

**SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY REFRESH**

**STRATEGY DOCUMENT**

**OCTOBER 2018**

**CONTENTS**

PART 1: INTRODUCTION.....	3
PART 3: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK.....	8
PART 4: RECOMMENDATIONS.....	11
PART 5: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES.....	12
PART 6: SPORT SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES.....	22
PART 7: ACTION PLAN.....	25
PART 8: CONCLUSIONS.....	40
PART 9: MONITORING AND REVIEW.....	41
<b>APPENDIX ONE: STRATEGIC CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>APPENDIX TWO: FUNDING PLAN.....</b>	<b>50</b>

## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for Sandwell. Building upon the preceding Assessment Report it provides a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities between 2018 and 2021. The PPS covers the following playing pitches and outdoor pitch sports:

- Football pitches
- Cricket pitches
- Rugby pitches
- Hockey/artificial grass pitches (AGPs)
- Golf courses
- Tennis courts
- Netball courts
- Athletics tracks
- Bowling greens

The Strategy is capable of:

- Providing strategic direction for the location and scale of major investment into grass-roots sport and physical activity facilities
- Providing adequate planning guidance to assess development proposals affecting playing fields;
- Informing land use decisions in respect of future use of existing outdoor sports areas and playing fields (capable of accommodating pitches) across the Borough;
- Supporting external funding bids and maximise 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.

A key characteristic of this PPS, as well as previous iterations of the same document in the past decade, is the collaborative nature of the steering group that has delivered the project. This PPS, alongside the needs assessment that is referenced throughout, has been delivered by a project steering group that included representatives from Sport England, Sandwell MBC, independent consultants and the relevant National Governing Bodies of sport, among others.

It is key that the Steering Group remains in place, in order to deliver the recommendations outlined within this document in an efficient and collaborative manner. The recommendations and subsequent investment included within this document are to be shared among the relevant member of the steering group, in order to effectively and efficiently improve the stock of playing pitch provision across the study area.

### 1.1: Structure

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

- A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of playing pitches (including ancillary facilities).
- A series of strategic objectives which provide a strategic framework for the improvement, maintenance, development and, as appropriate, rationalisation of the playing pitch stock.
- A series of sport by sport objectives which provide a strategic framework for sport led improvements to provision.
- A prioritised area-by-area action plan (where action is deemed necessary).

The Strategy and Action Plan recommends a number of priority projects for Sandwell, which it is recommended are implemented in the period between 2018 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 will be identified.

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

### 1.2: Terminology

The Strategy provides a list of policy and site specific recommendations, as well as a range of processes and delivery approaches that the Council and partner stakeholders 'should' adhere to when planning the long term of sport and physical activity across the study area. It should be noted that where the term 'should' is used, this identifies a recommendation from the steering group that delivered this project, including the Council, an independent consultant and key stakeholders. These recommendations have been agreed by the whole steering group, and therefore provide a list of priorities for the stakeholders to address through the delivery of this strategy.

Throughout this strategy, the need to 'protect' playing fields is frequently referenced, with the needs assessment providing a robust evidence base to demonstrate the need for this pitch provision. When adopted, this document will form a key part of the evidence base for Sandwell MBC's ongoing planning policy, therefore it is recommended that those sites identified as requiring protection are afforded appropriate planning designation.

In some cases, the PPS will recommend protection of a site, however local housing or development needs may require a site to be lost, to meet the wider needs of the local population and Sandwell MBC. In this case, and in line with Sport England's Playing Fields Policy, one of the five exceptions (identified in Part 3 of this strategy) will need to be met. As part of this process, it may be useful to see the term 'protect' as relating to the quantity and quality of sports provision on the site.

## PART 2: KEY ISSUES TO ADDRESS

Using the key issues identified in the Assessment Report, the following priorities are identified for each sport and provide the context for the development of the recommendations and objectives within the Strategy.

### 2.1 Football pitches

- Drainage issues resulting in poor or standard quality pitches, particularly on popular and well used/overplayed sites
- Inadequate changing provision at some sites
- Imported and exported demand for youth and mini teams
- An overall decline in adult 11v11 football, which has resulted in a spare capacity for adult 11v11 adult pitches provision across Sandwell
- A shortfall of youth football provision across the Borough, leading to an overall deficit for all pitch typologies
- When all pitch types are considered, there is currently 27.75 match equivalents of grass pitch deficit per week. If no further pitches are added in the area and the quality of provision remains constant, the level of deficit will increase to 33.5 match equivalents by 2036. The greatest amount of deficit is in the West Bromwich and Smethwick sub-areas.

### 2.2 Cricket pitches

- Poor or standard quality pitches
- Availability and quality of changing facilities, particularly on parks sites
- Three council-owned sites have been removed from cricket supply (Redhouse, Victoria Park Smethwick and Hydes Road Playing Field) due to lack of demand and cost of maintenance
- Three new non-turf pitches have been installed, as part of the ECB's long term strategy to invest in informal cricket provision, at Lewisham Park, Bearmore Playing Fields and Jubilee Park
- Minimal spare pitch capacity and two sites are overplayed by a total of 8 match sessions per season. In addition, four sites are played to capacity
- There are less sites that are overplayed, when compared to the 2014 strategy, due to a reduced level of demand at some of the larger clubs
- New pitches would therefore be required to accommodate displaced, latent and/or future demand.

### 2.3 Rugby union pitches

- Both clubs (Warley and Wednesbury RFC) currently have a deficit of provision for grass match pitch provision
- While Wednesbury RFC has a small amount of spare capacity identified for training pitch provision, this single pitch can only be used for training and therefore does not help to aid the overall deficit. The two pitches on site suffer from waterlogging, with the training pitch being heavily used, as the only part of the site that is floodlit
- Spare capacity has been identified at a number of education sites, namely Wood Green Academy, RSA Academy and Q3 academy, however only Wood Green Academy is used for affiliated rugby
- RSA Academy and Q3 Academy could potentially be accessed as additional supply, should clubs require further facility provision
- If both drainage and maintenance were improved to good quality at Wednesbury RFC there would be capacity for all current and future demand. Securing the site would prevent casual use and would also improve pitch quality.

## 2.4 AGPs

- All seven full sized AGP's in Sandwell are of a good quality, with three of the 3G AGP facilities being installed or refurbished in the last three years.

### Hockey

- With the resurfacing of George Salter Academy and Sandwell Academy as 3G, further hockey has been displaced out of the local authority
- Ormiston Forge Academy represents the only sand-based AGP suitable for hockey, with the site being used sparingly by Old Halesonians HC (imported demand).

### Football

- The Football Foundation model suggests that there is a need for an additional four full size 3G pitches to service the number of football clubs in Sandwell. This is forecast to increase to five over the lifetime of the strategy
- Although there has been an increase in the number of full sized 3G AGP's since the 2014 strategy, all facilities of this typology are well used across the study area and further investment is required to meet existing and future deficit
- The Council aspires to develop high quality football hub sites in the areas of the Borough that have significant need, centred around the development of full sized 3G AGP facilities. As part of this ambition, the Council is currently at Stage 1 of the Parklife Programme. The Parklife process, which is governed by Sport England and the Football Foundation requires the completion of this Playing Pitch Strategy before Sandwell Council proceeds onto Stage 2 of the programme.
- Birmingham County F.A has acquired an additional plot of land adjacent to its current headquarters at Ray Hall Lane and has plans to deliver a 3G AGP in the medium term (possibly towards the end of this strategy). This AGP would be used for coach education along with some community access. Birmingham County FA is keen to work in partnership with Sandwell Council and other local agencies to ensure a 'joined up' approach to 3G provision and programming to compliment future football hubs in Sandwell. It is noted that should this facility be delivered then the local catchment areas will include both Birmingham and Walsall

## 2.5 Other sports

### Golf

- All Sandwell residents are serviced by a golf course within a 20 minute drive time. There is spare capacity at all courses for current demand and furthermore any future demand
- The quality of Brandhall GC has reduced since the 2014 strategy and the course is not financially sustainable as it stands. Capital and maintenance investment are required if the course is going to continue to be maintained and used as a municipal golf course

### Tennis

- Poor or standard quality courts
- Both Old Hill and Wednesbury Tennis Club have identified a decline in membership, with Wednesbury TC identifying 'rapidly deteriorating courts a key influencing factor for the decline
- Sandwell MBC is hoping to support clubs to apply for funding and support as part of the LTA's Transforming British Tennis Together programme. IF successful, this funding initiative will focus on the improvement and long-term sustainability of local authority owned tennis facilities across the study area.

## **Sandwell MBC Playing Pitch Strategy**

### Netball

- All demand for matches is accommodated on the current supply of courts and this is supported by the Leagues which suggest that there are enough courts in Sandwell to satisfy demand.
- With the current and ongoing investment in facilities at Phoenix Collegiate Academy, there will be sufficient supply to meet demand

### Athletics

- Tipton Academy meets the needs of Tipton Harriers and is well used but there is capacity to increase membership
- The Hadley Stadium is not currently used and has been identified as being of poor quality, with some parts of the track dangerous for community use

### Bowling greens

- Addressing spare capacity and maximising use of bowling greens, particularly for pay and play opportunities.
- Lack of junior participation to sustain future demand.
- Where demand exists, ensuring that quality is sustained or improved.
- Notwithstanding that there may be additional demand for bowling greens in the future; there is an approximate current oversupply of seven greens in Sandwell based on a membership capacity analysis. Considering only council greens, there is a theoretical oversupply of one green.

## PART 3: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

### 3.1 Context

The Playing Pitch Strategy will provide a strategic approach to playing pitch provision in Sandwell. During times of change for local authorities, the Strategy will provide direction and set priorities for pitch sports. The Strategy sits within the context of the Vision 20130 for Sandwell, which identifies 10 ambitions alongside the vision to ensure that in 2030 Sandwell is a thriving optimistic and resilient community. Against this backdrop, the rationale for producing the Strategy is that it will help to deliver on Ambition 2 of the 2030 Vision, which aims to ensure Sandwell is a place where residents live health lives and live them for longer. The objects of the Strategy extend across multiple service areas and include:

- To help deliver the public health agenda
- To make the most efficient use of land, while providing all Sandwell residents with the opportunity to access high quality sport and physical activity facilities
- To inform the investment strategy for sport initiatives
- To inform local planning policy and potential developer contributions
- To inform sports development initiatives
- To reflect wider property services asset reviews
- To help facilitate community use of outdoor facilities on education sites

Sandwell has invested heavily in sports provisions in the past few years. The overall sport offer in the Borough is good with demand increasing. The recent winters have had an impact on grass pitch quality at some locations. Investment in changing rooms and new provision provides a positive picture for Sandwell. Those grass sports pitches identified as poor are primarily associated with localised flooding and drainage problems.

The resident population in Sandwell is recorded as 322,631 (ONS 2016 mid-year estimate Population projections). By 2022, the population is projected to increase to 337,200 (equivalent to a percentage of 4%). By the end of 2036, the population is projected to increase to 364,000 (equivalent to a percentage of 13%). It should be noted that the ONS 2016 mid-year population projections were released in May 2018, after the completion of analysis for the PPS Refresh needs assessment draft. As a result, TGR calculations undertaken in the body of the report reference 2014 mid-year projections.

The number of school places is currently 54,352 (33,857 primary and 20,495 secondary places). The total number of school places needed by 2022 is 57,572 (34,187 primary and 23,385 secondary places). This is a further 3,220 school places required in total (330 additional primary and 2,890 additional secondary school places).

The Number of Schools in Sandwell is currently 117 (94 primary, 4 special and 18 secondary). The number of schools required by 2022 to meet demand is 121 (1 additional primary free school and 3 additional secondary schools).

Along with most other Local Authorities across the country, Sandwell MBC experiences significant budgetary pressures and is constantly seeking ways to improve efficiency, lower costs, attract inward investment and reduce costs.

Parks / greenspaces budgets have recently been squeezed which in turn has resulted in less funding being available for pitch maintenance, mowing, slitting, drainage, changing room refurbishment / repairs etc

Pressures to increase the number of dwellings is high as this supports the 10 ambitions described above. Council Tax receipts support the delivery of services to local residents. The current number



of domestic dwellings in Sandwell is 132,886. This is anticipated to increase to 139,635 by 2022 and approximately 146,634 by 2022. It is estimated that the remaining need for residential units between 2026 and 2036 is approximately 14,000 units although land to meet this demand is yet to be identified. Asset Management is also a high priority, converting un-used land and open space into commercial use not only increases Business Rate receipts but offers job creation, regeneration opportunities and disposable income for residents.

Sandwell Council is keen to ensure that a correct balance is made between approving developments whilst also protecting areas of green, open space and sports grounds for residents to enjoy. It should be noted, however, that an increased demand for infrastructure and services (such as school places, transport or retail) caused by projected population growth, is likely to increase the risk of loss of grass pitches over the lifetime of the strategy.

Sandwell Council works closely with Sport England relating to planning issues and is aware of its recently updated policy around the protection of playing fields and the 'Playing fields policy and guidance' document. Sandwell Council recognises that Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:

- All or any part of a playing field, or
- Land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or
- Land allocated for use as a playing field unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of the five specific exceptions.

These are below;

### Exemption 1

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

### Exemption 2

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

### Exemption 3

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

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

### Exemption 4

The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced prior to the commencement of development by a new area of playing field:

- Of equivalent or better quality, and
- Of equivalent or greater quantity and, and
- In a suitable location, and
- Subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements

### Exemption 5

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

Should a situation arise whereby Sandwell Council deems it necessary to apply for planning permission which would result in the loss of a playing field then the Authority will endeavour to make every effort to consult with Sport England, the relevant NGB(s), residents, clubs and key stakeholders at an early stage in order to ensure that one or more of the exemptions detailed above are met and appropriate mitigations put in place.

It should be noted, however, that any losses of pitch provision across the study area will need to be justified to ensure one or more of the above exceptions are met.

### ***Links to other strategies***

There are a number of related strategies developed by Sandwell Council which have been adopted or are in the process of being developed, which will inform or be informed by the Playing Pitch Strategy:

- Vision 2030
- Sport and Leisure Vision
- Built Facilities Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Corporate Asset Management Plan and capital Strategy 2010-2015
- Sandwell Local Plan
- Green Space Strategy 2010
- Community Infrastructure Open Space Quality and Quantity
- Street scene Business Plan

### **3.3 Vision**

Therefore, this study has been developed on the basis of the above strategic drivers in order to ensure that it reflects the Council's wider ambitions. A vision has been set out to provide a clear focus with desired outcomes for the Sandwell Playing Pitch Strategy:

*'To have a portfolio of high quality and accessible outdoor sports facilities, which service the changing needs of residents and offer opportunities for all sections of the community to participate in both formal and informal sport, contributing to a higher quality of life.'*

**PART 4: RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following Strategy recommendations are based on the key issues emerging from the Assessment Report. It is recommended that the following are adopted by the Council and its partners to enable it to achieve the overall vision of the Strategy:

**RECOMMENDATION 1 (R1)**

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

**RECOMMENDATION 2 (R2)**

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

**RECOMMENDATION 1 (R3)**

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

## **PART 5: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

The objectives for the 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.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

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

#### **Objectives:**

- a. Enhance local planning policy and protect sports facilities
- b. Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements
- c. Ensure that well-used multi-pitch sites that are of strategic importance for sport and physical activity are protected and invested in
- d. Develop working relationships with education facilities, especially Academy Trusts, to protect the long term access to facilities for residents
- e. Ensure that where sites are lost that are deemed to be required for sport and physical activity, a clear and robust process for mitigation is followed.

#### **Objective (a) – Enhance local planning policy and protect sports facilities**

Based on the outcomes of the playing pitch strategy, enhance local planning policy and emphasise the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF paragraph 97). Highlight Sport England's statutory consultee role on planning applications that affect playing field land.

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

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

The majority of facilities from the assessment report justify protection. It is recommended that local planning policy protects facilities and the scope to legally safeguard long term use of strategically important sites to the community.

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

- Is the facility surplus to requirements not only now but also in the future?
- Could the facility be used for another type of sport for which there is a deficit?

- Can current users be sufficiently accommodated at another appropriate site taking into consideration access, cost and locality?
- Consideration as to the quality of the facilities (including ancillary facilities).
- The long term sustainability of the facility.
- The level of current use and the impact on the spatial distribution of facilities across Sandwell of closing a facility.

Furthermore, any potential school sites which become redundant over the lifetime of the Strategy may offer potential for meeting community needs on a localised basis. Where schools are closed their playing fields may be dedicated to community use to help address any unmet community needs. It is recommended that closed school playing fields are considered in the first instance for becoming community playing fields for meeting the needs identified in the Strategy before being considered for other uses. The following can be considered when assessing the suitability of conversion of former school playing fields for community use:

- Size
- Quality
- Physical accessibility
- History of community access
- Availability of ancillary facilities.

### **Objective (b) – Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs through a range of solutions and partnership agreements**

It is recommended that local sports clubs be supported to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership working. For example, it is recommended that the Council continue to 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>1</sup>. Clubs should also be encouraged to work with partners locally whether volunteer support agencies or linking with local businesses.

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

There is potential for sites in Sandwell to be leased to sports clubs and/or organisations. Each club will be required to meet service and/or strategic objectives set out by the Council. However, an additional set of criteria can be considered, which takes into account the quality of the club, aligned to its long term development objectives and sustainability.

It is increasingly important for the Council to work with voluntary sector organisations in order that they may be able to take greater levels of ownership and support the wider development and maintenance of facilities.

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

Club	Site
Clubs should have an appropriate accreditation award, such as the FA Charter Standard for football or Clubmark for other sports.	Sites should be those identified as 'Club Sites' (objective d) for new clubs (i.e. not those with a District wide significance) but which offer development potential. For established clubs

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

Club	Site
<p>Clubs commit to meeting demonstrable local demand and show pro-active commitment to developing school-club links.</p> <p>Clubs are sustainable, both in a financial sense and via their internal management structures in relation to recruitment and retention policy for both players and volunteers.</p> <p>Ideally, clubs should have already identified (and received an agreement in principle) any match funding required for initial capital investment identified.</p> <p>Clubs have processes in place to ensure capacity to maintain sites to the existing, or better, standards.</p>	<p>which have proven success in terms of self-management 'Key Centres' are also appropriate.</p> <p>As a priority, sites should acquire capital investment to improve (which can be attributed to the presence of a Clubmark/Charter Standard club).</p> <p>Sites should be leased with the intention that investment can be sourced to contribute towards improvement of the site.</p> <p>An NGB/Council representative should sit on a management committee for each site leased to a club.</p>

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

***Club outcomes for lease agreements***

It is recommended that the Council establishes 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 Policy***

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

The Sport England Community Sport Asset Transfer Toolkit is a bespoke, interactive web based tool that provides a step by step guide through each stage of the asset transfer process: <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/community-asset-transfer/>.

### **Objective (c) – Ensure that well-used multi-pitch sites that are of strategic importance for sport and physical activity are protected and invested in**

The nature of how sports and physical activity provision is changing. In the recent five years, a greater focus has been placed on creating large hub sites with multiple pitches and facility types that can service a range of requirements and needs from local residents. This is partially driven by sustainability, as it is typical more affordable to maintain a single large site due to economies of scale or reduced travel time, rather than a selection of smaller sites. It is also more efficient to provide a single clubhouse or ancillary facility that can meet the need of numerous sports and participation groups, rather than investing in multiple separate facilities that are then used by single teams and clubs from a range of sports.

In addition, large multi-pitch sites encourage participation by ensuring clubs can be accommodated on single sites, reducing administration and organisation, as well as improving club unity and effectiveness. This is also the case for central venue leagues, which bring football teams together from a range of clubs to play league fixtures a single multi-pitch hub site. In the case of Rugby, the RFU has identified a key strategic objective to ensure that clubs, wherever possible, run all participation from a single club site, in order to ensure financial sustainability of the club and remove the risk of clubs becoming dis-jointed and inefficient.

Sandwell is currently home to a number of these sites (Greets Green, Hydes Road, Lion Farm and West Smethwick Park all have 5 or more pitches), which are used for a variety of adult and youth football. There are also two large rugby sites and a number of high quality cricket sites that are the home ground for a number of teams. Given the growing importance of this type of site, it is important that large multi-pitch sites currently used for sport and physical activity are protected where possible.

Where a site is identified as being required for housing or commercial development, and therefore is at risk of loss, it is important that the possible mitigating actions identified in Objective e are identified and undertaken, in order to safeguard future participation in grass-roots sport and physical activity across Sandwell.

### **Objective (d) – Develop working relationships with education facilities, especially Academy Trusts, to protect the long term access to facilities for residents**

Following a Government recommendation in 2010 for all schools to apply for academy status, the number of academies across England has risen dramatically. Academies are independent, state-funded schools, which receive funding directly from central government, rather than through a local authority. The running of these establishments is overseen by individual charitable bodies called academy trusts, with many being part of a larger chain.

Of note for this strategy, Academies have more freedom than the schools they have replaced, with local authorities no longer having formal influence into how the academies are run. For sports facilities in particular, this means that largely, academies are able to make sports facilities available as they wish and depending on the individual business case and operational procedures for the site.

Where academies have applied for and received facility funding from third party organisations, such as the Rugby Football Union, ECB or Football Foundation, then they will be often be obligated to make facilities available for public use. While this often improves the overall quality of facilities, regulating hire prices or long term availability is typically a challenge. The majority of sports provision based on education sites is currently for football, however there is also a small amount of rugby and cricket provision. In the case of cricket, Sandwell Academy represents a priority site, as it is currently the 2<sup>nd</sup> ground for one of the largest clubs in the study area.

The study currently has 11 academies identified as having playing pitch provision, with 6 of these being available for community use.

To ensure that these facilities continue to be made available for community use, the following approach is recommended:

### ***For existing academy sites available for community use but with no long-term community use agreement***

Engage with the academy trust that runs the site, to negotiate a long-term community use agreement for the use of sport and physical activity facilities. Where facilities are currently used by a large club or organisation, endeavour to name the specific organisation within the agreement, to provide long-term security of tenure.

### ***For new or planned academy facilities***

Ensure that any new academy development has a planning obligation to develop high quality playing pitch provision, reflecting the strategic objectives identified within this strategy. Where this development is secured, ensure that a long-term community use agreement is secured (at least 5 years) for the use of facilities by local clubs and teams.

### **Objective (e) – Ensure that where sites are lost that are deemed to be required for sport and physical activity, a clear and robust process for mitigation is followed**

If, following the assessment identified in objective a, a site is not deemed to be valuable for sport and physical activity, it may be appropriate to dispose of some existing playing field sites (that are of low value i.e. one/two pitch sites with no changing provision) to generate investment towards creating bigger better quality sites (Strategic Sites) in order to meet the objectives of the Strategy and to develop the hierarchy of sites (see objective d).

The following criteria can be used as a basis for negotiations to mitigate the loss of playing field provision:

- Ensure that where playing fields are lost through alternative development or closure, that the type of provision of the same or improved standard is provided to meet demand identified
- Where pitches are lost due to redevelopment of the site, compensatory re-provision or an equivalent contribution for re-investment into new pitches will be sought as appropriate in an alternative accessible location
- Where opportunities exist to additionally increase pitch quality (and therefore pitch capacity to accommodate more matches) this is a priority (please refer to the action plan to identify quality deficiencies in the appropriate area)
- All negotiations and mitigation packages should be raised and discussed in partnership with the relevant NGB and Sport England through the Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group.

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

It is also vital that, in line with the 2018 issue of the NPPF and associated Sport England Planning guidance, any pitch provided as mitigation for loss is re-provided prior to any development taking place or loss of the original pitch.



**RECOMMENDATION 2**

To enhance outdoor sports facilities through improving quality and management of site

**Objectives:**

- f. Seek to address overplay
- g. Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites.
- h. Establish an approach to securing developer contributions.

**Objective (f) – Seek to address overplay**

Priority in the short term (given limited resources) should be directed to poor quality club sites with security of tenure. This standard, based on an achievable target using existing quality scoring to provide a baseline, should be used to identify deficiencies and hence it is recommended that investment be prioritised to those sites which fail to meet the proposed quality standard (using the site audit database, provided in electronic format). The policy approach to these outdoor recreation facilities achieving these standards should be to enhance quality and ensure the long term security of community use.

‘Good’ quality refers to facilities that have, for example, good grass cover, an even surface, are free from vandalism, litter etc., have access for disabled people and are supported by good quality ancillary facilities including changing accommodation, toilets and car parking. While ‘standard’ quality refers to facilities that have, for example adequate grass cover, minimal signs of wear and tear, reasonable changing accommodation and the goalposts may be secure but in need of minor repair. Please refer to the Sport England quality assessments.

***Improving pitch/surface quality as a priority***

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	Matches
Football	Adult pitches	3
	Youth pitches	4
	Mini pitches	6
Rugby Union	Pipe and Slit Drained and a good level of maintenance (D3/M2)	3.5
	Pipe drained and a good level of maintenance (D2/M2)	3.25
	Natural (adequate) drainage and a good level of maintenance (D1/M2)	3
Rugby League	Senior	3
Cricket	One grass wicket	5 per season
	One synthetic wicket	60 per season

There are also a number of sites that are poor quality but are not overplayed. These sites should not be overlooked as often poor quality sites have less demand than other sites but demand could

increase if the quality was to increase. Improving pitch quality should not be considered in isolation from maintenance regimes.

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

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.

### **Objective (g) – Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites**

To allow for facility developments to be programmed within a phased approach, it is recommended that the Council adopts a tiered approach to the management and improvement of playing pitch sites and associated facilities. Please refer to Part 7: Action Plan for the proposed hierarchy.

### **Objective (h) – Establish an approach to securing developer contributions.**

It is important that this strategy informs policies and emerging supplementary planning documents by setting out the approach to securing sport and recreational facilities through new housing development. The guidance should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to include provision and/or enhancement of appropriate playing fields and its subsequent maintenance. Section 106 contributions or CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) 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 Planning Committee, and timing of the Contribution(s) to be paid.
- Some contributions may need to be ring fenced for use according to the particular terms of the Planning Obligation, where there is opportunity to improve the appropriate pitches within the local vicinity. However, for some sports such as for example cricket and rugby a "central pot" for developer contributions across the local authority area may be necessary for the particular sport.
- Contributions can 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.
- It is recommended that all new or improved playing pitches on school sites are 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/>
- Establish a formula for collating developer contributions for playing pitches which is demand based.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

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

**Objectives:**

- i. Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock.
- j. Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.
- k. Work in partnership with National Governing Bodies, to access funding and investment opportunities through major facility investment programmes, in order to develop strategic facilities that change the landscape of sport in the Borough

**Objective (i) – Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock**

The Council and its partners should work to rectify identified inadequacies and meet identified shortfalls as outlined in the Assessment Report and the sport by sport specific objectives (Part 2).

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

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

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

It is recognised that in order to rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock will require investment into a combination of pitch maintenance, re-marking, drainage improvement and new provision, alongside officer resource to work with third parties to increase community use. It is key to note that this investment is not to be solely funded by existing Council budgets. Instead, alternative funding mechanisms should be sought, such as NGB investment programmes or Section 106 allocation.

A comprehensive and collaborative investment plan is required, in order to address the current shortfalls while recognising the increasing pressures on funding for grass-roots sports facilities.

**Objective (j) - Identify opportunities to add to the overall pitch stock to accommodate both current and future demand**

As has occurred since the 2014 iteration of the strategy, it is recommended that the Action Plan within this Strategy is used to identify improvements to Council-owned pitches whilst recognising the need to support partners. The Action Plan lists improvements to be made to each site focused upon both qualitative and quantitative improvements as appropriate for each area.

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

### **Objective (k) – Work in partnership with National Governing Bodies to access funding and investment opportunities through major facility investment programmes, in order to develop strategic facilities that change the landscape of sport in the Borough**

Sport and physical activity is becoming increasingly commercial, with the internet and social media allowing for an ever increasing number of people to be influenced by everything from professional sports to grass-roots participation. As part of this, growth, sports are benefiting from major TV and sponsorship deals, which generate vital revenue that can then be re-invested back into the grass-roots sector.

The combination of this investment, alongside funding allocated by public bodies to positively influence public health and mental wellbeing, ensures new facilities are being developed across the UK, servicing a number of different sports and type of physical activity.

A selection of the major investment programmes currently being delivered across the sector are identified below. It should be noted that this list is not an exhaustive list of NGB investment programmes, instead focussing on those that are likely to lead to the greatest capital spend across the country.

- Parklife Football Hubs Programme aims to create a sustainable model for football facilities based around artificial grass pitches on hub sites
- The RFU's Rugby365 programme is focussed on developing high quality 3G AGP provision on existing rugby club sites, in order to improve the overall experience of players
- The ECB's South Asian Action Plan has the objective to improve engagement with South Asian communities and provide the facilities and programmes that engage the greatest number of people in the game. As part of this, the ECB are looking to invest in indoor and outdoor facilities that better meet the requirements of South Asian communities.

The common theme across these investment programmes, as well as many other NGB development plans, is to service the changing needs of residents and participants.

In particular, by investing in AGP provision the overall objective is to provide facilities that can be used throughout the year during weekday evenings and weekends (as well as off-peak), providing a consistently high quality of experience in all conditions.

In order for Sandwell to benefit from the funding that is being made available across these investment programmes, as well as those managed by other bodies, it is vital that the Council works in partnership with National Governing Bodies to identify funding opportunities that will have the greatest possible positive impact on residents, by changing the future landscape of sport in the Borough.

### ***Investing in football through the Parklife Programme***

In 2017, Sandwell MBC submitted an expression of interest for the Parklife programme, building on the recommendations included within the previous PPS, which focussed on increasing the amount of 3G AGP provision that was available for the community to use during periods of peak demand.

Alongside the due diligence work undertaken by Sport England and the Football Foundation, as well as this Playing Pitch Strategy refresh, extensive mapping and modelling has been undertaken

in order to understand the potential impact of investment across the study area and neighbouring local authorities.

The findings from the PPS identify that there is a current shortage of four full sized 3G AGP's, which is projected to grow to 5 over the lifetime of the strategy. This aligns with the specific Parklife modelling which identifies the same shortfall.

As a result, analysis is ongoing to identify potential sites for future development which could be used as Parklife Hub sites, should calculations show there to be sufficient demand in the area to make new facilities sustainable.

As part of this, the following sites have been identified as being **potential** sites for future development, due to their location, size and access.

- Hydes Road Playing Fields
- Tividale Park.

The Council is currently undertaking an extensive due diligence exercise for all remaining sites in the study area that may be suitable for Parklife investment. Following the completion of this due diligence, this strategy will be updated to reflect the latest findings.

It should be noted that sites must be able to accommodate at least 2 full sized 3G AGP pitches, as well as additional grass pitch provision and a high quality ancillary facility. The most sustainable mix would include three or more 3G AGP's supported by a commercial offer and sufficient car parking.

## PART 6: SPORT SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Site specific actions falling out of the sport by sport objectives outlined below are detailed within the action plan.

### FOOTBALL OBJECTIVE

Use innovative investment and management to ensure that all residents have access to adequate quality pitch provision, in line with the changing nature of football participation

- Protect the current level of playing pitches and seek to provide new youth pitches in areas of deficit
- Improve the quality/drainage and therefore carrying capacity of existing pitch stock as a priority on sites that are overplayed, with support from the Football Foundation's Pitch Improvement Programme
- Transfer overplay to alternative venues which are not operating at capacity or are not currently available for community use. Geographical location is a determining factor for where people want to play and must be considered
- Where necessary, reconfigure existing pitch provision with access to suitable pitches and facilities, to support and grow the game
- Work with schools to secure tenure and access to primary and secondary schools to help address deficiencies
- Where schools are available but unused ensure access arrangements are suitable for facilitating access to the whole community, particularly in relation to cost.
- Where necessary, improve the quality and standard of changing rooms, in particular to accommodate dual gender changing facilities (in line with The FA standards).
- Where appropriate, develop partnership and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded (i.e. FA Charter Standard Community) clubs to manage their own 'home' sites thus facilitating club development (as detailed in the management objectives).

### 3G pitches

- Invest in new 3G AGP provision, to meet the growing demand for youth and mini football, as well as the changing nature of adult football demand. Work with key stakeholders such as the FA the Football Foundation and Sport England to deliver the Council's long term strategic objective of investing in high-quality football hub sites, serving the areas of the local authority with the greatest need.
- Develop and utilise a clear site selection process for identifying sites that meet the requirements of all stakeholders, while best serving the needs of residents and local clubs
- Hub sites will need to meet basic criteria including;
  - Suitable location to meet identified demand – currently identified as Oldbury and Wednesbury
  - Basic principle of using the site as a football hub
  - Sufficient site area - capacity for AGPs together with ancillary facilities such as changing rooms and appropriate levels of car parking
  - Prospect of securing planning permission
- The Council is currently working through a process to assess the suitability of all possible football sites in Sandwell, with particular consideration to Oldbury and Wednesbury. This includes input from colleagues within Legal Services regarding titles etc as well as colleagues in Planning and Parks. This will ultimately be ratified by Council Members. However some potential sites are:
  - Hydes Road Playing Fields
  - Tividale Park

- In partnership with the FA and local leagues, seek to establish, in a phased approach, accommodating all mini soccer matches (both 5v5 and 7v7) on full size 3G pitches. Work with leagues to address behavioural and cultural issues associated with having varied kick-off times or playing competitive football on an artificial surface
- Seek to establish a strategic phased programme of 3G pitches, which will increase training slots and support back to back matches on Saturdays and Sundays
- Ensure that sinking funds are in place to maintain 3G pitch quality in the long term

### RUGBY OBJECTIVE

Work towards meeting identified current and future deficiencies and increase the quality of pitches and ancillary facilities as required.

- Improve the quality of natural turf pitches at community club sites through the installation of primary and secondary drainage and other associated works as appropriate
- Assist community clubs in improving the maintenance regimes of their natural turf pitches in order to improve quality and increase capacity
- Work to ensure that all community clubs have access to high quality floodlit pitches that meet the needs of their playing and training programme
- Improve the quality of the changing room provision at community clubs sites in order to meet the needs of all participants
- Where necessary, establish access to World Rugby Artificial Grass Pitches and ensure that these pitches maintain world rugby accreditation throughout their lifecycle
- Work with schools to maximise access to natural and artificial pitches where necessary.

### CRICKET OBJECTIVE

Continue to support clubs by protecting and investing in home grounds, while engaging with informal cricketers in line with recent ECB facility and participation strategy work

- Protect current levels of provision and seek to ensure new non-turf pitch provision is well utilised and valued by the local community
- Ensure that any facilities developed support opportunities for women's and girl's competitive cricket
- Support clubs to develop and improve 'off pitch' practice facilities
- Work with clubs to invest in ageing ancillary facilities, to improve the overall experience of the game and ensure long term sustainability

### HOCKEY OBJECTIVE

Protect at least 1 full size sand based AGP to future proof hockey. Work with displaced clubs to deliver outreach programmes in the study area, with a view to eventually moving back into the local authority

- In order to future-proof hockey, ensure that at least 1 full sized sand-based facility is protected and maintained to an acceptable standard, in order to meet any future demand, should a new club be developed or if those teams that have become displaced wish to return to the study area.

## **OTHER SPORTS OBJECTIVES**

Maximise access to existing provision and work towards improving the quality of provision.

### ***Golf***

- Work to ensure the future provision of golf is sustainable, while protecting the access to affordable pay and play golf in Sandwell. Undertake a detailed options appraisal in 2018, to determine the future use of Brandhall Golf Club, balancing the need to provide fit-for-purpose golf facilities while ensuring sports facilities are sustainable in the long term.

### ***Tennis***

- Support clubs with the improvement of facilities, while investing in local authority court provision in partnership with the LTA and community groups.

### ***Netball***

- Retain high current usage and support league structures with the ongoing provision of high-quality provision.

### ***Athletics***

- Work to ensure future provision of athletics is sustainable and fit for purpose, working in partnership with Birmingham CWG bid team to deliver a portfolio of high quality provision across the region. As part of this work, undertake an options appraisal and feasibility work in 2019 to determine the best possible future use of the Hadley Stadium athletics track.

### ***Bowls***

- Retain pay and play access to high quality bowls provision while ensuring long-term provision is sustainable.



## **PART 7: ACTION PLAN**

### **7.1 Introduction**

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

It should be reviewed in the light of staff and financial resources in order to prioritise support for strategically significant provision and provision that other providers are less likely to make. Objective 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.

It is recommended that the Council make it a high priority to work with NGBs and other partners to comprise a priority list of actions based on local priorities, NGB priorities and available funding.

### **7.2 Justification of sites within the prioritisation list**

The list details policy options relating to individual sites and the need to enhance and develop new sporting provision. The following criteria have been used to identify priorities and justify the inclusion of sites within the list. Just one of the following may apply:

- A project is currently underway to enhance the existing site and/or funding has been secured
- An evaluation of site use is required as it is of poor quality and is reportedly underused
- The desired action is small scale, short term and will enhance the quality of current provision, whilst aiding community use.

Sites included within the action plan have been tiered based on criteria set below:

#### **Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites**

To allow for facility developments to be programmed within a phased approach, it is recommended that the Council adopts a tiered approach to the management and improvement of playing pitch sites and associated facilities.

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

## Sandwell MBC Playing Pitch Strategy

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

### *Proposed tiered site criteria*

Category	Strategic sites	Key centres	Club or education sites	Strategic reserve sites
<b>Pitch provision</b>	Accommodates three or more grass pitches. Including provision of an AGP.	Accommodates two or more grass pitches or multiple non-PPS sport courts or facilities.	Accommodates more than one pitch.	Likely to be single-pitch site with limited demand.
<b>Facility mix/multi-sport offer</b>	Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision.	Supports informal demand and/ or training etc.
<b>Management arrangement</b>	Management control remains within the local authority/other provider or with an appropriate lease arrangement through a committee or education owned.	Management control remains within the local authority 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.
<b>Maintenance</b>	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Standard maintenance regime either by the club or in house maintenance contract.	Basic level of maintenance i.e. grass cutting and line marking as required.
<b>Ancillary provision</b>	Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Appropriate access changing to accommodate both senior and junior use concurrently (if required).	No requirement for access changing to accommodation.

**Strategic sites** are of borough wide importance where users are willing to travel to access the range and high quality of facilities offered and are likely to be multi sport. These have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the issues identified in the assessment.

**Key centres** are more community focused, however they are still likely to service a wider analysis area (or slightly wider). There is likely to be more of a focus on a specific sport than at a Strategic Site i.e. a dedicated football 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.

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

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

**Strategic reserve sites** could be used for summer matches/competitions, training or informal play. They could be single or multi-pitch sites with limited usage, or have no recognised current usage.

## 7.3 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 and Football Foundation.

## 7.4 Area by area specific actions

The action plan has been created to be delivered over a ten year period. The information within the Assessment Report, Strategy and Action Plan will require updating as developments occur. It is not feasible to include all sites with identified development issues. Only sites, which meet the criteria listed above, have therefore been included. 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).

## 7.5 Capacity analysis

The table includes an indication of peak time capacity for each pitch typology across all sites. It is key to note that this reflects **peak time capacity** rather than capacity across a full week.

**SANDWELL COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

**Rowley Regis**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
Ashtree Playing Field	3	Council	Football	One standard adult football pitch used only for 11v11 youth. The site is not currently used and is a spare pitch.		Remark to youth 11v11 size and use as a youth football only site. Consider all options for offsite changing. Focus on reducing dog fouling through signage and warden patrols. Engage with large clubs in Ashtree sub-area to offer as potential site to address overplay or peak time capacity issues. If not required for football, re-designate as open space and mitigate loss through investment in multi-pitch hub site or Parklife development	<b>Council</b>	Club Site	M
Bearmore Playing Field	5	Council	Football	Two standard adult football pitches located in far south of Rowley Regis used for adult teams but subject to antisocial behaviour and pitch damage.		Remark one adult pitch as youth 11v11, to service existing demand. Target dog fouling problems with better signage and red bins. Improve maintenance and deal with off road problems.	<b>Council</b>	Club Site	S
Brickhouse Farm	8	Council	Football	Poor quality site, no changing rooms. One adult football pitch unused – posts in place but no markings. Dog foul issues.		Retain as strategic reserve. Target dog foul problems with better signage and red bins.	<b>Council</b>	Strategic Reserve	S
Britannia High School (Closed)	10								
Britannia Park	11	Council	Football	Two standard adult football pitches also used for youth 11v11. One standard mini pitch unused competitively but recreational demand. Users report poor quality changing rooms.		Remark one 11v11 pitch as youth 11v11 and use as a youth football site. Transfer adult play to Bearmore. Seek to improve changing rooms. Consider converting 7v7 pitch to a 9v9 pitch. Improve quality of pitches. Investigate funding options to improve changing facilities and pavilion.	<b>Council</b>	Club site	S
Haden Hill Park	35	Council	Bowls	Two bowling greens on site well used. Talboats Bowling Club would like to self-manage/maintain the site. Issues with public playing but not paying as site is open access-pay & play is therefore difficult to control. Club uses Old Hill CC (ID 55) for pavilion. Public toilets are in the park.		Engage with Talboats Bowling Club to explore the potential of community asset transfer, with the club taking on management and maintenance of the site.	<b>Bowls Club/ Council</b>	Club Site	M
Old Hill Cricket and Tennis Club	55	Private Club	Cricket	Standard quality cricket pitch. Poor drainage on outfield. Club requires more training facilities, e.g. non-turf practice nets. Displaced demand outside Sandwell as square is at capacity.		Support the club with their aspirations to develop ancillary provision at the site, as well as non-turf practice nets	<b>ECB</b>	Club Site	S-M
			Tennis	Four adequate quality tennis courts not available for pay and play but adequate to meet the club's needs. Club has experienced a reduction in membership levels and is struggling to be sustainable		Work with the club to keep the club sustainable and retain existing membership base.	<b>LTA</b>	Club Site	M-L
Ormiston Forge Academy	59	Academy	Football	One poor adult football pitch and one poor 11v11 youth pitch. Available for community use and played to capacity.		Work with school to continue community use and consider ways to improve quality of pitches.	<b>FA</b>	Education Site	M
			Sand AGP	Good quality full size sand AGP but not floodlit. Imported hockey demand from Old Halesonians, however, there is no local hockey demand for the pitch. At capacity on		Continue community use.	<b>EHB</b>	Education Site	M-L

**SANDWELL COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
				Saturdays but some spare capacity at other times.					
Ormiston Forge Academy Main Site	60	Academy	Netball	Three good netball courts on site currently not accessed for community use.		No current community demand for netball courts in the Rowley Regis area. Consider site as a potential if demand increases.	<b>England Netball</b>	Education Site	M-L
Rowley Labour Club	71	Private Club	Bowls	One good bowling green on site with spare capacity.		Support club to increase/sustain participation.	<b>CSP/ England Bowls</b>	Club Site	M
Timbertree Primary School (Closed)	86								
Tividale Football Club	89	Private Club	Football	Facilities have been improved in line with FA ground requirements, following collaboration between the club and the Football Foundation.		No further actions at present, however if the club progresses through the pyramid system and needs to adhere to more onerous ground grading requirements, this should be reviewed.	<b>FA Council Tividale FC</b>	Club Site	S
St Michael's CE College	113	Academy	Football	The site has one good adult football and one good 11v11 youth football pitch. It is reported that under PFI contract costs are too high for users due to maintenance and operating costs for the school.		Maximise access to the AGP and work with the School in order to develop and secure community use. Cost is the biggest inhibitor for community use and site should be benchmarked against other similar facilities in the Area.	<b>Council/ Sport England (access to schools)</b>	Education Site	S-M
			Sand AGP	72x35 yards the AGP is currently only used by the School as again operating costs are too high under PFI contract.		Based on a shortfall of good cricket pitches for the Sandwell League, the artificial wicket at the College could provide an additional ground if community use can be secured.			
			Cricket	One artificial cricket wicket on site unused for community use.					
			Netball	5 good quality netball courts are also unused for community use.					

**Oldbury**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
Barnford Park	4	Council	Football	There are four, adult size, poor quality (poor drainage) football pitches. No demand has been identified for the site and therefore there is spare capacity at the site for adult football.		Re-mark as youth 11v11 provision and engage with local clubs to make site available for community use. If the site is to be used for community use, work with the Football Foundation and County FA to identify capital and/or maintenance funding to improve the quality of the site.	<b>Friends of Group</b>	Club Site	S
			Cricket	One standard quality square with five wickets. Played to capacity and used by the Sandwell Cricket League.		Protect grass pitch provision.	<b>ECB</b>	Club Site	S
Brandhall Primary School	7	School	Football	There are two youth 11v11 pitches, a 5v5 pitch and a 7v7 pitch, all standard quality. Site is home to Brandhall Colts. Pitches heavily played due to number of teams and little time to recover. Club would like to start an adult team but do not have a pitch available. Site has no changing rooms.		Consider moving some play to Cakemore (ID: 15) in order to give pitches chance to rest. Also consider Cakemore as a site to develop an adult team.	<b>Brandhall Colts/ Council</b>	Education/Club Site	S-M

**SANDWELL COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
Bristnall Hall Academy	9	Academy	Football	One poor quality adult pitch not available for community use due to concerns about over play.		Establish relationship with the School in order to encourage community use in the future.	<b>Council</b>	Education Site	M
			Netball	Two poor quality netball courts not available for community use.					
Cakemore Playing Field	15	Council	Football	Three standard quality adult pitches used minimally for youth 11v11 football.		Consider transferring some play from Brandhall Primary School and use site to develop club, in particular an adult team. Promotion of facilities. Sand slitting/verti draining.	<b>Brandhall Colts/ Council</b>	Club Site	S-M
Langley Bowling Club	45	Private	Bowls	One well used private green with some spare capacity for additional members		Support club to maintain participation and increase where possible.	<b>Bowls England</b>	Club Site	S
Lion Farm Playing Fields	48	Council	Football	There are 11 adult poor quality pitches also used as youth 11v11 pitches. Pitches prone to water logging, changing facilities are poor and toilets are kept locked due to vandalism. Usage has declined but site is still over played due to poor quality. Fly tipping and car parking issues. Sand slitting has been undertaken in an effort to improve quality, however this has not had any significant impact.		Continue to explore improved maintenance methods and explore the option of developing the site as a future football hub.	<b>FA/ Council</b>	Strategic Site	S-M
Old Cross Pub	54	Private	Bowls	Private bowls green, very well used. Some spare capacity for additional members.		Support club to maintain participation and increase where possible.	<b>Bowls England</b>	Club Site	S
Oldbury Academy	58	Academy	Football	Two standard quality adult pitches available for community use and used, however, pitches have poor drainage and can be unplayable in winter. Accommodates imported demand.		Consider site as potential future capacity if required.	<b>FA</b>	Education Site	L
			Cricket	One artificial wicket of good quality. Outfield would only be big enough for junior games.		Consider site as potential future capacity if required.	<b>ECB</b>	Education Site	L
			Tennis/Netball	Three tennis and netball over marked, good quality. Not currently used for community use.		Consider site as potential future capacity if required.	<b>LTA/ England Netball</b>	Education Site	L
			Netball	Two netball courts good quality.		Consider site as potential future capacity if required.	<b>England Netball</b>	Education Site	L
			3G AGP	Academy has planning permission for 5 aside 3G pitch which will be available for community use. Timescales unknown.		Work with school to utilise pitch for community use when complete.	<b>FA/ Council</b>	Education Site	M-L
Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy	61	Academy	Football	Two poor quality adult pitches not available for community to use to avoid over play.		Retain for school use.	-	Education Site	-
			Cricket	Artificial wicket unsafe and therefore not currently used.		Decommission	-	Education Site	-
			3G AGP	Full size sand dressed AGP resurfaced April 2014. Tividale currently using the pitch for training. No other use except for school use currently.		Work with school to maximise use of the pitch, especially for hockey.	<b>England Hockey</b>	Education Site	S
			Tennis/Netball	Three good quality tennis and netball courts over marked. Not currently used for community use.		Consider site as potential capacity if required.	<b>LTA/ England Netball</b>	Education Site	L
Perryfields High School	62	School	Football	One 9v9, one 7v7 and one 5v5 pitch, which are note available for community use. The club that has previously used this site (Perrywoods United)		Work with the school to re-instate community use, establishing a robuse community use	<b>FA/ Council</b>	Education	S

**SANDWELL COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
				have been displaced to Hadley Stadium, due to a recent (2018) decision by the school to remove community use from the site.		agreement and providing clubs with long term security of tenure.			
			Tennis/Netball	Two standard quality tennis and netball courts over marked. Not currently used for community use.		Consider site as potential capacity if required.	<b>LTA/ England Netball</b>	Education Site	L
The George Public House	82	Private	Bowls	One green on site, well used but with some spare capacity for additional members.		Support club to maintain participation and increase where possible.	<b>Bowls England</b>	Club Site	S
Tividale Park	90	Council	-	No evidence of current pitches but has previously had football at the Site. Drainage has been an issue and signs of dog fouling. The site is being considered as a potential site for a Parklife football hub.		Undertake further consultation and feasibility work to identify if the site could be an effective Parklife hub site	<b>FA/ Friends of Group/ Council</b>	Strategic Reserve and future Strategic Site	S-M
			Cricket	Feb 17 - Artificial wicket now in place. In good condition.			<b>Council</b>		-
Brades Lodge School	91	School	Football	Two standard quality adult pitches used by Tipton Town FC youth and ladies team. Spare capacity at peak time.		Use spare capacity as a way to retain quality at the Site.	<b>Club</b>	Education/Club Site	S
Warley RFC	96	Private	Football	Two good quality football pitches overplayed by 4 matches per week. Changing rooms, showers and parking is poor.		Explore options for improving changing facilities. Consider reducing play in order to maintain good quality. Explore options of moving demand onto nearby 3G AGP development, either existing or planned.	<b>Warley RFC</b>	Club Site	S
			Rugby	One good quality pitch (M2/D2) at the site which is well used, with the site currently showing a deficit of provision. Changing facilities are in need of upgrading as it is a barrier to participation.		Explore options for improving changing facilities.	<b>Warley RFC</b>	Club Site	S
Wernley Public House	101	Private	Bowls	One green on site, well used but with some spare capacity for additional members.		Support club to maintain participation and increase where possible.	<b>Bowls England</b>	Club Site	S
York Road Social and Sports Club	107	Private	Football	One standard adult pitch with spare capacity and no identified demand.		Use spare capacity as a way to retain quality at the Site.	<b>Club</b>	Education/Club Site	S
Portway Lifestyle Centre	116	Sandwell Leisure Trust	3G AGP	Full size 3G pitch on site of good quality. Well used facility.		Continue to maintain current participation and look to make use of spare capacity. Ensure sinking fund is in place in order to resurface pitch when required.	<b>Sandwell Leisure Trust</b>	Club Site	S
Pitfields Close	117	Council	Football	Playing Fields 150m from Perryfields High School main building. Two poor quality adult pitches with poor drainage with no identified demand at site.		Explore the option of using this site as a multi-pitch hub site. If the site is to be taken forward as a multi-pitch hub site, work with the Football Foundation and County FA to identify the required capital and maintenance investment, on order to improve the quality of the site.	<b>FA/ Perrywoods United/ Council</b>	Education/Club Site	S



**SANDWELL COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

**Smethwick**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
Hadley Stadium	34	Sandwell Leisure Trust	Football	One standard adult pitch within the athletics track. Site shows a significant deficit of provision and is of standard quality.		Undertake further feasibility and site use options analyses to identify how the future use of the site can align with the sport specific objectives of other sports within this PPS, as well as the wider strategic priorities of the Council	SLT	Club Site	M
			3G AGP	3G AGP recently refurbished, with facility well-used.			SLT	Club Site	S
			Athletics	Hadley Stadium has an eight lane track and throwing facility. The facilities are extremely poor and are not regularly used as the track has been disused for some time.			SLT	Club Site	S
Holly Lodge High School College Of Science	38	School	Football	Two adult, standard quality pitches but standing water in bad weather. 0.5 spare capacity at peak time. Pitches used by Smethwick Raiders.		Continue to support the Club to play at the Site. Ensure use is secured.	School/ Club	Education/Club Site	S
			Netball	Four good netball courts currently not used for community use.		Consider site as potential future capacity if required.	England Netball	Education Site	L
Lewisham Park	47	Council	Football	Two mini pitches (1x 5v5 and 1x 7v7) of standard quality. Currently unused, pitches used for recreational football. No current demand for the pitches in this area. Site used as overspill car park for West Bromwich Albion.		Use site as strategic reserve and to be used for recreational football.	Council	Strategic Reserve	S-M
			Cricket	New artificial wicket installed in 2017, which is reported to be well used.		No further actions.	Council/ECB	Key Centre	
Londonderry Playing Fields	49	Council	Football	Site has been re-allocated for alternative leisure provision, with the planned development of the aquatic centre and accompanying leisure centre, to be used for the 2021 Birmingham Commonwealth Games.		Ensure that previous demand from site is re-allocated effectively to neighbouring facilities, to mitigate the loss of provision.			
Pheasant Public House	63	Private	Bowls	One bowling green on site. Significant spare capacity for additional members.		Support the Club to increase/sustain membership.	Bowls England	Club Site	L
Sandwell Academy	74	Academy	Football	Two good quality adult pitches not available for community use in order to retain quality.		Retain for school use.	-	Education Site	S
			3G AGP	Full size high quality 3G AGP, which was privately funded. Site is well use for training and matchplay.		No further actions	School/ EHB	Education Site	
			Netball	Three good netball courts not currently used for community use.		Consider site as potential future capacity if required.	England Netball	Education Site	L
			Cricket	Adequate quality education site used by West Bromwich Dartmouth CC. No security of tenure or access to ancillary facilities, The club does not currently have access to water or facilities, which significantly reduces the attractiveness of the site for potential players.		Protect and secure long-term access to the site for cricket explore possibility of investing in ancillary provision at the site, in order to address issues with lack of water or changing provision.	Club/ECB	Education Site/Club Site	M
Smethwick Cricket Club	77	Private	Cricket	Standard quality wicket but with uneven outfield. The pavilion is also described as poor quality. The Club reports the need for non-turf practice nets. The 15 wickets at the site are over played and the Club accesses a second ground for the third XI. The club currently leases the site, but there is no record of the details of this lease.		Explore funding opportunities to improve outfield as well as the pavilion. Work with the club to negotiate a clear and long term community use agreement and/or lease, to provide security of tenure for the club and allow it to grow in the future.	Club/ ECB	Club Site	S-M

**SANDWELL COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
Thimblemill Recreation Centre	84	Private	Football	Four standard quality adult football pitches on site also used for 11v11 youth. Spare capacity of 2 matches at peak time.		Retain spare capacity as a way to retain quality at the Site.	<b>Thimblemill Rec</b>	Club Site	S
			Cricket	Standard quality square with eight wickets. Good quality changing and pavilion.		Support the Club to maintain current levels of participation and expand where possible.	<b>ECB/ Club</b>	Club Site	M
			Bowls	Two greens on site, one good quality, one standard quality. The Club is one of the smallest in the area with 21 members and therefore has significant spare capacity.		Support the Club to increase membership.	<b>Bowls England</b>	Club Site	L
Victoria Park (Smethwick)	93	Council	Football	Two standard quality adult pitches and one 5v5 pitch, all of which are unused.		Retain as strategic reserve and use for demand displaced from Londonderry Playing Fields. If the site is to be used, consider re-marking as youth 11v11 to address deficit for this pitch typology.	<b>Council</b>	Strategic Reserve	
			Cricket	Grass cricket square replaced with non-turf pitch in 2017. Site reported to be well used.		No further actions	<b>Council</b>	Club site	
			Tennis	One court of standard quality used for recreational tennis.		Maintain quality for recreational users.	<b>Council</b>	Strategic Reserve	L
West Smethwick Park	103	Council	Football	Five adult pitches standard quality, also used for 11v11 youth. No spare capacity during the peak period. Changing facilities require major refurbishment. Dog fouling is also an issue. The pitches are often of a lower quality for matches on Sunday afternoons following heavy use throughout the weekend.		Consider site as a multi-pitch hub site, with major investment into grass pitches to ensure high quality of provision throughout the season. As part of the future usage plans for the site, re-mark at least two of the pitches as youth 11v11, in order to meet the deficit of this pitch typology across the sub-area.	<b>Council</b>	Key Centre	L
			Cricket	There are two cricket squares on site with two wickets per square. Played to capacity by the Sandwell Cricket League. One of the squares also has an artificial wicket used recreationally.		Protect grass pitch provision on site, which is well used by Sandwell Cricket League.	<b>Council</b>	Key Centre	S
The Collegiate Academy Trust	112	Academy	Tennis/Netball	Three tennis and two netball courts over marked. Not used for community use.	-	Consider site as potential future capacity if required.	<b>England Netball</b>	Education Site	L

**Tipton**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current Status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
Ace Academy	1	Academy	Football	One adult pitch standard quality. Not available for community use to prevent overplay.		Retain for school use.	-	-	-
			Rugby Union	One senior pitch poor quality. Not available for community use to prevent overplay.		Retain for school use.	-	-	-
Coneygre Arts Centre Pitches	20	Private	Football	Two standard quality adult pitches. Spare capacity for 3 matches per week. Majority of play at site is youth 11v11		Work with the Club to explore options of remarking one adult pitch as youth 11v11 size.	<b>FA</b>	Club Site	S
Farley Park	25	Council	Football	One standard adult pitch used for youth 11v11. Pitch played to capacity.		Re-mark existing adult pitch as youth 11v11 to meet demand.	<b>Council</b>	Club Site	S
			Bowls	There is one good quality green on a site and a second green that is used as a practice green (formerly grass tennis courts). Well used green with some spare capacity.		In order to protect both greens, site should be considered, where possible, as a self-managed/maintained site in partnership with the Council.	<b>Greets Green BC/ Council</b>	Club Site	M
Jubilee Park	42	Council	Football	Two standard quality adult football pitches used only for adults. Minimal spare capacity (0.5)		With additional capacity for two adult pitches, site could be explored as a future hub site.	<b>Council</b>	Club Site	L

**SANDWELL COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current Status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
				each week. Teams change in adjacent community centre, which is an acceptable arrangement. Room for two additional pitches.		Further feasibility work and due diligence should be undertaken to assess this option.			
			Cricket	New non-turf pitch installed in 2017		No further action	<b>Council/ECB</b>		
RSA Academy	73	Academy	Football	One good adult pitch that is hired out through a private 3 <sup>rd</sup> party organisation and has extensive demand identified on site.		Secure long-term community use agreement with club and look to move demand onto nearby sites with spare capacity.	<b>NGBs/Academy</b>	Key Centre	L
			Rugby Union	One good quality senior pitch with minimum school use. Currently available for community use but unused. Spare capacity of 3 matches per week. The Site is closed so there is no unofficial use and maintenance is carried out externally.		Clubs unwilling to travel to access pitches on a regular basis. Continue relationship with school and use pitch as overspill for clubs.	<b>NGBs/Academy</b>	Key Centre	L
			Cricket	One grass wicket and one artificial wicket on site. Grass wicket used to capacity by the Sandwell Cricket League.		Continue relationship with school and seek to secure community use.	<b>NGBs/Academy</b>	Key Centre	L
			3G AGP	Full size good quality 3G pitch well used during the week and at the weekend. Pitch has a valid FA performance test and can be used for competitive matches. Some spare capacity.		Maintain current level of use and look to accommodate competitive matches on the pitch, especially mini and youth. Explore options of transferring mini play from Sandwell Minor League to the AGP. Ensure sinking fund is in place for future replacement.	<b>NGBs/Academy</b>	Key Centre	S
Tipton Sports Academy	88	Sandwell Leisure Trust	Football	Two adult pitches on site. The second pitch is over marked with one 9v9 and one 7v7 pitch. The first pitch is located within the athletics track and is floodlit; maintenance is adequate although work needs doing as the pitch is uneven. Changing facilities meet Step 5 League requirements. Second pitch has drainage issues. The main user is Tipton Town FC and the site is identified as having a deficit of provision.		Improve level/evenness of main pitch and improve drainage on second pitch if funding available. Seek to increase the carrying capacity of the grass pitch provision, in order to alleviate deficit.	<b>SLT</b>	Key Centre	M
			Sand AGP	2x 5aside cages (Skorz) used for training and 5 aside matches. Spare capacity.		Consider resurfacing to 3G as only football demand.	<b>SLT</b>	Key Centre	S
			Tennis	Four good quality tennis courts available on a pay and play basis for casual use only. Some spare capacity.		Maintain court quality.	<b>SLT</b>	Key Centre	S
			Athletics	The Site is the main athletics facility in Sandwell. There is an 8 lane, floodlit track constructed to international standards with all-weather surfaces and provision for all track and field disciplines. Used by Tipton Harriers and is sufficient to meet needs. Could accept more members.		Maximise use of the track and support the Club to attract new members.			
Victoria Park	92	Council	Football	Two adult pitches standard quality currently unused due to lack of changing facility.		Explore options for future changing provision possible 'portacabin' style changing.	<b>Council/FA</b>	Strategic Reserve	M-L
			Cricket	New non-turf pitch in place and being used for informal cricket		No further actions	<b>Council/ECB</b>	Key Centre	

**SANDWELL COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Powis Avenue	104	Council	Football	One youth 11v11 pitch with room for two. No changing provision.		Explore options for changing provision.	<b>Council</b>	Strategic Reserve	M-L
St. John's Rec	115	Private (Licence agreement with Warley RFC)	Football	One poor quality adult pitch with poor changing rooms. Poor drainage and litter a problem. Pitch played to capacity. Site in ownership of charitable trust, club would need long lease to develop site.		Explore options and funding for pitch and changing room improvements. Negotiate long term lease.	<b>Warley RFC/ RFU</b>	Club Site	S-M
			Rugby Union	One senior pitch with some spare capacity, however pitch improvements would be required to ensure quality did not decline further. Poor changing facility joint with football. Site in ownership of charitable trust, club would need long lease to develop site.		Explore options and funding for pitch and changing room improvements. Negotiate long term lease.	<b>Warley RFC/ RFU</b>	Club Site	S-M

**West Bromwich**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current Status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
Charlemont Farm	17	Bustleholme FC	Football	Two standard adult pitches also used for 11v11 youth and three standard 9v9 pitches. Club is responsible for maintenance and management at the site and site is currently showing a deficit of supply. Investment into changing rooms in past five years but club would like to erect fence around changing rooms to prevent vandalism.		Work with FF and Birmingham FA to improve pitch quality, to increase capacity and reduce overplay. Look to re-allocate demand to nearby sites with spare provision.	<b>Bustleholme FC/ FA</b>	Club Site	S
Churchfield Tavern	19	-	-	Disused bowling green.		Decommission as there is spare capacity at other greens in the area.	-	-	-
Dartmouth Bowling Club	21	Private	Bowls	One good quality green well used but with some spare capacity.		Support the Club to maintain participation and increase where possible.	<b>Bowls England</b>	Club Site	S
Dartmouth High School (Closed)	22								
George Salter Academy	29	Academy	Football	Grass pitch provision that was improved in parallel to the 3G AGP investment on site. Significant demand identified on site, with analysis showing a deficit of supply.		Ensure that demand on site is being serviced by 3G AGP provision, rather than leading to overplay on grass pitches.	<b>Academy</b>	Education Site	S
			3G AGP	One standard full size 3G AGP and one 5v5 3g AGP pitch, both resurfaced in 2017 with investment from the Football Foundation and support from Birmingham FA		No further action			
			Tennis/Netball	Four good quality tennis and netball courts over marked not currently available for community use.		Consider site as potential future capacity if required.	<b>LTA/ England Netball</b>	Education Site	L
Greets Green Playing Fields	32	Council	Football	Six poor quality, (poor drainage) adult pitches played to capacity. Poor changing rooms on site and dog foul an issue. one youth 11v11 currently use the site but there are five match equivalents of spare capacity in total. Changing rooms are currently locked and not used.		Retain as strategic reserve and explore as potential option for multi-pitch hub site. If the site is to be used for affiliated football, invest in the site, in order to improve the carrying capacity and the overall quality of pitches.	<b>Council</b>	Strategic Reserve	M
			Bowls	Green well used by Greets Green BC and close to capacity.		Support the Club to maintain participation and increase where possible.	<b>Council/ Bowls England</b>	Key Centre	S-M

**SANDWELL COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current Status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
Jesson Playing Fields	41	Council	Football	Poor adult pitch and poor youth 11v11 pitch, Pitches have improved slightly since previous PPS and now used for youth 9v9 football,		Retain as strategic reserve and explore as potential option for multi-pitch hub site. If the site is to be used for affiliated football, invest in the site, in order to improve the carrying capacity and the overall quality of pitches.	<b>Council</b>	Strategic Reserve/Club site	L
Kenrick Park	43	Council	Football	One adult pitch standard quality with no changing provision or ancillary facilities and no formal demand.		Use as strategic reserve and consider re-designation as open space	<b>Council</b>	Strategic Reserve	M
King George Playing Field	44	Council	Football	12x 9v9 and 8x 7v7 pitches prone to water logging in bad weather. Pitches normally used by the Sandwell Minors League, however 7v7 matches were moved to 3G in 2014 due to poor weather/water logging. Significant spare capacity for pitch provision.		Explore as potential hub site, alongside ongoing Parklife discussion.	<b>FA/ Council</b>	Club Site	S-M
			Cricket	Two non-turf pitches installed in 2017		No further actions	<b>Council</b>	Key Centre	
Phoenix Collegiate (South Campus)	65	College	Football	One adult pitch poor quality and one poor 9v9 pitch. Not available for community use due to concerns over overplay.		If pitch quality improves work with school to make pitches available for community use.	<b>Council/ FA</b>	Education Site	S
Q3 Academy	67	Academy	Football	Two adult and two 11v11 youth standard quality with spare capacity for two matches and one match respectively for community use.		Establish relationship with the school. Currently spare capacity to in the area but consider school site as strategic reserve.	<b>Council/ FA</b>	Education Site	M-L
			Rugby Union	Pitch marked around the outside of one adult football pitch. Currently not used but available for community use.		No current demand for rugby union in West Bromwich. Consider pitch if demand increases.	<b>RFU</b>	Education Site	M-L
			3G AGP	Half size 3G pitch of good quality. At capacity Monday to Thursday at peak time. Spare capacity Friday evening and Saturday/Sunday.		Maintain current usage and increase where possible. Ensure sinking fund is in place.	<b>FA</b>	Education Site	M-L
			Tennis/Netball	Three good quality tennis and netball courts over marked. Not currently available for community use.		Consider site as potential capacity if required.	<b>LTA/ England Netball</b>	Education Site	L
Redhouse Park	69	Council	Football	Four standard quality adult pitches, also used for youth 11v11 with significant deficit of supply, caused by high levels of demand. Existing ancillary provision not suitable to existing demand.		Explore options to provide additional changing facilities such as portacabin changing. Look to export demand to nearby sites, to reduce overplay	<b>FA</b>	Key Centre	M
			Cricket	One grass wicket on site of poor quality. Used to capacity by the Sandwell Cricket League.		Protect as grass cricket provision	<b>ECB</b>	Key Centre	M
			Tennis	Five standard quality tennis courts available for pay and play.		Retain quality for recreational tennis.	<b>LTA</b>	Key Centre	M
Sandwell District Football League	75	Private	Football	One good quality adult pitch used for county standard games.		This site is adjacent to the Walter Goodman Stadium (WGS) and has been identified as a potential development site alongside the proposed 3G development at WGS (see below). Ensure this site is included in future planning and feasibility work.	<b>Sandwell District FL</b>	Club Site	L
County FA (Walter Goodman Stadium)	95	Private	Football	One good quality adult pitch used for county standard games, however, no floodlights at the Site. Potential investment into 3G AGP provision has been explored, however this needs to align with wider Parklife strategic		Retain quality. Explore options to install floodlighting. Site has planning permission but needs extending in order to get the true value from the asset.	<b>County FA</b>	Club Site	L

**SANDWELL COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current Status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
				decisions, to ensure that the future supply of 3G AGP provision meets local needs.					
West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club	102	Private	Cricket	Two good quality squares, each with 10 wickets, played to capacity. Good quality pavilion.		Retain quality of squares and pavilion and support the Club to maintain participation.	<b>Club/ ECB</b>	Club Site	M-L
Churchfields Playing Fields	109	Council	Football	Three standard quality adult pitches. Site has had investment over the last two years and the changing rooms and car parking is excellent however no demand has been identified on site.		Transfer youth (11v11) play from nearby Redhouse Park in order to increase usage and maximise ROI on recent investment. Ensure maintenance is good quality in order to stop any further reduction in quality.	<b>Council</b>	Club Site	S
FC Premier	114	Private	Football	One good quality adult pitch also used for youth 11v11. Spare capacity of 0.5. Club reports the need for additional pitches in order to expand youth.		Work with the Club to explore options for securing additional pitches.	<b>Club/ FA</b>	Club Site	M
			Bowls	Great Barr BC. Bowls green well used and is over capacity. Club has ten junior members.		Maintain participation at the Club.	<b>Club</b>	Club Site	M

**Wednesbury**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current Status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
Elwells	24	Park Hill Boys FC	Football	One poor quality adult pitch and one standard youth 11v11 pitch, both of which are unused.		Retain as strategic reserve.		Strategic Reserve	L
Holyhead Primary School	39	School	Football	One standard quality youth 11v11 pitch with no demand identified		Retain for community use	<b>Club</b>	Education Site	L
Hydes Road Playing Fields	40	Council	Football	There eight standard quality adult pitches which are also used for youth 11v11 matches. Dog fouling is a big issue. Poor changing rooms. Adult games in the mornings can churn up the pitch for the youth games in the afternoon. Spare capacity of 2.5 matches per week. Site underwent drainage improvement works (slitting).		Invest in ancillary provision and signage, to reduce dog fouling.  Explore site as potential multi-pitch hub site as part of Parklife programme. Pending development on other sites, consider re-allocating at least 4 of the adult 11v11 pitches as youth 11v11, to address the deficit for youth 11v11 provision across the study area.	<b>Council</b>	Strategic Site	S
			Cricket	New non-turf pitch installed in 2017		No further action			
			Bowls	Reasonably well used green, spare capacity for approximately 30 members. Club reports that grass is not cut often enough and that there is no water supply to water the green or access to toilets (despite onsite pavilion).		Work with the Club to increase participation and ensure toilets are available when bowling green is open. Consider self-management of the site.	<b>Bowls England/ Council/ Club</b>	Key Centre	M
Pulse Soccer and Fitness Wednesbury	66	Private	Football	Two standard adult pitches with spare capacity for one match per week.		Establish relationship with Soccer Centre and look at ways to increase use.	<b>Council</b>	Club Site	M
			3G AGP	8x 5v5 cages and one 9v9 pitch used for small sided games.		Ensure sinking fund in place in order to replace carpets in the future.	<b>Pulse</b>	Club Site	L
			Netball	Six standard quality floodlit netball courts formerly part of the closed Phoenix Collegiate South Campus. The courts are now operated by Pulse Soccer and it is reported by users that quality of courts has deteriorated with car parking and some lighting also less well		Consider options of self-management by the League and explore options to improve courts and lighting.	<b>League/ England Netball</b>	Key Centre	S

**SANDWELL COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site	ID	Management	Sport	Current Status	Peak Time Capacity	Recommended actions	Lead Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Timescale
				maintained. Site is a key netball site for the League.					
Stuart Bathurst B.C. High School	81	School	Football	One poor quality adult football pitch unavailable for community use – School decision.		Establish relationship with school to look at the potential for community use in the future.	<b>Council</b>	Education Site	S
			Tennis/Netball	Two good quality tennis and netball courts over marked unavailable for community use.		Establish relationship with school to look at the potential for community use in the future.	<b>Council</b>	Education Site	S
Wednesbury RFC	99	Club	Rugby Union	Site has two poor quality (M1/D0) pitches (one match pitch and one floodlit pitch used only for training). Drainage is poor as pitches are built over hard courts. Site is open access and evidence of glass and dog foul. Good changing facilities. Pitches are already over played and the club is growing and expected to expand further.		Explore options for floodlighting the first pitch in order to spread training across both pitches. Explore improving the drainage of the existing two pitches to reduce existing overplay and allow the club to grow in the future.	<b>Club/ RFU</b>	Club Site	S
			3G AGP	Half size 3G pitch used by the club for training (not contact as it is not World Rugby compliant). Site not available for wider community use.		Explore options to upgrade to World Rugby standard in order to accommodate more training and reduce play on grass pitches. Ensure sinking fund is in place to replace carpet in the future.	<b>Club/ RFU</b>	Club Site	S
Wednesbury Sports Union	100	Private	Football	One standard adult pitch currently unused. Reason unknown.		Establish relationship with the Club to increase participation.	<b>FA</b>	Club Site	S
			Cricket	Good quality square with 12 wickets over played by 5 matches per season. One artificial wicket on site.		Ensure quality of square is maintained in order to continue to accommodate overplay without impacting on quality.	<b>Club</b>	Club Site	L
			Tennis	Four standard quality tennis courts which the Club report to be deteriorating quickly and in need of resurfacing. Spare capacity for members if quality was improved.		Explore options to support the Club to resurface courts to ensure they are playable. Work to increase the number of members.	<b>Club/ LTA</b>	Club Site	S
Wodensborough Ormiston Academy	105	Academy	Football	Standard quality adult pitch not available for community use.		No current demand for use of the pitch. Establish relationship with the school to accommodate potential future demand.	<b>Council/ FA</b>	Education Site	S
			Rugby Union	One standard senior pitch with natural drainage that is adequate for use. The pitch is unavailable for community use.		No current community demand for use of the pitch. Establish relationship with the school for any potential future demand.	<b>Council/ RFU</b>	Education Site	S
			Tennis/Netball	Three good quality tennis courts over marked with two netball courts. Not available for community use.		No current demand for use of the courts. Establish relationship with the school for any potential future demand.	<b>Council/ LTA</b>	Education Site	S
Wood Green Academy	106	Academy	Football	Four standard adult pitches with spare capacity for two matches. School reports a need to expand changing rooms in order to accommodate additional community use.		Explore options with the school to increase changing capacity. Maintain quality of pitches.	<b>Academy/ FA</b>	Education Site	S
			Rugby Union	One standard quality (M1/D1) senior pitch over marked around the outside of one of the football pitches. Ad hoc use from Wednesbury RFC. Pitch at capacity due to football usage.		Ensure appropriate pitch maintenance is applied in order to improve/sustain quality.	<b>Academy</b>	Education Site	S
			Cricket	One artificial wicket and outdoor net facilities away from the pitch. Nets used by Wednesbury CC for training (Thursdays). Spare capacity for match play and training.		Maintain relationship with the Club and maintain net quality.	<b>Academy/ ECB</b>	Education Site	S

## **PART 8: CONCLUSIONS**

The Playing Pitch Strategy seeks to provide guidance for planning decisions made across Sandwell in the three years up to 2021. 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 Sandwell 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. The Strategy is intended to be flexible and regularly updated using the accompanying database tools provided.



## **PART 9: MONITORING AND REVIEW**

It is important that once the strategy is adopted that the plan becomes a live document so that progress against the actions can be reviewed and monitored. We recommend that there is regular monitoring (i.e. quarterly).

Since the issue of the 2014 PPS, the Council and steering group has met on a regular basis to ensure that the strategy and action plan remain up to date and reflect latest priorities.

This PPS refresh represents the most robust element of the review process, utilising existing data and supplementing with a sample of new primary research to ensure that PPS meets the ongoing needs of Sandwell MBC and its residents.

It is recommended that the Council continues to track progress with implementing the recommendations and action plan. As has been delivered so far, this process should involve regular liaison with the pitch sport NGBs.

Through the delivery of the PPS, the Council has formed a number of working groups, which will call on both internal and external expertise in order to deliver the recommendations and actions included with this document. For these working groups to deliver effectively, it is key that they are provided with support from external members of the steering group, such as Sport England and NGB's.

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 development departments, 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.

It is recommended that within three years, a full Playing Pitch Strategy project is undertaken, including a full data capture process, followed by updated needs assessment and strategy delivery. This will ensure that the raw data is as robust as possible and that the future recommendations are valid for the greatest possible length of time.

## APPENDIX ONE: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The objectives 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.

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

### **National context**

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

### ***DCMS: A New Strategy for Sport***

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, following a consultation paper in 2015, launched the new strategy 'Sporting Future: A new Strategy for an Active Nation' in 2016. The development of the new strategy reflects a need to re-invigorate the nation's appetite for participation in sport following what appears to be a significant reduction in participation (highest profile being swimming), following the upsurge after the 2012 London Olympics.

The sport strategy is targeting five outcomes which each sports organisation, public or private sector, will be measured against:

- Physical wellbeing
- Mental wellbeing
- Individual development
- Social and community development
- Economic development.

Government funding will go toward organisations which can best demonstrate that they will deliver some or all the five outcomes.

The Delivery of the outcomes will be through three broad outputs;

- More people from every background regularly and meaningfully taking part in sport and physical activity, volunteering and experiencing live sport.
- A more productive, sustainable and responsible sports sector
- Maximising international and domestic sporting success and the impact of major sporting events

### ***Sport England: Towards and Active Nation***

The Vision for this Strategy is: 'We want everyone in England regardless of age, background or level of ability to feel able to engage in sport and physical activity. Some will be young, fit and talented, but most will not. We need a sport sector that welcomes everyone – meets their needs, treats them as individuals and values them as customers'.

The Sport England Strategy 'Towards an Active Nation' puts the policies set out in 'A new Strategy for an Active Nation' into practice. This will mean significant change for Sport England and for their partners.

# SANDWELL COUNCIL

## PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

This strategy sets out Sport England will deliver this task. The key changes Sport England will make are:

- Focusing more money and resources on tackling inactivity because this is where the gains for the individual and for society are greatest
- Investing more in children and young people from the age of five to build positive attitudes to sport and activity as the foundations of an active life
- Helping those who are active now to carry on, but at lower cost to the public purse over time. Sport England will work with those parts of the sector that serve the core market to help them identify ways in which they can become more sustainable and self-sufficient
- Putting customers at the heart of what we do, responding to how they organise their lives and helping the sector to be more welcoming and inclusive, especially of those groups currently under-represented in sport
- Helping sport to keep pace with the digital expectations of customers
- Working nationally where it makes sense to do so (for example on infrastructure and workforce) but encouraging stronger local collaboration to deliver a more joined-up experience of sport and activity for customers
- Working with a wider range of partners, including the private sector, using our expertise as well as our investment to help others align their resources
- Working with the sector to encourage innovation and share best practice particularly through applying the principles and practical learning of behaviour change

### **West Midlands**

Within the West Midlands this strategy is one of a family of strategies including the West Midlands Combined Authority's (WMCA) document *West Midlands on the Move 2017-30 Physical Activity Strategy* and the Active Black Country's *Towards an Active Black Country Strategic Framework 2017-2033: A Call to Action to Work Together to Get People Active*.

The WMCA's strategy sets out the following ambition:

“We will ignite a social movement throughout the West Midlands that makes physical activity and citizenship the norm. We want ‘active citizens’ and we are committed to:

- Making it feel easier and more desirable to get around the West Midlands;
- Making it feel easier and more enjoyable to be outdoors in our green and blue spaces as well as other urban environments;
- Improving how it feels to live in our streets and work in our communities;
- Improve people's life chances, health, employability and access to work.”

### **Black Country**

The Active Black Country's call to action is explicitly set in the context of the long-established, evidence-based vision for the Black Country in 2033 and the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan, which is currently being refreshed. The actions set out in the Active Black Country strategic framework have been developed around the three themes which form the core of the SEP: People, Business and Place.

The Black Country framework is underpinned by a set of principles and values which also underpin this strategy.

The principles are:

- Life course approach, recognising the longer term impact of health and social experiences;
- Asset-based approach, mobilising and utilising the skills and knowledge of individuals and their connections and resources within communities and organisations;

## SANDWELL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

- Economic viability, ensuring our approaches are affordable;
- A sustainable approach;
- A collaborative approach, working in partnership with individuals and communities;
- A recognition of the role which sport and activity have in education attainment;
- A focus on wellbeing.

The values are:

- Ensuring that individuals and communities are the focus of our work;
- Respecting and promoting the diversity of individuals, communities and businesses across the Black Country;
- Working in Partnership;
- Working in an inclusive way so that any individual, community or organisation can contribute;
- Ensuring a happy, healthy working environment;
- Behaving with integrity;
- Creating a commitment to continually create, learn and improve.

### **Football:**

In August 2015, the Football Association (FA) released their National Game Strategy for Participation and Development (2015 – 2019), which committed the organisation to invest £260 million into grassroots football over the next four years. The strategy has four key priorities;

- Participation – ‘More players playing football more often’. The FA are aiming to boost female youth participation by 11% and retain the current level of male team affiliation
- Player Development – ‘Better quality players being developed and entering the talent pathways’. The FA will invest £16m into coach education and development programmes. There will also be 1,000 more top level grassroots coaches developed and on-going investment into the skills coaching programme for 5 – 11-year olds
- Better Training and Playing Facilities – The FA has committed £48m to new and improved facilities through the Football Foundation. This includes the roll out of a new sustainable model for grassroots facilities in 30 cities through football hubs owned and operated by local communities. An ambition has also been stated to ensure that half of mini-soccer and youth matches are played on high-quality artificial grass pitches
- Football Workforce – ‘Recruiting and developing volunteers and paid staff who service the game’. This will grow the workforce, increase the number of qualified referees and ensure there is an advisory board for every County FA.

The national strategy follows the FA’s October 2014 announcements, stating its intentions to deliver 30 football hubs in cities across the country. The FA intends to increase the number of full size, publicly accessibility 3G AGP’s to over 1,000 across England. It also intends to facilitate the delivery of more than 150 new club-owned and managed football hubs to support the delivery of FA, County FA and professional club youth development and coach education programmes. It also aims to ensure that at least 50% of all mini soccer and 9v9 matches are played on good quality 3G AGP’s.

A key trend for football across the country is the contraction of adult affiliated clubs and the growth of more casual and informal forms of football, such as 5 and 7-a-side and organised evening 11-a-side, typically played on floodlit 3G pitches. This trend reflects the perceived reduction in free time across the UK and the reticence to commit to weekly football on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

The growth of demand and supply of 3G provision and the changing patterns of demand among grass roots footballers is key and will be addressed as an output of this study.

## SANDWELL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

In addition to the focus on 3G facilities the FA has emphasised, throughout consultations, the commitment of the organisation to improving grass pitches, with the overall target being to improve 2,000 grass pitches across the UK and reduce the amount of cancellations, especially due to waterlogging.

The F.A along with funding partners The Football Foundation, Premier League and Sport England have announced a major capital funding programme entitled 'Parklife Football Hubs' which seeks to increase the number of 3G pitches across the country and establish a Trust to improve grass pitches. Sandwell Council is keen to be engaged in this programme, has submitted an expression of interest and has a commitment in principle to allocate 'match funding' towards financing the programme. Work is currently ongoing.

### **Cricket**

#### **Cricket Unleashed (2016)**

The ECB published its new strategic plan in 2015. One of the core aims of the strategy is to create more players, great teams and inspired fans, guided by good governance and strong financial operations. The goal of Cricket unleashed is to make the game more accessible and inspire the next generation of players, coaches, officials and volunteers.

The ECB are looking to work with local authorities to develop fit-for-purpose facility and participation plans that will engage with local residents and ensure residents are provided with the right facilities to help them play the game.

It is key that this Playing Pitch Strategy recognises the opportunity made available by Cricket Unleashed and provides a framework that allows stakeholders to work together and deliver against the key objectives of 'more play', 'great teams' and 'inspired fans'. It's also vital that any facility development for cricket takes the objectives of the strategy into consideration, namely the growth of entry level cricket, women and girls' cricket, T20 and engagement of previously hard-to-reach demographics groups.

#### **All Stars Cricket (2017)**

Launched in 2017, All Stars Cricket is an ECB initiative that provides children aged five to eight with an introduction to cricket, focussing on parental engagement in supporting the newly trained All Stars Cricket Activators, as well as having a special focus on establishing women's softball and cricket events.

The programme will be delivered nationwide at over 1,800 centres, predominantly at club sites, with the ECB expecting the programme to have a positive impact on junior demand in the short to medium term, providing a transition for children into formal junior cricket.

It is key that this Playing Pitch Strategy recognises the opportunity made available by Cricket Unleashed and All Stars Cricket and provides a framework that allows stakeholders to work together and deliver against the key objectives of 'more play', 'great teams' and 'inspired fans'.

#### **South Asian Cricket Strategy (2018)**

The ECB announced a wide-ranging Action Plan to transform the way it engages with South Asian communities and draw more players, fans and volunteers into every level of the game.

The Action Plan was launched with a series of events in three 'core cities' including a Chance to Shine Street Tape-ball competition at Sparkhill Park in Birmingham, a schools' cricket competition at Bradford Park Avenue Cricket Ground in Yorkshire and a women's and girls' cricketing session at Leyton County Ground Sport Centre in East London.

# SANDWELL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

Insight work undertaken by the ECB strategy team has identified the following key drivers for the Strategy:

- South Asian participation in recreational cricket is at 30%
- The single biggest barrier to South Asian participation is access to facilities in urban areas
- Other challenges identified included; lack of scouting or talent ID in urban areas, the cost of travel and equipment for county age group cricketers, a lack of female coaches, access to cricket at school and a lack of cultural considerations within the match day experience
- 3% of domestic, non-international, ticket sales are from South Asian audiences compared to 40% in the Champions Trophy
- Cricket is overwhelmingly popular with South Asian communities who contribute 18% of the cricketing economy

Using all of this data and insight, ECB worked with Sport England to identify ten 'Core Cities' where the majority (61%) of the South Asian population live: Birmingham, Bradford, Kirklees, Leeds, Leicester, London, Luton, Manchester, Sandwell and Slough. These ten areas will be the focus of the first two years of the project. Following this initial period, the plan will expand to engage to being to engage with a further 300 districts that make up the remaining 39% of the audience.

The ECB Action Plan has set out 11 recommended actions which include:

- URBAN CRICKET CENTRES - The creation of 20+ new Urban Cricket Centres and the development of 1,000 non-turf pitches and 100 turf pitches by 2024;
- COMMUNITY TALENT CHAMPIONS - Piloting the implementation of 'Community Talent Champions' to scout talent previously missed by the scouting system;
- PRIMARY SCHOOLS - The delivery of cricket sessions to 6,000 primary schools in deprived urban communities through Chance to Shine by 2019;
- DIVERSITY IN COACHING - The adoption of the 'Rooney Rule' to support the progression of BAME coaches working in the professional game for all future ECB coaching roles; working with the ten 'core cities' to train and develop 200 female coaches;
- BURSARIES - The awarding of bursaries to talented young South Asian players.

## **Rugby Union**

### **RFU Strategic Plan (2017-2021)**

In October 2017, the RFU published its strategic plan, with the overall objective of being: *England's strongest sport, underpinned by good governance and regulation, as well as increased investment in the game to drive elite performance and community participation*<sup>2</sup>.

The following key areas of focus are particularly relevant for this strategy;

- Protect our clubs: Support clubs to protect themselves against risks to sustainability in the key areas of leadership, facilities and finances. Support clubs to meet all their statutory and regulatory obligations
- Expand places to play through Artificial Grass Pitches: Install and manage strategically placed Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP's) nationwide, increasing playing opportunities for the 15-a-side game and other variants in communities where natural turf pitches are significantly overused. Improve access to rugby in non-traditional and urban areas
- Engage new communities in rugby: Increase female player numbers, with more teams and matches, expansion in the education environment and transitioning more players to clubs

---

<sup>2</sup> RFU Strategic Plan (<http://www.englandrugby.com/about-the-rfu/rfu-strategic-plan/>): 2017)

## SANDWELL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

- Grow the grass-roots game: Increase the number of active male and female (14+) 15-a-side teams by 10%. Increase the number of 15-a-side matches played by 20%. Increase the number of active rugby union players by 10%.

The objectives and targets of the RFU will be referenced throughout this strategy and utilised to prioritise facility development projects as part of the recommendations and action plan section.

### **England Rugby Women and Girls Action Plan (2017-2021)**

As part of the four-year strategic plan summarised above, England Rugby has launched the women and girls action plan for the next four years. The plan recognises the significant growth in the female game over the last four years and sets out a plan for the next four years to continue to grow the number of women and girls engaging in rugby.

There are currently 512 women and girls teams in England and 27,500 existing players, however by 2021 England Rugby wants to growth these numbers, engaging 100,000 females in rugby and converting 25,000 of those into new players.

### **RFU facilities strategy (2014-2018)**

The RFU published its Facility Strategy (2014) for the next four years<sup>3</sup>. The strategy includes the following relevant objectives and priorities relevant to the PPS:

The core aims of the RFU are to create effective and efficient facilities, management and governance along with community integration

Facility priorities include improving changing provision, natural turf pitch quality, AGPs and floodlighting for both matches and training. These affect commercial opportunities within community clubs.

### **Hockey**

#### **England Hockey Facilities Strategy (2017)**

In 2017 England Hockey published the latest facilities strategy for the sport, which replaces the previous 2012 edition and aims to help every hockey club in England work towards having appropriate and sustainable facilities that provide excellent experiences for players.

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

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

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

The EHB has the ambition of growing participation by 10,000 adults and 32,500 children. To enable this, the following three objectives have been highlighted;

- PROTECT: To conserve the existing hockey provision. EH currently has over 800 pitches that are used by hockey clubs (club, school, universities). We need to retain the current provision where appropriate to ensure that hockey is maintained across the country

---

<sup>3</sup> RFU National Facility Strategy (<http://goo.gl/m6kqms>: 2014)

## SANDWELL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

- **IMPROVE:** To improve the existing facilities stock (physically and administratively). The current facilities stock is ageing and there needs to be strategic investment into refurbishing the pitches and ancillary facilities. There needs to be more support for clubs to obtain better agreements with facilities providers & education around owning an asset.
- **DEVELOP:** To strategically build new hockey facilities where there is an identified need and ability to deliver and maintain. This might include consolidation of hockey provision in a local area where appropriate. Research has identified key areas across the country where there is a lack of suitable Hockey provision and there is a need for additional pitches. There is an identified demand for multi pitches in the right places to consolidate hockey and allow clubs to have all of their provision catered at one site.

### ***Netball***

To facilitate the successful achievement of Netball 10:1:1 and Goal 4, England Netball will:

- Accelerate the participation growth by extending our market penetration and reach through the activation of a range of existing and new participant-focused products and programmes that access new and targeted markets.
- Increase the level of long-term participant retention through targeting programmes at known points of attrition and easy transition through the market segments, supported by an infrastructure that reflects the participant needs and improves their netball experience.
- Build a sustainable performance pathway and system built on the principles of purposeful practice and appropriate quality athlete coach contact time.
- Develop sustainable revenue streams through the commercialisation of a portfolio of products and programmes and increasing membership sales. This will also include the creation of cost efficiencies and improved value for money through innovative partnerships and collaborations in all aspects of the business.
- Establish high standards of leadership and governance that protect the game and its people and facilitates the on-going growth and transformation of the NGB and sport.

### ***British Tennis (LTA) - Place to Play Strategy***

The LTA aim to get more people to play tennis more frequently and the places to play strategy is a way of doing this. The strategy will aim to provide high quality facilities for everyone at a convenient location.

It's one plan that aims to increase opportunities for people to play tennis on a regular basis at tennis clubs close to their home, which provides high quality opportunities on safe and well maintained tennis courts.

The strategy sets out:

- Overall vision for places to play
- How to grow regular participation by supporting places to play to develop and deliver the right programmes
- Capital investment decisions to ensure we invest in the right facilities to grow the sport
- Supporting performance programmes in the right locations.

The LTA is committed to growing the sport to ensure that more people are playing tennis more often at first class tennis facilities, with high quality coaching programmes and well organised competition.



## SANDWELL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

The overall aim for the next five years (2011-2016) is to ensure that, as far as practicably possible, the British population has access to and are aware of the places and high quality tennis opportunities in their local area. In brief

- 
- Access for everyone to well-maintained high quality tennis facilities which are either free or pay as you play
- A Clubmark accredited place to play within a 10 minute drive of their home
- Indoor tennis courts within a 20 minute drive time of their home
- A mini tennis (10 and under) performance programme within a 20 minute drive of their home (Performance Centres)
- A performance programme for 11 - 15 year olds within a 45 minute drive time of their home (High Performance Centre).

A limited number of internationally orientated programmes strategically spread for players 16+ with an international programme (International High Performance Centres)

# SANDWELL COUNCIL 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>• Sustainable Facilities 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 Loans Scheme <a href="http://www.rfu.com/microsites/rff/index.cfm?fuseaction=loans.home">http://www.rfu.com/microsites/rff/index.cfm?fuseaction=loans.home</a>	The Loans Scheme helps finance projects that contribute to the retention and recruitment of rugby players. Projects eligible for loans include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Club House Facilities: General structural improvements, general refurbishment, storerooms and offices, kitchen facilities, training areas.</li> <li>2. Grounds (other than pitches): Car parking facilities, ground access improvements, fencing, security measures.</li> </ol>
Rugby Football Foundation - The Grant Match Scheme <a href="http://www.rfu.com/microsites/rff/index.cfm?fuseaction=groundmatch.home">http://www.rfu.com/microsites/rff/index.cfm?fuseaction=groundmatch.home</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>

## SANDWELL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Awarding body	Description
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. Smaller Charities.

### ***Protecting Playing Fields***

SE launched a funding programme; Protecting Playing Fields (PPF ) as part of its Places People Play Olympic legacy mass participation programme and is investing £10 million of National Lottery funding in community sports projects over the next three years (2011-2014).

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

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

The programmes three priorities are:

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

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

## ***Strategic Facilities Fund***

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

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

Key features which applications must demonstrate are:

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

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

The Strategic Facilities Fund will prioritise projects that:

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

# SANDWELL COUNCIL

## PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

---

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

### Funder's requirements

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

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

### Indicative costs

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

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

<http://www.sportengland.org/media/198443/facility-costs-4q13.pdf>

The costs are for the development of community sports facilities and are based on providing good quality sports facility for the for the 4th Quarter 2013. These rounded costs are based on typical schemes funded through the Lottery and CAD layouts developed in accordance with Sport England DGNs current at 4th Quarter 2013.

It is anticipated that construction output and activity will rise by 2% in 2014 and that tender prices are forecast to rise by 3% to December 2014.