



**CONSULTATION DRAFT**

**WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

**APPROVED FOR CONSULTATION APRIL 2017**

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

**Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd**

Company No: 9145032 (England)

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Registered Office: 1 -2 Frecheville Court, off Knowsley Street, Bury BL9 0UF

T: 0161 764 7040 E: [mail@kcp.co.uk](mailto:mail@kcp.co.uk) [www.kcp.co.uk](http://www.kcp.co.uk)



6543

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

## CONTENTS

GLOSSARY.....	2
PART 1: INTRODUCTION.....	3
PART 2: VISION.....	9
PART 3: OBJECTIVES.....	10
PART 4: SPORT BY SPORT RECOMMENDATIONS .....	11
PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS .....	21
PART 6: ACTION PLAN .....	35
APPENDIX ONE: STRATEGIC CONTEXT.....	74
APPENDIX TWO: FUNDING PLAN.....	80
APPENDIX THREE: GLOSSARY .....	84

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

## GLOSSARY

3G	Third Generation (artificial grass pitch)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
CC	Cricket Club
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CSP	County Sports Partnership
WC	Walsall Council
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board Staffordshire Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FE	Further Education
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HC	Hockey Club
HE	Higher Education
IOG	Institute of Groundmanship
JFC	Junior Football Club
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LDF	Local Development Framework
LMS	Last Man Stands
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PQS	Performance Quality Standard
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
PF	Playing Field
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RUFC	Rugby Union Football Club
RLFC	Rugby League Football Club
S106	Section 106 Agreement
TGR	Team Generation Rate
U	Under

## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for Walsall. Building upon the preceding Assessment Report it provides a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities between 2016 and 2021.

While the Strategy is for the Borough rather than the Council, it has a pivotal role to play as the main provider of pitches. That said, the strategy has to be considered within the context of the reduction in funding to local authorities, with Walsall Council specifically needing to find further savings of £86 million by 2020. Such savings include proposals that would mean a reduction in the resources available for the Council to maintain playing pitches and ancillary facilities.

The PPS covers the following playing pitches and outdoor sports:

- ◀ Football pitches
- ◀ Third generation turf (3G) pitches
- ◀ Cricket pitches
- ◀ Rugby union pitches
- ◀ Artificial grass pitches (AGPs)
- ◀ Bowling greens

The Strategy is capable of:

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

Delivery of the Strategy is the responsibility of and relies on, *all* stakeholders making up the Steering Group, for example, representatives from the key pitch sport national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), RFU, The FA (including Staffordshire and Birmingham FAs), ECB (including Staffordshire and Birmingham County Cricket Boards) and England Hockey.

Each member of the Steering Group should take the lead to ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence. The role of the Steering Group should not end with the completion of the PPS document.

It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should be led by the local authority and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the steering group. Sport England's guidance is, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPS being signed off by the steering group, then Sport England and the NGBs would consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date. If the PPS is used as a 'live' document, and kept up to date, the time frame can be extended beyond this.

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

## 1.1: Structure

The strategy has been developed using a methodology in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy guidance. Sport England and NGBs have evolved this methodology significantly since Walsall's previous PPS was completed in 2010. A key change has been that the non-technical assessments now reflect the maintenance of the pitches, which in many cases has led to a reduction in the quality scoring of pitches.

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

- ◀ The need for evidence to help protect and enhance existing provision.
- ◀ The need to inform the development and implementation of planning policy.
- ◀ The need to inform the assessment of planning applications.
- ◀ The need to develop a priority list of deliverable projects which will help to meet any current deficiencies provide for future demands and feed into wider infrastructure planning work.
- ◀ Identify sites of low value that may offer the opportunity for disposal, generating a capital receipt to re-invest in the wider playing pitch supply (through replacement of provision to an equal or greater quantity and quality).
- ◀ Prioritisation of internal capital and revenue investment.
- ◀ The need to provide evidence to help secure internal and external funding.

The Strategy and Action Plan recommends a number of priority projects for Walsall, which could be implemented from 2016 to 2021. It is outlined to provide a framework for improvement and, although resources may not currently be in place to implement it, potential partners and possible sources of external funding may be identified.

## 1.2 Context

The rationale for undertaking the study is to identify current levels of provision in the area, across the public, education, voluntary and commercial sectors, and to compare this with current, and likely future levels of demand.

Concern at national government level over the loss of playing fields prompted the development of localised Playing Pitch Assessments and Strategies which identified 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 predicated population changes.
- ◀ Address 'demand' pressures created as a result of specific sports development pressures e.g. growth of mini soccer, wider use of artificial grass pitches.
- ◀ Address budget pressures and public sector cuts.

The Walsall Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy covers the overall Borough area and considers in certain cases the overlap of supply and demand with adjoining areas.

The key outcome is to see the provision of a range of good quality and accessible facilities, services and opportunities that:

- ◀ Increase participation in sport and physical activity.
- ◀ Contribute to an overall improvement in health and wellbeing.

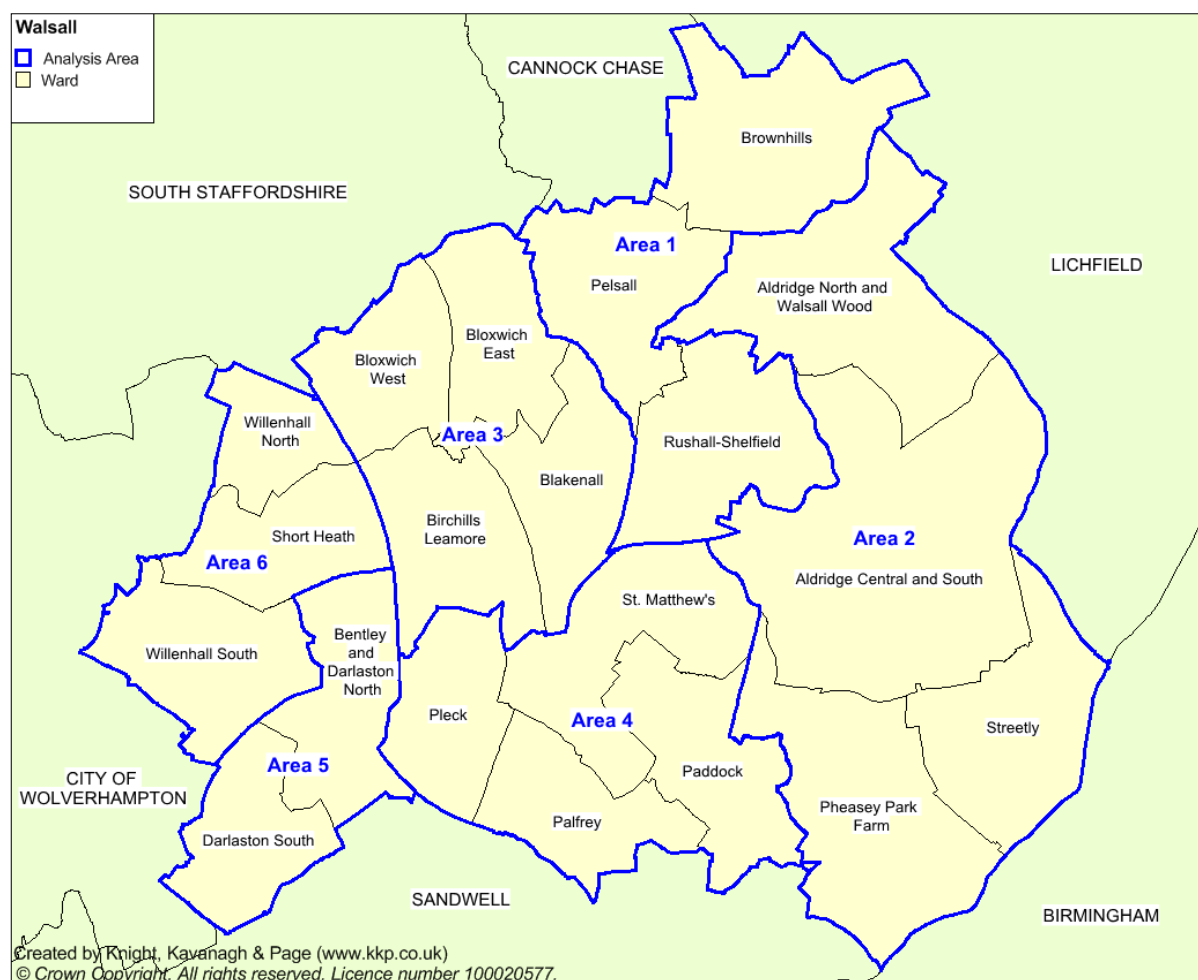
# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## 1.3 Study area

The study area covered by the PPS is the Walsall Council boundary. Further to this sub areas or analysis areas have been created to allow a more localised assessment of provision and examination of playing pitch surplus and deficiencies at a local level. Use of analysis areas also allows local circumstances and issues to be taken into account. Walsall is divided into the following five analysis areas:

- ◀ Area 1: Brownhills / Pelsall / Rushall / Sheffield
- ◀ Area 2: Aldridge / Streetly / Pheasey / Walsall Wood
- ◀ Area 3: Bloxwich / Blakenall / Birchills / Leamore
- ◀ Area 4: St. Matthew's / Paddock / Palfrey / Pleck
- ◀ Area 5: Darlaston / Bentley
- ◀ Area 6: Willenhall / Short Heath

Figure 1.1: Map of study area



## 1.4 Headline findings

The table below highlights the quantitative headline findings from the Walsall Playing Pitch Assessment Report:

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Table 1: Quantitative headline findings

Sport	Analysis area	Current picture	Future demand (2037) <sup>1</sup>
Football (grass pitches)	Area 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ No current shortfall of pitches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>four</b> match sessions on youth 11v11 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>four</b> match sessions on 9v9 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>2.5</b> match sessions on 7v7 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>four</b> match sessions on 5v5 pitches.</li> </ul>
	Area 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>five</b> match sessions on adult pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>one</b> match session on 9v9 pitches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>seven</b> match sessions on adult pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>five</b> match sessions on youth 11v11 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>six</b> match sessions on 9v9 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions on 7v7 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>one</b> match session on 5v5 pitches.</li> </ul>
	Area 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>three</b> match sessions on adult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>3.5</b> matches on adult pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>one</b> match session on youth 11v11 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions on 9v9 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions on 7v7 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions on 5v5 pitches.</li> </ul>
	Area 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions on adult pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions on youth 11v11 pitches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions on adult pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>two</b> match sessions on youth 11v11 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions on 7v7 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions on 5v5 pitches.</li> </ul>
	Area 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>5.5</b> match sessions on adult pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>two</b> match sessions on 9v9 pitches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>7.5</b> match sessions on adult pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>5.5</b> match sessions on youth 11v11 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>six</b> match sessions on 9v9 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>one</b> match session on 7v7 pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions on 5v5 pitches.</li> </ul>
	Area 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>two</b> match sessions on adult pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>two</b> match sessions on adult pitches.</li> <li>◀ Shortfall of <b>1.5</b> match sessions</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Please note that this is demand that will exist in 2037 if the current demand is not met and also includes latent and displaced demand identified.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Sport	Analysis area	Current picture	Future demand (2037) <sup>1</sup>
		on youth 11v11 pitches.	on youth 11v11 pitches. ◀ Shortfall of <b>one</b> match sessions on 9v9 pitches. ◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions on 7v7 pitches. ◀ Shortfall of <b>3.5</b> match sessions on 5v5 pitches.
Football (3G pitches) <sup>2</sup>	Walsall	◀ Shortfall of <b>three</b> 3G pitches based on FA model	◀ Pitch/s will require <b>resurface</b> and <b>FA testing</b>
Cricket	Area 1	◀ Current demand is being met	◀ Future demand can be met
	Area 2	◀ Current demand is being met	◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> pitches
	Area 3	◀ Current demand is being met	◀ Future demand can be met
	Area 4	◀ Current demand is being met	◀ Future demand can be met
	Area 5	◀ Current demand is being met	◀ Future demand can be met
	Area 6	◀ Current demand is being met	◀ Future demand can be met
Rugby union	Area 1	◀ Shortfall of <b>two</b> match sessions	◀ Shortfall of <b>two</b> match sessions
	Area 2	◀ Shortfall of <b>4.5</b> match sessions	◀ Shortfall of <b>six</b> match sessions
	Area 3	◀ Shortfall of <b>0.5</b> match sessions	◀ Shortfall of <b>two</b> match sessions
	Area 4	◀ Shortfall of <b>11.5</b> match sessions	◀ Shortfall of <b>14</b> match sessions
	Area 5	◀ Current demand is being met	◀ Future demand can be met
	Area 6	◀ Current demand is being met	◀ Future demand can be met
Hockey (Sand AGPs)	Area 1	◀ No current demand for pitches	◀ No demand expected
	Area 2	◀ Current demand is being met	◀ Future demand can be met
	Area 3	◀ Current demand is being met	◀ Future demand will result in pitch being <b>oversubscribed</b>
	Area 4	◀ Current demand is being met	◀ Future demand will result in pitch being <b>oversubscribed</b>
	Area 5	◀ No current demand for pitches	◀ No demand expected
	Area 6	◀ Pitch is <b>oversubscribed</b>	◀ Future demand will result in pitch being <b>oversubscribed</b>
Bowls	Walsall	◀ Current demand is being met	◀ Future demand can be met

### Conclusions

The existing position for all pitch sports is either demand is being met or there is small a shortfall. Based on the future projections, shortfalls may develop where demand is currently being met, and current shortfalls may be exacerbated.

<sup>2</sup> Based on accommodating 42 teams to one full size pitch for training.



# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## Definitions

### *Match sessions*

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

Based on how they tend to be played this unit for football and rugby union pitches relate 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.

### *Pitch capacity*

The capacity for pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of playing football. In extreme circumstances it can result in the inability of the pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off peak times. Pitch quality is often influenced by weather conditions, drainage and maintenance levels (a lack of maintenance or a reduction in maintenance will adversely affect quality).

As a guide, each NGB has set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its current quality (pitch capacity):

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

### *Shortfalls*

Please note that shortfalls are expressed in match sessions rather than converted to pitches. To convert match sessions into pitches, the number of match sessions should be halved (to take account of teams playing on a home and away basis).

For a full glossary of terms please refer to Appendix Three.

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

## PART 2: VISION

### 2.1 Vision

A vision has been set out to provide a clear focus with desired outcomes for the Walsall Playing Pitch Strategy:

*'Provide a network of good quality outdoor sports provision to increase participation and promote a healthier lifestyle for all.'*

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## PART 3: OBJECTIVES

The Walsall PPS is a strategy not just for the local authority, but holistically for sport across the Borough as a whole. Delivery of the Strategy is the responsibility of and relies on, *all* stakeholders.

The following overarching objectives are based on the three Sport England themes (see Figure 1 below). It is recommended that the following are followed to enable it to achieve the overall vision of the Strategy and Sport England planning objectives.

### AIM 1

To **protect** strategic and important playing fields where needed for meeting current and future needs

### AIM 2

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

### AIM 3

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

Figure 1: Sport England themes



## PART 4: SPORT BY SPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

### Football pitches

#### *Summary – grass pitches*

- ◀ Many youth 11v11 teams (93) are playing on adult pitches, which may in part be due to a lack of youth 11v11 pitches rather than a preference for adult pitches.
- ◀ Of the pitches available for community use, nine are assessed as good quality, 59 as standard quality and 87 are deemed to be poor quality. It must be noted that these quality ratings may differ substantially from the findings in the previous PPS (2010). This is not uncommon and is due to a change in Sport England guidance, which is now more sport and pitch specific and takes into account more key factors, such as maintenance regimes.
- ◀ All sites managed by the Council receive a basic level of maintenance, with budgets not allowing for any further level of upkeep.
- ◀ Of sites serviced by changing facilities, 7% have good quality facilities, 33% have standard quality facilities and 60% have poor quality facilities.
- ◀ Pitch hire costs are higher in Walsall when compared to neighbouring local authorities such as Dudley, Lichfield and Wolverhampton.
- ◀ Security of tenure is considered unsecure at many school sites and is also unsecure for Sheffield United FC at King George Crescent, Silverdale FC at Silverdale Football Club and Red Star AFC at Mckechnies Sport & Social Club.
- ◀ There are 10 teams registered to Walsall that currently play outside of the local authority area.
- ◀ There is latent demand expressed by eight clubs equating to 1.5 match equivalents on adult pitches, four match equivalents on youth pitches and 3.5 match equivalents on mini pitches.
- ◀ Team generation rates predict a growth of 22 youth boys' teams, two youth girls' teams and 10 mini teams. Future demand expressed by clubs equates to five match equivalents on adult pitches, 12 match equivalents on youth pitches and 8.5 match equivalents on mini pitches.
- ◀ There is spare capacity across pitches in Walsall amounting to 19 match equivalent sessions, although this is off-set by overplayed pitches. The majority of spare capacity exists on adult pitches and in Area 1.
- ◀ There are 33 overplayed pitches across 16 sites by a total of 27.5 match equivalent sessions. The majority of overplay occurs on adult pitches and is evident in each analysis area.
- ◀ There is a current shortfall of 13.5 match equivalent sessions on adult pitches and a future shortfall of 20 match equivalents.
- ◀ Youth 11v11 pitches are currently played to capacity, however, a future shortfall of 22 match equivalent sessions is evident.
- ◀ There is spare capacity of 1.5 match equivalent sessions currently on 9v9 pitches, although a shortfall of 14.5 match equivalents is identified in the future.
- ◀ There is spare capacity amounting to 2.5 match equivalent sessions on 7v7 pitches, however, future demand results in a shortfall of six match equivalents.
- ◀ There is spare capacity of one match equivalent on 5v5 pitches, however, a shortfall of 10.5 match equivalents is evident when taking into account future demand.
- ◀ There is an overall shortfall to accommodate both current and future demand on grass pitches in Walsall.

### Scenarios – grass pitches

- ◀ **Improving pitch quality** – on overplayed pitches (either through increased maintenance or drainage improvements) to either standard or good quality will increase pitch capacity and therefore help to accommodate expressed overplay, providing that the pitches are available at peak time. All overplayed pitches identified could accommodate their current demand if quality became good, however, improving pitch quality from poor to standard is more achievable and sustainable.
- ◀ Further to this, there are currently 16.5 match equivalent sessions of spare capacity discounted across Walsall due to poor quality. Improving pitch quality at these sites will therefore provide actual spare capacity. This can be used to accommodate demand from overplayed sites as well as displaced, latent and future demand.
- ◀ However, given the costs of improving pitch quality, alternatives 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**.
- ◀ **Providing security of tenure** – for clubs with lease agreements that are close to expiring and at schools through community use agreements will protect the current stock of pitches and current capacity.
- ◀ Also, where appropriate, large, sustainable clubs could potentially lease sites in the future, as this will help facilitate club development.
- ◀ There are currently 14.5 match equivalent session of spare capacity (including poor quality pitches) identified at unsecure sites. Failure to provide security of tenure at these sites could result in the loss of actual spare capacity and will increase shortfalls across each pitch type and in each analysis area.
- ◀ **Loss of single pitch sites** – Any sites deemed surplus to requirements will allow for the rationalisation of resources providing that the capital receipt is invested into improving key multi-pitch hub sites.
- ◀ If pitch shortfalls are identified when pitch sites are lost, replacement provision is required to an equal or greater quantity and quality in a suitable location.
- ◀ **Removal of full pitch hire subsidy** – will result in council pitch hire costs increasing, which in turn could result in an increase in displaced and exported demand, as well a decrease in imported demand. An increase in pitch hire costs could also result in clubs and teams folding.
- ◀ **Summary** – if pitch quality, overplay and security of tenure is addressed, and if access to existing pitches is maximised, there would be no requirement for new grass pitch provision.
- ◀ However, when this model is run on an area by area basis, there may be isolated areas which do generate enough demand for new pitches, especially areas identified for large population and housing growth.

### **Recommendations – grass**

- ◀ 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/improve pitch quality.
- ◀ Transfer play from sites which remain overplayed to alternative sites with spare capacity or sites which are not currently available for community use.
- ◀ Work to accommodate displaced, latent and future demand at sites which are not operating at capacity or at sites which are not currently available for community use.
- ◀ Ensure all teams are playing on the correct pitch sizes and explore pitch reconfiguration to accommodate more youth 11v11 pitches where possible.
- ◀ Seek to improve ancillary provision at key strategic sites.
- ◀ Provide security of tenure for clubs with lease agreements that are close to expiring and at schools through community use agreements.
- ◀ Consider the future value of one pitch sites and where appropriate, fully mitigate loss and reinvest into the development of hub sites.
- ◀ Where appropriate, develop partnerships and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded clubs to manage their own sites.
- ◀ Explore opportunities for access to 3G pitches to cater for grass pitch shortfalls.

### **Summary - 3G pitches**

- ◀ There are three full size 3G pitches within Walsall.
- ◀ In addition, Goals Soccer Centre previously provided a full size 3G pitch, however, this is now divided into three smaller sized pitches.
- ◀ Grace Academy and Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy are available for community use, whilst Walsall Football Club is not.
- ◀ No pitches available for community use are on the FA register to host competitive matches, although Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy is currently used by the Walsall Junior Youth League, as are smaller sized pitches at Black Country Performance Hub and Goals Soccer Centre.
- ◀ Sand based pitches at the following sites are all under proposal to change to a 3G surface.
  - ◀ Oak Park Leisure Centre
  - ◀ The University of Wolverhampton
  - ◀ West Walsall E-Act Academy
- ◀ Sporting Khalsa FC reports an aspiration to develop a full size, stadia 3G pitch.
- ◀ Of clubs in Walsall that responded to consultation, 68% report demand for additional training facilities, of which, 73% specifically state demand for 3G pitches.
- ◀ In order to satisfy training demand there is a need for at least nine full size community available pitches. If each team were to remain within their respective analysis area there is a need for 12 full size pitches (although this may be seen as unsustainable and a better solution would be to provide a lesser number of pitches in suitable, strategic locations)
- ◀ Both 3G pitches currently available to the community report that they are at or close to capacity.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

### Scenarios - 3G pitches

- ◀ **Increasing 3G pitch stock** – To meet training demand in each analysis area, there is a need for one additional full size pitch in Area 1, three in Area 2, one in Area 3, two in Area 4, one in Area 5 and one in Area 6. Please note, however, that these figures do not take account proposals at Oak Park Leisure Centre, the University of Wolverhampton and West Walsall E-Act Academy. Should all three pitches be provided in the future, demand would be met in Area 4 and the shortfall would reduce to two 3G pitches in Area 2.
- ◀ Priority should therefore be placed on improving full size 3G pitch stock by a minimum of three to meet training demand (on a holistic approach), with precedence towards the area with the biggest remaining shortfall (Area 2).
- ◀ A proposal for a full size 3G pitch at Black Country Performance Hub should also be considered as a priority.
- ◀ **Moving all mini teams to play on 3G pitches** – would require six full size 3G pitches. This is based on 39 teams playing 5v5 football requiring five pitches (rounded up from 4.88) and 64 teams playing 7v7 football requiring six pitches (rounded up from 5.33).
- ◀ Therefore, if all current pitches available for community use underwent FA testing, there is a shortfall of four full size 3G pitches to satisfy mini football demand. If the pitches do not undergo testing, there is a shortfall of six full size 3G pitches.
- ◀ Should Ormiston Shelfield Community Academy not undergo testing (as well as Black Country Performance Hub and Goals Soccer Centre), matches that are currently played on those pitches will have to be played elsewhere. This could result in teams/leagues folding due to a lack of a home/central venue or an increase in displaced demand.
- ◀ **Moving all 9v9 teams to play on 3G pitches** – would require five full size 3G pitches (rounded up from 4.75) based on 57 teams playing 9v9 football.
- ◀ Therefore, if all current pitches available for community use underwent FA testing, there is a shortfall of three full size 3G pitches to satisfy 9v9 match demand. If the pitches do not undergo testing, there is a shortfall of six full size 3G pitches.
- ◀ Should Ormiston Shelfield Community Academy not undergo testing (as well as Black Country Performance Hub and Goals Soccer Centre), matches that are currently played on those pitches will have to be played elsewhere. This could result in teams/leagues folding due to a lack of a home/central venue or an increase in displaced demand.
- ◀ **Transfer from overplayed sites** – Transferring all match demand from overplayed sites onto 3G pitches would alleviate overplay across Walsall.
- ◀ **Transfer from single pitch sites** – Transferring all match demand from single pitch sites to 3G pitches would enable the rationalisation of resources so that the capital receipt can be invested into improving key multi-pitch hub sites.

### **Recommendations – 3G pitches**

- ◀ Increase provision of full size 3G pitches in Walsall to meet both training and competitive demand.
- ◀ Ensure pitches are FA tested to host competitive matches and ensure pitches that are currently used for matches are tested as soon as possible.
- ◀ Carry out consultation with leagues/clubs to gauge acceptance of moving competitive play to 3G pitches in the future.
- ◀ Ensure providers have a sinking fund in place to ensure the long term sustainability of pitches.
- ◀ Explore options for a World Rugby compliant AGP in line with RFU investment plans.

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

## Cricket pitches

### Summary

- ◀ There are 25 natural turf wicket pitches in Walsall of which 21 are available for community use.
- ◀ In addition, there are four standalone non-turf wicket pitches available for community use, although none are used.
- ◀ There is a disused natural turf cricket square (previously contained eight wickets) at the former Walsall YMF Cricket Ground.
- ◀ The non-technical assessments carried out on natural turf squares found one square to be good quality, 23 to be standard quality and one to poor quality.
- ◀ Walsall CC, Streetly CC and Aldridge CC rate the quality of their changing facilities as poor.
- ◀ Tenure is considered secure by all clubs.
- ◀ There are eight clubs servicing Walsall which generate 30 senior teams and 29 junior teams.
- ◀ Team generation rates predict a growth of three junior boys' teams, whilst future demand expressed by clubs amounts to two senior teams and three junior teams.
- ◀ No non-turf wicket pitches are recorded as accommodating more than 60 matches per season, therefore, all non-turf wickets are considered to have spare capacity. This translates to actual spare capacity, as peak time for junior cricket is midweek, whereby non-turf wickets are more commonly used and matches can be played on a variety of days.
- ◀ There are 14 natural turf wicket pitches that have actual spare capacity, equating to a total of 6.5 pitches in the peak period. All spare capacity exists in Area 1, Area 3 and Area 4.
- ◀ Streetly Cricket Club is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions per season.
- ◀ Overall in Walsall there is a spare capacity amounting to 4.5 cricket pitches with spare capacity existing in Area 1, Area 3 and Area 4. A shortfall of 0.5 pitches is however identified in Area 2.

### Scenarios

- ◀ **Addressing overplay** – Ensuring appropriate maintenance at Streetly Cricket Club will allow it to continue accommodating its minimal overplay (2 match equivalent sessions).
- ◀ Alternatively, some demand can be transferred away from the site through access to pitches with actual spare capacity. This will, however, have financial implications due to the need to rent a secondary venue.
- ◀ A better alternative could be through the installation of a non-turf wicket at Streetly Cricket Club. This will allow for junior teams to be transferred from the natural turf wickets, thus alleviating all overplay.
- ◀ **Accommodating future demand** – It is considered that all future demand can be accommodated in all analysis areas, with the exception of Area 2. Aldridge CC expresses demand for one additional senior team, which cannot be accommodated at Aldridge Stick and Wicket Club during peak time.
- ◀ In order to accommodate the demand, the team will either have to enter a league which does not play during peak time (at which point it could be accommodated at Aldridge Stick and Wicket Club) or the team will have to access an alternative pitch.
- ◀ **Bringing disused square back into use** – The former Walsall YMF Ground previously contained 14 grass wickets and the site retains its potential to be brought back in to use considering how little time has passed since it fell out of action. Therefore, if the cricket square was restored to its previous level, 70 match equivalent sessions of capacity would be made available and two teams would be able to access the square at peak time.



## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

- ◀ Please note, however, that the potential to reinstate the capacity is dependent on significant restoration work taking place, which is likely to worsen depending on the amount of time that the square goes without the necessary level of maintenance.
- ◀ It must also be noted that the LTA and Walsall Tennis Club are looking into the site for a potential development of tennis courts.
- ◀ **Summary** – As overall spare capacity has been identified, priority should be placed on ensuring the current quantity of pitches is protected and that quality is sustained and improved where necessary.

### **Recommendations – cricket**

- ◀ Work with clubs and groundsmen to review quality on those pitches assessed as standard or poor and those pitches overplayed to ensure appropriate quality is achieved.
- ◀ Address overplay through ensuring appropriate maintenance and, if necessary, either the transfer of play to an alternative site or the installation of a non-turf wicket.
- ◀ Explore opportunities for increasing junior play on non-turf wickets throughout Walsall and utilise spare capacity for a growth in Last Man Stands.
- ◀ Ensure future demand can be accommodated throughout Walsall, in particular in relation to Aldridge CC.
- ◀ Work with clubs to improve access to appropriate training facilities.
- ◀ Improve changing facilities at Walsall Cricket Club, Streetly Cricket Club and Aldridge Stick and Wicket Club.
- ◀ Ensure tenure remains secure for all clubs.

### **Rugby pitches**

#### **Summary**

- ◀ Within Walsall there are 24 senior rugby union pitches. Of the pitches, 17 are available for community use. Pitches at Brownhills Community Technology College, Queens Mary Grammar School and Walsall Academy are unavailable to the community, whilst pitches at Aldridge School, Barr Beacon Sports Centre, Shelfied Playing Field and Shire Oak Academy are available but unused.
- ◀ All pitches are assessed as either poor or standard quality. No pitches have a drainage system in place, meaning all drainage is either natural adequate or natural inadequate.
- ◀ There are 60 teams across seven clubs in Walsall. Essington RUFC and Willenhall RUFC which play outside the study area account for 17 teams.
- ◀ Population growth is deemed to provide future growth of one junior teams, whilst clubs report aspirations to grow by three senior, two junior and three mini teams.
- ◀ Willenhall RUFC has security of tenure issues as some of its pitches are rented from a local farmer and therefore there is no guarantee that they will continue to be provided in the future. Bloxwich RUFC and Handsworth RUFC also rent some of their pitches.
- ◀ Walsall RUFC and Handsworth RUFC rate the quality of their respective changing provision as poor quality. Walsall RUFC reports issues surrounding the age and size of its facilities, whilst Handsworth RUFC reports issues with its flooring.
- ◀ The majority of teams train on their match pitches which reduces the capacity for matchplay, results in overplay and also causes quality issues.
- ◀ There is spare capacity on one senior pitch at King George Playing Field (Bloxwich RUFC) and one senior pitch at Veseyans RUFC.
- ◀ Overplay exists at ten sites and 14 pitches with total overplay amounting to 18.5 match equivalent sessions per week.
- ◀ There is an overall shortfall of 18.5 match session to meet current demand. When accounting for future demand, the shortfall worsens to 24 match sessions.

### Scenarios

- ◀ **Improving pitch quality** – Installing drainage systems at sites would improve pitch quality and therefore increase the carrying capacity of pitches. This is particularly required at pitches assessed as poor quality and pitches that are overplayed. Improving drainage at all sites available for community use to D3 (Pipe and Slit drained) would result in a further 12.5 match equivalent sessions of capacity and would fully alleviate overplay at all sites with the exception of Walsall RUFC (minimal overplay would still exist).
- ◀ Improving maintenance regimes is also required. Improving maintenance at all sites available for community use to M2 (good) would result in a further 20.5 match equivalent sessions and would fully alleviate overplay at all sites with the exception of Walsall RUFC (minimal overplay would still exist).
- ◀ Improving both drainage to D3 and maintenance to M2 at all sites available for community use would result in a further 34 match equivalent sessions and would alleviate overplay at all sites, including Walsall RUFC.
- ◀ **More pitches** – The creation of more pitches would reduce overplay through the transfer of play from overplayed pitches. In particular, the creation of more mini pitches would enable the transfer of mini teams from senior pitches.
- ◀ **Increasing floodlighting** – Installing floodlighting or providing additional floodlighting at sites would enable clubs to spread out their training demand across more pitches (or on separate land). This would create additional pitch capacity and alleviate overplay on pitches that are currently used for training.
- ◀ A solution is also required at King George V Playing Field (Bloxwich RUFC), which currently has poor quality floodlighting for training. A lack of security on the pitches is currently preventing investment.
- ◀ **World rugby compliant AGPs** – The RFU investment strategy into AGPs considers sites where grass rugby pitches are over capacity and where an AGP would support the growth of the game at the host site and for the local rugby partnership, including local clubs and educational establishments. To achieve this, the RFU is keen to work locally with partners such as the Council and the FA to look at sites of mutual interest.

### **Recommendations – rugby union**

- ◀ Retain minimal spare capacity identified at Bloxwich RUFC and Veseyans RUFC in order to protect and improve quality.
- ◀ As a priority, seek to address overplay at all sites through improving pitch quality via improved maintenance regimens and the installation of drainage systems.
- ◀ Work to reduce overplay as a result of training on match pitches through access to dedicated (or an increase in) floodlit pitches/training areas.
- ◀ Explore opportunities to secure access to additional pitches in order to transfer play from overused pitches, in particular where mini teams are identified as playing on senior pitches such as at Walsall RUFC, The Veseyans Sports & Social Club and the Charles Lewis Memorial Ground.
- ◀ Support Walsall RUFC and Handsworth RUFC in their need for clubhouse improvements.
- ◀ Ensure greater security of tenure for Willenhall RUFC.
- ◀ Work to reduce overplay as a result of training on match pitches through access to dedicated (or an increase in) floodlit pitches/training areas.
- ◀ Improve security at King George V Playing Field (Bloxwich RUFC) so that floodlighting can be improved.
- ◀ Consider supply of a World Rugby compliant AGP in the area to address levels of overplay.

## Artificial grass pitches for hockey (AGPs)

### Summary

- ◀ There are currently seven full sized sand based artificial pitches in Walsall:
  - ◀ The University of Wolverhampton
  - ◀ Walsall E-Act Academy
  - ◀ Oak Park Leisure Centre
  - ◀ Sneyd Community Association
  - ◀ Willenhall Academy
  - ◀ University of Aston Recreation Centre
  - ◀ Streetly Academy
- ◀ All of the pitches are floodlit and available to the community. The pitches at University of Wolverhampton, Walsall E-Act Academy and Oak Park Leisure Centre are, however, converting to a 3G surface.
- ◀ The pitches at Sneyd Community Association and Willenhall Academy are both considered to be nearing the end of their lifespan as neither have been resurfaced since 2005. In contrast, the pitches at University of Aston Recreation Centre and Streetly Academy were last resurfaced in 2015 and 2012 respectively and are considered to be good quality.
- ◀ The changing facilities at Streetly Academy are considered dated and in need of refurbishment. The facilities at Willenhall Academy are considered too small and the facilities at University of Aston Recreation Centre are considered to be located too far away from the pitch.
- ◀ All pitches are relatively well used with only limited spare capacity available at Streetly Academy and Willenhall E-Act Academy. The pitches at University of Aston Recreation Centre and Sneyd Community Association are fully booked.
- ◀ There are five hockey clubs in Walsall consisting of 32 teams. In addition, the University of Aston fields three teams. Of the clubs, West Bromwich HC and Wednesbury HC imports its demand from Sandwell.
- ◀ Both Bloxwich HC and Streetly HC express unmet demand for one additional women's team and one additional junior teams.
- ◀ Bloxwich HC and Streetly HC report plans to further increase their number of teams in the future, amounting to one women's and two junior teams at Bloxwich HC and one men's and one women's team at Streetly HC.
- ◀ Further to this, both the University of Aston Recreation Centre and Sneyd Community Association AGPs are oversubscribed.
- ◀ Since 2012 hockey has seen a 65% increase of U16 players taking up hockey within the club environment. This is increase across all age groups expected to continue especially with the success of Rio Olympics. Unlike some sports, hockey can only be played competitively on sand or water based Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs). Water based AGPs are not common and only found at elite sites, whereas sand based/sand dressed AGPs can be found on secondary school sites, leisure centres and higher education establishments.
- ◀ Its popularity on school sites was due to the surface being suitable for a number of sports that are played and taught. However, a large majority of these facilities did not financially plan to replace the surface, or carpets as they are called, of the AGPs. A carpet has roughly a 10 year life span dependant on use.
- ◀ Since the introduction of the 3G surface a few years ago, and its popularity with football, schools in particular have seen this as a way of replacing the tired carpet and generating money from the hire to football clubs/ commercial football provider. This is at the expense of hockey, and in some areas in England, hockey players are travelling over 40 minutes to get to a suitable AGP (in some cases this is doubling the travel time).

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

- ◀ Additionally, because of the conversion to 3G surfaces some local authorities no longer have hockey teams playing within their areas and they have been displaced to different areas or had to disbanded altogether.
- ◀ The 3G surface is limited in the range of sports which can be played or taught on it and has a range of piles. Those proposing to change the carpets should take advice from the appropriate sports' governing bodies or refer to Sport England's guidance on their website: <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/>

### Scenarios

- ◀ **Accommodating current and future demand** – There are currently 27 senior teams (discounting the University of Aston teams which play midweek) requiring a pitch at peak time (Saturday), however, when included unmet/latent and future demand, this increases to a need to accommodate 32 senior teams. Based on one floodlit AGP being able to accommodate four matches at peak time in Walsall (Saturday), there is a need for four full size sand-based AGPs.
- ◀ As there are four pitches which will continue to be available in the future, this is deemed sufficient to meet current and future demand. However, the University of Aston Recreation Centre and Sneyd Community Association are currently over-subscribed for hockey and the pitches at Sneyd Community Association and Willenhall Academy are both considered to be nearing the end of their lifespan.
- ◀ Therefore, in order to ensure all teams can access a pitch, play needs to be transferred from over-subscribed sites (University of Aston Recreation Centre and Sneyd Community Association) to sites with spare capacity (Streetly Academy and Willenhall Academy).
- ◀ Alternatively, engagement with leagues is required to allow some play to be transferred to Sundays, although there is a reluctance from the leagues to do this.

### **Recommendations – hockey**

- ◀ Retain four sand based AGPs in order to accommodate current and future demand.
- ◀ Improve quality at Sneyd Community Association and Willenhall Academy through re-surfacing the pitches.
- ◀ Ensure sinking funds are put into place at all sites with a sand-based AGP to enable ongoing repairs and future refurbishment.
- ◀ Explore changing facility improvements at University of Aston Recreation Centre, Sneyd Community Association and Willenhall Academy.
- ◀ Seek resolution to the over-subscribed University of Aston Recreation Centre and Sneyd Community Association through transferring some play to sites with spare capacity (Streetly Academy and Willenhall Academy) or to an alternative day.
- ◀ Consider cross border pitches as a resolution to excess demand.
- ◀ Due to the impact on hockey, it is appropriate to ensure that sufficient sand based AGPs are retained for the playing development of hockey within the local authority administrative area. To that end, a change of an AGPs surface or carpet will require a planning application, and as part of it the applicants will have to show that there is sufficient AGP provision available for hockey in the locality if the surface is changed. Otherwise planning permission will not be granted. Advice from Sport England and England Hockey should be sought prior to any planning application being submitted.<sup>3</sup>
- ◀ It should also be noted that if a surface is changed, it could require the existing floodlights to be changed and in some instances noise attenuation measures may need to be put in place.

---

<sup>3</sup> The requirement for planning permission regarding the replacement of an AGP with a 3G pitch is primarily as a result of the engineering works that are typically associated with the conversion due to 3G pitch construction.

## Bowling greens

### **Summary**

- ◀ There are 29 crown green bowling greens in Walsall across 26 sites.
- ◀ Of the greens, 22 are assessed as good quality, three as standard quality and three as poor quality. The poor quality greens are located at Yale Bowling Club and Palfrey Park.
- ◀ Access to changing accommodation is reported as an issue by many clubs at Anchor Meadow, Oak Park Leisure Centre, Rushall Labour Club, Walsall Aboretum and Walsall Cricket Club.
- ◀ There are 26 clubs playing in Walsall. Across the 21 consulted clubs, there are a total of 976 members.
- ◀ Five clubs report that membership has increased over the last three years; four clubs report that membership has decreased. A total of 11 clubs report aspirations to grow in the future.
- ◀ It is considered that most bowling greens have spare capacity to support growth, however, seven clubs are operating above the average membership of 47 members and require support.
- ◀ No clubs express demand for an additional green to be provided meaning all clubs deem the current stock of greens to be sufficient to meet demand both now and in the future.

### **Recommendations – bowls**

- ◀ Improve green quality at sites assessed as poor or standard.
- ◀ Support clubs expressing a need for changing facility improvements.
- ◀ Support all clubs to ensure demand continues to be met, particularly those clubs operating above the average membership.
- ◀ Where possible, consider amalgamation of clubs onto a lesser number of greens to rationalise resources, especially those clubs with the lowest membership numbers in areas provided by multiple greens.
- ◀ Where appropriate, lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded clubs to manage their own sites.

## PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations for the Strategy have been developed via the combination of information gathered during consultation, site visits and analysis which culminated in the production of an assessment report, as well as key drivers identified for the Strategy.

Implementation must be considered in the context of financial implications and the need for some proposals to also meet planning considerations. Provision for disability sport should also be considered and acknowledged in the decision making process.

### OBJECTIVE 1

To protect Strategic and Important playing fields where needed for meeting current and future needs

#### Recommendations:

- a. Ensure, through the use of the PPS, that playing fields and pitches are protected through the implementation of policy or replaced.
- b. Seek to secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs.
- c. Work towards increasing community use of education facilities where there is a need to do so.

### Recommendation (a) Ensure, through the use of the PPS, that playing fields and pitches are protected through the implementation of policy or replaced

NPPF paragraph 74 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

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

Lapsed, disused, underused and poor quality sites should also be protected from development or replaced either by new facilities or by improvements to existing provision, where there is a requirement for playing field land to accommodate more pitches to meet the identified shortfalls.

**Development Management** - The PPS should also be used to help inform Development Management decisions that affect existing or new playing fields, pitches, bowling greens and ancillary facilities by assessing all applications on a case by case basis taking into account site specific factors. Sport England will in addition use the PPS to help assess planning applications against their Playing Fields Policy.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

**New housing development** - The PPS should be used to determine what impact any new housing development will have on the demand and capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for local improvements to increase capacity or make new provision if required.

**School Playing Fields** - Local authorities wanting to dispose of school playing field land need consent under Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. Consent is now also required for disposal of any land used by a school or academy under Schedule 1 to the Academies Act 2010 and Academies also need consent to any leases or disposals under their Funding Agreement.

It should be noted that consent under Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act does not necessarily mean subsequent planning approval will be granted. Therefore, any application for planning permission must still meet the requirements of the relevant land-use planning policy, in this case paragraph 74 of NPPF, Local Plan Policy and Sport England policy. Applicants are advised to engage Sport England before submitting applications. Robust implementation of the statutory obligation will ensure protection of school playing fields for use by pupils (and sometimes the community as a whole) to ensure receipt is ploughed back into sports education.

Sport England's playing field policy exception E1 only allows for development of lapsed or disused playing fields if a PPS shows a clear excess in the quantity of playing pitch provision at present and in the future across all playing pitch sports types and sizes.

Policy Exception E1:

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

Where the PPS cannot demonstrate 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 Sport England policy exception E4.

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.

Further to this, playing fields should be protected or replaced up until the point where all satisfied demand has been met within the study area or individual sports catchment area.

Any disused/lapsed sites are included within the action plan together with a recommendation in relation to the need to bring the site back into use or mitigate the loss on a replacement site to address the shortfalls identified with the Assessment.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

### Recommendation (b) – Seek to secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs

A number of school sites are being 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 (CUA) is in place (including access to changing provision where required). This is especially the case for schools which have unsecured community use.

NGBs can often help to negotiate and engage with schools, particularly academies where the local authority may not have direct influence.

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

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

Local sports clubs should be supported by partners including the Council, NGBs or the County Sports Partnership (CSP) to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership working. For example, support club development and encourage clubs to develop evidence of business and sports development plans to generate an income through their facilities. All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC)<sup>4</sup>. Clubs should also be encouraged to work with partners locally whether volunteer support agencies or linking with local businesses.

Further to this there could be examples where long term leases could be put into place for the continued use of a site. Each club should be required to meet service and/or strategic recommendations. However, an additional set of criteria should be considered, which takes into account the quality of the club, aligned to its long term development objectives and sustainability. For most external funding opportunities (Sport England and NGBs), there is a requirement for clubs to have a **minimum 25-year lease agreement in place**.

In the context of public spending cuts, it is increasingly important to work with voluntary sector organisations in order that they may be able to take greater levels of ownership and support the wider development and maintenance of facilities.

#### *Recommended criteria for lease of sport sites to clubs/organisations*

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

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cascinfo.co.uk/cascbenefits>



## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Club	Site
capacity to maintain sites to the existing, or better, standards.	management committee for each site leased to a club.

Recognising the value of NGB club accreditation can be achieved by prioritising the clubs that are to have access to these better quality facilities. This may be achieved by inviting clubs to apply for season long leases on a particular site as an initial trial.

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

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

In addition, clubs should be made fully aware of the associated responsibilities/liabilities when considering leases of multi-use public playing fields.

### ***Community asset transfer***

Having a policy which supports community management and ownership of assets to local clubs, community groups and trusts may be option to consider. This presents sports clubs and national governing bodies with opportunities to take ownership of their own facilities; it may also provide non-asset owning sports clubs with their first chance to take on a building. In Walsall the opportunities for future leasing and or asset transfer exist mostly in relation to football and bowls provision.

For example, the FA considers that clubs and leagues are central to the longer term development of facilities. Those clubs best placed to create revenues and re-invest are those that have sound foundations in the shape of strong volunteer structures, security of tenure with facilities capable of supporting growth, well thought through business and development plans, a growing participation base and a good reputation for the delivery of quality coaching. The FA guidance to asset transfer sets out ten steps to a successful asset transfer:

- ◀ Is there a clear football need?
- ◀ What options have been considered?
- ◀ Seek independent legal advice
- ◀ Agree outline objectives between all parties
- ◀ Set realistic time scales
- ◀ Develop a business / feasibility plan
- ◀ Openly consult with stakeholders
- ◀ Manage the risk
- ◀ Protect the asset
- ◀ Adopt a partnership approach

For any sports club that is wishing to own and/or manage its sports facility, it is important that they have a robust governance structure and a robust business plan in place which enables them to take on the responsibilities and financial liabilities. For full FA guidance in relation to asset transfer: <http://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-FA-asset-guide-to-transfers.pdf>

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Further to this, for all other sports, the Sport England Community Sport Asset Transfer Toolkit is a bespoke, interactive web based tool that provides a step by step guide through each stage of the asset transfer process:

[http://archive.sportengland.org/support\\_advice/asset\\_transfer.aspx](http://archive.sportengland.org/support_advice/asset_transfer.aspx)

### **Recommendation (c) Work towards increasing community use of education facilities where there is a need to do so**

It is not uncommon for school pitch stock not to be fully maximised for community use. Even on established community use sites, access to grass pitches for community use is limited.

In order to maximise community use of educational facilities it is recommended that a more coherent, structured relationship is established with individual schools. The ability to access good facilities within the local community is vital to any sports organisation, yet many clubs struggle to find good quality places to play and train.

Pricing policies at facilities can be a barrier to access at some of the education sites but physical access and resistance from schools, especially academies, to open up provision is also an issue.

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

In some instances, grass pitches are unavailable for community use due to poor quality and therefore remedial works will be required before community use can be established.

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

Community use: <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/community-use-agreements/>

Use our schools toolkit: <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/use-our-school/>

The following schools were reported as being available for community use but currently unused. It is recommended that these schools are prioritised in terms of further exploring the reason pitches are currently unused by the community:

Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Analysis area	Sport	Pitch type	No. of pitches
5	Aldridge School	Yes-unused	Area 2	Rugby	Senior	1
10	Barr Beacon Sports Centre	Yes-unused	Area 2	Cricket	Senior	1
				Rugby	Senior	1
48	Ormiston Shelfield Community Academy	Yes-unused	Area 1	Cricket	Senior	1
				Rugby	Senior	1
63	Shire Oak Academy	Yes-unused	Area 2	Cricket	Senior	1
			Area 2	Rugby	Senior	1
66	St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College	Yes-unused	Area 2	Cricket	Senior	1

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

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

Each relevant NGB has a role to play in supporting the Council to deliver the strategy and engaging with schools where necessary to address shortfalls in provision, particularly for football pitches.

### **OBJECTIVE 2**

To enhance playing fields and pitches through improving quality and management of sites

#### **Recommendations:**

- d. Seek opportunities to improve pitch quality, particularly at overplayed or strategic sites.
- e. Work towards application of a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites.
- f. Work to identifying possible funding sources.
- g. Where possible, seek to secure developer contributions.

#### **Recommendation (d) Seek opportunities to improve pitch quality, particularly at overplayed or strategic sites**

There are a number of ways in which it is possible to increase pitch quality, including for example, addressing overplay and improving maintenance. Given that most councils are operating under reducing budgets it is currently advisable to look at improving only poor quality pitches as a priority. However, given such pressures on budgets any direct investment into pitch quality is unlikely and other options for improvements should be considered. This could be via asset transfer, for example for cricket, the Club could maintain the square and the Council the outfield. Other options may include equipment banks and the pooling of resources for maintenance.

The FA, and ECB are all part of the Pitch Improvement Programme (PIP) which has been developed in partnership with Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) to develop a Grass Pitch Maintenance service that can be utilised by grassroots clubs with the aim of improving the quality of grass pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide clubs with advice/practical solutions on a number of areas, with the simple aim of improving the clubs' playing surface. Where quality issues are identified the Pitch Improvement Programme should be accessed to help support improvements.

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

Pitch quality in Walsall is variable but on the whole pitches are assessed as either poor or standard quality, with a small proportion of good quality pitches.

Generally, where pitches are assessed as poor or standard quality and/or overplayed, review/improve maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain/improve pitch quality. Ensuring existing maintenance of good quality pitches continues is also important.

Based on an achievable target using existing quality scoring to provide a baseline, a standard should be used to identify deficiencies and investment should be focused on those sites which fail to meet the proposed quality standard (using the site audit database, provided in electronic format).

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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

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

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

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

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

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.

In order to prioritise investment into key sites it is recommended that the steering group works up a list of criteria, relevant to the Area, to provide a steer on future investment.

For 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/](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/)

### **Addressing overplay**

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

Sport	Pitch type	No. of matches		
		Good quality	Standard quality	Poor quality
Football	Adult pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Youth pitches	4 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Mini pitches	6 per week	4 per week	2 per week

Sport	Pitch type	No. of matches
-------	------------	----------------

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

		Good quality	Standard quality	Poor quality
Rugby union*	Natural Inadequate (D0)	2 per week	1.5 per week	0.5 per week
	Natural Adequate (D1)	3 per week	2 per week	1.5 per week
	Pipe Drained (D2)	3.25 per week	2.5 per week	1.75 per week
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	3.5 per week	3 per week	2 per week
Cricket	One grass wicket	5 per season	N/A	N/A
	One synthetic wicket	60 per season		

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

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

Whilst it works both ways, in so much as, poor pitch condition is a symptom of pitches being over played, potential improvements may make sites more attractive and, therefore, more popular; which in the long run can lead again to poor quality pitches if they are not maintained properly.

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

### ***Increasing pitch maintenance***

Standard or poor grass pitch quality may not just be a result of poor drainage. In some instances ensuring there is an appropriate maintenance for the level/standard of play can help to improve quality and therefore increase pitch capacity. Each NGB can provide assistance with reviewing pitch maintenance regimes.

For example, NGBs have introduced a Pitch Advisor Scheme and has been working in partnership with Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG). The key principles behind the scheme are to provide clubs with advice/practical solutions on a number of areas, with the simple aim of improving the club's playing surface.

In relation to cricket specifically, maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of cricket. If the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous. The ECB recommends full technical assessments of wickets and pitches available through a Performance Quality Standard Assessment (PQS). The PQS assesses a cricket square to ascertain whether the pitch meets the Performance Quality Standards that are benchmarked by the Institute of Groundsmanship. Please note that PQS assessments are also available for other sports.

### **Recommendation (e) – Work towards application of a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites**

To allow for facility developments to be programmed within a phased approach, a tiered approach to the management and improvement of playing pitch sites and associated facilities should be followed. Please refer to Part 6: Action Plan for the proposed hierarchy.

### **Recommendation (f) – Work to identifying possible funding sources.**

In order to address the community's needs, to target priority areas and to reduce duplication of provision, there should be a coordinated approach to strategic investment. Regular dialogue with local partners and through the Steering Group will be a key element to ensuring delivery of this recommendation.

The Steering Group should direct and lead a strategic and co-ordinated approach to facility development by education sites, NGBs, sports clubs and the commercial sector to address community needs whilst avoiding duplication of provision.

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

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

### **Recommendation (g) – Where possible, seek to 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. The Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy should be used as the evidence base for securing and negotiating developer contributions.

The guidance should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to include provision and/or enhancement of appropriate playing fields and subsequent maintenance. Section 106 contributions could also be used to improve the condition and maintenance regimes of the pitches in order to increase pitch capacity to accommodate more matches. A number of planning policy objectives should be implemented to enable the above to be delivered:

- ◀ Planning consent should include appropriate conditions and/or be subject to specific planning obligations. Where developer contributions are applicable, a Section 106 Agreement or equivalent must be completed specifying the amount which 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 paid.
- ◀ Contributions should also be secured towards the first ten years of maintenance on new pitches. NGBs and Sport England can provide further and up to date information on the associated costs.
- ◀ External funding should be sought/secured to achieve maximum benefit from the investment into appropriate playing pitch facility enhancement and its subsequent maintenance .
- ◀ Where new multiple pitches are provided, appropriate changing rooms and associated car parking should be located on site.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

- ◀ All new or improved playing pitches on school sites should be subject to community use agreements. For further guidance please refer to Sport England:  
<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/community-use-agreements/>



## OBJECTIVE 3

To provide new playing fields and pitches where there is current or future demand to do so.

### Recommendations:

- h. Work towards rectifying shortfalls through the current pitch stock.
- i. Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.

### Recommendation (h) - Work towards rectifying shortfalls through the current pitch stock

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

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

Unmet demand, changes in sport participation and trends, and proposed housing growth should be recognised and factored into future facility planning. Assuming an increase in participation and housing growth occurs, it will impact on the future need for certain types of sports facilities. Sports development work also approximates unmet demand which cannot currently be quantified (i.e., it is not being suppressed by a lack of facilities) but is likely to occur. The following table highlights the main development trends in each sport and their likely impact on facilities. However, it is important to note that these may be subject to change.

Furthermore, retaining some spare capacity allows some pitches to be rested to help protect overall pitch quality in the long term. Therefore, whilst in some instances it may be appropriate to re-designate a senior pitch where there is low demand identified a holistic approach should be taken to re-designation for the reasons cited.

#### *Likely future sport-by-sport demand trends*

Sport	Future sports development trend	Strategy impact
Football	Demand for adult football is likely to be sustained with the FA focusing on retention. There is also likely to be some continued movement towards small sided football for adults as well as mid-week 11 aside matches and hub sites for mini and youth football.	Additional need for full size 3G pitches. Qualitative improvements to national league stadia facilities to sustain clubs at that level.
	Demand for mini and youth football is likely to increase based on TGRs and The FA has a key objective to deliver 50% of mini and youth football on 3G AGP's.	Where possible utilise new or existing 3G pitches to accommodate this demand.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Sport	Future sports development trend	Strategy impact
3G pitches	<p>Demand for 3G pitches for football is high and will continue to increase as currently there is a shortfall of full size pitches in the City. It is likely that future demand for the use of 3G pitches, especially for training, will increase.</p> <p>The RFU investment strategy into AGPs considers sites where grass rugby pitches are over capacity and where an AGP would support the growth of the game at the host site and for the local rugby partnership, including local clubs and educational establishments. To achieve this, the RFU is keen to work locally with partners such as the Council and the FA to look at sites of mutual interest.</p>	<p>Requirement for new full size 3G pitches to be provided and a need for community use agreements to be in place for any new pitches.</p> <p>Requirement for pitches to become FA tested in order to host competitive matches.</p> <p>Requirement for sinking funds to put into place to ensure long-term sustainability of pitches.</p> <p>Utilise Sport England/NGB guidance on choosing the correct surface:  <a href="http://www.sportengland.org/media/30651/Selecting-the-right-artificial-surface-Rev2-2010.pdf">http://www.sportengland.org/media/30651/Selecting-the-right-artificial-surface-Rev2-2010.pdf</a></p> <p>Consider requirement for a World Rugby compliant 3G pitch given shortfalls identified on grass pitches and level of training demand on grass pitches.</p>
Cricket	<p>Women's and girls' cricket is a national priority and there is a target to establish two girls' and one women's team in every local authority over the next five years.</p>	<p>Support clubs to ensure access to segregated changing and toilet provision and access to good quality cricket pitches to support growth.</p>
Rugby union	<p>The RFU work towards achieving the stated outcomes of its National Facilities Strategy (2013-2017), the RFU National Women and Girls Strategy and the RFU National Male XV-a-side Strategy. Locally the RFU want to ensure access to pitches in Walsall that satisfies the existing demand and predicted growth. Further, that the RFU is aiming to protect and improve pitch quality plus that of ancillary facilities including changing rooms and floodlights as current and future demand requires.</p>	<p>Work with the clubs to improve the maintenance of the current pitch stock and explore the installation of drainage systems.</p> <p>Seek the installation of floodlighting (or an increase in floodlighting) to spread out training demand and to reduce training use on match pitches.</p> <p>Explore the creation of a World Rugby compliant AGP.</p> <p>Support clubs in improving ancillary facilities, especially in relation to clubhouse and changing room improvements.</p> <p>Access to additional pitches is likely to be required to accommodate shortfalls.</p>
AGPs	<p>Potential increase of adult and junior teams.</p>	<p>Sinking funds in place to improve quality and ensure continued use of provision for current and future hockey demand.</p>
Bowls	<p>No expected increase in memberships.</p>	<p>Likely that any future increase could be accommodated on existing greens.</p>

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

The Steering Group should use, and regularly update, the Action Plan within this Strategy for improvements to council pitches whilst recognising the need to support partners. The Action Plan lists improvements to be made to each site focused upon both qualitative and quantitative improvements as appropriate for each area. Although there are identified shortfalls of match equivalent sessions, the majority of demand is currently being met and most of these shortfalls are likely to be addressed through pitch improvements. Furthermore, there are dormant sites which have capacity to accommodate additional pitches, which could be brought back in to use if required.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

Adding to the pitch stock, particularly in the short term is therefore not recommended as a priority, except in the case of AGPs where there is a discrete need for additional pitches. Based on the FA model for calculating 3G pitch requirements the table below identifies the current number of pitches across Walsall and the shortfalls based on the FA model. Given the catchment of 3G pitches, it is possible that new pitches provided in adjoining areas could service the shortfalls in areas identified below:

Analysis area	Current number of teams	3G requirement	Current number of 3G pitches	Potential shortfall
Area 1	72	2	1	1
Area 2	91	3	-	3
Area 3	17	1	-	1
Area 4	74	2	-	2
Area 5	54	2	1	1
Area 6	67	2	-	2
<b>Walsall</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>

## PART 6: ACTION PLAN

### Introduction

The site-by-site action plan seeks to address key issues identified in the accompanying Assessment Report. It provides recommendations based on current levels of usage, quality and future demand, as well as the potential of each site for enhancement.

It should be reviewed in the light of staff and financial resources in order to prioritise support for strategically significant provision and provision that other providers are less likely to make. Recommendation e below explains the hierarchy of priorities on the list. It is imperative that action plans for priority projects should be developed through the implementation of the strategy.

The Steering Group should make it a priority to comprise a priority list of actions based on local priorities, NGB priorities and available funding.

### ***Recommendation (e) - Work towards application of a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites***

To allow for facility developments to be prioritised and programmed within a phased approach a tiered model for the improvement of playing surfaces and associated facilities is key.

The identification of important sites is based on their strategic importance in a Borough-wide context, for example, where they accommodate the majority of demand or the recommended action has the greatest impact on addressing shortfalls identified either on a sport by sport basis or across the Borough as a whole.

In line with the Walsall Greenspace Strategy 2012-2017, the hierarchy below uses similar classifications in order that the two can be aligned.

#### *Tiered site criteria*

Criteria	Strategic playing fields	District playing fields	Community playing fields	Incidental playing fields
Site location	Strategically located in the borough. Priority sites for NGB.	Strategically located within the Neighbourhood Management Areas	Serves the local community.	Serves the local community.
Site layout	Accommodates three or more grass pitches, including provision of an AGP.	Accommodates two or more grass pitches.	Accommodates more than one pitch.	Likely to be single-pitch site.
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.	Supports informal demand and/or training etc.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Criteria	Strategic playing fields	District playing fields	Community playing fields	Incidental playing fields
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 or with an appropriate club on a lease arrangement.	Club either has long-term lease/hires the pitch for the entire season or owns the site. Management control remains within the local authority/other provider or with an appropriate lease arrangement through a committee or education owned.	Management control remains with the Council or existing management body.
Maintenance regime	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Standard maintenance regime either by the club or in house maintenance contract.	Basic level of maintenance i.e. grass cutting and line marking as required.
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.	Appropriate access changing to accommodate both senior and junior use concurrently (if required).	No requirement for access changing to accommodation.

**Strategic playing fields**, specifically those containing AGPs (sand-based and 3G), service a borough-wide level and are a priority in terms of protection and future investment. These are of significant, wide ranging importance where users are willing to travel to access the range and high quality of facilities offered and are likely to be multi sport. They have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the issues identified in the PPS Assessment.

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

[http://www.sportengland.org/facilities\\_planning/planning\\_tools\\_and\\_guidance/sports\\_hubs.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/planning_tools_and_guidance/sports_hubs.aspx)

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

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

It is anticipated that both youth and mini-football matches could be played on these sites. Initial investment could be required in the short term and identified in the Action Plan.

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

**Community playing fields** refer to those sites which are hired to clubs for a season, or are sites which have been leased on a long-term basis. Primarily they are sites with more than one pitch. The level of priority attached to them for Council-generated investment may be relatively low and consideration should be given, on a site-by-site basis, to the feasibility of a club taking a long-term lease on the site (if not already present), in order that external funding can be sought.

It is possible that sites could be included in this tier which are not currently hired or leased to a club, but have the potential to be leased to a suitable club. Such sites will require some level of investment, either to the pitches or ancillary facilities, and it is anticipated that one of the conditions of offering a hire/lease is that the club would be in a position to source external funding to improve the facilities.

**Incidental playing fields** could be used as overspill for neighbouring sites and/or for summer matches/competitions, training or informal play. They are most likely to be single-pitch sites with no ancillary facilities or school sites where there is no current demand for community use.

### **Management and development**

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

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

## Action plan columns

### *Partners*

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

### *Site hierarchy tier and priority level*

Although Strategic sites are mostly likely to have a **high** priority level as they have Borough wide importance, high priority sites have also been identified on the basis of the impact that the site could have on addressing the key issues identified in the Assessment Report and some District sites are also identified as having a high priority level. It is these projects/sites which should generally be addressed within the short term (1-2 years).

**It is recommended that as the Steering Group reviews and updates the action plan that medium and low priority sites are then identified** as the next level of sites for attention. As a guide it is recommended that:

Key centres will generally be a **medium** priority, identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the issues for each analysis area identified in the Assessment Report.

**Low** priority sites are often club or education sites with a specific local importance, identified on a site by site basis in line with any site-specific issues identified in the Assessment Report

### *Costs*

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

(L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above. These are based on Sport England's estimated facility costs which can be found at <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-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 changes to individual sites occur. The timescales relate to delivery times and are not priority based.

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

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

### BOROUGH-WIDE ACTIONS

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescales <sup>5</sup>	Cost <sup>6</sup>
47	Oak Park Leisure Centre	3G AGP	Council	A full sized, floodlit, sand based pitch which is soon to be converted into a 3G pitch.	Ensure development goes ahead to a high standard. Seek FA testing so the pitch can host competitive matches. Ensure a sinking fund is in place to preserve long term quality. Ensure community availability is fully utilised.	School FA	District	S	H
66	Sneyd Community Association	Hockey	Community Association	A full sized, floodlit, sand based AGP which is considered to be nearing the end of its lifespan. No spare capacity for a growth in hockey demand is considered to exist.	Refurbish the pitch and ensure a sinking fund is in place to sustain long term quality. Seek consultation with leagues to ensure future demand can be accommodated by altering match start times.	CA EH	District	S	M
78	University of Wolverhampton (Walsall Site)	3G AGP	University	A full sized, floodlit, sand based pitch which is soon to be converted into a 3G pitch.	Ensure development goes ahead to a high standard. Seek FA testing so the pitch can host competitive matches. Ensure a sinking fund is in place to preserve long term quality. Ensure community availability is fully utilised.	University FA	Strategic	S	H
85	West Walsall E-Act Academy	3G AGP	School	A full sized, floodlit, sand based pitch which is soon to be converted into a 3G pitch.	Ensure development goes ahead to a high standard. Seek FA testing so the pitch can host competitive matches. Ensure a sinking fund is in place to preserve long term quality. Ensure community availability is fully utilised.	School FA	District	S	H
88	Willenhall E-Act Academy	Hockey	School	A full sized, floodlit, sand based AGP which is considered to be nearing the end of its lifespan. Spare capacity for a growth in hockey demand is considered to exist.	Refurbish the pitch and ensure a sinking fund is in place to sustain long term quality. Ensure future demand can continue to be accommodated.	School EH	District	S	M
TBC	TBC	Rugby	TBC	Provision of a World rugby compliant AGP given overplay of local pitches.	Ensure any potential World Rugby compliant pitch is provided to a good quality and ensure a sinking fund is in place for long-term sustainability. Seek to maximise use by local rugby clubs.	RFU	TBC		

<sup>5</sup> Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

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



# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## AREA 1

### Football

*Summary of grass pitches required to meet current and future demand*

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>7</sup>	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Future demand	Total
Adult pitches	5	2	3	1	1.5	0.5
Youth pitches 11v11	-	-	0	0.5	3.5	4
Youth pitches 9v9	-	-	0	1.5	2.5	4
Mini pitches 7v7	1	-	1	1	2.5	2.5
Mini pitches 5v5	1	-	1	1	4	4

- ◀ Spare capacity exists overall on adult pitches both now and in the future, although pitches at Pelsall Villa FC and Sheffield Playing Field are overplayed.
- ◀ Youth 11v11 and 9v9 pitches are currently played to capacity, however, future demand results in shortfalls.
- ◀ Spare capacity exists on 7v7 and 5v5 pitches, however, future demand results in shortfalls.
- ◀ There is demand for two full size 3G pitches, of which, there is currently one, located at Ormiston Sheffield Academy.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Improve pitch quality to alleviate overplay and increase future capacity.
- ◀ Transfer youth 11v11 teams from adult pitches to youth 11v11 pitches. Use resultant spare capacity on adult pitches to create and build future youth pitch capacity.
- ◀ Seek use of currently unavailable sites in order to further reduce shortfalls and build future capacity.
- ◀ Ensure FA testing of 3G pitch at Ormiston Sheffield Academy so that it can continue to accommodate competitive matches.
- ◀ Ensure 3G development at Oak Park Leisure Centre goes ahead to a high standard, ensure FA testing so the pitch can host competitive matches and continue to work with the FA to ensure the site is optimally used.

### Cricket

- ◀ There are three natural turf wicket cricket pitches within the analysis area and one standalone non-turf wicket pitch.
- ◀ Actual spare capacity equating to one pitch exists at Rushall Cricket Club; no pitches are overplayed.
- ◀ Overall spare capacity of one pitch exists both now and in the future.

<sup>7</sup> In match equivalent sessions

# WALSALL

## PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Review quality issues.
- ◀ Retain some spare capacity in order to protect and improve wicket quality.
- ◀ Improve/increase training provision.

### **Rugby union**

- ◀ There is one senior pitch within the Analysis Area available for community use at Shelfield Playing Field, however, it is currently unused.
- ◀ A pitch at Brownhills Community Technology College is unavailable for community use.
- ◀ Both pitches are assessed as poor quality.
- ◀ Both pitches are overplayed due to school use, resulting in an overall shortfall of two match equivalent sessions.

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Improve pitch quality to alleviate overplay through installation of drainage systems and/or improved maintenance regimes.
- ◀ Ensure potential capacity exists should community demand increase.

### **Hockey**

- ◀ There are no full size hockey suitable AGPs within the Analysis Area and no demand for one to be provided.

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Explore lack of local hockey demand.

### **Bowls**

- ◀ There are two greens; Rushall Labour Club is standard quality and Pelsall Community Centre is good quality.
- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, with no clubs expressing a need for an additional green.

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Sustain green quality and improve at Rushall Labour Club where possible.
- ◀ Improve ancillary provision at Rushall Labour Club.

**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescales <sup>8</sup>	Costs <sup>9</sup>
22	Brownhills Community Technology College (WS8 7QG)	Football	School	Unsecure	Two adult, one youth 11v11, one 9v9, three 7v7 and one 5v5 pitch assessed as standard quality. Unavailable to the community due to drainage issues. Previously used by Brownhills Community Colts FC.	Seek resolution to drainage issues and explore community use options with the School in order to reduce area shortfalls. Seek use by Brownhills Community Colts FC.	School FA	District	S	L
		Cricket			A standard quality standalone non-turf wicket pitch unavailable for community use.	No local demand. Retain for school use.	School ECB		L	L
		Rugby			A poor quality pitch with natural inadequate drainage and basic maintenance. Unavailable for community use. Overplayed through school use.	Seek to improve pitch quality to alleviate overplay through improved maintenance and drainage. Explore community use options to reduce local shortfalls.	School RFU		S	M
24	Clayhanger (WS8 7EG)	Football	Council	Secure	Two adult and one 7v7 pitch assessed as poor quality. Adult pitches are played to capacity whilst 7v7 pitch is unused.	Improve pitch quality to increase capacity. Explore use of 7v7 pitch to accommodate future demand if required.	Council FA	Community	S	L
26	Dales Lane - Rushall Olympic FC (WS4 1LG)	Football	Council	Secure	An adult pitch assessed as standard quality. Minimal spare capacity exists during the peak time. Mineshaft issues preventing development.	Retain spare capacity in order to sustain and improve pitch quality.	Council FA	Community	L	L
30	Fordbrook (WS4 1NG)	Football	Council	Secure	Four adult pitches assessed as standard quality and four 7v7 pitches assessed as poor quality. Four match equivalents of actual spare capacity exists at peak time on the adult pitches, whilst the 7v7 pitches are played to capacity. The 7v7 pitches are used as a central venue by the Walsall Junior Youth League.	Explore transfer of teams from overplayed adult pitches. Improve 7v7 pitch quality in order to sustain usage and increase potential capacity.	Council League FA	District	S	L
35	Holland Park (WS8 7QG)	Football	Council	Secure	One 9v9, two 7v7 and two 5v5 pitches all assessed as poor quality. The 9v9 pitch is played to capacity, whilst actual spare capacity on the 7v7 and 5v5 pitches is discounted due to poor quality. The site is used as a central venue by the Walsall Junior Youth League.	Improve pitch quality to increase capacity on the 9v9 pitch and create actual spare capacity on the 7v7 and 5v5 pitches.	Council League FA	District	S	L
38	King George Crescent (WS4 1EG)	Football	Club	Unsecure	Leased by Sheffield United FC on a one year rolling contract. Two adult, two youth 11v11, two 9v9, four 7v7 and two 5v5 pitches all assessed as poor quality. Only the adult and youth 11v11 pitches are currently used. Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor quality. Lack of changing facilities prohibits adult football.	Renew lease to provide greater security of tenure to Sheffield United FC. Build changing facilities to increase use of the site. Improve pitch quality to provide actual spare capacity. Potential site for future S106 investment.	Council Club FA	District	S	M

<sup>8</sup> Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

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

**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>10</sup>	Cost <sup>11</sup>
48	Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy (WS4 1BW)	Football	School	Secure	One adult and one 9v9 pitch assessed as good quality. The 9v9 pitch over marks a rugby pitch. Actual spare capacity exists on both pitches. Adult pitch used solely by youth 11v11 teams. An additional adult pitch is being developed.	Ensure appropriate maintenance regime to sustain pitch quality. Consider pitch reconfiguration to better provide for youth 11v11 users. Seek additional usage.	School FA	Strategic	S	L
		3G AGP			A full size 3G pitch which is floodlit and assessed as standard quality. Currently used for matches by the Walsall Junior Youth League despite not being FA tested. Also used by Aston Villa Girls Regional Talent Club. Poorly maintained by the School.	Ensure that the pitch is FA tested to host competitive matches. Support the School in improving pitch maintenance. Ensure a sinking fund is in place for eventual refurbishment.	School FA		S	L
		Cricket			A good quality standalone non-turf wicket pitch which is unused by the community despite being available.	No local demand. Retain for school use.	School ECB		L	L
		Rugby			A dual use pitch with football. Assessed as poor quality due to poor levels of maintenance and natural adequate drainage. Available for community use but not used.	Seek to improve pitch quality through improved maintenance. Explore lack of demand given local shortfalls.	School RFU		S	M
51	Pelsall Community Centre (WS3 1BQ)	Bowls	Council	Secure	A good quality green which is operating above the average club membership.	Sustain green quality. Support club users to ensure demand continues to be met.	Council	Community	L	L
52	Pelsall Cricket and Sports Club (WS3 4BS)	Football	Club	Secure	One adult pitch assessed as standard quality. Actual spare capacity discounted due to over marking cricket outfield.	Ensure appropriate maintenance levels in order to sustain over markings.	Club FA	Community	L	L
		Cricket			A good quality square with 14 grass wickets. Played to capacity during peak time.	Sustain pitch quality.	Club ECB		L	L
53	Pelsall Villa FC (WS3 4BP)	Football	Club	Unsecure	One adult pitch assessed as standard quality and overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions. Suitable for Step 6 football. Changing facilities are considered poor quality. Tenure is considered unsecure due to attempts to sell the site for housing.	Improve pitch quality to alleviate overplay or transfer use to a site with actual spare capacity. Improve changing facilities. Ensure club can advance through the football pyramid. Protect site or ensure replacement provision of an equal or greater quantity and quality in a suitable location.	Club FA	Community	M	M
54	Pelsall Village School (WS3 4NJ)	Football	School	Unsecure	A youth 11v11 pitch assessed as standard quality. Actual spare capacity discounted as community use aspects remain unknown.	Explore future community use options with the School.	School FA	Incidental	M	L
59	Rushall Cricket Club (WS4 1NE0)	Football	Club	Secure	A poor quality adult pitch played to capacity. Used solely by youth 11v11 teams.	Seek to improve pitch quality to increase capacity. Consider pitch reconfiguration to better provide for youth 11v11 users.	Club FA	Community	S	L
		Cricket			A standard quality square with 12 grass wickets. One pitch of spare capacity exists during peak time.	Review maintenance regime and seek to improve quality.	Club ECB		M	L

<sup>10</sup> Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

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

**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>10</sup>	Cost <sup>11</sup>
60	Rushall Labour Club (WS4 1JT)	Bowls	Council	Secure	A standard quality green with no access to changing facilities or toilets.	Review maintenance regimens and improve quality where possible. Consider lease arrangement with club users so that funding can be accessed to provide better ancillary provision.	Council	Community	M	L
62	Shelfield Playing Field (WS4 1QW)	Football	Council	Secure	A poor quality adult pitch overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions.	Improve maintenance regime to improve quality and reduce overplay. Consider transfer of play to a site with actual spare capacity.	School FA	Community	S	L
		Rugby			A poor quality pitch with natural adequate drainage and poor maintenance. Available for community use but not used. Overplayed through school use.	Seek to improve pitch quality to alleviate overplay through improved maintenance and drainage. Explore community use options to reduce local shortfalls.	School RFU		S	L
67	St James Primary School (WS8 6AE)	Football	School	Unsecure	A standard quality 7v7 pitch available to the community and played to capacity during peak time.	Ensure continued community use and appropriate maintenance regime to sustain usage.	School FA	Community	L	L
93	Elmwood School (WS4 1EU)	Football	School	Unsecure	A standard quality adult pitch and a standard quality 7v7 pitch. Adult pitch is used by the community; however, the 7v7 pitch is not.	Establish community use of all pitches on site in order to reduce future shortfalls.	School FA	Community	S	L
101	Greenfield Primary School (WS4 1PL)	Football	School	Unsecure	A standard quality 7v7 pitch unavailable for community use.	Explore future community use options with the School.	School FA	Incidental	M	L

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## AREA 2

### Football

*Summary of pitches required to meet current and future demand*

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>12</sup>	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Future demand	Total
Adult pitches	0.5	6	5.5	0.5	1	7
Youth pitches 11v11	-	-	0	0.5	4.5	5
Youth pitches 9v9	1	2	1	0.5	4.5	6
Mini pitches 7v7	0.5	-	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Mini pitches 5v5	-	-	0	0.5	0.5	1

- ◀ A shortfall of 5.5 match equivalent sessions exists on adult pitches currently, with overplay identified at Aldridge School, The Streetly Association and The Veseyans Sports and Social Club. Future demand results in a shortfall of seven match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ Overplay is also evident at Aldridge School and The Streetly Association on 9v9 pitches, with an overall shortfall of one match equivalent identified at present and six match equivalents identified in the future.
- ◀ Youth 11v11 and 5v5 pitches are currently played to capacity, however, future demand results in shortfalls.
- ◀ Spare capacity exists currently on 7v7 pitches, however, future demand results in shortfalls.
- ◀ There is demand for three full size 3G pitches, of which, there are currently none. A development at Oak Park Leisure Centre will reduce this shortfall to two 3G pitches.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Improve pitch quality to alleviate overplay and reduce future shortfalls.
- ◀ Transfer youth 11v11 teams from adult pitches to youth 11v11 pitches. Use resultant spare capacity on adult pitches to create and build future youth pitch capacity.
- ◀ Explore use of currently unavailable sites to further reduce shortfalls.
- ◀ Ensure 3G development at Oak Park Leisure Centre goes ahead to a high standard and ensure FA testing so the pitch can host competitive matches.

### Cricket

- ◀ There are seven natural turf wicket cricket pitches within the Analysis Area, two of which are accompanied by non-turf wickets. In addition, there are two standalone non-turf wicket pitches.
- ◀ There is no actual spare capacity identified on any of the pitches.
- ◀ Streetly Cricket Club is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions per season.
- ◀ Due to future demand expressed by Aldridge CC, a shortfall of 0.5 pitches is identified.

<sup>12</sup> In match equivalent sessions

# WALSALL

## PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Review quality issues.
- ◀ Retain some spare capacity in order to protect and improve wicket quality.
- ◀ Ensure maintenance levels are appropriate at Streetly Cricket Club in order to sustain current usage.
- ◀ Explore options to accommodate future demand at Aldridge Stick and Wicket Club.
- ◀ Improve/increase training provision.

### **Rugby union**

- ◀ There are eight senior pitches and one junior pitch within the Analysis Area, all of which are available to the community.
- ◀ All pitches are assessed as either standard or poor quality.
- ◀ Spare capacity exists one pitch at Veseyans RUFC, however, this is not considered actual spare capacity as the site is fully used during peak time for senior rugby.
- ◀ Overplay is evident at Aldridge School, Barr Beacon Sports Centre, Shire Oak Academy and Veseyans RUFC, whilst Aldridge RUFC is played to capacity.
- ◀ Taking into account future demand, there is an overall shortfall of six match equivalent sessions.

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Ensure security of tenure.
- ◀ Improve pitch quality to reduce overplay through installation of drainage systems and improved maintenance regimes.
- ◀ Seek to install floodlights or provide additional floodlighting at overplayed sites in order to spread out training demand.
- ◀ Explore potential use of currently unused pitches within education sites in order to provide greater capacity.

### **Hockey**

- ◀ There is one full size sand-based AGP located at Streetly Academy.
- ◀ The pitch was resurfaced in 2012 and is assessed as good quality.
- ◀ The pitch is deemed to have spare capacity for a growth in hockey demand.

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Protect Streetly Academy for continued hockey use.
- ◀ Ensure providers put a sinking fund in place to sustain long term quality.

### **Bowls**

- ◀ There are seven greens, all of which are assessed as good quality.
- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, with no clubs expressing a need for an additional green.

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

## *Recommendations*

- ◀ Sustain green quality.
- ◀ Improve ancillary provision at Oak Park Leisure Centre and Aldridge Community Centre.



**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>13</sup>	Cost <sup>14</sup>
2	Aldridge Library (WS9 8NN)	Bowls	Council	Secure	A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	Council	Community	L	L
3	Aldridge Rugby Club (WS9 0SH)	Rugby	Club	Secure	Two senior pitches that are assessed as poor quality due to poor levels of maintenance and natural adequate drainage. One pitch is floodlit. Both pitches are played to capacity. Future demand will result in overplay.	Improve pitch quality through installation of a drainage system and improved maintenance, which will in turn increase capacity to accommodate future demand. Ensure floodlighting is of an appropriate quality for safe match play and training.	Club RFU Council	Community	S	M
4	Aldridge Community Centre (WS9 8AN)	Bowls	Council	Secure	A good quality green operating above the average membership in Walsall.	Sustain green quality. Support club users to ensure demand continues to be met.	Council	Community	L	L
5	Aldridge School (WS9 0BG)	Football	School	Secure	Two adult, one 9v9, two 7v7 and one 5v5 pitch assessed as standard quality. Actual spare capacity of one match equivalent session exists on the 7v7 pitches, however, the adult pitches and the 9v9 pitch is overplayed.	Ensure appropriate maintenance levels to sustain current usage and explore transfer of teams from overplayed pitches to sites with actual spare capacity.	School FA	Community	S	L
		Rugby			A senior pitch assessed as poor quality due to poor levels of maintenance and natural inadequate drainage. Available to the community, however, unused.	Seek to improve pitch quality through improved maintenance and drainage. Explore community use options given local shortfalls.	School RFU		S	L
6	Aldridge Stick and Wicket Club (WS9 8NH)	Football	Club	Secure	Two adult, one 9v9 and one 5v5 pitch assessed as standard quality. Actual spare capacity exists on each pitch type, however, this is discounted due to over marking the cricket outfield.	Ensure appropriate maintenance levels to sustain pitch over markings.	Club FA	District	L	L
		Cricket			One good quality square with 12 grass wickets and one non-turf wicket and one standard quality square with 10 grass wickets. Both squares are played to capacity during peak time. Changing facilities are considered to be poor quality.	Ensure appropriate maintenance regime to sustain quality and current usage. Improve changing facilities.	Club ECB		M	M
8	Anchorage 55+ Club (WS9 8AH)	Bowls	Club	Secure	A good quality green with poor quality changing facilities. The green is operating above the average club membership.	Sustain green quality. Seek to improve changing facilities. Support club users to ensure demand continues to be met.	Council	Community	L	L
9	Anchor Meadow (WS9 8AN)	Football	Council	Secure	Two poor quality adult pitches. Minimal spare capacity discounted due to quality.	Improve pitch quality in order to provide actual spare capacity.	Council FA	Community	S	L
10	Barr Beacon Sports Centre (WS9 0RF)	Football	School	Unsecure	Two adult, one and one 5v5 pitch assessed as standard quality. Pitch is unavailable to the community during peak time as the site is not staffed.	Seek resolution to staffing issues in order to provide pitches at peak time.	School FA	Community	S	L
		Cricket			A standard quality standalone non-turf wicket pitch unused by the community despite being available.	Explore transfer of junior play from overplayed pitches to alleviate local shortfalls.	School ECB		S	L
		Rugby			A poor quality senior pitch with natural adequate drainage and poor maintenance. Available to the community, however, unused.	Seek to improve pitch quality through improved maintenance. Explore community use options given local shortfalls.	School RFU		S	L

<sup>13</sup> Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

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

**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>13</sup>	Cost <sup>14</sup>
21	Bronze Cricket Club (B43 7BA)	Cricket	Club	Secure	A good quality square with 16 grass wickets and one non-turf wicket. Played to capacity during peak time.	Ensure appropriate maintenance levels to sustain usage and quality.	Club ECB	Community	L	L
29	Doebank Park (WS9 0RQ)	Football	Council	Secure	Two poor quality adult pitches played to capacity and a poor quality 9v9 pitch which has actual spare capacity discounted due to its quality.	Improve pitch quality to increase capacity and provide actual spare capacity.	Council FA	Community	S	L
45	McKechnies Sport & Social Club (WS9 8AN)	Football	Club	Unsecure	Leased to Red Star AFC, however, this agreement is due to expire. One adult, one 9v9 and one 7v7 pitch assessed as standard quality. All pitches are played to capacity during peak time. Owners of the site have gone bust.	Explore future plans with owners and seek to extend lease in order to provide the Club with greater security of tenure. Protect site.	Club Council FA	Community	S	L
46	Walsall Wood Football Club (WS9 9NP)	Football	Club	Secure	Two poor quality adult pitches overplayed by two match equivalent sessions.	Improve pitch quality in order to reduce overplay and ensure appropriate maintenance levels.	Club FA	Community	S	M
47	Oak Park Leisure Centre (WS9 9PQ)	3G	Council	Secure	A full sized, floodlit, sand based pitch which is soon to be converted into a 3G pitch.	Ensure development goes ahead to a high standard. Seek FA testing so the pitch can host competitive matches. Ensure a sinking fund is in place to preserve long term quality. Ensure community availability is fully utilised.	School FA	District	S	H
		Bowls			A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	Council		L	L
63	Shire Oak Academy (WS9 9PA)	Football	School	Secure	Two adult pitches with actual spare capacity discounted due to poor quality and a poor quality youth 11v11 pitch played to capacity.	Seek to improve pitch quality in order to provide actual spare capacity. Ensure appropriate maintenance levels.	School FA	Community	S	L
		Cricket			A standard quality standalone non-turf wicket pitch unused by the community despite being available.	Explore transfer of junior play from overplayed pitches to alleviate local shortfalls.	School ECB		S	L
		Rugby			A poor quality senior pitch with natural adequate drainage and poor maintenance. Available to the community, however, unused.	Seek to improve pitch quality through improved maintenance. Explore community use options given local shortfalls.	School RFU		S	L
66	St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College (WSP 0RN)	Football	School	Secure	Two standard quality adult pitches and a standard quality 7v7 played to capacity and a standard quality 9v9 pitch with actual spare capacity. Adult pitches are well used by youth 11v11 teams.	Consider pitch reconfiguration to better accommodate youth 11v11 teams.	School FA	Community	S	L
		Cricket			A standard quality standalone non-turf wicket pitch unused by the community despite being available.	Explore transfer of junior play from overplayed pitches to alleviate local shortfalls.	School ECB		S	L
68	Streetly Methodise Recreation Centre (B74 3JJ)	Bowls	Council	Secure	A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	Council	Community	L	L
69	Streetly Sports Club (B74 3HX)	Cricket	Club	Secure	A standard quality square with 12 grass wickets. Overplayed by two match equivalent sessions per season.	Ensure appropriate maintenance levels to sustain current usage. Explore transfer of junior play to alternative sites with a non-turf wicket or consider installation of a non-turf wicket on site.	Club ECB	Community	S	M
		Bowls			A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	Club		L	L

**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>13</sup>	Cost <sup>14</sup>
71	The Aldridge Airport (WS9 0QE)	Football	Council	Secure	One standard quality adult pitch and six standard quality 9v9 pitches. Actual spare capacity exists on both pitch types. The 9v9 pitches are used by the Walsall Junior Youth League as a central venue. Drainage issues cited.	Seek resolution to drainage issues. Consider as potential hub site and explore 3G pitch suitability.	Council League FA	Strategic	S	L
73	The Streetly Academy (B74 2EX)	Football	School	Unsecure	Two standard quality adult pitches unavailable for community use as the School protects quality for school use.	Explore community use options with the School in order to reduce shortfalls.	School FA	District	S	L
		Hockey			A full size sand based pitch which is floodlit. Last resurfaced in 2012. Used by Streetly HC for matches and spare capacity for growth is considered to exist.	Ensure a sinking fund is in place to sustain long term quality. Ensure pitch continues to meet demand and utilise spare capacity where possible.	School EH		L	L
		Cricket			A disused non-turf wicket.	Consider refurbishing wicket given local shortfalls and school demand.	School ECB		S	M
74	The Streetly Association (B74 3HR)	Football	CA	Secure	Two adult, two 9v9 and one 7v7 pitch assessed as poor quality. Adult pitches are overplayed by three match equivalent sessions and used by many youth 11v11 teams. The 9v9 pitches also overplayed. Actual spare capacity on 7v7 pitch is discounted due to poor quality.	Improve pitch quality in order to reduce overplay. Explore transfer of play to sites with actual spare capacity. Consider pitch reconfiguration in order to better provide for youth 11v11 teams.	CA FA	Community	S	M
75	The Veseyans Sports and Social Club (WS9 0SQ)	Football	Club	Secure	One poor quality adult pitch overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.	Improve pitch quality to alleviate overplay.	Club FA	District	S	L
		Rugby			Two poor quality senior pitches and one poor quality junior pitch which are poorly maintained and have natural adequate drainage. One senior pitch is floodlit and overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions. The other senior pitch has 0.5 match equivalents of spare capacity, whilst the junior pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalents.	Improve pitch quality to increase capacity and reduce overplay by installing a drainage system and improving maintenance. Consider installation of additional floodlights to alleviate overplay of current training pitch.	Club RFU Council		S	M
99	Manor Primary School (B74 3HX)	Football	School	Unsecure	Two standard quality 7v7 pitches unavailable for community use.	Explore community use options with the School in order to reduce future shortfalls.	School FA	Incidental	S	L
102	Castlecroft JMI School (WS9 9JP)	Football	School	Unsecure	A standard quality 7v7 pitch unavailable for community use.	Explore community use options with the School in order to reduce future shortfalls.	School FA	Incidental	S	L
105	Queslett Bowling Club (B72 2EY)	Bowls	Club	Secure	A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	Club	Community	L	L

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## AREA 3

### Football

*Summary of pitches required to meet current and future demand*

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>15</sup>	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Future demand	Total
Adult pitches	-	3	3	-	0.5	3.5
Youth pitches 11v11	-	-	0	0.5	4.5	5
Youth pitches 9v9	-	-	0	-	0.5	0.5
Mini pitches 7v7	-	-	0	-	0.5	0.5
Mini pitches 5v5	-	-	0	-	0.5	0.5

- ◀ There is a shortfall of adult pitches equating to three match equivalent sessions due to overplay at Bloxwich United FC and King George V. Future demand worsens the shortfall to 3.5 match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ All remaining pitch types are currently played to capacity, however, future demand results in shortfalls across the board.
- ◀ There is demand for one full size 3G pitch, of which, there are currently none.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Improve pitch quality to alleviate overplay and increase future capacity.
- ◀ Transfer youth 11v11 teams from adult pitches to youth 11v11 pitches. Use resultant spare capacity on adult pitches to create and build future youth pitch capacity.
- ◀ Seek use of currently unavailable sites in order to further reduce shortfalls and build future capacity.
- ◀ Explore possible sites to provide full size 3G provision.
- ◀ Explore transfer of teams from grass pitches to 3G pitches, particularly at mini level.

### Cricket

- ◀ There are two natural turf wicket cricket pitches within the Analysis Area, one of which is accompanied by a non-turf wicket.
- ◀ Actual spare capacity equating to one pitch exists at Bloxwich Cricket Club and actual spare capacity equating to 0.5 pitches exists at King George V.
- ◀ Overall spare capacity of 1.5 pitches exists both now and in the future.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Review quality issues.
- ◀ Retain some spare capacity in order to protect and improve wicket quality.
- ◀ Improve/increase training provision.

<sup>15</sup> In match equivalent sessions

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

## Rugby union

- ◀ There are two senior pitches within the Analysis Area available for community use and one pitch unavailable for community use.
- ◀ All pitches are assessed as either standard or poor quality.
- ◀ Spare capacity exists on one pitch at King George Playing Field, however, Bloxwich RUFC retains this in order to sustain pitch quality.
- ◀ Overplay is evident another pitch at King George Playing Field amounting to 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ Taking into account future demand, there is an overall shortfall of two match equivalent sessions.

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Work with Bloxwich RUFC to establish a secure lease (25 years or more) at King George Playing Field so that the Club is provided with security of tenure, which will help it attract grant funding to develop the site.
- ◀ Improve pitch quality to reduce overplay through installation of drainage systems and improved maintenance regimes.
- ◀ Seek to install additional floodlighting at King George Playing Field in order to spread out training demand.
- ◀ Explore potential use of Walsall Academy in order to provide greater capacity.

## Hockey

- ◀ There is one full size sand-based AGP located at Sneyd Community Association.
- ◀ The pitch has not been resurfaced since 2005 and is therefore considered to be nearing the end of its lifespan.
- ◀ The pitch is running at capacity during peak time for matches.

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Protect Sneyd Community Association for continued hockey use.
- ◀ Resurface the pitch and ensure providers put a sinking fund in place to sustain long term quality.
- ◀ Engage with leagues to ensure future demand can be accommodated by altering match times or seek use of an alternative pitch.

## Bowls

- ◀ There are three greens, all of which are assessed as good quality.
- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, with no clubs expressing a need for an additional green.

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Sustain green quality.

**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>16</sup>	Cost <sup>17</sup>
16	Bloxwich Bowling Club (WS3 3JT)	Bowls	Club	Secure	A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	Club	Community	L	L
17	Bloxwich Cricket Club (WS3 3NJ)	Cricket	Club	Secure	A standard quality square with 12 grass wickets and one standalone non-turf wicket. The pitch has spare capacity at peak time.	Ensure appropriate maintenance levels to sustain and improve pitch quality.	Club ECB	Community	M	L
18	Bloxwich United FC (WS3 2EJ)	Football	Club	Secure	A poor quality adult pitch over played by 1.5 match equivalent sessions. Changing facilities are assessed as poor quality.	Improve pitch quality in order to reduce overplay and explore transfer of play to sites with actual spare capacity. Improve changing facilities.	Club FA	Community	S	M
39	King George V (WS3 3NJ)	Football	Council	Secure	Four poor quality adult pitches which are overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions. Used mainly by youth 11v11 teams.	Improve pitch quality in order to alleviate overplay. Consider pitch reconfiguration to better accommodate youth 11v11 teams.	Council FA	Strategic	S	M
		Cricket		Secure	A standard quality square with six grass wickets. Spare capacity amounting to 0.5 pitches exists during the peak time.	Ensure appropriate maintenance levels to sustain and improve quality.	Council ECB		M	L
		Rugby		Unsecure	Two poor quality senior pitches due to poor maintenance and natural adequate drainage. One pitch is partially floodlit for training, however, the floodlighting is poor quality. One pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalents, whilst one pitch has 0.5 match equivalents of spare capacity.	Improve pitch quality to increase capacity by improving maintenance and installing a drainage system. Replace existing floodlighting with high quality floodlights to better accommodate training demand. Ensure security of tenure for Bloxwich RUFC.	Council RFU Club		S	M
		Bowls		Secure	A good quality green which is operating above the average club membership.	Sustain green quality. Support club users to ensure demand continues to be met.	Council		L	L
41	Leamore Park (WS3 1HF)	Football	Council	Secure	A poor quality 9v9 pitch played to capacity and four 7v7 pitches with actual spare capacity discounted due to poor quality. Used by the Walsall Junior Youth League as a central venue.	Improve pitch quality to provide actual spare capacity.	Council League FA	District	S	L
		Bowls		Secure	A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	Club		L	L
66	Sneyd Community Association (WS9 0RN)	Hockey	CA	Secure	A full sized, floodlit, sand based AGP which is considered to be nearing the end of its lifespan. No spare capacity for a growth in hockey demand is considered to exist.	Refurbish the pitch and ensure a sinking fund is in place to sustain long term quality. Seek consultation with leagues to ensure future demand can be accommodated by altering match start times.	CA EH	Community	S	M
79	Walsall Academy (WS3 3LX)	Football	School	Unsecure	Two adult and one 9v9 pitch assessed as good quality. The 9v9 pitch is over marked on to one of the adult pitches. Unavailable to the community in order to protect the pitches for school use and due to staffing issues.	Ensure appropriate maintenance to sustain quality. Seek resolution to staffing issues and explore community use options with the School in order to reduce future shortfalls.	School FA	Community	S	L
		Rugby			A poor quality senior pitch unavailable to the community.	Improve pitch quality through improve maintenance and explore community use options given local shortfalls.	School RFU		S	L

<sup>16</sup> Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

<sup>17</sup> (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>16</sup>	Cost <sup>17</sup>
90	The Bloxwich Academy (WS2 7NR)	Football	School	Unsecure	Two adult and one 9v9 pitch assessed as standard quality. Unavailable to the community in order to protect the pitches for school use.	Explore community use options with the School in order to reduce future shortfalls.	School FA	Community	S	L
98	Christ Church CE Primary School (WS3 1EN)	Football	School	Unsecure	A poor quality 7v7 pitch unavailable for community use.	Improve quality and explore community use options with the School in order to reduce future shortfalls.	School FA	Incidental	S	L
100	St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School (WS3 1SP)	Football	School	Unsecure	A standard quality 9v9 pitch unavailable for community use.	Explore community use options with the School in order to reduce future shortfalls.	School	Incidental	S	L
103	St Peter's Catholic Primary School (WS3 3LY)	Football	School	Unsecure	A poor quality 9v9 pitch unavailable for community use.	Improve quality and explore community use options with the School in order to reduce future shortfalls.	School FA	Incidental	S	L

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## AREA 4

### Football

*Summary of pitches required to meet current and future demand*

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>18</sup>	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Future demand	Total
Adult pitches	2.5	3	0.5	-	-	0.5
Youth pitches 11v11	-	0.5	0.5	-	1.5	2
Youth pitches 9v9	5	0.5	4.5	-	1.5	3
Mini pitches 7v7	-	-	0	-	0.5	0.5
Mini pitches 5v5	-	-	0	-	0.5	4

- There is a shortfall amounting to 0.5 match equivalent sessions on adult pitches both now and in the future, with overplay identified at West Walsall E-Act Academy and Joseph Leckie Academy Playing Fields.
- Overplay is also evident on youth 11v11 pitches at Joseph Leckie Academy Playing Fields, resulting in an overall current shortfall of youth 11v11 pitches which worsens when accounting for future demand.
- Spare capacity exists overall on youth 9v9 pitches both now and in the future, although overplay is present at West Walsall E-Act Academy.
- Both 7v7 and 5v5 pitch types are currently played to capacity, however, future demand results in shortfalls across both pitch types.
- There is demand for two full size 3G pitches and developments at The University of Wolverhampton and West Walsall E-Act Academy will cater for demand.

### Recommendations

- Improve pitch quality to alleviate overplay and increase future capacity.
- Transfer youth 11v11 teams from adult pitches to youth 11v11 pitches. Use resultant spare capacity on adult pitches to create and build future youth pitch capacity.
- Explore use of currently unavailable sites to further build capacity and reduce shortfalls.
- Ensure 3G pitches at The University of Wolverhampton and West Walsall E-Act Academy are provided to a good quality and ensure FA testing so that they can accommodate competitive matches.
- Explore transfer of teams from grass pitches to 3G pitches, particularly at mini level.

### Cricket

- There are nine natural turf wicket cricket pitches within the Analysis Area, four of which are accompanied by non-turf wickets. In addition, there are two standalone non-turf wicket pitches
- There is a disused natural turf cricket square (previously contained eight wickets) at the former Walsall YMF Cricket Ground.
- Actual spare capacity exists at Pleck Park, Queen Marys Grammar School and Broadway West Playing Field, equating to two pitches, 0.5 pitches and one pitch respectively.
- Overall spare capacity of 3.5 pitches exists currently, which reduces to three pitches based on future demand.

<sup>18</sup> In match equivalent sessions



# WALSALL

## PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Review quality issues.
- ◀ Retain some spare capacity in order to protect and improve wicket quality.
- ◀ Improve/increase training provision.

### **Rugby union**

- ◀ There are seven senior pitches within the Analysis Area, six of which are available to the community.
- ◀ All pitches are assessed as either standard or poor quality.
- ◀ Overplay is evident on all pitches at Walsall RUFC and The Charles Lewis Memorial Ground (Handsworth RUFC).
- ◀ Taking into account future demand, there is an overall shortfall of 13 match equivalent sessions.

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Improve pitch quality to reduce overplay through installation of drainage systems and improved maintenance regimes.
- ◀ Seek to install floodlights or provide additional floodlighting at overplayed sites in order to spread out training demand.
- ◀ Explore potential use of Queen Marys Grammar School in order to provide greater capacity.
- ◀ Improve ancillary provision at Walsall RUFC and The Charles Lewis Memorial Ground (Handsworth RUFC).

### **Hockey**

- ◀ There is one full size sand-based AGP located at The University of Aston Recreation Centre.
- ◀ The pitch was resurfaced in 2015 and is therefore assessed as good quality.
- ◀ The pitch is considered to be oversubscribed during the peak time for senior hockey.

### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Protect The University of Aston Recreation Centre for continued hockey use.
- ◀ Ensure providers put a sinking fund in place to sustain long term quality.
- ◀ Engage with leagues to ensure demand can be accommodated by altering match times or seek use of an alternative pitch.

### **Bowls**

- ◀ There are six greens.
- ◀ Lichfield Road Bowling Club, LMRCA and Pleck Park are assessed as good quality, Walsall Aboretum and Walsall Cricket Club are assessed as standard quality and Palfrey Park is assessed as poor quality.
- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, with no clubs expressing a need for an additional green.

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

## *Recommendations*

- ◀ Sustain good quality greens and improve standard quality greens where possible.
- ◀ Improve quality at Palfrey Park.
- ◀ Improve ancillary provision at Walsall Aboretum and Walsall Cricket Club.

**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>19</sup>	Cost <sup>20</sup>
11	Reedswood E-Act Primary Academy (WS2 8RX)	Football	School	Unsecure	A poor quality 7v7 pitch unavailable to the community.	Improve pitch quality and explore community use options to reduce future shortfalls.	School FA	Community	S	L
19	Blue Coat Church of England Academy Playing Fields (WS5 4LP)	Football	School	Unsecure	Two adult, one 9v9 and one 7v7 pitch assessed as poor quality. Unavailable to the community as the School cannot staff the site due to its distance away from the main school building.	Improve pitch quality and seek resolution to staffing issues. Explore community use options to reduce future shortfalls.	School FA	Community	S	M
20	Broadway West Playing Field (WS1 4DX)	Football	Council	Secure	A standard quality adult pitch and five standard quality youth 9v9 pitches currently unused by the community.	Explore community use options in order to increase usage of the site.	Council FA	District	S	L
		Cricket		Secure	A standard quality square with 16 grass wickets. The pitch is not currently in use.	Explore community use options and levels of demand. Ensure appropriate maintenance levels.	Council ECB		S	L
37	Joseph Leckie Academy Playing Fields (WS5 4PG)	Football	School	Unsecure	One poor quality adult and one poor quality 9v9 pitch, both of which are overplayed. The pitches suffer from severe drainage issues.	Seek resolution to drainage issues in order to improve pitch quality and reduce overplay.	School FA	Community	S	L
		Cricket			A disused non-turf wicket.	No local demand. Explore future options with the school depending on levels of school demand for the wicket to be re-provided.	School ECB		S	L
42	Lichfield Road Bowling Club (WS4 2DW)	Bowls	Club	Secure	A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	Bowls	Community	L	L
44	LMRA (London Midland Railway Clubs Association) ((WS1 4JQ))	Football	CA	Secure	A poor quality adult pitch played to capacity.	Improve pitch quality and ensure appropriate maintenance regime to sustain usage.	CA FA	Community	S	L
		Bowls			A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	CA		Community	L
49	Palfrey Park (WS1 4AN)	Bowls	Council	Secure	A poor quality green.	Review maintenance regimes and improve green quality where possible.	Council	Community	M	L
55	Pleck Park (WS2 9AF)	Football	Council	Secure	A poor quality adult pitch played to capacity.	Improve pitch quality.	Council FA	District	S	L
		Cricket			A standard quality square with six grass and one non-turf wicket and a standard quality square with a standalone non-turf wicket. Both squares are unused by the community.	Explore options to increase demand.	Council ECB		S	L
		Bowls			A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	Council		L	L

<sup>19</sup> Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

<sup>20</sup> (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>21</sup>	Cost <sup>22</sup>
57	Queen Marys Grammar School (WS1 2PG)	Cricket	School	Secure	A standard quality square with nine grass and one non-turf wicket and a standard quality square with 11 grass wickets. Spare capacity of 0.5 pitches remains in the peak period.	Review maintenance levels to ensure pitch quality and usage can be sustained.	School ECB	Community	L	L
		Rugby			Four poor quality senior pitches unavailable for community use.	Improve pitch quality through improving maintenance and drainage and explore community use options given local shortfalls.	School RFU		S	L
58	Reedswood Park (WS2 8SP)	Cricket	Council		A standalone non-turf wicket pitch assessed as standard quality. The wicket is new, however, the remnants of an old wicket remains on the outfield. No community use is recorded.	Explore options to increase demand. Consider as possible LMS venue in the future. Remove all evidence of old wicket.	Council ECB	Community	L	L
77	University of Aston Recreation Centre (B43 7AJ)	Football	University	Secure	Five good quality adult pitches played to capacity and one good quality 9v9 pitch which is played to capacity during peak time.	Ensure appropriate maintenance regime to sustain quality and current usage.	University FA	Strategic	L	L
		Hockey			A full size, floodlit, sand based AGP which was resurfaced in 2015. The pitch is oversubscribed in the peak period for senior matches.	Seek consultation with leagues to accommodate all demand by altering match start times or transfer play to a site with spare capacity. Ensure a sinking fund is in place to sustain long term quality.	University EH		S	L
		Cricket			A standard quality square with nine grass wickets. Used to capacity during peak time.	Ensure appropriate maintenance to sustain and improve quality as well as levels of use.	University ECB		L	L
		Rugby			A poor quality senior pitch with poor maintenance levels and natural adequate drainage. Regularly used by Handsworth RUFC for matches.	Improve pitch quality through improve maintenance and explore lack of community demand given local shortfalls. Improve security of tenure for Handsworth RUFC through a community use agreement.	University RFU		S	L
78	University of Wolverhampton - Walsall Site (WS1 3BD)	Football	University	Secure	Two standard quality adult pitches with one match equivalent of actual spare capacity.	Ensure appropriate maintenance and retain some spare capacity to sustain quality.	University FA	District	L	L
		3G AGP			A full sized, floodlit, sand based pitch which is soon to be converted into a 3G pitch.	Ensure development goes ahead to a high standard. Seek FA testing so the pitch can host competitive matches. Ensure a sinking fund is in place to preserve long term quality. Ensure community availability is fully utilised.	University FA		S	H

<sup>21</sup> Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

<sup>22</sup> (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>23</sup>	Cost <sup>24</sup>
80	Walsall Cricket Club (WS1 3BE)	Cricket	Club	Secure	A standard quality square with 16 grass wickets. Used to capacity during peak time.	Ensure appropriate maintenance to sustain and improve quality as well as levels of use.	Club ECB	Community	L	L
		Bowls			A standard quality green which is operating above the average club membership. Users state that they are given poor access to changing facilities on site.	Review maintenance regimes and improve quality where possible. Support club users to ensure demand continues to be met. Seek resolution to lack of changing room access.	Club		M	L
81	Walsall Football Club (WS1 4SA)	Football	Club	Secure	A good quality stadia pitch used to host professional football.	Support club.	Club FA	Community	L	L
		3G AGP			A full sized, floodlit, standard quality 3G pitch reserved for use by Walsall FC.	Retain pitch and preserve quality for continued club use.	Club FA		L	L
82	Walsall Rugby Club (WS1 3JY)	Rugby	Club		Two poor quality senior pitches with basic maintenance and natural inadequate drainage and a standard quality senior pitch with natural inadequate drainage. Two pitches are floodlit. All pitches are overplayed. Changing facilities are poor quality.	Improve pitch quality to reduce overplay through improved maintenance and the installation of drainage systems. Seek installation of additional floodlighting to further spread out training demand or consider the value a world rugby compliant 3G pitch. Improve changing facilities.	Club RFU Council	District	S	M-H
83	Former Walsall YMF Cricket Ground (WS5 3AW)	Cricket	Council	Secure	A disused square that the LTA and Walsall Tennis Club are looking at for a potential development.	Explore local demand and consider pitch value to determine the need of bringing the square back in to use. Alternatively, consider value of LTA development.	Council ECB LTA	Incidental	S	M
84	Walsall YPF Cricket Club (WS5 3AW)	Cricket	Club	Secure	A square with 10 grass wickets and one non-turf wicket. Currently played to capacity.	Ensure appropriate maintenance to sustain and improve quality as well as levels of use.	Club ECB	Community	L	L
85	West Walsall E-Act Academy (WS2 9UA)	Football	School	Secure	Two poor quality adult pitch, one of which is over marked by a poor quality 9v9 pitch. All pitches are overplayed and suffer from drainage issues.	Improve pitch quality through improved drainage in order to reduce over play and consider transfer of play to sites with actual spare capacity. Ensure appropriate maintenance to sustain pitch over markings.	School FA	District	S	M
		3G AGP			A full sized, floodlit, sand based pitch which is soon to be converted into a 3G pitch.	Ensure development goes ahead to a high standard. Seek FA testing so the pitch can host competitive matches. Ensure a sinking fund is in place to preserve long term quality. Ensure community availability is fully utilised.	School FA		S	H

<sup>23</sup> Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

<sup>24</sup> (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>23</sup>	Cost <sup>24</sup>
91	Silverdale Football Club (WS5 4DW)	Football	Club	Unsecure	Leased to Silverdale FC, however, this expires in 2017. Four adult and four 7v7 pitches assessed as standard quality. The 7v7 pitches have actual spare capacity. Changing facilities are assessed as poor quality. Used by the Walsall Junior Youth League as a central venue.	Extend lease agreement in order to provide the Club with greater security of tenure. Improve changing facilities.	Club League Council FA	Community	S	M
92	The Charles Lewis Memorial Ground (WS4 1EU)	Rugby	Club	Secure	One standard quality senior pitch with basic maintenance and natural adequate drainage and one poor quality senior pitch with poor maintenance. One pitch is floodlit. All pitches are overplayed. Changing facilities are poor quality.	Improve pitch quality to reduce overplay through improved maintenance and the installation of drainage systems. Consider installation of additional floodlighting to spread out training demand. Improve changing facilities.	Club RFU Council	Community	S	M
104	Walsall Aboretum (WS4 2BU)	Bowls	Club	Secure	A standard quality green with poor quality changing facilities.	Review maintenance regimes and improve quality where possible. Explore options to improve changing facilities.	Club	Community	M	L

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## AREA 5

### Football

*Summary of pitches required to meet current and future demand*

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>25</sup>	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Future demand	Total
Adult pitches	-	5.5	5.5	-	2	7.5
Youth pitches 11v11	1	-	1	0.5	6	5.5
Youth pitches 9v9	-	2	2	-	4	6
Mini pitches 7v7	-	-	0	-	1	1
Mini pitches 5v5	-	-	0	0.5	-	0.5

- ◀ There is a shortfall of adult pitches as a result of overplay at Bentley South Playing Field and Bentley Youth Sports Ground. This shortfall worsens when accounting for future demand.
- ◀ Spare capacity exists currently on youth 11v11 pitches, however, future demand results in shortfalls.
- ◀ Overplay is evident on 9v9 pitches at Kings Hill Park, which results in an overall shortfall of 9v9 pitches. This shortfall worsens when taking future demand into account.
- ◀ Both 7v7 and 5v5 pitch types are currently played to capacity, however, future demand results in shortfalls on both pitch types.
- ◀ There is demand for two full size 3G pitches, of which, there is currently one, located at Grace Academy.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Improve pitch quality to alleviate overplay and increase future capacity.
- ◀ Transfer youth 11v11 teams from adult pitches to youth 11v11 pitches. Use resultant spare capacity on adult pitches to create and build future youth pitch capacity.
- ◀ Seek use of currently unavailable sites in order to further reduce shortfalls and build future capacity.
- ◀ Ensure FA testing of 3G pitch at Grace Academy so that it can accommodate competitive matches.
- ◀ Explore possible sites to increase full size 3G provision.
- ◀ Explore transfer of teams from grass pitches to 3G pitches, particularly at mini level.

### Cricket

- ◀ There are no cricket pitches in the Analysis Area and no demand for any in the future.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Explore possibilities should demand for pitches exist in the future.

<sup>25</sup> In match equivalent sessions

# WALSALL

## PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

### **Rugby union**

- ◀ There are no rugby pitches in the Analysis Area and no demand for any in the future.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Explore possibilities should demand for pitches exist in the future.

### **Hockey**

- ◀ There are no full size hockey suitable AGPs within the Analysis Area and no demand for one to be provided.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Explore lack of local hockey demand.

### **Bowls**

- ◀ There are four greens, all of which are assessed as good quality.
- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, with no clubs expressing a need for an additional green.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Sustain green quality.



**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>26</sup>	Cost <sup>27</sup>
12	Bentley South Playing Field (WS2 0EA)	Football	Council	Secure	Two standard quality adult pitches overplayed by two match equivalent sessions and two standard quality youth 11v11 pitches with one match equivalent of actual spare capacity.	Ensure appropriate maintenance regime to sustain usage. Improve adult pitch quality to reduce overplay or seek the transfer of play to sites with actual spare capacity.	Council FA	District	S	L
		Bowls			Three good quality greens. Community use unavailable.	Further explore community use availability and seek resolution. Explore levels of demand.	Council		L	L
13	Bentley West Playing Field (WS2 0EQ)	Football	Council	Secure	An adult pitch with actual spare capacity discounted due to poor quality and four poor quality 9v9 pitches played to capacity. The adult pitch is used solely by youth 11v11 teams. The 9v9 pitches are used by the Walsall Junior Youth League.	Improve pitch quality to increase capacity. Consider pitch reconfiguration to better accommodate youth 11v11 teams.	Council League FA	District	S	M
14	Bentley Youth Sports Ground (WS10 8LN)	Football	Council	Secure	Two poor quality adult pitches overplayed by 3.5 match equivalent sessions. The pitches are used mainly by youth 11v11 teams. Changing facilities are also considered to be poor quality.	Improve pitch quality to reduce overplay and seek the transfer of play to sites with actual spare capacity. Consider reconfiguration of pitches to better accommodate youth 11v11 teams. Improve changing facilities.	Council FA	Community	S	M
27	Darlaston Community Association (WS10 8NL)	Football	CA	Secure	A poor quality adult pitch played to capacity.	Improve pitch quality and ensure appropriate maintenance levels to sustain usage.	CA FA	Community	S	L
		Hockey			A smaller sized sand based AGP which measures 68x47 metres.	Further explore pitch demand and consider value to accommodate training.	CA EH		M	L
		Bowls			A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	CA		L	L
28	Darlaston Town FC (WS10 8ED)	Football	Club	Unsecure	A disused adult pitch.	Consider re-providing the pitch given local shortfalls.	Club Council FA	Community	S	M
33	Grace Academy Darlaston (WS10 8QJ)	Football	School	Secure	A standard quality adult pitch unavailable for community use. An additional adult pitch will be provided from September 2016, at which point community use will be allowed.	Work with the School to ensure community use is offered and seek required demand.	School FA	District	S	L
		3G AGP			A good quality, floodlit, full sized 3G pitch which was provided in 2013. The pitch will soon be made available for community use.	Seek FA testing so the pitch can host competitive matches. Ensure a sinking fund is in place to sustain long term quality.	School FA		S	L
34	Great Bridge Road (WV14 8LG)	Football	Council	Secure	Three adult pitches and one youth 11v11 pitch assessed as poor quality. Minimal spare capacity discounted.	Improve pitch quality and retain some spare capacity to sustain quality improvements.	Council FA	Community	S	L
36	Jane Lane School (WS2 0JH)	3G AGP	School	Secure	A 40x30 metre 3G pitch which is not floodlit.	No local demand due to lack of floodlighting. Retain for school use.	School FA	Incidental	L	L
40	Kings Hill Park (WS10 9JF)	Football	Council	Secure	Three poor quality 9v9 pitches overplayed by two match equivalent sessions. Used by the Walsall Junior Youth League as a central venue.	Improve pitch quality to reduce overplay and consider transfer of play to sites with actual spare capacity.	Council FA	Community	S	L

<sup>26</sup> Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

<sup>27</sup> (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>26</sup>	Cost <sup>27</sup>
94	Salisbury Primary School (WS10 8BQ)	Football	School	Unsecure	A standard quality youth 11v11 pitch unused for community use.	Explore community use options and seek to increase demand.	School FA	Incidental	S	L
97	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (WS10 8HN)	Football	School	Unsecure	A poor quality 5v5 pitch unavailable to the community.	Improve pitch quality and explore community use options in order to reduce local shortfalls.	School FA	Incidental	S	L

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## AREA 6

### Football

*Summary of pitches required to meet current and future demand*

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>28</sup>	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Current total	Latent demand	Future demand	Total
Adult pitches	0.5	2.5	2	-	-	2
Youth pitches 11v11	-	0.5	0.5	-	1	1.5
Youth pitches 9v9	-	-	0	-	1	1
Mini pitches 7v7	1	-	1	-	1.5	0.5
Mini pitches 5v5	-	-	0	-	3.5	3.5

- ◀ There is a current and future shortfall of adult pitches as a result of overplay at Willenhall Memorial Park and Black Country Performance Hub.
- ◀ There is also overplay on youth 11v11 pitches at Willenhall E-Act Academy which results in an overall current shortfall of youth 11v11 pitches. This shortfall worsens when accounting for future demand.
- ◀ Both 9v9 and 5v5 pitch types are currently played to capacity, however, future demand results in shortfalls on both pitch types.
- ◀ Spare capacity exists currently on 7v7 pitches, however, future demand results in a shortfall.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Improve pitch quality to alleviate overplay and increase future capacity.
- ◀ Transfer youth 11v11 teams from adult pitches to youth 11v11 pitches. Use resultant spare capacity on adult pitches to create and build future youth pitch capacity.
- ◀ Seek use of currently unavailable sites in order to further reduce shortfalls and build future capacity.
- ◀ Ensure FA testing of 3G pitch at Goals Soccer Centre so that it can continue to accommodate competitive matches.
- ◀ Explore transfer of teams from grass pitches to 3G pitches, particularly at mini level.

### Cricket

- ◀ There are no cricket pitches in the Analysis Area and no demand for any in the future.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Explore possibilities should demand for pitches exist in the future.

<sup>28</sup> In match equivalent sessions

# WALSALL

## PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

### Rugby union

- ◀ There are no rugby pitches in the Analysis Area and no demand for any in the future.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Explore possibilities should demand for pitches exist in the future.

### Hockey

- ◀ There is one full size sand-based AGP located at Willenhall Academy.
- ◀ The pitch has not been resurfaced since 2005 and is therefore considered to be nearing the end of its lifespan.
- ◀ The pitch is considered to have spare capacity for future growth.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Protect Willenhall Academy for continued hockey use.
- ◀ Resurface the pitch and ensure providers put a sinking fund in place to sustain long term quality.

### Bowls

- ◀ There are seven greens, all of which are assessed as good quality with the exception of two greens at Yale Bowling Club which are assessed as poor quality.
- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, with no clubs expressing a need for an additional green.

#### *Recommendations*

- ◀ Sustain good quality greens.
- ◀ Improve green quality at Yale Bowling Club.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>29</sup>	Cost <sup>30</sup>
7	Amery Bowling Club (WV12 5RY)	Bowls	Club	Secure	A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	Club	Community	L	L
15	Black Country Performance Hub (WV13 3BB)	Football	Club	Secure	A poor quality pitch overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.	Improve pitch quality in order to alleviate overplay or consider proposal to replace the pitch with a 3G pitch.	Club FA	District	M	H
		3G AGP			Four 5v5 size 3G pitches which are floodlit. Used to accommodate Sporting Khalsa FC and used for matched by the Walsall Junior Youth League, despite not being FA tested.	Retain pitches for continued club use. Ensure FA testing so that the pitches can continue to host competitive matches.	Club FA		L	L
31	Goals Soccer Centre (WV14 7BL)	3G AGP	Commercial	Secure	Three 7v7 size 3G pitches and 10 5v5 size 3G pitches assessed as standard quality. All pitches are floodlit. Used by the Walsall Junior Youth League for competitive matches despite not being FA tested.	Ensure pitches are FA tested so that they can continue to host competitive matches. Ensure a sinking fund is in place for future refurbishment.	Commercial FA	District	S	L
56	Pool Hayes Arts and Community School (WV12 4QZ)	Football	School	Secure	Three poor quality adult pitches unavailable to the community due to quality issues.	Improve quality and explore community use options with the School in order to reduce local shortfalls.	School FA	Community	S	L
64	Short Heath Liberal Club (WV12 5PG)	Bowls	Club	Secure	A good quality green which is operating above the average club membership.	Sustain green quality. Support club users to ensure demand continues to be met.	Club	Community	L	L
70	St Thomas More School (WV14 7BL)	Football	School	Secure	Three standard quality adult pitches with no community use. Minimal spare capacity.	Retain spare capacity to protect quality for school use.	School	Incidental	L	L
76	Trinity Bowls Club (WV13 1HG)	Bowls	Club	Secure	A good quality green which is operating above the average club membership.	Sustain green quality. Support club users to ensure demand continues to be met.	Club	Community	L	L
86	Willenhall Liberal Club (WV13 1DF)	Bowls	Club	Secure	A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	Club	Community	L	L
87	Willenhall Memorial Park (WV13 3BU)	Football	Council	Secure	Two poor quality adult pitches overplayed by two match equivalent sessions. Well used by youth 11v11 teams.	Improve pitch quality to reduce overplay and consider transfer of teams to sites with actual spare capacity. Consider pitch reconfiguration to better accommodate youth 11v11 teams.	Council FA	Community	S	L
		Bowls			A good quality green.	Sustain green quality.	Club		Community	L
88	Willenhall E-Act Academy (WV12 4BD)	Football	School	Secure	Two standard quality adult pitches with 0.5 match equivalents of actual spare capacity and a standard quality 7v7 pitch with one match equivalent of spare capacity. An overplayed poor quality youth 11v11 pitch and a 9v9 pitch which has actual spare capacity discounted due to its poor quality. Drainage issues are present, especially on the poor quality pitches.	Improve pitch quality through drainage improvements in order to increase capacity. Retain some spare capacity to protect the pitches.	School FA	District	S	L
		Hockey			A full sized, floodlit, sand based AGP which is considered to be nearing the end of its lifespan. Spare capacity for a growth in hockey demand is considered to exist.	Refurbish the pitch and ensure a sinking fund is in place to sustain long term quality. Ensure future demand can continue to be accommodated.	School EH		S	M

<sup>29</sup> Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

<sup>30</sup> (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**WALSALL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Security of tenure	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale <sup>29</sup>	Cost <sup>30</sup>
89	Yale Bowls Club (WV13 2HA)	Bowls	Club	Secure	Two poor quality greens.	Review maintenance regimes and improve quality where possible.	Club	Community	M	L
95	Barr Beacon Primary School (WV12 5HA)	Football	School	Unsecure	One adult, one 9v9 and one 5v5 pitch all assessed as standard quality. No community use.	Explore future community use options to meet shortfalls.	School FA	Incidental	M	L
96	New Invention Junior School Playing Field (WV12 5DB)	Football	School	Unsecure	A youth 11v11 pitch with no spare capacity due to poor quality.	Improve pitch quality and explore future community use options to meet shortfalls.	School FA	Incidental	M	L

## **PART 7: KEEP THE STRATEGY ROBUST AND UP TO DATE**

### ***Delivery***

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

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

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

Each member of the steering group should take the lead to ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence. The role of the steering group should not end with the completion of the PPS document.

To help ensure the PPS is well used it should be regarded as the key document within the study area guiding the improvement and protection of playing pitch provision. It needs to be the document people regularly turn to for information on how the current demand is met and what actions are required to improve the situation and meet future demand. In order for this to be achieved the steering group need to have a clear understanding of how the PPS can be applied and therefore delivered. Key uses for the PPS include evidence for supporting funding bids, guidance to inform planning decisions and planning applications and decision making for capital investment.

The process of developing the PPS will hopefully have already resulted in a number of benefits that will help with its application and delivery. These may include enhanced partnership working across different agendas and organisations, pooling of resources along with strengthening relationships and understanding between different stakeholders and between members of the steering group and the sporting community. The drivers behind the PPS and the work to develop the recommendations and action plan will have also highlighted, and helped the steering group to understand, the key areas to which it can be applied and how it can be delivered.

### ***Monitoring and updating***

It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should be led by the local authority and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the steering group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery. This should form an on-going role of the group. It is possible that in the interim between annual reviews the steering group could operate as a 'virtual' group; prepared to comment on suggestions and updates electronically when relevant.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPS being signed off by the steering group, then Sport England and the NGBs would consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date. If the PPS is used as a 'live' document, and kept up to date, the time frame can be extended to five years.

Furthermore, the process of refreshing the PPS would be much less resource intensive if changes and updates have been made throughout the five years. If there are no updates to the document within the period the nature of the supply and in particular the demand for playing pitches is likely to have changed. Therefore, without any form of review and update within this time period it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

Ideally the PPS 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 that would have been built up when developing the PPS. Taking into account the time to develop the PPS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

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

- ◀ How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others)
- ◀ How the PPS has been applied and the lessons learnt
- ◀ Any changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs in the area (e.g. the most used or high quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues
- ◀ Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport
- ◀ Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

Once the PPS is complete the role of the steering group should evolve so that it:

- ◀ Acts as a focal point for promoting the value and importance of the PPS and playing pitch provision in the area
- ◀ Monitors, evaluates and reviews progress with the delivery of the recommendations and action plan
- ◀ Shares lessons learnt from how the PPS has been used and how it has been applied to a variety of circumstances
- ◀ Ensures the PPS is used effectively to input into any new opportunities to secure improved provision and influence relevant programmes and initiatives
- ◀ Maintains links between all relevant parties with an interest in playing pitch provision in the area;
- ◀ Reviews the need to update the PPS along with the supply and demand information and assessment work on which it is based. Further to review the group should either:
  - ◀ Provide a short annual progress and update paper;
  - ◀ Provide a partial review focussing on particular sport, pitch type and/or sub area; or
  - ◀ Lead a full review and update of the PPS document (including the supply and demand information and assessment details).



## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

Alongside the regular steering group meetings it is recommended that the City Council holds annual sport specific meetings with the pitch sport NGBs and other relevant organisations. These meetings should look to update the key supply and demand information, if necessary amend the assessment work, track progress with implementing the recommendations and action plan and highlight any new issues and opportunities. Things to consider include formation of new teams or loss of teams, any new formats of the sports that would impact on facilities, changes in quality or creation of new facilities.

These meetings could be timed to fit with the annual affiliation process undertaken by the NGBs which would help to capture any changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area. Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites could be fed into these meetings. The NGBs will also be able to indicate any further performance quality assessments that have been undertaken within the study area. Discussion with the league secretaries may also indicate annual league meetings which it may be useful to attend to pick up any specific issues and/or enable a review of the relevant club details to be undertaken.

The steering group should regularly review and refresh area by area plans taking account of any improvements in pitch quality (and hence increases in pitch capacity) and also any new negotiations for community use of education or other private sites in the future. Updating the action plans will make the task of updating the PPS much easier.


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

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## Checklist

To help ensure the PPS is delivered and is kept robust and up to date, the steering group can refer to the new methodology Stage E Checklist: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date:

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

Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date	Tick 	
	Yes	Requires Attention
<b>Step 9: Apply &amp; deliver the strategy</b>		
1. Are steering group members clear on how the PPS can be applied across a range of relevant areas?		
2. Is each member of the steering group committed to taking the lead to help ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence?		
3. Has a process been put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered and the PPS is being applied?		
<b>Step 10: Keep the strategy robust &amp; up to date</b>		
1. Has a process been put in place to ensure the PPS is kept robust and up to date?		
2. Does the process involve an annual update of the PPS?		
3. Is the steering group to be maintained and is it clear of its on-going role?		
4. Is regular liaison with the NGBs and other parties planned?		
5. Has all the supply and demand information been collated and presented in a format (i.e. single document that can be filtered accordingly) that will help people to review it and highlight any changes?		
6. Have any changes made to the Active Places Power data been fed back to Sport England?		

## APPENDIX ONE: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

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

### National context

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

DCMS (Department for Culture Media & Sport) is currently (2015) consulting on a new strategy for sport. It will seek to address the following challenges:

- ◀ How to address the recent decline in the number of people that regularly take part in sport and deliver a long-term sustainable increase in participation;
- ◀ What type(s) of participation should be encouraged and how should they be measured;
- ◀ How to ensure that funding goes to those who can best deliver results;
- ◀ How to specifically target under-represented groups;
- ◀ Understanding the role of the private sector, and how public sector bodies, National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and other sports bodies should work with the private sector to help deliver an increase in participation;
- ◀ How to best support participation in new and/or non-traditional sports and activities;
- ◀ How to maximise the potential of new technology to increase participation;
- ◀ How to use the power of sport to achieve broader positive social outcomes and whether some funding should specifically be spent for that purpose.

### ***Sport England: Towards an Active Nation (2016-2021)***

Sport England has recently released its new five year strategy 'Towards an Active Nation'. The aim is to target the 28% of people who do less than 30 minutes of exercise each week and will focus on the least active groups; typically women, the disabled and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Sport England will invest up to £30m on a plan to increase the number of volunteers in grassroots sport. Emphasis will be on working with a larger range of partners with less money being directed towards National Governing Bodies.

The Strategy will help deliver against the five health, social and economic outcomes set out in the Government's Sporting Future strategy.

- ◀ Physical Wellbeing
- ◀ Mental Wellbeing
- ◀ Individual Development
- ◀ Social & Community Development
- ◀ Economic Development

## ***National Planning Policy Framework***

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

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

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

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

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

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

## ***The FA National Game Strategy (2015 – 2019)***

The main aims of the National Game Strategy are summarised below:

- ◀ Sustain and Increase Participation
- ◀ Ensure access to education sites to accommodate the game.
- ◀ Help players to be the best that they can be and provide opportunities for them to progress from grassroots to elite
- ◀ Recruit, retain and develop a network of qualified referees
- ◀ Support clubs, leagues and other competition providers to develop a safe, inclusive and positive football experience for everyone.
- ◀ Support Clubs and Leagues to become sustainable businesses, understanding and serving the needs of players and customers.
- ◀ Improve grass pitches through the pitch improvement programme to improve existing facilities and changing rooms
- ◀ Deliver new and improved facilities including new Football Turf Pitches.
- ◀ Work with priority Local Authorities enabling 50% of mini-soccer and youth matched to be played on high quality artificial grass pitches

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

### ***England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Champion Counties Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017***

The England and Wales Cricket Board unveiled a new strategic plan in 2013 which seeks to deliver successful England teams at all levels, to produce a vibrant domestic game as well as increasing participation during the period 2014-17. It builds on the 2005 plan, Building Partnerships and the subsequent 2009 initiative, Grounds to Play.

The plan will take advantage of local partnerships developed in earlier plans and support local delivery of priorities through the County network. It targets operational excellence to make maximum use of scarce resources and facilities during a time of economic austerity.

Among the targets set under the four pillars of Effective Governance, Vibrant Domestic Game, Enthusiating Participation and Successful England teams, which are relevant to the playing pitch strategy, are:

- ◀ An increase in participation as measured by Sport England's Active People Survey from 183,400 to 197,500
- ◀ Expand the number of clubs participating in NatWest CricketForce from 2,000 to 2,200
- ◀ Increase the number of cricket's volunteers to 80,000 by 2017
- ◀ Expand the number of participants in women's and disabilities cricket by 10% by 2017
- ◀ To increase the number of TwelfthMan members from 220,000 to 250,000 by 2017
- ◀ Complete an approved Community Engagement programme with all 18 First Class Counties and MCC
- ◀ For each £1 provided in facility grants through the 'Sport England Whole Sport Plan Grant Programme' ensure a multiplier of three with other funding partners
- ◀ Provide a fund of £8.1m of capital investment to enhance floodlights, sightscreens, replay screens, power sub-stations and broadcasting facilities at First Class County venues
- ◀ Provide an interest-free loan fund to community clubs of £10 million
- ◀ Qualify and engage 50 Level 4 coaches to support the development of professional cricketers
- ◀ Expand the number of coaches who have received teacher level 1, 2 or 3 qualifications to 50,000
- ◀ Provide a fund of £2 million for community clubs to combat the impact of climate change
- ◀ Introduce a youth T20 competition engaging 500 teams by 2017

The following actions executed during the duration of Building Partnerships provide a strong base for this plan. Actions include:

- ◀ Streamlining ECB governance
- ◀ Building participation by more than 20% per annum (as measured through ECB focus clubs and County Cricket Boards)
- ◀ Developing women's cricket
- ◀ Attracting volunteers
- ◀ Expanding cricket's spectator base
- ◀ Introducing grants and loans to clubs
- ◀ Developing disabilities cricket

This plan therefore influences 'Grounds to Play' in the areas of facilities and coaches, which is where ECB investment will be focussed. Partnership funding and support will play a key role in the delivery of actions and maintaining the strength of the pillars.

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

The RFU National Facility Strategy 2013-2017 provides a framework for development of high-quality, well-managed facilities that will help to strengthen member clubs and grow the game in communities around them. In conjunction with partners, this strategy will assist and support clubs and other organisations, so that they can continue to provide quality opportunities for all sections of the community to enjoy the game. It sets out the broad facility needs of the sport and identifies investment priorities to the game and its key partners. It identifies that with 1.5 million players there is a continuing need to invest in community club facilities in order to:

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

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

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

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

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

### ***England Hockey (EH) - A Nation Where Hockey Matters (2013-2017)***

EH have a clear vision, a powerful philosophy and five core objectives that all those who have a role in advancing Hockey can unite behind. With UK Sport and Sport England's investment, and growing commercial revenues, EH are ambitious about how they can take the sport forward in Olympic cycles and beyond.

*“The vision is for England to be a ‘Nation Where Hockey Matters’. A nation where hockey is talked about at dinner tables, playgrounds and public houses, up and down the country. A nation where the sport is on the back pages of our newspapers, where children dream of scoring a goal for England’s senior hockey team, and where the performance stirs up emotion amongst the many, not the few”*

England Hockey aspires to deepen the passion of those who play, deliver and follow sport by providing the best possible environments and the best possible experiences. Whilst reaching out to new audiences by making the sport more visible, available and relevant and through the many advocates of hockey.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

Underpinning all this is the infrastructure which makes the sport function. EH understand the importance of volunteers, coaches, officials, clubs and facilities. The more inspirational people can be, the more progressive Hockey can be and the more befitting the facilities can be, the more EH will achieve. The core objectives are as follows:

- ◀ Grow our Participation
- ◀ Deliver International Success
- ◀ Increase our Visibility
- ◀ Enhance our Infrastructure
- ◀ Be a strong and respected Governing Body

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

England Hockey has a Capital Investment Programme (CIP) that is planned to lever £5.6 million investment into hockey facilities over the next four years, underpinned by £2m million from the National Governing Body. With over 500 pitches due for refurbishment in the next 4-8 years, there will be a large focus placed on these projects through this funding stream. The current level of pitches available for hockey is believed to be sufficient for the medium term needs, however in some areas, pitches may not be in the right places in order to maximise playing opportunities

### ***‘The right pitches in the right places<sup>31</sup>’***

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

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

### ***England Hockey Strategy***

EH’s new Club Strategy will assist hockey clubs to retain more players and recruit new members to ultimately grow their club membership. EH will be focusing on participation growth through this strategy for the next two years. The EH Strategy is based on seven core themes. These are:

- 1 Having great leadership
- 2 Having Appropriate and Sustainable Facilities
- 3 Inspired and Effective People
- 4 Different Ways to Play
- 5 Staying Friendly, Social and Welcoming
- 6 Being Local with Strong Community Connections
- 7 Stretching and developing those who want it

### ***British Crown Green Bowling Association***

Please note there is no current facility guidance provided by British Crown Green Bowling Association responsible for crown green bowls in England.

<http://crowngreenbowls.sharepoint.com/Pages/default.aspx>

---

<sup>31</sup>

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



# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## APPENDIX TWO: FUNDING PLAN

### Funding opportunities

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

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

## ***Protecting Playing Fields***

SE launched a funding programme; Protecting Playing Fields (PPF) as part of its Places People Play Olympic legacy mass participation programme. The programme is being delivered via funding rounds with approximately £4 million being awarded to projects in each round.

Its focus is on protecting and improving playing fields and developing community sport. It will fund capital projects that create, develop and improve playing fields for sporting and community use and offer long term protection of the site for sport. Projects are likely to involve the construction of new pitches or improvement of existing ones that need levelling or drainage works.

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

The programmes three priorities are:

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

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

## ***Strategic Facilities Fund***

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

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

# WALSALL

## PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

Key features which applications must demonstrate are:

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

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

The Strategic Facilities Fund will prioritise projects that:

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

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

### ***Funder's requirements***

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

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

# WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

## Indicative costs

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

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

There are two sets of costs that are highlighted here; facility capital costs and lifecycle costs.

### *Facility capital costs*

- ◀ Facility capital costs are calculated using estimates of what it typically costs to build modern sports facilities, including fees and external work, naturally taking into account varying conditions, inflation and regional adjustments.
- ◀ Costs are updated regularly in conjunction with information provided by the BCIS (Building Cost Information Service) and other Quantity Surveyors.
- ◀ The document is often referred to as the Planning Kitbag costs as the figures are often used by planners and developers when reviewing potential planning contributions to site developments.

### *Lifecycle costs*

- ◀ Life cycle costs are how much its costs to keep a facility open and fit-for-purpose during its lifetime.
- ◀ It includes costs for major replacement and planned preventative maintenance (PPM) – day to day repairs. The costs are expressed as a percentage of the capital cost.
- ◀ You should not underestimate the importance of regular maintenance and the expense in maintaining a facility throughout its life.

## APPENDIX THREE: GLOSSARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

**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**.

## WALSALL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

**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 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.