



ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

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QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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ABBREVIATIONS

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
ANOG	Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance
BC	Bowls Club
CC	Cricket Club
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
EN	England Netball
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
GMA	Grounds Maintenance Association
HC	Hockey Club
HCB	Hertfordshire Cricket Board
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
LMS	Last Man Stands
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NTP	Non turf pitch
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
PQS	Performance Quality Standard
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RUFC	Rugby Union Football Club
SACDC	St Albans City & District Council
S106	Section 106 Agreement
TGR	Team Generation Rate
TC	Tennis Club
U	Under

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) for St Albans City & District Council (SACDC). Building upon the preceding Assessment Report, it provides a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of all formal outdoor playing pitch and outdoor sport provision, with accompanying ancillary facilities up to 2038 (in line with the Emerging Local Plan) and subject to annual monitoring and review taking place.

The PPOSS will form a key element of the evidence base to support local policy and the Local Plan as a whole, ensuring that it is compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Strategy has been developed in accordance with Sport England guidance and under the direction of a steering group led by the Council, Sport England and including National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs). It is capable of:

- ◀ Providing adequate planning guidance to assess development proposals affecting outdoor sports facilities, as appropriate, directing outdoor sport contributions secured through development and informing and shaping local planning policy.
- ◀ Informing the protection and provision of outdoor sports facilities.
- ◀ Informing land use decisions in respect of future use of existing playing pitch areas and playing fields (capable of accommodating pitches).
- ◀ Providing a strategic framework for the provision and management of outdoor sports facilities.
- ◀ Supporting external funding bids and maximising support for outdoor sports facilities.
- ◀ Providing the basis for ongoing monitoring and review of the use, distribution, function, quality and accessibility of outdoor sports facilities.

The strategy has been developed from research and analysis of outdoor sports provision and usage to provide:

- ◀ A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of outdoor sport facilities.
- ◀ Evidence to help protect and enhance outdoor sport provision.
- ◀ The need to inform the development and implementation of planning policy.
- ◀ The need to inform the assessment of planning applications.
- ◀ The need to provide evidence to help secure internal and external funding.
- ◀ A series of sport-by-sport recommendations that provide a strategic framework for improvements to provision.
- ◀ 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 prioritised area-by-area action plan to address key issues.

The Strategy and Action Plan recommends a number of priority projects for St Albans which should be realised over the Local Plan period. It provides a framework for improvement and, although resources may not currently be in place to implement it, possible sources of external funding should be sought.

Partner organisations have a vested interest in ensuring existing playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities can be protected and enhanced. As such, many of the objectives and actions within this document need to be delivered and implemented by sports organisations, education establishments and parish/town councils. In many instances, the Council will not be a key partner in delivering these actions or recommendations, meaning the PPS is not just for the Council to act upon, but for all the stakeholders and partners involved within any project.

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Covid-19

On the 23 March 2020, England was led to enter an unprecedented state of national lockdown because of the global pandemic caused by the Coronavirus (Covid-19). Lockdown required the general public to remain at home and only leave their households for food, health reasons or work (only if work could not be carried out at home). This understandably led to all sporting activities including all those covered in this PPS to cease until further notice.

The data capture for the PPOSS Assessment Report was undertaken during a period of restrictions which may have had a theoretical impact on participation of sport, throughout the pandemic period.

It is currently unknown what the long term future impact of Covid-19 and the lockdown will have on participation and the quality of provision for each sport referenced in the documents. Therefore, it is acknowledged that as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy Stage E process, the review of the documents should ensure that any recommendations made are still accurate based on future levels of supply and demand.

As part of Stage E the PPS should be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the Steering Group. A review will help to maintain the momentum and commitment built up during its development. Given current circumstances an annual meeting, which could coincide with the annual NGB affiliation process, would be beneficial to understand what impact, if any, Covid-19 and the Lockdown has had within the Borough. For more information regarding the Stage E process please see Part 8: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date or see <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>

Monitoring and updating

It is important to ensure there is regular annual monitoring and review of the baseline data, recommendations and actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should be led by the Council and supported by the Steering Group.

Following a pause between the production of the Assessment Report and development of the Draft Strategy & Action Plan, the Council has committed to producing a formal update of both documents in the near future. The trigger point for the update will be when the Council's better understands future housing targets and population growth for its new Local Plan.

Following on from the formal update of the document, the PPOSS should be reviewed on an annual basis by the Steering Group. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment built up when developing the PPOSS. Taking into account the time spent developing the PPOSS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed. Part 8 of this strategy report contains a suggested process for undertaking the update and monitoring. The Steering Group will need to agree a bespoke process prior to the adoption of this strategy.

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Scope

The following are the key outdoor sports in St Albans and as such are included within the scope:

- ◀ Athletics
- ◀ Cricket
- ◀ Football
- ◀ Rugby union
- ◀ Rugby league
- ◀ Hockey
- ◀ Bowls
- ◀ Tennis
- ◀ Netball

It should be noted that for the non-pitch sports, (i.e. tennis, athletics, bowls and netball) included within the scope of this study, the supply and demand principles of Sport England Guidance: Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities (ANOG) are followed to ensure the process is compliant with the NPPF. Please note that although this is less prescriptive than the PPS Guidance, the same approach is applied to provide a full supply and demand assessment for each sport.

Study area

The study area comprises the whole of St Albans City & District Council's administrative area. Due to its size, St Albans is broken into smaller subsections known as analysis areas. The analysis areas are as follows:

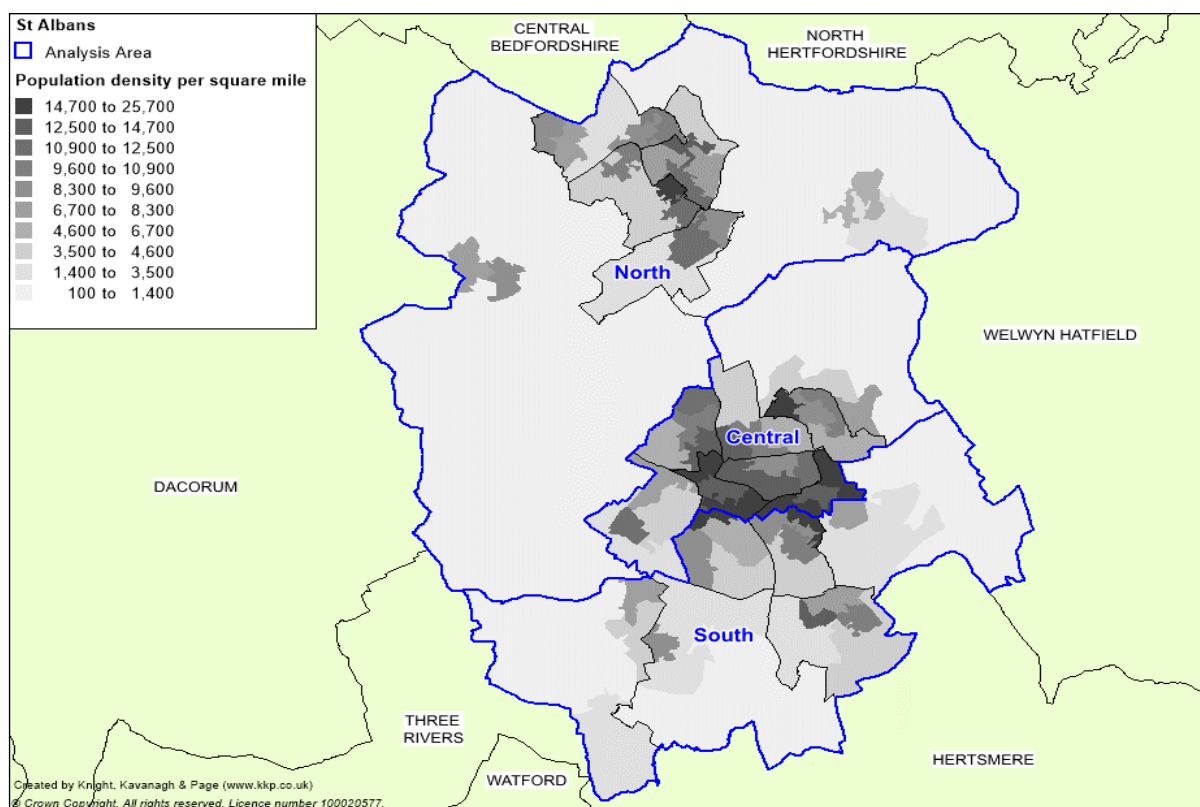
- ◀ North
- ◀ Central
- ◀ South

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Table 1.1: Analysis areas by ward

Analysis area	Ward
Central	Ashley
	Batchwood
	Clarence
	Marshalswick North
	Marshalswick South
	Sandridge
	St. Peters
	Verulam
North	Harpenden East
	Harpenden North
	Harpenden South
	Harpenden West
	Redbourn
	Wheathampstead
South	Colney Heath
	Cunningham
	London Colney
	Park Street
	Sopwell
	St. Stephen

Figure 1.1: St Albans analysis area map



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1.1: Context

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

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

- ◀ Developing a strategic approach to the analysis of playing pitch supply and demand is necessary to:
- ◀ Protect playing pitches against development pressures on land in, and around, urban areas.
- ◀ Identify pitch (natural grass and artificial) supply and demand issues in relation to predicted population changes.
- ◀ Address 'demand' pressures created as a result of specific sports development pressures e.g. growth of mini soccer and wider use of artificial grass pitches.
- ◀ Address budget pressures and public-sector cuts.

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

1.2: Local context

St Albans Local Plan

The St Albans Local Plan was adopted in 1994. The plan is out of date and the Council is working to develop a new Local Plan to cover the period up and to 2038.

St Albans City & District Council submitted its new Local Plan for examination on March 29th, 2019. Sport England submitted a substantial objection to the emerging Local Plan at Regulation 19 consultation stage. After discussions between Sport England and St Albans City and District Council, Sport England has indicated that it is willing to sign a Memorandum of Understanding providing that the Playing Pitch Strategy was being progressed.

In September 2020, the Draft Local Plan was withdrawn. Government planning inspectors identified issues with the plan's preparation and some of its content. The Council is now committed to starting a new Local Plan which will have an emphasis on climate change and sustainability.

The PPS will play a vital role in shaping and delivering an agreed approach to future sports pitch provision at the local and wider level. The evidence base collated within the PPS means that it will provide a clear direction for accommodating future demand and changing patterns of use. The plan will continue to project up and to 2038.

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South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan

SACDC, together with Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers and Watford councils have also begun work on a Joint Strategic Plan for the wider South West Hertfordshire area.

The Joint Strategic Plan is intended to set the longer-term strategic framework and shared priorities within which future local plans will be prepared. A key aim will be to ensure that infrastructure such as transport, schools, health and utilities are properly co-ordinated and delivered alongside the need for new homes and jobs.

1.3: Headline findings

The table below highlights the quantitative headline findings identified for all main pitch sports included in the preceding Assessment Report. MES stands for match equivalent sessions and has been used as the comparable unit for natural grass pitches. Converting both the amount of play a site can accommodate (its carrying capacity) and how much play takes place there (its current use) into the same unit of demand enables a comparison to be undertaken.

Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected. As the main usage of pitches is for matches, it is appropriate for the comparable unit to be match equivalent sessions.

Based on how they tend to be played, this unit for football and rugby union pitches relates to a typical week within the season for each sport. For cricket pitches it is appropriate to look at the number of match equivalent sessions over the course of a season. How much play a cricket pitch can accommodate is primarily determined by the number and quality of wickets on a pitch. Only one match is generally played per pitch per day. However, play is rotated across the wickets to reduce wear and allow for repair. Each wicket is able to accommodate a certain amount of play per season as opposed to a week.

The PPS guidance does not advocate the conversion of MES to pitches as there is not always a case for providing pitches to meet the demand/shortfalls expressed. For example, improving the quality of pitches can also increase the capacity of existing pitches to accommodate such demand. For qualitative findings and site-specific findings, please see Part 4: Sport Specific Recommendations and Scenarios, and Part 6: Action Plan.

For artificial surfaces (AGPs/3G pitches), how much play can be accommodated is primarily determined by availability, rather than how much play it can accommodate before its quality is adversely affected as with natural grass pitches. Therefore, whole pitches are used as the comparable unit. Similarly, for the other non-pitch sports (i.e. tennis, netball bowls etc) where it is not as easy to determine carrying capacity, whole facilities are used as the comparable unit.

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Table 1.2: Quantitative headline findings

Sport	Analysis area	Pitch type	Current demand (2020)	Future demand (2038)
			Current capacity total in MES ¹	Future capacity total in MES
Football (grass pitches)	North	Adult	Spare capacity of 2	Spare capacity of 2
		Youth 11v11	Spare capacity of 1.5	Shortfall of 1
		Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 3	Shortfall of 5
		Mini 7v7	At capacity	Shortfall of 2
		Mini 5v5	At capacity	Shortfall of 2
	Central	Adult	Spare capacity of 5	Spare capacity of 4
		Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 5	Shortfall of 5
		Youth 9v9	Spare capacity of 0.5	Spare capacity of 0.5
		Mini 7v7	At capacity	At capacity
		Mini 5v5	At capacity	At capacity
	South	Adult	Spare capacity of 5	Spare capacity of 4.5
		Youth 11v11	Spare capacity of 1.5	At capacity
		Youth 9v9	Spare capacity of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
Mini 7v7		Shortfall of 1.5	Shortfall of 3	
		Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 2.5	Spare capacity of 1
Football (3G pitches) ²	North	Full size, floodlit	Shortfall of 3	Shortfall of 3
	Central	Full size, floodlit	Demand being met	Demand being met
	South	Full size, floodlit	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 2
Cricket	District wide	Senior Saturday Cricket	Shortfall of 40	Shortfall of 48
		Senior Sunday Cricket	Shortfall of 7	Shortfall of 11
		Junior Cricket	Sufficient capacity	Sufficient capacity
Rugby union	North	Senior	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 0.5
	Central	Senior	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 4.5
	South	Senior	Shortfall of 6.5	Shortfall of 8
Hockey (Artificial Grass Pitches)	St Albans District	Full size floodlit AGP	Shortfall of one full size AGP – aligned to Harpenden HC	Shortfall of one full size AGP – aligned to Harpenden HC
Athletics	St Albans District	Athletics Track	Sufficient supply to meet current demand	Sufficient supply on the basis the existing track is sustained in quality and the ancillary offer is refurbished.

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

² Based on accommodating 38 teams on one full size pitch

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Sport	Analysis area	Pitch type	Current demand (2020)	Future demand (2038)
			Current capacity total in MES ¹	Future capacity total in MES
Rugby league	St Albans District	Senior	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 2.5
Tennis	St Albans District	Courts	Theoretically capacity challenges at 7 clubs. Need to improve the offer of local park tennis through LTA technological solutions	Theoretically capacity challenges at 7 clubs. Need to improve the offer of local park tennis through LTA technological solutions
Bowls	St Albans District	Greens	Sufficient supply to meet current demand	Sufficient supply to meet future demand
Netball	St Albans District	Courts	Sufficient supply to meet current demand	Sufficient supply to meet future demand

Conclusions

The existing position is that there are existing shortfalls or demand is being met. Where shortfalls already exist, it is expected that these will increase in the future based on club aspirations (i.e., how much they plan to expand) and through an increased population. Where shortfalls currently do not exist, it is the case that some are likely to emerge in the future.

For football, there is a current shortfall on youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 pitches with the remaining pitch types having small levels of spare capacity. Future demand is expected to utilise any remaining capacity on these pitch types (where it is existing on ad-hoc pitches in the District) and further exacerbate the current position.

For 3G pitches, there is a theoretical need to provide an additional five full size floodlit pitches with the North and South analysis areas the places with the most immediate need.

The position for cricket is that there are existing shortfalls due to capacity issues at successful club sites across the District. Anticipated future demand is going to increase this pressure for peak time adult cricket and shortfalls are expected to increase.

For rugby union, shortfalls are identified in the Central and South analysis areas. These shortfalls are aligned to three clubs; Old Albanians RFC, Verulamians RUFC and St Albans RFC. There are no shortfalls in the North Analysis Area, and this is largely due to the recently installed Rugby 365 3G pitch at Harpenden RFC removing pressure of the grass pitch stock. Future demand aspirations from all clubs with existing shortfalls is likely to increase the pressure on pitches which are over capacity.

For hockey, there is a shortfall of provision aligned to Harpenden HC. The Club requires full access during the peak period (for midweek training and weekend match play) across one site. It cannot currently access this and therefore a shortfall of provision is established for this Club. The shortfall equates to that of one full size floodlit hockey suitable AGP.

For rugby league, there is a shortfall of provision aligned to St Albans Centurions RLFC. The Club has access to one senior pitch which accommodates its four teams (one senior and three

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junior). This includes both match play and midweek training. As such, a small shortfall is identified. Future demand expressed by the Club (in addition to that which may be generated through interest generated through the Rugby League World Cup 2022) increases the identified shortfall.

There are theoretical shortfalls identified at seven tennis clubs in the District. These are based on the LTA capacity methodology which is more geared towards sustainability of clubs as opposed to capacity shortages. In each case, no club identified issues with capacity. The focus for tennis locally should be on working with the Council and local parish councils to increase the quality of offer available to residents for recreational tennis geared through LTA technological solutions (later discussed in Part 4 of this report).

For all remaining sports, the current stock of facilities is meeting demand and is expected to do so in the future, although there is a requirement to increase quality of provision at specific sites which are identified within the Action Plan.

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

As there are identified shortfalls on grass pitches, there is a need to protect both playing pitch provision currently in use and pitches that are no longer in use due to the potential that they may offer for meeting current and future needs. Sites which are lapsed and disused should be protected from development unless the loss of playing field is suitably mitigated for. This might be on a like for like basis or through qualitative improvements on existing sites. Sport England should be consulted on all planning applications to inform what potential mitigation options could be.

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PART 2: VISION

2.1: Vision

Below is St Albans City & District Councils vision for its playing pitch and outdoor sport provision. It sets out the vision and objectives for the period 2020 - 2038.

“To create and maintain high quality, sustainable leisure and sports facilities which meet community need, increase participation, help tackle health and age issues and provide accessible, inclusive activities for St Albans residents as part of an active lifestyle.”

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

- ◀ Working collectively with partners to create opportunity for everyone to participate
- ◀ Ensure that all valuable facilities are protected for the long term benefit of sport.
- ◀ Promote a sustainable approach to the provision of playing pitches and management of sports clubs.
- ◀ Ensure that there are enough facilities in the right place to meet current and projected future demand.
- ◀ Ensure that all clubs have access to facilities of appropriate quality to meet current needs and longer term aspirations.

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PART 3: AIMS

The following overarching aims are based on the three Sport England themes. It is recommended that they are adopted by the Council and partners to enable delivery of the overall PPOSS vision and Sport England planning objectives.

AIM 1

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

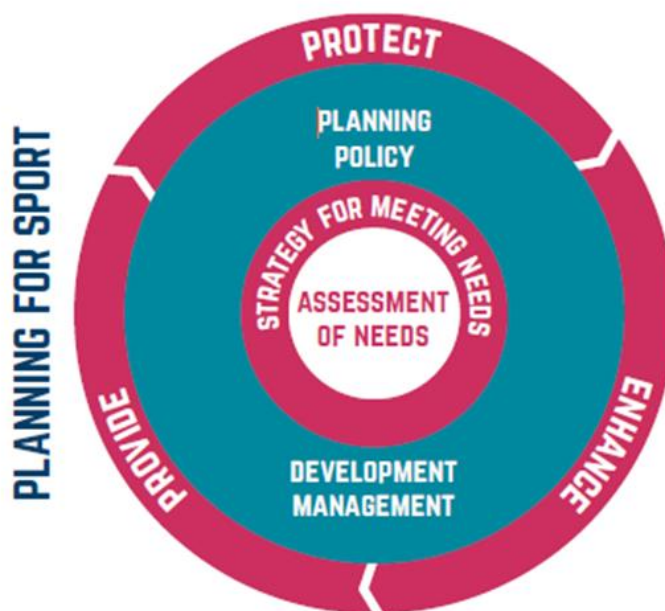
AIM 2

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

AIM 3

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

Figure 3.1: Sport England Objectives



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

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PART 4: SPORT SPECIFIC ISSUES SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Football – grass pitches

Assessment Report summary

Football – grass pitch summary

- ◀ **There is currently an insufficient supply of pitch provision for youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 pitch formats. There is sufficient provision for adult and mini 7v7 match play.**
- ◀ **When considering future demand, existing shortfalls increase. No new shortfalls emerge for adult or mini 5v5 pitch types.**
- ◀ Grass football pitch supply:
 - ◀ The audit identifies a total of 195 grass football pitches in St Albans across 70 sites. Of the pitches, 171 are available, at some level, for community use across 60 sites. All unavailable pitches are located at education sites.
- ◀ Grass football pitch quality:
 - ◀ Of the 171 pitches which offer community use, 19 pitches are assessed as good quality, 119 as standard and 33 as poor. All good quality pitches are aligned to adult football teams which compete in high performance league competitions or are at established grassroots clubs such as Harvesters FC.
- ◀ Affiliated football demand:
 - ◀ Through the audit and assessment, 399 teams from 66 clubs are identified as playing in St Albans. This consists of 54 adult men's, four adult women's, 174 youth boys', 30 youth girls' and 137 mini mixed teams.
 - ◀ Future demand equates to equates to the growth of 21 teams (16 of are identified by local clubs and five are identified through population forecasts).
 - ◀ Unmet demand totalling 14 teams is identified by both Harvesters FC and Harpenden Colts.
 - ◀ Latent demand for facilities was expressed by 14 clubs through consultation. Demand is expressed for a need for additional grass pitches for match play, a need for better or more training facilities and better or more appropriate training provision.
- ◀ Supply vs demand analysis conclusions:
 - ◀ Actual spare capacity in St Albans equates to 27 match equivalent sessions per week (provided across 19 sites).
 - ◀ In total, 20 pitches across 13 sites are identified as being overplayed. Total overplay equates to 18 match equivalent sessions per week.
 - ◀ There is a sufficient supply of provision to accommodate demand for adult and mini 5v5 pitch types.
 - ◀ There are current shortfalls on youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 pitch types.
 - ◀ Future demand as well as identified unmet demand, is likely to create further pressure on pitches where shortfalls already exist. This is expected to increase future shortfalls on youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 pitches.

Scenarios

Alleviating overplay/improving pitch quality

In total, there are 23 community available pitches overplayed in St Albans across 12 sites. Improving quality of the remaining pitches (i.e. through increased maintenance or improved drainage) will therefore increase capacity and consequently reduce current and future shortfalls, and the impact is shown below.

As a reminder, the capacity rating for each type and quality rating is identified in the table overleaf.

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Table 4.1: Football capacity rating based on quality scores

Adult pitches		Youth pitches		Mini pitches	
Pitch quality	Matches per week	Pitch quality	Matches per week	Pitch quality	Matches per week
Good	3	Good	4	Good	6
Standard	2	Standard	2	Standard	4
Poor	1	Poor	1	Poor	2

Table 4.2: Levels of overplay if quality improved to good quality

Site ID	Site name	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Current quality	Current Capacity rating ³	Good quality capacity rating ⁴
8	Butterfield Road	Youth 9v9	1	Good	0.5	0.5
30	Highfield Park	Youth 9v9	2	Standard	0.5	3.5
37	Marford Field	Adult	1	Standard	1	-
38	Margaret Wix Primary School	Youth 11v11	1	Poor	1.5	1.5
43	Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	0.5	1.5
52	Redbourn Leisure Centre	Mini 7v7	2	Standard	1	3
54	Rothamsted Park	Youth 11v11	3	Standard	1	5
		Youth 9v9	1	Standard	2.5	0.5
57	Samuel Ryder Academy	Youth 11v11	1	Standard	1	1
58	Sandridge School	Youth 11v11	1	Poor	1	2
		Youth 9v9	1	Poor	0.5	2.5
60	Shenley Lane Playing Field	Mini 7v7	2	Poor	2	6
65	St Albans Girls School	Youth 11v11	1	Standard	6.5	4.5
66	St Albans High School for Girls Grass Pitches	Adult	1	Poor	2	-
76	The Acre (Harpenden Rovers FC)	Adult	1	Poor	0.5	1.5

To illustrate the effect of quality improvements, the table above looks at how pitch improvements would impact on current overplay. The sites listed above are all identified as being overcapacity in the PPOSS Assessment. Improving the quality of these pitches to good, would theoretically alleviate overplay at most sites and in most instances, create potential spare capacity for further use. The only two instances in which this would not be the position is on a single youth pitch at Butterfield Road where the quality of the pitch is already good and at Rothamsted Park where overplay would be reduced from 2.5 match equivalent sessions to 0.5.

Notwithstanding the above, given the costs of improving pitch quality, alternatives also need to be considered that can offer a more sustainable model for the future of football. The alternative to grass pitches is the use of 3G pitches for competitive matches, which cannot only alleviate overplay on grass pitches, but it can also aid quality improvements through the transfer of play and therefore reduced use.

³ Match equivalent sessions

⁴ Match equivalent sessions

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FA Pitch Improvement Programme

With quality of grass pitches becoming one of the biggest influences on participation in football, the FA has made it a priority to work towards improving quality of grass pitches across the country. This has resulted in the creation of the FA Pitch Improvement Programme. As part of this, grass pitches identified as having quality issues undergo a pitch inspection from a member of the Grounds Management Association (GMA, formerly Institute of Groundsmanship).

The FA in partnership with the Grounds Management Association (GMA) has developed a Grass Pitch Improvement and Maintenance Programme that can be utilised by grassroots football clubs, organisations and local authorities with the simple aim of improving the quality of grass pitches.

The key principles behind the service are to provide members of the programme with advice/practical solutions via a Grass Pitch Assessment Report which will also identify the key enhanced maintenance works required along with machinery requirements.

Following a Grass Pitch Assessment Report, clubs can work towards the recommended dedicated maintenance regime identified in order to improve the quality of their pitches. Clubs can also utilise the report as an evidence base to acquire potential funding streams to obtain the relevant maintenance equipment.

If a site is categorised as 'poor' or 'basic' on the Grass Pitch Assessment Report they are then eligible to apply for Grass Pitch Funding through the Football Foundation through the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund⁵, a fund offering six-year tapered grants to help clubs enhance or sustain the quality of their grass pitches. The fund is a key part of the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Improvement Programme - an ambition to deliver 20,000 quality grass pitches by 2030.

All applicants must have the required security of tenure and have received a PitchPower Pitch Assessment Report, with the fund currently open to football clubs, leagues, National League System Clubs at Steps 1-6 and charities (with an annual turnover of under £500,000). Locally, five sites have had visits from the GMA, with each site now having a dedicated report which outlines specific recommendations on how to improve the quality of grass pitches at each respective site through maintenance improvements. The five sites are as follows:

- ◀ Redbourn Leisure Centre
- ◀ Morris Playing Field
- ◀ Butterfield Playing Field
- ◀ Highfield Park
- ◀ Rothamsted Park

Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP)

As improving the quality of certain overplayed sites may not be feasible from an investment point of view, an alternative approach is to focus on improving strategic sites. The St Albans Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) identifies ten sites for grass pitch improvements that need investment and that are key for football. The table below identifies what the impact would be on the supply and demand balance if quality were improved to good quality.

⁵ <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/grant/grass-pitch-maintenance-fund>

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Table 4.3: Impact of LFFP quality improvements

Site ID	Site name	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Quality	Current capacity rating (MES)	Improved capacity rating (MES)
52	Redbourn Leisure Centre	Adult	2	Standard	3.5	5.5
		Youth 11v11	1	Standard	1.5	3.5
		Youth 9v9	2	Standard	0.5	4.5
		Mini 7v7	2	Standard	1	3
		Mini 5v5	2	Standard	1.5	5.5
30	Highfield Park	Adult	1	Standard	-	1
		Youth 11v11	2	Standard	2	6
		Youth 9v9	2	Standard	0.5	3.5
		Mini 7v7	3	Standard	4.5	10.5
		Mini 5v5	3	Standard	8.5	14.5
43	Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School	Adult	2	Standard	1.5	3.5
		Youth 11v11	2	Standard	-	4
		Youth 9v9	1	Standard	0.5	1.5
40	Morris Playing Fields	Adult	1	Standard	-	1
		Youth 11v11	1	Standard	1	2
54	Rothamsted Park	Adult	2	Standard	1	3
		Youth 11v11	3	Standard	1	5
		Youth 9v9	1	Standard	2.5	0.5
60	Shenley Lane Playing Field	Mini 7v7	2	Poor	2	6
		Mini 5v5	2	Poor	-	8
37	Marford Field	Adult	1	Standard	1	-
		Adult	1	Poor	-	2
57	Samuel Ryder Academy	Youth 11v11	1	Standard	1	1
		Youth 9v9	2	Standard	0.5	3.5
79	Toulmin Drive	Adult	7	Poor	1	15
8	Butterfield Road	Youth 11v11	2	Good	4	4
		Youth 9v9	3	Good	0.5	0.5
		Mini 7v7	2	Good	8	8
		Mini 5v5	1	Good	9	9

Theoretically, improving the sites identified in the table above would alleviate identified overplay at most sites. The only two sites which would still contain overplayed provision is at Rothamsted Park and Butterfield Road.

Further to the above, the one remaining site which was not included which has warrant for inclusion is St Albans Girls School which is a popular site football.

Accommodating youth and mini demand

Adult football pitches have a sufficient capacity to accommodate both existing and anticipated future levels of demand. However, the same cannot be said for youth pitches or mini 7v7 pitches. For these pitch types, there are both shortfalls now and higher shortfalls forecast for the future as seen in the table below.

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Table 4.4: Football supply and demand balance

Pitch format	Actual spare capacity ⁶	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Adult	15.5	3.5	12	1.5	10.5
Youth 11v11	5	7	2	4	6
Youth 9v9	2.5	4.5	2	3	5
Mini 7v7	1.5	3	1.5	3.5	5
Mini 5v5	2.5	-	2.5	3.5	1

Given there are identified shortfalls on the mentioned pitch types, there is a need to explore theoretical solutions to reducing and ultimately, alleviating these shortfalls. One of the easiest way to do this, is to utilise underused pitches which are set up for adult football.

In the District (based on usage from the 20/21 football season) the following locations have adult pitches which are not used for match play and therefore provide opportunities for reconfiguration to alternate youth and mini formats (on the basis goalposts can be provided):

- ◀ Abbey View Track
- ◀ Folly Field
- ◀ Katherine Warrington School
- ◀ Aldwickbury School
- ◀ Spencer Meadow

Further to the above, underutilised adult hub sites should be considered for a partial reconfiguration to increase utilisation (whilst also retaining existing adult demand).

Toulmin Drive has seven adult pitches which are underutilised (partially due to poor pitch quality). Improving these and providing goal posts for youth and mini football would further work to reduce identified shortfalls. Based on existing demand, five adult pitches could support existing demand of teams, giving way for potential reconfiguration of two adult pitches to alternate formats. Note this would need to be ratified against the latest figures for recorded use.

Likewise, Verulamium Drive has eight adult pitches (some of which are used by youth teams using incorrect size pitches). There is also scope here to reconfigure a number of these to more appropriate sizes.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect both football pitches currently in use and pitches that are no longer in use due to the potential that they may offer for meeting current and future needs (unless replacement provision is agreed upon and provided). This position should not change until the full position on future demand is established through the development of the Local Plan.
- ◀ Where pitches are overplayed and assessed as poor or standard quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality.
- ◀ Use the LFFP as a guide to determine suitable sites for grass pitch investment and update the priority projects within it following this study.
- ◀ Utilise the Football Foundation's PitchPower app to assist in the improvement and ongoing maintenance of provision.
- ◀ Consider pitch re-configuration where capacity of one pitch type can be used to reduce shortfalls of another, and where it can better accommodate what demand is received.
- ◀ Transfer play from sites which remain overplayed to alternative sites with spare capacity (or 3G provision), or to sites which are not currently available for community use.

⁶ In match equivalent sessions

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- ◀ Look to secure tenure for those clubs accessing unsecure sites.
- ◀ Improve ancillary facilities where there is a demand to do so and where it can benefit the wider footballing offer.
- ◀ Where appropriate, develop partnerships and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded clubs to manage their own sites.
- ◀ Ensure that any large housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision through master planning on an individual basis.
- ◀ Where a housing development is not of a size to justify on-site football provision, consider using contributions to improve existing sites within the locality.
- ◀ Where a development is of a size to justify on-site football provision, focus on the creation of multi-pitch sites that reduce existing shortfalls, with accompanying clubhouse provision included given that single pitch sites without appropriate ancillary facilities can be unsustainable.

3G pitches

Assessment Report summary

3G pitch summary

◀ **Supply:**

- ◀ There are six full size 3G pitches and 11 small sided pitches situated in St Albans. All of these pitches provide opportunities for community use.
- ◀ All six size pitches are on the FA register for football match play and therefore be used to accommodate competitive matches.
- ◀ There are two World Rugby Compliant 3G pitches in St Albans, these are located at Sandringham School and Harpenden RFC.

◀ **Quality:**

- ◀ 80% of full size pitches are good quality and 20% are standard quality. All small sided pitches are good or standard quality. There are no poor quality 3G pitches in the District.
- ◀ All full size 3G provision is accompanied by ancillary facilities that are considered adequate.

◀ **Supply vs demand analysis:**

- ◀ With 399 teams currently affiliated to St Albans there is a need for ten full size 3G pitches to service current levels of demand. Future demand increases this shortfall by one pitch.
- ◀ When studying demand by analysis area, shortfalls are apparent in in the North and South analysis areas. The North Analysis Area has the highest shortfall with a current shortfall of three full size pitches.
- ◀ The existing broad shortfall equates to a deficit of five full size equivalents and it is expected that this will grow in the future to a shortfall of six full size equivalents (an increase of one full size equivalent)

Scenarios

Accommodating football training demand

The FA's long-term ambition is to provide every affiliated team in England the opportunity to train once per week on a floodlit 3G surface, together with priority access for every Charter Standard Community Club through a partnership agreement. In order to calculate the number of football teams a 3G pitch can service for training, peak time access is considered to be from 18:00 until 22:00 Tuesday-Thursday resulting in an overall peak period of 12 hours per week. Mondays and Fridays are not included within this calculation as it is considered that most teams do not want to train in such close proximity to a weekend match.

Full size 3G pitches are divided into thirds or quarters for training purposes meaning they can accommodate either three or four teams per hour and either 36 or 48 teams per week (during

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the peak training period). Based on an average of these numbers, it is estimated that 38 teams can be accommodated on one full size 3G pitch for training.

Given the above, with 399 teams currently affiliated to St Albans, there is a theoretical need for ten full size 3G pitches equivalents (rounded down from 10.5). As there are currently six full pitches provided, it is considered that there is a theoretical need an additional four full size pitches in St Albans to accommodate all affiliated football demand. However, when considering that the 3G pitch at Harpenden RFC is largely accommodating peak time rugby union demand, this should be discounted from the overall football 3G requirement figure. Likewise, the 3G pitch at Oaklands College is also discounted based on predominant use being from a performance based academy programme utilising most peak time hours.

On this basis, the current need for full size 3G pitches in St Albans equates to a shortfall of six full size pitch equivalents.

The table below considers the number of full size 3G pitches required if every team was to remain training within the analysis area they play in. This is a more precise representation of potential need relative to where existing demand is based in the District and differs from the broad District wide position set out above.

Table 4.5: Demand by analysis area

Analysis area	Current number of teams	Full size 3G requirement ⁷	Current number of full size 3G pitches	Theoretical shortfall
North	158	4	1*	3
Central	55	1	1	-
South	186	4	2*	2
St Albans	399	9	4	5

Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP)

The LFFP identifies priority sites for 3G pitch development. The plan identifies the need for a further five full size pitches to be built. These are featured in the table below and adjudged against identified shortfalls in the PPOSS (which remains the same at, five). As a reminder, existing shortfalls (by analysis area) equates to a need for a further three pitches in the North and two in the South.

Table 4.6 LFFP 3G projects

Site ID	Site	PPOSS Analysis Area
52	Redbourn Leisure Centre	North
24	Harpenden Town FC	North
26	Harvesters FC	South
8	Butterfield Road	North
65	Central St Albans Area (St Albans Girls School has begun development in this area and will likely meet the criteria of location identified in the LFFP).	Central

Based on the above, all three identified LFFP projects for the North are supported by the PPOSS evidence base. As is, the project at Harvesters FC. The project in the Central Analysis Area is already underway and works towards meeting the broad shortfall of the district. If

⁷ Figure rounded up to the nearest whole number.

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further provision is going to be built upon a refresh version of the LFFP then opportunities to increase provision in the South Analysis Area should be the priority.

The LFFP also identifies the small sided 3G pitches at Cotswoldwick Leisure Centre for potential conversion to small sided youth pitches. This does not feature in the modelling above on the basis it will not be a full size offer.

Moving football mini match play demand to 3G pitches

To further the use of 3G pitches for matches, the FA is particularly keen to work with local authorities to understand the potential demand for full size floodlit 3G pitches to cater for different formats of match play.

The FA has an ambition to transfer 50% of mini play on to 3G pitches nationally. Thus, a programme of play has been created for the Borough to determine how many 3G pitches would be required to accommodate this, given that peak time for both mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 football is Saturday AM.

Table 4:7 Full size 3G pitch programming for mini demand

Time	Pitch markings	Total games/teams
9.00 – 10.00	4 x 5v5	4/8
10.00 – 11.00	2 x 7v7	2/4
11:00 – 12:00	2 x 7v7	2/4
12:00 – 13:00	2 x 7v7	2/4

Based on the above programming and separate start times for mini 5v5 and mini 7v7 matches, the overall need is for seven full size 3G pitch equivalents. This is calculated based on 55 mini 5v5 teams and 31 mini 7v7 teams currently playing in the district,

As the number of 3G pitches required to accommodate all mini demand is the lesser than the midweek training demand (a total current need of ten full size pitches), it suggests that all mini match play demand could be catered for if training shortfalls were alleviated.

World Rugby (WR) compliant 3G pitches

To enable 3G pitches to host competitive rugby union matches, as well as contact training, World Rugby has developed the Rugby Turf Performance Specification. This is to ensure that the surfaces replicate the playing qualities of good quality grass pitches, provide a playing environment that will not increase the risk of injury and are of an adequate durability.

The specification includes a rigorous test programme that assesses ball/surface interaction and player/surface interaction and has been modified to align the standard with that of FIFA. Any 3G pitch used for any form of competitive rugby must comply with this specification and must be tested every two years to retain compliance.

After the Rugby World Cup in 2015, the RFU set out a legacy to invest more than £50m over a four-year period to develop 100 artificial grass pitches. It wanted to create accessible facilities and increase participation within the sport.

Locally, this resulted in the development of the 3G pitch at Harpenden RFC. Based on the outcomes of the Assessment, there is not an explicit need for further WR compliant 3G pitches to be provided to cater for local demand.

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However, a pitch would work to alleviate overplay at Old Albanians RFC (largely attributed to midweek training by Saracens RFC) however it is likely to be an unsustainable through just rugby union usage alone.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect current stock of 3G pitches.
- ◀ Explore options of providing new 3G pitches first and foremost to meet football training shortfalls, focusing on the North and South analysis areas.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA recommended dimensions and quality performance standards to meet performance testing criteria.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches planned in areas with identified deficit of rugby provision explore the opportunity to provide a World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant surface.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches at education sites have community use agreements in place as part of the planning permission.
- ◀ Encourage providers to put in place a sinking fund to ensure long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Encourage more match play demand to transfer to 3G pitches, where possible, and ensure that pitches remain suitable to accommodate such demand through appropriate certification when it is required.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches are priced competitively against the cost of hiring grass pitches and are aimed at local grassroots clubs.

Cricket pitches

Assessment Report summary

Cricket Summary

- ◀ **There is insufficient supply of cricket provision to cater for current and future senior demand across St Albans.**
- ◀ **Supply:**
 - ◀ There are 26 grass wicket squares in St Albans located across 18 sites, all of which, are available for community use.
 - ◀ In St Albans, there is one non-turf pitch that accompanies a grass wicket square, located at Nomansland Common. There are also eight NTPs located at education sites.
- ◀ **Demand**
 - ◀ There are ten clubs competing in St Albans, generating 121 teams. As a breakdown, this equates to 35 senior men's, one senior women's, 81 junior boys' and four junior girls' teams.
 - ◀ Wheathampstead CC exports one senior team outside of St Albans to Parkfield Sports Ground (North Hertfordshire). The club will lose access to the site in 2022 and so requires an urgent alternative to accommodate this demand.
 - ◀ Future demand in St Albans equates to one senior men's, one senior women's and six junior teams. This is based on future growth aspirations from Redbourn, Old Albanians, Frogmore and St Albans cricket clubs. In addition to this, demand equating to five junior girls' teams has been accounted for to account by participation delivery work being implemented by Hertfordshire Cricket.
- ◀ **Quality:**
 - ◀ The non-technical assessment of community available grass wicket squares in St Albans found two squares to be good quality, 14 standard and three poor quality. The poor quality squares are located at Rothamsted Park and Verulam School Playing Fields.
 - ◀ The audit of ancillary facilities determines that provision at both Clarence Park and Park Street Recreation Ground are both outdated and in need of improvement.
 - ◀ Redbourn, Sandridge and St Albans cricket clubs all indicate a desire for additional/improved training facilities at their respective home venues.

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- ◀ All cricket clubs in St Albans are considered to have secure tenure at their primary home venue.
- ◀ **Supply vs demand analysis:**
 - ◀ There is insufficient supply of cricket provision to cater for current and future senior demand across St Albans.
 - ◀ There are five sites in St Albans considered to be overplayed by a total of 99 match equivalent sessions per season. Only overplay at Clarence Park can be alleviated through quality improvements.

Scenarios

Alleviating overplay

The quality of cricket squares impacts on the playability of the square throughout a season. The better quality the square, the more demand it can accommodate without comprising on the quality of match play.

As a guide, The ECB has set a standard number of matches that each grass wicket should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its current quality (pitch capacity). Taking into consideration the guidelines on capacity the following was concluded:

Table 4.8: Cricket square capacity guidelines

Adult wickets	
Pitch quality	Matches per season
Good	5
Standard	4
Poor	0

Table 4.9: Effect of quality improvements on cricket squares

Site ID	Site name	Quality	No. of squares	Overplay (MES)	Capacity if good quality
9	Clarence Park	Standard	1	6	4
21	Harpenden Cricket Club	Good	1	10	10
44	Nomansland Common	Standard	1	24	15
45	OA Sport	Good	2	16	16
				25	25
52	Redbourn Leisure Centre	Standard	1	18	10

Provision at Harpenden CC and OA Sport is already good quality, this means that enhancing the quality of the existing cricket squares will not result in an increased capacity for play. As such, quality improvements are not deemed to be a satisfactory way of resolving overplay at each of these sites. For the remaining sites, quality improvements would result in a reduction of overplay at Nomansland Common and Redbourne Leisure Centre, but a residual amount would remain at both sites. Overplay at Clarence Park would be eradicated in its entirety and create a small pocket of spare capacity.

For sites with remaining overplay, other options need exploration. Three of the overplayed sites do not utilise a non-turf pitch.

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The ECB highlights that non-turf pitches which follow its TS6 guidance⁸ on performance standards are suitable for high level, senior play and are considered able to take 60 matches per season, although this may include training sessions via the use of mobile nets. On this basis, the development on non-turf pitch provision at the following sites would work to alleviate overplay:

- ◀ Harpenden Cricket Club
- ◀ OA Sports
- ◀ Redbourn Leisure Centre

For all three sites, a transfer of junior demand onto a non-turf-pitch would theoretically allow a reduction of use on the natural turf wickets and reduce overplay. Given the substantial number of junior teams at each club aligned to the above sites, this should be a simple and measured approach to accommodating existing demand and reducing shortfalls.

Accommodating future demand

It is important to understand when teams play fixtures. This allows a decision to be made on what capacity truly exists to increase demand during peak periods. An analysis of existing match play identifies peak time demand for senior cricket as Saturday, with most teams playing at this time (25 teams out of 35). The remaining senior teams play on Sundays (ten teams).

For junior cricket, peak time demand is midweek, with most clubs' youth sections playing between Monday and Friday (82 teams). The remaining three teams play on Sundays. As a result, squares have greater capacity to carry junior demand as play can be spread across numerous days.

Junior demand

Through delivery of its new strategy, Inspiring Generations, the ECB and county board programmes of activity are targeting growth in women's cricket, club and school's activity targeting growth in girls' cricket and there is increased engagement of young people. All Stars Cricket, the ECB national programme for 5-8 year olds, is engaging large numbers of children and has already been delivered over the past 3-4 years, with increasing numbers of participants year on year, alongside Chance to Shine cricket delivery in primary schools. Increasing numbers of those children are continuing to play cricket as they get older, so junior numbers are increasing within clubs.

The ECB has also launched Dynamos Cricket, a new programme to inspire kids aged 8-11 to play cricket. Dynamos Cricket is the latest launch by the ECB, building on the existing All Stars programme for 5-8-year-olds. Participants will continue to develop their skills and be introduced to a countdown style of cricket match.

Based on club aspirations and aspirations from Hertfordshire Cricket, an anticipated increase of five junior girls teams have been added attributed to five clubs, identified in the table below.

Table 4.10: Cricket future demand

Club	Club aspirations	Hertfordshire Cricket aspirations
Frogmore CC	1 x senior men's, 1 x junior boys	-
Harpenden CC	-	1 x junior girls
Old Albanians CC	3 x juniors (2 x boys, 1 x girls)	1 x junior girls

⁸ <http://www.cag.org.uk/docs/ecb-non-turf-pitches-ts6-final-328.pdf>

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Club	Club aspirations	Hertfordshire Cricket aspirations
Redbourne CC	2 x junior boys	1 x junior girls
St Albans CC	1 x senior women's	1 x junior girls
Wheathampstead CC	-	1 x junior girls

Table 4.11: Existing capacity of clubs with future demand aspirations

Site name	Site users *	No. of squares	No. of grass wickets	Capacity rating (sessions per season)	Potential spare capacity for senior Saturday cricket?	Potential spare capacity for senior Sunday cricket?
Clarence Park	St Albans CC	1	10	6	No	No
Harpenden Cricket Club	Harpenden CC	1	8	10	No	No
Nomansland Common	Wheathampstead CC	1	9	24	No	No
OA Sport	Old Albanians CC	3	8	16	No	No
			6	25	No	No
			3	3	No	No
Park Street Recreation Ground	Frogmore CC	1	8	23	Yes	Yes
Redbourn Cricket Club	Redbourn CC	1	16	30	No	No
Redbourn Leisure Centre	Redbourn CC	1	8	18	No	No

Firstly, Frogmore CC can fully accommodate its demand aspirations on site, for both senior and junior demand. Redbourn CC can also fully meet its junior future demand aspirations by utilising the spare capacity at its home facility or through utilisation of a non-turf pitch at Redbourn Leisure (its secondary site).

For the remaining sites, it's a more convoluted picture on how demand can be accommodated. St Albans CC could theoretically accommodate either of its junior or senior women's aspirations if quality improvements were undertaken at the site, however, it is likely that a non-turf pitch would be the best solution, as it can accommodate both teams within their respective peak period of play and a non-turf pitch would provide a capacity solution to both teams being developed.

Similarly for Harpenden CC, providing an NTP would allow for an increase of junior demand. It would also theoretically work to alleviate existing shortfalls by the transfer of play off natural turf wickets

For Old Albanians CC (OA Sport) there are two options to resolve existing issues and facilitate future demand. As with aforementioned clubs an increase in non-turf pitch provision would allow the transfer of existing demand of natural turf squares and allow for an increased junior offer. Alternatively, working to gain access to the cricket squares at St Albans School (Woollams Playing Field) would alleviate all capacity issues.

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The school site accommodates five natural turf squares and three non turf pitches. Formal access to these would allow for significant demand increases. Old Albanians RUFC already utilises its rugby union pitches as overspill facilities, so this pre-existing relationship is already in place.

Lastly, Wheathampstead CC (Nomandsland Common) requires an improvement of its square to firstly reduce existing overplay. Once overplay is reduced to a more manageable level (15 match sessions per season) the development of a non-turf pitch could be used to theoretically accommodate demand both existing and aspiration. The Club currently has a substantive junior section so therefore a relatively minor transfer of demand off natural turf wickets will allow existing shortfalls to be alleviated and allowing for aspirational demand to be accommodated on a non-turf pitch. As a final option, there is existing provision at Aldwickbury School and St Georges School (both within a ten minute drive) which are currently unavailable for community use, but if accessed could be a vital resource in accommodating existing and future demand.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect all cricket provision which is currently in use. All active sites are required to support demand of clubs (unless suitable re-provision is agreed in line with Sport England Policy)
- ◀ Ensure that any disused or lapsed cricket provision is protected due to anticipated growth in the sport over the Local Plan period (unless re-provision is provided in line with Sport England Policy).
- ◀ Ensure protection from development that may prejudice the use of a cricket square such as residential development in close proximity to a cricket outfield (ball strike issues).
- ◀ Work with clubs and grounds staff to review quality issues on squares to ensure appropriate quality is achieved at sites assessed as standard and sustained at sites assessed as good.
- ◀ For clubs without lease arrangements, explore opportunities for long-term asset transfer or as a minimum ensure long term security of tenure.
- ◀ Explore funding opportunities to improve the quality of ancillary provision at sites identified as having poor quality facilities within the PPOSS Assessment.
- ◀ Work with clubs to provide sufficient training facilities and explore funding opportunities to help provide these were necessary.
- ◀ Work to accommodate targeted growth for women's and girls' cricket through the ECB Inspiring Generations Strategy.
- ◀ Where a development is not of a size to justify on-site cricket provision, or if sufficient demand cannot be attracted, consider using contributions to improve existing sites within the locality.
- ◀ Ensure that any developments nearby to existing cricket sites do not prejudice the use of the provision (e.g. through ball-strike issues).
- ◀ Ensure that any large housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision through master planning (i.e. via a sports needs assessment/feasibility study/assessment of need) on an individual basis.
- ◀ Where a development is of a size to justify on-site cricket provision, ensure that any proposals for new squares will attract adequate demand.

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Rugby union pitches

Assessment Report summary

Rugby union summary

- ◀ There is currently an insufficient level of rugby union provision in St Albans.
- ◀ The priority for rugby union in St Albans is to ensure that pitches are of suitable quality for demand, sufficient floodlighting is available and ancillary infrastructures are of a good quality which supports the long term development of rugby union across the local area.
- ◀ Rugby union pitch supply:
 - ◀ There is a total of 52 rugby union pitches identified in St Albans. Of these, 48 are available for community use.
 - ◀ There are two WR compliant 3G pitch, these are located at Harpenden RFC and Sandringham School.
- ◀ Rugby union pitch quality:
 - ◀ Based on the above criteria, there are 16 good quality pitches (ten senior and six mini), 19 standard (11 senior and eight mini) and 17 poor quality (13 senior and four mini). From a club perspective, Old Albanians RFC have good quality pitches, and the remaining three clubs in the area have standard quality pitches.
- ◀ Ancillary provision quality
 - ◀ Several clubs identify issues with their existing ancillary provision. Issues range from a general refurbishment to a need to expand the number of changing rooms provided to accommodate demand.
- ◀ Rugby union demand:
 - ◀ There are four rugby union clubs in St Albans which in total generate demand equating to 74 teams. The four clubs are Old Albanians RFC, Verulamians RFC, Harpenden RFC and St Albans RFC.
- ◀ Supply vs demand analysis:
 - ◀ There is an overall insufficient supply of provision to cater for current and future demand.

Scenarios

Overplay

Three community club sites in St Albans are identified as being overplayed. This translates to each site accommodating more demand than it should be accommodating, relative to the facility stock on each site. The scenarios below look at the impact of improvements to senior pitches at each of the sites through enhancing the existing maintenance regimes and through the installation of drainage solutions.

As a guide, the RFU has set a standard number of matches that each pitch should be able to accommodate, set out below.

Table 4.12: Pitch capacity (matches per week) based on quality assessments

		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2
	Natural Adequate or Pipe Drained (D1)	1.5	2	3
	Pipe Drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2	3	3.5

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Table 4.13: Rugby union supply vs demand balance (sites which are overplayed)

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Security of tenure	Number of senior pitches	Technical score	Quality*	Floodlit?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating
45	OA Sport	Central	Yes	Secure	4	M2/D1	Good	No	6	12	6
					1			Yes	3	3	-
					1			Yes	10	3	7
47	Verulamians RUFC	South	Yes	Secure	2	M1/D1	Standard	No	5.25	4	1.25
					1			Yes	4.5	2	2.5
67	St Albans RFC	South	Yes	Unsecure	1	M1/D1	Standard	No	3.75	2	1.75
					1	M1/D1	Standard	Yes	3	2	1

Table 4.14: Improvements to existing maintenance regimes to reduce overplay

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Technical score	Quality*	Floodlit?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical maintenance score	Improved quality rating	Theoretical capacity rating
47	Verulamians RUFC	2	M1/D1	Standard	No	5.25	4	1.25	M2/D1	Good	0.75
		1			Yes	4.5	2	2.5	M2/D1	Good	1.5
67	St Albans RFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	No	3.75	2	1.75	M2/D1	Good	0.75
		1			Yes	3	2	1	M2/D1	Good	-

OA Sport is not included in the table above due to its maintenance levels already ascertaining an M2 score. This means that there will be no direct changes to its capacity by enhancements to its existing regime. Undertaking improvements at the remaining sites, will have an impact on capacity. The two unfloodlit pitches at Verulamians RUFC will have overplay alleviated and a small level of spare capacity generated. Overplay on the floodlit training pitch will be reduced from 2.5 to 105 match equivalent sessions per week.

For St Albans RFC, overplay on its unfloodlit pitch will be reduced from 1.75 to 0.75 match equivalent sessions per week. The floodlit pitch will have shortfalls alleviated but will be played to capacity.

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 4.15: Improving on site drainage solutions

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Technical score	Quality*	Floodlit?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical drainage score	Improved quality rating	Theoretical capacity rating
45	OA Sport	4	M2/D1	Good	No	6	12	6	M2/D3	Good	15
		1		Good	Yes	3	3	-	M2/D3	Good	0.5
		1		Good	Yes	10	3	7	M2/D3	Good	6.5
47	Verulamians RUFC	2	M1/D1	Standard	No	5.25	4	1.25	M1/D3	Standard	0.75
		1			Yes	4.5	2	2.5	M1/D3	Standard	1.5
67	St Albans RFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	No	3.75	2	1.75	M1/D3	Standard	0.75
		1			Yes	3	2	1	M1/D3	Standard	-

The table above illustrates that the impact of improving the drainage solutions at all sites to an D3 rating would have the identical impact as maintenance improvements for Verulamians RUFC and St Albans RUFC with the same level of overplay reduction and capacity created. Improving the drainage systems in place on the overplayed pitch at OA Sport would have a limited effect, reducing overplay by just 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 4.16: Improving maintenance and drainage

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Technical score	Quality*	Floodlit?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical drainage score	Improved quality rating	Theoretical capacity rating
45	OA Sport	4	M2/D1	Good	No	6	12	6	M2/D3	Good	15
		1		Good	Yes	3	3	-	M2/D3	Good	0.5
		1		Good	Yes	10	3	7	M2/D3	Good	6.5
47	Verulamians RUFC	2	M1/D1	Standard	No	5.25	4	1.25	M2/D3	Good	1.75
		1			Yes	4.5	2	2.5	M2/D3	Good	1
67	St Albans RFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	No	3.75	2	1.75	M2/D3	Good	0.25
		1			Yes	3	2	1	M2/D3	Good	0.5

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

When maximising the drainage and maintenance offer on each site, OA Sport is not affected. The concentrated midweek training demand from Saracens RFC is too significant to reduce through pitch improvements. For the remaining sites, overplay is mostly alleviated at Verulamians RUFC. Just one match session per week remains on the floodlit training pitch on the site. For St Albans RUFC overplay is broadly reduced with just 0.25 match equivalent sessions remaining per week.

Security of tenure

Security of tenure refers to the rights of occupation on playing field and infrastructure. Clubs and stakeholders are generally fall into the bracket of owner-occupier, tenant or licensee.

St Albans RFC has a lease its site from Hertfordshire County Council. It expires in 2027. The Club has struggled with previous engagement with the County Council and is uncertain if it will be granted an extension to its existing lease arrangement. The land accommodates circa 6.75 match equivalent sessions of demand per week for training and match play and therefore it plays a crucial part in providing for local community rugby union.

If the lease is to expire, the site should be protected from development (unless adequately re-provided elsewhere in accordance with Sport England's Playing Fields Policy Exception E4 and paragraph 99(b) of the NPPF), as it is required to meet the need of the existing population and that of the future population.

Floodlighting

On the basis a level of pitch improvements is undertaken at Verulamians RUFC which will create spare capacity, it will allow for a transfer of demand from the existing floodlit pitch to those with spare capacity. This will work to alleviate all overplay on site and create a small margin of spare capacity to accommodate future growth.

Providing additional floodlighting at St Albans RFC will not have a significant impact on the transfer of demand as both pitches are overplayed. Even if pitch improvements are undertaken to an M2/D3 score at the site, only a limited level of spare capacity is created (0.25 match equivalent sessions). To that end, the best solution for the site (and relative to the demand of the Club) is to maximise the quality of the natural turf pitches.

OA Sport

The impact of pitch improvements (via maintenance and drainage) will not alleviate overplay identified on a dedicated training pitch at OA Sport (with a total of 6.5 match equivalent sessions per week remaining on the pitch which is utilised by Saracens RFC). As Saracens RFC is an elite club operating within the top tier of English Rugby, it trains in the daytime and has no requirement for floodlighting (unlike existing community clubs). Consequently, the only theoretical way to alleviate overplay on this site is to transfer training demand onto alternate pitches across the site (which have sufficient capacity to cater for demand) or to transfer play to a World Rugby Complaint 3G pitch.

Harpenden RFC (20/21)

Harpenden RFC was the sole club without identified overplay during the 20/21 rugby union season. This is predominately due to the impact of the RFU 365 third generation pitch on the site. The two tables below outline the playing teams and supply vs demand balance for this season.

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 4.17: Harpenden RFC teams (20/21)

Club	Senior men's	Senior women's	Colts boys (U17/U18)	Colts girls (U16/17/U18)	Junior boys (U16-U13)	Junior girls (U15-U13)	Minis (U12-U6)
Harpenden RFC	3	1	3	1	8	2	7

Table 4.18: Supply vs demand balance (20/21)

Site name	Community use?	Number of senior pitches	Quality*	Floodlit?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating
Harpenden RFC	Yes	2	Standard (M1/D1)	No	4	4	-
		1		Yes	1	2	1

Since the PPOSS data capture, it is known that the Club has seen an increase within its specific junior girl's section of two teams. This may have an impact on spare capacity exhibited in the table above, however, demand may also be predominately exhibited on the third generation pitch so this cannot be confirmed.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect all existing rugby provision currently in use based on need in accommodating current and future needs (unless replacement provision is agreed upon and provided).
- ◀ Work to provide a solution to lease issues at St Albans RUFC.
- ◀ Ensure that all clubs can express demand and that clubs with unsecure tenure are catered for.
- ◀ Work with clubs to improve their ancillary offer where there is a need to do so.
- ◀ Retain supply of rugby pitches at school sites for curricular and extra-curricular purposes. Ensure that any large housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision through master planning on an individual basis.
- ◀ Where a housing development is not of a size to justify on-site rugby union provision, consider using contributions to improve existing sites within the locality.
- ◀ Where a development is of a size to justify on-site rugby union provision, focus on the creation of multi-pitch sites that reduce existing shortfalls, with accompanying clubhouse provision included given that single pitch sites without appropriate ancillary facilities can be unsustainable.

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Artificial grass pitches (for hockey)

Assessment Report summary

Hockey summary

- ◀ **There is an insufficient supply of hockey suitable pitches in St Albans to accommodate current levels of peak time demand.**
- ◀ Hockey pitch supply:
 - ◀ There is a total of five full sided AGPs in St Albans and one small sided pitch which is unavailable for community use.
 - ◀ St Albans HC aspires to build a new artificial grass pitch at Oaklands College and The Redbourn Trust has plans to build a new artificial grass pitch at Redbourn Leisure Centre in partnership with Harpenden HC.
- ◀ Quality:
 - ◀ Four of the five full size AGPs are good quality. The remaining pitch, located at Clarence Park, is poor quality.
- Affiliated demand:
 - ◀ There are two hockey clubs in St Albans, St Albans HC and Harpenden HC.
 - ◀ St Albans HC operates a senior section of 20 teams (including two masters teams) and a significant junior section. Harpenden HC operates four senior men's teams and three senior women's teams. It also has a significant junior section.
 - ◀ Future demand aspirations by clubs equates to two senior teams. One senior team from each club.
- ◀ Supply vs demand analysis conclusions:
 - ◀ Based on current levels of demand, there is an insufficient supply of provision to accommodate existing demand.
 - ◀ Future demand is unlikely to be accommodated within the area, if achieved.
 - ◀ The priority for hockey in St Albans is ensure that the existing stock of facilities is protected from development to ensure that shortfalls are not exacerbated. Any efforts to increase the supply of hockey suitable provision should also be supported to ensure demand levels can be supported.

Accommodating demand and protecting provision

There are two community hockey clubs in St Albans; Harpenden and St Albans hockey clubs. Based on the outcome of the Assessment, it is determined that a shortfall of provision exists aligned to Harpenden HC.

Harpenden HC is based at St Albans School (Woollams Playing Field) which it has full access to the onsite AGP until the spring half term when the curricular hockey schedule begins utilising peak time slots which the Club would usually utilise. Consequently, the Club must change to an alternate venue to facilitate its fixtures. It usually accesses Beaumont School which is also accessed by St Albans HC as an overspill facility, thus reducing capacity for Harpenden HC. On this basis, as a minimum, the existing stock of pitch provision which is in active use for hockey requires long term protection from development to ensure that hockey can be continued to be developed across the area.

If an additional hockey suitable pitch is provided in the future, which benefits Harpenden HC (either directly as a dedicated pitch, or indirectly through freeing up full capacity at Beaumont School) then that would theoretically free up all capacity sufficient demand to meet the needs of all community clubs in the area.

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Clarence Park

Clarence Park has an existing full size hockey suitable AGP which is used as an overspill facility for competitive hockey. It has in the past been unused due to its poor surface quality and a lack of surrounding infrastructure such as carparking and pavilion/changing facilities for teams to use.

This pitch, in its current state should be considered as a strategic reserve for hockey in the area and not considered for development, loss or replacement to a 3G surface with the current position for hockey being that there is a theoretical shortfall. Whilst not providing a satisfactory match day experience to users, if needed it can play a role in accommodate a small level of demand if needed in the City & District.

If a new pitch is built, with secure access to existing clubs then this pitch can theoretically be lost for hockey and converted to 3G to meet existing shortfalls or used for alternate recreational purposes.

Converting hockey suitable artificial grass pitches to third generation artificial grass pitches

Since the introduction of third generation artificial grass pitches and given their popularity for football, providers have seen this as a way of replacing their tired sand-based carpet and generating money from hiring out a third generation artificial grass pitch to football clubs and commercial football providers. This has come at the expense of hockey, with players now travelling further distances to gain access to a suitable pitch and many teams being displaced from their preferred geographical area.

Due to its impact on hockey, it is appropriate to ensure that sufficient sand-based artificial grass pitches are retained for the playing development of hockey. To that end, a change of surface will require a planning application and, as part of that, the applicants will have to show that there is sufficient provision available for hockey in the locality. Advice from Sport England and EH should therefore be sought prior to any planning application being submitted.

It should also be noted that, if a surface is changed, it could require the existing floodlighting and drainage to be changed and, in some instances, noise attenuation measures may need to be put in place.

As there is an identified shortfall of provision in the St Albans District it is imperative that the pitch at Clarence Park is retained as a hockey suitable surface to accommodate potential future need (i.e. Hitchin School becoming unavailable for use) and should not, therefore, be considered for conversion to a 3G surface. This is on the basis that the pitch is required as a strategic reserve for the District.

If in the future the position for hockey changes, and an increase of provision is provided, then this could be considered for potential conversion on the basis that England Hockey agree with the decision and there will be no perceived detriment to hockey.

No other of the identified hockey suitable AGPs should be converted to 3G. These are all required to support the community grassroots hockey base and therefore require protection

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect all sand-based AGPs for continue hockey use.
- ◀ In the short term, focus on the resurface of Clarence Park AGP as a multi-sport offer.
- ◀ Support the development of new AGPs which benefit hockey in the District.
- ◀ Ensure all hockey suitable AGPs have a sinking fund in place for their eventual refurbishment.
- ◀ Ensure security of tenure for clubs, particularly Harpden HC.
- ◀ Ensure that any large housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision through master planning on an individual basis.
- ◀ Where a development is of a size to justify on-site hockey provision, ensure that any proposals for new pitches will attract adequate demand.
- ◀ Where a development is not of a size to justify on-site hockey provision, or if sufficient demand cannot be attracted, consider using contributions to improve existing sites within the locality.

Tennis courts

Assessment Report summary

Tennis summary

- ◀ Supply:
 - ◀ There are 128 outdoor tennis courts identified in St Albans across 24 sites. All of these are available for community use.
 - ◀ Redbourn Leisure Trust is working in partnership[with Redbourn Tennis Club to develop new provision at Redbourn Leisure Centre which will result in the Club having access to two primary sites. Initial plans show the development of three macadam courts, four clay courts and three indoor courts. Both the Club and Trust are working in partnership with the Junior Elite Tennis Academy to fund the development.
- ◀ Quality:
 - ◀ Following a non-technical assessment, 83 tennis courts are identified as being good quality. 25 are standard quality and 20 are poor quality.
 - ◀ Poor quality courts are located at Morris Playing Field, Napsbury Park and Verulamium Park and several education sites.
- ◀ Demand:
 - ◀ There are ten tennis clubs in St Albans, the total membership of these is 4525. This figure does not include demand from OA Tennis which was unresponsive to consultation.
 - ◀ Six clubs identify aspirations to grow their respective memberships, future growth from this equates to 427 members.
 - ◀ Elliswick LTC has a waiting list of 289 which it cannot accommodate due to its provision being at capacity.
- ◀ Supply vs demand analysis:
 - ◀ Seven of the nine responsive clubs are operating over the recommended LTA capacity guidelines. Only Rothamsted and Redbourn tennis clubs are operating within capacity guidelines.
 - ◀ Future and latent demand exacerbates current shortfalls and a new future shortfall emerges at Redbourn TC when accounting for its future demand aspirations.

Recreational and informal tennis

The LTA has developed a package of support for local authorities to grow the use of park tennis courts by removing key barriers to participation. The three products are ClubSpark, Rally and Gate Access and can be used individually or in combination. The products are used to provide a remote booking and access system.

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Instead of providing free access, some local authorities are now securing their courts as per a membership scheme that allows members access through the use of a fob system following payment of a small yearly fee. Not only does this deter unofficial use of courts but it also allows official use to be tracked, thus providing data on how well and how often courts are being accessed. In addition, it provides income generation that can go towards ongoing maintenance of the courts.

The LTA and Government have also in 2021 announced a £30 million package to refurbish more than 4,500 public tennis courts in poor or unplayable condition at more than 1,500 venues in the most deprived parts of the UK⁹.

ClubSpark

ClubSpark is a flexible and simple venue management platform with multiple products and applications to help venues, local authorities and coaches manage their sport. ClubSpark is a tool that is offered for free as part of LTA venue registration and allows administrators to manage all functions of their venue(s) including:

- ◀ Managed Website - create and manage a mobile friendly website tailored to LA/club requirements to promote events and activities
- ◀ Managed Coaching – set up coaching lessons and courses online
- ◀ Membership Management - improve membership engagement by making it easier for the venue and for members to pay, renew and keep in touch. Take online payments, manage direct debits and monitor revenue streams with ease. Membership modules can also be used to take 'Season Ticket' payments for venues operating a non-traditional annual facility fee. 'Season Tickets' can be configured to allow court bookings to be made for free or at a reduced rate by players who hold one, whilst still allowing non-holders to book
- ◀ Organise Payments - Set the way you want payments to be taken, whether it's immediate pay and play, or bookable as part of a membership package
- ◀ Court Bookings – Reduced admin for managing bookings. Give staff, coaches, members and the general public access to book and pay for courts, classes or other resources online
- ◀ Scheduling - Set unique booking and price rules to suit your venue. Enable lights to switch on/off automatically when linked to the LTA Premium Gate Access system
- ◀ Book and Pay remotely - Customers can make bookings and payments for a venue anytime, anywhere via the real-time booking app
- ◀ Reporting - ClubSpark allows administrators to view reports highlighting income, court usage, revenue and number of members and season ticket holders. This allows for identification of trends and patterns and evidence to demonstrate participation levels and impact

RALLY

Rally is an aggregator that collects all booking and coaching information via partner venues ClubSpark pages and displays it for participants in one easy to view page. Rally allows players to search for venues close to them, and provides booking options, removing the barriers of not knowing where courts are or how to book. Rally provides a helpful customer journey, with a personal profile to review and manage bookings, and helpful reminders. Courts can be set to book for free of charge or at a fee agreed by the LA.

Gate Access

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/30-million-package-to-refurbish-4500-public-tennis-courts-in-deprived-parts-of-uk-announced>

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

The LTA has developed two Gate Access systems that work in association with ClubSpark, to secure your courts and to allow access to booked customers only. Members of the public can book a court online (making payment if required) and will receive a four digit access code via email, to enter using the courtside keypad. The system will allow entry for the time booked if a correct code is entered.

Nationally the LTA has reported that in the last three years sites with gate access installed have attracted 64,841 unique players to make bookings, leading to 609,671 courts being booked, and has generated £1.1m of income.

There are two gate options available Smart Access Premium & Smart Access Lite. The demands and needs of users plus the setup of the venue will determine the most appropriate system for each site.

Sites which should be considered for future investment for recreational tennis should ideally provide at least several courts to provide the best possible opportunities for tennis and potential participation development schemes. The sites which meet this criterion in St Albans are as follows:

- ◀ Morris Playing Fields
- ◀ Napsbury Park

The LTA report that use of park tennis courts are greatly increased where there is accessible toilets and a café nearby providing more of a destination to play tennis. Additional floodlighting expands the maximum available courts hours available to play for longer periods of the year. Overall, the combination of these ancillary elements is shown to increase the value and sustainability of tennis within park sites and therefore these features should be considered when investing into court provision.

Satisfying club demand

The LTA suggests that a non-floodlit court can accommodate a maximum of 40 members, whereas a floodlit court can accommodate 60 members. Based on this, two clubs could have current capacity issues, with these being the seven sites/clubs listed in the table below.

Table 4.18: Additional provision required to satisfy future demand

Club name	Current membership balance	No. of additional courts required	Nearby provision to satisfy club demand	Comments
Greenwood Park Lawn LTC	48	1 floodlit court	Verulamium Park (3.4 miles)	More suitable to develop new provision as opposed to using Verulamium Park as a satellite venue.
Wheathampstead LTC	35	1 floodlit court	St Albans High Prep School (0.7 miles)	Either option suitable albeit courts at the School are unfloodlit.
Elliswick LTC	87	N/A – Landlocked	St Georges School or Sir John Lawes School (0.5 miles)	

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Club name	Current membership balance	No. of additional courts required	Nearby provision to satisfy club demand	Comments
Harpenden LTC	330	N/A – Landlocked	Rothamsted Play Area (0.1 miles)	Provision at Rothamsted Play Area managed by Harpenden Leisure Centre
Salisbury TC	82	N/A – Landlocked Opportunity to provide additional floodlighting on all three courts	Beaumont School or Clarence Park (0.9 miles)	Both sites equidistance from club site.
St Albans TC	25	N/A – Landlocked Opportunity to provide additional floodlighting on two courts.	Beaumont School or Clarence Park (1.1 miles)	Both sites equidistance from club site.
Townsend TC	167	N/A – Landlocked	Garden Fields JMI School (0.1 miles)	Easy access to two courts on the adjacent playing field.

Where additional courts are required, this does not necessarily mean that new courts need to be established. Instead, enabling access to existing provision at local authority sites or at school sites could be explored.

Housing growth scenarios

It should be noted that later in the report in Part 7: Housing Growth Scenarios, the PPOSS provides an estimate of demand for pitch sport based on population forecasts to 2038 using the Sport England Development Pitch Calculator.

This is only for the pitch sports of football, hockey, rugby union and cricket and does not include calculations for sports such as tennis as there is no current guidance established on these sports. However, it is still recommended that tennis is acknowledged as part of this process especially as part of any large scale developments where there may be substantial enough increase in population for tennis courts.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of courts.
- ◀ Improve court quality at sites assessed as poor or standard quality and sustain quality at sites assessed as good, especially at sites in use by clubs or that are (or could be) well used for recreational demand.
- ◀ Linked to the above, improve park courts as a priority to create a year-round recreational tennis option to meet local demand.
- ◀ Explore options to further improve the recreational tennis offer via utilisation of technology provided by the LTA (e.g., Clubspark) to support the customer journey and through investment into facilities and accompanying ancillary provision.
- ◀ Ensure sinking funds are put into place by providers for long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Improve ancillary provision at club sites, where it is required.
- ◀ Explore options to promote Padel Tennis¹⁰ in the District.

¹⁰ <https://www.lta.org.uk/play/ways-to-play/padel/>

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Netball

Assessment Report summary

Netball summary

- ◀ Supply:
 - ◀ There are 28 netball courts identified in St Albans provided across eight unique sites.
 - ◀ All courts are overmarked with tennis markings and there are no dedicated netball courts identified in the District.
- ◀ Quality:
 - ◀ Of the identified 28 netball courts, 15 are standard quality, eight are poor quality and five are good quality. Good quality courts are provided at The Marlborough Science Academy.
- ◀ Demand:
 - ◀ All local clubs compete in league structures which are predominately based outside of the District. Just one league operates locally, and this is the St Albans Netball League which is based at St Albans Girls School.
- ◀ Supply vs demand analysis:
 - ◀ Given the identified exported demand for central venue league play and the current local league being able to accommodate demand at St Albans Girls School, it is considered that there is a sufficient supply of netball courts to accommodate existing and potential future demand.
 - ◀ Most courts in the District are not utilised for netball outside of academic teachings and there is the opportunity to maximise the uses of these facilities through increases partnership work with England Netball and Herts Sports Partnership.

Scenarios

Accommodating demand

The St Albans Netball League is an established league which operates two divisions for senior play. It is based at St Albans Girls School in which it accesses the outdoor courts for match play, running on a central venue basis so all teams utilise the site. The league operates match play on Saturdays so has no requirement for floodlighting to service the courts.

All remaining demand for competitive play in the District is played at Stanborough School (Welwyn Hatfield). This site operates as the home venue for the Hertfordshire Premier League and the Welwyn Hatfield League as well as a base for recreational programmes such as Play Netball.

To continue the long term opportunity for competitive play in the District, there is a need for the courts (audited as being standard quality) at St Albans Girls School to have the quality sustained and when required in the future, improved/resurfaced. Providing floodlighting on the site may also provide an opportunity for further competitive midweek play and/or opportunities for an increased recreational offer.

Housing growth scenarios

It should be noted that later in the report in Part 7: Housing Growth Scenarios, the PPOSS provides an estimate of demand for pitch sport based on population forecasts to 2038 using the Sport England Development Pitch Calculator.

This is only for the pitch sports of football, hockey, rugby union and cricket and does not include calculations for sports such as tennis as there is no current guidance established on these sports.

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However, it is still recommended that tennis is acknowledged as part of this process especially as part of any large scale developments where there may be substantial enough increase in population for netball courts.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect quantity of courts.
- ◀ Seek to improve poor quality courts, particularly where an improvement in quality can be aligned to participation programmes.
- ◀ Explore options to increase floodlighting at key sites where appropriate usage outcomes can be secured.
- ◀ Look to continue and expand the use of courts for England Netball initiatives such as Back to Netball and Walking Netball.
- ◀ Facilitate improved engagement between England Netball and schools.

Athletics

Assessment Report summary

Athletics summary

◀ Supply:

- ◀ There is one formal athletics track in St Albans located at the Abbey View Track, which is a six lane, synthetic 400 metre track. The track is fully floodlit and provides all accompanying field event facilities including a hammer cage, pole vault, high jump and shot put area.

◀ Quality:

- ◀ The quality of the track is good, it was resurfaced in 2019.

◀ Supply vs demand analysis:

- ◀ There is one athletics club in St Albans; St Albans Athletics Club.
- ◀ It is considered that in order for athletics track to be sustainable, a club membership of 200 is required. As St Albans Athletic Club is operating well above this threshold with 395 members, the track is sustainable and should be protected for the long term benefit of athletics.
- ◀ When considering other uses of the track, such as recreational use and annual events it is evident that the track has significant local importance and regional importance and should be protected for the long term benefit of athletic competition.

Scenarios

Sustaining provision

There is one formal athletics track in St Albans located at the Abbey View Stadium, which is a six lane, synthetic 400 metre track. The track is fully floodlit and provides all accompanying field event facilities including, sand pits, hammer and discuss cages, pole vault, shot putt fans and two synthetic javelin runways.

It is considered that for an athletics track to be sustainable, a club membership of 200 is required; however, a number of other factors should also be considered. St Albans AC has a membership of 395 and to that end the track is sufficiently used to ensure its long term viability.

Given the quality of both the track and field facilities at Abbey View Stadium, evidence does not suggest a wider need (based on accessed demand) for further dedicated athletics facilities within St Albans. Priority should therefore be placed on sustaining the maintenance regime at the track to maintain the quality of provision on site and ensure refurbishment work is undertaken when necessary.

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

TrackMark

*TrackMark*¹¹ is a UK athletics quality assurance scheme for outdoor track & field facilities. Accreditation of a facility can demonstrate to hirers, athletes, clubs etc, that a facility is well managed, well maintained, and accessible to all potential users.

The track at Abbey View is TrackMark accredited. This accreditation should be sustained to ensure the facility offer adequately services the needs of affiliated athletic groups. It requires reaccreditation in 2023.

Ancillary provision

Ancillary facilities refer to the type of amenities which are available on a site accompanied by their quality, such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, showering provision, car parking, dedicated official and spectator facilities and boundary fencing.

The ancillary offering at the Abbey View Track is generally poor quality. From the Club perspective, it views the changing facilities, toilets and showers as being inadequate for use. It states there has not been major investment into the facility for circa 30 years. Specifically, it notes that there are only three female toilet cubicles and one open shower in one small changing room for its female athletes. The men's changing rooms have "open showers" which are not considered appropriate for younger male athletes to use. It also notes that there is not a clubhouse facility or clubroom for more social ventures or administrative ventures at the Club.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect the athletics track and the accompanying ancillary provision at Abbey View. Work to achieve full TrackMark certification at the site.
- ◀ Work to improve the ancillary offer supporting the site to improve the user experience.
- ◀ Continue to increase participation both within affiliated clubs and the wider running market, signposting potential club members from the likes of Parkrun events and other health initiatives.
- ◀ Ensure that any new developments consider the need for running and opportunities to link with/to existing running routes

Rugby league

Assessment Report summary

Rugby league summary

- ◀ Supply:
 - ◀ There is one senior rugby league pitch in St Albans, this is located at Toulmin Drive.
- ◀ Quality:
 - ◀ The pitch is standard quality, and no issues were identified by St Albans Centurions RLFC.
- ◀ Demand:
 - ◀ St Albans Centurions RLFC is the sole club operating in St Albans. It operates one senior men's team and three junior boys' teams.
 - ◀ The Club aspires to increase the number of junior team it provides but denotes that it has a limited volunteer network which inhibits growth.
- ◀ Supply vs demand analysis:
 - ◀ Current supply of rugby league provisions in St Albans is insufficient to accommodate current and future levels of demand.

¹¹ <https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/facilities/>

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Scenarios

Accommodating demand

St Albans Centurions RLFC is the sole rugby league club in the District. It has a total of four teams consisting of one senior men's, one U18 colts, U16 boys and an U14 boys' team. It is based at Toulmin Drive where it rents its sole pitch from the Council. The tenure position of the Club is secure, in the sense that the Council will continue to provide the pitch for the benefit of rugby league over the benefit of the PPS. However, in theory, the Council does not have to accommodate the Club, and it could benefit from a more secure position.

The pitch at Toulmin Drive accommodates all match play and midweek training demand and is therefore overplayed by two matches per week (with this expected to slightly increase to 2.5 match equivalent sessions in the future based on growth aspirations of the Club).

Targeted pitch improvements would theoretically reduce the shortfall by one match equivalent session but still leave a level of overplay remaining. To reduce overplay, the Club would benefit from access from one of the additional pitches on site which are currently underutilised for football. This would require new goalposts being installed on the site.

The ancillary provision currently servicing the site is poor quality and not conducive to the development of youth rugby league. Improved toilets and a social area would be beneficial to both football and rugby league development and this offer may present itself as a multi-sport investment opportunity.

Recommendations

- ◀ Ensure existing and future demand from St Albans Centurions RLFC can be met at Toulmin Drive (or an alternative dedicated site if one becomes available).
- ◀ Improve ancillary offer
- ◀ Encourage participation initiatives and use the catalyst of the delayed 2021 Rugby League World Cup to increase coverage of the sport.

Bowling greens

Assessment Report summary

Bowls summary

- ◀ Supply:
 - ◀ There are six bowling greens in St Albans across six sites. All of which are available for community use.
- ◀ Demand
 - ◀ There are six bowls clubs in St Albans. Each has full access to one bowling green. The cumulative membership across the six clubs equates to 435 members.
- ◀ Quality:
 - ◀ Four bowling greens are good quality, two are standard quality. There are no poor quality greens identified.
- ◀ Supply vs demand analysis:
 - ◀ There are six bowling clubs with each having access one dedicated bowling green to service club demand.
 - ◀ Based on the existing supply of provision and identified demand to access provision it is determined that there is a sufficient supply of bowling greens to accommodate both current and anticipated future levels of demand.

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Recommendations

- ◀ Retain existing quantity of in use greens and, as a minimum, sustain quality.
- ◀ Assist clubs, where possible, with any future ancillary provision improvements
- ◀ Support clubs with plans to increase membership so that growth can be maximised.

Gaelic football

Assessment Report summary

Gaelic football summary

- ◀ Supply:
 - ◀ There is one full size Gaelic football pitch in St Albans, this is located at St Albans Irish Club.
- ◀ Quality:
 - ◀ The non-technical audit of provision found the pitch to be standard quality and the clubhouse to be good quality.
- ◀ Demand:
 - ◀ St. Colmcilles GAC is the sole club operating in St Albans. It operates one senior men's team, one senior women's team and five junior teams.
- ◀ Supply vs demand analysis:
 - ◀ Current supply of Gaelic football provisions in St Albans is sufficient to accommodate current and future levels of demand.

Scenarios

N/A

Recommendations

- ◀ Ensure that the St Albans Irish Club site is appropriately managed to ensure the long term sustainability of the sport in St Albans and the wider region.
- ◀ Encourage and support any localised participation initiatives to keep the Club sustainable.

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Croquet

Assessment Report summary

Croquet – supply and demand summary

- ◀ **St Albans Croquet Club is adequately provided for via the lawn at Clarence Park; however, demand should be monitored, especially given that the Club aspires to grow further.**
- ◀ **Supply**
 - ◀ There is one croquet lawn provided in St Albans; one at Clarence Park (Central Analysis Area).
 - ◀ The lawn is assessed as good quality, with the respective club users reporting that they are well maintained.
 - ◀ St Albans Croquet Club does not have its own clubhouse. It does, however, have long term improvement plans which incorporate having a clubhouse to cater as a shelter, hospitality space, and for socialising.
- ◀ **Demand**
 - ◀ There is one croquet club based in St Albans; St Albans Croquet Club.
 - ◀ Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, St Albans Croquet Club catered for 33 playing members before suspending subscriptions when play was no longer allowed.
 - ◀ There are no known clubs that travel from out of the District to play home matches inside of St Albans, although St Albans Croquet Club do frequently travel out of St Albans to compete in league and cup competitions.
 - ◀ The Club has not reported latent or unmet demand; however, given its location and the size of St Albans, it is reasonable to assume that some potential demand is not being catered for, particularly in central and northern parts of the District.

Scenarios

N/A

Recommendations

- ◀ Retain existing croquet provision in the District.
- ◀ Support and encourage participation events to promote the sport to residents.
- ◀ Support development plans of the St Albans Croquet Club which include ancillary improvements and the development of a new lawn.

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PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

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

OBJECTIVE 1

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

Recommendations:

- a. Ensure, through the use of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy, that outdoor sports facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy.
- b. Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.
- c. Maximise community use of education facilities where there is a need to do so.

Recommendation (a) – Ensure, through the use of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy, that outdoor sports facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy.

The PPOSS shows that all existing playing field and outdoor sport sites cannot be deemed surplus to requirements because of shortfalls now and in the future. As such, all provision requires protection or replacement until all identified shortfalls have been overcome. This includes lapsed, disused, underused and poor quality sites as there is a requirement for such provision to help meet and alleviate the identified shortfalls.

When shortfalls are evident, provision can only be permanently lost when the current picture changes to the extent that the site in question is no longer needed as a result of no shortfalls existing, or unless replacement provision is provided and agreed upon by all stakeholders. NPPF paragraph 99 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 PPOSS should be used to help inform development management decisions that affect existing or new playing pitch provision and accompanying ancillary facilities. All applications are assessed by the Local Planning Authority on a case-by-case basis taking into account site specific factors. In addition, Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications that affect or prejudice the use of playing field used within the last five years and will use the PPS to help assess that planning application against its Playing Fields Policy.

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Policy Exception E1:

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

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

Policy Exception E2

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

Policy Exception E3

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

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

Policy Exception E4:

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

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

Policy Exception E5

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

Lapsed and disused sites should also be protected from development or replaced in accordance with Sport England's policy exceptions. A disused site is a playing field which is not currently being used at all by any users and is not available for community hire either. Once these sites are disused for five or more years they will then be categorised as 'lapsed sites'.

Lapsed and disused sites should also be protected from development or replaced in accordance with Sport England's policy exceptions as they currently provide a solution to reducing identified shortfalls. A disused site is a playing field which is not currently being used at all by any users and is not available for community hire either.

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Once these sites are disused for five or more years they will then be categorised as 'lapsed sites'. Any disused/lapsed playing fields are included within the Action Plan together with a recommendation in relation to bringing the site back into use or to mitigate the loss on a replacement site to address the shortfalls identified.

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

A number of education sites in St Albans are used for competitive play, predominately for football. In some cases, use of pitches has been classified as secure, however, use is not necessarily formalised and further work should be carried out to ensure an appropriate community use agreement is in place (including access to changing provision where required). Examples of where this is the case include Sandridge School, St Albans Girls School and St Albans School (Woollams Playing Fields).

Not having fully formalised usage presents a risk for those clubs using these sites as community use could technically be terminated at any time. Securing community use at such as will help to create additional pitch capacity and could help to address deficiencies.

Further partnership working with NGBs should be carried out to encourage schools to put in place CUA including access to changing provision where required.

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

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

The Council should further explore opportunities where security of tenure could be granted via lease agreements (minimum 25 years as recommended by Sport England and NGBs) so that clubs are in a position to apply for external funding. This is particularly the case at poor quality local authority sites, possibly with inadequate or no ancillary facilities, so that quality can be improved and sites developed.

Local sports clubs should be supported by partners including the Council or NGBs to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership work. For example, club development should be supported and clubs should be encouraged to develop evidence of business and sports development plans to generate income via their facilities.

All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC)¹². They should also be encouraged to work with partners locally, such as volunteer support agencies or local businesses.

¹² <http://www.cascinfo.co.uk/cascbenefits>

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

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

Clubs	Site
<p>Clubs should have NGB accreditation award.</p> <p>Clubs commit to meeting demonstrable local demand and show pro-active commitment to developing school-club links.</p> <p>Clubs are sustainable, both in a financial sense and via their internal management structures in relation to recruitment and retention policy for both players and volunteers.</p> <p>Ideally, clubs should have already identified (and received an agreement in principle) any match funding required for initial capital investment identified.</p> <p>Clubs have processes in place to ensure capacity to maintain sites to the existing, or better, standards.</p>	<p>For established clubs which have proven success in terms of self-management sites identified as 'Key' or 'Local' within the action plan hierarchy may be appropriate to consider.</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>

Local sports clubs should be supported by partners including the Council, Herts Sports Partnership and NGBs to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership work.

All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC). They should also be encouraged to work with partners locally – such as volunteer support agencies or local businesses.

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

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

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

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

Community asset transfer

Another way of ensuring long term tenure for clubs is through a Community Asset Transfer (CAT). CAT is the transfer of management and/or ownership of public land and buildings from its owner (usually a local authority) to a community organisation (such as a

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Development Trust, a Community Interest Company or a social enterprise) for less than market value – to achieve a local social, economic or environmental benefit.

Community based organisations are often much more effective at engaging people than other types of organisation because they are close to and directly accountable to their community.

Communities that come together to plan and deliver services can make them more inclusive and responsive than state run services. Communities can mobilise a lot of volunteer time and energy. Asset transfer can, for example:

- ◀ Give sports clubs and community organisations more security and sustainability
- ◀ Enable people to protect the assets in their communities – including iconic heritage buildings and open spaces
- ◀ Involve people in designing and running the services from which, they benefit
- ◀ Be a catalyst for getting people more involved as volunteers
- ◀ Keep money in the local economy through enterprise and locally owned assets

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 should this be an option for the Council to consider. It can be accessed here:

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/community-assets-and-rights>

Recommendation (c) - Maximise community use of education facilities where there is a need to do so.

To maximise community use a more coherent, structured relationship with schools is recommended. The ability to access good facilities within the local community is vital to any sports organisation, yet many clubs struggle to find good quality places to play and train. In St Albans, pricing policies at facilities can be a barrier to access at some education sites but physical access, poor quality and resistance from schools to open up provision is also an issue, especially at some private schools and academies.

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 schools and local clubs, as well helping to reduce identified shortfalls. It is, however, common for school provision not to be fully maximised for community use, even on established community use sites.

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

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

Where new schools are provided in major new residential developments, they should be designed to facilitate community access, with opportunities for meeting the community's outdoor sports needs explored at the outset to maximise the potential for facility provision to be made within the developments, if appropriate. An example of this is ensuring the provision of adult, youth 11v11 and/or youth 9v9 grass football pitches, given current shortfalls and their

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suitability for the playing format of students, or multi-use provision such as court that can accommodate both tennis and netball activity.

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

The key sites school sites in the District which are accessed by community clubs where no known community use agreement is in place are as follows:

- ◀ Verulam School – St Albans CC
- ◀ St Georges School – Harpenden CC
- ◀ Roundwood Park School – Harpenden Colts FC
- ◀ Sandridge School – Sandridge Rovers Juniors FC

Key sites which are known to have community use agreements which are well used are:

- ◀ Samuel Ryder Academy – London Colney Colts & Cougars
- ◀ St Albans Girls School – St Albans City Youth FC
- ◀ Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School – St Albans City Youth FC

The last remaining key site is Oaklands College. St Albans HC has a long term agreement to access the on-site AGPs. No other club accessing the site has a known tenure agreement with the School.

OBJECTIVE 2

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

Recommendations:

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

Recommendation (d) – Improve quality

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

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

Addressing quality issues

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

Based upon an achievable target, using existing quality scoring to provide a baseline, a standard should be used to identify deficiencies and investment should be focused on those sites which fail to meet the proposed quality standard. For the purposes of quality assessments, the Strategy refers to pitches and ancillary facilities separately as being of 'good', 'standard' or 'poor' quality. However, some good quality sites have poor quality elements and vice versa (e.g., a good quality pitch may be serviced by poor quality changing facilities).

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

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If a poor quality site receives little or no usage that is not to say that no improvement is needed. It may instead be the case that it receives no demand because of its quality, thus an improvement in said quality will attract demand to the site, potentially from overplayed standard or good quality sites (thus reducing capacity issues).

In addition, without appropriate, fit for purpose ancillary facilities, good quality provision may be underutilised, especially by adults and female users who have more of a requirement. Changing facilities form the most essential part of this offer and therefore key sites should be given priority for improvement. For the majority of sports, no senior league matches can take place without appropriate changing facilities and the same also applies to women's and girls' demand.

For football, The FA has a Pitch Improvement Programme aimed at improving the standard of grass pitches across the Country. For provision included in the programme, clubs can utilise the services of the Football Foundation's PitchPower app to carry out a free on-site assessment of their pitches. This then provides the Grounds Management Association (GMA) with the detail needed to create a personalised, informative report to advise on how improvements can be made. Clubs then receive bespoke advice and support to help with any future actions, funding applications and equipment, with clubs getting access to discounted rates for machinery and consumables through local partnerships.

The tool is available across mobile apps and desktop and is open to access by all providers, including clubs, schools and local authorities. Following a PitchPower report, organisations can work towards the recommended dedicated maintenance regime identified to improve the quality of their pitches. Applicants are required to submit a PitchPower assessment for each of their pitches as a condition of a grant funding application for Football Foundation grass pitch investment, such as the Grass Pitch Maintenance fund.

For cricket and the ECB, the equivalent is the Grounds and Natural Turf Improvement Programme (GaNTIP), which is jointly funded by the ECB, FA, Football Foundation and the GMA. Its aim is to raise the standards of sports surfaces as well as the understanding of sports turf management practices among grassroots sports clubs across England Wales.

Specifically for tennis, the LTA has secured a £22 million investment fund to be put into public tennis courts across Britain, together with an £8.5 million investment from the LTA. This will see thousands of public park tennis courts that are in poor or unplayable condition improved for the benefit of the local communities.

For the improvement/replacement of AGPs refer to Sport England and the NGBs 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface for Hockey, Football, Rugby League 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 outdoor facility stock; it is necessary to ensure that provision is not overplayed beyond recommended carrying capacity. This is determined by assessing quality (via a non-technical site assessment) and allocating a match limit to each (daily for hockey, weekly for football and rugby union and seasonal for cricket).

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

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Table 5.2: Capacity of pitches

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

For all remaining non-pitch sports (e.g. bowls, croquet, netball and tennis) there are no capacity recommendations set out by the NGBs. Instead, potential capacity is evaluated on a site-by-site basis following consultation and site assessments.

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

For cricket, an increase in the usage of NTPs is key to alleviating overplay as this allows for the transfer of junior demand from grass wickets, this should be undertaken in situ of quality improvements to a cricket square to improve the quality which in turn will increase carrying capacity.

For rugby union, additional floodlighting can mitigate some of the overplay as it allows training demand to be spread across a greater number of pitches or unmarked areas. However, this is on the basis that there are enough pitches on a site to make this feasible. Alternatively, access to a World Rugby compliant 3G pitch will help the transfer of midweek training demand and competitive match play which in turn will reduce the pressure on grass pitches.

Improving changing provision

There is a need to address changing provision at some sites, these are generally centred at either Council or privately managed sites (these are all identified in the Action Plan). As previously mentioned, without appropriate, fit for purpose ancillary facilities, good quality pitches may be underutilised. Changing facilities form the most essential part of this offer and therefore key sites should be given priority for improvement. An example of this is at Toulmin Drive.

Sites which predominantly accommodate adult and/or older junior age group sports should be prioritised for improvements, whilst there is a trend for younger junior age groups (particularly for football) not to require use of changing provision, with suitable male and female toilet provision for players and spectators considered to be of greater importance.

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

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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 6: Action Plan for the proposed hierarchy.

Recommendation (f) – Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding

Partners should ensure that appropriate funding secured for improved sports provision is directed to areas of need, underpinned by a robust strategy for improvement in outdoor sport provision and accompanying ancillary facilities.

To address community need, target priority areas and reduce provision duplication, a coordinated approach to strategic investment is required. In delivering this recommendation, the Council should maintain a regular dialogue with local partners through the PPOSS Steering Group.

Although some investment in new provision will not be made by the Council directly, it is important that the Steering Group directs and leads a co-ordinated approach to facility development whether made at/by education sites, NGBs, sports clubs and the commercial sector. This is to ensure that the extent to which it addresses community need is optimised and duplication is avoided.

One of sport's key contributions is its positive impact on public health. It is therefore important to lever in investment from other sectors such as, for example, health and wellbeing. Sport and physical activity can have a profound effect on peoples' lives, and plays a crucial role in improving community cohesion, educational attainment and self-confidence.

Recommendation (g) –Secure developer contributions

It is important that this strategy informs policies and supplementary planning documents by setting out the approach to securing sport and recreational facilities through new housing development.

For playing pitches, it is recommended the Council use Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator as a tool for helping to determine the additional demand for pitches and to estimate the likely developer contribution required linking to sites within the locality. This should form part of the Council working with Sport England to develop a process and guidance for obtaining developer contributions.

The calculator uses the current number of teams by sports pitch type contained within the Assessment Report and calculates the percentage within each age group that play that sport. That percentage is then applied to the population growth. The additional teams likely to be generated are then converted into match equivalent sessions and associated pitch requirements in the peak period, with the associated costs (both for providing the pitch/facility and for its life cycle) then given. The calculator splits the requirement into peak time demand for natural turf pitches, training demand for artificial grass pitches, and the number of new changing rooms required.

The PPOSS should be used to help determine the likely impact of a new development on demand and the capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity of existing provision or if new provision is required.

Where a development is located within access of existing high-quality provision, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further provision or improvement to existing provision, as additional demand arising from the development is likely to result in increased usage (which can result in overplay or quality deterioration).

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Where it is determined that new provision is required to accompany a development, priority should be placed on providing facilities that contribute towards alleviating existing shortfalls within the locality. To determine what supply of provision is provided, it is imperative that the PPOSS findings are taken into consideration and that for particularly large developments consultation takes place with the relevant NGBs and Sport England. This is due to the importance of ensuring that the stock of facilities provided is correct to avoid provision becoming unsustainable and unused. The preference is for multi-pitch and potentially multi-sport sites to be developed, supported by a clubhouse and adequate parking facilities which consider the potential for future AGP development. This is because single-pitch facilities are more likely to become under-used (or unused), unviable and unsustainable.

It is recognised that consultation cannot take place with NGBs for every development due to resource restrictions. Instead, it is recommended that such discussions take place within PPOSS Steering Group meetings, which should take place regularly following adoption of the study as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation process. It is recommended that these take place every 6-12 months and inform the annual review/update (see Part 8 for further information).

The guidance should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to include provision and/or enhancement of appropriate provision and subsequent maintenance. S106 contributions could also be used to improve the condition and of the pitches in order to increase pitch capacity to accommodate more matches.

Sport England recommends that a number of objectives should be implemented to enable the above to be delivered:

- ◀ Planning consent should include appropriate conditions and/or be subject to specific planning obligations. Where developer contributions are applicable, a S106 agreement or equivalent must be completed that should specify, when applied, the amount that will be linked to Sport England's Building Cost Information Service from the date of the permission and timing of the contribution/s to be made.
- ◀ Contributions should also be secured towards the first ten years of maintenance on new pitches (lifecycle costs), the cost of which is indicated by the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator. NGBs and Sport England can provide further and up to date information on the associated costs.
- ◀ External funding should be sought/secured to achieve maximum benefit from the investment into appropriate facility enhancement, alongside other open space provision, and its subsequent maintenance.
- ◀ Where new provision is provided, appropriate changing rooms and associated car parking should be located on site.
- ◀ All new or improved outdoor sports facilities on school sites should be subject to community use agreements.

Currently, the Playing Pitch Calculator has not been provided to the Council. It will be made available upon request. It has not yet been provided on the basis of it still determining its future housing target over the Local Plan period as well as its general future population.

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OBJECTIVE 3

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

Recommendations:

- h. Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock.
- i. Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.

The Council and its partners should work to rectify identified inadequacies and meet identified shortfalls as outlined in the preceding Assessment Report and the sport-by-sport specific recommendations (Part 4) as well as the following Action Plan (Part 6).

It is important that the current levels of provision are protected, maintained and enhanced to secure provision both for now and in the future. Maximising use of existing provision through a combination of the following will help to reduce shortfalls and accommodate future demand:

- ◀ Improving quality in order to improve the capacity to accommodate more demand.
- ◀ Transferring demand from overplayed sites to sites with spare capacity.
- ◀ The re-designation of facilities e.g. converting an unused pitch (or pitch type) for one sport to instead cater for another sport (or another pitch type).
- ◀ Securing community use at school sites including those currently unavailable.
- ◀ Working with commercial and private providers to increase usage.

The PPOSS identifies priority sites that should be focused upon, including those that are presently overplayed and/or poor quality, or unused sites that are particularly large. It also advises how issues can be overcome.

Recommendation (i) - Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand

The Steering Group should use and regularly update the Action Plan within this Strategy. The Action Plan lists recommendations for each site, focused upon both qualitative and quantitative improvements, which if delivered will lessen the need for new provision.

Linked to the above and as evidenced in Part 4, although there are identified shortfalls of match equivalent sessions, most current and future demand is currently being met and most shortfalls can be addressed via quality improvements and/or improved access to sites that presently used minimally or that are currently unavailable. Adding to the current stock, particularly in the short term, is therefore not recommended as a priority, except for 3G pitches, the shortfall for which cannot be reduced without new stock.

Large scale housing developments and the establishment of new schools may also necessitate the need for new provision. Where new schools are developed, there is an opportunity to combine the building of the school to the development of a new multi-sport site that will be of a benefit to the School as well as the wider community.

All subsequent development for sport should, where possible, follow environmental sustainability principles¹³ where opportunities present themselves to do so. Sport England and

¹³<https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/sustainability?section=introduction>

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Herts Sports Partnership can aid in support to the Council and contractors on active design and environmental sustainability considerations.

For housing developments, as outlined in Recommendation (g), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator can be used as a guide to inform requirements.

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PART 6: ACTION PLAN

The site-by-site action plan seeks to address key issues identified in the preceding Assessment Report. It provides recommendations based on current levels of usage, quality and future demand, as well as the potential of each site for enhancement. It should be reviewed in the light of staff and financial resources in order to prioritise support for strategically significant provision and provision that other providers are less likely to make. The Action Plan is separated by analysis area.

The Council should make it a high priority to work with NGBs and other partners to produce a priority list of actions based on local priorities, NGB priorities and available funding. To allow for facility developments to be programmed within a phased approach, the Council should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of outdoor facility sites and associated provision.

The identification of sites is based on their strategic importance i.e., they accommodate the majority of demand, or the recommended action has the greatest anticipated impact on addressing shortfalls (identified either on a sport-by-sport basis or across the Council area as a whole).

Table 6.1: Proposed tiered site criteria

Criteria	Hub sites	Key centres	Local sites
Site location	Strategically located in the District. Priority sites for NGBs.	Strategically located within the analysis area.	Serves the local community.
Site layout	Accommodates three or more grass pitches, including provision of an AGP.	Accommodates two or more grass pitches.	Accommodates one or more pitches.
Type of sport	Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision.
Management	Management control remains within the local authority/other provider or with an appropriate lease arrangement through a committee or education owned.	Management control remains within the local authority/parish council or with an appropriate club on a lease arrangement.	Management control remains within the local authority/provider or with an appropriate club on a lease arrangement.
Maintenance regime	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Standard maintenance regime either by the club or in house maintenance contract.
Ancillary facilities	Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	No changing room access on site or appropriate access to accommodate both senior and junior use concurrently (if required).

Hub sites are of strategic District-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.

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Key centres are more community focussed sites, although some are still likely to service a wider analysis area. There may be more of a focus on a specific sport.

Additionally, it is considered that some financial investment may be necessary to improve the ancillary facilities at both hub sites and key centre sites to complement the pitches in terms of access, flexibility (i.e. single-sex changing if necessary), quality and that they meet the rules and regulations of local competitions.

Local sites refer to those sites offering minimal provision or that are of minimal value to the wider community. Primarily they are sites with one facility or a low number of facilities that service just one or two sports. The level of priority attached to them for external investment may be relatively low.

For local authority and parish council sites, consideration should be given, on a site-by-site basis, to the feasibility of a club taking on a long-term lease (if not already present), in order that external funding can be sought. Such sites will require some level of investment, either to the outdoor sport facilities or ancillary facilities, and is it anticipated that one of the conditions of offering a hire/lease is that the Club would be in a position to source external funding to improve/extend the provision.

Other sites considered in this tier may be primary school sites or secondary school sites that are not widely used by the community or that do not offer community availability.

Some local sites are suitable for rationalisation providing that capital receipts are allocated to replace the lost provision at larger, multi-pitch sites.

Management and development

The following issues should be considered when undertaking sports related site development or enhancement:

- ◀ Financial viability.
- ◀ Security of tenure.
- ◀ Planning permission requirements and any foreseen difficulties in securing permission.
- ◀ Adequacy of existing finances to maintain existing sites.
- ◀ Business Plan/Masterplan – including financial package for creation of new provision where need has been identified.
- ◀ Analysis of the possibility of shared site management opportunities.
- ◀ The availability of opportunities to lease sites to external organisations.
- ◀ Options to assist community groups to gain funding to enhance existing provision.
- ◀ Negotiation with landowners to increase access to private hub sites.
- ◀ Football investment programme/3G pitch development with the FA and Football Foundation

Partners

The column indicating partners refers to the main organisations that the Council would look to work with to support delivery of the actions. Given the extent of potential actions it is reasonable to assume that partners will not necessarily be able to support all of the actions identified but where the action is a priority and resource is available the partner will endeavour to provide support. It is vital that, where possible, the Council supports all parish councils in the Borough in the delivery of key actions and priorities identified in the Action Plan below.

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Priority

Although hub sites are mostly likely to have a high priority level as they have wide importance, high priority sites have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the key issues identified in the assessment. Therefore, some key centres and local sites are also identified as having a high priority level. It is these projects/sites which should generally, if possible, be addressed within the short term (1-2 years).

The majority of key centres are a **medium** priority, have analysis area importance and have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the issues identified in the assessment.

The **low** priority sites tend to be single pitch or single sport sites and often club or education sites with local specific importance but that may also contribute to addressing the issues identified in the assessment for specific users.

Costs

The strategic actions have also been ranked as low, medium or high based on cost. The brackets are:

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

These are based on Sport England's estimated facility costs which can be found at:
<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>

Timescales

The Action Plan has been created to be delivered over a ten-year period. The information within the Assessment Report, Strategy and Action Plan will require updating as developments occur.

The indicative timescales relate to delivery times and are not priority based:

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

Aim

Each action seeks to meet at least one of the three aims of the Strategy; **Enhance, Provide, Protect.**

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CENTRAL

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
1	Abbey View Golf & Track	Football	Commercial	One standard quality adult football pitch with accompanying ancillary provision which is standard quality. The pitch is currently unused.	Sustain pitch quality and look to maximise use. Ensure that the ancillary provision servicing the site is appropriate for football and athletics use.	SCDC CFA FF	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect
		Athletics		One formal athletic track, which is a six lane, synthetic 400 metre facility. The track is fully floodlit and provides all accompanying field event facilities including a hammer cage, pole vault, high jump and shot put area. The track is TrackMark accredited.	Ensure that the TrackMark accreditation is retained during future inspections. Work in partnership with England Athletics and its partners to maximise usage and promote increases in participation where possible.	SCDC England Athletics		L	L	L	
		Tennis/ Netball		Two new artificial tennis/netball courts with accompanying floodlighting. Good quality.	Sustain quality and ensure maximisation of provision for competitive and recreational formats of both tennis/netball.	SCDC LTA EN		L	L	L	
2	Aboyne Lodge School Playing Field	Football	School	One poor quality 11v11 pitch that is not available for community use.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
6	Beaumont School	Football	School	Three standard quality adult pitches with spare capacity. Pitches currently unused by community users. Theoretical spare capacity on site to accommodate community demand.	Ensure the quality of the pitches is sustained. Explore opportunities for increases of demand if it exists now or in the future.	School CFA FF	Key site	L	L	L	Protect
		Rugby Union		One senior and one junior pitch, both of which are non-floodlit, available for community use and are poor quality. The pitches are at capacity with existing levels of curricular demand.	Retain for curricular demand.	School RFU		L	L	L	
		Hockey		One good quality, floodlit, 100m x 62m sand dressed pitch that was built in 2015. The site is used by St Albans HC and Harpenden HC. The pitch provides a pivotal role in supporting hockey in the district.	Ensure the pitch continues to provide a long term community offer to residents in the District. Protect the pitch from conversion to an alternate sport surface if it is at the detriment to hockey.	School England Hockey		L	L	L	
				Pitch converted to a 3G surface in 2023.	N/A						
		Tennis		Three standard quality, floodlit macadam courts. Available for community use, but unused.	Sustain quality for curricular and any future community use.	School LTA		L	L	L	
		Netball		Three standard quality, floodlit macadam courts. Available for community use, but unused.	Sustain quality for curricular and any future community use.	School EN		L	L	L	
9	Clarence Park	Hockey AGP	Council	One poor quality, floodlit, 99.5m x 61m, hockey suitable sand filled pitch The pitch was last resurfaced in 2004 and is poor quality, and broadly unfit for competitive hockey use (albeit can accommodate a level of low performance level demand). The site offers limited car parking and no direct ancillary offer for changing or social benefit.	The pitch needs to be retained and resurface. Gen2 surface type (https://www.fih.ch/news/game-changing-gen-2-leads-the-way-in-multi-sport-synthetic-surfaces-fit-for-hockey/) most suitable due to multisport use. There is a further need to establish relationships with adjacent cricket club to access ancillary provision to improve overall user experience.	Council England Hockey	Key centre	H	M	H	Protect Enhance Provide

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
				It is currently an essential pitch due to the loss of Beaumont School hockey pitches conversion to 3G.							
		Cricket	Sports Club	One standard quality Cricket square used by St Albans CC. The site has no spare capacity for senior Cricket on Saturday's or Sunday's as it is currently overplayed by six matches per season. St Albans CC have identified that outfield improvements are required, and that the clubhouse needs significant refurbishment including re-wiring, plumbing and a complete overhaul of its changing rooms, toilet facilities and shower facilities.	Work with the Club to explore opportunities to reduce overplay on the site via improvements to the cricket square and outfield. Further support work with the Club is required to ensure that the ancillary offer continues to provide a suitable offer for all users of the site. This may also link to a longer term opportunity to provide an improved offer to the user of the adjacent hockey suitable AGP.	Council Club ECB	Local site	M	M	L-H	
16	Fleetville Junior School	Football	School	One standard quality 11v11 pitch with potential capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Retain for curricular demand.	School CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
19	Garden Fields Jim School	Football	School	Two poor quality 11v11 pitch that are at capacity with curricular use.	Retain for curricular demand.	School CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
27	Heathlands School for Deaf Children	Football	School	One poor quality 11v11 pitch that is not available for community use.	Retain for curricular demand.	School CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
		AGP		One 45m x 25m pitch that is not floodlit and is not available for community use. Used by EN to operate Paraneball sessions.		School EH					
36	Maple Primary School	Football	School	One poor quality 11v11 pitch that is not available for community use.	Retain for curricular demand.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
38	Margaret Wix Primary School	Football	School	One poor quality 11v11 pitch that has overplay issues.	Retain for curricular demand.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
45	OA Sport	Rugby Union	Sports Club	Six good quality senior pitches, two of which are floodlit. There are also an additional four good quality junior pitches. The floodlit pitches are a dedicated training pitch and the 1 st xv senior pitch. The 1 st xv pitch is at capacity with match play and the training pitch is overplayed due to concentrated midweek training demand	Ensure that the good quality of the pitches is sustained. Existing overplay on one training pitch is unlikely to be alleviated unless a transfer of play to a World Rugby Compliant 3G pitch is achieved. The pitch is overplayed due to dual use by the Club and Saracens RFC which use the site as a training base.	Sports Club RFU	Key centre	L	L	L	Protect Provide
		Cricket		Three good quality squares with eight, six and three grass wickets. The site has no spare capacity for extra weekend play. Two squares are overplayed by a cumulative 41 session per season. One square has limited spare capacity.	The site would benefit from either the installation of an NTP to reduce concentrated play on overplay squares or a transfer of demand to the squares at St Albans School (Woollams Playing Field) when they are not being used which is adjacent to the site.	Sports Club HCB ECB		L	L	L	
		Tennis		Four good quality, floodlit astro turf courts.	Retain for existing club use.	Sports Club LTA		L	L	L	

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
50	Prae Wood Primary School	Football	School	One poor quality 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Retain for curricular demand.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
58	Sandridge School	Football	School	Two 7v7 pitches, one 11v11 and one 9v9 pitch, all of which are poor quality. Youth pitches are played above recommendation capacity.	There is a modest need to undertake pitch improvements on the site to ensure there is sufficient capacity to accommodate current levels of future demand.	School CFA FF	Local site	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
59	Sandringham School	Football	School	Two standard quality adult pitches. Only used for curricular use.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect
		Artificial 3G		One good quality, medium pile 110m x 75m, FA and World Rugby approved pitch that was installed in 2018.	Ensure pitch quality is sustained and a sinking fund is in place for future refurbishment.	School RFU CFA, FF		L	L	L	
		Rugby Union		Two poor quality, senior pitches with minimal spare capacity. Only used for curricular demand.	Retain for curricular use.	School RFU		L	L	L	
		Tennis		Six poor quality, non-floodlit macadam courts.	Look to improve quality for curricular use. Explore opportunities to provide floodlighting and maximise community use.	School LTA		L	L	L	
		Netball		Four poor quality, non-floodlit courts.	Look to improve quality for curricular use. Explore opportunities to provide floodlighting and maximise community use.	School EN		L	L	L	
62	Skyswood Primary School	Football	School	One standard quality 11v11 pitch with potential capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
63	Spencer Meadow	Football	Parish Council	Two standard quality adult pitches with spare capacity in peak period. Ancillary provision at this site is satisfactory.	Ensure continuation of existing maintenance levels to sustain quality.	Parish Council CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
		Cricket		One standard quality square with potential spare capacity for additional senior Cricket on Sundays. Ancillary provision sufficient quality to support senior cricket.	Ensure continuation of existing maintenance levels to sustain quality.	Parish Council ECB		L	L	L	
		Netball		Two standard quality courts.	Sustain court quality and ensure upgrades to the surface are undertaken when needed. Where possible, promote courts to see an increased level of use.	Parish Council EN		L	L	L	
64	St Albans City Football Club	Football	Sports club	One good quality adult pitch. Stadia site with no wider community access permitted. Ancillary provision at this site is standard quality. The Club has been looking at opportunities for a new stadia development elsewhere within the City/District. Its current offer, whilst meeting needs of existing demand has challenges with carparking and it cannot provide a significant hospitality offer which is needed to increase match day revenue.	The Club should be supported with improving the stadia site where possible to offer the best opportunities to increase revenue. Any necessary upgrades to the stadium to meet FA Ground Grading requirements should also be supported to allow its progression in the football pyramid. In the long term, the Club should be supported, where opportunities are available, to explore the transfer away from the site and into a new purpose built stadia offer.	Sports Club Council CFA FF	Local site	H	S	H	Protect Enhance Provide
65	St Albans Girls School	Football	School	One standard quality youth 9v9 pitches. Formerly two pitches, one lost to the development of the on-site 3G.	Retain one remaining pitch for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Provide
		3G		New full size 3G pitch which is FIFA approved for competitive match play.	Ensure the pitch is maximised from community demand to cater for midweek	School CFA FF		L	L	L	

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
		Tennis		Seven standard quality, non-floodlit macadam courts.	training opportunities and match play demand. Ensure sinking fund is in place to secure long term sustainability of the pitch. Explore opportunities for greater community use for tennis activities.	School LTA		L	L	L	
		Netball		Five standard quality, non-floodlit macadam courts. The site is used for the St Albans Netball League, an established league which operates two senior divisions for senior play on Saturdays.	Ensure quality of provision is sustained and that courts remain of a suitable quality for league activity. Explore the benefit of providing floodlighting on site to provide a more year round offer.			M	M	L	
66	St Albans High School for Girls Grass Pitches	Football	School	One poor quality adult pitch with identified overplay. This pitch was lost for the development of a full size hockey suitable AGP in 2022. The pitch has no floodlighting and no community use.	Explore opportunities to access the pitch/site for community hockey clubs. Consider if floodlighting the pitch is possible.		Local site	L	L	L	Protect
70	St Columbas College	Football	School	One adult pitch and one 11v11 pitch, both of which are standard quality with potential spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect -
		Rugby Union		Two poor quality senior pitches with an additional mini pitch. The site has minimal spare capacity.	Ensure pitches remain suitable for curricular demand.	School RFU		L	L	L	
		Tennis		Four poor quality, non-floodlit macadam courts.	Ensure the courts are sustained and improved where possible to provide an improved curricular offer.	School LTA		L	L	L	
		N/A		Ongoing application to convert large proportions of the playing field to a small sided 3G pitch and a small sided hockey suitable AGP. Remaining playing field to be improved.	N/A	-		-	-	-	
77	The Marlborough Science Academy	Football	School	Two adult pitches, one 7v7 pitch and one 11v11 pitch, all of which are standard quality.	Ensure the quality of the pitches is sustained. Explore options for greater community utilisation if demand exists within the locality.	School CFA FF	Key centre	L	L	L	Protect
		Rugby Union		One poor quality senior pitch with community access that is at capacity with curricular use.	Retain for curricular use.	School RFU		L	L	L	
		Tennis		Seven good quality, non-floodlit macadam courts	Explore opportunities for higher levels of community utilisation. Consider the benefits providing floodlighting on the site would offer.	School LTA		L	L	L	
		Cricket		One standalone non-turf pitch.	Retain for curricular use.	School HCB, ECB		L	L	L	
		Netball		Five good quality, non-floodlit macadam courts.	Explore the benefit of providing floodlighting to the courts and	School EN		L	L	L	
81	Verulam School Playing Fields	Football	School	Four standard quality adult pitches with potential spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Ensure the quality of the pitches is sustained. Explore options for greater community utilisation if demand exists within the locality.	School CFA FF	Local site	L	L		Protect

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
		Rugby Union		Four poor quality senior grass pitches with spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Retain for curricular use.	School RFU		L	L		
		Cricket		One poor quality, standalone non-turf pitch with no spare capacity for extra Cricket.	Retain for curricular use.	School HCB, ECB		L	L		
82	Verulamium Park	Football	Council	Eight standard quality adult pitches, one standard quality 11v11 pitch and one standard quality 9v9 pitch. Ancillary provision at this site has been identified as poor quality. Most adult pitches have spare capacity for additional play.	Ensure that the quality of pitches is sustained and improved where possible. Consider opportunities for reconfiguration to youth and mini formats to better accommodate existing demand.	Council CFA FF	Key centre	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
		Cricket		Two standard quality squares with potential spare capacity for Cricket on Sunday's and spare capacity for one additional team on Saturdays and two teams on Sundays.	Sustain quality and promote the site for further play.	Council HCB ECB		L	L	L	
		Tennis		Two courts which have recently been re-provided. Good quality.	Sustain quality and work with tennis partners to offer recreational programmes.	Council LTA		M	M	L	
		Netball		Two courts which have recently been re-provided. Good quality.	Sustain quality and work with netball partners to offer recreational programmes.	Council EN		M	M	L	
83	Victoria Playing Fields	Football	Parish Council	One 7v7 and one 9v9 pitch, both of which are standard quality. The 7v7 pitch has no capacity during peak period, whilst the 9v9 pitch does have spare capacity during the peak period.	Sustain quality to continue to accommodate existing demand.	Parish Council CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
85	Wheatfields Junior Mixed School	Football	School	Two poor quality 7v7 pitches that are not available for community use.	Retain for curricular use.	Council CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
91	Salisbury Tennis Club	Tennis	Sports Club	Three good quality, Astroturf courts (two floodlit) used by Salisbury TC which has a freehold over the site. Ancillary provision has been identified as a good facility despite adequate car parking and changing facilities.	Ensure all good quality characteristics of the site are sustained and sufficient sinking funds are in place for facility improvement when required.	Sports Club LTA	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
92	St Albans Tennis Club	Tennis	Sports Club	11 floodlit, Astroturf courts and two, non-floodlit macadam courts, all of which are floodlit. The facility is used by St Albans TC who have a freehold over the site.	Ensure all good quality characteristics of the site are sustained and sufficient sinking funds are in place for facility improvement when required.	Sports Club LTA	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
93	Townsend Sports and Bowls Club	Lawn Bowls	Sports Club	One good quality flat green used by St Albans Townsend BC. Good quality ancillary provision.	Sustain good quality offer on the site.	Sports Club Bowls England	Local site	L	L	L	Protect Provide
		Tennis		Eight tennis good quality courts of which six are floodlit. Ancillary facilities are good quality.	Consider opportunities to provide additional floodlighting on the site to improve seasonal offer to more members of the Club.	Sports Club LTA	Local site	L	L	L	
98	St Albans Bowls Club	Lawn Bowls	Sports Club	One standard quality flat green that is used by St Albans BC, a Club with 110 members. Ancillary provision at this site has been identified as standard quality.	Ensure the quality of existing provision is sustained. Improve quality of the green/ancillary provision if opportunities to do so are available.	Sports Club Bowls England	Local site	L	L	L	Protect

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
99	Redbourn Tennis Club	Tennis	Sports Club	Four good quality, non-floodlit macadam courts used by Redbourn TC. The changing facilities are poor quality.	Ensure that the good quality offer of the courts is sustained. Explore long term need to improve ancillary offer to Club members.	Sports Club LTA	Local site	L	L	L	Protect

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NORTH

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
3	Aldwickbury School	Football	School	One standard quality adult pitch with spare capacity during the peak period. Available for community use but unused.	Retain for curricular use and ensure quality is sustained for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
		Rugby Union		Four standard quality mini pitches. No community use.	Retain for curricular use.	School RFU		L	L	L	
		Cricket		One standalone non turf pitch that is not available for community use.	Retain for curricular use.	School HCB ECB		L	L	L	
5	Bamville Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports club	One standard quality square with standard quality ancillary provision. Club has secure tenure. Spare capacity for an increase of demand for Sunday cricket.	Ensure quality of the square and ancillary facility is sustained to support existing and future use.	Sports Club HCB ECB	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
8	Butterfield Road	Football	Sports club	Two 5v5, three 7v7, two 11v11 and one 9v9 pitch, all of which are good quality. The 5v5, 7v7 and 11v11 pitches all have no capacity during the peak period. The 9v9 pitch is overplayed. Ancillary provision is poor quality, it is a pipeline LFFP project for replacement. Site also referenced as a potential location for a 3G pitch within the St Albans LFFP.	Ensure the quality of the pitches is sustained and site maximised. Support on-going development of a new clubhouse facility which will allow for an improved functional and social match day offer on the site.	Sports Club CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
13	Crabtree Junior School	Football	School	One poor quality 7v7 pitch, available for community use but unused.	Retain for curricular demand.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
17	Folly Field	Football	Parish Council	One standard quality adult pitch with spare capacity during peak periods. Ancillary provision is poor quality.	Ensure pitch quality is sustained for existing demand. Explore long term feasibility of improving the ancillary offer on site for users.	Parish Council CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
21	Harpenden Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports club	One good quality Cricket square with no spare capacity for additional Cricket on weekends. The site is operating slightly over recommended capacity levels.	Consider opportunities to install a non-turf wicket to alleviate pressure on the natural turf square. Ensure remaining facilities are kept to a high standard.	Sports Club HCB ECB	Local site	M	M	L	Protect Provide
22	Harpenden RFC	Artificial 3G	Sports club	One good quality, 120m x 80m, floodlit long pile 3G. The pitch installed in 2018 and sits on the World Rugby 22 compliancy register and is also FA approved which means it can be used for match play for rugby union and football. The pitch is managed by the RFU and its focus is for accommodating regional Rugby Union demand as well as the core match day requirements from Harpenden RFC.	Ensure good quality is sustained and that pitch usage is maximised for regional rugby union demand. Make sure rugby union and football certifications for match play are sustained and that a sufficient sinking fund is in place for future replacement of the pitch surface.	Sports Club RFU	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide
		Rugby Union		Three senior pitches and four mini pitches, all of which are standard quality. There is a small amount of potential spare capacity identified on site for senior rugby in the peak periods. The sites four mini pitches are operating at capacity during peak periods.	Ensure the quality of the natural turf pitches are sustained to continue to accommodate existing use. Work with club to offer an improved maintenance offer through partnership with GMA in the future to increase quality to offset impact of future demand increases.			M	M	H	

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				The ancillary offer is mixed. There is a need for an increased offer to promote women's and girls' activity as well as providing a suitable safeguarding option to mixed users. The kitchen and requires expansion and the car park resurfacing.	Work with the Club to set out a long term vision for its ancillary facilities which it will benefit from expansion for both changing rooms and the wider social offer.						
24	Harpenden Town Football Club	Football	Sports club	One good quality adult pitch. The Club compete at Step 5 in the NLS. This is a stadia site with no permitted wider community access. Ancillary provision at this site has been deemed good quality. Identified LFFP project for a grass pitch conversion to 3G.	Support progression of LFFP project to alleviate identified 3G shortfalls in the City/District. Ensure partnerships are formed with localised community clubs to ensure pitch maximisation.	Sports Club CFA FF	Key Centre	M	M	H	Protect Provide
28	High Beeches Primary School	Football	School	One poor quality 7v7 pitch with potential spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
29	Highfield Oval	Football	Parish Council	Two poor quality 11v11 pitches with no capacity during peak periods. The site has standard quality ancillary provision.	Work with Parish Council to improve quality of the pitches to accommodate existing and future use.	Parish Council CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
37	Marford Field	Football	Parish Council	One standard quality adult pitch with identified overplay and one poor quality adult pitch with no capacity during the peak period. Ancillary provision at this site is poor quality.	Consider options to improve pitch quality and explore medium to long term opportunities to improve the ancillary offer available to users of the site.	Parish Council CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
		Artificial 3G		One standard quality, 46m x 26m, medium pile, floodlit pitch that has not received FA approval resulting in it being used for recreational and midweek training purposes.	Ensure pitch quality is sustained for existing use and the pitch is resurfaced in the future. Consider future option for FA testing to approve match play for mini 5v5 football.	Parish Council CFA FF		M	M	M-H	
		Tennis		Four good quality Astroturf courts, one of which is to a junior scale. The site is used by Wheathampstead LTC, who have a long-standing lease arrangement. Wheathampstead TC. Ancillary provision has been identified as a good quality.	Sustain quality of the courts and the overall site offer. Ensure operator has a sufficient sinking fund in place for future court and floodlighting refurbishment.	Parish Council Sports Club LTA		L	L	L	
44	Nomansland Common	Cricket	Sports Club	One standard quality cricket square. The site has no spare capacity for additional Cricket on weekends due to it being overplayed. The outfield at this site has severe undulations that have reportedly become dangerous for fielders during play.	Work with Club to determine the feasibility of levelling the outfield and work on medium to long term opportunities to achieve this. Consider opportunities to improve the quality of the square to reduce overplay and also consider appetite for the installation of a non-turf-wicket to reduce pressure on natural turf square.	Sports Club HCB ECB	Local site	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
51	Redbourn Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports Club	One good quality Cricket square despite an uneven outfield. Good quality ancillary offer. No capacity for additional growth in senior cricket.	Maintain square quality to sustain existing demand.	Sports Club HCB ECB	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
52	Redbourn Leisure Centre	Football	Commercial	Two adult, two 5v5, two 7v7, two 9v9 pitches and one 11v11 pitch, all of which are standard quality. The adult, and 7v7 pitches have spare capacity during peak periods, whilst the 5v5 and	Work to improve the overall quality of all pitches on site as it provides one of the larger strategic football sites locally.	Commercial CFA FF	Key Centre	H	S	M	Protect Enhance Provide

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				<p>9v9 pitches have no capacity during peak periods and the 7v7 pitch has identified overplay.</p> <p>One adult and two youth pitches on the site are owned by the adjacent St Luke's School but managed by the leisure centre.</p> <p>The site is identified for a 3G pitch project within the St Albans LFFP.</p>	<p>Ensure pitches owned by St Luke's School are retained under the management of the Leisure Centre to enable community use to be maximised on the site thus enabling community benefit.</p> <p>Consider the long term vision of the site as it has theoretical potential to accommodate a 3G pitch to meet known shortfalls.</p>						
		Cricket		<p>One standard quality Cricket square with no spare capacity for additional senior Cricket on weekends, the square is overplayed by 18 match sessions per season.</p>	<p>Work to improve the quality of the square to reduce overplay. Consider installation of a non-turf wicket to reduce pressure on natural turf wickets.</p>	<p>Commercial Sports Club HCB ECB</p>					
		-		<p>Redbourn Leisure Trust is working in partnership with Jarvis Homes to improve the overall site offer due to localised development.</p> <p>This development is expected to see the creation of an 3G and a non turf cricket wicket and also see the relocation of the existing cricket square to provide a compliant boundary. There are also plans to provide new outdoor cricket training nets as well as indoor nets within the sports hall of the leisure centre.</p>	<p>Ensure the 3G pitch is maximised and a suitable usage programme is established and that the cricket relocation is completed to a technically sound standard to enable match play to resume on the site as soon as possible.</p>	-		-	-	-	
53	Redbourn Primary School	Football	School	<p>One poor quality 7v7 pitch and one poor quality 5v5 pitch that is not available for community use.</p>	<p>Retain for curricular use.</p>	<p>School CFA, FF</p>	Local site	-	-	-	-
54	Rothamsted Park (Harpenden Sports Centre)	Football	Town Council	<p>Two adult, three 11v11 and one 9v9 pitch, all of which are standard quality. The adult pitches have spare capacity during peak periods, whilst the 11v11 and 9v9 pitches are identified overplay. Ancillary provision at this site is poor quality.</p>	<p>Work to improve the quality of the site in partnership with users and football partners. Consider long term opportunities to improve the ancillary offer for football, cricket and tennis users.</p>	<p>Town Council CFA FF</p>	Key centre	H	S	L	Protect Enhance
		Cricket		<p>Two poor quality squares which are unused due to concerns around safety. They were formerly the home of Harpenden Dolphins CC which have relocated to Napsbury Park. The Club wishes to return if improvements are made.</p>	<p>There is a need to protect these facilities ensuring they do not fall out of use. Improvements are required for the benefit of all cricket users in the District.</p>	<p>Town Council HCB ECB</p>		H	S	L	
		Tennis		<p>Three standard quality, floodlit macadam courts.</p>	<p>Ensure quality is sustained and improved when required for recreational use. Consider long term opportunities for LTA technological solutions.</p>	<p>Town Council LTA</p>		L	L	L	
55	Rothamsted Research	Football	Sports club	<p>One standard quality adult pitch with no spare capacity during peak periods. Ancillary provision at this site has been identified as poor quality.</p>	<p>Sustain pitch quality. Work to improve ancillary offer over the long term in partnership with other on site sports.</p>	<p>Sports Club CFA FF</p>	Local site	L	L	L	Protect

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		Cricket		One standard quality Cricket square with no spare capacity for additional Cricket on weekends.	Sustain quality of the square.	Sports Club HCB, ECB		L	L	L	
		Tennis		Four standard quality, non-floodlit macadam courts used and owned by Rothamsted TC.	Consider opportunities for floodlighting to improve user experience. Ensure court quality is sustained.	Sports Club LTA		L	L	L	
56	Roundwood Park School	Football	School	Two adult pitches and four 7v7 pitches, all of which are standard quality.	Sustain existing quality and consider a higher level of community use if demand exists.	School CFA, FF	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect
		Artificial 3G		One good quality, 100m x 60m, medium plie, floodlit, FIFA approved surface that was installed in 2018 and is available for community use.	Ensure quality is sustained, usage maximised and sinking fund is in place.	School CFA FF		L	L	L	
		Rugby Union		One senior pitch and two mini pitch, all of which have been deemed poor quality. The site is at capacity with curricular use.	Retain for curricular demand.	School RFU		L	L	L	
		Tennis		Four standard quality, non-floodlit macadam courts.	Sustain use and consider long term opportunities/benefits of providing floodlighting.	School LTA		L	L	L	
		Netball		Four standard quality, non-floodlit macadam courts.	Sustain use and consider long term opportunities/benefits of providing floodlighting.	School EN		L	L	L	
61	Sir John Lawes School	Football	School	One adult and one 11v11 pitch, both of which are standard quality and not available for community use.	Retain for curricular demand.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
		Cricket		One standalone non-turf pitch that is not available for community use.	Retain for curricular demand.	School HCB, ECB		L	L	L	
68	St Albans School (Woollams Playing Fields)	Cricket	School	Five squares with an additional three standalone non-turf pitches, all of which are not available for community use.	Try and work with the School to develop a relationship with the County Cricket Board to allow for an ad hoc level of community access to facilities on site.	School HCB ECB	Key Centre	M	M	L	Protect
		Football		Five standard quality adult pitches, and an additional two 5v5 pitches. No community access permitted on site.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF		L	L	L	
		Rugby Union		Four good quality, non-floodlit senior pitches with two additional mini pitches. Used as an overspill facility by OA Rugby.	Ensure good quality of the pitches are sustained.	School RFU		L	L	L	
		Hockey		One floodlit, 98m x 62m good quality, sand filled pitch that was built in 2017. The site is used by Harpenden HC which books the site on short term arrangements. No social offer on the site, however, changing rooms are good quality.	Ensure that the good quality of the pitch and changing rooms are sustained and improvements are undertaken as and when required. Ensure Harpenden HC can continue to access the pitch as its primary home venue.	School EH		H	S	L	
		Tennis		Four good quality, non-floodlit macadam courts.	Retain for curricular use.	School LTA		L	L	L	
71	St Georges School	Rugby union	School	Three standard quality senior which are unavailable for community use.	Retain for curricular demand.	School RFU	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
		Cricket		A small natural turf cricket square which is unavailable for community use.	Retain for curricula demand.	School HCB, ECB		L	L	L	
		Netball		Three poor quality netball courts.	Improve quality for curricular demand.	School		L	L	L	

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
						EN					
73	St Lukes School	Football	School	One poor quality youth 11v11 football pitch which is available for community use but unused.	Retain for curricular demand.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
76	The Acre (Harpenden Rovers FC)	Football	Sports Club	Two poor quality adult football pitches with poor quality ancillary provision.	Work with the Club to improve the overall site offer to ensure its long term viability.	Sports Club CFA, FF	Local site	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
79	Toulmin Drive	Football	Council	Seven poor quality adult pitches with accompanying ancillary provision now condoned as of 22/23 season.	Strategic site for adult football. Need to improve both pitches and ancillary offer. Multisport need with associated rugby league club on site.	Council CFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	M-H	Protect Enhance
		Rugby League		One standard quality senior pitch used by St Albans Centurians RLFC. Ancillary provision poor and no social offer on site for the Club which reduces player retention opportunities. The Club identify need for additional space on site to grow its operations.	Support to Club to grow on the site via allocation of more space for its training and match requirements. Consider long term benefit of provision an enhanced social offer for it and football users.	Council RFL		M	M	M-H	
80	Townsend Church of England School	Football	School	Two standard quality adult pitches with potential spare capacity discontinued due to unsecure tenure.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Local Site	L	L	L	Protect
		Rugby Union		One poor quality senior pitch that is available to the community and is at capacity with curricular use.	Retain for curricular use.	School RFU		L	L	L	
84	Westfield Recreation Ground	Football	Parish Council	One standard quality 11v11 pitch with spare capacity during the peak period.	Sustain quality for existing use.	Parish Council CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
88	Batchwood Golf Course & Sports Centre	Lawn Bowls	Sports centre	One good quality flat green used by Batchwood Hall BC. The site has good quality changing rooms and general facilities.	Sustain the good quality offer on the site.	Sports Club Bowls England	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
		Tennis		Three good quality, non-floodlit macadam courts.	Sustain quality and consider opportunities to provide floodlighting for a more seasonal offer.	Sports Centre LTA		L	L	L	
89	Elliswick Lawn Tennis Club	Tennis	Sports club	Seven good quality, partially floodlit, adult Astroturf courts and one junior court. The site is used by Elliswick LTC who have a freehold over the site. Ancillary provision has been identified as good quality.	Ensure all good quality characteristics of the site are sustained and sufficient sinking funds are in place for facility improvement when required.	Sports Club LTA	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
90	Harpenden Lawn Tennis Club	Tennis	Sports club	Nine Astroturf, three clay and five grass courts, all of which are good quality and floodlit. Five of these courts are within air halls. The facility is used by Harpenden LTC who have a freehold over the site. Ancillary provision has been identified as good quality.	Ensure all good quality characteristics of the site are sustained and sufficient sinking funds are in place for facility improvement when required.	Sports Club LTA	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
95	Harpenden Bowls Club	Lawn Bowls	Sports centre	One good quality flat green used by Harpenden BC who have 107 members as of 2020. Membership has steadily declined since 2015 when the site had a total of 131 members. The site has been identified as having good quality clubhouse facilities.	Sustain quality of provision for all users.	Sports Club Bowls England	Local site	L	L	L	Protect

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97	Redbourn Bowls Club	Lawn Bowls	Sports club	One standard quality, flat artificial green that is used by Redbourn BC. The Club have 49 total members as of 2020, an increase of 11 members from 2019. The Club have full access to Redbourn Leisure Centre for the use of changing and toilet facilities which has been identified as providing standard quality ancillary provision.	Sustain quality of provision for all users.	Sports Club Bowls England	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
100	St Albans High School for Girls (Prep School)	Football	School	One poor quality 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
		Tennis		Four non-floodlit macadam courts, two of which are standard quality and two poor quality.	Retain for curricular use.	School LTA		L	L	L	
		Netball		Four non-floodlit macadam courts. Two of which are standard quality and two poor quality.	Retain for curricular use.	School England Netball		L	L	L	
103	Katherine Warrington School	Football	School	A standard quality youth 11v11 football pitch. Available for community use but not yet used.	Sustain quality and maximise use.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect Provide
		3G		Katherine Warrington School has been in discussion with Hertfordshire County FA and the Football Foundation to work towards the development of a new full size 3G pitch. This is now at planning stage and FF funding is expected.	Support on going scheme to help reduce 3G shortfalls.	School CFA, FF		M	M	H	
		Tennis		Four good quality tennis courts overmarked with netball. No floodlighting. Available for community use.	Explore options to install floodlighting to provide a community offer on good quality facilities.	School LTA		L	L	L	
		Netball		Four good quality netball courts overmarked with tennis. No floodlighting. Available for community use.	Explore options to install floodlighting to provide a community offer on good quality facilities.	School EN		L	L	L	

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SOUTH

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
10	Colney Heath Recreation Ground	Football	Sports club	One good quality adult stadia pitch alongside one 7v7, one 11v11 and one 9v9 pitch, all of which are standard quality. Ancillary provision at this site has been deemed good quality. Home venue of London Colney FC which play at Step 5 of the NLS.	Ensure the Club can meet FA ground grading requirements if gains promotion in the future. Sustain pitch quality on site and improve non-stadia pitches when opportunities arise to do so.	Sports Club CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
11	Cotlandswick Leisure Centre	Artificial 3G	Commercial	Eight good quality, 38m x 20m, non-FA approved floodlit pitches that were installed in 2015. The site also has one 38mx28m medium pile pitch. The eight pitches have been identified by the LFFP as potentially being reconfigured to create a larger pitch.	Sustain pitch quality across all 3G pitches. Consider the benefit of the LFFP project if taken forward and which clubs would directly benefit as a result. Ensure sinking fund is in place.	Commercial CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
14	Cunningham Hill Junior School	Football	School	One 5v5 pitch and one 11v11 pitch both of which are poor quality and not available for community use.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
15	Cunningham Hill Playing Fields	Football	Council	Three standard quality adult pitches with spare capacity during the peak period. The site has been identified has poor quality ancillary provision.	Sustain pitch quality to continue accommodate existing demand and future use. Consider long term feasibility of improving the ancillary offer on site.	Council CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
18	Foxcroft Playing Field	Football	Council	One standard quality adult pitch with no capacity during the peak period.	Sustain quality for existing use.	Council CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
20	Greenwood Park	Football	Council	Three adult pitches, one 7v7 pitch and one 9v9 pitch, all of which are standard quality. The adult and 9v9 pitches have spare capacity during peak periods whilst the 7v7 pitch has no capacity during peak periods. Ancillary provision at this site is good quality.	Sustain quality of the pitches in the short term and work to improve the overall pitch quality offer in the future.	Council CFA FF	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect
		Cricket		One standard quality Cricket square used by Greenwood Park CC. The Club have two senior teams and has identified that it has spare capacity for extra Cricket on Saturdays and Sundays.	Sustain overall cricket offer on the site to allow for continued use of cricket as well as retaining the ability to accommodate future growth.	Council HCB ECB		L	L	L	
		Tennis		Six good quality, floodlit macadam courts used by Greenwood Park Lawn LTC. One of these six courts is a junior whilst the remaining five are adult courts. Ancillary provision has been identified as adequate.	Sustain quality of the courts and ensure a sufficient sinking fund is in place for long term replacement of provision.	Sports Club LTA		L	L	L	
26	Harvesters Football Club	Football	Sports club	One adult, two 7v7, three 11v11 and one 9v9 pitch, all of which are good quality. Pitches are considered to be some of the best community available pitches in the City/District. Ancillary provision at this site is poor quality.	Ensure pitch quality is sustained. Explore medium to long term opportunities to enhance/replace the existing ancillary offer for the benefit of site users.	Sports Club CFA FF	Key Centre	H	S	H	Protect Enhance Provide

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		Artificial 3G		One standard quality, 64m x 26m, medium pile, FA approved, floodlit Astroturf that was built in 2005 and resurfaced in 2011. The site is referenced in the LFFP for the development of a new full size 3G pitch to support the levels of high existing demand on site. The development is currently on pause as the Club is unable to extend its lease on the site from Hertfordshire County Council.	Sustain quality of existing 3G pitch and ensure the pitch is resurfaced when needed. Support the Club in its ambition to progress the full size 3G project (identified in the LFFP) on site. Work to create an agreement with Hertfordshire County Council to extend the Clubs lease on site to a minimum of a 25 years to ensure its ability to secure grant funding.	Sports Club CFA FF		H	S	L	
30	Highfield Park	Football	Sports club	One adult, three 5v5, three 7v7, two 11v11 and two 9v9 pitches, all of which are standard quality. Ancillary provision is good quality.	Sustain quality of all pitches on site through continuation of the existing maintenance regime.	Sports Club CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
31	Killigrew Junior School	Football	School	One poor quality 11v11 pitch that is not available for community use.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	L	L	L	L	Protect
33	London Colney FC	Football	Sports club	One good quality, stadia site adult pitch, one 7v7, one 9v9 and one 11v11 pitch, all of which are standard quality. The 7v7 pitch has spare capacity during peak periods whilst the 9v9 and 11v11 pitches have no capacity during peak periods. The site has good quality ancillary provision. The Club identified a latent demand due to the need for more grass pitches and need for better training facilities.	Ensure the Club can meet FA ground grading requirements if gains promotion in the future. Sustain pitch quality on site and improve non-stadia pitches when opportunities arise to do so.	Sports Club CFA FF	L	L	L	L	Protect
35	Mandeville Primary School	Football	School	Two poor quality 7v7 pitches that are not available for community use.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
39	Marlborough Open Space	Football	Council	One standard quality adult pitch with spare capacity during the peak period. The site has new ancillary facilities which were opened in 2022.	Ensure pitch quality is sustained through continuation of the existing maintenance regime.	Council CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
40	Morris Playing Fields	Football	Parish Council	One adult pitch with no capacity during peak periods and one 11v11 pitch with spare capacity in peak periods. The site's ancillary provision is of an overall poor quality.	Sustain pitch quality to continue to accommodate existing levels of demand. Explore medium to long term benefit of improving on site ancillary provision.	Parish Council CFA FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
		Tennis		Four poor quality, non-floodlit macadam courts.	Explore opportunities to improve court surfaces. Link to potential utilisation of LTA technological solutions.	Parish Council LTA		L	L	L	
41	Mount Pleasant Lane School	Football	School	One poor quality 7v7 pitch that is not available for community access.	Retain for curricular demand.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
42	Napsbury Park	Football	Parish Council	One standard quality adult pitch with no capacity during peak periods. Ancillary facility is standard quality.	Sustain existing maintenance regime.	Parish Council CFA, FF	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
		Cricket		One standard quality square that is available for community use. The site is unused for Sunday cricket and can accommodate an increase in demand.	Sustain quality of the square to continue to support existing levels of demand. Explore options for higher utilisation for Sunday cricket.	Parish Council HCB, ECB		L	L	L	

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		Tennis		Four poor quality, non-floodlit, concrete courts.	Work to resurface the quality of the courts through utilisation of LTA technological solutions. Explore opportunities for recreational programmes on site.	Parish Council LTA		M	M	L	
		Netball		Two poor quality, non-floodlit, concrete courts.	Work to resurface the quality of the courts Explore opportunities for recreational programmes on site.	Parish Council EN		L	L	L	
43	Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School	Football	School	Two adult and two 11v11 pitches with minimal spare capacity remaining, and one standard quality 9v9 pitch which is overplay identified.	Explore reconfiguration opportunities of the larger pitch types to reduce pressure on the existing youth 9v9 pitch. Sustain existing quality and look to improve the overall offer where opportunities allow themselves to do so.	School CFA FF		M	M	L	Protect
		Artificial 3G		One standard quality, medium pile, non-floodlit, 105m x 70m, FIFA approved pitch that was installed in 2011 and is available for community access.	Ensure sinking fund is in place for long term sustainability of the pitch	School CFA FF		L	L	L	
		Rugby Union		One poor quality, non-floodlit senior pitch that is at capacity with curricular use.	Retain for curricular use.	School RFU		L	L	L	
		Tennis		Two standard quality, non-floodlit macadam courts	Retain for curricular use.	School LTA		L	L	L	
		Netball		One standard quality, non-floodlit macadam court.	Retain for curricular use.	School EN		L	L	L	
46	Oaklands College (Smallford Campus)	Football	School	Three standard quality, adult pitches with potential capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. The School has additional land to potentially increase the number of pitches it marks out.	Sustain quality and consider expansion of the existing field to develop further playing field is benefit can be found in doing so.	School CFA FF	Hub site	L	L	L	Protect Provide
		3G		A good quality full size FIFA approved 3G pitch which was built in 2020. The School has an aspiration to develop another full size 3G pitch on the site to complement its existing offer. A new pavilion to service this pitch and the hockey pitch will open in the summer of 2022.	Sustain quality of existing pitch and maximise community use. Determine further need for 3G provision locally against the project identified at Harvesters FC which is within a 3 minute drive time.	School CFA FF		H	S	H	
		Athletics		There is formal athletics track at Gosling Sports Park in Welwyn Hatfield which is identified in the Welwyn Hatfield PPS as having challenges in relation to its size, scale and supporting ancillary provision which is poor quality. The track is impacted by the use of a surrounding cycling track and the infield areas which are also used for football. These combined elements restrict the growth of local club Herts Phoenix Athletics Club.	Support ongoing talks between the School and partners in Welwyn Hatfield. Maximise use it the facility offer comes to the school.	School England Athletics		H	S	H	
		Other		The School has established a new estate plan which as well as 3G and athletics provision has scope to include both cricket and rugby union provision.	Consider opportunities to work with school and local clubs to enable known shortfalls and issues to be reduced/overcome as part of its estate management plan.	School		-	-	-	

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
		Hockey		Two good quality, floodlit, 100m x 62m, sand filled pitches that were installed in 2011 and are used by St Albans HC. The site is at capacity due to demand from St Albans HC. New clubhouse being built on site later in 2022 to support club demand and football demand.	Ensure pitch quality is sustained for all users.	Sports Club School EH		L	L	L	
47	Old Verulamians RUFC	Rugby Union	Sports Club	Three standard quality senior pitches, one of which is floodlit. Both match pitches and the floodlit pitch are overplayed. The clubhouse is largely of a satisfactory quality for current demand levels. It comprises of six changing rooms, one communal shower room and one referee's room. Its current facility priority is to improve the quality of its six changing rooms to ensure they meet the latest RFU technical specifications for changing rooms.	There is a need to improve the quality of pitches on site, particularly the floodlit training pitch which accommodates most demand on site. Providing additional floodlighting to allow the transfer of midweek training demand is also likely to be beneficial and should be considered. Support on-going talks around improvements to the ancillary offer on site.	Sport Club RFU	Local site	M	M	M	Protect Enhance Provide
48	Park Street Primary School	Football	School	One poor quality 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
49	Park Street Recreation Ground	Football	Parish Council	One standard quality 9v9 pitch with spare capacity during peak period. Ancillary provision at this site has been deemed a standard quality.	Sustain quality of provision.	Parish Council CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
		Cricket		One standard quality Cricket square that is available for community use. Frogmore CC have reported how there are divots in the outfield that are now dangerous. The Club have also stated the ancillary facilities are poor quality. The site has spare capacity for extra Cricket on Saturdays and Sundays, as well as space for an extra team on Saturday's and two extra teams on Sunday's.	There is a need to improve the overall offer of cricket on the site. An increase quality is likely to be able to satisfy wider demand for cricket in the District.	Parish Council HCB ECB		M	M	L-M	
57	Samuel Ryder Academy	Football	School	One 11v11 and two 9v9 pitches, all of which are standard quality. The 11v11 pitch has identified overlay.	Ensure quality of all pitches is sustained and improvements undertaken where possible.	School CFA, FF	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Provide
		Artificial 3G		One good quality, 100m x 63m, floodlit, medium pile, FA approved pitch that was installed in 2018. The LFFP have identified a potential project of the development of a new clubhouse/changing offer at Samuel Ryder Academy to support demand on the site from London Colney Colts & Cougars and St Albans City Youth.	Sustain quality of the pitch and work to support the development of an ancillary offer on the site to better accommodate high levels of community demand.	School CFA FF		M	M	H	
		Netball		Five good quality netball courts provided in 2022. Not floodlit.	Explore opportunities to provide floodlighting aligned to a programme of use.	School EN		L	L	L	

**ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL
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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
60	Shenley Lane Playing Field	Football	Parish Council	Two 5v5 and two 7v7 pitches, all of which are poor quality. The 5v5 pitches have no capacity in peak period, whilst the 7v7 pitches have identified overplay. Ancillary quality has also been deemed as poor.	Pitch improvements should be undertaken to improve the offer for youth football with appropriate small scale ancillary facilities provided (toilets) to ensure a positive experience for users.	Parish Council Sports Club CFA FF	Local site	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
67	St Albans RFC	Rugby Union	Sports Club	Two standard quality senior pitches, one of which is floodlit, and both are overplayed. The Club has a lease on the site from Hertfordshire County Council which expires in 2027 and therefore it has unsecure tenure on the site. Clubhouse offer is dated and both social element and kitchen require replacement/refurbishment.	There is a need to alleviate overplay on the site. This can be achieved via providing further floodlighting on the site or/ or via pitch improvement solutions. The immediate concern is for a resolution to its lease. The RFU and relevant stakeholder should provide support to the Club about its lease extension from the County Council.	Sports Club RFU SE	Local site	H	S	L	Protect Enhance Provide
69	St Bernadette Catholic Primary School	Football	School	One poor quality, 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
74	St Peter's School	Football	School	One poor quality 7v7 pitch with potential capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
75	St Stephens Parish Centre	Football	Parish Council	One standard quality 11v11 pitch with spare capacity in the peak period.	Sustain existing maintenance regime to support existing demand.	Parish Council CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
86	Windermere Primary School	Football	School	One poor quality, 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
96	Harperbury Bowls Club	Lawn Bowls	Sports Club	One good quality flat green used by Harperbury BC. Ancillary provision is standard quality with no issues identified during the non-technical audit. The site offers facilities such as a clubroom, toilets and a kitchen.	Sustain quality of the green and on-site ancillary offer to continue to accommodate existing levels of demand.	Sports Club England Bowls	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
101	St Albans Irish Club	Gaelic Football	Sports Club	Home to St Colmcilles Gaelic Athletic Club. One full size pitch to accommodate demand.	Sustain quality and appropriate ancillary offer to ensure long term viability of the sport.	Sports Club	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
102	Colney Heath Primary School	Football	School	One 5v5 and one 7v7 pitch, both of which are standard quality. Available for community use.	Retain for curricular use.	School CFA, FF	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
-	St Albans Rangers FC	Football	Sports Club	One youth 11v11, two youth 9v9, one mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitch; all of standard quality. The youth 11v11 is currently overplayed by one MES per week whilst the mini 7v7 is played to capacity at peak times. The youth 9v9 pitches have capacity for three additional teams at peak time whilst the mini 5v5 pitches have capacity for an additional team at peak time. The Club's site has been promoted as a potential development site by Hertsmere Borough Council. It is understood that	Improve pitch quality through improvements to the current maintenance regime to alleviate overplay. If feasible, explore options to secure long term access for the club on the site through a long term lease arrangement. The site should be protected from development unless adequately reprovided in accordance with the NPPF on an identified site.	Sports Club Council Hertsmere Council Sport England CFA FF	-	-	-	-	Protect

**ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL
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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
				the Club have been offered a 25-year lease for its site as part of mitigation for a loss of a pitch on the adjoining hospital site (in St Albans).							

PART 7: HOUSING GROWTH SCENARIOS

The PPOSS provides an estimate of demand for pitch sports based on population forecasts and club consultation to 2038 (in line with the emerging new Local Plan period). This future demand is translated into teams likely to be generated, rather than actual pitch provision required. The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator adds to this, updating the likely demand generated for pitch sports based on housing and population increases and converts the demand into match equivalent sessions and the number of pitches required. This is achieved via team generation rates in the Assessment Report to determine how many new teams would be generated from an increase in population derived from housing growth and gives the associated costs of supplying the increased pitch provision.

Experience shows that housing sites with 600 dwellings or more are likely to generate demand for new provision to be created. For such large scale developments, consideration should be given to providing multi-pitch sites with suitable ancillary provision, including appropriate clubhouse/changing facilities and car parking. Single pitch sites which have been provided traditionally by developers are not considered to provide long term sustainable provision for the relevant sports.

Where demand does not warrant new pitch provision, the Action Plan in this document should be consulted to determine whether the additional demand can be accommodated via existing provision (in which case no further action is required). If this is not the case, contributions should be sought to enhance existing provision in the locality to accommodate the increased demand. This can be through, for example, improving quality, or providing new or improved ancillary provision. Consultation with appropriate NGBs should also be used to assist in the selection of suitable sites and suitable enhancements.

The scenarios below are provided as a guide to show the potential additional demand for pitch sports that could be generated from housing growth in Wolverhampton, thus showing how the calculator works and what it provides. The demand is shown in match equivalent sessions per week for most sports, except for cricket, where match equivalent sessions are by season. Training demand is expressed in either hours or match equivalent sessions. Where expressed in hours, it is expected that demand will be to either a 3G pitch (to accommodate football demand) or an AGP (to accommodate hockey demand). Where expressed in match equivalent sessions, it is expected training will take place on floodlit grass pitches (rugby).

Three scenarios are explored below. Two are based on population forecasts using 2018 MYE ONS data projections. The last is based on a housing target of 890 dwellings being delivered per annum from 2026 through to 2038.

- ◀ **Scenario One** – 2018 – 2026 – ONS forecasts
- ◀ **Scenario Two** – 2018 – 2038 – ONS forecasts
- ◀ **Scenario Three** – 890 dwellings per annum – 2026 - 2038

For reference, the indicative figures for scenario three assume that population growth will average 2.4 per dwelling.

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Scenario One – 2018 – 2026 ONS forecasts

The estimated additional population derived from population forecasts from 2018 – 2026 is 1,358 people. This population increase equates to 2.10 match equivalent sessions of demand per week for grass pitch sports, 0.21 match equivalent sessions on a hockey suitable AGP and 9.52 match equivalent sessions of demand per season for cricket. Training demand equates to 3.65 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and 0.53 hours on a hockey suitable AGP.

Table 7.1: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 1,358 population increase

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 532 dwellings	
	Match demand per week ¹⁴	Training demand ¹⁵
Adult football	0.27	3.65 hours
Youth football	0.93	
Mini soccer	0.63	
Rugby union	0.25	0.28 match equivalent sessions
Rugby league	0.02	0.02 match equivalent sessions
Adult hockey	0.14	0.43 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0.07	0.10 hours
Cricket	9.52	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifestyle costs.

Table 7.2: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ¹⁶	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ¹⁷	Number	Capital cost
Adult football	0.27	£28,430	£5,999	0.53	£98,084
Youth football	0.93	£79,947	£16,789	1.22	£224,770
Mini soccer	0.63	£16,777	£3,523	0.00	£0
Rugby union	0.25	£37,373	£7,998	0.50	£92,099
Rugby league	0.02	£2,253	£498	0.04	£6,759
Cricket	0.19	£61,097	£12,342	0.39	£71,453
Sand based AGPs	0.04	£31,514	£977	0.07	£13,099
3G	0.10	£102,366	£3,540	0.19	£35,494

¹⁴ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

¹⁵ Hours equate to access to a full size floodlit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

¹⁶ Sport England Facilities Costs Second Quarter 2021 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

¹⁷ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

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Scenario Two – 2018 – 2038 ONS forecasts

The estimated additional population derived from population forecasts from 2018 – 2038 is 812 people. This population increase equates to 1.25 match equivalent sessions of demand per week for grass pitch sports, 0.12 match equivalent sessions on a hockey suitable AGP and 5.69 match equivalent sessions of demand per season for cricket. Training demand equates to 2.18 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and 0.31 hours on a hockey suitable AGP.

Table 7.3: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 812 population increase

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 303 dwellings	
	Match demand per week ¹⁸	Training demand ¹⁹
Adult football	0.16	2.18 hours
Youth football	0.56	
Mini soccer	0.38	
Rugby union	0.15	0.17
Rugby league	0.01	0.01
Adult hockey	0.08	0.25
Junior & mixed hockey	0.04	0.06
Cricket	5.69	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifestyle costs.

Table 7.4: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ²⁰	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ²¹	Number	Capital cost
Adult football	0.16	£16,999	£3,587	0.32	£58,647
Youth football	0.56	£47,805	£10,039	0.73	£134,423
Mini soccer	0.38	£10,033	£2,107	0.00	£0
Rugby union	0.15	£22,348	£4,782	0.30	£55,072
Rugby league	0.01	£1,347	£298	0.02	£4,041
Cricket	0.12	£36,532	£7,379	0.23	£42,724
Sand based AGPs	0.02	£18,843	£584	0.04	£7,832
3G	0.06	£61,212	£2,117	0.11	£21,224

¹⁸ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

¹⁹ Hours equate to access to a full size floodlit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

²⁰ Sport England Facilities Costs Second Quarter 2021 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

²¹ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

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Scenario Three – 890 dwellings per annum – 2026 - 2038

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth from 890 dwellings per annum from 2026 through to 2038 is 10,680. With an occupancy rate of 2.4 per household, this equates to a population increase of 25,632 people. This population increase equates to 43.60 match equivalent sessions of demand per week for grass pitch sports, 4.06 match equivalent sessions on a hockey suitable AGP and 179.69 match equivalent sessions of demand per season for cricket. Training demand equates to 68.96 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and 9.93 hours on a hockey suitable AGP.

Table 7.5: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 10,680 dwellings

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 10,680 dwellings	
	Match demand per week ²²	Training demand ²³
Adult football	5.02	68.96 hours
Youth football	17.63	
Mini soccer	11.84	
Rugby union	4.71	5.27
Rugby league	0.35	0.35
Adult hockey	2.68	8.04
Junior & mixed hockey	1.38	1.89
Cricket	179.69	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifestyle costs.

Table 7.6: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ²⁴	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ²⁵	Number	Capital cost
Adult football	5.02	£536,632	£113,229	10.03	£1,851,379
Youth football	17.63	£1,508,847	£316,858	22.98	£4,242,237
Mini soccer	11.84	£316,641	£66,495	0.00	£0
Rugby union	4.71	£705,431	£150,962	9.42	£1,738,385
Rugby league	0.35	£42,522	£9,397	0.69	£127,565
Cricket	3.65	£1,153,172	£232,941	7.31	£1,348,625
Sand based AGPs	0.67	£594,860	£18,441	1.34	£247,261
3G	1.81	£1,932,003	£66,808	3.63	£669,891

²² As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

²³ Hours equate to access to a full size floodlit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

²⁴ Sport England Facilities Costs Second Quarter 2021 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

²⁵ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

PART 8: DELIVER THE STRATEGY AND KEEP IT ROBUST AND UP TO DATE

Delivery

The PPOSS provides guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across the District. By addressing issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in this Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs can be met. The Strategy identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and identifies how best to resolve this in the future.

Production of this Strategy is the start of the planning process. Successful Strategy implementation and the benefits to be gained depend upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a mutually bought into, strategic approach. It is important that this document is used in a practical manner, supports engagement with partners and encourages partnerships to be developed, to ensure that outdoor sports facilities are regarded as a vital aspect of community life and which contribute to the achievement of Council priorities.

Each member of the Steering Group should take the lead to ensure the PPOSS 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 PPOSS document

To help ensure that the PPOSS is well used it should be regarded as the key document within the study area guiding the improvement and protection of playing pitch provision. It needs to be the document to which people and agencies regularly turn to for information in respect of how current demand should be met and what actions are required to improve the situation and meet future demand. To ensure that this is achieved the Steering Group need to have a clear understanding of how the PPOSS can be applied and therefore delivered.

The process of PPOSS development has already led to a number of benefits that assist its application and delivery. These include enhanced partnership work across different agendas and organisations, pooling of resources along with strengthened relationships and understanding between stakeholders, members of the Steering Group and the sporting community. The drivers behind the PPOSS and the work to develop the recommendations and action plan will have also highlighted, and helped the Steering Group to understand, the key areas to which its influence should be applied and strategy delivered.

Following sign off of the PPOSS, a short-term Action Plan should be prepared by the Council, in consultation with relevant partners, in order to distil the existing Action Plan and to give the Steering Group a short-term focus. This would then need to be revised through regular meetings.

Monitoring and updating

It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This should be led by the Council and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the Steering Group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPOSS has been applied should be a key component of monitoring its delivery and be an on-going role of the Steering Group.

In the case of this PPOSS, due to the uncertainty on known future demand, it is imperative that the Council and its partners regularly meet to understand future growth in the District and work to reflect that within any subsequent changes to the PPOSS. This will ensure maximum community benefit for sports provision across the District by ensuring a reliable evidence base about current and future need is in place.

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The Steering Group that takes the PPOSS forward should be made up of St Albans District Council as well as other partners such as the NGBs and Herts Sports Partnership. This offers benefits in terms of joint working on strategic and cross-boundary issues and will also be more efficient in terms of administration when compared to each authority having its own individual Steering Group.

KKP will provide the tools used to produce the PPOSS to the Council as well as training on how to use such tools, such as the PPOSS database used to hold all information gathered. This will enable the monitoring and updating process to be carried out.

As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPOSS being signed off by the steering group, Sport England and the NGBs will consider the PPOSS and the information on which it is based to be out of date.

The nature of the supply and in particular the demand for outdoor sports facilities will likely to have changed over the three years. Therefore, without any form of review and update within this time period it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

Ideally the PPOSS should 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 built up during its development. Taking into account the time to develop the PPOSS 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 particular resource intensive task. However, it should highlight:

- ◀ How delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase or reduce following the delivery of others)
- ◀ How the PPOSS 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 PPOSS 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 PPOSS and outdoor sports provision in the area
- ◀ Monitors, evaluates and reviews progress with the delivery of the recommendations and action plan
- ◀ Shares lessons learnt from how the PPOSS has been used and how it has been applied to a variety of circumstances
- ◀ Ensures that the PPOSS is used effectively to input into any new opportunities to secure improved provision and influence relevant programmes and initiatives
- ◀ Maintains links between relevant parties with an interest in local outdoor sports provision;
- ◀ Reviews the need to update the PPOSS 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 PPOSS document (including the supply and demand information and assessment details).

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- ◀ Consider how provision for sport be made in new development, where on-site provision is required and how developer contributions are used.

Alongside regular Steering Group meetings, a good way to keep the PPOSS up to date and maintain relationships is to hold annual sport specific meetings with pitch sport NGBs and other relevant parties. These could be part of a process of updating key supply and demand information plus, if necessary, amending assessment work, tracking progress in respect of implementing action plan recommendations and highlighting new issues and opportunities.

Meetings could be timed to coincide with annual NGB affiliation processes. This would help to signal changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area. Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites should also feed into these meetings.

NGBs will also be able to confirm any further performance quality assessments undertaken within the study area. Discussion with league secretaries may also indicate annual league meetings may be useful to attend to pick up on specific issues and/or enable a review of the relevant club details to be undertaken.

The Steering Group should regularly review and refresh 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 work encompassing, for example, grounds maintenance and sports development departments, to ensure that this is achieved and that results inform subsequent annual sports facility development plans. Results should be shared with partners via a consultative mechanism.

St Albans Local Football Facilities Plan


The findings of and any subsequent changes to the LFFP (completed in 2019) should align to this PPOSS which will serve as a live document requiring concurrent management. The position for formal and affiliated football provision determined and updated through the PPOSS should form the basis for investment into formalised football provision echoed through the LFFP, which will further explore opportunities for investment into informal, recreational, small sided and indoor football as an extension of the PPOSS findings, the result being a wholistic plan for partnership investment into football facilities over the next decade. The PPOSS should have a synergy with the LFFP, by that, the projects within the LFFP are determined by the supporting evidence of the PPOSS.

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Checklist

To help ensure the PPOSS 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 PPOSS 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 PPOSS 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 PPOSS is being applied?		
Step 10: Keep the strategy robust & up to date		
1. Has a process been put in place to ensure the PPOSS is kept robust and up to date?		
2. Does the process involve an annual update of the PPOSS?		
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?		

ST ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

APPENDIX ONE: HIGH LEVEL SPORT SCENARIOS (2022/23 DATA)

Football

Grass pitches

Since the PPS audit took place during the 20/21 football season there has been an increase in demand across the District. In total, this accumulative difference equates to an increase of 78 affiliated teams. This is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Football demand comparison

	Number of teams					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
St Albans (20/21 season)	58	133	71	81	56	399
St Albans (22/23 season)	78	143	79	177		477
Increase/decrease	+20	+10	+8	+40		+78

The growth of 78 teams equates an increase of demand of 39 match equivalent sessions per week. The scenario below explores the difference this demand increase has on the supply vs demand balance on a broad level across the District. The first table was the position as of the 20/21 football season.

Table 2: Football supply vs demand balance (20/21 season)

Pitch format	Actual spare capacity ²⁶	Demand (match equivalent sessions) – 20/21 season			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Adult	15.5	3.5	12	1.5	10.5
Youth 11v11	5	7	2	4	6
Youth 9v9	2.5	4.5	2	3	5
Mini 7v7	1.5	3	1.5	3.5	5
Mini 5v5	2.5	-	2.5	3.5	1

The expressed future demand via club aspirations at the time equated to 15.5 match equivalent sessions (or 31 teams). This has already been well established and has in fact more than doubled since the initial data capture. The position below looks at an updated supply vs demand balance for the District based on an new growth. It does not look to forecast any future demand.

Table 3: Football supply vs demand balance (22/23 season)

Pitch format	Actual spare capacity ²⁷	Demand (match equivalent sessions) – 22/23 season		
		Overplay	Current total	Change (MES)
Adult	15.5	3.5	2	10
Youth 11v11	5	7	7	5
Youth 9v9	2.5	4.5	6	4
Mini 7v7	1.5	3	11.5	10
Mini 5v5	2.5	-	7.5	10

²⁶ In match equivalent sessions

²⁷ In match equivalent sessions

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The impact of this is a reduction in spare capacity on adult pitches and overplay being exacerbated on remaining pitch types. A new shortfall emerges for mini 5v5 pitches. On this basis, the overall conclusion for the supply vs demand balance for grass pitches is that there is a combined shortfall of 32 match equivalent sessions per week, notwithstanding the small amounts of spare capacity on adult pitch types.

Third generation artificial grass pitches (3G)

The table below identifies what the PPS determined to be the need for full size 3G pitches based on the 20/21 data audit. In total, it identified a current shortfall equating to 6.5 full size pitches. This analysis is on a district-wide catchment.

Table 4: 3G requirement (20/21)

Analysis area	Current number of teams	Full size 3G requirement	Current number of full size 3G pitches	Theoretical shortfall
St Albans	399	10.5	4 ²⁸	6.5

Since the initial data audit, two further full size pitches have been built. These are located at St Albans Girls School and Beaumont School. The latter of these was a surface conversion from a hockey suitable artificial grass pitch.

Using the latest football affiliation figures. The existing shortfall of give pitches an indicative need for 6.5 full size pitches, even when factoring in the increased supply of provision. As such, even with new provision being provided, the increase in demand has counter balanced new development.

Table 5: 3G requirement (2022/23)

Analysis area	Current number of teams	Full size 3G requirement	Current number of full size 3G pitches	Theoretical shortfall
St Albans	477	12.5	6 ²⁹	6.5

It is expected that over the next 12-18 months that an additional three pitches will be developed or as a minimum, a formal planning application will be received to develop such provision. This is applicable to the following sites:

- ◀ Harpenden Town FC (stadia pitch – full size)
- ◀ Katherine Warrington School (youth 11v11 pitch)
- ◀ Redbourne Leisure Centre (full size)

If all three pitches are to come online, the shortfall of 6.5 will be reduced to 3.5. It is noted that the pitch at Katherine Warrington School is not full size, however, for the purposes of this broad modelling it has been considered as such.

²⁸ 3G pitches at Oaklands College and Harpenden RFC are discounted from the supply due to either being unavailable for football at peak times or for community bookings.

²⁹ 3G pitches at Oaklands College and Harpenden RFC are discounted from the supply due to either being unavailable for football at peak times or for community bookings.

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Hockey

The conclusions for hockey in 2020/21 was as follows “Based on the outcomes of the Assessment, it is determined that a shortfall of provision exists aligned to Harpenden HC. On this basis, as a minimum, the existing stock of pitch provision which is in active use for hockey requires long term protection from development to ensure that hockey can be continued to be developed across the area.

If an additional hockey suitable pitch is provided in the future (as St Albans HC aspire to create at Oaklands College) then that would theoretically free up all capacity at Beaumont School which would meet all demand from Harpenden HC. Alternatively, if a pitch is provided at Redbourn Leisure Centre as part its plans to redevelop the site, then this would also provide sufficient capacity for the Harpenden HC”.

Loss of provision

Since the above position statement has been written, the hockey suitable pitch at Beaumont School has been resurfaced with a 3G surface type, meaning it is now unfit for any format of hockey use. On this basis, there is a definitive shortfall of hockey provision in the District which has been exacerbated by this loss. This shortfall remains aligned to Harpenden HC.

This underpins a current reliance on the last remaining available hockey suitable pitch at Clarence Park to support hockey for Harpenden HC which is poor quality and nearing end of life. Looking forward over the next several years, it will be expected that there will become unusable for competitive hockey and as such Harpenden HC will be unable to complete its fixtures within St Albans. This will result in it having to either reduce the number teams it operates or having a requirement to export demand outside of the District.

Hockey conclusion (2022/23)

There is a definitive shortfall of provision for hockey in the District which has been exacerbated by the loss of the accessibility of provision at Beaumont School. The impact of this is a requirement to retain the poor quality hockey pitch at Clarence Park as a minimum need to ensure hockey can be played in the District.

Any forthcoming application to provide new hockey provision in the District should be supported on the basis that there is a direct correlation to one of the existing community clubs. Harpenden HC has the highest capacity requirement for hockey and any development which supports it accessing additional peak time access will provide a vital resource to ensuring it can continue to express its demand.

If an application is brought forward in the future, it is imperative that a suitable community use agreement³⁰ is in place to ensure long term accessibility for community clubs.

³⁰<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/community-use-agreements>

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Cricket

Since the 2020 data capture, there has been changes in the participation landscape for cricket across the District. Overall, there has been a decrease of seven teams from 121 to 115. The club by club breakdown is listed below and notable differences identified in Table 8.

Table 6: Summary of demand (2020)

Club name	No. of competitive teams			
	Senior men's	Senior women's	Junior boys'	Junior girls'
Bamville CC	2	-	-	-
Frogmore CC	1	-	-	-
Greenwood Park CC	2	-	-	-
Harpenden CC	9	-	11	2
Harpenden Dolphins CC	1	-	-	-
Old Albanians CC	4	-	16	-
Redbourn CC	4	-	16	2
Sandridge CC	2	-	-	-
St Albans CC	7	1	20	-
Wheathampstead CC	3	-	18	-
Total	35	1	81	4

Table 7: Summary of demand (2022)

Club name	No. of competitive teams			
	Senior men's	Senior women's	Junior boys'	Junior girls'
Bamville CC	2	-	-	-
Frogmore CC	1	-	-	-
Greenwood Park CC	2			
Harpenden CC	8	1	16	4
Harpenden Dolphins CC	2	-	-	-
Old Albanians CC	4	-	18	-
Redbourn CC	4		14	4
Sandridge CC	2	-	-	-
St Albans CC	7	2	5	3
Wheathampstead CC	5		11	-
Total	37	3	64	11

Table 8: Demand changes since 2020 – 2022

Club name	No. of competitive teams (difference)			
	Senior men's	Senior women's	Junior boys'	Junior girls'
Total	+2	+2	-17	+7

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Senior cricket

As there has been an increase of two senior men's teams, it is important to understand the subsequent impact of this on the supply vs demand balance. This is seen in the table below. Each new men's team equates to eight match equivalents (as this is typically the average amount of home fixtures played per team at home venues per season).

Table 9: Supply and demand analysis (2022) for senior Saturday cricket

Actual spare capacity (sessions per season)	Demand (match sessions)			
	Overplay	2020 total	2022 total	Changes (MES)
59	99	40	56	+16

In 2020 there was an identified shortfall of 40 match equivalent sessions. With an increase of two additional teams, this shortfall is expected to have been exacerbated by 16 match equivalent sessions (two teams) to increase the District wide shortfall to 56 match equivalent sessions per season.

Junior cricket demand

In contrast to senior cricket, there has been an overall decrease in junior cricket affiliation numbers between 2020 and 2022. This participation trend equates to a loss of nine teams; however, it is likely not a true reflection of club demand as current demand within ECB initiatives such as All Stars and Dynamos are high (identified in the table below) at all clubs offering such activity.

Table 10: All stars and Dynamos participation (2022)

Club	All Stars	Dynamos
Harpenden Cricket Club	160	27
Old Albanian Cricket Club	0	36
Redbourn Cricket Club	44	3
St Albans Cricket Club	60	7
Wheathampstead Cricket Club	60	0
Total	324	73

From an affiliated perspective, the table below looks at the differences in affiliated numbers on a club by club basis. Harpenden CC has had the biggest growth with seven additional teams generated, and St Albans CC the biggest lost, with 12 teams.

Table 11: Affiliated junior teams at club sites between 2020 and 2022

Club name	No. of competitive teams		
	Juniors (2020)	Juniors (2022)	Difference
Harpenden CC	13	20	+7
Old Albanians CC	16	18	+2
Redbourn CC	18	17	-1
St Albans CC	20	8	-12
Wheathampstead CC	18	11	-7

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When looking at the supply vs demand balance effect of this change in junior demand across the five clubs which offer junior activity. There are some key impacts as can be seen in the table below. Note, that each junior team equates to four match equivalent sessions (as this is typically the average amount of home fixtures played per team per season at home venues).

Harpden CC is anticipated to have become more overplayed with the increase of demand, likewise is the case at Old Albanians CC. Redbourne CC would remain overplayed with a slight decrease, however, in contrast, St Albans and Wheathampstead CCs are expected to have much of the existing overplay alleviated due to the reduction in junior demand at each site.

Table 12: Updated supply vs demand position (junior demand only)

Club name	Supply vs demand position (2020)	Supply vs demand position (2022)
Harpden CC	6	34
Old Albanians CC	41	49
Redbourn CC	18	14
St Albans CC	6	42
Wheathampstead CC	24	4

Harpden CC also accesses Rothamsted Research CC which was identified as being at capacity during 2020. With an increase of demand at junior level, this site is expected to be now also overplayed.

Lastly, this analysis does not account for demand identified in Table 10. This needs to be considered on a club by club basis on impact by the relevant partners. Not all demand from these activities will be utilising grass wickets or hardballs and as such this associated demand for cricket cannot be attributed to squares in a similar way to affiliated teams.

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Rugby union

St Albans RFC

St Albans RFC is due to have its lease with Hertfordshire County Council expire in 2027. Since the data collection for the PPS was undertaken in 2021, it is not known that this position has changed and therefore it has less than four years left of secure tenure on the site.

If pressure comes to bring the site forward for any form of development in the future, either partially or fully, strict consideration should be given to existing policies. These are Sport England Playing Field Policy and NPPF which are detailed below.

Sport England's Playing Field Policy

To help protect the spaces where people get active, local planning authorities are required by law to consult Sport England on planning applications they receive which affect playing fields. Sport England's Playing Field Policy helps it to assess and respond to these applications. Sport England also provides publicly available guidance alongside its Playing Fields Policy to give clarity and advice to external parties on how we make individual assessments.

Sport England is a statutory consultee on applications effecting playing field which have been used in the last five years and a non-statutory consultee on playing field sites which are older than this.

On any application it will object to the development unless one of the following five exceptions is met:

- ◀ **Exception 1 (E1): Excess of provision**
 - ◀ A robust and up-to-date assessment has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of Sport England, that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, which will remain the case should the development be permitted, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.

- ◀ **Exception 2 (E2): Ancillary development**
 - ◀ The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.

- ◀ **Exception 3 (E3): Land incapable of forming part of a pitch**
 - ◀ The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:
 - reduce the size of any playing pitch;
 - result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
 - reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;
 - result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or
 - prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.

- ◀ **Exception 4 (E4): Replacement provision of equivalent or better quality and quantity**

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- ◀ The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new area of playing field:
 - of equivalent or better quality, and
 - of equivalent or greater quantity, and
 - in a suitable location, and
 - subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.

- ◀ **Exception 5 (E5): New sports provision benefit outweighs the loss of the playing field.**
 - ◀ The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.

The full explanation and conditions of each exception is available via the link below:

[Link to Sport England Playing Fields Policy](#)

National Planning Policy (NPPF)

Paragraph 99 states that “Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless”:

- (a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- (b) 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
- (c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

As the site is an active site, mitigation would be required to meet Policy Exception E4 and NPPF Paragraph 99 point B.

It is noted that Oaklands College located a short distance away aspires to develop its site further for elite sporting opportunities for its students and other sporting organisations. Through consultation, it is known it holds several pockets of land locally which are designated as playing field and as such could theoretically be considered as a potential mitigation opportunity if a suitable package could be produced and be a benefit to both parties. This will require a full feasibility study to understand further details and potential opportunities. Note this is only for consideration if the Club comes under pressure to relocate through its lease not being extended.

Alongside this, where possible, multisport considerations should be sought to maximise site outcomes if a relocation was to happen. As an example, St Albans Centurions Rugby League Club has a limited provision set at Toulmin Drive and could theoretically benefit from an increased quantity/quality offer.

Old Albanians RFC

Old Albanians RFC has historically accommodated professional rugby union club Saracens Rugby Club at its site as its main training venue. From 2023, it is expected that Saracens will relocate to a new site (which is currently unknown). As a result, additional capacity will be available to Old Albanians RFC to accommodate its existing levels of demand.

KKP estimated that Saracens total demand equated to circa ten match equivalent sessions per week during 2021. Most of Saracens’ demand was expressed on one pitch and occasionally one other as an overspill offer when needed.

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Table 13: Supply vs demand balance (OA sport) 2020

Site name	Number of senior pitches	Quality*	Floodlit?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating
OA Sport	4	Good	No	6	12	6
	1		Yes	3	3	-
	1		Yes	10	3	7

When removing this demand associated with Saracens Rugby Club, all overplay at the site is removed and spare capacity generated on the now unused pitch. This will now be used to reduce pressure on the remaining pitch stock and to also accommodate modest increases in the Clubs mixed age grade and junior sections, however, for the purpose of this scenario, to clearly show the impact of Saracens relocating, this has not been actioned as the overall spare capacity will be the consistent with what is now displayed.

Table 14: Supply vs demand balance (OA sport) 2022

Site name	Number of senior pitches	Quality*	Floodlit?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating
OA Sport	4	Good	No	6	12	6
	1		Yes	3	3	-
	1		Yes	0	3	3

Harpenden RFC

Harpenden RFC has access to a circa 1.15 hectare playing field which it uses for mixed age grade rugby. This is highlighted in Figure 1. It rents this from a local landowner on an annual basis and as such this presents the Club with an area of playing field which has unsecure tenure (in contrast to the remainder of its site which it has freehold off).

If hypothetically, the Club could no longer access this unsecure playing field, the loss of provision would be ultimately negligible (from a capacity perspective) due to most of the existing mixed age grade rugby being either played on the existing third generation pitch on site on Sunday mornings or on the four dedicated mixed age grade pitches to the south of the site. KKP estimate the pitches on this unsecure playing field accommodate between one to two matches per week during peak periods where all teams are playing in either festival formats (i.e., with several clubs playing fixtures at the site) or when all individual teams have fixtures.

Based on peak time need, the pitches on this site accommodate one match equivalent session of demand (or 0.5 if demand is adjudged against senior pitch formats). The loss of this site would alleviate most available spare capacity on the site (which is currently one match equivalent session across one senior pitch) but spare capacity would remain on the site.

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Figure 1: Harpenden RFC



Future demand

ONS figures used in the PPOSS outlines minimal growth over the Local Plan period. On this basis, to produce a more accurate position on future demand, the PPC has been used below to look at what impact potential housing growth may have on provision. The Council currently has a Local Plan target of 890 dwellings per annum from 2026-2038. This equates to 10,680 dwellings or 25,632 people.

As the St Albans Local Plan is yet to be finalised, this specific number is not confirmed as a set target and is likely to change. As such, the scenario below is a starting point for future discussions with Sport England and NGBs as part of the Stage E process about how best to accommodate future demand over the Local Plan process. For the purposes of this scenario, match equivalent sessions have been rounded to the nearest whole 0.5 match equivalent session to be consistent with the existing PPS Assessment.

Table 15: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 10,680 dwellings (MES)

Pitch sport	Match demand per week ³¹
Adult football	5
Youth football	17
Mini soccer	12
Rugby union	5
Rugby league	0.5
Adult hockey	3
Junior & mixed hockey	1.5
Cricket	180 (per season)

³¹ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

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Table 16: Football supply vs demand considering housing growth impact

Pitch format	Demand (match equivalent sessions) – 22/23 season		
	Current total ³²	2038 total	Change (MES)
Adult	2	3	5
Youth	13	30	17
Mini	19	31	12

Cricket

Of the 180 match equivalent sessions of growth the PPC suggests this will equate to the growth of six additional senior men's teams and 13 junior boys' teams. The PPC does not suggest sufficient growth into women's and girls' to warrant the development of new teams but due to on-going development work in the region, this is unlikely to be the case with several clubs now rapidly increasing its women's and girls' operations.

In terms of potential impact on men's senior cricket, it will theoretically have a significant impact on exacerbating existing pressures for provision at peak times. If all six teams were to play at this time, the existing 2022 shortfall will increase to 106 (based on each team typically playing ten matches at home per season). On a club by club basis, there it is unlikely this will be able to be met without increased access to new provision over the Local Plan period.

Table 17: Senior cricket supply vs demand 2022

Saturday Peak time	Demand (match sessions)		
	2022 total	2038 total	Changes (MES)
	56	106	60

The position for junior cricket is more convoluted due to demand being expressed by just five clubs and it not being known where demand will gravitate too. An increase of 13 teams on the existing five clubs would put additional strain on sites which are currently overplayed, these are:

- ◀ Harpenden CC
- ◀ Old Albanians CC
- ◀ Redbourn CC
- ◀ St Albans CC
- ◀ Wheathampstead CC

Hockey

The PPC suggests there will be a growth of three match equivalent sessions per week for adult peak time hockey. It further establishes in the workings of the output that four adult teams will be generated (two adult male and two adult female). This demand translates to a need to access 0.5 full size pitches per week (based on a full size pitch being able to accommodate eight teams).

With the current facility mix maximised and needing renovation, this translates to a need for additional full size provision for hockey to be provided for over the Local Plan period.

Rugby union

³² Note the demand for youth and mini pitches types have been merged to match the PPC output.

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The PPC identifies a growth in rugby union equating to five match equivalent sessions per week for match play. This equates to the growth of two senior men's teams, four junior boys' teams, one junior girls team and four mini (mixed aged grade) teams. It further forecasts an increase of demand for senior women, but this is not sufficient enough for a new team to be created.

When applying this growth on a home vs away basis the impact is an exacerbation of current shortfalls in the District.

Table 18: Rugby union supply vs demand 2022³³

	Demand (match equivalent sessions)	
	Current total (2022)	Future total (2038)
Senior Rugby (Sat PM)	2.5	3.5
Junior Rugby (Sun AM)	2.5	6.5

³³ Figures are based on 2020 data snapshot in St Albans Assessment Report. However, removal of overplay at Old Albanians RFC has been accounted for to reflect a more accurate position for 2023.

APPENDIX TWO: SPORTING CONTEXT

The following section outlines a series of national, regional and local policies pertaining to the study and which will have an important influence on the Strategy.

National context

The provision of high quality and accessible community outdoor sports facilities at a local level is a key requirement for achieving the targets set out by the Government and Sport England. It is vital that this strategy is cognisant of and works towards these targets in addition to local priorities and plans.

Department of Media Culture and Sport Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation (2015)

The Government published its strategy for sport in December 2015. This strategy confirms the recognition and understanding that sport makes a positive difference through broader means and that it will help the sector to deliver five simple but fundamental outcomes: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of 23 performance indicators under nine key headings, as follows:

- ◀ More people taking part in sport and physical activity.
- ◀ More people volunteering in sport.
- ◀ More people experiencing live sport.
- ◀ Maximising international sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ A more productive sport sector.
- ◀ A more financially and organisationally sustainable sport sector.
- ◀ A more responsible sport sector.

Sport England: Uniting the Movement 2021

Sport and physical activity has a big role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society for all. From this notion, Sport England has recently released its new strategy, Uniting the Movement, its 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.

It seeks to tackle the inequalities long seen in sport and physical activity. Providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity, has never been more important.

There are three key objectives to the Strategy:

- ◀ Advocating for movement, sport and physical activity.
- ◀ Joining forces on five big issues
- ◀ Creating the catalyst for change

In particular, the five big issues are identified where the greatest potential is seen for preventing and tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity. Each one is a building block that, on its own, would make a difference, but together, could change things profoundly:

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Recover and reinvent: Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people.

Connecting communities: Focusing on sport and physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together.

Positive experiences for children and young people: Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life.

Connecting with health and wellbeing: Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.

Active environments: Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

The specific impact of the Strategy will be captured through programmes funded, interventions made, and partnerships forged. For each specific area of action, a set of key performance indicators will be developed. This hybrid approach will help evidence the overall progress being made by all those involved in supporting sport and physical activity.

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

The NPPF states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

The 'promoting healthy communities' theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies or surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

As a prerequisite the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

In order for planning policies to be 'sound' local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities.

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The FA National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)

The Football Association's (FA) National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a ten-year period.

The Strategy sets out shared aims and objectives it aims to deliver on in conjunction with The Premier League, Sport England and the Government, to be delivered with support of the Football Foundation.

These stakeholders have clearly identified the aspirations for football to contribute directly to nationally important social and health priorities. Alongside this, the strategy is clear that traditional, affiliated football remains an important priority and a core component of the game, whilst recognising and supporting the more informal environments used for the community and recreational game.

Its vision is: *"Within 10 years we aim to deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed"*

£1.3 billion has been spent by football and Government since 2000 to enhance existing football facilities and build new ones. However, more is needed if football and Government's shared objectives for participation, individual well-being and community cohesion are to be achieved. Nationally, direct investment will be increased – initially to £69 million per annum from football and Government (a 15% increase on recent years).

The NFFS investment priorities can be broadly grouped into six areas, recognising the need to grow the game, support existing players and better understand the different football environments:

- ◀ **Improve 20,000 Natural Turf pitches**, with a focus on addressing drop off due to a poor playing experience;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 3G AGP 'equivalents'** (mix of full size and small sided provision, including MUGAs - small sided facilities are likely to have a key role in smaller / rural communities and encouraging multi-sport offers), enhancing the quality of playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 changing pavilions/clubhouses**, linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development;
- ◀ **Support access to flexible indoor spaces**, including equipment and court markings, to support growth in futsal, walking football and to support the education and skills outcomes, exploiting opportunities for football to positively impact on personal and social outcomes for young people in particular;
- ◀ **Refurbish existing stock to maintain current provision**, recognising the need to address historic under-investment and issues with refurbishment of existing facilities;
- ◀ **Support testing of technology and innovation**, building on customer insight to deliver hubs for innovation, testing and development of the game.

The FA: National Game Strategy (2018-2021)

The FA launched its new National Game Strategy in July 2018 which aims to inspire a life-long journey in football for all.

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To achieve this, the strategy will focus on five key aspects of the game:

- ◀ A high quality introduction to football
- ◀ Developing clubs and leagues
- ◀ Embrace all formats of football and engage all participants
- ◀ Recruit, develop and support the workforce
- ◀ Develop sustainable facilities

Through these five pillars, The FA's objectives are to:

- ◀ Increase the number of male affiliated and recreational players by 10%.
- ◀ Double the number of female affiliated and recreational players via a growth of 75%.
- ◀ Increase the number of disability affiliated and recreational players by 30%.
- ◀ Ensure affiliated Futsal is available across the country in order to increase the number of Futsal affiliated and recreational players.

The sustainable football facilities should provide support to an agreed portfolio of priority projects that meet National Football Facility Strategy (NFFS) investment priorities.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Inspiring Generations (2020-2024)

The England and Wales Cricket Board unveiled a new strategic plan in 2019. The strategic plan aims to connect communities and improve lives by inspiring people to discover and share their passion for cricket

The plan sets out six important priorities and activities, these are:

- ◀ ***Grow and nurture the core***
 - ◀ Create an infrastructure investment fund for First Class County Clubs (FCCs)
 - ◀ Introduce a new Community Investment Funding for FCCs and County Cricket Boards (CCBs)
 - ◀ Invest in club facilities
 - ◀ Develop the role of National Counties Cricket
 - ◀ Further invest in County Competitions
- ◀ ***Inspire through elite teams***
 - ◀ Increase investment in the county talent pathway
 - ◀ Incentivise the counties to develop England Players
 - ◀ Drive the performance system through technology and innovation
 - ◀ Create heroes and connect them with a new generation of fans
- ◀ ***Make cricket accessible***
 - ◀ Broaden crickets appeal through the New Competition
 - ◀ Create a new digital community for cricket
 - ◀ Install non-traditional playing facilities in urban areas
 - ◀ Continue to deliver South Asian Action Plans
 - ◀ Launch a new participation product, linked to the New Competition
- ◀ ***Engage children and young people***
 - ◀ Double cricket participation in primary schools
 - ◀ Deliver a compelling and coordinated recreational playing offer from age five upwards
 - ◀ Develop our safeguarding to promote safe spaces for children and young people
- ◀ ***Transform women's and girls' cricket***
 - ◀ Grow the base through participation and facilities investment
 - ◀ Launch centres of excellence and a new elite domestic structure
 - ◀ Invest in girls' county age group cricket
 - ◀ Deliver a girls' secondary school programme

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◀ **Support our communities**

- ◀ Double the number of volunteers in the game
- ◀ Create a game-wide approach to Trust and Foundations through the cricket network
- ◀ Develop a new wave of officials and community coaches
- ◀ Increase participation in disability cricket

The Rugby Football Union Strategic Plan (2021)

The RFU has released its new strategic vision, which is to achieve ‘a successful and thriving game across England’. The strategy can be found [here](#).

It identifies four ‘Game Objectives’ and four ‘Driving Objectives’, to form priority focuses for the strategy. It believes that these objectives will make the greatest substantive improvements to the game and investment will be aligned to these areas.

Game objectives

- ◀ **Enjoyment** – Enable positive player experiences on and off the field.
- ◀ **Winning England** – Create the best possible high-performance system for England Rugby.
- ◀ **Welfare** – Enhance players welfare to protect and support the wellbeing of players.
- ◀ **Flourishing rugby communities** – Support clubs to sustain and grow themselves and to reflect society.

Driving objectives

- ◀ **Diversity & inclusion** – Drive rugby union in England to reflect the diversity of society.
- ◀ **Understand** – Build a deep understanding of players, volunteers and fans to shape the future of the game.
- ◀ **Connect** – Connect with and grow the rugby community and create exceptional experiences.
- ◀ **Commercial & operational excellence** – Ensure a sustainable and efficient business model delivered by an inspired workforce.

A number of aims, identified as key to the achievement of these main objectives, are particularly relevant to facilities. The provision of good quality and suitable rugby union facilities will help to achieve these aims and in turn objectives:

- ◀ **Enjoyment** – Improve accessibility for women and girls across the game.
- ◀ **Enjoyment** – Make the game inclusive and attractive for 14 to 18 year olds.
- ◀ **Flourishing rugby communities** – Provide support to help clubs maximise the benefit from their facilities and assets.
- ◀ **Diversity & Inclusion** – Improve the diversity of all facets of our game and continue to create an inclusive environment for all.

England Hockey (EH) - A Nation Where Hockey Matters 2013

The vision is for England to be a ‘Nation Where Hockey Matters’.

We know that delivering success on the international stage stimulates the nation’s pride in their hockey team and, with the right events in place, we will attract interest from spectators, sponsors and broadcasters alike.

The visibility that comes from our success and our occasions will inspire young people and adults to follow in the footsteps of their heroes and, if the right opportunities are there to meet their needs, they will play hockey and enjoy wonderful experiences.

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Underpinning all this is the infrastructure which makes our sport function. We know the importance of our volunteers, coaches, officials, clubs and facilities. The more inspirational our people can be, the more progressive we can be and the more befitting our facilities can be, the more we will achieve for our sport. EH will enable this to happen and we are passionate about our role within the sport. We will lead, support, counsel, focus and motivate the Hockey Nation and work tirelessly towards our vision.

As a governing body, we want to have a recognisable presence to participants of the game, be that through club or association website or their communications, or through the work of the many outstanding coaches in our game, so that players understand that their club is part of a wider team working together to a common goal.

The core objectives are as follows:

- ◀ Grow our Participation
- ◀ Deliver International Success
- ◀ Increase our Visibility
- ◀ Enhance our Infrastructure
- ◀ For EH to be proud and respected custodians of the sport

Club participation

Our club market is well structured and clubs are required to affiliate to EH to play in community leagues. As a result only relatively few occasional teams lie outside our affiliation structure. Schools and Universities are the other two areas where significant hockey is played.

Hockey is clearly benefiting from a double Olympic legacy. After Great Britain's women won bronze in front of a home crowd in London in 2012 the numbers of young girls playing the sport doubled and a historic gold in Rio 2016 saw more than 10,000 players promptly joining clubs. These triumphs have inspired the nation to get active and play hockey. Thanks to the outstanding work of the network of clubs across the country, EH has seen unprecedented growth at both ends of the age range. There has been an 80% increase in the number of boys and girls in clubs, as well as a 54% increase in players over the age of 46.

Hockey clubs have reaped the rewards of the improved profile of the sport, focussing on a link with schools to provide excellent opportunities for young players. Programmes such as Quick sticks – a small-sided version of hockey for 7-11 year olds – in Primary Schools have been hugely successful in allowing new players to take part in the sport from an early age. The growth in the sport since the eve of London 2012 has been seen across the country, examples being a 110% increase in under 16s club participation in London, and a 111% growth in the North West in the same age bracket.

Rugby Football League Strategic Plan 2015 – 2021

The RFL's most recent strategy aims to establish rugby league as "a growing sport, available throughout the country, that is recognised as providing positive experience for all participants and spectators, in environments that are welcoming, inclusive, vibrant, safe and comfortable - encouraging people to return again and again, featuring:

- ◀ Financially viable and sustainable professional clubs creating stable employment opportunities, showcasing local, national and international playing talent, and leading the sport's development - and making a difference - in their own communities;
- ◀ Welcoming community clubs, putting players first, offering recreational enjoyment for children and adults alike in a safe and inclusive environment;

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- ◀ A central organisation that stands out for excellence, innovation, mutual respect, integrity and inclusion that understands its role in servicing the wider sport;
- ◀ A sports that lives its values in all its decisions and actions.

This vision is underpinned by 13 core principles, including:

- ◀ **An integrated whole sport.** Each constituent part of the sport will have a responsibility to ensure the good health of the entire game;
- ◀ **Return on investment.** Investment will be targeted to ensure the sustainability of member clubs, and growth in the number and quality of players thus seeking an effective return for the game;
- ◀ **Financial parameters.** Financial distributions will be undertaken to ensure the whole of the game will move forward together;
- ◀ **Geographic expansion.** Geographic expansion of the sport should be carried out in a proportionate and sustainable manner.

Rugby League World Cup ‘Inspired by 2022’ Legacy Programme

The Rugby League World Cup 2022 will develop a £10 million legacy programme with funds driven into local clubs and community projects. The government investment, delivered by Sport England, is part of RLWC 2021’s ambitious plan to grow the sport and make it more visible, engaging and welcoming to current and potential participants.

The funding will be split into large transformational community projects, such as changing room improvements and new artificial grass pitches with the remaining funding used for smaller scale initiatives such as supplying new kit and equipment to promote club and community development. The investment will focus on the following four key areas:

- ◀ Creating welcoming environments
- ◀ Encouraging participation growth
- ◀ Building community engagement
- ◀ Cultivating further investment

England Hockey Strategy

EH’s Facilities Strategy can be found [here](#).

Vision: For every hockey club in England to have appropriate and sustainable facilities that provide excellent experiences for players.

Mission: More, Better, Happier Players with access to appropriate and sustainable facilities

The 3 main objectives of the facilities strategy are:

1. PROTECT: To conserve the existing hockey provision

- There are currently over 800 pitches that are used by hockey clubs (club, school, universities) across the country. It is important to retain the current provision where appropriate to ensure that hockey is maintained across the country.

2. IMPROVE: To improve the existing facilities stock (physically and administratively)

- The current facilities stock is ageing and there needs to be strategic investment into refurbishing the pitches and ancillary facilities. EH works to provide more support for

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clubs to obtain better agreements with facilities providers & education around owning an asset.

3. DEVELOP: To strategically build new hockey facilities where there is an identified need and ability to deliver and maintain. This might include consolidating hockey provision in a local area where appropriate.

EH has identified key areas across the country where there is a lack of suitable hockey provision and there is a need for additional pitches, suitable for hockey. There is an identified demand for multi pitches in the right places to consolidate hockey and allow clubs to have all of their provision catered for at one site.

The LTA has developed a programme of action based on seven core strategies. These are:

- ◀ Visibility – Broaden relevance and increase visibility of tennis all year round to build engagement and participation with fans and players.
- ◀ Innovation – Innovate in the delivery of tennis to widen its appeal.
- ◀ Investment – Support community facilities and schools to increase the opportunities to play.
- ◀ Accessibility – Make the customer journey to playing tennis easier and more accessible for anyone.
- ◀ Engagement – Engage and collaborate with everyone involved in delivering tennis in Britain, particularly coaches and volunteers, to attract and maintain more people in the game.
- ◀ Performance – Create a pathway for British champions that nurtures a diverse team of players, people and leaders.
- ◀ Leadership – Create a pathway for British champions that nurtures a diverse team of players, people and leaders.

The LTA Facilities Investment Framework sets out how it intends to deliver the investment to support community accessible tennis facilities. The focus will be on:

- ◀ New and existing indoor tennis centres
- ◀ Park tennis
- ◀ Tennis clubs
- ◀ Schools and other educational establishments

The key principles of the framework are to:

- ◀ Help fund projects through interest free loans.
- ◀ Invest in venues that have a proven record of increasing participation.
- ◀ Invest where there is thorough community engagement.
- ◀ Support venues that encourage participation growth.
- ◀ Targeted investment that is demand-led.
- ◀ Support venues that have successfully sourced partnership funding.

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England Netball

In November 2021 England Netball launched a 10-year 'Adventure Strategy' for the game with a new brand identity for the organisation.

England Netball's 'Adventure Strategy' shares a purpose-led ambition for the game, to build on the momentum the sport has seen in recent years and take it to new heights for the decade ahead.

The 'Adventure Strategy' outlines the intention to:-

- ◀ accelerate the development and growth of the game at every level, from grassroots to the elite,
- ◀ elevate the visibility of the sport, and
- ◀ lead a movement to impact lives on and beyond the court.

At the heart of its purpose, England Netball, with its proud and unique female foundations, will remain dedicated to increasing opportunities for women and girls to play the game as a priority, working tirelessly to address the gender participation gap in sport that has widened since the global pandemic.

Underpinned by years of engaging with and delivering netball for female communities, the organisation pledges to understand, support and nurture women and girls more deeply at every life stage, at every age.

The organisation is also committed to opening the sport to new audiences in every community, so netball better represents the rich diversity of the country it proudly represents, and ensures the sport continues to evolve and adapt to thrive in the future, helping to create a truly inclusive sport for all where everyone can belong, flourish and soar. A recent partnership announcement with England Men's and Mixed Netball Association (EMMNA) to help develop and grow male participation in the game, supports this commitment as England Netball pledges to promote difference and embrace the opportunity to make the sport a possibility within everyone's reach.

Transforming netball for children and young people is a strategic priority to protect the future of the sport. Working with schools and policy makers to extend physical literacy within, and after the school day with a focus on netball specific provision will pave the way for greater community participation. The organisation will accelerate the expansion of its Bee Netball programme for young children, whilst supporting teens and young women to stay in the game to keep them physically active and in the game for life.

The elite game is in focus too, with the ambition for the Vitality Roses to be the best female sports team in the world, supporting the national team to consistently win on the world stage, with an outstanding talent pathway in place to fuel sustainable successes on court, and setting new standards for netball. The professionalisation of the game over the next decade is a priority, focusing on growing world-leading international and domestic competitions and events, and creating more careers in the sport.

Grounded in feedback from the Netball Family, with over 3,000 members and stakeholders consulted as part of the strategic process to understand what they wanted netball to 'look like' in 2031, the plan is aspirational and ambitious and sees the organisation pledge to continue to be a trailblazer for women's sport as it embarks on its new adventure.

Facility Development

The facility development aspirations stated within the Strategy are to:-

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- ◀ Take a fresh look at the spaces required to support the sport, creating accessible places in every community to allow netball to be incorporated into how and where women and girls live their lives;
- ◀ Protect, enhance, and extend the network of homes that house the sport at a local and regional level;
- ◀ Develop an elite domestic professional competition that supports full time athletes underpinned by a world class infrastructure and environments.
- ◀ For England Netball to achieve its ambitions to make the game accessible to wider audiences and in every community, it encourages Local Authorities to adopt policies within Playing Pitch Strategies and Built Facilities Strategies that:-
- ◀ Facilitates informal netball activity within neighbourhood multi use games areas for example by installing combined outdoor basketball and netball goals and art courts in Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs).
- ◀ Incorporates the cultural and health needs of women and girls within any designs for improved or new facilities.
- ◀ Protects and enhances netball facilities within all Primary and Secondary School environments so they offer a positive first experience of the sport for students and the wider community during out of school hours.
- ◀ Supports the installation of floodlights on outdoor courts to increase all year-round use.
- ◀ Facilitates the development of netball growth programmes, club training and competition within public leisure centres.
- ◀ Where appropriate, supports the development of netball homes and performance environments that enable local women and girls to pursue a career in netball as an elite athlete, official, coach or administrator.

Bowls England: Fit for the Future (2021-2026)

Bowls England's new Strategy; 'Fit For The Future' frames an exciting course for the sport. The five-year plan has been designed with the ultimate goal of getting more people playing & enjoying bowls. It sets out its vision for the sport, how it plans to achieve its objectives and what success looks like in 2026. The priorities that will get it a the target of 1 million bowls experiences per year by 2026 are:

- ◀ Building the brand of bowls by increasing focus on international & top domestic bowls, and utilizing opportunities such as Birmingham 2022 to achieve larger media coverage;
- ◀ Ensuring the sport is truly accessible to all by offering different formats of the game which suit all time constraints, as well as driving more people to clubs in new ways;
- ◀ Creating positive playing experiences for everyone who steps on the green, both for casual and competitive players, as well as growing our events calendar and introducing a Performance Pathway
- ◀ Putting volunteers first, as the lifeblood of our sport, by increasing our support for clubs in order to empower them to thrive;
- ◀ Leading the sport with purpose by developing our Governance structures, diversifying our revenue streams, and work collaboratively with all the sport's key stakeholders.

England Athletics Strategic Plan – Athletics & Running: for everyone, forever – 2017 and beyond

This plan sets out England Athletics' mission, vision and strategic priorities that will direct how they work as an organisation during the coming years: what they do and how they will do it.

Vision: Make athletics and running the most inclusive and popular sport in England, led by a network of progressive clubs and organisations and supported by a sustainable, respected and trusted governing body.

For England Athletics to achieve this vision, they will focus on three values:

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- Pride – taking pride in their work and demonstrating to athletes that they recognise the importance of their role in bettering athletics.
- Integrity – demonstrate integrity to earn respect and to build effective partnerships.
- Inclusivity – promote inclusivity in all their actions.

Mission: To grow opportunities for everyone to experience athletics and running, to enable them to reach their full potential.

In order to achieve their mission, England Athletics will have three strategic priorities.

1. To expand the capacity of the sport by supporting and developing its volunteers and other workforce. The target is to achieve a 6% increase every year of licensed leaders, coaches and officials.
2. To sustain and increase participation and performance levels in our sport. To achieve this, England Athletics’ current targets are to increase the number of club registered athletes from (149,000 to 172,000), engage 135,000 people through the RunTogether programme and to increase athlete performance levels across all events and disciplines by 1% every year.
3. To influence participation in the wider athletics market. Their target here is to increase the number of regular athletes or runners by at least one million.

England Athletics Facility Strategy (2018 – 2025)

The purpose of this document is to set out our long term vision for athletics facilities in England. Facilities form a vital component of the overall England Athletics strategy.

The development, protection and enhancement of facilities will support our strategic plan and help England Athletics contribute to the delivery of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport’s Sporting Futures: A New Strategy for Sport and Sport England’s strategy Towards an Active Nation. Appropriate facilities help to attract and inspire new participants and provide the foundation and focus for a significant proportion of the England Athletics family.

The England Athletics Strategic Plan notes that the sport increasingly needs to become financially sustainable and that a business-like and innovative approach is a vital component of its future success. Facilities are fundamental, but they are also expensive to create and to maintain. The sport therefore faces a significant challenge to develop, improve and maintain facilities, most of which are currently operated and funded by third parties.

This strategy sets out a challenge to all those involved with the delivery of the sport to be innovative and business like in the operation and development of facilities at a time of financial challenge, as it aims “To create an innovative and inspiring network of sustainable athletic facilities, with the capacity to meet both current and future demand across England.

APPENDIX THREE: GLOSSARY

Exported/imported demand generally relates to play by teams or other users of playing pitches from within the study area (i.e. from residents of the study area) which takes place outside of the area. This may be due to issues with the provision of pitches and ancillary facilities in the study area, just reflective of how the sports are played (e.g. at a central venue for the wider area) or due to the most convenient site for the respective users just falling outside of the local authority/study area.

Unmet demand is demand that is known to exist but unable to be accommodated on current supply of pitches. This could be in the form of a team with access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa. This could also be due to the poor quality and therefore limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement. League secretaries may be aware of some unmet demand as they may have declined applications from teams wishing to enter their competitions due to a lack of pitch provision which in turn is hindering the growth of the league.

Latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. This could include feedback from a sports club who may feel that they could set up and run an additional team if they had access to better provision.

Future demand is an informed estimate made of the likely future demand for pitches in the study area. This is generally based on the most appropriate current and future population projections for the relevant age and gender groupings for each sport. Key trends, local objectives and targets and consultation also inform this figure.

Casual use or other use could take place on natural grass pitches or AGPs and include:

- ◀ Regular play from non-sports club sources (e.g. companies, schools, fitness classes)
- ◀ Infrequent informal/friendly matches
- ◀ Informal training sessions
- ◀ More casual forms of a particular sport organised by sports clubs or other parties
- ◀ Significant public use and informal play, particularly where pitches are located in parks/recreation grounds.

Carrying capacity is the amount of play a site can regularly accommodate (in the relevant comparable unit) for community use without adversely affecting its quality and use. This is typically outlined by the NGB.

Overplay is when a pitch is used over the amount that the carrying capacity will allow, (i.e. more than the site can accommodate). Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected.

Spare capacity is the amount of additional play that a pitch could potentially accommodate in addition to current activity. There may be reasons why this potential to accommodate additional play should not automatically be regarded as actual spare capacity, for example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below its carrying capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of friendly matches and training activity. This needs to be investigated before the capacity is deemed **actual spare capacity**.

Match equivalent sessions is an appropriate comparable unit for pitch usage. For football, rugby union and rugby league, pitches should relate to a typical week within the season and

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one match = one match equivalent session if it occurs every week or 0.5 match equivalent sessions if it occurs every other week (i.e. reflecting home and away fixtures). For cricket pitches it is appropriate to look at the number of match equivalent sessions over the course of a season and one match = one match equivalent session.