

- ◀ There are just two bowling greens in the area; one good quality green at Stanley Coronation Park and another good quality green at Village Inn Pub.
- ◀ Stanley Coronation Park has identified spare capacity for 10 more members. Neither green shows evidence of overplay.

**WEST LANCASHIRE
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

| Site ID | Site | Sport | Management | Current status | Recommended actions | Partners | Hierarchy | Timescales | Cost ¹⁴ | Aim |
|---------|---|----------|-----------------|---|--|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|--------------------|---------|
| 3 | Glenburn Sports College | Football | Education | Four good quality adult pitches, one of which is marked over with youth 9v9. Some peak time spare capacity on adult pitches. School retains one pitch as spare capacity to fulfil bookings if one is unplayable. Good quality mini 7v7 also onsite but currently unused. School is closing and there is serious doubt over retention of sports facilities. | Seek to retain pitches and secure use or mitigate loss. Convert two adult pitches to youth pitches in order to meet shortfalls. Retain some spare capacity for rest and rotation and to protect quality. | WLBC FA | Key Centre High Priority | S | L | Protect |
| | | AGP | | One standard quality full size 3G pitch. FA certified and operating at full capacity. | Seek to retain pitches and secure use or mitigate loss. Consider Active8 option to manage, alongside grass pitches. | | | | | |
| 11 | Blaguegate Playing Fields | Football | Local Authority | Eight good quality adult pitches with no peak time capacity. Pitches 1 & 2 are lapsed. Changing rooms have a potential child welfare issues surrounding the sharing of the changing block with adults at peak times. | Reconfiguring five adult pitches to youth 11v11 size due to adequately accommodate existing youth teams. Due to the number of youth teams now using the site ensure that appropriate changing room access is secured. | WLBC FA | Strategic High Priority | S | L | Protect |
| 16 | Chequer Lane Playing Field | Football | Local Authority | Two adult pitches with no current use. Clubs suggest it is unused due to quality issues. Part of the site is now lapsed. | Improve pitch quality through greater maintenance of the site. Reconfigure to youth pitches to accommodate overplay/future demand in the area. Consider investment as mitigation for loss of Tower Hill. | WLBC FA | Local | M | M | Provide |
| 20 | Crawford Village Playing Fields | Football | Community | One good quality adult pitch with no current use. | Seek to find possible resident teams or consider alternative use of site such as for training. Potential for reconfiguration to youth pitches to accommodate overplay/future demand in the area. | WLBC FA | Reserve | S | L | Protect |
| 33 | JMO Sports Park | AGP | Commercial | Two full size FA certified 3G pitches and nine small sided 3G cages all of standard quality. Heavily used for training and social football, therefore operating at full capacity. | Maintain high level of usage throughout the week and seek to make greater use of AGPs for matches at weekends when required. | Commercial Operator FA | Key Centre | L | L | Protect |
| 34 | Lathom High School : A Technology College | Football | Education | Two poor quality adult pitches and one poor youth 11v11. No community use due to being used to capacity for school use. | Work to improve pitch quality through increased maintenance to better accommodate school fixtures and potential future community use. | School | Local | L | L | Protect |

¹⁴ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WEST LANCASHIRE
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

| Site ID | Site | Sport | Management | Current status | Recommended actions | Partners | Hierarchy | Timescales | Cost ¹⁵ | Aim |
|---------|--|-------------|-----------------|---|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------------|---------|
| 35 | Liverpool Road Playing Fields | Football | Local Authority | <p>Three mini 5v5, five 7v7 and four 9v9 pitches, all of standard quality. No peak time capacity and 9v9 pitches are overplayed by a total of 2.5 match sessions.</p> <p>Some reported drainage issues which need to be addressed. There is frequent cancellation of matches during December and January. Used as a central venue by the Skelmersdale Junior League.</p> <p>Site is located opposite a potentially hazardous waste disposal development which is of growing concern for users and likely to impact on the sites future use.</p> <p>Both the Council and County Council have put forward their objections to these proposals, whilst Lancashire FA has also raised concerns over the possible impact on Liverpool Playing Fields and football being played onsite.</p> | <p>If proposals go ahead, it is likely that those anxious about the potential hazard will seek another league and site on which to play football and that development of alternative central venue site will need to be considered.</p> <p>Notwithstanding these issues, pitch quality should be improved to increase capacity and address overplay and to build future capacity for pitches to cater for future demand. Site could have future potential for a hub site and to accommodate a 3G pitch for competitive fixtures.</p> | WLBC County Council FA | Strategic High Priority | M | M | Protect |
| 45 | Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Engineering College | Football | Education | Three poor quality adult pitches with no current community use. One match equivalent session of peak time spare capacity. | Work to improve pitch quality through increased maintenance to better accommodate school fixtures and any potential future community use. | School FA | Reserve | L | L | Protect |
| 52 | Skelmersdale United FC | Football | Sports Club | One good quality adult pitch which meets Step 3 criteria. Two match sessions available, of which one is accessible at peak time. | <p>Retain spare capacity in order to protect quality.</p> <p>Work with the Club to find suitable training facilities for all teams. Investigate potential for asset transfer and club management of a site to accommodate training for all teams.</p> | WLBC FA | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 56 | Stanley Coronation Park | Bowls | Local Authority | One good quality crown green used by several clubs. Minimal capacity. | Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality. | WLBC | Local | L | L | Protect |
| 62 | Up Holland High School | Football | Education | One poor quality pitch unavailable for community use. Overplayed by two match sessions when considering school usage. | Work to improve pitch quality through increased maintenance to better accommodate school fixtures. | School FA | Local | M | L | Protect |
| | | Rugby union | | One poor quality (M0/D0) senior pitch unavailable for community use but used by Orrell RFC junior section on agreement. Overplayed by 1.25 matches when considering school use. | Work to improve pitch quality through increased maintenance to better accommodate school fixtures and community use. Look to secure continued access for Orrell RFC teams. | School RFU | | S | L | |

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

**WEST LANCASHIRE
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

| Site ID | Site | Sport | Management | Current status | Recommended actions | Partners | Hierarchy | Timescales | Cost ¹⁵ | Aim |
|---------|------------------------------------|-------|------------|--|--|---------------|---------------------------|------------|--------------------|---------|
| 77 | Village Inn Pub | Bowls | Private | One good quality crown green used by two clubs. Capacity unknown. | Engage with the Club to identify capacity. Continue current maintenance regime in order to ensure continued green quality. | Club | Local | L | L | Protect |
| - | West Lancashire College | - | College | No current outdoor sports provision, currently using Glenburn Sports College. Aspirations for a 3G pitch onsite. | Investigate the feasibility and ascertain strategic value of a potential AGP onsite. Provide support towards applications for funding opportunities if required. | College FA | Local | M | H | Provide |
| - | Tower Hill, Up Holland | - | Council | Lapsed playing field. | Investigate the potential for the site to be brought back into use to meet football pitch shortfalls. Alternatively mitigate any loss. | Council FA | Key Centre (potential) | M | H | Provide |
| - | Hillside Playing Fields, Upholland | - | Council | Lapsed playing field. | Investigate the potential for the site to be brought back into use to meet football pitch shortfalls. Alternatively mitigate any loss. | Council FA | Key Centre (potential) | M | H | Provide |

PART 6: DELIVER THE STRATEGY AND KEEP IT ROBUST AND UP TO DATE

Delivery

The Playing Pitch Strategy seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across West Lancashire. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in this Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of West Lancashire can be satisfied. The Strategy identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and identifies how best to resolve this in the future.

It is important that this document is used in a practical manner, is engaged with partners and encourages partnerships to be developed, to ensure that outdoor sports facilities are regarded as a vital aspect of community life and which contribute to the achievement of Council priorities.

The production of this Strategy should be regarded as the beginning of the planning process. The success of this Strategy and the benefits that are gained are dependent upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a strategic approach.

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 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 people regularly turn to for information on the how the current demand is met and what actions are required to improve the situation and meet future demand. In order for this to be achieved the steering group need to have a clear understanding of how the PPS can be applied and therefore delivered.

The process of developing the PPS will hopefully have already resulted in a number of benefits that will help with its application and delivery. These may include enhanced partnership working across different agendas and organisations, pooling of resources along with strengthening relationships and understanding between different stakeholders and between 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 it can be applied and how it can be delivered.

Monitoring and updating

It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should be led by the local authority 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 also form a key component of monitoring its delivery. This should form 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, then Sport England and the NGBs would 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 playing pitches 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.

Ideally the PPS could be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the steering group. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment that would have been built up when developing the PPS. Taking into account the time to develop the PPS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

An annual review should not be regarded as a particularly resource intensive task. However, it should highlight:

- ◀ How the 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 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 playing pitch 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 the PPS is used effectively to input into any new opportunities to secure improved provision and influence relevant programmes and initiatives
- ◀ Maintains links between all relevant parties with an interest in playing pitch provision in the area;
- ◀ 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 the regular steering group meetings a good way to keep the strategy up to date and maintain relationships may be to hold annual sport specific meetings with the pitch sport NGBs and other relevant parties. These meetings could look to update the key supply and demand information, if necessary amend the assessment work, track progress with implementing the recommendations and action plan and highlight any new issues and opportunities.

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These meetings could be timed to fit with the annual affiliation process undertaken by the NGBs which would help to capture any 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 could be fed into these meetings. The NGBs will also be able to indicate any further performance quality assessments that have been undertaken within the study area. Discussion with the league secretaries may also indicate annual league meetings which it may be useful to attend to pick up any specific issues and/or enable a review of the relevant club details to be undertaken.

The steering group should regularly review and refresh area by area plans taking account of any improvements in pitch quality (and hence increases in pitch capacity) and also any new negotiations for community use of education sites in the future.


It is important that the Council maintains the data contained with the accompanying Playing Pitch Database. This will enable it to refresh and update area by area plans on a regular basis. The accompanying databases are intended to be refreshed on a season by season basis and it is important that there is cross-departmental working, including for example, grounds maintenance and leisure services, to ensure that this is achieved and that results are used to inform subsequent annual sports facility development plans. Results should be shared with partners via a consultative mechanism.

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Checklist

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:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>

| 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? | | |
| 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? | | |

APPENDIX ONE: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The recommendations within this Strategy have been developed via the combination of information gathered during consultation, site visits and analysis. They reflect key areas to be addressed over its lifetime. However, implementation must be considered in the context of financial implications and the need for some proposals to also meet planning considerations.

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.

Sport England: A Sporting Habit for Life (2012-2017)

In 2017, five years after the Olympic Games, Sport England aspires to transforming sport in England so that it is a habit for life for more people and a regular choice for the majority. Launched in January 2012 the strategy sets out how Sport England will invest over one billion pounds of National Lottery and Exchequer funding during the five year plan period. The investment will be used to create a lasting community sport legacy by growing sports participation at the grassroots level following the 2012 London Olympics. The strategy will:

- ◀ See more people starting and keeping a sporting habit for life
- ◀ Create more opportunities for young people
- ◀ Nurture and develop talent
- ◀ Provide the right facilities in the right places
- ◀ Support local authorities and unlock local funding
- ◀ Ensure real opportunities for communities

The vision is for England to be a world leading sporting nation where many more people choose to play sport. There are five strategic themes including:

- ◀ Maximise value from current NGB investment
- ◀ Places, People, Play
- ◀ Strategic direction and market intelligence
- ◀ Set criteria and support system for NGB 2013-17 investment
- ◀ Market development

The aim by 2017 is to ensure that playing sport is a lifelong habit for more people and a regular choice for the majority. A specific target is to increase the number of 14 to 25 year olds playing sport. To accomplish these aims the strategy sets out a number of outcomes:

- ◀ 4,000 secondary schools in England will be offered a community sport club on its site with a direct link to one or more NGBs, depending on the local clubs in a school's area.
- ◀ County sports partnerships will be given new resources to create effective links locally between schools and sport in the community.
- ◀ All secondary schools that wish to do so, will be supported to open up, or keep open, their sports facilities for local community use and at least a third of these will receive additional funding to make this happen.
- ◀ At least 150 further educational colleagues will benefit from a full time sports professional who will act as a College Sport Maker.

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- ◀ Three quarters of university students aged 18-24 will get the chance to take up a new sport or continue playing a sport they played at school or college.
- ◀ A thousand of our most disadvantaged local communities will get a Door Step Club.
- ◀ Two thousand young people on the margins of society will be supported by the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust into sport and to gain new life skills.
- ◀ Building on the success of the Places People Play, a further £100 million will be invested in facilities for the most popular sports.
- ◀ A minimum of 30 sports will have enhanced England Talent Pathways to ensure young people and others fulfil their potential.

National Planning Policy Framework

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 Game Strategy (2011 – 2015)

The Football Association's (FA) National Game Strategy provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities, expenditure proposals and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a four year period. The main issues facing grassroots football are identified as:

- ◀ Growth and retention (young and adult players)
- ◀ Raising standards and behaviour
- ◀ Better players
- ◀ Running the game

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- ◀ Workforce
- ◀ Facilities

'The National Game Strategy' reinforces the urgent need to provide affordable, new and improved facilities in schools, clubs and on local authority sites. Over 75% of football is played on public sector facilities. The leisure budgets of most local authorities have been reduced over recent years, resulting in decaying facilities that do not serve the community and act as a disincentive to play football. The loss of playing fields has also been well documented and adds to the pressure on the remaining facilities to cope with the demand, especially in inner city and urban areas.

The growth of the commercial sector in developing custom built five-a-side facilities has changed the overall environment. High quality, modern facilities provided by Powerleague, Goals and playfootball.net for example, have added new opportunities to participate and prompted a significant growth in the number of five-a-side teams in recent years.

The FA National Facilities Strategy (2013 – 2015)

The National Facilities Strategy sets out the FA's long term vision for development of facilities to support the National Game. It aims to address and reflect the facility needs of football within the National Game. The National Game is defined as all non-professional football from Steps 1-7 of the National League System down to recreational football played on open public space. The role of facilities will be crucial in developing the game in England. One of the biggest issues raised from 'the Big Grassroots Football Survey' by that of 84% respondents, was 'poor facilities'.

The FA's vision for the future of facilities in England is to build, protect and enhance sustainable football facilities to improve the experience of the nation's favourite game. It aims to do this by:

- ◀ Building - Provide new facilities and pitches in key locations to FA standards in order to sustain existing participation and support new participation.
- ◀ Protecting - Ensure that playing pitches and facilities are protected for the benefit of current and future participants.
- ◀ Enhancing - Invest in existing facilities and pitches, ensuring that participation in the game is sustained as well as expanded.

The Strategy commits to delivering in excess of £150m (through Football Foundation) into facility improvements across the National Game in line with identified priorities:

- ◀ Natural grass pitches improved – target: 100
- ◀ A network of new AGPs built – target 100
- ◀ A network of refurbished AGPs – target 150
- ◀ On selected sites, new and improved changing facilities and toilets
- ◀ Continue a small grants programme designed to address modest facility needs of clubs
- ◀ Ongoing support with the purchase and replacement of goalposts

It also commits to:

- ◀ Direct other sources of investment into FA facility priorities
- ◀ Communicate priorities for investment across the grassroots game on a regular basis
- ◀ Work closely with Sport England, the Premier League and other partners to ensure that investment is co-ordinated and targeted

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Champion Counties – England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Strategic Plan (2013 – 2017)

“Champion Counties” - continues to focus on the four pillars, as identified in the ECB’s previous strategy: “Grounds to Play”. The pillars are:

- ◀ Energising people and partnerships through effective leadership and governance
- ◀ Building a **Vibrant** domestic game through operational excellence and delivering a competition structure with appointment to view
- ◀ Engaging participants through the maintenance of existing facilities, supporting club/school links , supporting volunteers and expanding women’s and disabilities cricket
- ◀ Delivering **Successful** England teams and world class global events

The key measures for the life span of the plan are as follows:-

- ◀ Increase the subset of participation measured by Sport England’s Active People Survey from 183,400 to 197,500.
- ◀ Increase attendances at LV= CC, YB50 and FLT20 by 200,000.
- ◀ Complete sponsorship and broadcasting agreements through 2019.
- ◀ Win the World Test Championship and Women’s World Cup in 2017.
- ◀ Win The Ashes and World Cup in 2015.
- ◀ Expand the number of clubs participating in NatWest Cricket Force from 2,000 to 2,200.
- ◀ Complete co-operation agreements for each of the 39 County Boards with their First Class County or Minor County partner.
- ◀ Deliver two world class global events in 2017 which exceed budget and exceed customer satisfaction targets.
- ◀ Increase the number of cricket’s volunteers to 80,000 by 2017.
- ◀ Expand the number of participants in women’s and disabilities cricket by 10% by 2017.
- ◀ Award all Major Matches through 2019 by December 2014.
- ◀ To increase the number of TwelfthMan members from 220,000 to 250,000 by 2017.
- ◀ Complete an approved Community Engagement programme with all 18 First Class Counties and MCC.
- ◀ Provide First Class Counties with total fee payments of £144m between 2014 and 2017.
- ◀ For each £1 provided in facility grants through the Sport England Whole Sport Plan grant programme ensure a multiplier of 3 with other funding partners.
- ◀ Provide a fund of £8.1m of capital investment to enhance floodlights, sightscreens, replay screens, power sub-stations and broadcasting facilities at First Class County venues.
- ◀ Provide an interest-free loan fund to community clubs of £10 million.
- ◀ Leverage the 2014 tour by India to engage with a minimum of 10,000 cricket supporters of Asian origin. Qualify and engage 50 Level 4 coaches to support the development of professional cricketers.
- ◀ Expand the number of coaches who have received teacher level 1, 2 or 3 qualifications to 50,000.
- ◀ Deliver an annual fixture for the Unicorns against a touring (Full, A or U19) ICC member nation.
- ◀ Provide a fund of £2 million for community clubs to combat the impact of climate change.
- ◀ Introduce a youth T20 competition engaging 500 teams by 2017.

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The Rugby Football Union National Facilities Strategy (2013-2017)

The RFU National Facility Strategy 2013-2017 provides a framework for development of high-quality, well-managed facilities that will help to strengthen member clubs and grow the game in communities around them. In conjunction with partners, this strategy will assist and support clubs and other organisations, so that they can continue to provide quality opportunities for all sections of the community to enjoy the game. It sets out the broad facility needs of the sport and identifies investment priorities to the game and its key partners. It identifies that with 470 grass root clubs and 1500 players there is a continuing need to invest in community club facilities in order to:

- ◀ Create a platform for growth in club rugby participation and membership, especially with a view to exploiting the opportunities afforded by RWC 2015.
- ◀ Ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of rugby clubs, through supporting not only their playing activity but also their capacity to generate revenue through a diverse range of activities and partnerships.

In summary the priorities for investment which have met the needs of the game for the Previous period remain valid:

- ◀ Increase the provision of changing rooms and clubhouses that can sustain concurrent adult and junior male and female activity at clubs
- ◀ Improve the quality and quantity of natural turf pitches and floodlighting
- ◀ Increase the provision of artificial grass pitches that deliver wider game development

It is also a high priority for the RFU to target investment in the following:

- ◀ Upgrade and transform social, community and catering facilities, which can support the generation of additional revenues
- ◀ Facility upgrades, which result in an increase in energy-efficiency, in order to reduce the running costs of clubs
- ◀ Pitch furniture, including rugby posts and pads, pitch side spectator rails and grounds maintenance equipment

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England Hockey (EH)

'The right pitches in the right places'¹⁶

In 2012, EH released its facility guidance which is intended to assist organisations wishing to build or protect hockey pitches for hockey. It identifies that many existing hockey AGPs are nearing the end of their useful life as a result of the installation boom of the 90's. Significant investment is needed to update the playing stock and protect the sport against inappropriate surfaces for hockey as a result of the rising popularity of AGPs for a number of sports. EH is seeking to invest in, and endorse clubs and hockey providers which have a sound understanding of the following:

- ◀ Single System – clubs and providers which have a good understanding of the Single System and its principles and are appropriately places to support the delivery.
- ◀ ClubsFirst accreditation – clubs with the accreditation are recognised as producing a safe effective and child friendly hockey environment
- ◀ Sustainability – hockey providers and clubs will have an approved development plan in place showing their commitment to developing hockey, retaining members and providing an insight into longer term goals. They will also need to have secured appropriate tenure.

¹⁶

<http://englandhockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=1143§ionTitle=The+Right+Pitches+in+the+Right+Places>

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APPENDIX TWO: FUNDING PLAN

Funding opportunities

In addition to using the planning system to lever in contributions through Section 106 or CIL, it is recognised that external partner funding will need to be sought to deliver much of the action plan. Although seeking developer contributions in applicable situations and other local funding/community schemes could go some way towards meeting deficiencies and/or improving provision, other potential/match sources of funding should be investigated. Below is a list of current funding sources that are relevant for community improvement projects involving sports facilities.

| Awarding body | Description |
|--|--|
| Big Lottery Fund http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/ | Big invests in community groups and to projects that improve health, education and the environment |
| Sport England : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement Fund • Sportsmatch • Small Grants • Protecting Playing Fields • Inspired Facilities • Strategic Facilities Fund http://www.sportengland.org/funding.aspx http://www.sportengland.org/funding/our-different-funds/strategic-facilities/ | Sport England is keen to marry funding with other organisations that provide financial support to create and strengthen the best sports projects. Applicants are encouraged to maximise the levels of other sources of funding, and projects that secure higher levels of partnership funding are more likely to be successful. |
| Football Foundation http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/ | This trust provides financial help for football at all levels, from national stadia and FA Premier League clubs down to grass-roots local development. |
| Rugby Football Foundation - The Grant Match Scheme www.rugbyfootballfoundation.org | The Grant Match Scheme provides easy-to-access grant funding for playing projects that contribute to the recruitment and retention of community rugby players. Grants are available on a 'match funding' 50:50 basis to support a proposed project. Projects eligible for funding include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pitch Facilities – Playing surface improvement, pitch improvement, rugby posts, floodlights. 2. Club House Facilities – Changing rooms, shower facilities, washroom/lavatory, and measures to facilitate segregation (e.g. women, juniors). 3. Equipment – Large capital equipment, pitch maintenance capital equipment (e.g. mowers). |
| EU Life Fund http://ec.europa.eu/environment/funding/intro_en.htm | LIFE is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU. |
| EH Capital Investment Programme (CIP) | The CIP fund is for the provision of new pitches and re-surfacing of old AGPs. It forms part of EH's 4 year Whole Sport's Plan. |

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| Awarding body | Description |
|---|---|
| National Hockey Foundation http://www.thenationalhockeyfoundation.com/ | The Foundation primarily makes grants to a wide range of organisations that meet one of our chosen areas of focus: Young people and hockey. Enabling the development of hockey at youth or community level. Smaller Charities. |

Protecting Playing Fields

SE funding programme; Protecting Playing Fields (PPF) is part of its Places People Play Olympic legacy mass participation programme and is investing £10 million of National Lottery funding in community sports projects.

The programme is being delivered via funding rounds (with up to £2 million being awarded to projects in each round). Its focus is on protecting and improving playing fields and developing community sport. It will fund capital projects that create, develop and improve playing fields for sporting and community use and offer long term protection of the site for sport. Projects are likely to involve the construction of new pitches or improvement of existing ones that need levelling or drainage works.

Sport England's 'Inspired Facilities' funding programme will be delivered via five funding rounds and is due to launch in Summer 2011 where clubs, community and voluntary sector groups and local authorities can apply for grants of between £25k and £150k where there is a proven local need for a facility to be modernised, extended or modified to open up new sporting opportunities.

The programmes three priorities are:

- ◀ Organisations that haven't previously received a Sport England Lottery grant of over £10k.
- ◀ Projects that are the only public sports facility in the local community.
- ◀ Projects that offer local opportunities to people who do not currently play sport.

Besides this scheme providing an important source of funding for potential voluntary and community sector sites, it may also providing opportunities for Council to access this funding particularly in relation to resurfacing the artificial sports surfaces

Strategic Facilities Fund

Facilities are fundamental in providing more people with the opportunity to play sport. The supply of the right facilities in the right areas is key to getting more people to play sport. Sport England recognises the considerable financial pressures that local authorities are currently under and the need to strategically review and rationalise leisure stock so that cost effective and financially sustainable provision is available in the long-term. Sport England has a key role to play in the sector, from influencing the local strategic planning and review of sports facility provision to investing in major capital projects of strategic importance.

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The Strategic Facilities Fund will direct capital investment into a number of key local authority projects that are identified through a strategic needs assessment and that have maximum impact on growing and sustaining community sport participation. These projects will be promoted as best practice in the delivery of quality and affordable facilities, whilst demonstrating long-term operational efficiencies. The fund will support projects that bring together multiple partners, including input from the public and private sectors and national governing bodies of sport (NGBs). The fund is also designed to encourage applicants and their partners to invest further capital and revenue funding to ensure sustainability. Sport England has allocated a budget of circa £30m of Lottery funding to award through this fund (2013-17).

Key features which applications must demonstrate are:

- ◀ A robust needs and evidence base which illustrates the need for the project and the proposed facility mix
- ◀ Strong partnerships which will last beyond the initial development of the project and underpin the long-term sustainability of the facility
- ◀ Multi-sport provision and activity that demonstrates delivery against NGB local priorities
- ◀ A robust project plan from inception to completion with achievable milestones and timescales.

Lottery applications will be invited on a solicited-only basis and grants of between £500,000 and £2,000,000 will be considered.

The Strategic Facilities Fund will prioritise projects that:

- ◀ Are large-scale capital developments identified as part of a local authority sports facility strategic needs assessment/rationalisation programme and that will drive a significant increase in community sports participation
- ◀ Demonstrate consultation/support from two or more NGBs and delivery against their local priorities
- ◀ Are multi-sport facilities providing opportunities to drive high participant numbers
- ◀ Are a mix of facility provision (indoor and/or outdoor) to encourage regular & sustained use by a large number of people
- ◀ Offer an enhancement, through modernisation, to existing provision and/or new build facilities
- ◀ Have a long-term sustainable business plan attracting public and private investment
- ◀ Show quality in design, but are fit for purpose to serve the community need
- ◀ Have effective and efficient operating models, combined with a commitment to development programmes which will increase participation and provide talent pathways.

Projects will need to demonstrate how the grant will deliver against Sport England's strategic priorities. The funding available is for the development of the capital infrastructure, which can contribute to the costs of new build, modernisation or refurbishment and purchasing of major fixed equipment as part of the facility development.

Funder's requirements

Below is a list of funding requirements that can typically be expected to be provided as part of a funding bid, some of which will fall directly out of the Playing Pitch Strategy:

- ◀ Identify need (i.e., why the Project is needed) and how the Project will address it.
- ◀ Articulate what difference the Project will make.
- ◀ Identify benefits, value for money and/or added value.
- ◀ Provide baseline information (i.e., the current situation).
- ◀ Articulate how the Project is consistent with local, regional and national policy.
- ◀ Financial need and project cost.
- ◀ Funding profile (i.e., Who's providing what? Unit and overall costs).
- ◀ Technical information and requirements (e.g., planning permission).
- ◀ Targets, outputs and/or outcomes (i.e., the situation after the Project/what the Project will achieve)
- ◀ Evidence of support from partners and stakeholders.
- ◀ Background/essential documentation (e.g., community use agreement).
- ◀ Assessment of risk.

Indicative costs

The indicative costs of implementing key elements of the Action Plan can be found on the Sport England website:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>

These costs are broken down into two areas:

- ◀ Facility capital costs
- ◀ Lifecycle costs

Facility capital costs

Facility capital costs are calculated using estimates of what it typically costs to build modern sports facilities, including fees and external works.

Naturally, varying conditions, inflation and regional adjustments.

Costs are updated regularly in conjunction with information provided by the BCIS (Building Cost Information Service) and other Quantity Surveyors.

The document is often referred to as the Planning Kitbag costs as the figures are often used by Planners and Developers when reviewing potential Planning Contributions to site developments.

Facility life cycle costs

Life cycle costs are how much it costs to keep a facility open and fit-for-purpose during its lifetime.

It includes costs for major replacement and planned preventative maintenance (day to day repairs).

The costs are expressed as a percentage of the capital cost.

You should not underestimate the importance of regular maintenance and the expense in maintaining a facility throughout its life.