



# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY

## ASSESSMENT REPORT OCTOBER 2022

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## ABBREVIATIONS

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
BAFA	British American Football Association
BC	Bowls Club
BCGBA	British Crown Green Bowling Association
BSUK	Baseball Softball United Kingdom
CFA	County Football Association
CONGU	Council of National Golf Unions
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FF	Football Foundation
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FPM	Facilities Planning Model
GMA	Grounds Management Association
HC	Hockey Club
JFC	Junior Football Club
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LFFP	Local Football Facilities Plan
NFFS	National Football Facilities Strategy
NGB	National Governing Body
NHS	National Health Service
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
PPOSS	Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy
PQS	Performance Quality Standard
RFL	Rugby Football League
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RLFC	Rugby League Football Club
RUFC	Rugby Union Football Club
SCB	Staffordshire Cricket Board
TC	Tennis Club
U	Under
WJYFL	Walsall Junior Youth Football League

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### PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Knight, Kavanagh & Page (KKP) has been commissioned by the Black Country authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton, together with the Black Country Consortium, to assess playing pitch and outdoor sport facility needs across the individual local authority areas. The output is provision of four separate needs assessments and strategies across the aforementioned authorities as well as one additional overarching framework.

This is the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) Assessment Report for Sandwell. It presents a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) Guidance (for playing pitch sports) and Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (for "non-pitch" sports). The PPS Guidance details a 13-stepped approach, separated into five distinct sections:

- ◀ Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach (1, 2 & 3)
- ◀ Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision (4 & 5)
- ◀ Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views (6, 7 & 8)
- ◀ Stage D: Develop the strategy (9 & 10)
- ◀ Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (11, 12 & 13)

Stages A to C are detailed in this report, with stage D covered in the proceeding strategy document and Stage E ongoing once the work has been adopted. The lifespan of a PPOSS is considered to be three years, although this can be increased if it is kept up to date. As part of the Stage E process, the PPOSS should be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off. Such a review will help to maintain the momentum and commitment built up during its development.

#### 1.1: Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach

##### *Why the strategy is being developed*

The PPOSS for Sandwell will replace the existing study, which was updated in 2018 and is nearing the end of its lifespan.

A key driver for undertaking the Study across the four authorities was to support the preparation of a joint Black Country Plan and to provide an important evidence base for its development. The intention was for this to replace the Black Country Core Strategy, which was adopted in 2011; however, separate local plans are now to be produced by the four local authorities instead.

Notwithstanding the above, the joint framework will still enable the four authorities to ensure that each PPOSS is carried out to same degree of detail and quality and for the reports to identify compatible outcomes across the sub-region. It will also help the authorities identify areas of deficits and surpluses in provision as well as helping to identify and capitalise on cross-boundary opportunities.

The strategies will be produced in accordance with national planning guidance and provide robust and objective justification for future sporting provision throughout the Black Country. One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated in 2021, is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Paragraph 98 discusses the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation that can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

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Paragraph 99 discuss assessments and the protection of “existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields”. Paragraphs 101 and 102 also promote the identification of important green spaces by local communities and the protection of these facilities. Such spaces may include playing fields and outdoor sports facilities.

### ***Management arrangements***

A project team from Sandwell Council, as well as the other relevant councils, has worked with KKP to ensure that all relevant information is readily available so that project stages and milestones are delivered on time. In addition, a strong and effective steering group has and will continue to lead the PPOSS during its development and will be responsible for the delivery of its recommendations and actions. The membership of this group is balanced and representative of the different parties and key drivers behind the work; it is made up of representatives from the councils, Active Black Country, Sport England and the relevant National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs).

The steering group is and has been responsible for the direction of the PPOSS from a strategic perspective and for supporting and checking and challenging the work of the project team. It will be important for the steering group to continue once the PPOSS has been finalised for several reasons, including a continuing responsibility to:

- ◀ Be a champion for provision in the area and promote the importance of the PPOSS.
- ◀ Support implementation of the recommendations and action plan.
- ◀ Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the study.
- ◀ Ensure that the work is kept up to date and refreshed when necessary.

### ***Agreed scope***

A wide range of playing pitch and outdoor sports and associated facilities have been agreed for inclusion in the PPOSS in Sandwell and across all four Black Country authorities. In full, the study covers:

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| ◀ Athletics                          | ◀ Bowls  |
| ◀ Cricket                            | ◀ Cycling                                      |
| ◀ Football (including 3G pitches)    | ◀ Golf   |
| ◀ Hockey (sand/water based AGPs)     | ◀ Netball                                      |
| ◀ Rugby union (including 3G pitches) | ◀ Rugby league (including 3G pitches)          |
| ◀ Tennis                             | ◀ Water sports (e.g. sailing and water skiing) |

In addition, other grass pitch sports are included where identified as having a presence. This can include, but is not limited to, sports such as American football, baseball/softball, Gaelic football and lacrosse.

Sport England’s PPS guidance applies to football, rugby union, rugby league, cricket and hockey, as well as any other grass pitch sports, whereas the ANOG guidance applies to the remaining sports (as these are “non-pitch”).

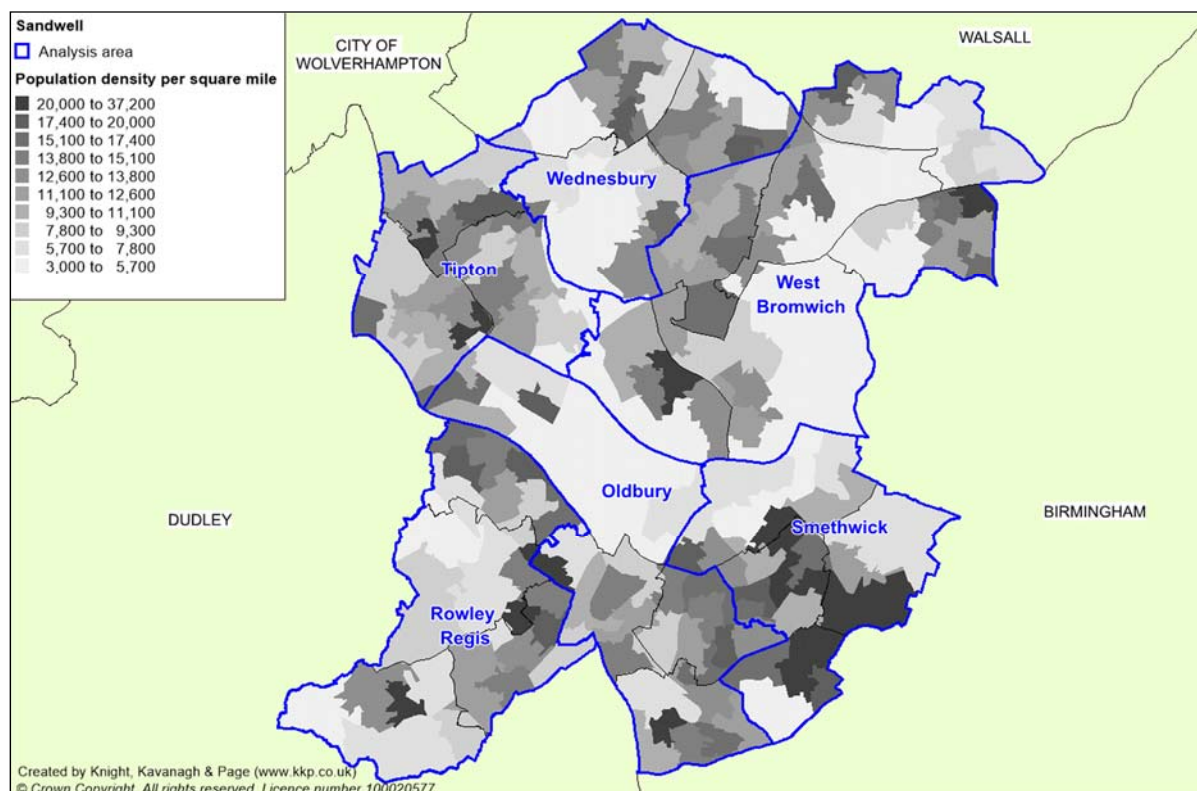
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## Study area

The study area for the Sandwell PPOSS is the Sandwell Council boundary area. Further to this, sub areas or analysis areas have been used to allow for a more localised assessment of provision and examination of supply and demand at a local level. For this purpose, Sandwell is split into the following six areas, based on towns in the Borough:

- ◀ Oldbury
- ◀ Rowley Regis
- ◀ Smethwick
- ◀ Tipton
- ◀ Wednesbury
- ◀ West Bromwich

Figure 1.1: Analysis areas



Cross-boundary migration is also to be explored, not only to and from the other three Black Country authorities but also from other nearby authorities, particularly Birmingham. This applies to demand from neighbouring authorities that imports into Sandwell and demand from the Borough which exports out.

## 1.2: Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision

A clear picture of the supply of and demand for playing pitches and outdoor sport facilities in Sandwell needs to be provided to enable an accurate assessment of quantity, quality and usage. This is achieved through site assessments and consultation with key stakeholders.

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## ***Gather supply information and views – an audit of provision***

Sport England's guidance uses the following definitions of a playing pitch and playing field; these are set out by the Government in the 2015 'Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order'<sup>1</sup>:

- ◀ ***Playing pitch*** – a delineated area of 0.2ha or more which is used for football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, American football, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.
- ◀ ***Playing field*** – the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch.

Although the statutory definition of a playing field sets out a minimum size, this PPOSS takes account of smaller sized pitches that contribute to the supply side. For example, a site containing a mini 5v5 football pitch is included despite it potentially being smaller than 0.2ha. The study counts individual grass pitches (as a delineated area) as the basic unit of supply, with the definition of a playing pitch also including artificial grass pitches (AGPs).

As far as possible, this report aims to capture all of the playing pitches and relevant outdoor sport facilities within Sandwell; however, there may be instances that have led to omissions, such as unused school sites where access was not possible (although facilities at sites not accessed are still included within the study where provision is known to exist from other sources e.g. affiliation data or club/league consultation). Where provision has not been recorded within the report, it is still considered to exist for planning purposes and will continue to do so. Furthermore, any exclusion does not mean that the provision is not required from a supply and demand point of view.

## *Quantity*

Where known, all playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities are included within the PPOSS, irrespective of ownership, management and use. Sites were initially identified using Sport England's Active Places web-based database, with the Council and NGBs supporting the process by checking and updating this initial data as well as supplying their own. This was also verified against club and league information supplied through consultation and any affiliation processes.

For each site, the following details are recorded in the project database:

- ◀ Site name, address (including postcode) and location
- ◀ Ownership and management type
- ◀ Security of tenure
- ◀ Community availability
- ◀ Total number, type and quality of provision
- ◀ Usage levels

## *Accessibility*

Not all facilities offer the same level of access to the community and the ownership and accessibility of provision also influences actual availability for demand. As such, each site is assigned a level of community use as follows:

- ◀ **Community use** – facilities in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire and currently in use by teams/members/individuals (depending on the sport).

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<sup>1</sup> [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)>Facilities and Planning> Planning Applications

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- ◀ **Available but unused** - facilities that are available for hire but are not currently used externally; this most often applies to school sites but can also apply to sites which are expensive to hire or particularly poor quality.
- ◀ **No community use** - facilities which are, as a matter of policy, unavailable for external hire. This includes professional club pitches along with some semi-professional club pitches where play is restricted to the first or second team of the host club.
- ◀ **Disused** – sites that are not being used at all by any users and are not available for community hire either (often being unmarked). Once these sites are disused for five or more years they will then be categorised as lapsed sites.
- ◀ **Lapsed** - last known use was as a playing field more than five years ago. These fall outside of Sport England’s statutory remit but still have to be assessed using the criteria in paragraph 99 of the NPPF; Sport England would nonetheless challenge a proposed loss which fails to meet such criteria. It should be emphasised that the lawful planning use of a lapsed site is still that of a playing field.

In addition, there should be a good degree of certainty as to whether a facility will be available to the community for at least the following three years. A judgement is made based on the information gathered and any provision adjudged not be available for this length of time is considered to be “unsecure” (as opposed to “secure”).

### *Quality*

The capacity of provision to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of provision affects the playing experience and people’s enjoyment of a sport. In extreme circumstances, it can result in a facility being unable to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.

It is not just the quality of the pitches themselves which have an effect on capacity but also the quality, standard and range of ancillary facilities. The quality of both the playing provision and the ancillary facilities will determine whether sites are able to contribute to meeting demand from various groups and for different levels and types of play.

The quality of all provision identified in the audit and the ancillary facilities supporting them are assessed regardless of ownership, management or availability. Along with capturing any details specific to the individual facilities and sites, a quality rating is also recorded within the audit for each. These ratings are then used to help estimate the capacity (aligned to NGB guidance) to accommodate competitive and other play within the supply and demand assessment.

In addition to undertaking non-technical assessments (using the templates provided within the guidance and as determined by NGBs), users and providers have also been consulted on the quality. In some instances, the quality rating has been adjusted to reflect this i.e. an “agreed quality rating”.

### ***Gather demand information and views***

Presenting an accurate picture of current demand for playing pitches and outdoor sport facilities (i.e. recording how and when provision is used) is important when undertaking a supply and demand assessment. Demand for provision in Sandwell tends to fall within the following categories:

- ◀ Organised competitive play
- ◀ Organised training
- ◀ Informal play



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Current and future demand for provision is presented on a sport-by-sport basis within the relevant sections of this report. In addition, unmet, latent, imported and exported demand for provision is also identified within each section.

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to provision; it is usually expressed, for example, when a team is in training but is unable to access a match pitch, or when a league has a waiting list due to a lack of pitch provision, which in turn is hindering the growth of the league. In comparison, latent demand is defined as the number of additional teams that could be fielded if access to a sufficient number of outdoor sports facilities (and ancillary provision) was available. Exported and imported demand refers to those that are playing outside of their local authority area of choice.

A variety of consultation methods were used to collate demand information. Firstly, face-to-face consultation (normally via video call due to Covid-19 restrictions) has been carried out with key clubs and leagues (as identified by the Steering Group) from each sport, thus allowing for the collection of detailed demand information and an exploration of key issues to be interrogated and more accurately assessed. For all remaining clubs, telephone consultation or an online survey (converted to postal if required) has been utilised.

As key providers and users of the sports facilities, educational establishments have also been consulted. This involved face-to-face meetings with secondary schools and colleges and an online survey being sent to primary schools, special schools and independent schools.

### ***Future demand***

Alongside current demand, it is important for a PPOSS to assess whether the future demand for provision can be met. Using Office of National Statistics (ONS) population projections and proposed housing growth, as well as likely participation growth informed through consultation, an estimate can be made of the likely future demand for the relevant facilities. Assumptions can then be made as to whether existing provision can cater for such growth.

Team generation rates are used to provide an indication as to how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group). This ratio is then applied to predicted population growth to help estimate the change in demand for each sport that may arise in the future. Other information sources that were used to help identify future demand include:

- ◀ Recent trends in the participation.
- ◀ The nature of the current and likely future population and their propensity to participate.
- ◀ Feedback from clubs on plans to develop additional teams or attract additional members.
- ◀ Any local and NGB specific sports development targets.

In line with the previously proposed Black Country Plan (now to be replaced by four separate local plans), future demand projections across the PPOSS cover the period up until 2039.

### **1.3: Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views**

Supply and demand information gathered is used to assess the adequacy of playing pitch and outdoor sport provision in Sandwell and to identify key issues, challenges and aspirations. This forms the basis of this report.

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## ***Understand the situation at individual sites***

Qualitative ratings are linked to a capacity rating derived from NGB guidance and tailored to suit a local area. For playing pitch sports, the quality and use of each pitch is assessed against recommended capacity to indicate how many match equivalent sessions a pitch could accommodate. This is then compared to the number of matches actually taking place and categorised as follows, to identify:

Potential spare capacity: Play is below the level the site could sustain.	
At capacity: Play is at a level the site can sustain.	
Overused: Play exceeds the level the site can sustain.	

As a guide, the NGBs for football, cricket, rugby union, rugby league and hockey have set a standard number of matches that each pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its quality. Given how the sports operate, this is per week for football, rugby union and rugby league, per day for hockey and per season for cricket.

*Table 1.2: Capacity of playing pitches*

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

For non-pitch sports, capacity is not linked to the number of matches taking place but rather the number of members (and other users) attracted to a site. For example, for tennis, a floodlit hard court is said to have capacity for 60 members, whereas a non-floodlit has court has capacity for 40 members (this varies for grass courts). Other sport specific capacity guidance is detailed within the relevant sections of this report.

## ***Develop the current picture of provision***

Once capacity is determined on a site-by-site basis, actual spare capacity is calculated on a Borough-wide and an area-by-area basis via further interrogation of peak time demand. This then identifies whether there is overall spare capacity on provision or whether there is a shortfall.

Although spare capacity may be identified at some sites and in some areas, it does not necessarily mean that there is surplus provision. For example, spare capacity may not be available when it is needed (actual spare capacity), or a site may be retained in a 'strategic reserve' to enable rotation and to reduce wear and tear. Often, spare capacity is discounted due to site specific issues such as those relating to quality, availability and security of tenure.

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## ***Identify the key findings and issues***

By completing the aforementioned steps, it is possible to identify several findings and issues relating to the supply, demand and adequacy of playing pitch and outdoor sport provision. This report therefore seeks to identify and present such key information on a sport-by-sport basis prior to the development of the Strategy and Action Plan.

Each included sport has its own section within this Assessment Report, detailing key findings and featuring a supply and demand analysis. In addition, a separate 3G pitch section is also included to take into account the variety of sports that can utilise such provision (e.g. football, rugby union and rugby league).

## ***Develop the future picture of provision (scenario testing)***

Modelling scenarios to assess whether existing provision can cater for unmet, latent, exported and future demand is made after the capacity analysis. As such, most of the scenario testing generally occurs in the Strategy report that proceeds this document and therefore does not form part of the Assessment Report.

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### PART 2: FOOTBALL

#### 2.1: Introduction

Birmingham County FA is the primary organisation responsible for the development of football in Sandwell. It is also responsible for the administration, in terms of discipline, rules and regulations, cup competitions and representative matches, development of clubs and facilities, volunteers, referees, coaching courses and delivering national football schemes.

Facility development for football is largely the responsibility of the Football Foundation, which is a charity, linked to the Premier League, the FA and the Government, that helps communities improve their local football facilities through grant funding. It is committed to improving the experience of playing football for everyone involved in the game.

This section of the report focuses on the supply and demand for grass football pitches. Part 3 captures supply and demand for third generation pitches (3G pitches), which is the preferred artificial surface type for football. There is a growing demand for the use of 3G pitches for competitive football fixtures, in addition to training needs, especially to accommodate mini and youth football.

For grass football pitches, formal demand is generally defined through five formats of play and five pitch types, linked to the age of teams and players. Please refer to the table below for more detail relating to this.

*Table 2.1: Football grass pitch formats*

Format/pitch type	Age range	Recommended pitch size (metres)
Adult	U17s+	100 x 64
Youth 11v11	U15s-U16s	91 x 55
	U13s-U14s	82 x 50
Youth 9v9	U11s-U12s	73 x 46
Mini 7v7	U9s-U10s	55 x 37
Mini 5v5	U7s-U8s	37 x 27

#### **Local Football Facility Plans (LFFPs)**

To support in delivery of both the current and superseding FA National Games Strategy, the FA commissioned a nationwide consultancy project which has now been completed. As part of this, a Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) has been produced for every local authority across England, with each plan being unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation.

The LFFP is strategically aligned to the National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS); a 10-year plan to change the landscape of football facilities in England. The NFFS represents a major funding commitment from the national funding partners (the FA, Premier League and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and is delivered through the Football Foundation to inform and direct an estimated one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next ten years.

Each LFFP builds upon PPOSS findings (where present and current) regarding the formal and affiliated game as well as including strategic priorities for investment across small-sided football (including recreational and indoor activity). The LFFP also incorporates consultation with groups outside of formal football, as well as under-represented communities. This includes those which may be key partners with regards to using football for behavioural change, plus groups which may be key drivers of FA priorities around participation in the likes of women and girls' football, disability football and futsal.

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The LFFP is a 'live' document that can be updated following the completion of a PPOSS, if required, as an up-to-date supply and demand assessment may present findings and recommendations that need to be incorporated for investment purposes. LFFPs identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all national football investment through the funding partners will be identified via LFFPs.

Notwithstanding the above, it is important to recognise that the LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment; it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a PPOSS and is not an accepted evidence base for site change of use or disposal. A LFFP does, however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPOSS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

The LFFP for Sandwell was produced in 2020 and identifies numerous priority projects for investment. These are discussed in greater detail in both this section and Part 3 of the report.

### **Consultation**

Consultation requests were sent to all football clubs based in Sandwell via Birmingham FA, with 42% responding. Whilst this is a low figure, it represents 74% of teams that play in the Borough as focus was placed on large clubs identified as key. As such, most non-respondents are small clubs fielding just one or two teams.

When sending out surveys, Birmingham FA incentivised clubs to respond with vouchers for football kit and boots. The survey was distributed multiple times and non-responsive clubs were chased via telephone by the Club Development Officer.

The responsive clubs include the following:

- ◀ Albion Foundation FC
- ◀ Brandhall Colts FC
- ◀ Langley Town FC
- ◀ Oldbury United FC
- ◀ Sandwell Falcons FC
- ◀ Bustleholme FC
- ◀ Greets Green Albion FC
- ◀ Perrywoods United Youth FC
- ◀ Tipton Town FC
- ◀ Tividale FC

### **2.2: Supply**

The audit identifies a total of 171 grass football pitches within Sandwell across 70 sites, with 139 pitches available, at some level, for community use across 48 sites. Most of the unavailable pitches are located at school sites.

The distribution of the community available pitches is shown in the table overleaf. The Oldbury and West Bromwich analysis areas contain over half of the community available provision with 46 and 38 pitches, respectively. The remaining provision is relatively evenly across the remaining areas, with 15 pitches in each of the Rowley Regis and Smethwick analysis areas, 14 in the Wednesbury Analysis Area and 11 in the Tipton Analysis Area.

Adult pitches are the most common (86) whilst mini 5v5 pitches are the least (seven).

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Table 2.2: Summary of grass football pitches available to the community

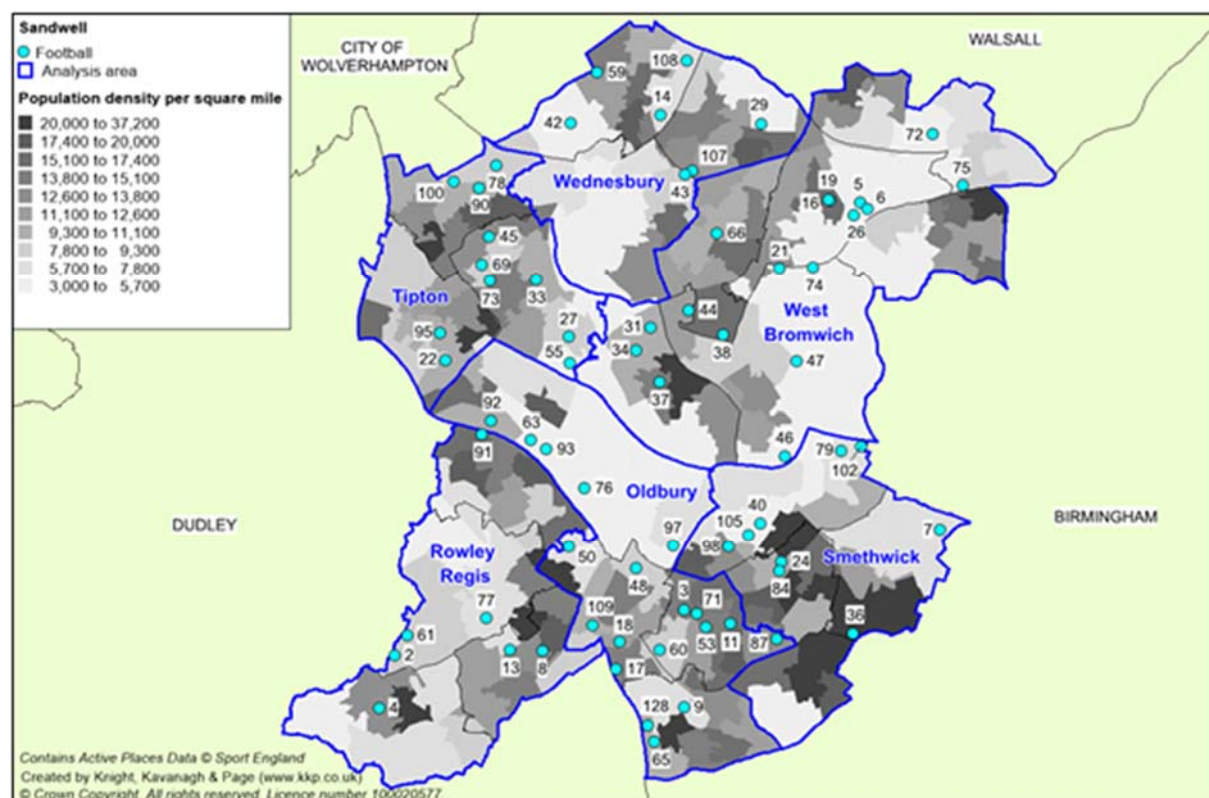
Analysis area	No. of pitches available for community use					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Oldbury	28	4	6	3	5	46
Rowley Regis	6	1	2	4	2	15
Smethwick	12	1	1	1	0	15
Tipton	5	2	2	2	0	11
Wednesbury	9	2	3	0	0	14
West Bromwich	26	3	7	2	0	38
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>139</b>

When compared to 2018 PPS findings, there has been a small reduction in the number of adult pitches and increase in the number of youth pitches. This is in part due to some adult pitches being reconfigured to better accommodate youth team users.

There being more adult pitches across Sandwell is reflective of high demand for this format of play. However, youth 11v11 demand is almost equivalent, meaning that the low supply of youth 11v11 pitches still does not correlate. This leads to many youth 11v11 teams playing on adult pitches, which, whilst sometimes preferable for clubs, is not ideal for players at U13-U16 level and is not in line with the FA Youth Review.

Figure 2.1 below identifies the location of all football pitches in Sandwell, regardless of community use. For a key to the map, please see Table 2.14.

Figure 2.1: Location of grass football pitches in Sandwell



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## ***Lapsed/disused provision***

The following playing field sites previously provided football pitches that are no longer being marked out or maintained:

- ◀ Friar Park Playing Fields
- ◀ Kent Road Park
- ◀ Kenrick Park
- ◀ Powis Avenue
- ◀ Brickhouse Farm
- ◀ Elwells

Four of these sites have been used for formal football within the last five years, which means that they are considered disused rather than lapsed. This applies to Kenrick Park, Powis Avenue, Brickhouse Farm and Elwells.

Kent Road Park and Friar Park Playing Fields are considered to be lapsed. Kent Road Park previously contained an adult pitch whilst a development of approximately 630 dwellings is being considered at Friar Park Playing Fields, where four lapsed youth 11v11 pitches are currently located. A master planning exercise is currently underway which will consider open space and playing pitch requirements.

All of these sites are owned and operated by the Council.

## ***Future provision***

There is an Option Agreement in place between the Council and a Developer that enables the Developer to explore the feasibility of establishing a retail outlet village and other ancillary uses. If the scheme secured planning consent to proceed, there would be an impact for the playing pitches at Lion Farm Playing Fields. However, no planning application has yet been submitted for these proposals.

Sandwell Council has identified Lightwoods Park, Jesson Playing Fields and Forge Farm as suitable for new football provision and Tividale Park, Barnford Park, Pitfields Close, Black Patch and Greets Green for pitch improvement/refurbishment works as potential mitigation options for the development. Pre-application consultation has now closed but it is not known if any further progress has been made.

Additionally, a grass football pitch is due to be provided at Sandwell Aquatics Centre in 2023.

Away from Lion Farm Playing Fields, Oldbury United FC has plans to develop Cakemore Playing Fields and the surrounding area to provide community facilities as well as a kiosk/bar area, clubhouse and the creation of two adult pitches on site alongside pitch improvements. The Club is currently in discussions with the Council regarding this development.

Phoenix Collegiate reports that it will provide two additional adult pitches on its site from September 2022, with this forming part of mitigation for its now closed North Campus site. The land that will accommodate these pitches has been levelled and had drainage installed. Electricity is also in place to provide floodlights for the pitches. Once online, these pitches will be available to the community.

A new youth pitch is to be established at West Smethwick Park following significant investment into the site from Heritage Lottery funding.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## **Security of tenure**

The table below details the management of football sites in Sandwell. As seen, the main operators are the Council and educational establishments. The other management providers include the FA, trusts or private contractors (PPP/PFI).

*Table 2.3: Football pitch sites by management type*

Club	Number of sites		
	Council	Education	Other
8	30	27	5

With schools being the second most common provider of pitches, it is worth noting that they are also the least likely to offer community use. In total, 17 educational providers do not allow for community use of some or all of their pitches, with reasons for not allowing access varying. The most common example is that the schools want to protect pitches for curricular and extra-curricular purposes due to existing quality issues, whilst other reasons include staffing issues, health and safety issues and a perceived lack of profitability.

Moreover, many of the schools that do provide community access are not known to have formal community use agreements in place, meaning that they can stop the external use at any point devoid of any notice. To prevent future issues, it is recommended that users enter into community use agreements with the schools that they access, where possible.

Away from schools, tenure is generally secure, including at council sites where pitches will continue to be offered as part of the Council's commitment to providing sports and leisure facilities.

In relation to clubs, Bustleholme FC aspires to take on the management of Charlemont Playing Fields via a long-term lease agreement to develop the site. Similarly, Oldbury United FC would like to extend its annual management agreement to a long-term lease to facilitate its aforementioned development plans at Cakemore Playing Fields.

Having security of tenure is crucial for clubs/organisations, especially those that will be seeking significant investment and external funding from partners such as the Football Foundation.

## **Pitch quality**

The quality of football pitches across Sandwell has been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating on a scale of good, standard and poor. The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments are: Good (>80%), Standard (50-80%), Poor (<50%). However, it must be noted that the final quality ratings assigned to pitches also takes into account the user quality ratings gathered from consultation as well as feedback from Birmingham FA.

Pitch quality primarily influences the carrying capacity of a site; often pitches lack the drainage and maintenance necessary to sustain levels of use. Pitches that receive little to no ongoing repair or post-season remedial work are likely to be assessed as poor, therefore limiting the number of games they can accommodate each week without it having a detrimental effect on quality. Conversely, well maintained pitches are likely to be of a higher standard and capable of taking a number of matches without a significant reduction in surface quality.

The table below summarises the quality of pitches that are available for community use in Sandwell. Most are assessed as poor quality, with 83 assessed as this, although there is also a large proportion assessed as standard (51). Only five pitches are assessed as good quality.



# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 2.4: Pitch quality assessments (community use pitches)

Adult pitches			Youth pitches			Mini pitches		
Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor
5	34	47	-	12	22	-	5	14

When compared to findings of the 2018 PPS, quality has seemingly deteriorated across Sandwell, with there only previously being 47 poor quality pitches (although the number of good quality pitches has remained the same).

Most of the poor quality pitches are located at council sites. Such provision often receives limited amounts of dedicated maintenance due to budgetary restraints and can be open access which can lead to further damage from unofficial use. The following community available sites accommodate at least one poor quality pitch:

- ◀ Barnford Park
- ◀ Bearmore Playing Field
- ◀ Black Patch Park
- ◀ Brandhall Primary School
- ◀ Britannia Park
- ◀ Bustleholme Playing Fields
- ◀ Cakemore Playing Field
- ◀ Charlemont Playing Fields
- ◀ Farley Park
- ◀ George Salter Academy
- ◀ Greet's Green Playing Fields
- ◀ Birmingham County FA Headquarters
- ◀ Hydes Road Playing Fields
- ◀ Jesson Playing Fields
- ◀ Jubilee Park
- ◀ Lion Farm Playing Fields
- ◀ Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy
- ◀ Queen Elizabeth Playing Fields
- ◀ St Michael's CE High School
- ◀ Thimblemill Recreation Centre
- ◀ Tividale Park
- ◀ West Smethwick Park

Where poor quality is identified, a lack of maintenance and drainage issues are the most common factors. Conversely, where better quality is identified, a better maintenance regime is often cited, as is investment by the Football Foundation. The good quality pitch identified in Sandwell is at FC Premier.

Where quality issues are prevalent, it is recommended that sites engage with the Football Foundation's PitchPower app (see below).

The Council has secured significant funding to develop Britannia Park, where poor quality provision is identified. This will be partly used to create a sporting 'hub' within the park, with a focus on increasing participation, particularly amongst youths and women. As part of this, pitch and ancillary facilities improvements will be included.

In contrast to the poor quality pitches, good quality community available pitches are provided at Birmingham County FA Football Development Centre, FC Premier, Tividale Football Club and Warley Rugby Club.

Of clubs that responded to consultation, the majority (66%) report that quality has not changed in the last 12 months. Of the remaining clubs, 12% report that quality has improved, whilst 22% report that quality has worsened, which correlates with the difference in the finding of this PPS compared to the 2018 study.

Tividale FC indicates that pitch quality is much better than it was 12 months ago after receiving grants for pitch improvement.

For a full breakdown of the quality ratings at each site, see Table 2.14. For the full assessment criteria, please refer to Appendix 2.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## *Local Football Facility Plan*

The LFFP for Sandwell identifies key sites considered a priority to improve, with these selected based on the rationale of identifying sites that are the poorest in quality and that are the best utilised, or that have the greatest potential for increased utilisation following quality enhancements. Emphasis is on sites with three or more pitches, although scope exists for the inclusion of smaller sites if they are deemed to be strategically important.

The following 11 site specific projects are identified:

- ◀ Barnford Park
- ◀ Birmingham County FA Headquarters
- ◀ Bustleholme/Charlemont Playing Fields
- ◀ Cakemore Playing Fields
- ◀ F C Premier
- ◀ Hydes Road Playing Fields
- ◀ King George V Playing Fields
- ◀ Lion Farm Playing Fields
- ◀ Tipton Sports Academy
- ◀ Tividale Park
- ◀ West Smethwick Park

In the PPOSS, most pitches at these sites have been assessed as poor or standard quality. Whilst most of these sites will therefore still require improvement, given that the LFFP is a live document, there may be a need to amend and/or add to this list based on the findings of this study.

## *Pitch improvement*

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

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

PitchPower is less restricted by the seasonal window of in-season play than the non-technical assessments, instead being able to be undertaken within a ten month period, with assessments completed and submitted within one of three windows: September - October, November – March or April – June.

As well as the completion of other supporting information such as detail of volunteer training and what maintenance equipment is available, the assessment requires the taking of images and a single soil sample at each assessment site. There are three assessment sites for 11v11 and 9v9 pitches at each goal area and the centre circle, whilst for mini pitches there are two sites at the centre circle and one goal area.

The PitchPower assessments use a new five step Performance Quality Standard rating system developed by the GMA, with the Football Foundation and Sport England agreeing alignment with the capacity guidance within the existing PPS guidance. This alignment is shown in the table overleaf.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 2.5: Agreed equivalent PPS rating for pitch Performance Quality Standard ratings.

PQS Rating	PPS Quality Rating
Poor	Poor
Basic	Standard
Good	Good
Advanced	
High	

In Sandwell, five sites have received a PitchPower assessment. The findings of these in comparison to PPS findings are shown in the table below.

Table 2.6: Summary of PitchPower findings compared to PPS quality ratings

Site ID	Site name	Pitch type	PPS quality rating	PitchPower rating
5	Birmingham County FA Football Development Centre	Adult	Good	Good
6	Birmingham County FA Headquarters	Adult	Poor	Poor
17	Cakemore Playing Field	Mini (5v5)	Poor	Basic
		Youth (9v9)	Poor	Poor
		Mini (7v7)	Poor	Poor
		Mini (7v7)	Poor	Basic
		Youth (9v9)	Poor	Basic
		Adult	Poor	Poor
78	Gospel Oak School	Youth (11v11)	Standard	Basic
		Adult	Standard	Poor
97	Warley Rugby Club	Adult	Good	High
		Adult	Good	High

As shown, the findings are predominately aligned, with only minor differences between some poor and standard ratings at Cakemore Playing Field and Gospel Oak School.

In addition to PitchPower, the FA has a general pitch improvement strategy, in partnership with the GMA. As part of this, it has a grass pitch maintenance service that can be utilised by clubs with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and therefore the quality of pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide clubs with advice and practical solutions in a range of areas, with the simple aim of improving playing surfaces. This is designed to help clubs on sites that they themselves manage and maintain but can also be used to advise local authority-maintained sites.

The Football Foundation and the FA have also recently developed a new Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund that allows clubs and sports organisations to apply for funding for maintenance assistance, consumables and/or equipment. Whilst local authorities are currently ineligible applicants through this fund, clubs, leagues and/or charitable organisations using local authority sites can apply provided they have security of tenure.

Funding is awarded over a ten-year period for up to 66% of the total cost required to bring the pitches up to an appropriate standard, following a site assessment. The level of funding then decreases year on year, with the expectation that the Club is able to take on the works independently by the end of the term. This fund was initially available until the end of March 2020, although it has since been extended indefinitely due to ongoing circumstances surrounding Covid-19.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## ***Over marked pitches***

Over marking of pitches can cause notable damage to the surface quality and lead to overuse beyond recommended capacity. In some cases, mini pitches may be marked onto senior pitches or mini matches may be played widthways across adult or youth pitches. This can lead to targeted areas of surface damage due to a large amount of play focused on high traffic areas, particularly the middle third of the pitch.

Over marking of pitches not only influences available capacity, but it may also cause logistical issues regarding kick off times; for example, when two teams of differing age formats are due to play at the same site at the same time.

Additionally, it can be common for football pitches to be marked onto or overlapping cricket outfields. This creates availability issues at multi-sport sites as the cricket season begins in April when the football season is still ongoing, and the football season begins in August as cricket fixtures are still being played.

The table below highlights all sites known to contain over marked pitches in Sandwell.

*Table 2.7: Sites containing over marked pitches*

Site ID	Site	Comments
13	Britannia Park	A mini 5v5 and a mini 7v7 pitch overmark an adult pitch.
72	Q3 Academy Great Barr	An adult pitch overmarked with rugby union.
75	Red House Park	Four adult and one mini 7v7 pitches overlap cricket.
78	Gospel Oak School	Youth 9v9 pitch overmarked with rugby union.
79	Sandwell Academy	Two adult pitches overlap a cricket outfield.
87	Thimblemill Recreation Centre	Four adult pitches overlap a cricket outfield.
108	Wood Green Academy	Youth 9v9 pitch overmarked with rugby union.

## ***Ancillary facilities***

As with pitch quality, the quality of ancillary facilities servicing football sites across Sandwell has been assessed on the basis of identifying good, standard and poor quality provision. To that end, the ratings are primarily influenced by the type and quality of amenities which are available on a site, such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, car parking and boundary fencing.

Changing rooms in particular are an issue at numerous sites, with many being serviced by facilities that are poor quality, basic, and that do not provide sufficient space in relation to the number of pitches on site. Furthermore, several sites do not have changing provision at all, such as Powis Avenue and Victoria Park, which is a particular problem for adult football where changing facilities are a requirement for clubs to participate in a league structure.

As an example of the above, Sandwell Falcons FC reports that it is without changing or toilet facilities at Britannia Park, which is linked to the aforementioned investment that has been secured for the site. The FA and Football Foundation are now working with the Council to transform the site into a women's and girls' football hub, with proposals including a large changing pavilion.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

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In addition to Britannia Park, facilities at the following sites are also reported to be in poor condition:

- ◀ Cakemore Playing Fields
- ◀ Greets Green Playing Fields
- ◀ Hydes Road Playing Fields
- ◀ Lion Farm Playing Fields
- ◀ Red House Park
- ◀ Tividale Park
- ◀ Warley RFC (St Johns Pitches)
- ◀ West Smethwick Park

At Cakemore Playing Fields, whilst eight changing rooms are available, each room is small and many of these are now used for storage as no storage facilities are available on site.

Funding has been acquired by the Council to upgrade the changing rooms at Tividale Park, with a new car park also to be constructed. Similarly, the Heritage Lottery funding acquired for West Smethwick Park will contribute to ancillary facility improvements.

The facilities at Greets Green Playing Fields have recently been surveyed and condemned, meaning they are no longer accessible to users.

Whilst the pavilion at Charlemont Playing Fields is in adequate condition following relatively recent investment, the toilets are in poor condition whilst the showers are no longer safe for use.

Both Wood Green Academy and Ormiston Sandwell Academy have aspirations to install dedicated external pavilions to better facilitate community use of their pitches.

Tipton Town FC reports that ancillary and changing facilities at Tipton Sports Academy are of good quality, with no issues highlighted.

## *Local Football Facility Plan*

As with grass pitch improvements, the LFFP for Sandwell identifies sites considered as priority sites for clubhouse and changing facility improvements, although there may again be a need to amend and/or add to this list based on the findings of this study. It recommends that the following six sites should be a priority for refurbishment/replacement:

- ◀ Birmingham County FA
- ◀ Hydes Road Playing Fields
- ◀ King George V Playing Fields
- ◀ Lion Farm Playing Fields
- ◀ Tipton Sports Academy
- ◀ West Smethwick Park

Whilst most of these sites will still require improvement, as with the grass pitch projects, there may be a need to amend and/or add to this list based on the findings of the PPOSS.

## **2.3: Demand**

Through the audit and assessment, 348 teams from within 115 clubs are identified as playing within Sandwell. This consists of 109 adult, 165 youth and 72 mini teams and includes eight adult women's teams as well as 13 youth girls' teams (12 youth 11v11 and one youth 9v9).

The most prominent playing format is adult football (109 teams), closely followed by youth 11v11 football (108 teams), whereas the least common is mini 5v5 football (29 teams). The largest number of teams are found in the Oldbury Analysis Area (97 teams) whilst the fewest number of teams play in the Tipton and Wednesbury analysis areas (19 teams).

A summary of demand can be seen in the table overleaf.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 2.8: Summary of teams currently playing in Sandwell

Analysis area	No. of teams					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Oldbury	28	25	20	14	10	<b>97</b>
Rowley Regis	20	22	6	8	9	<b>65</b>
Smethwick	25	24	11	10	-	<b>70</b>
Tipton	8	6	2	2	1	<b>19</b>
Wednesbury	4	5	4	3	3	<b>19</b>
West Bromwich	24	26	16	6	6	<b>78</b>
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>348</b>

## Participation trends

The number of teams competing in Sandwell has declined in recent years (down from 365 in the 2018 PPS). This is most prevalent in relation to adult football, with 157 teams previously identified, whilst there has been an overall growth in youth football (from 135 teams to 167).

When analysing each analysis area, there has been a considerable growth in the Rowley Regis Analysis Area and a reduction in the Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich analysis areas.

In contrast with an overall decline, 45% of consulted clubs report a growth in demand over the previous three years, whilst only two clubs report a reduction. These are Greets Green Albion FC and Oldbury United FC, which have both seen a decrease in youth demand, reportedly due to coaches leaving the clubs. The latter has, however, seen an increase in mini teams.

Most clubs reporting an increase in demand have seen increases in the number of their youth teams. The reasons for the growth vary, but include a general increase in demand, the impact of initiatives and coaching sessions, increased access to secondary venues and the acquisition of additional coaches.

The contrast between the findings of the consultation and the overall decline in team numbers could be due to the prevalence of the Walsall Junior Youth Football League (WJYFL), which offers central venues for youth and mini football across the Black Country. As many of these venues are outside of Sandwell, increased demand from Sandwell clubs for mini and youth football has likely been picked up by other Black Country authorities.

## Exported demand

As mentioned above, a significant level of demand is exported from Sandwell via the WJYFL due to its central venue format. For example, Bustleholme FC fields 11 mini teams in the League because of the central venue format as the Club has been unable to identify sufficient mini pitches in Sandwell. Tipton Town FC also exports four mini and two youth teams from Sandwell due to competing in the WJYFL.

Away from the WJYFL, Bustleholme FC also exports its first team to Dudley to groundshare with AFC Birmingham. It previously played at York Road Social & Sports Club but reports that the site has now closed. The Club was unable to find another suitable playing location within Sandwell.

Great Barr Harriers FC exports its U7s team to the University of Aston Recreation Centre in Walsall whilst Oldbury United FC also exports its U8s team to the same site.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

In addition, Oldbury United FC has a partnership agreement with Cradley Town FC in Dudley. As part of this agreement, Oldbury United FC has three youth 11v11 teams based at Cradley Town Football Club due to a lack of pitches in Sandwell. In exchange, Cradley Town FC utilises Cakemore Playing Fields on an ad-hoc basis when it is unable to fulfil all its home fixtures at Cradley Town Football Club.

Additionally, Sandwell College exports its U19s team to the Walter Goodman Stadium in Birmingham. This is due to ground requirements.

## ***Imported demand***

Both Stourbridge FC and Halas Hawks FC import demand from Dudley into Sandwell. Stourbridge FC indicates that this is due to a lack of availability within Dudley, which also applies to Halas Hawks FC. The Club is of a significant size.

## ***Latent demand***

Five clubs playing in Sandwell express latent demand. Most prominently, Bustleholme FC has now capped its team numbers due to a lack of available pitch provision. If it had sufficient access, the Club believes it could bring through five U7s teams each year.

Sandwell Falcons FC and Tividale FC both also state they could field more teams if pitch quality/capacity was increased. However, they did not quantify any potential increases.

Additionally, Sky Force FC and Oldbury United FC, as well as Bustleholme FC and Tividale FC, indicate that improved ancillary facilities would support them to field more teams. Oldbury United FC also indicates that it could field a further U7s, U9s and two U10 teams; however, it states that this is due to a lack of coaches rather than facilities.

## ***Future demand***

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and by using population forecasts. In addition, the proceeding Strategy & Action Plan document will contain housing growth scenarios that will estimate the additional demand for football arising from housing developments within Sandwell.

### *Population increases*

Team generation rates are used in the following table to calculate the number of teams likely to be generated in the future (2039) based on population growth. Using this, there is a predicted increase of seven adult, seven youth 11v11 and one mini 7v7 team. This represents significant growth from population increases alone.

*Table 2.9: Sandwell-wide team generation rates*

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group (2039)	Predicted future number of teams (2039)	No. of teams that may be generated
Adult Mens (18-45)	61,698	97	1:636	66,161	104	7
Adult Womens (18-45)	60,348	8	1:7,544	64,573	8	0
Youth Boys (12-17)	13,053	94	1:139	13,893	100	6
Youth Girls (12-17)	12,290	12	1:1,024	13,381	13	1
Youth Boys (10-11)	4,821	55	1:88	4,800	54	0

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Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group (2039)	Predicted future number of teams (2039)	No. of teams that may be generated
Youth Girls (10-11)	4,632	1	1:4,632	4,560	1	0
Mini Mixed (8-9)	9,296	43	1:216	9,554	44	1
Mini Mixed (6-7)	10,231	29	1:353	9,735	27	0

When broken down by analysis area, one adult and one youth 11v11 boys' team is expected to be generated in each of the Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick and West Bromwich analysis areas. This is summarised below and translates the demand to match equivalent sessions (0.5 match equivalent sessions represents one team, based on teams playing on a home and away basis).

Table 2.10: Summary of future demand through team generation rates by analysis area

Analysis area	Future demand (match equivalent sessions)					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Oldbury	0.5	0.5	-	-	-	1
Rowley Regis	0.5	0.5	-	-	-	1
Smethwick	0.5	0.5	-	-	-	1
Tipton	-	-	-	-	-	0
Wednesbury	-	-	-	-	-	0
West Bromwich	0.5	0.5	-	-	-	1
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	-	-	-	<b>4</b>

## Participation increases

A total of seven clubs report aspirations to increase the number of teams that they provide in the future and quantify their growth. This equates to a potential growth of 29 teams, although it includes five mini teams from Bustleholme FC and one mini team from Tipton Town FC that would be exported outside of Sandwell due to accessing the WJYFL.

Brandhall Colts FC and Tipton Town FC hope to form girls' sections in the near future but did not state the age these teams would be or where they would play.

Table 2.11: Potential team increases identified by clubs

Club	Analysis area	Future demand (teams)	Pitch size	Match equivalents
Oldbury United	Oldbury	2	Mini 5v5	1
Sky Force FC	Wednesbury	2	Adult	1
		2	Youth 11v11	1
		2	Youth 9v9	1
Sandwell Falcons FC	Rowley Regis	1	Mini 5v5	0.5
Oldbury Warriors	Oldbury	1	Youth 11v11	0.5
		1	Youth 9v9	0.5
Bustleholme FC	West Bromwich	4	Adult	2
		4	Youth 11v11	2
		5	Youth 9v9	2.5
<b>Total</b>				<b>12</b>



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Furthermore, Tividale FC reports plans to add additional teams but did not quantify this aspiration.

The total future demand expressed by the clubs relating to pitch access in Sandwell (therefore discounting Bustleholme FC's demand) amounts to 12 match equivalent sessions per week. Most of this is identified in the West Bromwich Analysis Area (12 match equivalent sessions) and on youth 9v9 pitches (four match equivalent sessions) whilst none is identified on mini 7v7 pitches or in the Smethwick and Tipton analysis areas.

*Table 2.12: Summary of future demand expressed by clubs*

Analysis area	Future demand (match equivalent sessions)					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Oldbury	-	0.5	0.5	-	1	2
Rowley Regis	-	-	-	-	0.5	0.5
Smethwick	-	-	-	-	-	0
Tipton	-	-	-	-	-	0
Wednesbury	1	1	1	-	-	3
West Bromwich	2	2	2.5	-	-	6.5
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>12</b>

Included within the future demand expressed by clubs is demand for the creation of female teams by Sky Force FC and Bustleholme FC. Increasing female demand is currently a priority area for the FA.

Related to the above, Wildcats centres work with County FA qualified coaches to deliver local weekly sessions, providing opportunities for girls aged five to 11 to develop fundamental skills and experience football in a safe and fun environment. All organisations delivering Wildcats centres receive a £900 start-up grant and 30 branded footballs in their first year of running the programme to help develop and increase girl's participation.

Through Wildcats, it is likely that the growth in affiliated female demand will exceed that shown through team generation rates and club aspirations, although to what extent is not currently quantifiable.

### *Future demand summary*

In the supply and demand analysis at the end of this section of the report, only future demand identified through population increases are included due to the large increases expressed by clubs. This demand is considered more aspirational, and it is unlikely that it will all be achieved. However, the preceding Strategy document will include a scenario to identify the impact it would have if the growth was realised.

## **2.4: Capacity analysis**

The capacity for pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment. In extreme circumstances, it can result in the inability of a pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.

As a guide, the FA has set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without it adversely affecting its quality.

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Taking into consideration the guidelines on capacity, the following ratings are used in Sandwell:

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

Table 2.14 applies the above pitch ratings against the actual level of weekly play recorded to determine a capacity rating as follows:

<b>Potential capacity</b>	Play is below the level the site could sustain
<b>At capacity</b>	Play matches the level the site can sustain
<b>Overused</b>	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

### ***Match equivalent sessions***

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

### ***Education sites***

To account for curricular/extra-curricular use of education pitches, the current usage of such sites needs to be adjusted. The only time this would not happen is when a school does not use its pitches at all and the sole use is community use. The adjustment is typically dependent on the amount of play carried out, the number of pitches on site and whether there is access to an on-site AGP (as this can result in less grass pitch use).

In some cases, where there is no identified community use, there is little capacity to accommodate further play. Internal usage often exceeds recommended pitch capacity, which is further exacerbated by basic maintenance regimes that may not extend beyond grass cutting and line marking. As such, where not overplayed as a result of community use, many school sites are considered to have no spare capacity to accommodate further usage based on assumed curricular and extra-curricular activity.

For school sites which are available for community use, current play has been enlarged on a site-by-site basis following consultation with the providers. Generally, usage is increased by one match equivalent session per pitch; however, in some cases, further use is added when it is known that a particular provider uses a particular pitch heavily.

### ***Informal use***

Several football pitches in the area are on open access sites. As such, these pitches are subject to informal use in the form of, for example, dog walkers, unorganised games of football and exercise groups. It must be noted, however, that informal use of these sites is not recorded and it is therefore difficult to quantify on a site-by-site basis. Instead, it is recommended that open access sites be protected through an improved maintenance regime.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## **Peak time**

Spare capacity can only be considered as actual spare capacity if pitches are available at peak time, which can differ for each pitch type depending on when leagues operate for each format of play. In Sandwell, peak time for all types of football is Sunday AM, based on current demand levels.

On occasion, spare capacity in the peak period is identified despite the pitch being played to capacity or overplayed, or more spare capacity is identified in the peak period than the overall spare capacity that exists. This is because most or all use on those pitches occurs outside of the peak period. Where this is the case, given that peak time usage should not be utilised over and above overall capacity, adjustments have been made.

A pitch is only said to have 'actual spare capacity' if it is available for community use and available at the peak time for that format of play. Any pitch not meeting this criterion is therefore not considered to have additional capacity, although it may have capacity outside of peak time.

There may also be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as actual spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

Pitches that are of a poor quality are not deemed to have actual spare capacity due to the already low carrying capacity of the pitches. Instead, any identified spare capacity should be retained to relieve the pitches of use, which in turn will aid the improvement of pitch quality. Furthermore, any pitches with unsecured tenure are not considered to have actual spare capacity as no further play should be encouraged on such sites given that future access cannot be guaranteed.

The table below identifies the way actual spare capacity is represented in Table 2.14.

*Table 2.13: Spare capacity examples*

<b>Spare capacity in peak period (examples)</b>	<b>Explanation of spare capacity</b>
1	If the cell is highlighted in green with a number, it means that the pitches have actual spare capacity at peak time.
-	If the cell has a dash in it, this means that the pitch is unavailable in the peak period. If it was to be made available, actual spare capacity could exist.
0	If the cell has a 0 in it, this means that the pitch is played to capacity, either overall or during the peak period.
1	If the cell has a number in it but is not highlighted, it means the pitch has spare capacity in the peak period; however, this is discounted. This is most commonly due to unsecure tenure and/or poor pitch quality.

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Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Community use?	Management	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Site capacity	Current play	Capacity balance	Spare capacity in peak period	Comments
2	Ashtree Playing Field	B64 5NE	Rowley Regis	Yes-unused	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	2	0	2	1	Actual spare capacity
3	Barnford Park	B68 8ED	Oldbury	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	4	4	0	4	4	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
4	Bearmore Playing Field	B64 6EA	Rowley Regis	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	2	2	2	0	0	Played to capacity.
5	Birmingham County FA Football Development Centre	B43 6JE	West Bromwich	Yes	NGB	Secure	Adult		Good	1	3	1.5	1.5	1	Actual spare capacity
6	Birmingham County FA Headquarters	B43 6JF	West Bromwich	Yes	Commercial	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	1	1	0	0	Played to capacity.
7	Black Patch Park	B66 2LS	Smethwick	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	1	0	1	1	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
8	Blackheath Primary School	B65 9NF	Rowley Regis	No	School	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
9	Brandhall Primary School	B68 0SH	Oldbury	Yes	School	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	2	2.5	0.5	-	Overplayed
							Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	2	3	1	-	Overplayed
							Youth	(11v11)	Poor	2	2	2	0	1	Played to capacity.
							Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	2	1	-	Overplayed
11	Bristnall Hall Academy	B68 9PA	Oldbury	No	School	Unsecure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
13	Britannia Park	B65 8DR	Rowley Regis	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	1	1.5	0.5	-	Overplayed
							Mini	(5v5)	Poor	2	4	0.5	3.5	0.5	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
							Mini	(7v7)	Poor	2	4	0.5	3.5	0.5	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
							Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	0	1	1	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
14	Brunswick Park	WS10 9HH	Wednesbury	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	2	0	2	1	Actual spare capacity
16	Bustleholme Playing Fields	B71 3EX	West Bromwich	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	3	3	0	3	3	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
17	Cakemore Playing Field	B68 8BL	Oldbury	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	2	4	2.5	1.5	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
							Mini	(7v7)	Poor	2	4	3.5	0.5	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
							Youth	(9v9)	Poor	2	2	6	4	-	Overplayed
18	Causeway Green Primary School	B68 8LX	Oldbury	No	School	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
19	Charlemont Playing Fields	B71 3EN	West Bromwich	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	2	2	6.5	4.5	-	Overplayed
							Youth	(9v9)	Poor	3	3	4.5	1.5	-	Overplayed
21	Churchfields Playing Fields	B71 3SX	West Bromwich	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	3	6	6	0	0	Played to capacity.
22	Coneygre Arts Centre Pitches	DY4 8UH	Tipton	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	2	1	1	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
24	Devonshire Infant & Junior Academy	B67 7AT	Smethwick	Yes	School	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Played to capacity.
26	F.C Premier	B43 6JF	West Bromwich	Yes	Club	Secure	Adult		Good	1	3	2.5	0.5	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
							Adult		Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Played to capacity.
27	Farley Park	DY4 7JQ	Tipton	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	1	1	0	0	Played to capacity.

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Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Community use?	Management	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Site capacity	Current play	Capacity balance	Spare capacity in peak period	Comments
31	George Salter Academy	B70 9UW	West Bromwich	Yes	School	Unsecure	Adult		Poor	2	2	2.5	0.5	-	Overplayed
						Unsecure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Played to capacity.
33	Great Bridge Primary School	DY4 7DE	Tipton	No	School	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
34	Greets Green Playing Fields	B70 9BZ	West Bromwich	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	2	0	2	1	Actual spare capacity.
							Adult		Poor	2	2	0	2	2	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
36	Hadley Stadium	B66 4ND	Smethwick	Yes	Trust	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	2	9	7	-	Overplayed
37	Hanbury Primary School	B70 9NT	West Bromwich	No	School	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
38	Hargate Primary School	B71 1PG	West Bromwich	No	School	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
40	Holly Lodge High School College of Science	B67 7JG	Smethwick	Yes	School	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	2	4	2	2	1.5	Discounted spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.
42	Holyhead Primary School	WS10 7PZ	Wednesbury	Yes	School	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	1.5	0.5	0.5	Discounted spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.
43	Hydes Road Playing Fields	WS10 0DR	Wednesbury	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	6	6	3	3	1	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
							Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	1.5	0.5	-	Overplayed
44	Jesson Playing Fields	B71 1NJ	West Bromwich	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	1	0	1	1	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
45	Jubilee Park	DY4 0QS	Tipton	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	2	2	2	0	0	Played to capacity.
							Mini	(7v7)	Poor	2	4	0	4	2	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
							Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	0	1	1	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
47	King George V Playing Fields	B71 4BG	West Bromwich	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	7	14	6.5	7.5	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
48	Langley Primary School	B69 4QB	Oldbury	No	School	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
50	Lion Farm Playing Fields	B69 1JD	Oldbury	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	11	11	6.5	4.5	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
53	Moat Farm Junior School	B68 9QR	Oldbury	No	School	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
55	Newtown Primary School	B70 0ES	Tipton	No	School	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
59	Old Park Primary School	WS10 9LX	Wednesbury	No	School	Unsecure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
60	Oldbury Academy	B68 8NE	Oldbury	No	School	Unsecure	Adult		Poor	1	1	1	0	0	Played to capacity.
							Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	1	1	0	0	Played to capacity.
61	Ormiston Forge Academy (Hingleys)	DY2 9LT	Rowley Regis	Yes	School	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	1	2	8.5	6.5	-	Overplayed
							Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	8	4.5	3.5	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
63	Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy	B69 2HE	Oldbury	Yes	School	Unsecure	Adult		Poor	3	3	3	0	0	Played to capacity.
							Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
65	Perryfields High School	B68 0RG	Oldbury	No	School	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	3	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.

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Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Community use?	Management	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Site capacity	Current play	Capacity balance	Spare capacity in peak period	Comments
66	Phoenix Collegiate	B71 2BX	West Bromwich	No	School	Unsecure	Adult		Poor	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
							Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
71	Q3 Academy	B68 8ED	Oldbury	Yes	Council	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	1	2	0.5	1.5	0.5	Discounted spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.
							Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	1	1	1	Discounted spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.
72	Q3 Academy Great Barr	B43 7SD	West Bromwich	No	School	Unsecure	Adult		Poor	2	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
							Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
73	Q3 Academy Tipton	DY4 7NR	Tipton	No	Private	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
74	Queen Elizabeth Playing Fields	B71 3RT	West Bromwich	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	2	2	0.5	0.5	0.5	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
							Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1	0	1	1	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
							Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	0	1	1	Discounted spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.
75	Red House Park	B43 6AD	West Bromwich	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	4	8	5	3	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
							Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	4	0.5	3.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity.
76	Rounds Green Primary School	B69 2DP	Oldbury	No	School	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
77	St Michael's CE High School	B65 8JY	Rowley Regis	Yes	School	Unsecure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	1	6	5	-	Overplayed
							Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	3.5	2.5	-	Overplayed
78	Gospel Oak School	DY4 0SX	Tipton	Yes	School	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	2	1	1	1	Actual spare capacity.
							Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	1	1	1	Actual spare capacity.
79	Sandwell Academy	B69 2DP	Smethwick	Yes	School	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	2	4	3	1	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
84	Stoney Lane	B67 7HP	Smethwick	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	2	4	0	4	2	Actual spare capacity.
87	Thimblemill Recreation Centre	B67 6NR	Oldbury	Yes	Sport Club	Secure	Adult		Poor	4	4	5.5	1.5	-	Overplayed
90	Tipton Sports Academy	DY4 0BS	Tipton	Yes	Trust	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	1	2	3.5	1.5	-	Overplayed
							Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	2	2.5	0.5	-	Overplayed
91	Tividale Football Club	B69 1UL	Rowley Regis	Yes	Sport Club	Secure	Adult		Good	1	3	1.5	1.5	0.5	Discounted spare capacity to preserve pitch quality for Step football.
92	Tividale Park	B69 2HU	Oldbury	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	1	1.5	0.5	-	Overplayed
							Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	1.5	0.5	-	Overplayed
93	Tividale Sports Ground	B69 2HF	Oldbury	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	2	1.5	0.5	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
							Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	8	0	8	2	Actual spare capacity.
97	Warley Rugby Club	B69 4NH	Oldbury	Yes	Sport Club	Secure	Adult		Good	2	6	9.5	3.5	-	Overplayed
98	Warley Rugby Club (St John's Recreation Ground)	B68 9SD	Smethwick	Yes	Sport Club	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	2	0.5	1.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity.
100	Wednesbury Oak Academy	B71 4AA	Tipton	No	Sport Club	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	-	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
102	West Bromwich Albion (The Hawthorns)	WS10 0SB	Smethwick	No	Sport Club	Secure	Adult		Good	1	3	1	2	2	Discounted spare capacity to preserve pitch quality for Championship football.
105	West Smethwick Park	WS10 0SB	Smethwick	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	4	4	6	2	-	Overplayed
							Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	2	1	1	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
107	Wodensborough Ormiston Academy	WS10 0SB	Wednesbury	Yes	School	Unsecure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	2	5	3	-	Overplayed

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Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Community use?	Management	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Site capacity	Current play	Capacity balance	Spare capacity in peak period	Comments
108	Wood Green Academy	WS10 0SB	Wednesbury	Yes	School	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	2	4	0.5	3.5	1.5	Discounted spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.
							Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	2	1	1	1	Discounted spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.
							Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	0	2	1	Discounted spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.
109	York Road Social & Sports Club	WS10 0SB	Oldbury	Yes	Sport Club	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	1	2	1	1	0.5	Discounted spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. Reported to have closed.
128	Jubilee Play Area	DY4 0QS	Oldbury	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	2	4	0	4	2	Actual spare capacity.

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## Actual spare capacity

The table below identifies actual spare capacity by site and pitch type across Sandwell. It totals 13 match equivalent sessions per week and is identified across 14 pitches at ten sites. This represents comparatively minimal levels.

Table 2.15: Summary of actual spare capacity

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (sessions)
2	Ashtree Playing Field	Rowley Regis	Adult	1	1
5	Birmingham County FA Football Development Centre	West Bromwich	Adult	1	1
14	Brunswick Park	Wednesbury	Adult	1	1
34	Greets Green Playing Fields	West Bromwich	Adult	1	1
75	Red House Park	West Bromwich	Mini (7v7)	1	0.5
78	Gospel Oak School	Tipton	Youth (11v11)	1	1
			Youth (9v9)	1	1
84	Stoney Lane	Smethwick	Adult	2	2
93	Tividale Sports Ground	Oldbury	Mini (5v5)	2	2
98	Warley Rugby Club (St John's Recreation Ground)	Smethwick	Adult	1	0.5
128	Jubilee Play Area	Oldbury	Youth (11v11)	2	2
<b>Total</b>				<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>

The Oldbury Analysis Area provides the largest amount of actual spare capacity, with four match equivalent sessions, whereas the least is identified in the Tipton and Rowley Regis analysis areas with one match equivalent session each. Furthermore, only one match equivalent session of actual spare capacity exists on the youth 9v9 pitch stock.

Table 2.16: Summary of actual spare capacity by analysis area

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions per week)					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Oldbury	-	2	-	-	2	4
Rowley Regis	1	-	-	-	-	1
Smethwick	2.5	-	-	-	-	2.5
Tipton	-	1	1	-	-	2
Wednesbury	1	-	-	-	-	1
West Bromwich	2	-	-	0.5	-	2.5
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>

In addition, it must be noted that an additional 22.5 match equivalents sessions per week of potential spare capacity have also been discounted due to poor quality, which is significant. Moreover, 8.5 match equivalent sessions per week have been discounted due to unsecure tenure.



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## Overplay

Overplay occurs when there is more play accommodated on a site than it can sustain (based on its quality rating), which can often be due to the low carrying capacity of pitches. In Sandwell, 33 pitches across 15 sites are overplayed by a combined total of 48 match equivalent sessions per week. This represents considerable levels of overplay and is summarised in the table overleaf.

Table 2.17: Summary of overplay

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (sessions)
9	Brandhall Primary School	Oldbury	Youth (9v9)	1	1
			Mini (7v7)	1	1
			Mini (5v5)	1	0.5
13	Britannia Park	Rowley Regis	Adult	1	0.5
17	Cakemore Playing Field	Oldbury	Youth (9v9)	2	4
19	Charlemont Playing Fields	West Bromwich	Youth (11v11)	2	4.5
			Youth (9v9)	3	1.5
31	George Salter Academy	West Bromwich	Adult	2	0.5
36	Hadley Stadium	Smethwick	Adult	1	7
43	Hydes Road Playing Fields	Wednesbury	Youth (9v9)	1	0.5
61	Ormiston Forge Academy (Hingleys)	Rowley Regis	Adult	1	6.5
77	St Michael's CE High School	Rowley Regis	Youth (11v11)	1	5
			Youth (9v9)	1	2.5
87	Thimblemill Recreation Centre	Oldbury	Adult	4	1.5
90	Tipton Sports Academy	Tipton	Adult	1	1.5
			Youth (11v11)	1	0.5
92	Tividale Park	Oldbury	Adult	1	0.5
			Youth (9v9)	1	0.5
97	Warley RFC	Oldbury	Adult	2	3.5
105	West Smethwick Park	Smethwick	Adult	4	2
107	Wodensborough Ormiston Academy	Wednesbury	Youth (11v11)	1	3
<b>Total</b>				<b>33</b>	<b>48</b>

In total, there are 23.5 match equivalent sessions per week of overplay on adult pitches, 13 on youth 11v11 pitches, ten on youth 9v9 pitches, one on mini 7v7 pitches and 0.5 on mini 5v5 pitches. Each analysis area is experiencing some level of overplay, most prominently in the Rowley Regis Analysis Area (14.5 match equivalent sessions).

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Table 2.18: Summary of overplay by analysis area

Analysis area	Overplay (match equivalent sessions per week)					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Oldbury	5.5	-	5.5	1	0.5	12.5
Rowley Regis	7	5	2.5	-	-	14.5
Smethwick	9	-	-	-	-	9
Tipton	1.5	0.5	-	-	-	2
Wednesbury	-	3	0.5	-	-	3.5
West Bromwich	0.5	4.5	1.5	-	-	6.5
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>48</b>

Of the overplayed pitches, ten are assessed as poor quality where improvements would relieve issues. Additionally, six are located at education sites, where curricular and extra-curricular use adds to the capacity issues, in addition to community access.

In addition to the overplayed pitches, it should be noted that nine pitches across Sandwell are currently played to capacity. Any further use of these, without quality improvements, would result in further overplay developing.

## 2.5: Supply and demand analysis

Having considered supply and demand, the tables below identify the current supply and demand balance (i.e., spare capacity taking away overplay) in each of the analysis areas for each pitch type. The future demand balance is then also calculated, based on the predicted increases from population growth.

### Adult pitch analysis

Overall, there is currently a considerable shortfall of adult pitch capacity in Sandwell amounting to 17 match equivalent sessions per week, although spare capacity is identified in the Wednesbury and West Bromwich analysis areas.

When accounting for future demand, the overall shortfall increases to 19 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 2.19: Supply and demand balance of adult pitches

Analysis area	Match equivalent sessions (per week)				Total
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	
Oldbury	-	5.5	5.5	0.5	6
Rowley Regis	1	7	6	0.5	6.5
Smethwick	2.5	9	6.5	0.5	7
Tipton	-	1.5	1.5	-	1.5
Wednesbury	1	-	1	-	1
West Bromwich	2	0.5	1.5	0.5	1
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Youth 11v11 pitch analysis

There is currently a capacity shortfall across Sandwell on youth 11v11 pitches totalling ten match equivalent sessions per week. This is due to a shortfall in three of the analysis areas, with spare capacity of two and 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week of capacity in the Oldbury and Tipton analysis areas respectively. The Smethwick Analysis Area is played to capacity.

When future demand is considered, the overall shortfall increases to 12 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 2.20: Supply and demand balance of youth 11v11 pitches

Analysis area	Match equivalent sessions (per week)				Total
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	
Oldbury	2	-	2	0.5	1.5
Rowley Regis	-	5	5	0.5	5.5
Smethwick	-	-	0	0.5	0.5
Tipton	1	0.5	0.5	-	0.5
Wednesbury	-	3	3	-	3
West Bromwich	-	4.5	4.5	0.5	5
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>

## Youth 9v9 pitch analysis

There is a current and future overall shortfall of youth 9v9 pitch capacity in Sandwell amounting to nine match equivalent sessions per week. There is a current and future shortfall evident in four of the six analysis areas, with the Smethwick Analysis Area played to capacity and the Tipton Analysis Area having one match equivalent session of capacity per week.

Table 2.21: Supply and demand balance of youth 9v9 pitches

Analysis area	Match equivalent sessions (per week)				Total
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	
Oldbury	-	5.5	5.5	-	5.5
Rowley Regis	-	2.5	2.5	-	2.5
Smethwick	-	-	0	-	0
Tipton	1	-	1	-	1
Wednesbury	-	0.5	0.5	-	0.5
West Bromwich	-	1.5	1.5	-	1.5
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>

## Mini 7v7 pitch analysis

Across Sandwell, there is overplay of 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week on mini 7v7 pitches. The Oldbury Analysis Area is overplayed by one match equivalent session per week whilst the West Bromwich Analysis Area has 0.5 match equivalent sessions of spare capacity. This is not impacted by future demand aspirations. All remaining analysis areas are played to capacity both currently and after considering future demand.

## SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 2.22: Supply and demand balance of mini 7v7 pitches

Analysis area	Match equivalent sessions (per week)				Total
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	
Oldbury	-	1	1	-	1
Rowley Regis	-	-	0	-	0
Smethwick	-	-	0	-	0
Tipton	-	-	0	-	0
Wednesbury	-	-	0	-	0
West Bromwich	0.5	-	0.5	-	0.5
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.5</b>

### Mini 5v5 pitch analysis

Currently, there is minimal overall spare capacity on mini 5v5 pitches in Sandwell totalling 1.5 match equivalent sessions per week. This is attributed to the Oldbury Analysis Area.

Table 2.23: Supply and demand balance of mini 5v5 pitches

Analysis area	Match equivalent sessions (per week)				Total
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	
Oldbury	2	0.5	1.5	-	1.5
Rowley Regis	-	-	0	0	0
Smethwick	-	-	0	-	0
Tipton	-	-	0	-	0
Wednesbury	-	-	0	-	0
West Bromwich	-	-	0	-	0
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.5</b>

### Overall supply and demand analysis

Using the supply and demand analysis tables above, it is determined that there is currently a shortfall of adult, youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 match equivalent sessions in Sandwell and sufficient capacity on mini 5v5 pitches, albeit minimal. After factoring in future demand, the existing shortfalls on adult and youth 11v11 pitches are projected to worsen.

Table 2.24: Summary of supply and demand

Pitch type	Match equivalent sessions per week				Total
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	
Adult	6.5	23.5	17	2	19
Youth 11v11	3	13	10	2	12
Youth 9v9	1	10	9	-	9
Mini 7v7	0.5	1	0.5	-	0.5
Mini 5v5	2	0.5	1.5	-	1.5

## **SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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When compared to the findings of the 2018 PPS, there has been a significant change in the supply and demand analysis findings. For example, for adult football, overall spare capacity was previously identified, compared to a considerable shortfall currently. This can be explained by there now being more poor quality pitches (with spare capacity now discounted) and a reduction in the number of adult pitches. Although this is partly offset by a reduction in adult demand, an increasing number of youth teams are also using adult pitches.

Conversely, the shortfall of youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitch capacity is now less than it was previously. There are multiple reasons for this, including an increase in the number of youth pitches, an increase in the number of youth teams using adult pitches, and an increase in the number of youth teams using 3G pitches for matches.

Similarly, there was previously a greater shortfall of mini 7v7 pitch capacity and a shortfall of mini 5v5 pitch capacity, which can be explained by the number of mini teams now using 3G pitches for match play.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

## PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

### **Football – grass pitch supply and demand summary**

- Actual spare capacity totals 13 match equivalent sessions per week across football pitches in Sandwell, which is a minimal amount.
- A total of 33 pitches across 15 sites are overplayed by a combined total of 48 match equivalent sessions per week.
- There is a current shortfall of adult, youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 match equivalent sessions, whilst minimal capacity exists on mini 5v5 pitches.
- After factoring in future demand, shortfalls are predicted to worsen on adult and youth 11v11 pitches.

### **Football – supply summary**

- The audit identifies a total of 171 grass football pitches within Sandwell across 70 sites, with 139 pitches available, at some level, for community use across 48 sites.
- As a breakdown, there are 86 adult, 13 youth 11v11, 21 youth 9v9, 12 mini 7v7 and seven mini 5v5 pitches that are available for community use.
- Lapsed/disused pitches are identified at Friar Park Playing Fields, Kent Road Park, Kenrick Park, Powis Avenue, Brickhouse Farm and Elwells.
- The Council and education providers are the predominant suppliers of football pitches.
- Bustleholme FC and Oldbury United aspire to formalise long-term tenure agreements for their respective home venues.
- Most community available pitches are considered to be poor quality, with 83 assessed as this, although there is also a large quantity assessed as standard (51).
- Only five pitches are assessed as good quality.
- Quality of ancillary provision is an issue at sites such as Cakemore Playing Fields, Charlemont Playing Fields, Greets Green Playing Fields, Hydes Road Playing Fields, Lion Farm Playing Fields, Red House Park, Tividale Park, Warley RFC (St Johns Pitches) and West Smethwick Park.
- Ancillary facility improvements are planned at Britannia Park, Tividale Park and West Smethwick Park whilst Wood Green Academy and Ormiston Sandwell Academy aspire to provide new provision.

### **Football – demand summary**

- Through the audit and assessment, 348 teams from within 115 clubs are identified as playing within Sandwell, consisting of 109 adult, 167 youth and 72 mini teams.
- The number of teams competing in Sandwell has declined in recent years although consultation indicates that the majority of clubs have seen an increase in demand (the contradiction may be to do with the presence of the WJYFL and the exported demand it creates).
- There are high levels of exported demand, with a large number of teams playing in neighbouring authorities due to a lack of pitch capacity and availability within Sandwell, in addition to the prevalence of the WJYFL.
- A total of five clubs express latent demand in that they could field more teams if more pitch capacity or improved ancillary facilities were available to them.
- Based on population growth, an increase of seven adult, seven youth 11v11 and one mini 7v7 team is projected (to 2039), whilst six clubs report aspirations to grow by a combined total of 29 teams.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 3: THIRD GENERATION TURF (3G) ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES (AGPS)

Competitive football can take place on 3G surfaces that have been FIFA or International Matchball Standard tested and approved by the FA for inclusion on the FA pitch register. As such a growing number of 3G pitches are now used for competitive match play, providing that the performance standard meets FIFA quality requirements.

World Rugby produced the 'Performance Specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby', more commonly known as 'Regulation 22', which provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union. The artificial surface standards identified in Regulation 22 allows matches to be played on surfaces that meet the required standard, meaning full contact activity can take place.

Competitive rugby league play and contact practice is permitted to take place on 3G pitches which are deemed by the Rugby Football League (RFL) to meet its Performance Standard. Pitches fall under two categories; community club pitches which require retesting every two years and elite stadia pitches which require an annual retest. Much of the criteria within the RFL performance standard test also forms part of the World Rugby test, meaning World Rugby certified 3G pitches are considered by the RFL to be able to meet rugby league requirements, subject to passing an additional RFL performance standard test.

Other sports that are known to use 3G pitches for training and match play include American football and lacrosse. Many test contractors are able to offer reduced rates through efficiency savings to carry out multiple performance tests in the same session, therefore providers seeking 3G pitch compliancy for a number of sports would be recommended to consider this opportunity.

England Hockey's Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy (June 2016) advises that 3G pitches should not be used for hockey matches or training and that they can only be used for lower level hockey (introductory level) as a last resort when no sand-based or water-based AGPs are available.

### 3.2 Current provision

A full size 3G pitch is considered by the FA to measure at least 100 x 64 metres (106 x 70 metres including run offs); however, for the purposes of this report, all pitches measuring over 100 x 60 metres (inclusive of run offs) are included as full size due to the amount of demand they can accommodate. It is common for such pitches to be slightly undersized, especially when sand-based pitches have been converted as the size requirement for hockey is generally smaller than for football.

As seen in the table below, there are currently six full size outdoor 3G pitches in Sandwell across the same number of sites. All of the pitches are floodlit and four are available for community use.

Table 3.1: Full size 3G pitches in Sandwell

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Community use?	Floodlit?	Size (metres)
31	George Salter Academy	B70 9UW	West Bromwich	Yes	Yes	102 x 63
36	Hadley Stadium	B66 4ND	Smethwick	Yes	Yes	100 x 60
68	Portway Lifestyle Centre	B69 1HE	Rowley Regis	Yes	Yes	104 x 64
78	Gospel Oak School	DY4 0BZ	Tipton	Yes	Yes	100 x 60

## SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Community use?	Floodlit?	Size (metres)
79	Sandwell Academy	B71 4LG	Smethwick	No	Yes	100 x 60
103	West Bromwich Albion FC Academy	B71 4LG	Smethwick	No	Yes	105 x 70

The pitch at West Bromwich Albion FC Academy is considered as unavailable as most of the access is reserved for use by the professional club. Similarly, the pitch at Sandwell Academy is considered unavailable as, outside of internal use, it only allows lettings to the Albion Foundation. It can therefore not be accessed by community clubs.

Of the pitches, three are located within the Smethwick Analysis Area (although only one is available), with one in each of the Rowley Regis, Tipton and West Bromwich analysis areas. There are therefore no pitches within either the Oldbury or Wednesbury analysis areas.

In addition to the above, there is also a full size indoor 3G pitch at West Bromwich Albion FC Academy. However, as with its outdoor provision, this is not available for community use.

As well as the full size pitches, there are 13 smaller sized pitches in Sandwell across six sites (nine pitches are provided at Pulse Soccer & Fitness. All of this provision is floodlit and available to the community.

*Table 3.2: Additional supply of 3G pitches in Sandwell*

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Community use?	Floodlit?	Number of pitches	Size (metres)
28	Ferndale Primary School	West Bromwich	Yes	Yes	1	20 x 13
31	George Salter Academy	West Bromwich	Yes	Yes	1	51 x 38
70	Pulse Soccer & Fitness	Wednesbury	Yes	Yes	8	34 x 22
					1	60 x 40
97	Warley Rugby Club	Oldbury	Yes	Yes	1	36 x 22
101	Wednesbury Rugby Club	Wednesbury	Yes	Yes	1	55 x 35

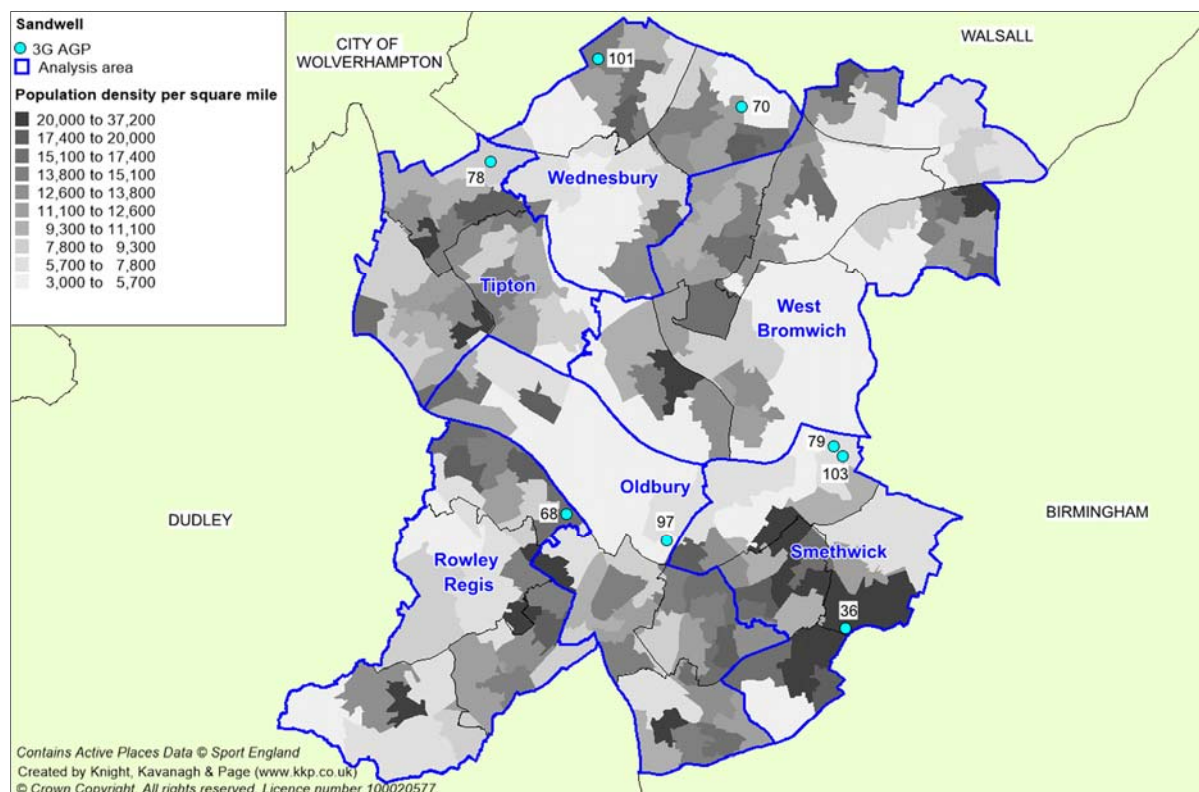
Nationally, whilst not large enough to accommodate adult match play, smaller sized provision can be used to host youth and mini matches, in addition to training demand, providing that they are FA approved. Whilst some of the pitches in Sandwell are too small to accommodate any form of demand (as a minimum area of 37 x 27 metres is required for mini 5v5 football), others, such as those at George Salter Academy and Wednesbury Rugby Club, can serve a purpose in this regard.

The map overleaf identifies the location of 3G pitches currently servicing Sandwell, regardless of size.



# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Figure 3.1: Location of 3G pitches in Sandwell



## Future provision

In the LFFP for Sandwell, five priority projects are identified to provide four additional full size pitches and one additional smaller sized pitch. Of the full size pitch projects, two are identified in the Wednesbury Analysis Area and one in the Smethwick Analysis Area; however, specific sites are not selected due to numerous options existing. West Smethwick Park, Hadley Stadium, Hydes Road Playing Field and Phoenix Collegiate are identified as potential venues.

The remaining full size project is identified at Tipton Sports Academy, whilst the smaller sized project is at Birmingham County FA Headquarters.

Due to significant growth in football demand since the LFFP was produced, it is likely that 3G requirements have now considerably increased, whilst additional aspirations are now also known. As such, it is likely that the project list will now need to be revisited, amended and added to, which the demand section of this report further explores.

As an example of the above, Birmingham County FA now has an aspiration to develop a full size pitch at its site, rather than smaller sized provision. It has recently met with The FA and the Football Foundation, which are supportive of the project, although there are a few site challenges around access and car parking that will need to be resolved. Partnership funding is in place.

In addition, the Albion Foundation is actively looking for a site within Sandwell to accommodate its own 3G provision as well as office and classroom space. It currently owns no facilities and so is completely reliant on third-party sites. It has previously explored West Smethwick Park and Lewisham Park.

## SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

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An ongoing proposal in relation to Lion Farm Playing Fields plans for the loss of the grass pitches at the site to enable the creation of an outlet shopping and leisure destination. To help offset the loss of the pitches, the project sets out the development of 3G provision, although this has yet to be approved.

As part of a viability assessment into the disused Phoenix Collegiate (North Campus), the possibility of providing 3G pitch(es) at the School's remaining campus is being explored as part of the required mitigation. A developer contribution has been agreed upon, subject to the completion of a suitable S106 agreement. This would fit into one of the recommendations in the LFFP and discussions have also taken place as to whether the proposed pitch(es) should be WR compliant although the RFU suggested floodlit grass pitches with a community use agreement would be a more efficient use of funds.

Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy reports that it is exploring the conversion of its pitch to 3G. It states that it has held conversations with the Albion Foundation, which would support its plans and use the provision more heavily if it was resurfaced. This, however, would mean that it could not be used for hockey (see Part 7 of this report for further details).

If proposals at Birmingham County FA, Phoenix Collegiate (North Campus) and Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy were to go ahead, Hydes Road Playing Field could become a potential site to host a hockey-suitable AGP instead of a 3G pitch.

A smaller sized 3G pitch is proposed as part of wider development plans at Britannia Park.

### ***FA/FIFA approved pitches***

In order for competitive matches to be played on 3G pitches, the pitch should be FIFA or IMS tested and approved and added to the FA pitch register, which can be found at: <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/3g-pitch-register>.

Pitches undergo testing to become a FIFA Quality pitch or a FIFA Quality Pro pitch, with provision commonly constructed, installed and tested in situ to achieve either accreditation. The differences between the accreditations are that FIFA quality pitches are designed to accommodate substantial levels of regular usage, whereas FIFA Quality Pro pitches are more for high level performance, with usage levels therefore more limited to protect the standard. Generally, FIFA Quality pitches can be typically used for 60-85 hours per week, whereas FIFA Quality Pro pitches are able to accommodate 20-30 hours.

To remain accredited, pitches must be re-assessed every three years to ensure that quality has not deteriorated beyond acceptable levels, although this is required annually for clubs using 3G pitches within the football pyramid (steps 1-6).

In Sandwell, four of the six full size 3G pitches are currently FIFA/FA approved and can therefore host competitive matches. These are the pitches at:

- ◀ George Salter Academy
- ◀ Hadley Stadium
- ◀ Gospel Oak School
- ◀ Portway Lifestyle Centre

Re-testing is required every three years to ensure that this remains the case. In addition, the smaller sized pitch at George Salter Academy is also accredited and could therefore accommodate competitive youth and mini match (it is too small for adult play).

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The full size pitches at Sandwell Academy and West Bromwich Albion FC Academy are not currently approved. The provision at Sandwell Academy was previously on the register but its certification has expired.

## ***World Rugby compliant pitches***

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

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

None of the existing 3G pitches in Sandwell are World Rugby compliant.

## ***Management***

The full size pitches at George Salter Academy, Gospel Oak School and Sandwell Academy are operated internally by the schools, whilst the pitches at Hadley Stadium and Portway Lifestyle Centre are managed by Sandwell Leisure Trust, on behalf of the Council. Provision at West Bromwich Albion FC Academy is managed by the Club.

The pitch at Hadley Stadium, whilst managed by Sandwell Leisure Trust, is accessed by Shireland Collegiate Academy during the school day.

Of the smaller size pitches, two are operated by schools (at George Salter Academy and Ferndale Primary School), two by clubs (Warley Rugby Club and Wednesbury Rugby Club), and the remainder commercially (at Pulse Soccer & Fitness).

## ***Availability***

The table below summarises the availability for community use at sites in Sandwell providing full size 3G pitches. Each available pitch is readily accessible during peak time periods, whilst the pitches at Sandwell Academy and West Bromwich Albion FC Academy are unavailable.

The peak period is based on Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM), which applies an overall peak period for AGPs of 34 hours per week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00).

*Table 3.3: Summary of availability of full size 3G pitches*

Site ID	Site	Availability	Hours available in the peak period (and overall)
31	George Salter Academy	Reserved for curricular use until 17:00 then available to the community from 17:00-22:00 during the week, from 10:00-18:00 on Saturdays and from 09:00-21:00 on Sundays.	33 (45)

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Site ID	Site	Availability	Hours available in the peak period (and overall)
36	Hadley Stadium	Reserved for use by Shireland Collegiate Academy until 17:30 then available to the community from 17:30-22:30 during the week, from 10:00-17:00 on Saturdays and from 10:00-16:00 on Sundays.	28.5 (38)
68	Portway Lifestyle Centre	Available from 07:00-22:00 during the week and from 07:00-18:00 at the weekend.	34 (97)
78	Gospel Oak School	Reserved for curricular use until 16:00 then available to the community until 23:00 during the week. Also available to the community from 09:00-16:30 at weekends.	33 (50)
79	Sandwell Academy	Reserved for curricular use until 18:00 and then hired out to the Albion Foundation. No further use is allowed.	-
103	West Bromwich Albion FC Academy	Unavailable for community use; all access reserved for internal demand.	-

The picture is similar for the smaller sized pitches, with non-school pitches available throughout each day and most school-based pitches having good availability outside of curricular times. The only exception to this is at Ferndale Primary School, which closes at 19:00 during the week and is inaccessible at weekends.

*Table 3.4: Summary of availability of smaller sized 3G pitches*

Site ID	Site	Availability	Hours available in the peak period (and overall)
28	Ferndale Primary School	Reserved for curricular use until 16:00 then available to the community until 19:00 during the week. Unavailable at weekends.	10 (15)
31	George Salter Academy	Reserved for curricular use until 17:00 then available to the community from 17:00-22:00 during the week, from 10:00-18:00 on Saturdays and from 09:00-21:00 on Sundays.	33 (45)
70	Pulse Soccer & Fitness	Reserved for use by adjacent school until 17:00 then available to the community from 17:00-22:00 during the week, from 09:00-19:00 on Saturdays and from 09:00-21:00 on Sundays.	34 (47)
97	Warley Rugby Club	Available throughout each day.	34 (84)
101	Wednesbury Rugby Club	Available throughout each day.	34 (84)

### Quality

Depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately ten years and it is the age of the surface, combined with maintenance levels, which most commonly affects quality. It is therefore recommended that sinking funds be put into place by providers to enable long-term sustainability, ongoing repairs and future refurbishment beyond this period.

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For the PPOSS, each 3G pitch has been assigned a quality rating of good, standard or poor following site assessments. This rating is most commonly linked to the condition and age of the playing surface, as well as surrounding hard areas and maintenance that is undertaken. For the full assessment criteria, please refer to Appendix 2.

The following table indicates when each full size 3G pitch was installed or last resurfaced in Sandwell together with an agreed quality rating following non-technical assessments and user and provider consultation.

Table 3.5: Summary of quality of full size 3G pitches

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Year installed/ resurfaced	Quality
31	George Salter Academy	West Bromwich	2017	Good
36	Hadley Stadium	Smethwick	2016	Good
68	Portway Lifestyle Centre	Rowley Regis	2013	Good
78	Gospel Oak School	Tipton	2017	Good
79	Sandwell Academy	Smethwick	2016	Good
103	West Bromwich Albion FC Academy	Smethwick	2014	Good

As seen, all six pitches are within their recommended lifespans and are assessed as good quality. The pitch at Portway Lifestyle Centre has the oldest surface, meaning that refurbishment is likely to be required over the next couple of years.

Despite its overall good quality, George Salter Academy reports that the lights servicing its pitch are temperamental and in need of an upgrade.

Of the smaller size pitches, the pitches at Pulse Soccer & Fitness (2011) have exceeded their recommended lifespans, although only recently. All remaining provision is newer, with no significant issues identified.

### **Ancillary facilities**

All full size 3G provision is accompanied by ancillary facilities that are considered adequate and no major issues have been identified via site assessments or through consultation.

### **3.3: Demand**

The community available 3G pitches currently servicing Sandwell are operating at or close to capacity at peak times, especially during winter months when grass pitches cannot be used for training or recreational demand (due to a lack of floodlighting). This applies not only to midweek capacity but also to weekend capacity on account of all the community available full size pitches being FA approved to host competitive matches.

As an example, the full size pitch at Gospel Oak Academy only has capacity before 17:00 and after 21:00 during the week, which are not preferable times for many teams in terms of training. At weekends, it only has availability after 12:00 on Saturdays and before 12:00 on Sundays.

Similarly, the pitch at George Salter Academy only has capacity on Mondays and Fridays, in addition to some capacity on Saturday evenings.

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In addition to community clubs accessing the pitches, the Albion Foundation is a key user of the 3G pitch stock and it in fact uses each full size pitch on a weekly basis for its activities and sessions. It accesses both West Bromwich Albion FC Academy and Sandwell Academy on four nights a week as well as at weekends, George Salter Academy on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, Gospel Oak School on Tuesdays, Hadley Stadium on Fridays and Portway Lifestyle Centre on Tuesday and Wednesdays.

This is in addition to usage of some smaller size pitches, sand-based pitches and grass playing fields and is linked to its aspiration for its own provision. Removing some of its usage from the existing 3G pitches would free up significant capacity for community clubs and other users.

Across the Country, there are often small-sided commercial leagues operating on 3G provision. Whilst this is somewhat limited in Sandwell, potentially due to a lack of overall capacity, Leisure Leagues uses the pitch at George Salter Academy on Sundays. Pulse also runs commercial leagues on the small-sided pitches at its site, Pulse Soccer & Fitness.

### ***Football***

The FA considers high quality 3G pitches as an essential tool in promoting coach and player development, with the pitches considered to be great assets on account of being able to support intensive use and use during inclement weather. Primarily, such facilities have been installed for social use and training, however, they are increasingly being used for competition, which the NGB wholly supports.

### ***Training demand***

Getting access to good quality, affordable training facilities is a problem for many clubs throughout the country. In the winter months, midweek training is only possible at floodlit facilities, with 3G provision preferred by the FA and most clubs.

The FA's long-term ambition is to provide every affiliated team in England the opportunity to train once per week on a floodlit 3G surface, together with priority access for every England Accredited Club through a partnership agreement. As such, it has established a model to calculate the required number of pitches to meet demand, with one full size pitch being required to service every 38 teams within a local authority. This is based on peak time access being Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings (Mondays and Fridays are discounted as it is considered that teams do not want to train in such close proximity to a weekend match, and it also allows for other forms of access such as for commercial leagues and recreational play).

For the model, in addition to full size pitches being included, some smaller sized pitches are also incorporated as many are suitable for accommodating training demand, especially larger ones such as that in place at George Salter Academy. To calculate their contribution, a pitch large enough to cater for youth matches (but not adult) is considered to be the equivalent of half a full size pitch (0.5 pitches), whilst a pitch that is large enough for mini matches (but not youth or adult) is the equivalent of quarter of a full size pitch (0.25 pitches). Any pitch smaller than this is discounted.

The full size pitches at Sandwell Academy and West Bromwich Albion FC Academy are also discounted from the modelling due to being unavailable for community use. However, whilst future access is always going to be unlikely at West Bromwich Albion FC Academy, it could be explored at Sandwell Academy as it is unusual for school-based pitches not to be made available (notwithstanding use by the Albion Foundation).

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Using the above, with 348 teams currently playing in Sandwell, there is a calculated need for 9.25 full size 3G pitches (rounded up from 9.15). With 4.75 full size pitch equivalents currently provided and available (including smaller size provision), a shortfall of 4.5 full size pitches is identified.

Table 3.6: Current demand for 3G pitches in Sandwell (based on 38 teams per pitch)

Current number of teams	3G requirement <sup>2</sup>	Current number of 3G pitches	Current shortfall
348	9.25	4.75	4.50

When considering future demand for an additional eight teams (based on population increases), the shortfall remains the same.

Table 3.7: Future demand for 3G pitches in Sandwell (based on 38 teams per pitch)

Future number of teams	3G requirement <sup>3</sup>	Current number of 3G pitches	Future shortfall
356	9.25	4.75	4.50

Alternatively, the table below considers the number of 3G pitches required if every team was to remain training within the respective analysis area that they play in. This not only identifies where the needs exist across Sandwell, but it can also be used to guide which areas should be targeted for new provision.

Table 3.8: Current demand for 3G pitches in Sandwell by analysis area

Analysis area	Current number of teams	3G requirement	Current number of 3G pitches	Current shortfall
Oldbury	97	2.5	-	2.50
Rowley Regis	65	1.75	1	0.75
Smethwick	70	1.75	1	0.75
Tipton	19	0.5	1	-
Wednesbury	19	0.5	0.5	-
West Bromwich	78	2	1.25	0.75
<b>Dudley</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.75</b>

This identifies a slightly higher need than for Sandwell as whole, which is due to rounding the numbers and due to a perceived existing oversupply in the Tipton Analysis Area. There is a shortfall of 2.5 pitches in the Oldbury Analysis Area and a shortfall of 0.75 pitches in each of the Rowley Regis, Smethwick and West Bromwich analysis areas.

When accounting for future demand, the shortfalls remain the same.

Table 3.9: Future demand for 3G pitches in Sandwell by analysis area

Analysis area	Future number of teams	3G requirement	Current number of 3G pitches	Current shortfall
Oldbury	99	2.5	-	2.50
Rowley Regis	67	1.75	1	0.75
Smethwick	72	1	1	0.75

<sup>2</sup> Rounded to the nearest 0.25

<sup>3</sup> Rounded to the nearest 0.25

## SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Analysis area	Future number of teams	3G requirement	Current number of 3G pitches	Current shortfall
Tipton	19	0.5	1	-
Wednesbury	19	0.5	0.5	-
West Bromwich	80	2	1.25	0.75
<b>Dudley</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.75</b>

Notwithstanding the above, whilst the FA model provides a good guide for estimating 3G pitch requirements, it does not account for the level of access currently required by the Albion Foundation. This is therefore likely to increase the number of pitches needed to accommodate club training, unless the Foundation can be provided with a pitch that it can transfer a good proportion of its demand to (it is acknowledged that it would still want a presence in other areas and at other sites).

When compared to 2018 PPS findings, the overall shortfalls identified above are broadly consistent (although they have slightly increased), with a current shortfall of four pitches and a future shortfall of five previously identified. However, on an analysis area basis, a shortfall was previously evident in Wednesbury and not in West Bromwich, meaning this aspect has since changed.

### *Match play demand*

Improving grass pitch quality is one way to increase the capacity at sites but given the cost of doing such work and the continued maintenance required, alternatives need to be considered that can offer a more sustainable model for the future of football. The substitute to grass pitches is the use of 3G pitches for competitive matches, providing that the pitch is appropriately accredited, floodlit and available for community use during the peak period.

Four existing community available pitches in Sandwell are FA approved to host competitive fixtures and there is relatively high demand for the provision, with 51 teams currently accessing a 3G facility as their home pitch and with each accredited pitch being in use for this purpose. This is 51 teams that would otherwise be using grass pitches, adding to capacity and quality issues, or alternatively they would not exist at all due to having nowhere to play.

As a breakdown, of the 72 teams utilising 3G pitches for matches, six are adult teams, four are youth 11v11 teams, seven are youth 9v9 teams, 15 are mini 7v7 teams and 19 are mini 5v5 teams.

As the number of 3G pitches increases in line with meeting training demand shortfalls, so should the number of teams utilising the provision for matches, which in turn should relieve grass pitches of use. As such, whilst the number of 3G pitches needed for matches will never outweigh the number of 3G pitches needed for training (as they would not be sustainable without midweek usage), maximising the pitches that are in place and that are proposed should be fully supported. This will be further explored in the proceeding strategy document via a range of scenarios for transferring play.

The use of 3G provision for matches also emphasises the importance of maintaining good quality pitches. Should pitches become poor quality, they will likely lose accreditation to accommodate fixtures. This will then result in all teams using the provision needing to transfer to grass pitches, adding to their usage, reducing their capacity and further diminishing their quality.



# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

## PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

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### ***Other sports***

Whilst the majority of the demand accessing the existing stock of 3G pitches, is football-based, there is some activity recognised from Wednesbury RUFC (see Part 5) and Sandwell Steelers (see Part 15).

#### *Rugby union*

Wednesbury RUFC access its smaller size 3G pitch for some training activity when its grass training area is waterlogged. However, as the pitch is not World Rugby compliant, all activity is non-contact. It is also not used more regularly as it is not large enough for purposeful activity.

Warley RUFC also has a smaller size 3G pitch at its site, although it does not use this as it is too small.

World Rugby compliant 3G pitches can often be a resolution for accommodating rugby union training demand and, in turn, alleviating grass pitch shortfalls. However, there is no perceived need for such provision in Sandwell as grass pitch capacity is generally sufficient and overuse is minimal. Nevertheless, there are grass pitch shortfalls in other Black Country authorities, meaning a pitch within Sandwell could alleviate capacity issues elsewhere if it was placed at a suitable location for clubs to travel to.

#### *American football*

Sandwell Steelers trains midweek at Gospel Oak School and at weekends at Portway Leisure Centre. Ideally, it would prefer to undertake this activity at one site, but this is not currently possible due to lack of midweek capacity at Portway Leisure Centre and a lack of weekend capacity at Gospel Oak School.

### **3.4: Supply and demand analysis**

There is limited spare capacity on the present supply of 3G pitches when teams require access for training purposes, leading to several clubs reporting a need for increased provision. This is exacerbated by significant use from the Albion Foundation, which as a result expresses an aspiration for its own provision.

With the FA model suggesting that there is a shortfall of at least 4.5 full size 3G pitches, priority should be placed on the creation of new provision. To that end, precedence should be given to areas with identified shortfalls and to providing for the Albion Foundation, which will then free up capacity for other users. The shortfall could also be lessened if community access to the existing pitch at Sandwell Academy could be gained.

Meeting the 3G pitch shortfall for training will also help alleviate grass pitch shortfalls and quality issues identified in Part 2 of this report, providing that the transfer of play is pursued as and when more pitches are established. Potential options for the creation of new provision will therefore be explored in the proceeding strategy document.

In addition, it is important to sustain the current pitch stock to ensure that the existing shortfalls are not exacerbated. In that regard, providers should be encouraged to put sinking funds in place and it is also recommended that all new and existing pitches undergo FA testing every three years to remain or become FA approved.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

## PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

### **3G – supply and demand summary**

- Priority should be placed on the creation of new 3G pitches to meet the identified shortfalls for football training demand and to better provide for the Albion Foundation.
- Meeting the 3G pitch shortfall for training will also help alleviate grass pitch shortfalls and quality issues, providing that the transfer of play is pursued as and when more pitches are established.
- In addition, it is important to sustain the current pitch stock to ensure that the existing shortfalls are not exacerbated.

### **3G – supply summary**

- There are six outdoor full size 3G pitches in Sandwell, all of which are floodlit and four of which are available for community use (pitches at Sandwell Academy and West Bromwich Albion FC Academy are unavailable).
- There is also a full size indoor pitch at West Bromwich Albion FC Academy, although this is also unavailable for community use.
- There are also 13 smaller sized 3G pitches across six sites, all of which are available for community use and floodlit.
- The LFFP identifies five potential future 3G projects, whilst other aspirations also exist at Birmingham County FA Headquarters, Lion Farm Playing Fields, Phoenix Collegiate and Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy.
- Four of the six full size pitches are on the FA register for match play (pitches at Sandwell Academy and West Bromwich Albion FC Academy are not).
- There are no World Rugby Compliant pitches provided.
- All full size pitches are good or standard quality and within their recommended lifespans.

### **3G – demand summary**

- The existing available 3G provision is reported to be operating at or close to capacity at peak times, with all current community activity being football-based.
- In addition to community clubs accessing the pitches, the Albion Foundation is a key user of the 3G pitch stock and it in fact uses each full size pitch on a weekly basis for its activities and sessions.
- With 348 football teams currently playing in Sandwell, there is a broad calculated shortfall of 4.50 full size 3G pitches to meet training needs (discounting unavailable pitches but including smaller sized pitches that are of a sufficient size).
- When accounting for future demand (based on population increases), the shortfall remains the same.
- When assessing 3G pitch need by analysis area there is a current and future shortfall in Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick and West Bromwich.
- There are currently 51 football teams using the 3G pitch stock for matches; whilst the number needed for matches will never outweigh the number of 3G pitches needed for training, maximising the pitches that are in place and that are proposed should be fully supported.
- Wednesbury RUFC access its smaller sized 3G pitch for some training activity when its grass training area is waterlogged, although it cannot be used for contact activity.
- There is no perceived need for a World Rugby compliant pitch in Sandwell, unless it could be located at a suitable location for clubs from across the Black Country to travel to.
- Sandwell Steelers trains midweek at Gospel Oak School and at weekends at Portway Leisure Centre; it would prefer to undertake this activity at one site but capacity does not currently enable this.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 4: CRICKET

### 4.1: Introduction

The Staffordshire Cricket Board (SCB) is the main governing and representative body for Cricket within Sandwell. Working closely with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), it is responsible for the management and development of every form of recreational cricket for men, women and children within Sandwell. It is currently working with the ECB on delivering its Strategy, 'Inspiring Generations', which has been live since 2020.

For adult cricket in Sandwell there are three main offerings; Saturday, Sunday and midweek cricket. The youth league structure tends to be club-based matches which are played mid-week, although some matches are also played on Sundays.

#### **Consultation**

In total, five cricket clubs are identified as playing within Sandwell, all of which, responded to consultation requests as shown below.

*Table 4.1: Cricket club response rate*

Club name	Club response?
Old Hill CC	Yes
Smethwick CC	Yes
Thimblemill CC	Yes
Wednesbury CC	Yes
West Bromwich Dartmouth CC	Yes

### 4.2: Supply

In total, there are six grass wicket cricket squares in Sandwell provided across the same number of sites. All of the squares are available for community use.

*Table 4.2: Summary of grass wicket squares*

Analysis area	Number of squares
Oldbury	1
Rowley Regis	1
Smethwick	2
Tipton	-
Wednesbury	1
West Bromwich	1
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>6</b>

Each analysis contains at least one grass wicket square, with the exception of the Tipton Analysis Area which is without provision. The Smethwick Analysis Area is the only area to provide more than one square.

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## ***Non-turf pitches***

There are non-turf pitches (NTPs) accompanying one grass wickets square. This relates to the square at Wednesbury Sports Union.

In addition, there are 15 standalone NTPs currently provided across 14 sites (two are at West Smethwick Park). These are located at the following sites:

- ◀ Bearmore Playing Field
- ◀ Jubilee Park
- ◀ Lewisham Park
- ◀ Redhouse Park
- ◀ Victoria Park (Smethwick)
- ◀ West Smethwick Park
- ◀ Woodgreen Academy
- ◀ Gospel Oak School
- ◀ Hydes Road Playing Fields
- ◀ King George V Playing Fields
- ◀ Oldbury Academy
- ◀ Rowley Regis Learning Campus
- ◀ Tividale Park
- ◀ Victoria Park (Tipton)

Of these, 14 are available to the community, with only the wicket at Rowley Regis Learning Campus being reported as unavailable. Nine of the standalone NTPs are provided at sites managed by the Council and are in place to provide for and encourage casual and informal use, as well to cater for formal midweek demand.

NTPs, particularly when located at club sites, can also aid with training and practice and can help reduce overplay on grass wickets when used for matches. The ECB highlights that NTPs which follow its TS6 guidance on performance standards are suitable for high level, senior play. Additionally, NTPs are frequently used for junior matches across the Country.

## ***Lapsed/disused provision***

Numerous sites across Sandwell previously provided grass wicket squares but no longer do so. However, these are not considered to be disused sites as they are still being used as playing fields, it is just that the cricket provision is disused. One example is at Hydes Road Playing Fields, which previously featured up to three grass wicket squares but now contains just a solitary NTP. Similarly, Barnford Park, Redhouse Park, West Smethwick Park, Victoria Park (Smethwick) and Victoria Park (Tipton) also previously provided grass wicket squares that are no longer maintained.

Heathfield Close is a lapsed playing field site. This previously provided a cricket square; however, it has not been maintained as such for over ten years.

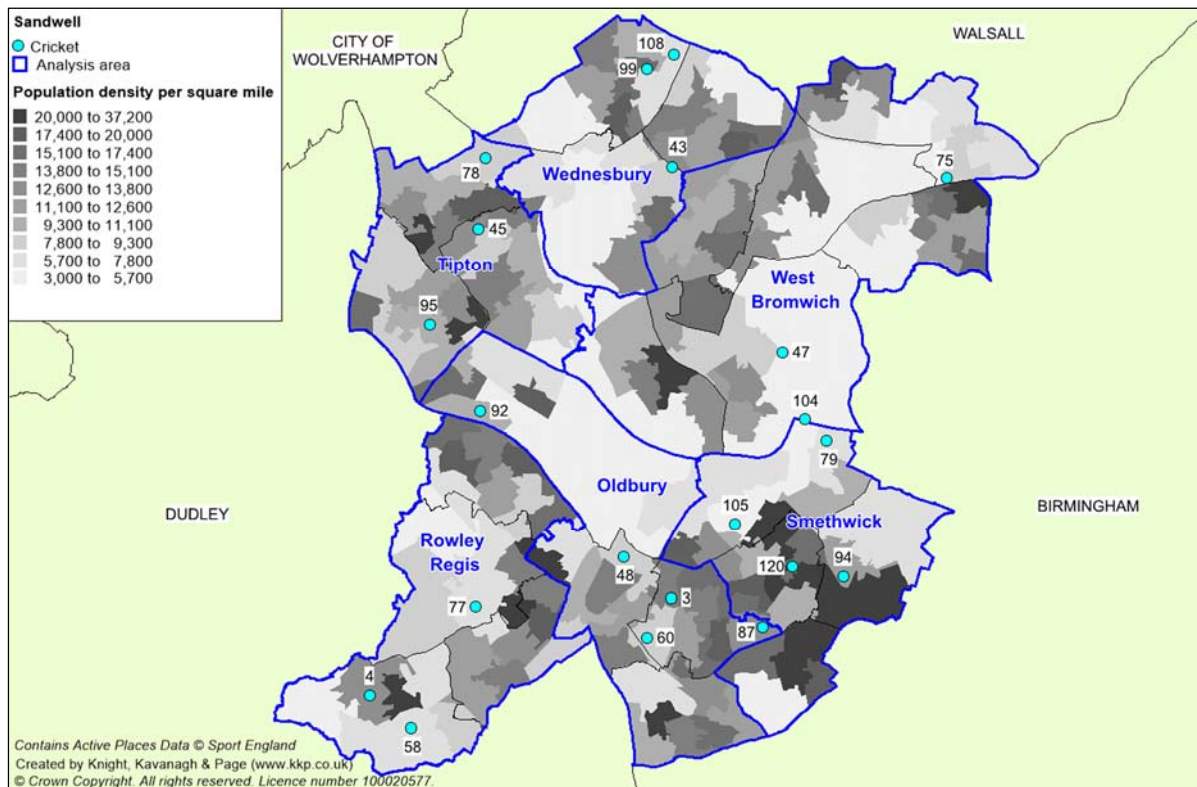
## ***Future provision***

As part of ongoing plans at West Smethwick Park, there may be a loss of one of the cricket squares. This would form part of a wider scheme that will result in the creation of a new pavilion and a grass football pitch, as well as potentially a 3G pitch.

The map below shows the location of all cricket squares currently servicing Sandwell. For a key to the map, see Table 4.3.

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Figure 4.1: Location of cricket pitches within Sandwell



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Table 4.3: Key to map of cricket squares

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Community use?	No. of squares	No. of wickets	
						Grass	Non-turf
4	Bearmore Playing Field	B64 6EA	Rowley Regis	Yes	1	-	1
43	Hydes Road Playing Fields	WS10 0DR	Wednesbury	Yes	1	-	1
45	Jubilee Park	DY4 0QS	Tipton	Yes	1	-	1
47	King George V Playing Fields (West Bromwich)	B71 4BG	West Bromwich	Yes	1	-	1
49	Lewisham Park	B69 4QB	Smethwick	Yes	1	-	1
58	Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club	B64 7HF	Rowley Regis	Yes	1	16	-
60	Oldbury Academy	B68 8NE	Oldbury	Yes	1	-	1
75	Redhouse Park	B43 6AD	West Bromwich	Yes	1	-	1
77	St Michael's CE High School	B65 9AN	Rowley Regis	No	1	-	1
78	Gospel Oak Academy	DY4 0BZ	Tipton	Yes	1	-	1
79	Sandwell Academy	B71 4LG	Smethwick	Yes	1	8	-
87	Thimblemill Recreation Centre	B67 6NR	Oldbury	Yes	1	10	-
92	Tividale Park	B69 2HU	Oldbury	Yes	1	-	1
94	Victoria Park (Smethwick)	B66 3PD	Smethwick	Yes	1	-	1
95	Victoria Park (Tipton)	DY4 8SW	Tipton	Yes	1	-	1
99	Wednesbury Sports Union	WS10 9QL	Wednesbury	Yes	1	10	1
104	West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club	B71 4JQ	West Bromwich	Yes	1	10	-
105	West Smethwick Park	B67 7JH	Smethwick	Yes	2	-	1
						-	1
108	Wood Green Academy	WS10 9QU	Wednesbury	Yes	1	-	1
120	Smethwick Cricket Club	B67 6BJ	Smethwick	Yes	1	13	-

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## **Management and security of tenure**

Three of the clubs in Sandwell have freehold of their sites, whilst the remaining two clubs have lease agreements in place (meaning no clubs rent provision).

*Table 4.4: Summary of security of tenure for clubs*

<b>Club</b>	<b>Primary site</b>	<b>Agreement</b>
Old Hill CC	Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club	Freehold
Smethwick CC	Smethwick Cricket Club	Leased (999 years)
Thimblemill CC	Thimblemill Recreation Centre	Freehold
Wednesbury CC	Wednesbury Sports Union	Leased (one-year rolling)
West Bromwich Dartmouth CC	West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club	Freehold

For the clubs with lease agreements in place, both Smethwick CC and Wednesbury CC lease their sites from the Council, with the former having a 999-year arrangement and the latter having a one-year rolling arrangement. This could be an issue for Wednesbury CC given that the agreement is not long-term, especially when it comes to funding bids and site development. The possibility of a 25-year lease is currently being explored.

In addition to the above, West Bromwich Dartmouth CC also accesses Sandwell Academy as a secondary venue. This site, which is adjacent to the Club's own site, is used via a rental agreement, although the Club reports that it is attempting to enter a more formal and longer term arrangement.

Both Old Hill CC and Smethwick CC also use secondary venues; however, they do so outside of Sandwell (exported demand).

## **Pitch quality**

The quality of cricket pitches has been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the ECB) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>80%), Standard (50-79%), Poor (<49%). For the full assessment criteria, please see Appendix 2.

Maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of cricket; if the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous. As an example, if a square is poor quality, a ball can bounce erratically on a wicket and become a danger to players.

The audit of community available grass wicket cricket squares in Sandwell found five to be good quality and one to be standard quality (none are assessed as poor quality). The site-by-site breakdown of this is shown in the following table.

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Table 4.5: Quality ratings for community available grass wicket squares (site-by-site)

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Square quality
58	Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club	Rowley Regis	Good
79	Sandwell Academy	Smethwick	Good
87	Thimblemill Recreation Centre	Oldbury	Standard
99	Wednesbury Sports Union	Wednesbury	Good
104	West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club	West Bromwich	Good
120	Smethwick Cricket Club	Smethwick	Good

Thimblemill Recreation Centre provides the standard quality square and there are particular concerns regarding this given that it is in use for club cricket. Drainage is problematic in certain areas, whilst Thimblemill CC reports that the wickets are slow and suffer from a low and irregular bounce.

Despite being assessed as good quality, Old Hill CC reports that its pitch suffers from moss growth and drainage issues, although it states that it has recently invested in a new drainage system which should help.

Of particularly good quality are the squares at West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club and Sandwell Academy. The former is maintained to a high level by the Club in order to meet Birmingham & District Premier League criteria, whilst it has also been used to host the England Women's national team.

The square at Sandwell Academy is also maintained by West Bromwich Dartmouth CC (with the School maintaining the outfield) and again is carried out to a high standard. However, the Club reports that it would benefit from the School having its own maintenance equipment (e.g. a roller), rather than it needing to transport equipment between the two sites. In addition, the provision is accompanied by floodlighting to allow for late night and evening usage, although the Club reports that upgrades are required.

To obtain a full technical assessment of wicket and pitches, the ECB recommends a Performance Quality Standard (PQS) assessment. The PQS looks at a cricket square to ascertain whether the pitch meets the required standards, which are benchmarked by the GMA.

Clubs can contact the SCB to arrange for a pitch advisor to complete three different reports that vary in cost. A fully comprehensive report includes soil testing and guidance on machinery and corrective procedures, a mini report includes guidance on machinery and corrective procedures and a verbal report is a spoken version of a mini report.

Table 4.6: Performance Quality Standard ratings

Quality rating	Details
Premier (High)	Where the surface is intended for Premier League play, with those within the top quartile capable of holding minor county and 1st class one day matches. May include some of the better schools and university pitches
Club (Standard)	A Club pitch suitable for league, school and junior cricket
Basic	An acceptable level suitable for recreational cricket and where the surface is designed and maintained within tight financial limitations such as local authorities
Unsuitable	This is where the surface is deemed unfit or unsafe for play



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Of the NTPs in Sandwell, the wickets at Hydes Road Playing Fields, Gospel Oak Academy, West Smethwick Park and Wood Green Academy are considered to be in poor condition and in need of repair/replacement. Improvements are also needed at Redhouse Park, Lewisham Park and Victoria Park (Smethwick), albeit the provision remains useable.

### ***Ancillary facilities***

All clubs in Sandwell have access to changing room facilities at their home ground, although quality varies. However, all provision is regarded as fit for purpose, with two clubs rating their clubhouse as good quality and three rating theirs as standard.

Smethwick CC and Wednesbury CC consider their facilities to be standard quality, although both note that this is due to the age of the buildings, with some level of modernisation required. West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club also rates its facilities as standard, identifying that it is currently exploring a reconfiguration of its ground floor and changing rooms in order to make them gender compliant.

West Bromwich Dartmouth CC also has access to changing rooms at Sandwell Academy. However, it notes that these are located a fair distance from the pitch at the site, which can be problematic. The provision cannot be used as a pavilion as match play cannot be seen.

The Club is in discussions with the school in relation to various ancillary aspects that need investment. In addition to maintenance and floodlighting issues, this includes:

- ◀ A boundary rope
- ◀ Ball stop netting on land adjacent to a golf course
- ◀ Wicket covers

In addition, since initial consultation took place with West Bromwich Dartmouth CC, the Club's 3<sup>rd</sup> team has been promoted to the South Staffordshire County League – Division 2 for the 2022 season which is subject to ground grading requirements. The Club has been provided with a year's grace period in order to meet these requirements. For this, it requires:

- ◀ An improved changing/toilet area (e.g. a dedicated clubhouse)
- ◀ A covered seating area
- ◀ An electronic scoreboard
- ◀ Two additional sightscreens

If these requirements are not met by the 2023 season, the team will be relegated back to the South Staffordshire County League – Division 3.

### ***Training facilities***

Access to cricket nets is important, particularly for pre-season/winter training. In Sandwell, four of the five clubs report demand for new, improved or additional training facilities. Only Thimblemill CC reports no additional requirements.

West Bromwich Dartmouth CC reports no requirements at its main ground, but states that it would benefit from an NTP being installed at Sandwell Academy in addition to being provided with a mobile net. This would not only aid training but also provide additional match provision for some of its junior teams.

Both Smethwick CC and Wednesbury CC report a need for fixed bay practice nets to be installed, whilst Old Hill CC's aspirations are in relation to indoor facilities.

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Although falling out of the scope of this study, it must be noted that all five clubs in Sandwell report that the indoor facility stock in the Borough is insufficient to meet requirements. Currently, schools are commonly used, where quality can be limited and where capacity can be minimal at preferred times.

## 4.3: Demand

There are five clubs in Sandwell which collectively provide 19 senior men's, two senior women's and 19 junior teams. Four of the clubs are relatively large and consist of both senior and junior sections, whilst Thimblemill CC fields just two senior teams.

Table 4.7: Summary of teams by club

Club	Analysis area	No. of teams		
		Senior male	Senior female	Junior
Old Hill CC	Rowley Regis	3	1	7
Smethwick CC	Smethwick	5	-	4
Thimblemill CC	Oldbury	2	-	-
Wednesbury CC	Wednesbury	4	-	2
West Bromwich Dartmouth CC	West Bromwich	5	1	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>

As seen in the table below, most teams are based in the West Bromwich Analysis Area (12 teams), based on West Bromwich Dartmouth CC being the largest club, whereas no teams are based on Oldbury.

Table 4.8: Summary of teams by analysis area

Analysis area	No. of competitive teams		
	Senior men	Senior women	Junior
Oldbury	2	-	-
Rowley Regis	3	1	7
Smethwick	5	-	4
Tipton	-	-	-
Wednesbury	4	-	2
West Bromwich	5	1	6
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>

### Participation trends

Four of the five clubs report that demand has increased in some form over the previous three years. Both Smethwick CC and West Bromwich Dartmouth CC identify growth in both senior and junior cricket, whilst Thimblemill CC identifies senior growth and Old Hill CC identifies junior growth.

Conversely, Wednesbury CC reports a reduction in participation at senior level. It previously fielded four senior men's teams on Saturdays but now has just two. Junior participation at the Club has remained static.

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### ***Latent demand***

No latent demand has been expressed during consultation, with no clubs reporting that teams are unable to play due to a lack of facilities. That being said, many express that capacity is limited, with secondary venues needing to be sought to realise both current demand and future demand aspirations. This particularly relates to Smethwick CC and Wednesbury CC.

### ***Imported/exported demand***

Coseley CC imports demand into Sandwell from Dudley. It accesses the NTP at Gospel Oak Academy for its third Saturday team due to a lack of capacity at its main venue.

In terms of exported demand, Smethwick CC accesses Calthorpe Park, in Birmingham, for its third Saturday team and Handsworth Grammar School, also in Birmingham, for its fourth Saturday team. Similarly, Old Hill CC uses Handsworth Grammar School for its third Saturday team.

Previously, Wednesbury CC exported a team to Aston University Recreation Ground, in Walsall, but this is no longer required following a decline in participation. Nevertheless, aspirations exist for the team to be reformed, which could result in demand again exporting out of Sandwell.

Finally, West Bromwich Dartmouth CC's 5<sup>th</sup> team is nomadic as the Club has been unable to find a home venue for the team to date. Friendly matches are typically played on Saturdays although ad-hoc matches are also played on Sundays, with all this activity taking place at away venues. As a result, many of the fixtures are played outside of Sandwell.

Away from the five clubs, four Sandwell-based teams are also recognised as playing in the Birmingham Cricket League, which uses a variety of central venues across Birmingham. There are currently over 1,500 registered players competing within the League, with these players forming 56 teams competing on a Sunday, 16 teams on a Saturday and eight teams playing mid-week.

### ***Additional activity***

The ECB is currently running a number of initiatives across the Country which results in additional cricket demand and use of cricket facilities. Whilst these do not generally utilise grass wickets, they can impact upon availability when sessions are being held due to use of cricket outfield, making squares unusable for matches during these periods. This can mean no availability on one or two nights a week.

### ***All Stars Cricket***

In partnership with the ECB and Chance to Shine, cricket clubs can register to become an ECB All Stars Cricket Centre. Once registered, a club can deliver the programme which aims to introduce cricket to children aged from five to eight. Subsequently, this may lead to increased interest and demand for junior cricket at clubs. The programme seeks to achieve the following aims:

- ◀ Increase cricket activity for 5-8 year olds in the school and club environment.
- ◀ Develop consistency of message in both settings to aid transition.
- ◀ Improve generic movement skills for children, using cricket as the vehicle.
- ◀ Make it easier for new volunteers to support and deliver in the club environment.
- ◀ Use fun small-sided games to enthuse new children and volunteers to follow and play the game.

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For the 2021 season, Old Hill, Smethwick, Wednesbury and West Bromwich Dartmouth cricket clubs are signed up to be part of the initiative, with 106 participants recorded across the Borough. West Bromwich Dartmouth CC has the most registered participants (48).

### *Dynamo's Cricket*

A key development area for the ECB in delivering on the outcomes of 'Inspiring Generations' will be the Dynamos Cricket programme for 8-11 year olds, which originally aimed to launch in 2020. It plans on building on the significant growth of the All Stars and will develop the pathway to retain juniors who progress.

Where All Stars seeks to engage children in cricket activity and learning the skills, Dynamo's seeks to engage children in learning how to play, introducing a modified softball format as competitive progression with a view to eventual transition through to hardball cricket. The programme will be strongly linked to The Hundred, a new short format competition which also aimed to launch in 2020 (pre-Covid-19).

In Sandwell, Wednesbury CC and West Bromwich Dartmouth CC are signed up to deliver Dynamo's, with seven and 23 participants, respectively, registered across the two clubs. In addition, Smethwick CC began delivering sessions later in the season.

### *Softball Cricket*

Softball Cricket is an ECB initiative aimed at women and girls to increase female participation in cricket as a sport. The aim of softball cricket sections is enjoyment and participation, without pads, a hardball, a heavy bat and limited rules. Sessions are generally played on the outfield of a square and follow a festival format with each session running for a maximum of two and half hours, shorter than traditional formats.

In Sandwell, Old Hill CC and West Bromwich Dartmouth CC field women's softball teams.

### *Sandwell Cricket League*

The Sandwell Cricket League is no longer in operation; however, plans are in place for it to be re-started in 2022. When it was last run, in 2019, 10 teams took part, although it had accommodated up to 20 teams across three divisions previously. Teams participating were generally unaffiliated to clubs.

Matches in the League utilise a variety of venues. This included provision at Barnford Park, Gospel Oak Academy, Victoria Park and West Smethwick Park, with similar sites likely to be used if/when it re-commences. As the League sits outside of traditional Saturday cricket, NTPs can more readily be used to accommodate fixtures.

### *Chance to Shine*

Chance to Shine is a national charity that aims to give all children the opportunity to play, learn and develop through cricket. It believes that cricket can help to develop the personal, social and physical skills of the 500,000 children that are worked with every year. It works in schools to provide children with their first experience of cricket, whilst it has also developed Chance to Shine Street. This is a format of the sport played with a tapeball, targeting children and young adults in inner-city areas and with matches lasting just 20-minutes.

In Sandwell, Chance to Shine Street sessions are held at Dugdale Street.

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## *Other usage*

The cricket pitch at West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club has been used to host England Women's matches, whilst it is also suitable for First Class matches should it be required.

Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club is used to host Worcestershire County youth matches and Staffordshire County representative games. In addition, various charity matches and events are reportedly held at the site across the playing season.

As many NTPs in Sandwell are located at open access sites, these are often used recreationally. This applies to provision at Bearmore Playing Field, Hydes Road Playing Fields, Jubilee Park, King George V Playing Fields, Lewisham Park, Redhouse Park, Tividale Park, West Smethwick Park, Victoria Park (Smethwick) and Victoria Park (Tipton).

## **Future demand**

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts. In addition, the Strategy & Action Plan that follows this report will contain housing growth scenarios that will estimate the additional demand for cricket arising from housing development plans within Sandwell.

## *Population forecasts*

Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future (2039) based on population growth. Using this, it is predicted that there will be a growth of one senior men's and one junior team.

*Table 4.10: Team generation rates based on population growth (2039)*

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population <sup>4</sup>
Senior Men's (18-55)	83,046	19	1:4,371	89,389	20	1
Senior Women's (18-55)	82,518	1	1:82,518	87,426	1	0
Junior (7-18)	27,279	19	1:1,436	28,372	20	1

When applied on an analysis area basis, the growth does not equate to a whole team in any of the analysis areas. As such, the overall predicted growth estimated across Sandwell may not be realised.

Although no women and girls' teams are predicted to be created via population growth alone, consultation with the ECB suggests that further development of female cricket in Sandwell is likely as it is currently a national priority to increase women and girl's participation. It is therefore important to acknowledge that there are plans and strategies to increase the number of teams at some formats beyond what current trends and population changes would ordinarily suggest. This also applies to a likely growth in junior cricket, linked to the abovementioned All Stars and Dynamo's initiatives.

<sup>4</sup> Rounded to the nearest whole number

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In addition, the ECB's five-year media rights deal, from 2020-2024, includes a continuation of its relationship with Sky Sports. This now extends beyond broadcasting and acts as a genuine partnership to secure investment and a commitment to increase participation and drive engagement. This could therefore see future demand increase to levels in excess of those anticipated through the PPS, meaning the impact should be reviewed over coming years.

### *Participation increases*

Of the five clubs in Sandwell, four indicate aspirations to increase levels of participation (only Old Hill CC does not). This amounts to a total predicted growth of 11 teams, equating to three senior men's, two senior women's and six junior teams.

*Table 4.11: Future demand expressed by clubs*

Club	Analysis area	Senior men's	Senior women's	Junior
Old Hill CC	Rowley Regis	-	-	-
Smethwick CC	Smethwick	1	1	1
Thimblemill CC	Oldbury	1	1	2
Wednesbury CC	Wednesbury	1	-	2
West Bromwich Dartmouth CC	West Bromwich	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>

### *Future demand summary*

In the supply and demand analysis at the end of this section of the report, only future demand identified through participation increases are included due to the large increases expressed by clubs. This demand is considered more aspirational, and it is unlikely that it will all be achieved. However, the preceding Strategy document will include a scenario to identify the impact it would have if the growth was realised.

### **Peak time demand**

An analysis of match play identifies that peak time demand for senior cricket in Sandwell is Saturday, although a good proportion of teams are also fielded on a Sunday including senior women's teams. As such, both require consideration.

For junior cricket, peak time is midweek albeit some Sunday cricket is also recorded. Midweek availability is also key regarding the potential re-formation of Sandwell Cricket League.

### **4.4: Capacity analysis**

Capacity analysis for cricket is measured on a seasonal rather than a weekly basis. This is due to playability (as only one match is generally played per square per day at weekends or weekday evening) and because wickets are rotated throughout the season to reduce wear and tear and to allow for repair.

The capacity of a square to accommodate matches is driven by the number and quality of wickets. This section of the report therefore presents the current pitch stock available for cricket and illustrates the number of competitive match equivalent sessions per season per square that is available and that currently takes place.

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For good quality squares, capacity is considered to be five matches per grass wicket per season, whilst for a standard quality square, capacity is four matches per wicket per season. For poor quality squares, no capacity is considered to exist as such provision is not deemed safe for play.

The number of matches played by each team has been derived from consultation with the clubs. Where consultation was not possible, or where the level of play was not made clear, an assumption has been made that all senior teams play between ten and 12 home matches per year and all junior teams play between four and eight matches per year depending on their age and level of competition.

The above is used to allocate capacity ratings as follows:

<b>Potential capacity</b>	Play is below the level the site could sustain
<b>At capacity</b>	Play matches the level the site can sustain
<b>Overused</b>	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

The capacity analysis assumes that all clubs rotate their wickets evenly. However, this may not be the case at all sites, with central wickets potentially used more commonly than outer wickets that are closer to a boundary, especially for senior matches. The idea of this is to showcase what the capacity is or could be if best practice is followed for the whole square, rather than doing it on a wicket-by-wicket basis.

Please note that NTPs have been discounted from the analysis by means of not distorting the findings. This is because no NTPs are currently being used more than their recommended capacity, which is 60 match equivalent sessions per season (0 match equivalent sessions when poor quality). With no NTPs being overused, this translates to overall actual spare capacity for junior play, as well as for the Sandwell Cricket League, where the provision is more commonly used and where matches can be played on a variety of days. However, this is not considered to be actual spare capacity for senior weekend cricket due to league requirements generally not allowing usage.

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Table 4.12: Capacity analysis of community available grass cricket squares

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Club users	No. of squares	Square quality	No. of grass wickets	Capacity (sessions per season)	Actual play (sessions per season)	Capacity rating (sessions per season)	Potential spare capacity for senior cricket? (Saturday)	Potential spare capacity for senior cricket? (Sunday)	Potential spare capacity for junior cricket? (Midweek)
4	Bearmore Playing Field	Rowley Regis	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
43	Hydes Road Playing Fields	Wednesbury	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45	Jubilee Park	Tipton	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
47	King George V Playing Fields (West Bromwich)	West Bromwich	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
48	Lewisham Park	Smethwick	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
58	Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club	Rowley Regis	Old Hill CC	1	Good	16	80	68	12	No	Yes	No
60	Oldbury Academy	Oldbury	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
75	Redhouse Park	West Bromwich	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
77	St Michael's CE High School	Rowley Regis	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
78	Gospel Oak Academy	Tipton	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
79	Sandwell Academy	Smethwick	West Bromwich Dartmouth CC	1	Good	8	40	40	0	No	No	No
87	Thimblemill Recreation Centre	Oldbury	Thimblemill CC	1	Standard	10	40	24	16	No	Yes	Yes
92	Tivdale Park	Oldbury	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
94	Victoria Park (Smethwick)	Smethwick	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
95	Victoria Park (Tipton)	Tipton	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
99	Wednesbury Sports Union	Wednesbury	Wednesbury CC	1	Good	10	50	56	6	No	No	No
104	West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club	West Bromwich	West Bromwich Dartmouth CC	1	Good	10	50	62	12	No	No <sup>5</sup>	Yes
105	West Smethwick Park	Smethwick	-	2	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
108	Wood Green Academy	Wednesbury	-	1	Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
120	Smethwick Cricket Club	Smethwick	Smethwick CC	1	Good	13	65	70	5	No	No	No

<sup>5</sup> Whilst there is capacity for a second Sunday team at West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club, the Club reports its junior section often plays during the week and on Sundays so there is no capacity for an increase in play.



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## **Actual spare capacity**

Although a large amount of spare capacity is identified, it is not as simple as to aggregate this into a general oversupply of cricket squares. Despite two squares displaying some form of spare capacity (Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club and Thimblemill Recreation Centre), none are available for further senior cricket activity on a Saturday.

All squares are used to capacity on Saturdays, either because two teams are already assigned to them as a home venue or because the level of spare capacity is insufficient to accommodate an additional team without overlap being created or exacerbated (at least 12 match equivalent sessions of spare capacity are required).

For Sunday cricket, actual spare capacity is provided on two squares, at Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club and Thimblemill Recreation Centre.

*Table 4.13: Summary of actual spare capacity for senior cricket (Sunday) by site*

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of squares	Actual spare capacity (sessions per season)	Number of additional teams that could be accommodated
58	Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club	Rowley Regis	1	12	1
87	Thimblemill Recreation Centre	Oldbury	1	16	1

The actual spare capacity on a Sunday totals 28 match equivalent sessions and is found in the Oldbury and Rowley Regis analysis areas.

*Table 4.14: Actual spare capacity for senior cricket (Sunday) by analysis area*

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (matches per season)
Oldbury	16
Rowley Regis	12
Smethwick	-
Tipton	-
Wednesbury	-
West Bromwich	-
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>28</b>

Sunday capacity provides capacity for additional senior men's demand to be accommodated outside of the peak period but still within a competitive format. Moreover, it provides peak time availability for senior women's cricket (both hardball and softball) and for some junior demand, particularly older age groups.

For junior midweek cricket, only one square has actual spare capacity, with this totalling 16 match equivalent sessions at Thimblemill Recreation Centre. Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club is not considered to have actual spare capacity due to the existing size of the Old Hill CC's junior section.

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Table 4.15: Summary of actual spare capacity for junior cricket by site

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of squares	Actual spare capacity (sessions per season)	Number of additional teams that could be accommodated
87	Thimblemill Recreation Centre	Oldbury	1	16	2

Table 4.16: Actual spare capacity for junior cricket by analysis area

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (matches per season)
Oldbury	16
Rowley Regis	-
Smethwick	-
Tipton	-
Wednesbury	-
West Bromwich	-
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>16</b>

### Actual spare capacity analysis

Notwithstanding the above, it should be noted that spare capacity across Saturday, Sunday and midweek should not be viewed collectively as utilising the spare capacity across different days may result in overplay. For example, Thimblemill Recreation Centre, with 16 match equivalent sessions of spare capacity theoretically has capacity for one additional senior team and two additional junior teams; however, it does not have capacity for both. As such, this needs to be taken into consideration on a site-by-site basis as and when demand grows.

### Overplay

Overplay translates to a site accommodating more demand than it can sustain based on the number of wickets provided and the quality of the square. On this basis, three sites in Sandwell are overplayed; West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club by 12 match equivalent sessions, Wednesbury Sports Union by six match equivalent sessions and Smethwick Cricket Club by five match equivalent sessions.

Although it is possible to sustain certain, minimal levels of overplay providing that a regular, sufficient maintenance regime is in place, a reduction in play is recommended on overplayed squares to ensure there is no detrimental effect on quality over time.

Table 4.17: Summary of overplay

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Overplay (matches per season)
99	Wednesbury Sports Union	Wednesbury	6
104	West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club	West Bromwich	12
120	Smethwick Cricket Club	Smethwick	5
<b>Total</b>			<b>23</b>

The overplay is split across the Smethwick, Wednesbury and West Bromwich analysis areas.

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Table 4.18: Summary of overplay by analysis area

Analysis area	Overplay (sessions per season)
Oldbury	-
Rowley Regis	-
Smethwick	5
Tipton	-
Wednesbury	6
West Bromwich	12
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>23</b>

## 4.5: Supply and demand analysis

Consideration must be given to the extent to which current provision can accommodate current and future demand for both senior and junior cricket. This section therefore looks at actual spare capacity on grass wicket squares considered against overplay and identified future demand. Match equivalent sessions for future demand are calculated using the average number of matches played per season (12 matches for senior teams and between four and eight matches for junior teams, depending on age).

### *Senior cricket supply and demand analysis (Saturday)*

The table below looks at the supply and demand balance during the peak period for senior men's cricket (Saturday). For actual spare capacity, please note that this is converted from the number of match equivalent sessions identified above to the number of match equivalent sessions that could feasibly be utilised by a growth in demand. This is calculated by using the average number of matches played per season by senior teams (12) multiplied by the number of additional teams that can be fielded at peak time (two teams per square that is available). The entirety of the spare capacity at each site is not used as this number of matches may not be able to be accommodated at peak time.

Table 4.19: Supply and demand analysis of cricket squares for senior cricket (Saturday)

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Oldbury	-	-	0	-	0
Rowley Regis	-	-	0	-	0
Smethwick	-	5	5	-	5
Tipton	-	-	0	-	0
Wednesbury	-	6	6	-	6
West Bromwich	-	12	12	-	12
<b>Sandwell</b>	-	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>

As seen in the table above, there is a shortfall for Saturday cricket in Sandwell amounting to 23 match equivalent sessions, with this being due to overplay in the Smethwick, Wednesbury and West Bromwich analysis areas. No analysis areas have overall spare capacity.

In addition to the shortfalls, consideration must also be given to the exported demand currently expressed by West Bromwich Dartmouth CC, Old Hill CC and Smethwick CC. Should this demand be accommodated within Sandwell, the identified shortfalls will significantly increase.

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## **Senior cricket supply and demand analysis (Sunday)**

The table below looks at the supply and demand balance for Sunday cricket, which is peak time for senior women's demand but also relevant to some senior men's and junior teams. This shows overall current spare capacity amounting to five match equivalent sessions, despite shortfalls in the Smethwick, Wednesbury and West Bromwich analysis areas.

*Table 4.20: Supply and demand analysis of cricket squares for senior cricket (Sunday)*

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Oldbury	16	-	16	-	16
Rowley Regis	12	-	12	-	12
Smethwick	-	5	5	-	5
Tipton	-	-	0	-	0
Wednesbury	-	6	6	-	6
West Bromwich	-	12	12	-	12
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

## **Junior cricket supply and demand analysis (midweek)**

For the junior supply and demand analysis, actual spare capacity equates to the total spare capacity at each available site or, if it is lower, the total number of additional junior teams that could be fielded on each available square (on the assumption that one square can accommodate six midweek teams), multiplied by six (the average number of matches a junior team plays). This is because junior demand at peak time is not limited to one day, although some capacity should be reserved for activity such as All Stars and Dynamo's Cricket.

*Table 4.21: Supply and demand analysis of cricket squares for junior cricket*

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Oldbury	16	-	16	-	16
Rowley Regis	-	-	0	-	0
Smethwick	-	5	5	-	5
Tipton	-	-	0	-	0
Wednesbury	-	6	6	-	6
West Bromwich	-	12	12	-	12
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>

There is an overall shortfall amounting to seven match equivalent sessions, with shortfalls again evident in the Smethwick, Wednesbury and West Bromwich analysis areas.

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### **Cricket – supply and demand summary**

- ◀ No squares that show potential spare capacity on grass wickets on Saturdays, whilst two do on Sundays and one does during midweek for junior cricket.
- ◀ Three sites are overplayed; West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club, Wednesbury Sports Union and Smethwick Cricket Club.
- ◀ There is a current shortfall for Saturday and midweek cricket, whilst minimal spare capacity exists overall on Sundays.

### **Cricket – supply summary**

- ◀ In total, there are six grass cricket squares in Sandwell, with all six available for community use.
- ◀ There are NTPs accompanying grass wicket squares at one site and there are 15 standalone NTPs at 14 sites.
- ◀ Numerous sites previously provided grass wicket squares, including Barnford Park, Redhouse Park, West Smethwick Park, Victoria Park (Smethwick) and Victoria Park (Tipton).
- ◀ Heathfield Close is a lapsed playing field site that previously provided a cricket square.
- ◀ Three of the clubs in Sandwell have freehold of their sites, whilst the remaining two clubs have lease agreements in place (meaning no clubs rent provision).
- ◀ The audit of community available grass wicket cricket squares found five to be good quality and the remaining one to be standard quality; none are assessed as poor.
- ◀ Smethwick CC, Wednesbury CC and West Bromwich Dartmouth CC all note that ancillary facilities require improvement.
- ◀ Four of the five clubs report a demand for new, improved or additional training facilities (only Thimblemill CC does not).

### **Cricket – demand summary**

- ◀ There are five clubs in Sandwell which collectively provide 19 senior men's, two senior women's and 19 junior teams.
- ◀ Four of the five clubs report that demand has increased in some form over the previous three years (Wednesbury CC reports a reduction in participation at senior level).
- ◀ Coseley CC imports demand to Sandwell, using Gospel Oak Academy for its third Saturday team, whilst both Old Hill CC and Smethwick CC export demand to sites in Birmingham.
- ◀ West Bromwich Dartmouth CC has a 5<sup>th</sup> senior team that only plays away matches due to a lack of capacity within Sandwell.
- ◀ Old Hill, Smethwick, Wednesbury and West Bromwich Dartmouth cricket clubs are signed up to be part of the All Stars initiative, whilst Wednesbury CC and West Bromwich Dartmouth CC are also signed up to deliver Dynamo's.
- ◀ Old Hill CC and West Bromwich Dartmouth CC field women's softball teams.
- ◀ The Sandwell Cricket League is no longer in operation, although plans are in place for it to be re-started in 2022; when it was last run it utilised provision at Barnford Park, Gospel Oak Academy, Victoria Park and West Smethwick Park.
- ◀ Future demand for one senior men's and one junior team is predicted via population growth, whilst club aspirations equate to the potential growth of three senior men's, two senior women's and six junior teams.

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## PART 5: RUGBY UNION

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is split into four areas across the country with a workforce team that covers development, coaching, governance and competitions. As part of this, Club Developers and a team of community rugby coaches deliver core programmes in schools and clubs across Sandwell.

The RFU governs a variety of formats and programmes, including 15-aside, 10-aside, 7-aside and Tag rugby as well as The Touch Union programme. Its aim is to increase and retain participation within the game, with facilities needing to be appropriate, affordable, and accessible in order to enable this.

### **Consultation**

There are two affiliated rugby union clubs identified as playing within Sandwell, with these being Warley RUFC and Wednesbury RUFC. Both responded to consultation requests, resulting in a response rate of 100%.

### **5.2: Supply**

Within Sandwell there are seven sites containing the same number of rugby union pitches. All of the pitches are senior, with no junior or mini pitches identified. Four are available for community use and three are not.

Of the community available pitches, there is one in each of the Oldbury, Smethwick, Tipton and Wednesbury analysis areas. This means that there are no community available pitches in the Rowley Regis and West Bromwich analysis areas (there is one unavailable pitch in the latter).

*Table 5.1: Summary of grass rugby union pitches available for community use*

<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>No. of senior pitches</b>	<b>No. of junior pitches</b>	<b>No. of mini pitches</b>
Oldbury	1	-	-
Rowley Regis	-	-	-
Smethwick	1	-	-
Tipton	1	-	-
Wednesbury	1	-	-
West Bromwich	-	-	-
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The available pitches are located at Warley Rugby Club and Wednesbury Rugby Club, as well as at Warley Rugby Club (St John's Recreation Ground) and Gospel Oak School, albeit these two sites are not currently used.

The unavailable pitches are located at Q3 Academy Great Barr, Q3 Academy Tipton and Wodensborough Ormiston Academy. In addition, Wood Green Academy provides posts but has no current pitch markings in place.

The audit only identifies dedicated, line marked pitches, with recommended dimensions shown in the table overleaf. As no junior or mini pitches are provided in Sandwell, it must be noted that it is common for junior and mini matches to be played on senior pitches via the use of darts, particularly at sites used by clubs.

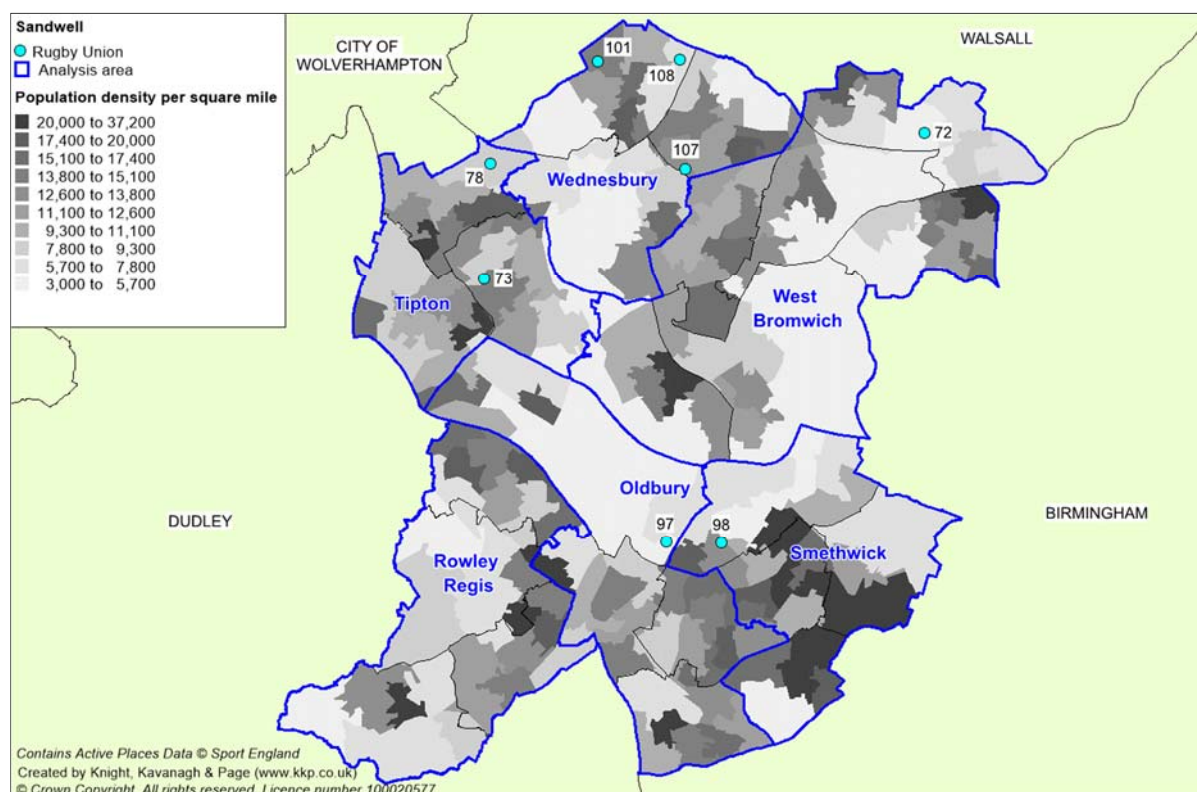
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Table 5.2: Pitch dimensions

Age	Pitch type	Maximum pitch dimensions (metres) <sup>6</sup>
U7	Mini	20 x 12
U8	Mini	45 x 22
U9	Mini	60 x 30
U10	Mini	60 x 35
U11	Mini	60 x 43
U12	Mini	60 x 43
U13	Junior	90 x 60 (60 x 43 for girls)
U14 +	Senior	100 x 70 <sup>7</sup>

Figure 5.1 highlights all rugby union pitches currently within Sandwell, regardless of community use. For a key to the map, see Table 5.7.

Figure 5.1: Location of rugby union pitches within Sandwell



## Security of tenure

Both Warley RUFC and Wednesbury RUFC have a long-term lease agreement in place for use of their main sites from the Council, meaning access to these is secure. However, Wednesbury RUFC reports that it has an aspiration to take over the ownership of its venue, whilst Warley RUFC is exploring asset transfer.

<sup>6</sup> Recommended run off area for all pitch types requires five-metres each way and a minimum in-goal length of six metres.

<sup>7</sup> Minimum dimensions of 94 x 68 metres are accepted.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

In addition to the above, Warley RUFC has recently agreed a long-term lease agreement for the use of St John's Recreation Ground, although it does not currently access the site due to a lack of demand. Nevertheless, it requires the protection of the pitch for overspill purposes and to accommodate future growth. Two football pitches are currently provided on site as this is considered to provide an additional revenue stream.

Tenure at the school sites is unsecure as none currently have a community use agreement in place, and none are in use for community rugby. However, there is no perceived demand for any arrangements to be formed, with both clubs satisfied without access to school provision.

## **Pitch quality**

The quality of rugby pitches across Sandwell has been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by RFU) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating on a scale of good, standard and poor.

The methodology for assessing rugby pitch quality looks at two key elements: the maintenance programme and the level of drainage on each pitch. A breakdown of actions required based on the ratings can be seen below.

*Table 5.3: Definition of maintenance categories*

Category	Definition
M0	Action is significant improvements to maintenance programme
M1	Action is minor improvements to maintenance programme
M2	Action is no improvements to maintenance programme

*Table 5.4: Definition of drainage categories*

Category	Definition
D0	Action is pipe drainage system is needed on pitch
D1	Action is pipe drainage is needed on pitch
D2	Action is slit drainage is needed on pitch
D3	No action is needed on pitch drainage

An overall quality based on both drainage and maintenance can then be generated. The agreed rating for each pitch type also represents actions required to improve pitch quality.

*Table 5.5: Quality ratings based on maintenance and drainage scores*

		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	Poor	Poor	Standard
	Natural Adequate (D1)	Poor	Standard	Good
	Pipe Drained (D2)	Standard	Standard	Good
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	Standard	Good	Good

The figures are based upon a pipe drained system at 5m centres that has been installed in the last eight years and a slit drained system at 1m centres completed in the last five years.

For the full site assessment criteria, please refer to Appendix 2.



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Overall, in Sandwell, of the community available pitches, one is assessed as good quality (at Warley Rugby Club, one as standard (at Gospel Oak School) and two as poor (at St John's Recreation Ground and Wednesbury Rugby Club).

*Table 5.6: Quality of pitches available for community use*

Pitch quality		
Good	Standard	Poor
1	1	2

All three of the unavailable pitches are assessed as poor.

The good quality pitch at Warley Rugby Club is assessed as such due to a sophisticated maintenance regime that consists of regular grass cutting, seeding, aeration slitting and sanding. Although no drainage system is in place, the natural drainage is adequate. However, there is a public right of way through the site, which can result in some issues with unofficial use and dog walkers.

In contrast, maintenance is less regimented at Wednesday Rugby Club, with no aeration or rolling taking place, whilst the natural drainage is poor. It is thought that this is a consequence of the pitches being formed on a concrete base, leading to water being held after heavy rainfall. One end of the pitch at the site has a bank on either side, which result in water settling in the middle.

Maintenance at Warley Rugby Club (St John's Recreation Ground) is carried out by the Council to a basic level, with drainage problematic in specific areas. The poor quality at the site provides an added reason as to why the Club does not currently access the provision.

The table overleaf shows the agreed quality ratings for each of the pitches on a site-by-site basis and regardless of community use.

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Table 5.7: Site quality ratings

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Community use?	Tenure	No. of pitches	Pitch type	Floodlit?	Non tech score	Quality rating
72	Q3 Academy Great Barr	B43 7SD	West Bromwich	No	Unsecure	1	Senior	No	M0/D0	Poor
73	Q3 Academy Tipton	DY4 7NR	Tipton	No	Unsecure	1	Senior	No	M0/D0	Poor
78	Gospel Oak School	DY4 0BZ	Tipton	Yes	Unsecure	1	Senior	No	M1/D1	Standard
97	Warley Rugby Club	B69 4NH	Oldbury	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	No	M2/D1	Good
98	Warley Rugby Club (St John's Recreation Ground)	B68 9SD	Smethwick	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	No	M1/D0	Poor
101	Wednesbury Rugby Club	WS10 9NP	Wednesbury	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	No	M1/D0	Poor
107	Wodensborough Ormiston Academy	WS10 0DR	Wednesday	No	Unsecure	1	Senior	No	M0/D1	Poor

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## ***Ancillary facilities***

Wednesbury RUFC has an aspiration to rebuild its clubhouse facility in order to transform it into more of a community facility in addition to it better accommodating the Club itself. The existing building is now dated and limited in terms of what it can cater for, although the changing rooms are relatively new having been redeveloped in 2014. This includes an officials' room and a physio room.

Similarly, Warley RUFC is looking to redevelop its provision, which is currently poor quality and in need of modernisation. Three basic changing rooms are currently provided, although one of them is being used for storage. The condition of the provision is considered to be a key barrier for participation, particularly in terms of female demand. It also plans to partition its social room so that private functions can be hosted.

The Club also identifies a need for the changing rooms to be improved at St John's Recreation Ground. The existing provision is dated and considered too small, particularly for adult rugby.

## **5.3: Demand**

Demand for rugby union within Sandwell tends to fall within the categories of organised competitive play and organised training.

### ***Competitive play***

Two community rugby union clubs play within Sandwell that collectively produce four senior teams. This consists of Warley RUFC fielding one senior men's and one senior women's team and Wednesbury RUFC two senior men's teams.

*Table 5:8 Summary of demand*

Club	Analysis area	No. of rugby union teams				
		Senior male	Senior female	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini mixed
Warley RUFC	Oldbury	1	1	-	-	-
Wednesbury RUFC	Wednesbury	2	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Whilst neither club currently contain any junior or mini teams, Wednesbury RUFC has junior and mini players that train and it previously fielded teams. The Club has quite large membership, with matches only stopped following the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Warley RUFC previously had two senior men's teams in addition to a junior section. However, this has ceased to function, with local youngsters now playing at Bournville RUFC, in Birmingham, instead.

### ***Training***

Throughout the Country, many rugby teams train at their home ground on match pitches. As a result, usage is concentrated which reduces the capacity for match play on these pitches and means they are more likely to be overplayed. A key factor in determining the extent of training on match pitches is the presence of floodlighting.

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In Sandwell, none of the marked pitches are serviced by floodlighting. However, both Wednesbury and Warley rugby clubs have separate, floodlit training areas at their sites, with these accommodating most of their training demand. At Warley Rugby Club, the training area is a relatively thin strip of land, whilst the area at Wednesbury Rugby Club is larger and more conventional, measuring approximately 80 x 50 metres.

Linked to the above, Warley RUFC has submitted a planning application for the installation of floodlighting on its match pitch.

In addition to the floodlit training areas, both sites also accommodate smaller size 3G pitches. The pitch at Wednesbury Rugby Club measures 55 x 35 metres and is used when wet weather prevents the use of the grass space. It is not used more regularly as it is not large enough for purposeful activity, and it is not World Rugby compliant so cannot be used for contact activity.

Similarly, the pitch at Warley Rugby Club is too small for purposeful activity as it only measures 36 x 22 metres. That being said, the Club is looking to increase activity on the provision, both from itself and local football clubs, with volunteering issues previously preventing this. As part of its own activity, it wants to host coaching sessions, such as for disability sports.

### *Use of artificial pitches*

The alternative to training on grass pitches is the use of 3G pitches. World Rugby produced the 'Performance Specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby', more commonly known as 'Regulation 22' that provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union. A World Rugby compliant pitch also enables the transfer of match demand from grass pitches onto 3G pitches, which alleviates overplay of grass pitches and as a result protects quality.

Nationally, clubs with access to 3G pitches for training utilise them as a method of protecting grass pitches for matches and providing a high-quality surface for full contact practice. Competitive play generally continues to take place on grass pitches, although there is occasional use of 3G pitches for fixtures in the case of grass pitch quality or capacity issues (especially during bad weather spells).

As evidenced in Part 3 of this report and as indicated above, there are currently no World Rugby compliant 3G pitches in Sandwell, although the smaller sized pitches at Wednesbury Rugby Club and Warley Rugby Club are located at rugby club sites. Given that only minimal grass pitch shortfalls are identified later on in this section of the report, there is no perceived requirement for further provision.

### ***Exported/imported demand***

As referenced above, due to the loss of Warley RUFC's junior section, local youngsters in the area are now likely to travel outside of Sandwell to access a club. This represents exported demand.

### ***Unmet/latent demand***

No unmet or latent demand is reported by any of the rugby clubs in Sandwell.

### ***Additional demand***

The rugby pitch at Gospel Oak School is a dual use football pitch, which means it accommodates additional usage, both internally and from community football teams. As such, this limits its capacity for rugby union demand.

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## *Future demand*

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts. In addition, the proceeding Strategy & Action Plan document will contain housing growth scenarios that will estimate the additional demand for rugby union arising from housing developments within Walsall.

### *Population forecasts*

Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth (to 2039). However, based on this, no growth is predicted. This is partly a consequence of no current junior and mini teams existing.

*Table 5.10: Team generation rates (2039)*

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Mens (19-45)	59,671	3	1:19,890	63,919	3	0
Senior Womens (19-45)	58,451	1	1:58,451	62,438	1	0
Junior Boys (13-18)	12,802	0	0	13,800	0	0
Junior Girls (13-18)	11,948	0	0	13,270	0	0
Mini Mixed (7-12)	28,341	0	0	6,660	0	0

### *Participation increases*

Future demand is expressed by both clubs. Wednesbury RUFC reports that it has formed a partnership with a local coaching group (known as the Wednesbury Whippersnappers), which trains players under six years old and it expects to form three mini teams from this when participants reach an appropriate age. Furthermore, it is working with Worcester Warriors RUFC in relation to jointly forming a senior women's team and a mixed ability team that will include players with learning and physical disabilities.

Warley RUFC is working in partnership with Sandwell College, holding midweek training sessions with its students. It expects to be able to form a colts. team on the back of this.

*Table 5.11: Future demand expressed by clubs*

Club	No. of rugby union teams				
	Senior male	Senior female	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini mixed
Warley RUFC	1	-	-	-	-
Wednesbury RUFC	1	1	-	-	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

### *Future demand summary*

In the supply and demand analysis at the end of this section of the report, only future demand identified through participation increases are included (meaning none is identified) due to the large increases expressed by clubs. This demand is considered more aspirational, and it is unlikely that it will all be achieved. However, the preceding Strategy document will include a scenario to identify the impact it would have if the growth was realised.

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## *The peak period*

In order to fully establish actual spare capacity, the peak period needs to be established. The peak time for demand of senior rugby pitches is Saturday PM, whereas for junior and mini teams it is Sunday AM. That being said, junior teams can also play on senior pitches.

Women's and girls' rugby is played on Sunday afternoons.

## **5.4: Capacity analysis**

The capacity for pitches to regularly accommodate competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of playing rugby. In extreme circumstances, it can result in the inability of a pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.

To enable an accurate supply and demand assessment of rugby pitches, the following assumptions are applied to the site-by-site and pitch-by-pitch analysis:

- ◀ All sites that are or could be used for competitive rugby matches (regardless of whether this is secured community use) are included on the supply side.
- ◀ All competitive play is on senior sized pitches (except for where mini pitches are provided and known to be used as standard practice).
- ◀ From U13 upwards, teams play 15 v 15 and use a full pitch.
- ◀ Mini teams (U6-U12) play on half of a senior pitch, meaning two matches and four teams can be accommodated at any one time; this means that play per week is set at 0.25 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis.
- ◀ For senior and youth teams, the current level of play per week is set at 0.5 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis (assumes half of matches will be played away).
- ◀ Senior men's rugby generally takes place on Saturday afternoons.
- ◀ Senior women's rugby generally takes place on Sunday afternoons.
- ◀ Junior rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings.
- ◀ Mini rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings.
- ◀ Unless known otherwise, capacity on school pitches is limited due to internal usage.
- ◀ Training that takes place on marked pitches is reflected by the addition of match equivalent sessions to current usage levels.

As a guide, the RFU has set a standard number of matches that each pitch should be able to accommodate. Capacity is based upon a basic assessment of the drainage system and maintenance programme ascertained through a combination of the quality assessment and the club survey.

This guide should only be used as a very general measure of potential pitch capacity and does not account for specific circumstances at time of use and assumes average rainfall and an appropriate end of season rest and renovation programme.

*Table 5.12: Pitch capacity (matches per week) based on quality assessments*

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

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Capacity is based upon a basic assessment of the drainage system and maintenance programme ascertained through a combination of the quality assessments and consultation. This guide, however, is only a very general measure of potential pitch capacity. It does not account for specific circumstances at time of use and it assumes average rainfall and an appropriate end of season rest and renovation programme.

Please see the table overleaf for the full capacity analysis. Note that pitches that are unavailable for community use have been discounted by means of not distorting the community picture.

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Table 5.13: Rugby union pitches and level of community use

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Pitch type	Community use?	Quality rating	Floodlit?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch capacity (Sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Comments
72	Q3 Academy Great Barr	West Bromwich	1	Senior	No	Poor	No	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use
73	Q3 Academy Tipton	Tipton	1	Senior	No	Poor	No	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use
78	Gospel Oak School	Tipton	1	Senior	Yes	Standard	No	2	2	0	Available for community use but unused. No spare capacity due to internal usage and on account of it being a dual use football pitch
97	Warley Rugby Club	Oldbury	1	Senior	Yes	Good	No	1	3	2	Used by Warley RUFC for senior matches, with spare capacity remaining
98	Warley Rugby Club (St John's Recreation Ground)	Smethwick	1	Senior	Yes	Poor	No	-	1.5	1.5	Currently unused, despite being leased by Warley RUFC
101	Wednesbury Rugby Club	Wednesbury	1	Senior	Yes	Poor	No	2	1.5	0.5	Overplayed by Wednesbury RUFC through senior matches and additional junior/mini activity
107	Wodensborough Ormiston Academy	Wednesday	1	Senior	No	Poor	No	-	-	-	Unavailable for community use



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## Actual spare capacity

There are two pitches in Sandwell that display potential spare capacity, with these being at Warley Rugby Club and St John's Recreation Ground. All remaining pitches are either overplayed, played to capacity or are unavailable for community use.

The table below identifies the level of actual spare capacity for senior rugby at Warley Rugby Club and St John's Recreation Ground i.e., spare capacity at peak time (Saturday PM). This shows actual spare capacity on both pitches, amounting to 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week at Warley Rugby Club (on account of the pitch already being in use by one team) and one match equivalent session per week at St John's Recreation Ground (on account of the pitch currently being unused).

Table 5.14: Spare capacity summary

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Potential capacity	Actual spare capacity	Comments
97	Warley Rugby Club	Oldbury	2	0.5	Actual spare capacity for one additional senior team
98	Warley Rugby Club (St John's Recreation Ground)	Smethwick	1.5	1	Actual spare capacity for two additional senior teams

Given that Warley RUFC has recently submitted a planning application for the installation of floodlighting to service the pitch at its main site, it must be noted that this could reduce or completely eradicate the spare capacity that exists. This will be due to training demand transferring to the provision.

For mini and junior rugby, the level of actual spare capacity is likely to be similar, with no junior or mini teams currently playing matches at the sites.

Nationally, where junior and mini teams are being fielded, ascertaining actual spare capacity can be unclear with regards to the programming of matches as it can vary from week to week. This is because junior and mini sections tend to enter cup competitions or play organised friendly fixtures, with clubs arranging for several of their age groups to play those from another club all at once, either at home or away. Then when fixtures are not scheduled, clubs will generally hold training sessions, which means that clubs may require use of home pitches for consecutive weeks, or not at all for the same time period.

Given the above, it is generally assumed that no pitches used by mini or junior teams have significant actual spare capacity for an increase in demand (over and above what actual spare capacity has been identified for senior play). However, it is acknowledged that some capacity does exist during weekend when the pitches are not in use.

## Overplay

The pitch at Wednesbury Rugby Club is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week. This is due to its limited capacity, linked to its poor quality, and use by the Club's senior teams and its junior and mini sections.

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Table 5.15: Overplay summary

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Match sessions
101	Wednesbury Rugby Club	Wednesbury	Senior	1	0.5

## 5.5: Supply and demand analysis

Having considered supply and demand, the table below identifies the overall spare capacity and overplay in each of the analysis areas for rugby union pitches in Sandwell based on match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 5.16: Supply and demand analysis of senior grass rugby union pitches

Analysis area	Match equivalent sessions per week				
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current demand	Future demand	Future total
Oldbury	0.5	-	0.5	-	0.5
Rowley Regis	-	-	0	-	0
Smethwick	1	-	1	-	1
Tipton	-	-	0	-	0
Wednesbury	-	0.5	0.5	-	0.5
West Bromwich	-	-	0	-	0
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

The broad position is that there is a currently spare capacity of rugby union pitches amounting to one match equivalent session per week; however, there is a shortfall in the Wednesbury Analysis Area due to the expressed overplay at Wednesbury Rugby Club.

The Strategy document that proceeds this report will explore options to address the future shortfall identified.

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### **Rugby union supply and demand summary**

- ◀ There is a currently spare capacity of rugby union pitches amounting to one match equivalent session; however, there is a shortfall in the Wednesbury Analysis Area.
- ◀ Two pitches display potential spare capacity, with these being at Warley Rugby Club and St John's Recreation Ground.
- ◀ The pitch at Wednesbury Rugby Club is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.

### **Rugby union supply summary**

- ◀ Within Sandwell there are seven sites containing the same number of pitches, all of which are senior (no dedicated junior or mini pitches are provided).
- ◀ Four of the pitches are available for community.
- ◀ All club-based pitches have secure tenure (at Wednesbury Rugby Club, Warley Rugby Club and St John's Recreation Ground).
- ◀ Of the community available pitches, one is assessed as good quality (at Warley Rugby Club, one as standard (at Gospel Oak School) and two as poor (at St John's Recreation Ground and Wednesbury Rugby Club).
- ◀ Wednesbury RUFC has an aspiration to rebuild its clubhouse facility in order to transform it into more of a community facility in addition to it better accommodating the Club itself.
- ◀ Warley RUFC is looking to redevelop its clubhouse provision, which is currently poor quality and in need of modernisation.

### **Rugby union demand summary**

- ◀ Two community rugby union clubs play within Sandwell.
- ◀ Warley RUFC fields one senior men's and one senior women's team and Wednesbury RUFC fields two senior men's teams.
- ◀ Whilst neither club currently contain any junior or mini teams, Wednesbury RUFC has junior and mini play that train and Warley RUFC previously fielded teams.
- ◀ Both clubs train on separate floodlit training areas at their sites, rather than on match pitches, although Warley RUFC has submitted a planning application for the installation of floodlighting on its match pitch.
- ◀ Due to the loss of Warley RUFC's junior section, local youngsters in the area are now likely to travel outside of Sandwell to access a club, therefore resulting in exported demand.
- ◀ Warley RUFC has future demand for a colts' team, whilst Wednesbury RUFC has demand for one senior men's, one senior women's and three mini teams.
- ◀ No future growth is predicted via population growth, although this is impacted upon by no junior or mini teams currently being fielded (despite demand existing).

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### PART 6: RUGBY LEAGUE

#### 6.1: Introduction

The Rugby Football League (RFL) is the governing body for rugby league in England. It administers the England national rugby league team, the Challenge Cup, Super League and the championships which form the professional and semi-professional structure of the game in the UK.

Most community club rugby league is played throughout the summer season (from February to October). However, rugby league is considered as a winter season sport within schools, colleges and universities and therefore pitch provision for matches and training is also required throughout the winter months.

Senior rugby league is played on a field measuring 100 x 68 metres. The preferred pitch size for U7s, U8s and U9s is 60 x 40 metres, whereas for U10s and U11s it is 80 x 30 metres, with U12s and above generally playing on senior pitches. Teams from U7s to U11s are known as primary teams, with teams from U12s to U18s known as junior teams.

#### 6.2: Supply

There are no rugby league pitches in Sandwell.

There are also no rugby league pitches provided across the four Black Country authorities. The nearest provision is at Kings Norton Rugby Club, in Bromsgrove, where a rugby union pitch doubles up to accommodate Birmingham Bulldogs RLFC.

#### 6.3: Demand

No demand has been identified for rugby league in Sandwell. In effect, any residual need is unlikely to be sufficient for a club to be created, with individuals instead likely to travel to form part of the clubs based in other, nearby authorities.

#### 6.4: Supply and demand analysis

As no demand has been identified within Sandwell, there is no need at this time for any provision to be established. Instead, focus should be placed on ensuring that any demand that does exist can be accommodated within clubs outside of the Borough.

##### **Rugby league – supply and demand summary**

- ◀ As no demand has been identified within Sandwell, there is no need at this time for any provision to be established.
- ◀ Focus should be placed on ensuring that any demand that does exist can be accommodated within clubs outside of the Borough.

##### **Rugby league – supply summary**

- ◀ There are no rugby league pitches in Sandwell.
- ◀ The nearest provision is provided in Bromsgrove.

##### **Rugby league – demand summary**

- ◀ No demand has been identified for rugby league in Sandwell.
- ◀ Any residual need is unlikely to be sufficient enough for a club to be created, with individuals instead likely to travel to form part of the clubs based in other, nearby authorities.

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## PART 7: HOCKEY

### 7.1: Introduction

Competitive league hockey matches, and training can only be played on sand filled, sand dressed, or water based artificial grass pitches (AGPs). Although competitive, adult, and junior club training cannot take place on 3G pitches, 40mm pitches may be suitable at introductory level, such as school curriculum low level hockey. England Hockey's (EH) Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy details suitability of surface type for varying levels of hockey, as seen below.

Table 7.1: England Hockey guidelines on artificial surface types suitable for hockey

Category	Surface	Playing Level	Playing Level
England Hockey Category 1	Water surface approved within the FIH Global/National Parameters	<b>Essential</b> International Hockey - Training and matches	<b>Desirable</b> Domestic National Premier competition Higher levels of EH Player Pathway Performance Centres and upwards England
England Hockey Category 2	Sand dressed surfaces within the FIH National Parameter	<b>Essential</b> Domestic National Premier competition Higher levels of player pathway: Academy Centres and Upwards	<b>Desirable</b> All adult and junior League Hockey Intermediate or advanced School Hockey
England Hockey Category 3	Sand based surfaces within the FIH National Parameter	<b>Essential</b> All adult and junior club training and league Hockey EH competitions for clubs and schools Intermediate or advanced schools' hockey	EH competitions for clubs and schools (excluding domestic national league)
England Hockey Category 4	All 3G surfaces	<b>Essential</b> None	<b>Desirable</b> Lower-level hockey (Introductory level) when no category 1-3 surface is available.

In addition to the above pitch types, EH reports that it is currently trialling a different multi-sport surface in order to better accommodate lower levels of hockey demand on a pitch that is also suitable for other sports such as netball and tennis. The surface type, known as Gen 2<sup>8</sup>, is a versatile surface that will ensure that the sports do not need to compromise on the playing experience; it will be a sand dressed synthetic turf with a compatible shock pad.

The concept is designed to provide facilities, including schools, with a dynamic surface which reduces the amount of space required and enables the provision to be utilised to its full potential.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.englishockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=2596&sectionTitle=Gen+2+Playing+Surface>

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For senior teams, a full-size pitch for competitive matches must measure at least 91.4 x 55 metres excluding surrounding run-off areas, which must be a minimum of two metres at the sides and three metres at the ends. EH's preference is for four-metre side and five-metre end run offs, with a preferred overall area of 101.4 x 63 metres, though a minimum overall area of 97.4 x 59 metres is accepted.

It is considered that a hockey pitch can accommodate a maximum of four matches on one day (peak time) provided the pitch has floodlighting. Training is generally midweek and also requires access to a pitch with floodlights.

## Consultation

Old Halesonians HC is the only affiliated hockey club identified as playing within Sandwell and it responded to consultation to help inform this section of the report. That being said, the Club primarily exports demand to Birmingham.

In addition, both Wednesbury HC and West Bromwich HC are considered to be Sandwell clubs, despite currently playing outside of the Borough. Both were therefore also consulted and are also included within the Walsall element of this study.

## 7.2: Supply

The audit identifies two full size hockey suitable AGPs in Sandwell. A pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy is located in the Rowley Regis Analysis Area and a pitch at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy is located in the Oldbury Analysis Area.

Both pitches are available for community use; however, the pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy is without floodlighting, which can impact on its availability, especially during winter months. That being said, the pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy is currently in use for community hockey, whereas the pitch at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy is not.

Table 7.2: Summary of full-size hockey suitable AGPs

Site ID	Site	Postcode	Analysis area	Floodlit?	Community use?	Size (metres)
62	Ormiston Forge Academy	B64 6QU	Rowley Regis	No	Yes	100 x 67
63	Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy	B69 2HE	Oldbury	Yes	Yes	100 x 60

## Smaller size provision

In addition to the full size AGPs, there are also seven smaller size pitches provided in Sandwell, with five of these available to the community and four serviced by floodlights (the pitch at The Meadows School is available but not floodlit).

Table 7.3: Summary of smaller sized hockey suitable AGPs

Site ID	Site	Postcode	Analysis area	Floodlit?	Community use?	Size (metres)
47	King George V Playing Fields	B71 4BG	West Bromwich	Yes	Yes	60 x 36
72	Q3 Academy Great Barr	B43 7SD	West Bromwich	Yes	Yes	60 x 45

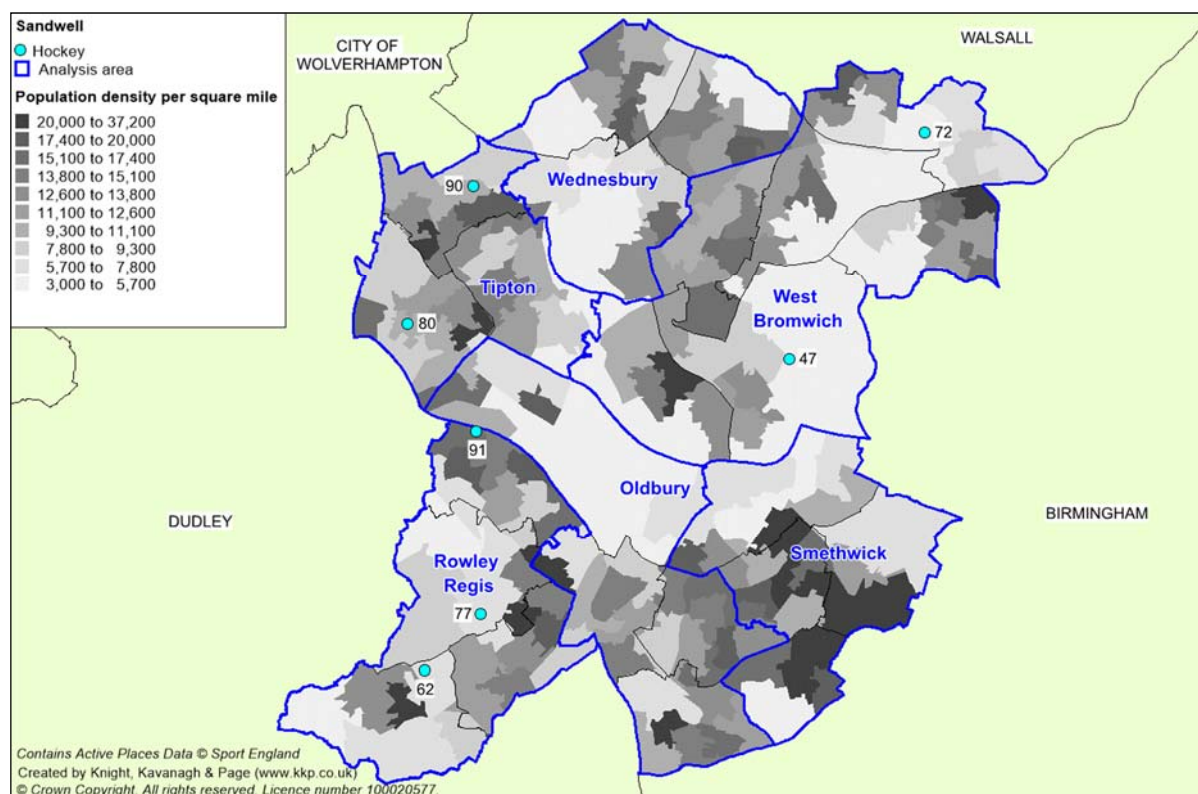
# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site ID	Site	Postcode	Analysis area	Floodlit?	Community use?	Size (metres)
77	St Michael's CE High School	B65 9AN	Rowley Regis	Yes	No	65 x 40
80	Silvertrees Academy	DY4 8NH	Tipton	No	No	49 x 31
86	The Meadows School	B69 3BU	Oldbury	No	Yes	33 x 18
90	Tipton Sports Academy	DY4 0BS	Tipton	Yes	Yes	35 x 35
91	Tividale Football Club	B69 1UL	Rowley Regis	No	Yes	24 x 15

Generally, smaller size pitches are considered too small to accommodate any purposeful hockey demand. As such, they are discounted from this point onwards in the report, although it is acknowledged that some of the larger ones could be used for some training activity and for junior matches if the demand existed.

For the location of the AGPs, regardless of size, please see Figure 7.1 below.

7.1: Location of full-size hockey suitable AGPs in Sandwell



## Future provision

Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy reports that it is exploring the conversion of its pitch to 3G. It states that it has held conversations with the Albion Foundation, which would support its plans and use the provision more heavily if it was resurfaced. This, however, would mean that it could not be used for hockey.

EH notes that the site is based around two miles from West Bromwich HC's former home site and could be used heavily if it was resurfaced as a hockey suitable pitch. It is not currently used due to its poor quality.

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A planning application has also been submitted for a new secondary school in Smethwick which includes the provision of a full-size AGP.

EH hopes to support West Bromwich HC to return to Sandwell to enable to Club to undertake more work in the local community, growing the Club and sport further.

## **Management and ownership**

Both of the full size pitches are operated by the respective schools.

## **Security of tenure**

Old Halesonians HC accesses the sand-based pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy, albeit this is only via a rental agreement. Without a longer term arrangement, its tenure is therefore considered to be unsecure. The Club also has unsecure tenure at the sites it uses in Birmingham.

Neither Wednesbury HC nor West Bromwich HC are considered to have security of tenure at their venues used outside of Sandwell. That being said, EH is working with Willenhall E-Act Academy to provide long-term access for Wednesbury HC.

## **Availability**

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) applies an overall peak period for AGPs of 34 hours per week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00). The full size pitch at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy is available for community use throughout these time periods.

The pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy is also widely available in the peak period, although in actuality its availability is reduced through it not being serviced by floodlighting.

*Table 7.4: Availability of full-size hockey suitable AGPs*

Site ID	Site	Availability in the peak period (hours)	Comments
62	Ormiston Forge Academy	29	Reserved for internal use during the week until 18:00, then available to the community from 18:00 until 21:00 Mondays to Fridays and from 09:00 until 18:00 Saturdays and Sundays.
63	Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy	34	Reserved for internal use during the week until 17:00, then available to the community from 17:00 until 21:00 Mondays to Fridays and from 09:00 until 18:00 Saturdays and Sundays.

## **Quality**

Depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately ten years, and it is the age of the surface, together with maintenance levels, that most commonly affects quality. An issue for hockey nationally is that many providers did not financially plan to replace the carpet when first installed.



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In Sandwell, the full size pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy is assessed as standard quality, whilst the pitch at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy is assessed as poor. Both are within their recommended lifespan, having last been resurfaced in 2014, although some signs of wear and tear are now becoming evident.

Table 7.5: Summary of full-size AGP quality

Site ID	Site	Year installed/ resurfaced	Quality
62	Ormiston Forge Academy	2014	Standard
63	Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy	2014	Poor

## Ancillary provision

There are changing facilities servicing both full size pitches; however, these are located in the main school buildings and are not dedicated to the provision. They are therefore not ideal for accommodating community hockey demand.

Away from the pitches, Old Halesonians HC forms part of the wider Old Halesonians Sports Association, which also includes Old Halesonians RUFC and Old Halesonians CC. As part of this, the Club is formally based in Bromsgrove, accessing clubhouse provision at Old Halesonians Association.

## 7.3: Demand

Old Halesonians HC has five senior men's, one senior women's and three junior teams, as shown in the table below. As the only club currently playing in Sandwell, this therefore represents all of the formal demand in the Borough.

Table 7.6: Summary of demand

Name of club	No. of competitive teams		
	Senior men	Senior women	Junior
Old Halesonians HC	5	1	3

The Club currently has 81 playing members, which is unaltered from the previous season. This consists of 53 senior members and 28 junior members.

## Participation trends

Old Halesonians HC has increased its demand significantly in recent years. When compared to the 2018 PPS, it has grown from four teams to nine, including the creation of three additional senior men's teams.

## Imported demand

Old Halesonians HC previously played in Dudley and considers this to be its home authority, if an adequate facility was provided. Furthermore, its current home base, as mentioned, is in Bromsgrove. As such, its current presence in Sandwell represents imported demand, with many of its players drawn from outside of the Borough.

In addition to its use of the pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy, Old Halesonians HC also accesses a pitch in Birmingham at King Edward VI Five Ways High School. In fact, this is used more so than the pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy due to the presence of floodlighting. This enables training demand to take place during midweek evening slots.

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## **Exported demand**

Both Wednesbury HC and West Bromwich HC are considered to be Sandwell-based clubs, despite currently playing outside of the Borough. Both access pitches in Walsall.

West Bromwich HC previously played all its competitive matches at George Salter Academy in Sandwell, before being forced to relocate when it was converted to a 3G surface. This resulted in it moving to Walsall due to a lack of capacity on remaining Sandwell pitches and due to Aston University (Recreation Centre) providing a better-quality pitch than any alternative. However, it would prefer to play within Sandwell if a comparable offer was provided and EH would also prefer it to be based in the Borough.

Wednesbury HC is also exported into Walsall from Sandwell following the resurfacing of its previous home pitch at Gospel Oak Academy to a 3G surface. However, unlike West Bromwich HC, it has no desire to move back and is reportedly happy and well provided for at Willenhall E-Act Academy. As mentioned previously, discussions are ongoing in regards to provided increased security of tenure.

Both clubs currently have three senior teams and a junior (badgers) team, meaning eight teams in total are exported.

*Table 7.7: Summary of exported demand*

Name of club	No. of competitive teams				Total no. of members
	Senior Men	Senior Women	Junior	Other	
Wednesbury HC	3	-	-	1	76
West Bromwich HC	3	-	-	1	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>151</b>

## **Latent demand**

Whilst no formal latent demand is identified by Old Halesonians HC, it is generally considered that clubs based at a single site can recruit new members more effectively. Therefore, it is likely that the Club could increase membership if it was based at a single site, preferably within Dudley, rather than being split across two pitches in two different authorities.

Neither West Bromwich HC nor Wednesbury HC express any latent demand; however, this is likely to be due to pitch capacity issues rather than being a true reflection of where they stand. Both express future demand, as captured below.

## **Future demand**

Old Halesonians HC has aspirations to increase its demand in the future, although it does not quantify this due to a lack of pitch capacity. It reports that it cannot currently grow, despite having a desire to do so.

West Bromwich HC reports that it is in a position to add one senior men's team, one senior women's team and one junior team to its club.

Wednesbury HC reports aspirations to grow its junior section, although it does quantify the potential increase in terms of team numbers.

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In addition to the above, growing participation is a key aim within EH's Strategic Plan and key drivers include working with clubs, universities, and schools, working with regional and local leagues, developing opportunities for over 40s and delivering a quality programme of competition. Overall, it has an aim to double participation over the next ten years.

### ***EH initiatives***

There are several initiatives supported by EH that operate across the Country, including:

- ◀ Back to Hockey
- ◀ Hockey Heroes
- ◀ Walking Hockey

These initiatives can add to the demand picture for hockey and are likely to result in future growth within the affiliated clubs. However, none are currently being run in Sandwell.

### ***Peak time demand***

For matches, senior hockey activity takes place on a Saturday, whereas junior activity occurs on a Sunday. For training, peak time is midweek evenings, although preference is generally given for Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

### **Usage**

The pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy is used on both Saturdays and Sundays by Old Halesonians HC and can be operating close to capacity on these days, with earlier time slots taken up by the Club and later time slots not being suitable due to the lack of floodlighting. However, there is often more availability, depending on fixtures, as the Club primarily uses provision in Birmingham.

During midweek, the pitch is generally unused, both by the Club and the wider community. This is again due to no floodlighting being present.

Whilst Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy receives no community hockey demand due to its poor condition, that is not to say that it is unused. Instead, a lot of the capacity is taken up by football teams for training purposes, especially during midweek. For example, the Albion Foundation accesses the pitch for three hours on Monday evenings, whilst Tividale FC does likewise for three hours on Tuesdays and for two hours on Wednesdays. That being said, significant capacity exists on Thursday and Friday evenings, as well as during weekends.

In total, spare capacity remains on the pitch, equating to around 35% of capacity during the midweek peak period and 80% during the peak period at weekends.

### **7.4: Supply and demand analysis**

It is suggested that a floodlit pitch is able to accommodate four match equivalent sessions on a Saturday. With teams playing on a home and away format, this equates to one AGP being able to cater for eight 'home' teams (one team requires 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week on its 'home' AGP).

Based on the above, with six senior teams currently being fielded by Old Halesonians HC, there is a need for just one full size pitch (rounded up from 0.75) in Sandwell. However, this increases to two pitches (rounded up from 1.5) when including the expressed exported demand, particularly from West Bromwich HC due to its aspiration to return to the Borough.

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As two pitches are currently provided, it could be suggested that the existing stock of pitches is sufficient; however, if this was the case, demand would not be exported. The provision at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy is not currently suitable for the sport due to its quality, meaning improvements are required to ensure that there is an adequate stock of facilities. Its plans for a 3G conversion must therefore also be noted as this, if realised, would reduce the stock of hockey suitable provision and result in an undersupply of one pitch.

It also must be reiterated that capacity is reduced at Ormiston Forge Academy due to no floodlights being provided.

For junior hockey matches, the need for pitches is generally less than it is for senior hockey. This is because younger age groups can play on half a pitch (meaning two fixtures can take place at one time) and because there are also fewer junior teams fielded by Old Halesonians HC than its number of senior teams. As such, a sufficient stock of pitches for senior hockey would also be considered sufficient for junior demand.

### ***Conclusion***

There is a requirement for two hockey suitable AGPs within Sandwell to cater for both existing demand in the Borough and demand that is being exported. Whilst these are currently being provided, the pitch at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy is not serving any meaningful purpose for the sport. As such, improvements to the pitch needs to be made and hockey access to the site needs to be enabled, or if this is not possible (or if 3G conversion is pursued), an additional pitch is required. This should be located within the West Bromwich Analysis Area to best accommodate demand.

The above would not only ensure that Sandwell-based demand can be catered for, but it would also relieve some capacity issues identified in the Walsall element of the PPOSS.

Notwithstanding the above, the Dudley element of the PPOSS identifies that a suitable pitch within Dudley is required in order to re-accommodate demand from Old Halesonians HC and to therefore enable it to transfer away from Sandwell. Should this happen, there may only be a requirement for one pitch within Sandwell, although this pitch should not be the one located at Ormiston Forge Academy due to it not being floodlit. It would either need to be the pitch at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy or via new provision.

Options to address the above points will be explore in the proceeding Strategy document.

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### **Hockey supply and demand summary**

- ◀ There is a requirement for two hockey suitable AGPs within Sandwell to cater for both existing demand in the Borough and demand that is being exported.
- ◀ Whilst these are currently being provided, the pitch at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy is not currently serving any meaningful purpose for the sport, with quality improvements required and hockey access needing to be enabled.
- ◀ If quality improvements are not possible, or if 3G conversion is pursued, an additional full size hockey suitable pitch is required.
- ◀ If imported demand from Dudley returns to the Borough, there may only be a requirement for one pitch within Sandwell, although this should not be the pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy due to its lack of floodlighting.

### **Hockey supply summary**

- ◀ There are two full size hockey suitable AGPs in Sandwell, one at Ormiston Forge Academy and one at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy.
- ◀ Both pitches are available for community use; however, the pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy is without floodlighting.
- ◀ There are also seven smaller sized pitches provided, with five of these available to the community and four serviced by floodlights.
- ◀ Both of the full size pitches are operated by the respective schools.
- ◀ The pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy is accessed by Old Halesonians HC, although no security of tenure is provided.
- ◀ Both full size pitches are theoretically available throughout most if not all of the peak period, although actual availability is limited at Ormiston Forge Academy due to its lack of floodlighting.
- ◀ The pitch at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy is assessed as poor quality, whilst the pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy is standard.
- ◀ Both are serviced by changing rooms but these are within main school buildings and are therefore not dedicated to the pitches.

### **Hockey demand summary**

- ◀ Old Halesonians HC is the only hockey club playing in Sandwell; it fields five senior men's, one senior women's and three junior teams, although it is primarily based in Birmingham.
- ◀ The Club previously played in Dudley and considers this to be its home authority (imported demand).
- ◀ Both Wednesbury HC and West Bromwich HC are considered to be Sandwell-based clubs, despite currently playing outside of the Borough (exported demand). Despite this, the former has no desire to return to Sandwell.
- ◀ West Bromwich HC would prefer to play within Sandwell.
- ◀ Old Halesonians, West Bromwich and Wednesbury hockey clubs all have an aspiration to increase demand in the future.
- ◀ No EH initiatives are being held in the Borough (e.g. Back to Hockey, Walking Hockey and Hockey Heroes).
- ◀ The pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy is used on both Saturdays and Sundays by Old Halesonians HC and is considered to be close to capacity on these days; it is generally unused during midweek as a consequence of no floodlights.
- ◀ Whilst not used for hockey, the pitch at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy is well used for football activity, predominately on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays (capacity exists on the remaining days).

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 8: TENNIS

### 8.1: Introduction

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is the organisation responsible for the governance of tennis and administers the sport locally across Sandwell. It has recently restructured its strategic approach to target several national focus areas, with a priority on developing the sport at park sites.

#### **Consultation**

There are two tennis clubs in Sandwell; Old Hill TC and Wednesbury TC. Only Old Hill TC responded to consultation requests, resulting in a response rate of 50%.

### 8.2: Supply

There are 57 tennis courts identified in Sandwell across 18 sites. Of the courts, 35 are categorised as being available for community use at 12 sites, compared to 22 that are unavailable at six sites.

The Rowley Analysis Area contains the highest number of available courts with 12, whereas no community available courts are present in the Oldbury Analysis Area. It does, however, have 13 courts that are unavailable for community use.

*Table 8.1: Summary of the number of courts by analysis area*

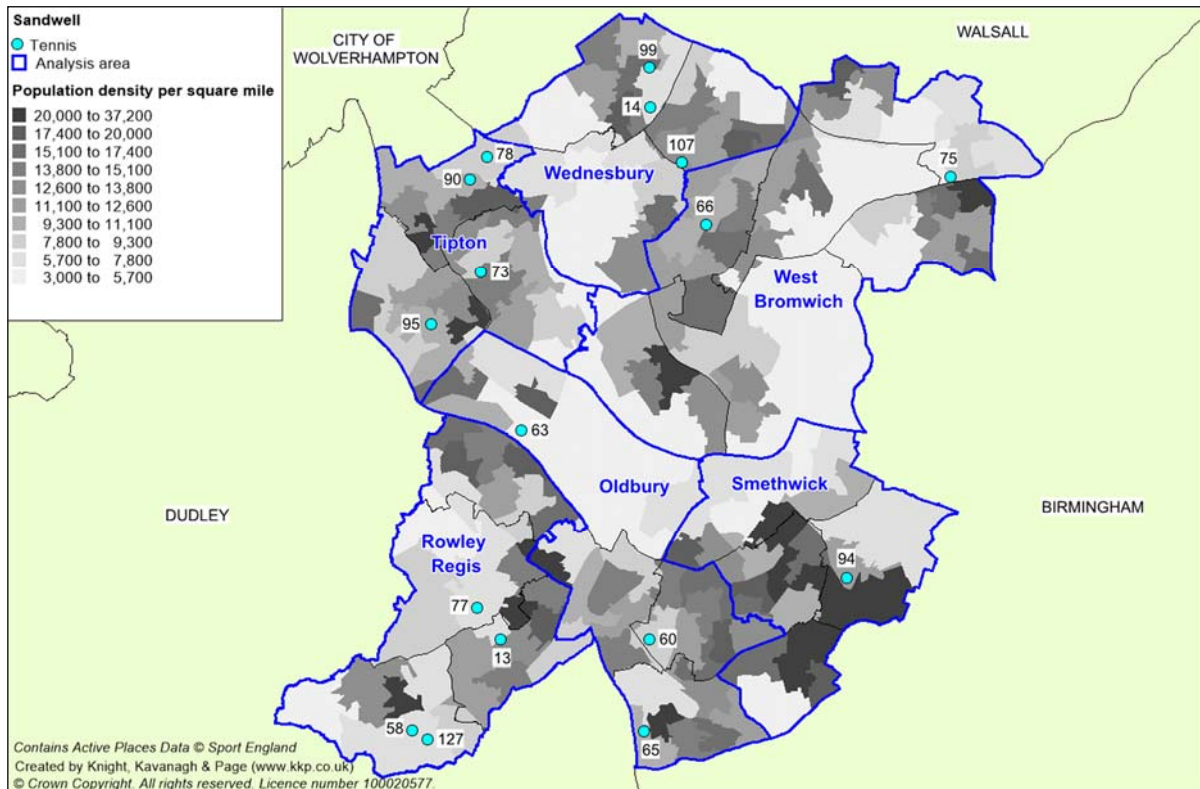
Analysis area	Courts available for community use	Courts unavailable for community use
Oldbury	-	13
Rowley Regis	12	-
Smethwick	1	-
Tipton	8	3
Wednesbury	8	3
West Bromwich	6	3
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>22</b>

Please note that courts are classified as being available for community use provided that they are deemed to be easily accessible to the general population, either via pay and play or through a membership at a club (or a mixture of both). All unavailable courts in Sandwell are located at school sites.

Figure 8.1 shows the location of the courts servicing Sandwell, regardless of community use. For a key to the map, see Table 8.2.

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Figure 8.1: Location of tennis courts in Sandwell



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Table 8.2: Tennis courts in Sandwell

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Ownership	Community use?	No. of courts	Floodlit?	Court type	Court quality
13	Britannia Park	B65 8DR	Rowley Regis	Council	Yes	3	No	Macadam	Poor
14	Brunswick Park	WS10 9HH	Wednesbury	Council	Yes	4	No	Macadam	Poor
58	Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club	B65 7HF	Rowley Regis	Club	Yes	2	Yes	Macadam	Standard
						2	No	Macadam	Standard
60	Oldbury Academy	B68 8NE	Oldbury	School	No	3	No	Macadam	Good
63	Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy	B69 2HE	Oldbury	School	No	3	No	Macadam	Standard
65	Perryfields High School	B68 0RG	Oldbury	School	No	7	No	Macadam	Standard
66	Phoenix Collegiate	B71 2BX	West Bromwich	School	Yes	1	Yes	Macadam	Good
73	Q3 Academy Tipton	DY4 7NR	Tipton	School	Yes	3	No	Macadam	Poor
75	Redhouse Park	B43 6AD	West Bromwich	Council	Yes	5	No	Macadam	Poor
77	St Michael's CE High School	B65 9AN	Rowley Regis	School	Yes	4	No	Macadam	Standard
78	Gospel Oak Academy	DY4 0BZ	Tipton	School	No	3	No	Macadam	Standard
90	Tipton Sports Academy	DY4 0BS	Tipton	Trust	Yes	4	Yes	Macadam	Good
94	Victoria Park (Smethwick)	B66 3PD	Smethwick	Council	Yes	1	No	Macadam	Poor
95	Victoria Park (Tipton)	DY4 8SW	Tipton	Council	Yes	1	No	Macadam	Poor
99	Wednesbury Sports Union	WD10 9QL	Wednesbury	Club	Yes	4	No	Macadam	Standard
107	Wodensborough Ormiston Academy	WS10 0DR	Wednesbury	School	No	3	Yes	Macadam	Standard
127	Haden Hill Park	B64 7JL	Rowley Regis	Council	Yes	1	No	Macadam	Standard
129	Shireland Collegiate Academy	B66 4ND	Smethwick	School	No	3	No	Macadam	Standard



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## **Future provision**

Sandwell Leisure Trust and the LTA are in discussions regarding development plans at Tipton Sports Academy. Initial proposals include an aspiration to cover the four courts on site with two air domes/bubbles and to install four dedicated padel courts where a multi-use games area is currently provided. Scheme layouts are currently being reviewed and initial cost indications are to be prepared.

In addition, the Council are working together with the LTA on a potential parks development project for 2022. This may include upgrades to provision at Brunswick, Redhouse and Britannia parks. In relation specifically to Britannia Park, the Council has recently been awarded a significant sum to redevelop the site, with tennis court improvements potentially forming part of this.

## **Management and security of tenure**

The table below highlights the management of tennis courts within Sandwell. The majority are operated by schools, although only 27% of these are available for community use, with more club and local authority operated courts considered to be accessible.

*Table 8.3: Tennis courts by management type*

Community use?	Number of courts			
	Club	Council <sup>9</sup>	Education	Trust
Available	8	15	8	4
Unavailable	-	-	22	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>

Previously, more courts were provided in Sandwell at school sites, including at George Salter Academy and Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School. However, both now solely provide netball courts.

A total of eight courts are managed by clubs, with four of these provided at Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club and four at Wednesbury Sports Union. Old Hill TC has freehold of the courts at Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club, whilst Wednesbury TC has a rolling one-year lease of the courts at Wednesbury Sports Union from the Council.

## **Court type**

All outdoor tennis courts in Sandwell have a macadam surface. The estimated lifespan of a macadam court is ten years, depending on levels of use and maintenance levels. To ensure courts can continue to be used beyond this time frame, it is recommended that a sinking fund is put into place for eventual refurbishment.

Nationally, macadam courts are the most common, although other courts can have an artificial, clay or grass surface.

## **Floodlighting**

Floodlit courts enable use throughout the year and are identified by the LTA as being a key priority for growing participation nationally. The LTA reports that floodlights allow for a 35% increase in available court time on an annual basis.

<sup>9</sup> Includes courts operated by the Sandwell Leisure Trust

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## PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

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In Sandwell, only ten of the 57 tennis courts are serviced by floodlights, representing just 18% of the provision. There are only four floodlit courts provided at local authority sites (all at Tipton Sports Academy) and four at school sites (three at Wodensborough Ormiston Academy and one at Phoenix Collegiate). This can considerably impact on recreational and casual demand.

A lack of floodlighting at the school sites presents a key reason as to why many of the courts are unavailable for community use. Many of the providers state that making them available for lettings would not be financially viable as usage would be limited, although the LTA does offer solutions to help overcome this including initiatives such as Clubspark and Gate Access (detailed further on).

The remaining two floodlit courts in Sandwell are at Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club (two are floodlit at the site and two are not). Access to floodlit courts is considered particularly key for clubs as it allows for more usage of provision, which in turn can help accommodate more members. It should, therefore, be noted that no floodlighting is at Wednesbury Sports Union, although it is reported by the LTA that Wednesbury TC is working with the NGB regarding potential installation of floodlighting.

### **Over markings**

Tennis courts, particularly within schools, are often over marked by netball, basketball and/or football courts. Courts which are over marked tend to receive higher levels of use which can be detrimental to quality over time, as well as creating capacity issues if there is community demand from more than one sport.

In Sandwell, some or all of the courts at the following sites are overmarked:

- ◀ Britannia Park
- ◀ Oldbury Academy
- ◀ Perryfields High School
- ◀ Q3 Tipton Academy
- ◀ Rowley Regis Learning Campus
- ◀ Wodensborough Ormiston Academy
- ◀ Brunswick Park
- ◀ Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy
- ◀ Phoenix Collegiate
- ◀ Gospel Oak Academy
- ◀ Shireland Collegiate Academy

The majority are overmarked by netball courts, except for one of the courts at Britannia Park, which is overmarked by a basketball court (the other two courts at the site are standalone).

### **Quality**

The quality of tennis courts has been informed through non-technical site assessments and consultation with providers to assign each court a rating of good, standard or poor. Key aspects informing the findings include surface quality, grip underfoot, line marking quality, evenness and evidence of inappropriate use (e.g. vandalism and/or littering).

For the full assessment criteria, please refer to Appendix 2.

Of the courts in Sandwell, eight are assessed as good quality, 32 as standard quality and 17 as poor quality. All of the poor quality courts are available for community use, whereas only five good quality and 13 standard quality courts are.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 8.4: Quality of community available tennis courts

Community use?	Quality		
	Good	Standard	Poor
Available	5	13	17
Unavailable	3	19	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>

The courts assessed as poor quality are located at the following sites:

- ◀ Britannia Park
- ◀ Q3 Tipton Academy
- ◀ Victoria Park (Smethwick)
- ◀ Brunswick Park
- ◀ Redhouse Park
- ◀ Victoria Park (Tipton)

Issues recorded at these sites include poor grip underfoot, the presence of moss, worn line markings and loose gravel. Moreover, maintenance is also considered to be basic and infrequent at most of the poor quality sites, which can lead to further deterioration. At Victoria Park (Tipton) in particular, it is questionable as to whether the court is still in use based on the quality of the provision, with the line markings badly faded.

Five of the sites containing poor quality courts are operated by the Council. Improving such courts is currently a national priority for the LTA, linked to the aforementioned discussions with the Council relating to a parks' development programme in Sandwell. Its focus is on suitable sites that cater for high levels of recreational demand or that have the potential to do so. This is especially the case if the provision is serviced (or could be serviced) by changing facilities and floodlighting, whereby a sustainable tennis programme could be supported.

All of the club courts are assessed as standard quality. At Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club, significant signs of wear and tear are evident and the Club reports that quality has deteriorated over the last 12 months. Similarly, the courts at Wednesbury Sports Union are also worsening, with resurfacing required in the near future to sustain the level of play received.

The good quality courts are identified at Oldbury Academy, Phoenix Collegiate and Tipton Sports Academy. To that end, it is worth noting that Oldbury Academy is unavailable for community use, despite the quality of the provision, whilst Phoenix Collegiate is generally prioritised for netball use (via the Walsall Netball League).

### **Ancillary provision**

The ancillary facilities servicing both Old Hill TC and Wednesbury TC are considered to be adequate, with suitable provision provided albeit with some level of modernisation required.

For non-club courts, ancillary provision is generally considered to be problematic, although good quality ancillary facilities are provided at Tipton Sports Academy. Whilst most of the other sites do provide changing facilities and/or toilets, they are not specific for tennis and are generally too far away from the courts to be realistically used. Often, the facilities predominately service football/cricket pitch users and therefore are not readily available or suited to tennis court users. In some instances, quality is also poor, as is especially the case with the toilets at Victoria Park (Tipton).

As part of the proposed development of Britannia Park, a new pavilion will be built, with the Council currently looking for a suitable organisation to manage this.

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Insight from the LTA indicates good quality ancillary facilities such as toilets, changing rooms and cafes encourage players to visit community available provision and stay for extended periods of time. Therefore, a potential way to increase usage of such provision would be to invest in suitable ancillary amenities, which can then also provide a source of income.

### 8.3: Demand

It is reported that demand for tennis provision during the Covid-19 pandemic has increased substantially compared to prior levels when court restrictions have not been in place (potentially linked to tennis being one of the first sports to be allowed to resume). This should therefore be monitored moving forward to ensure that any growth can be accommodated for if the increases are sustained.

#### ***Competitive tennis***

There are two tennis clubs in Sandwell; Old Hill TC and Wednesbury TC. The former has just 14 members, all of which, are senior, whilst membership for the latter is currently unknown as it did not respond to consultation requests.

*Table 8.6: Summary of tennis club demand*

Club	Number of members	
	Senior	Junior
Old Hill TC	14	-
Wednesbury TC	Unknown	Unknown

#### ***Participation trends***

Old Hill TC reports that its membership has reduced significantly in recent years, with it stating that it is now at a point where its future is uncertain. The Club reports that it cannot attract new members, with it in need of a new person with new ideas to run it more successfully.

#### ***Latent/unmet demand***

Latent demand for tennis nationally is reported to be high by the LTA, which has an insight tool that suggests that 18% of the five million players that pick up a racket each year would play more often if key barriers such as poor promotion of opportunities to get on court, unclear booking journeys (especially those that are 'offline') and low quality facilities were addressed. As such, there is a potential opportunity in Sandwell for the Council and other providers to address such barriers, whilst also bettering understanding of court usage.

Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in tennis but 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies latent demand of 4,852 people within Sandwell. By way of comparison, this is below latent demand in Dudley (5,375 people) but is above what is identified in Walsall (4,180 people) and in Wolverhampton (3,933 people).

In relation to clubs, Old Hill TC reports that it would be able to attract new members if it had better quality facilities. This is because it has lost members in recent years, partly due to its courts deteriorating in quality.

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### ***Future demand***

Old Hill TC reports that it needs to increase its membership in order to continue operating but does not quantify its potential growth.

In addition, the LTA, primarily based on its insight tools, identifies high levels of latent and unmet demand, suggesting that future growth may exceed club ambitions. However, such demand is also likely to include demand outside of the club-environment.

### ***Informal tennis***

It is considered that all local authority courts available for community use in Sandwell have spare capacity for a growth in demand, although this is difficult to quantify as use is not always recorded due to the open access nature of many sites. Most of the current use is assumed to take place throughout the summer months although it is also accepted that many courts are accessed unofficially for activities unrelated to tennis.

The LTA has developed a package of support for local authorities to grow the use of tennis courts by removing key barriers to participation. The three products are ClubSpark, Rally and Gate Access, which are further detailed below. In Sandwell, some of these are currently utilised across six local authority sites and the LTA is keen to explore further developments, particularly at Britannia, Brunswick and Redhouse parks, as well as in relation specifically to Gate Access. In addition, Clubspark is in place at the club sites (Old Hill Cricket & Tennis Club and Wednesbury Sports Union) and the LTA reports that it is in discussions regarding further implementation of its products.

In relation to education providers, none report any regular demand from the community for tennis. It is believed by many that a lack of demand is a direct result of a lack of floodlighting, as well as other courts being available for free. This results in the community being less likely to pay a hire charge for their provision.

### ***ClubSpark – Improving the booking process***

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

- ◀ Managed website - create and manage a mobile friendly website tailored to LA/club requirements to promote events and activities.
- ◀ Managed coaching – set up coaching lessons and courses online.
- ◀ Membership management - improve membership engagement by making it easier for the venue and for members to pay, renew and keep in touch (includes online payments, direct debits and the monitoring of revenue streams; membership modules can also be used to take season ticket payments for venues operating a non-traditional annual facility fee).
- ◀ Organise payments - set the way payments are taken, whether it's immediate pay and play, or bookable as part of a membership package
- ◀ Court bookings – reduced administration for managing bookings; give staff, coaches, members and the general public access to book and pay for courts, classes or other resources online.
- ◀ Scheduling - set unique booking and price rules to suit the venue and enable lights to switch on/off automatically when linked to the LTA Premium Gate Access system.
- ◀ Book and pay remotely - customers can make bookings and payments for a venue anytime, anywhere via the real-time booking app.

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- ◀ Reporting - ClubSpark allows administrators to view reports highlighting income, court usage, revenue and number of members and season ticket holders; this allows for identification of trends and patterns and evidence to demonstrate participation levels and impact.

### *RALLY*

Rally is an aggregator that collects all booking and coaching information via ClubSpark pages and displays it for participants in one easy to view page. It allows players to search for venues close to them and provides booking options, removing the barriers of not knowing where courts are or how to book.

Rally provides a helpful customer journey, with a personal profile to review and manage bookings, and helpful reminders. Courts can be set to book for free of charge or at a fee agreed by the provider.

### *Gate Access*

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

There are two gate options available: SmartAccess Premium and SmartAccess Lite. The demands and needs of users plus the setup of the venue determines the most appropriate system for each site.

Nationally, the LTA report that in the last three years, sites with a gate access system installed have attracted 64,841 unique players, leading to 609,671 courts being booked. This has generated income of over £1 million.

### ***Additional demand***

The LTA operates various tennis initiatives across the Country which result in some courts receiving additional demand. Furthermore, there are other formats away from traditional tennis that can result in increased usage. These are all detailed below.

### *Local Tennis Leagues*

Recreational Tennis leagues are less formal in comparison to established club play, offering greater flexibility and an opportunity for all abilities to engage in competition at local venues. The leagues are available to all aged 18 years and above and are run by an organisation called Local Tennis Leagues, which affiliates to the LTA. Players are organised into mixed sex leagues of eight based on similar ability levels, with matches arranged between the two players at whatever time and court is agreed. The flexibility of play is conducive to the use of park sites which are typically more easily accessible.

There is no Local Tennis League specific to Sandwell; however, both the Walsall Parks League and the Wolverhampton Parks League identify Tipton Sports Academy as one of their primary venues.

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### *LTA Youth Start*

This is a six week coaching offer for children that have never played tennis before and is identified as a priority by the LTA. For £25, kids get six weeks coaching by an LTA Accredited coach, along with a free racket, pack of balls and personalised t-shirt so that they can continue playing.

### *Tennis for Free*

Tennis for Free is a community sports charity that works in partnership with the LTA. The charity delivers free, fully inclusive weekly coaching sessions for all ages and abilities in local communities across the UK, especially those in low-income areas.

Tennis for Free offers a package for local authorities and court operators that includes financial support for local LTA Accredited coaches to deliver the sessions, tennis equipment for attendees and coaches and promotional support. Sessions are typically delivered across three courts, although the charity have recently launched 'Tennis for Free Lite', available to clubs that wish to open their doors to non-members.

Through its offer, Tennis for Free aims to:

- ◀ Reinvigorate under-used public facilities
- ◀ Make tennis a sport for all
- ◀ Make tennis more financially accessible in the UK
- ◀ Improve the physical and mental wellbeing of local communities through tennis

### *LTA Big Tennis Weekend*

The LTA Big Tennis Weekend is an LTA initiative which all registered venues can access. Clubs and venues have the ability to sign up to host open days, which are free of charge, and create a relaxed and welcoming environment for those new to tennis to participate. This in turn can potentially lead to the clubs attracting new members.

The LTA hosts three dedicated weekends a year (in May, July and September) that are the UK's biggest public tennis events. Furthermore, venues are able to run additional events outside these dates and will benefit from their events being promoted on the national LTA campaign website. All clubs running an open day are asked to promote a follow-on offer to all attendees, such as a reduced rate introductory membership or a number of free coaching sessions, to encourage people to continue playing after the event.

### *Mini tennis*

Mini tennis provides children with the perfect opportunity to learn the fundamentals of tennis at an early age. Designed for children aged between 4-10, mini tennis utilises smaller courts, nets and rackets as well as lower-bouncing tennis balls to develop vital tennis skills and techniques. The game is split out into three levels, with the LTA stating that each stage there are key aims and goals:

- ◀ Red (Stage 3): 4-8 year olds – serve, rally and score
- ◀ Orange (Stage 2): 8-9 year olds – develop a rounded game
- ◀ Green (Stage 1): 10 year olds – put skills to the test

No dedicated mini tennis courts have been identified in Sandwell.

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### *Padel tennis*

Padel is a form of tennis that is easy to play, fun and sociable. It is played mainly in a doubles format on an enclosed court about a third of the size of a tennis court and can be played in groups of mixed ages and abilities as it is not power dominant. The rules are broadly the same as tennis, although you serve underhand and the walls are used as part of the game, with the ball allowed to bounce off them.

One of the fastest growing sports across continental Europe, it has gained increasing popularity over recent years, particularly in Spain with over six million people currently playing. As of 2021, there are around 6,000 active paddle tennis players across Great Britain, with 107 courts provided at 52 clubs. This is predicted to grow substantially in future years.

There are currently no paddle tennis courts in Sandwell; however, as previously mentioned, plans are in place for the creation of provision at Tipton Sports Academy. The nearest existing courts are located in Birmingham at Sutton Coldfield Tennis Club and in Walsall at Streetly Academy.

### **8.4: Supply and demand analysis**

The LTA suggests that a non-floodlit court can accommodate a maximum of 40 members, whereas a floodlit court can accommodate 60 members.

Old Hill TC has enough courts to meet its current membership of 14 as it has access to four courts with capacity for 200 members (meaning its membership could theoretically be accommodated on one court). Priority should therefore be placed on increasing its membership so that the Club becomes more sustainable. For this, quality and operational improvements are required.

For Wednesbury TC, further exploration is required to determine its current membership levels and its future growth aspirations. At Wednesbury Sports Union, it has capacity for a membership base of up to 160 members.

As no non-club courts are identified as having any capacity issues, precedence should be placed on improving quality to an adequate standard for promoting and increasing informal play, particularly at publicly available sites accommodating multiple courts and adequate ancillary facilities. Linked to this, increased utilisation of LTA schemes at suitable sites should be considered, as should the establishment of the other various initiatives supported by the NGB.

Tipton Sports Academy, as well Brunswick, Redhouse and Britannia parks, could be seen as key given the current proposals in place at the sites, the operating structure in place and the existing quality.



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### **Tennis – supply and demand summary**

- ◀ Old Hill TC has a sufficient number of courts to meet its current membership, with priority needing to be placed on ensuring that the Club can remain operational.
- ◀ For Wednesbury TC, further exploration is required to determine its current membership levels and its future growth aspirations; at Wednesbury Sports Union, it has capacity for a membership base of up to 160 members.
- ◀ As no non-club courts are identified as have any capacity issues, precedence should be placed on improving quality to an adequate standard for informal play, particularly at publicly available sites hosting multiple courts.

### **Tennis – supply summary**

- ◀ There are a total of 57 tennis courts identified in Sandwell across 18 sites, with 35 courts categorised as being available for community use at 12 sites.
- ◀ Sandwell Leisure Trust and the LTA are in discussions regarding development plans at Tipton Sports Academy (including the covering of the courts and the installation of four dedicated padel courts).
- ◀ In addition, the Council are working together with the LTA on a potential parks development project for 2022; this may include upgrades to provision at Brunswick, Redhouse and Britannia parks.
- ◀ The majority of courts are operated by schools, although only 27% of these are available for community use.
- ◀ All of the courts have a macadam surface.
- ◀ In total, ten of the 57 tennis courts are serviced by floodlights, representing just 18% of the provision.
- ◀ Of the courts, eight are assessed as good quality, 32 as standard quality and 17 as poor quality.
- ◀ The ancillary facilities servicing Old Hill TC and Wednesbury TC are considered to be adequate, with some modernisation required.
- ◀ For non-club courts, ancillary provision is generally considered to be problematic, although good quality ancillary facilities are provided at Tipton Sports Academy and development proposals are in place at Britannia Park.

### **Tennis – demand summary**

- ◀ There are two tennis clubs in Sandwell.
- ◀ Old Hill TC has a current membership of just 14 members, which is threatening the long-term future of the Club.
- ◀ Membership details at Wednesbury TC are unknown as the Club was unresponsive to consultation requests.
- ◀ Away from clubs, it is considered that all local authority courts available for community use in Sandwell have spare capacity for a growth in demand, although this is difficult to quantify as use is not always recorded due to the open access nature of many sites.
- ◀ Clubspark is utilised across six local authority sites and the LTA is keen to explore further opportunities.
- ◀ Two local tennis leagues, whilst not specific to Sandwell, identify Tipton Sports Academy as being a primary venue.

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## PART 9: NETBALL

### 9.1: Introduction

England Netball is the governing body with overall responsibility for ensuring the effective governance of the sport.

Whilst often played indoors, there are far more outdoor courts provided and in use by the netball community than there are indoor. Nationally, England Netball reports that the challenge is that the supply of outdoor netball courts is generally not of a good enough standard for use by the community, whilst accessibility and a lack of floodlighting can also be problematic.

#### **Consultation**

Information to inform this section of the report was primarily obtained through discussions with England Netball. In addition, consultation has taken place with the Dudley Netball League and Walsall Netball League.

### 9.2: Supply

There are 62 netball courts in Sandwell identified across 24 sites. Of the courts, 27 at eight sites are available for community use; all the courts that are unavailable for community use are located at education sites.

There are no community available courts in the Oldbury Analysis Area, although there are nine that are unavailable to the community. The West Bromwich Analysis Area has the most community available courts (12).

*Table 9.1: Summary of the number of courts by analysis area*

Analysis area	Courts available for community use	Courts unavailable for community use
Oldbury	-	9
Rowley Regis	3	4
Smethwick	2	5
Tipton	3	3
Wednesbury	7	6
West Bromwich	12	8
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>35</b>

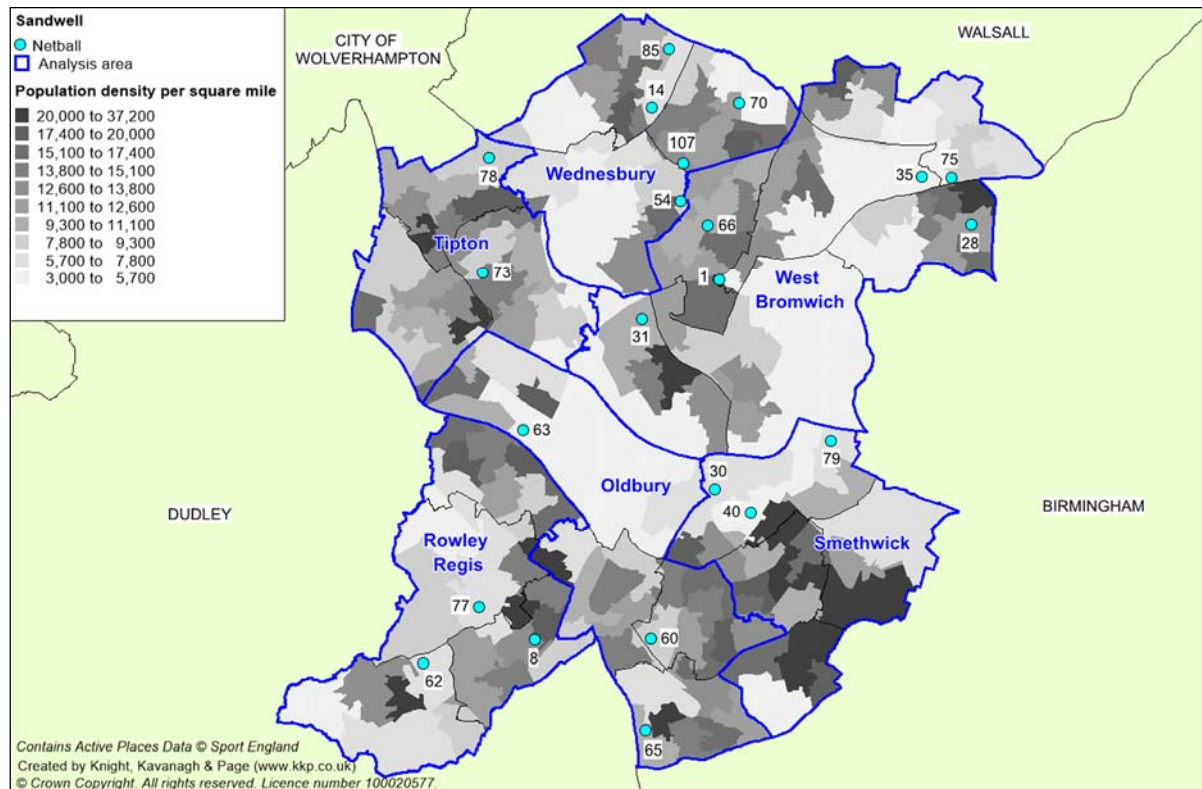
#### **Disused provision**

There are six tennis courts at the former Phoenix Collegiate Campus (Friar Park Road). Sport England has agreed to the loss of these courts due to replacement courts being provided at the Phoenix Collegiate Campus referenced throughout this section of the report (Clarkes Lane). These were subject to Sport England funding and a community use agreement being established across the site.

For a site-by-site breakdown of the courts supplied across Sandwell, please refer to Table 9.2 and Figure 9.1 overleaf.

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Figure 9.1: Location of netball courts in Sandwell



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Table 9.2: Netball courts in Sandwell

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Ownership	Community use?	No. of courts	Floodlit?	Court type	Over-marked?	Court quality
1	All Saints C of E Primary School	B71 1QN	West Bromwich	School	No	1	No	Macadam	No	Poor
8	Blackheath Primary School	B65 9NF	Rowley Regis	School	No	1	No	Macadam	No	Standard
14	Brunswick Park	WS10 9HH	Wednesbury	Council	Yes	1	No	Macadam	No	Poor
28	Ferndale Primary School	B43 5QF	West Bromwich	School	No	2	No	Macadam	No	Standard
30	George Betts Primary School	B66 1RE	Smethwick	School	No	1	No	Macadam	No	Poor
31	George Salter Academy	B70 9UW	West Bromwich	School	Yes	4	Yes	Macadam	No	Good
35	Grove Vale Primary School	B43 6AL	West Bromwich	School	No	2	No	Macadam	No	Standard
40	Holly Lodge High School	B67 7JG	Smethwick	School	No	4	Yes	Macadam	No	Good
54	Moorlands Primary School	B71 2NZ	Wednesbury	School	No	1	No	Macadam	No	Standard
60	Oldbury Academy	B68 8NE	Oldbury	School	No	3	No	Macadam	Yes	Good
						2	No	Macadam	No	Good
62	Ormiston Forge Academy	B64 6QU	Rowley Regis	School	No	3	No	Macadam	No	Standard
63	Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy	B69 2HE	Oldbury	School	No	2	No	Macadam	Yes	Standard
65	Perryfields High School	B68 0RG	Oldbury	School	No	2	No	Macadam	Yes	Standard
66	Phoenix Collegiate	B71 2BX	West Bromwich	School	Yes	5	Yes	Macadam	Yes	Good
						2	Yes	Macadam	No	Good
70	Pulse Soccer & Fitness	WS10 0JX	Wednesbury	Commercial	Yes	6	Yes	Macadam	No	Poor
73	Q3 Academy Tipton	DY4 7NR	Tipton	School	Yes	3	No	Macadam	Yes	Poor
75	Redhouse Park	B43 6AD	West Bromwich	Council	Yes	1	No	Macadam	Yes	Poor
77	St Michael's CE High School	B65 9AN	Rowley Regis	School	Yes	3	No	Macadam	Yes	Standard
78	Gospel Oak Academy	DY4 0BZ	Tipton	School	No	3	No	Macadam	Yes	Standard

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Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Ownership	Community use?	No. of courts	Floodlit?	Court type	Over-marked?	Court quality
79	Sandwell Academy	B71 4LG	Smethwick	School	Yes	2	No	Macadam	No	Standard
85	Stuart Barthurst Catholic High School	WS10 9QS	Wednesbury	School	No	3	No	Macadam	No	Standard
107	Wodensborough Ormiston Academy	WS10 0DR	Wednesbury	School	No	2	Yes	Macadam	Yes	Standard
129	Shireland Collegiate Academy	B66 4ND	Smethwick	School	No	3	No	Macadam	Yes	Standard

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### ***Management and security of tenure***

Two netball courts in Sandwell are operated by the Council, with these being located at Brunswick Park and Redhouse Park, whilst the six courts at Pulse Soccer & Fitness fall under commercial management. All remaining courts are at school sites.

The Dudley Netball League and the Walsall Netball League both use central venues in Sandwell, with George Salter Academy and Phoenix Collegiate being accessed. For both leagues, this is via an annual agreement, which therefore provides limited security of tenure as access is not guaranteed beyond a 12-month period. That being said, neither league expresses any concern.

### ***Court type***

All outdoor netball courts in Sandwell have a macadam surface. The estimated lifespan of a macadam court is ten years, depending on levels of use and maintenance levels.

### ***Floodlighting***

Despite 62 outdoor netball courts being provided in Sandwell, only 23 are serviced by floodlighting. These are provided at:

- ◀ George Salter Academy
- ◀ Holly Lodge High School
- ◀ Phoenix Collegiate
- ◀ Pulse Soccer & Fitness
- ◀ Wodensborough Ormiston Academy

Of these, the courts at George Salter Academy, Phoenix Collegiate and Pulse Soccer & Fitness are readily available to the community. This results in 17 community available netball courts across Sandwell being floodlit.

A lack of floodlighting on netball courts is an issue nationwide, with England Netball's national database (updated in April 2020) identifying that only 1,941 of 5,108 outdoor netball courts are floodlit throughout the Country (38%). This is comparative to the ratio identified in Sandwell, where 37% of courts are serviced.

A lack of floodlighting presents a key reason as to why many courts are unavailable for community use. Many providers of non-floodlit courts state that making them available would not be financially viable as usage would be significantly limited. However, it is also stated by the majority that there is a lack of perceived demand.

### ***Over markings***

Netball courts, particularly at school sites, are often overmarked, predominately by tennis courts but also on occasion by basketball and/or football courts. Provision such as this tends to receive higher levels of use which can be detrimental to quality over time, as well as potentially causing capacity issues when there is external netball demand.

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In Sandwell, 28 netball courts are overmarked compared to 34 that are dedicated for netball use. This actually represents a comparatively high number of standalone courts, especially given that many are located at secondary schools where tennis markings are also often provided. Both George Salter Academy and Phoenix Collegiate provided dedicated courts, as do Holly Lodge High School, Ormiston Forge Academy, Oldbury Academy, Sandwell Academy and Stuart Barthurst Catholic High School.

### Quality

The quality of netball courts has been informed through non-technical site assessments and consultation with providers to assign each court a rating of good, standard or poor. Key aspects informing the findings include surface quality, grip underfoot, line marking quality, evenness and evidence of inappropriate use (e.g. vandalism and/or littering).

For the full assessment criteria, please refer to Appendix 2.

Of the courts in Sandwell, 20 are assessed as good quality, 29 as standard quality and 13 as poor quality. However, the majority of the poor quality courts are available for community use (85%), compared to just over half of the good quality courts (55%) and a minimal number of the standard quality courts (17%).

Table 9.3: Quality of courts

Community use	Quality		
	Good	Standard	Poor
Available	11	5	11
Unavailable	9	24	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>13</b>

The poor quality courts that are available for community use are located at Pulse Soccer & Fitness, Q3 Tipton Academy and Redhouse Park. Issues surrounding these include poor grip underfoot, evidence of moss and worn line markings.

The good quality courts that are available for community use are provided at George Salter Academy and Phoenix Collegiate. At George Salter Academy, the courts were resurfaced through dialogue with England Netball in order to cater for the needs of the Dudley Netball League, although the League does report that some worn areas have recently developed. The courts at Phoenix Collegiate have been resurfaced more recently (in 2019) for use by the Walsall Netball League and no issues are identified.

The good quality courts unavailable for community use are located at Holly Lodge High School and Oldbury Academy. If more courts are required by the community, gaining access to these could be prioritised, although neither site is serviced by floodlights.

### Ancillary provision

Ancillary provision is generally considered to be problematic. Whilst most sites provide changing facilities and/or toilets, they are not specific for netball and are generally located within main school buildings or are provided to predominately service sports halls and/or grass pitches. As such, access can be limited even at sites that allow for community use.

Notwithstanding the above, there are good quality changing facilities servicing the courts at George Salter Academy following refurbishment in 2017. However, the Dudley Netball League reports that it has been unable to access the provision since the Covid-19 pandemic began, which is one of the reasons it has not held fixtures since 2019.

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The Walsall Netball League does not have any meaningful access to the changing rooms at Phoenix Collegiate.

### **9.3: Demand**

Demand for outdoor netball tends to come in two forms; league and club-based netball that consists of matches and training, and the various netball-based initiatives such as Back to Netball and Walking Netball.

#### ***Dudley Netball League***

As mentioned previously, the Dudley Netball League uses George Salter Academy as a central venue. It operates between April and July each year, although no matches have been played since 2019 due to Covid-19 (play is expected to resume in 2022). When the League was last held, nine divisions were provided and 72 teams were accommodated, with matches split across Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

Many of the clubs competing in the League draw players from Sandwell, particularly Grasshoppers Netball Club which fields five teams. The Club uses Haden Hill Leisure Centre as a home base, using the indoor provision for training purposes.

The League reports that the four courts provided at George Salter Academy is insufficient to meet its needs, stating that it really requires six courts, with fixtures currently tightly congested. Ideally, it would like to relocate to Dudley to facilitate this but notes that there is no suitable location within the Borough. In effect, it is currently importing its demand into Sandwell.

#### ***Walsall Netball League***

The League accesses Phoenix Collegiate across Saturdays, Mondays and Tuesdays. However, as with the Dudley Netball League, no fixtures have been held since 2019, although play is expected to resume in 2022. The League operates both winter and summer leagues, also using the indoor provision at Phoenix Collegiate for the former. When the summer iteration was last held, there were five divisions and 37 teams accommodated (including teams from Grasshoppers Netball Club).

Unlike the Dudley Netball League, despite the Walsall Netball League technically importing its demand into Sandwell, there is no aspiration to relocate. The site received significant investment to provide for netball and a community use agreement is in place to ensure that the League can be accommodated in the long-term.

#### ***Play Netball***

Play Netball is a commercial organisation that runs various netball leagues across the Country that run all-year round (a new season begins as soon as the previous one ends). In addition to welcoming already established teams, it also encourages individual players to sign up, with it then placing each person within a team that suits their ability.

In Sandwell, Play Netball operates a league at Phoenix Collegiate. Matches are played every Tuesday evening, with three time slots (19:00, 19:40 and 20:20).

#### ***Back to Netball***

Back to Netball is a scheme put into place by England Netball in 2010, with participation increasing ever since. Sessions are running weekly by qualified coaches across England with the aim of re-introducing female players over the age of 16 to the sport.



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In Sandwell, numerous Back to Netball sessions have been run, mainly at George Salter Academy. Historically, Gospel Oak Academy has also been used.

### ***Walking Netball***

Walking Netball is a lower version of the sport, designed so that anyone can play regardless of age or fitness level. It can give those who are isolated an outlet, provide an activity for those who do not deem themselves fit enough and offer a stepping-stone for those looking for a pathway back into traditional netball.

Walking Netball sessions are hosted across the Black Country and the wider West Midlands region by Netball West Midlands. In addition, the Sandwell Leisure Trust actively promotes the initiative.

### ***Netball Now***

Netball Now is a simple, straight forward way to play netball. It is not a competition led by rules or scores but rather a simple session where players can play a variety of positions and even have a go at umpiring.

No Netball Now sessions are in operation in Sandwell.

### ***Bee Netball***

A new initiative by England Netball, Bee Netball a programme for children all about friendship, inclusion, fair play and teamwork. Each session is managed by an England Netball accredited coach. Although there are currently no sessions operating in Sandwell, it is still in its infancy so one may be established in the near future.

### ***Exported/imported demand***

As indicated above, both the Dudley Netball League and the Walsall Netball League import demand into Sandwell.

### ***Latent/unmet demand***

Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in netball but 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies latent demand of 857 people within Sandwell, which is the highest identified across the Black Country region (second is Walsall, with 704 people).

No latent or unmet demand is reported by England Netball or the netball leagues. However, the Dudley Netball League reports that, before Covid-19, capacity was an issue with 72 teams being accommodated and could therefore become more problematic if demand grows further.

### ***Future demand***

Both the Dudley Netball League and the Walsall Netball League report that they expect to lose several teams when the leagues resumes post Covid-19 due to many players being unable to play netball over the past couple of seasons. However, it is hoped that this will then be offset through more junior players joining following the 2022 Commonwealth Games (hosted in Birmingham), with interest in the sport likely to increase.

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In addition to the above, it is hoped by England Netball that there will be an increase in the number of its initiatives held in Sandwell and the demand for them. However, this is reliant on volunteers running and organising the sessions.

### **9.4: Supply and demand analysis**

Sandwell is relatively well catered for regarding netball, with a large number of community available courts provided and with a good number of these being dedicated to netball. This is especially the case when comparing the provision in Sandwell to Dudley and Walsall, both of which have fewer community available courts, fewer courts that are floodlit and fewer courts that are good quality. This is a key factor in demand being imported into Sandwell, with both George Salter Academy and Phoenix Collegiate providing an offer that is not necessarily available elsewhere.

Given the above, focus should be placed on protecting the facilities at George Salter Academy and Phoenix Collegiate and ensuring that the quality of the provision remains adequate to meet the demand. However, based on the Dudley Netball League reporting an aspiration to relocate its demand from Sandwell, it must be noted a recommendation in the Dudley PPOSS is to explore options that will enable this. Should this be possible, it is imperative that any Sandwell-based demand remains provided for and that the courts at George Salter Academy remain sustainable. As such, a collective approach between the authorities should be sought, with this to be guided and informed by England Netball.

For netball demand away from the club and league environment, focus should also be placed on supporting the various initiatives that are championed by England Netball and ensuring such programmes have suitable provision from which to be ran from. As part of this, priority should be placed on improving the quality of the existing stock, particularly where quality is poor and where curricular and extra-curricular needs are high. Where courts are over marked, this could be carried out in conjunction with improving tennis court quality.

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### **Netball – supply and demand summary**

- ◀ Sandwell is relatively well catered for, with a large number of community available netball courts provided and with a good number of these being dedicated to netball.
- ◀ Focus should be placed on protecting and sustaining the courts at George Salter Academy and Phoenix Collegiate for continued use by the Dudley Netball League and the Walsall Netball League.
- ◀ Should the Dudley Netball League relocate outside of Sandwell, it is imperative that the Sandwell-based demand remains provided for and that the courts remain sustainable.
- ◀ For netball demand away from the club and league environment, there is a need to ensure programmes provided by England Netball have suitable provision from which to be ran from and that curricular and extra-curricular needs are being met.

### **Netball – supply summary**

- ◀ There are 62 netball courts identified in Sandwell across 24 sites, with 27 courts at eight sites available for community use.
- ◀ Two courts are operated by the Council and six are operated commercially, with all remaining provision located at school sites.
- ◀ The courts at George Salter Academy and Phoenix Collegiate are access by the Dudley Netball League and the Walsall Netball League, respectively, via annual agreements.
- ◀ All the courts have a macadam surface.
- ◀ A total of 28 courts are overmarked by other sports provision, which means that there are a comparatively high number of standalone courts.
- ◀ Overall, 23 of the courts are serviced by floodlighting, including provision at George Salter Academy and Phoenix Collegiate, which is a comparable rate to the national ratio.
- ◀ There are 20 courts assessed as good quality, 29 as standard quality and 13 as poor quality.
- ◀ Poor quality community available courts are provided at Pulse Soccer & Fitness, Q3 Tipton Academy and Redhouse Park.
- ◀ The community available courts at George Salter Academy and Phoenix Collegiate are assessed as good quality, as are the unavailable courts at Holly Lodge High School and Oldbury Academy.

### **Netball – demand summary**

- ◀ The Dudley Netball League uses George Salter Academy as a central venue; prior to Covid-19 it accommodated 72 teams across nine divisions.
- ◀ The Walsall Netball League uses Phoenix Collegiate as a centre venue and it accommodated 37 teams across five division when last held (2019).
- ◀ Both leagues import demand into Sandwell and the Dudley Netball League has a preference to relocate to its home authority (Dudley).
- ◀ Grasshoppers Netball Club is a large club based in Sandwell, using Haden Hill Leisure Centre as a training base.
- ◀ Play Netball operates in Sandwell at Phoenix Collegiate.
- ◀ Back to Netball has previously been held at George Salter Academy as well, historically, at Gospel Oak Academy.
- ◀ Walking Netball sessions are actively promoted by the Sandwell Leisure Trust.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

## PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

### PART 10: BOWLS

#### 10.1: Introduction

Outdoor bowls in Sandwell is played on crown greens, with a typical season running in the Summer from May until September. The British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA) is the NGB with overall responsibility for ensuring effective governance of the sport.

Flat green is another version of bowls played in England, governed by Bowls England. However, this is played predominately in the South and has no presence in Sandwell.

#### Consultation

There are 16 bowls clubs identified as currently using outdoor bowling greens in Sandwell. Of these, nine responded to consultation requests, equating to a response rate of 56%. A low response rate can be common when it comes to bowls clubs.

Table 10.1: Summary of consultation

Name of club	Responded?
Cradley Heath BC	No
Dartmouth Central BC	Yes
Dartmouth Links BC	No
Great Barr BC	No
Greets Green BC	No
Hamstead Social BC	Yes
Langley BC	No
Old Cross BC	Yes
Rowley Labour BC	Yes
Tallboats BC	Yes
The George BC	Yes
Thimblemill BC	Yes
Victoria Park (Tipton) BC	Yes
Warley BC	No
Wernley BC	No
West Bromwich Football Supporters BC	Yes

Where clubs have been unresponsive, relevant information has been provided by the BCGBA.

#### 10.2: Supply

There are currently 18 crown green bowling greens in Sandwell provided across 17 sites (two are provided at Thimblemill Recreation Centre). All of the greens are available for community use.

The West Bromwich Analysis Area and the Oldbury Analysis Area contain the largest number of greens with six, whilst the Smethwick, Tipton and Wednesbury analysis areas contain just one green each.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 10.2: Summary of the number of greens by analysis area

Analysis area	Number of greens
Oldbury	6
Rowley Regis	3
Smethwick	1
Tipton	1
Wednesbury	1
West Bromwich	6
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>18</b>

Figure 10.1 below shows the location of all bowling greens currently servicing Sandwell. For a key to the map, see Table 10.3.

Figure 10.1: Location of bowling greens in Sandwell

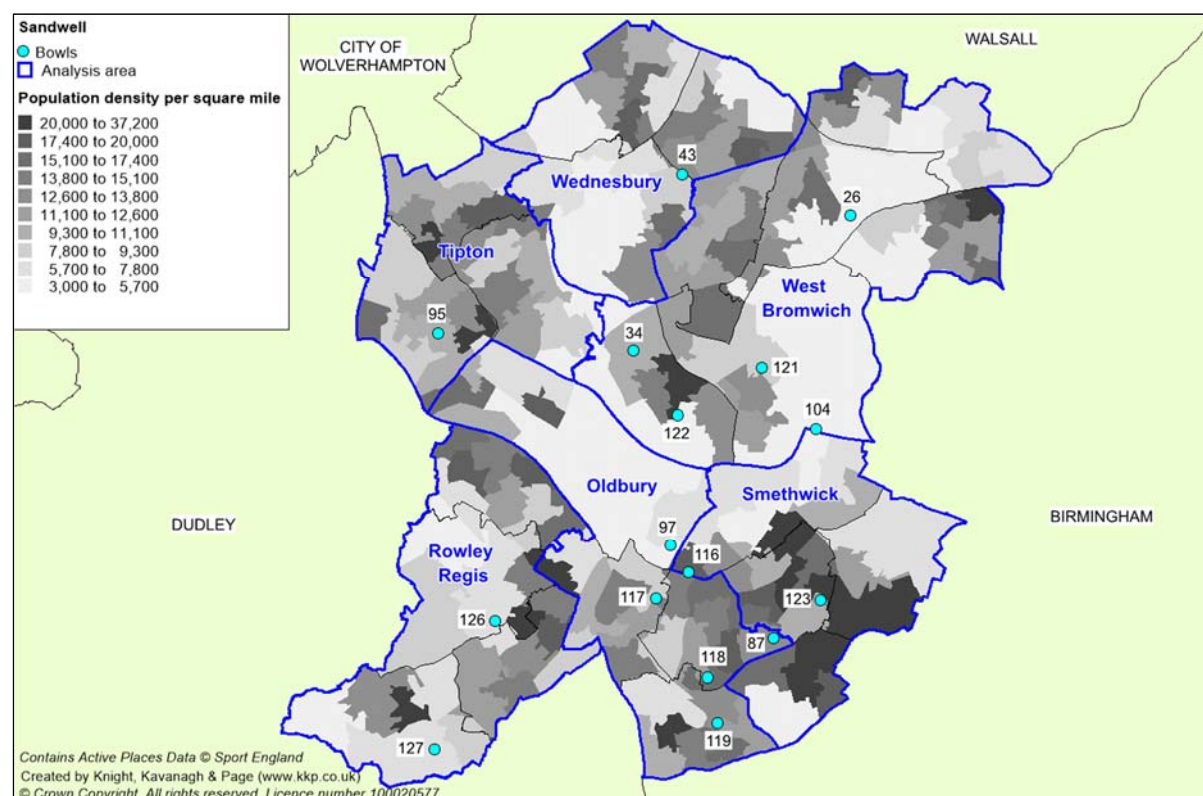


Table 10.3: Key to map

Site ID	Site	Postcode	Analysis area	Club user	No. of greens
26	F.C Premier	B43 6JF	West Bromwich	Great Barr BC	1
34	Greets Green Playing Fields	B70 0HF	West Bromwich	Greets Green BC	1
43	Hydes Road Playing Fields	WS10 0DR	Wednesbury	-	1
87	Thimblemill Recreation Centre	B67 6NR	Oldbury	Thimblemill BC	2
95	Victoria Park (Tipton)	DY4 8SW	Tipton	Victoria Park (Tipton) BC	1
97	Warley Rugby Club (St Johns Pitches)	B69 4NH	Oldbury	Warley BC	1

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site ID	Site	Postcode	Analysis area	Club user	No. of greens
104	West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club	B71 4JQ	West Bromwich	Dartmouth Links BC	1
116	Langley Bowls Club	B68 8HH	Smethwick	Langley BC	1
117	Old Cross Pub	B68 8LD	Oldbury	Old Cross BC	1
118	The George Public House	B68 9LW	Oldbury	The George BC	1
119	Wernley Public House	B68 0LR	Oldbury	Wernley BC	1
121	Dartmouth Bowling Club	B71 4AA	West Bromwich	Dartmouth Central BC	1
122	West Bromwich Football Supporters Club	B70 8LD	West Bromwich	West Bromwich Football Supporters BC	1
124	Cradley Heath Sports & Social Club	B64 5HU	Rowley Regis	Cradley Heath BC	1
125	Hamstead Social Club	B42 1HY	West Bromwich	Hamstead Social BC	1
126	Rowley Labour Club	B65 9AN	Rowley Regis	Rowley Labour BC	1
127	Haden Hill Park	B64 7HF	Rowley Regis	Tallboats BC	1

## ***Disused provision***

Greens were previously provided at Old Chapel Inn and Pheasant Public House; however, these are now used solely as beer gardens.

In addition, both Greets Green Playing Field and Haden Hill Park previously provided two greens, with just one now provided. At Greets Green Playing Field, the second green as been repurposed as a play area.

## ***Future provision***

The green at Cradley Heath Sports & Social Club is at risk following the closure of the wider sports club due to development. It is expected that all bowlers at the site will be lost or displaced.

## ***Ownership/management***

Details around the ownership and management arrangements for clubs which responded to consultation requests are provided in the table below. As seen, three clubs own their green, two have a lease arrangement in place and four clubs rent their greens.

*Table 10.4: Ownership/management arrangements for bowling clubs in Sandwell*

Name of club	Ownership/management details
Dartmouth Central BC	The Club owns the green at Dartmouth Bowling Club.
Hamstead Social BC	The Club owns the green at Hamstead Social Club.
Old Cross BC	The Club rents green at Old Cross Pub.
Rowley Labour BC	The Club leases its green but does not state the length of this agreement.
Tallboats BC	The Club rents its greens at Haden Hill Park from the Council.
Thimblemill BC	The Club rents the green at Thimblemill Recreation Centre from Thimblemill Recreation and Entertainment Centre.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Name of club	Ownership/management details
The George BC	The Club rents ground from a brewery; the green is listed as a community asset.
Victoria Park (Tipton) BC	The Club lease the green at Victoria Park (Tipton) but does not state the length of this agreement.
West Bromwich Football Supporters BC	The Club owns the green at West Bromwich Football Supporters Club.

Both Old Cross BC and The George BC are considered to have unsecure tenure given that they rent their greens from a private/commercial operator. All remaining clubs with a rental agreement in place have secure tenure as the agreement is either via the Council or via an overarching sports club.

Similarly, whilst Great Barr BC did not respond to consultation requests, it is known that, as of August 2021, the Club had not been able to re-access the green at FC Premier as the provision had yet to re-open following initial Covid-19 restrictions.

## Quality

The quality of bowling greens across Sandwell have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

For bowling greens, the non-technical assessment considers several attributes of the site including the surrounding hard surfaces to the green, disability access, evenness, grass coverage and signs off unofficial use. For further detail regarding the site assessment criteria, see Appendix 2.

Overall, 17 greens are assessed as good quality, with just one assessed as standard (none are assessed as poor). This is seen site-by-site in the table below.

*Table 10.5: Summary of bowling green quality*

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	No. of greens	Quality
26	F.C Premier	West Bromwich	1	Good
34	Greets Green Playing Fields	West Bromwich	1	Good
43	Hydes Road Playing Fields	Wednesbury	1	Good
87	Thimblemill Recreation Centre	Oldbury	2	Good
				Standard
95	Victoria Park (Tipton)	Tipton	1	Good
97	Warley Rugby Club (St Johns Pitches)	Oldbury	1	Good
104	West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club	West Bromwich	1	Good
116	Langley Bowls Club	Smethwick	1	Good
117	Old Cross Pub	Oldbury	1	Good
118	The George Public House	Oldbury	1	Good
119	Wernley Public House	Oldbury	1	Good
121	Dartmouth Bowling Club	West Bromwich	1	Good
122	West Brom Football Supporters Club	West Bromwich	1	Good
124	Cradley Heath Sports & Social Club	Rowley Regis	1	Good

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	No. of greens	Quality
125	Hamstead Social Club	West Bromwich	1	Good
126	St Giles Rowley Regis Parish Church	Rowley Regis	1	Good
127	Haden Hill Park	Rowley Regis	1	Good

The standard quality green is one of the greens at Thimblemill Recreation Centre, which is rarely maintained. Thimblemill BC predominately just uses the good quality green at the site.

In addition to the majority of the greens being assessed as good quality, all eight responsive clubs report that quality has also improved over the last year. Many suggest that the greens benefited from less activity taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst others state that maintenance regimes have improved/increased.

Notwithstanding the above, at West Bromwich Football Supporters Club, the green is noted as suffering from regular vandalism, with the general public accessing the green with bikes and damaging quality. In addition, Old Cross BC states that it requires an upgraded watering system.

### ***Ancillary provision***

All clubs are able to access ancillary provision at their home green and the majority are serviced by standard quality facilities, although the range of facilities and the condition of them varies site-by-site. The more comprehensive facilities tend to be provided at sites that also service other sports and activities, such as at West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club and FC Premier.

Notwithstanding the above, a number of clubs have plans/aspirations to improve their provision. This includes:

- ◀ Dartmouth Central BC
- ◀ Old Cross BC
- ◀ Rowley Labour BC
- ◀ The George BC
- ◀ Victoria Park (Tipton) BC
- ◀ West Bromwich Football Supporters BC

West Bromwich Football Supporters BC reports that it is not serviced by any changing facilities or showers, whilst Rowley Labour BC states that the pavilion needs refurbishing. Its current provision is extremely dated.

Old Cross BC reports an aspiration to replace its pavilion entirely as the current provision does not contain toilets, with these instead accessed via the onsite public house (when it is open). Victoria Park (Tipton) BC has plans to refurbish its toilets and is soon to submit a planning application in regards to this.

The George BC reports an aspiration to install boundary fencing to its green for security purposes and to create disabled access, whereas Dartmouth Central BC reports that car parking is a problem at Dartmouth Bowling Club. The current area is not adequate for its needs as it fills relatively quickly, meaning users often need to park on residential streets.

From site assessments, it is also evident that the pavilion at Wernley Public House, whilst adequate, requires some upgrades to bring it up to a better standard. In particular, the kitchen area needs attention.



# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## ***Floodlighting***

In Sandwell, three greens are serviced by floodlighting at the following sites:

- ◀ St Giles Rowley Regis Parish church
- ◀ The George Public House
- ◀ Warley Rugby Club (St Johns Pitches)

Floodlit greens offer opportunities to access provision for training and matches during evenings outside of the summer months. However, they are relatively rare across the Country, with the level of floodlit supply in Sandwell therefore considered to be comparatively high.

Hamstead Social BC reports an aspiration for the green at Hamstead Social Club to be floodlit in the future.

### **10.3: Demand**

There are 16 clubs using bowling greens in Sandwell. Where membership is known, membership across the clubs equates to 600 members, made up of 326 senior men, 86 senior women and eight juniors. However, membership data for Cradley Heath BC is unknown.

Four of the clubs (Old Cross, Thimblemill, Tallboats and West Bromwich Football Supporters bowls clubs) have junior members, which is a relatively high amount.

*Table 10.6: Summary of club membership*

Club name	Members		
	Men	Women	Juniors
Cradley Heath BC	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Dartmouth Central BC	14	5	-
Dartmouth Links BC	11	28	-
Great Barr BC	38	3	-
Greets Green BC	35	4	-
Hamstead BC	42	5	-
Langley BC	56	15	-
Old Cross BC	26	16	1
Rowley Labour BC	35	17	-
Tallboats BC	31	4	2
The George BC	58	2	-
Thimblemill BC	30	6	1
Victoria Park (Tipton) BC	14	6	-
Warley BC	20	-	-
Wernley BC	33	4	-
West Bromwich Football Supporters BC	23	11	4

The average club membership is 40 and the largest club is Langley BC (71 members). In contrast, the smallest club is Dartmouth Central BC, which has just 19 members, followed by Victoria Park (Tipton) BC and Warley BC, which both have 20 members.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## **Participation trends**

In line with a national trend of declining membership, three of the clubs that responded to consultation report that membership has decreased in recent years, with these being West Bromwich Football Supporters, Tallboats and Victoria Park (Tipton) bowls clubs.

Conversely, both Dartmouth Central BC and Rowley Labour BC report that membership has increased, whilst the remaining clubs report that participation has stayed the same in recent years.

## **Latent demand**

Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in bowls but 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies latent demand of 495 people within Sandwell, which is a relatively low number compared to 583 people in Dudley but is above the levels of 488 people in Walsall and 454 people in Wolverhampton.

All responding clubs report that existing membership can be accommodated on the current level of provision available to them and that no potential members are being turned away due to capacity issues. As such, no clubs report any latent or unmet demand, with the majority actively trying to recruit new members.

## **Future demand**

Using ONS projections the number of persons aged 65 and over is likely to significantly increase for the period up to 2039. Due to this age band being the most likely to play bowls, demand for greens could increase.

From consultation, West Bromwich Football Supporters BC, Old Cross BC and Dartmouth Central BC report future demand to increase their membership, with this collectively equating to the potential growth of 18 senior and 11 junior members.

*Table 10.7: Summary of future demand*

Club name	Future demand (members)	
	Senior	Junior
Dartmouth Central BC	3	-
Old Cross BC	10	6
West Bromwich Football Supporters BC	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>

However, the above is not to say that the remaining clubs are not looking for new members, but rather that they are focusing on sustaining current playing levels. This involves recruiting new members to replace those that leave the clubs or that become unable to participate.

## **10.4: Supply and demand analysis**

The capacity of a bowling green is very much dependent on the leagues and the day that they operate. A green may have no spare capacity on an afternoon or evening when a popular league operates but may be unused for the rest of the week. However, in many cases, greens are used during the afternoons by club members who bowl socially, with access a potential issue during peak times if membership is particularly high.

## SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

The BCGBA does not have any specific guidance on bowling green capacity, stating that it can vary from site-to-site and from club-to-club. However, as a guide, it states that any green used by at least 20 members is generally considered to be sustainable, whilst any green operating with a membership of over 60 may need additional resource to ensure that it is meeting its required level of demand.

Therefore, capacity ratings for bowling greens in Sandwell are classified as follows:

<b>Within capacity range</b>	Membership ensures green is sustainable without capacity issues
<b>Outside capacity range</b>	Membership is below or above the recommended capacity range

Following this, the table below highlights the level of usage each green in Sandwell receives, where the information is known. Where no membership information is known, further communication is required with clubs to fully understand their needs and any potential capacity or sustainability issues.

*Table 10.8: Supply and demand balance of bowling greens in Sandwell*

Site ID	Site	No. of greens	Club user	Current members	Future demand
26	F.C Premier	1	Great Barr BC	41	41
34	Greets Green Playing Fields	1	Greets Green BC	39	39
43	Hydes Road Playing Fields	1	-	-	-
87	Thimblemill Recreation Centre	2	Thimblemill BC	37	37
95	Victoria Park (Tipton)	1	Victoria Park (Tipton) BC	20	20
97	Warley Rugby Club (St Johns Pitches)	1	Warley BC	20	20
104	West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club	1	Dartmouth Links BC	39	39
116	Langley Bowls Club	1	Langley BC	71	71
117	Old Cross Pub	1	Old Cross BC	43	59
118	The George Public House	1	The George BC	60	60
119	Wernley Public House	1	Wernley BC	37	37
121	Dartmouth Bowling Club	1	Dartmouth Central BC	19	22
122	West Brom Football Supporters Club	1	West Bromwich Football Supporters BC	38	48
124	Cradley Heath Sports & Social Club	1	Cradley Heath BC	Unknown	Unknown
125	Hamstead Social Club	1	Hamstead Social BC	57	57
126	Rowley Labour Club	1	Rowley Labour BC	52	52
127	Haden Hill Park	1	Tallboats BC	37	37

Only Langley BC is operating above the recommended capacity threshold, and whilst this is relatively minimal, the Club may require support to ensure the level of demand is sustainable. Similarly, support may also be required in relation to The George BC and Hamstead Social BC given that they are operating right on the limit of the capacity threshold.

As all other clubs are considered to have spare capacity for a growth in demand, overall supply is considered sufficient to meet demand.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

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At the other end of the scale, Dartmouth Central BC (with 19 members) is operating below the level of membership required to ensure that its green is sustainable. Support is therefore required to safeguard the Club, with emphasis needing to be placed on ensuring that it can fulfil its future growth aspirations. The same may also apply to Warley BC and Victoria Park (Tipton) BC, both of which have 20 members.

For some authorities, an amalgamation of clubs can often be a solution when numerous clubs are struggling for membership within a locality. However, this is something that needs to be informed through separate needs assessment studies before any provision that is in use can be lost.

### **Bowls – supply and demand summary**

- ◀ Only Langely BC is operating above the recommended capacity threshold, suggesting that overall supply is sufficient to meet demand.
- ◀ Dartmouth Central BC (with 19 members) is operating below the threshold of the level of membership required to ensure that its green is sustainable.

### **Bowls – supply summary**

- ◀ There are 18 crown green bowls greens in Sandwell provided across 17 sites.
- ◀ Greens were also previously provided at Old Chapel Inn and Pheasant Public House (disused), whereas Greets Green Playing Field and Haden Hill Park previously provided two greens.
- ◀ The green at Cradley Sports & Social Club is at risk to development.
- ◀ Of clubs which responded to consultation requests, three own their greens, four rent their greens and two have a lease arrangement in place.
- ◀ In total, 17 greens are assessed as good quality and one is assessed as standard quality (at Thimblemill Recreation Centre).
- ◀ Three greens are serviced by floodlighting (St Giles Rowley Regis Parish church, Warley Rugby Club (St Johns Pitches) and The George Public House).
- ◀ Six clubs state a need for ancillary provision to improve, whilst upgrades are also required at Wernley Public House.

### **Bowls – demand summary**

- ◀ There are 16 clubs using bowling greens in Sandwell; where membership is known (across seven clubs), there are a total of 373 members, equating to 281 senior men, 84 senior women and eight juniors.
- ◀ The average membership across the clubs is 41.
- ◀ In line with a national trend of declining membership, three of the clubs that responded to consultation report that membership has decreased in recent years, whilst two report recent increases.
- ◀ Due to a predicted increase in persons aged 65 and over (to 2039), demand is likely to increase for greens over the coming years.
- ◀ Both West Bromwich Football Supporters BC, Old Cross BC and Dartmouth BC report future demand to increase membership, with this collectively equating to 18 senior and 11 junior members.
- ◀ All clubs report that existing membership can be accommodated on the current level of provision and that no potential members are being turned away, suggesting that there is no latent or unmet demand.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

## PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

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### PART 11: CYCLING

#### 11.1: Introduction

British Cycling is the NGB for all forms of cycling. It oversees six sporting disciplines, with each having a dedicated facility type:

- ◀ Track cycling – velodromes
- ◀ Road cycling – closed road circuits
- ◀ Mountain biking – trails
- ◀ BMX racing – race/pump tracks
- ◀ Cycle speedway – cycle speedway tracks
- ◀ Cyclocross – non-dedicated, non-permanent venues

British Cycling aids in the development of all six formats, helping to safeguard those that wish to participate in a competitive and compelling environment. The popularity of cycling has increased since recent, elite sporting success in the Olympics and Paralympics as well as in other major championships.

In terms of road cycling, in January 2020, the Council produced a Cycling and Walking Investment Plan for the Borough. This audited 15 cycling routes (and six walking routes), identifying that there are opportunities for large scale interventions in the infrastructure.

Prior to this, in 2016, the West Midlands Combined Authority proposed a 'Black Country Walking and Cycling Strategy and Implementation Plan' aiming to raise levels of cycling to 5% of all trips by 2023. The project was outlined to address the matter that historically the West Midlands region had fewer people choosing to cycle to work than other metropolitan regions.

Broad cycling specific aims of the project the project included:

- ◀ Making cycling inviting and attractive to everyone
- ◀ Making cycling safe and secure
- ◀ Making cycling easy and intuitive
- ◀ Normalising cycling to reduce inequalities

#### **Consultation**

Information for cycling was gathered through online research and via consultation with British Cycling.

#### 11.2: Supply

Sandwell Valley Country Park features a range of surfaced and unsurfaced cycling tracks as well as a mountain bike trail and a pump track. The mountain bike trail includes three kilometres of trails, suitable for all abilities, and is located in Jubilee Woods.

There is also a disused speedway track, Sandwell Cycle Speedway Track, which has not been utilised since Sandwell Lions Speedway Club folded. The track remains available for community use but is in poor condition and in need of enhancement and repairs. It is owned and operated by The Brades Lodge School.

Two national cycling routes run through Sandwell; Route 5 (from Reading to North Wales) and Route 81 (from Aberystwyth to Wolverhampton). In addition, cycling is encouraged along canal towpaths throughout the Borough.

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The Council is also in the process of creating a number of mountain bike trails around Sandwell Valley and also on neighbouring land in Birmingham, on the former Hilltop Golf Course.

### **11.3: Demand**

There are four prominent cycling clubs based in Sandwell, although none are currently affiliated to British Cycling. The clubs are:

- ◀ Bangladeshi Association Cycling Club
- ◀ Hadley Stadium Cycling Club
- ◀ Lightwoods Community Cycle Club
- ◀ Smethwick Beat the Streets Community Cycle Club

Smethwick Beat the Streets Community Cycle Club is a female only club for both adults and children that want to learn to cycle or get back into cycling. It takes part in numerous led rides around Sandwell and the wider region, as well as using the provision at Sandwell Valley Country Park. It generally uses Smethwick Fire Station as a meeting point.

Hadley Stadium Cycling Club is set up to provide family cycling in a safe, off-road environment, utilising the athletics track at Hadley Stadium. It has access to the facility every Wednesday from 16:00 until 18:00, with sessions overseen by volunteers from the Benson's Community Project.

Bangladeshi Association Cycling Club has both a men's and a women's branch. Both engage in weekly rides around Sandwell, often utilising Victoria Park and meeting at Tipton Muslim Community Centre.

Lightwoods Community Cycle Club meets every Wednesday morning to ride around Lightwoods Park, although it often ventures further afield.

### ***HSBC UK Go-Ride***

HSBC UK Go-Ride is a British Cycling's development programme for young people. It offers a fun and safe way to introduce young people to the sport and provides a platform to improve cycling skills. People can get involved through holiday coaching programmes or through their local accredited club which allows them to sample the various disciplines of the sport. Progression is obtainable with Go-Ride Racing, offering competition for riders to transition from school or club coaching to inter club and open regional competitions.

Go-Ride is not currently implemented in Sandwell. It is across the other three Black Country authorities.

### ***HSBC UK Breeze***

HSBC UK Breeze is a British Cycling's development programme for women. It offers three categories easy going, steady and challenging to allow women of all abilities to get involved. The programme offers exercise whilst also creating a comfortable environment to meet new people. In Sandwell, there is no evidence of the programme although it is found across the other three Black Country authorities.

### ***Future/latent demand***

Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in cycling but are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies latent demand

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of 11,449 people who would like to participate in the sport within Sandwell, which is a high amount. By means of comparison, it is lower than the latent demand identified in Dudley (12,906 people), but higher than that found in Walsall (9,876) and in Wolverhampton (9,210).

Notwithstanding the above, it must be noted that future and latent demand does not account for societal factors or changes in the way people may wish to participate in sport and cannot account for specific targeted development work within certain areas or focused towards certain groups, such as NGB initiatives or coaching within schools. For example, there is a focus by British Cycling to develop youth participation through the HSBC UK Go-Ride or HSBC UK Breeze schemes, which may lead to further increases in demand.

### 11.4: Supply and demand analysis

High demand for cycling is identified within Sandwell, especially when taking into account latent demand. Whilst most of this demand will fall outside of the club environment and will not require dedicated provision, protecting and sustaining what is provided at Sandwell Valley Country Park should be seen as particularly key given the off-road facilities offered (it should be seen as a destination venue for cyclists in the area). Furthermore, continued cycling use of Hadley Stadium should be ensured as an alternative off-road offer.

Implementation of initiatives promoted by British Cycling should also be explored in order to encourage more people to get into cycling. Currently, anyone wanting to participate in Go-Ride or Breeze will have to travel to neighbouring authorities e.g. Dudley or Birmingham.

#### **Cycling – supply and demand summary**

- ◀ High demand for cycling is identified within Sandwell, especially when taking into account latent demand.
- ◀ Protecting and sustaining what is provided at Sandwell Valley Country Park should be seen as particularly key, whilst continued use of Hadley Stadium should be ensured.
- ◀ Implementation of initiatives promoted by British Cycling should also be explored to encourage more people to get into cycling.

#### **Cycling – supply summary**

- ◀ Sandwell Valley Country Park features a range of surfaced and unsurfaced cycling tracks as well as a mountain bike trail and a pump track.
- ◀ Two national cycling routes run through Sandwell; Route 5 (from Reading to North Wales) and Route 81 (from Aberystwyth to Wolverhampton),
- ◀ Cycling is encouraged along canal towpaths throughout the Borough.

#### **Cycling – demand summary**

- ◀ There are four prominent cycling clubs based in Sandwell, although none are currently affiliated to British Cycling.
- ◀ Smethwick Beat the Streets Community Cycle Club takes part in numerous led rides around Sandwell, as well as using the provision at Sandwell Valley Country Park.
- ◀ Hadley Stadium Cycling Club is set up to provide family cycling in a safe, off-road environment, utilising the athletics track at Hadley Stadium.
- ◀ Bangladeshi Association Cycling Club has both a men's and a women's branch, with both engaging in weekly rides around Sandwell, often utilising at Victoria Park.
- ◀ Lightwoods Community Cycle Club meets every Wednesday morning to ride around Lightwoods Park, although it often ventures further afield.
- ◀ British Cycling's development programmes Go-Ride and Breeze are not currently implemented.
- ◀ Sport England's Segmentation Tool identifies latent demand of 11,449 people who would like to participate in cycling within Sandwell, which is a high amount.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 12: ATHLETICS

### 12.1: Introduction

As a Governing Body, UK Athletics is responsible for developing and implementing the rules and regulations of athletics, including everything from anti-doping, health and safety, facilities and welfare, to training and education for coaches and officials as well as permitting and licensing.

Locally, the sport is governed through England Athletics, which is the development and membership body for athletics and running clubs in England. It has a National Head of Clubs and Participation as well as a team of five club support managers across the Country, with one of these covering activities in Sandwell as part of the Midland region.

#### **Consultation**

Consultation took place with England Athletics to inform this section of the report.

### 12.2: Supply

Consultation with England Athletics reveals that, nationally, no new standard 400-metre athletics tracks are planned to be constructed. Focus is instead on the retention of existing 400-metre facilities and the development of new, innovative, entry level facilities such as mini tracks and endurance loops, particularly if they can be provided as part of floodlit, multi-sport developments.

In Sandwell, there are four purpose-built athletics tracks. Three of these are 400-metre tracks, with an 8-lane synthetic track at both Hadley Stadium and Tipton Sports Academy and a 6-lane cinder track at Phoenix Collegiate. The tracks at Hadley Stadium and Tipton Sports Academy are also serviced by floodlighting.

The remaining track is provided at Sandwell Academy, with this being a 200-metre “mini” track.

*Table 12.1: Summary of athletics tracks in Sandwell*

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Length	Surface type	Floodlit?
36	Hadley Stadium	Smethwick	400 metres	Synthetic	Yes
66	Phoenix Collegiate	West Bromwich	400 metres	Cinder	No
79	Sandwell Academy	Smethwick	200 metres	Synthetic	No
90	Tipton Sports Academy	Tipton	400 metres	Synthetic	Yes

As seen, the Smethwick, Tipton and West Bromwich analysis areas are serviced by the facilities. For the specific locations, please see Figure 12.1 overleaf.

In addition, there is a small 40-metre straight athletics track provided at The Meadows School.

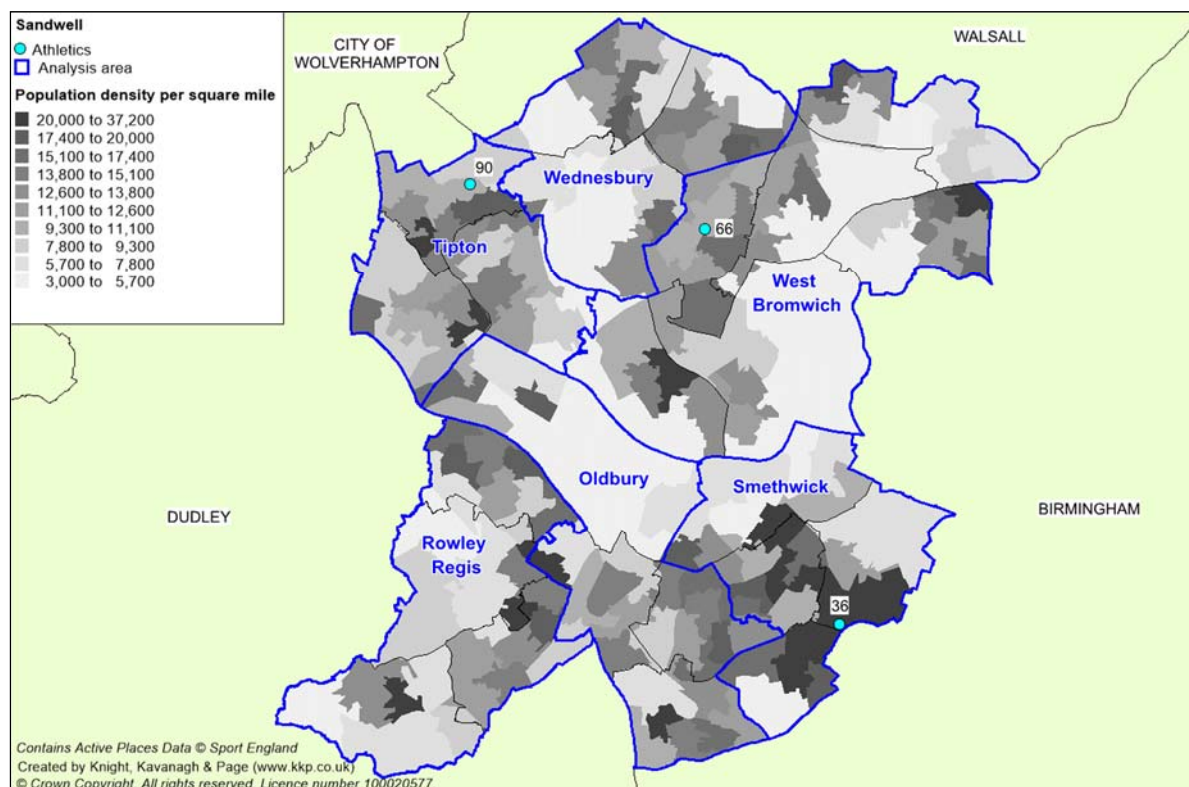
#### **Management**

The tracks at both Hadley Stadium and Tipton Sports Academy are operated by Sandwell Leisure Trust, whilst the tracks at Phoenix Collegiate and Sandwell Academy are operated by the schools themselves.



# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Figure 12.1: Location of athletics tracks in Sandwell



## Quality

Key factors impacting upon the quality ratings of athletics facilities include the condition and age of the track surface, the prominence of the line markings and any signs of wear and tear or unofficial use. For the full site assessment criteria, please see Appendix 2.

The track at Tipton Sports Academy is assessed as standard quality, with maintenance carried out to a high standard by the Sandwell Leisure Trust. However, it only marginally passed its recent TrackMark inspection, with repairs required in an addition to surface clean and overspray. Furthermore, the throwing cage failed its inspection, although it can still be used for training.

The track at Hadley Stadium is assessed as poor quality, with significant signs of wear and tear evident and drainage problematic. This has resulted in the track closing to the community due to health and safety issues.

Recent improvements have been undertaken in regards to the track at Phoenix Collegiate, resulting in its quality improving from a previously poor standard. In addition, a 7<sup>th</sup> lane has been added.

The track at Sandwell Academy is assessed as standard.

## TrackMark

TrackMark is UK Athletics' quality assurance scheme for outdoor track and field athletics facilities. A venue that achieves TrackMark is recognised by UK Athletics as having well managed, compliant facilities that are accessible to participants of all abilities. From 2021, venues that actively choose not to pursue accreditation are not eligible to apply for a competition licence at any level.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

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In Sandwell, the track at Tipton Sports Academy is progressing towards gaining TrackMark status, although as mentioned above, its throwing cage failed its inspection. Financial support has been applied for in order to bring it up to standard.

Hadley Stadium has not started the accreditation process, whilst the tracks at Sandwell Academy and Phoenix Collegiate do not qualify for accreditation due to the size of the former and the surface type of the latter.

### ***Ancillary facilities***

Both Hadley Stadium and Tipton Sports Academy are serviced by a multi-functional clubhouses that provide changing rooms as well as social space. The facilities at Tipton Sports Academy are particularly good quality.

The tracks at Sandwell Academy and Phoenix Collegiate are not surfaced by dedicated ancillary facilities, but rather provision that services the whole schools and their wider sporting offer.

### **12.3: Demand**

For the purposes of this study, athletics demand is considered to come in various forms, rather than just traditional track and field activity. As such, running clubs are also considered, as are organised running events and various running initiatives, some of which are governed by England Athletics. It is also acknowledged that recreational running forms a large part of demand, although this is difficult to measure.

### ***Tipton Harriers***

Tipton Harriers is a large athletics club based at Tipton Sports Academy. It accommodates both male and female members at both senior and junior level and whilst it specialises in track and field, it also operates road running and cross-country running sections.

In addition to using the track at Tipton Sports Academy, the Club also accesses the indoor sports hall at the site, especially during winter months, for indoor athletics and conditioning work. Sessions are held at the site on both Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

### ***Black Country Running Club***

The Club meets every Wednesday evening for organised road runs, beginning at Tipton Leisure Centre. These are free to attend. In addition, the Club also offers its own Couch to 5k programme.

### ***Sandwell Valley Running Club***

Sandwell Valley Running Club is a road running club that currently caters for around 40 members. It meets twice a week, once for a long run, using West Bromwich Dartmouth Cricket Club as a base.

### ***West Bromwich Harriers***

The Club holds road running sessions every Wednesday evening and Sunday morning, catering for runners of all abilities. It competes in the Birmingham Cross Country League and the Midlands Ladies Cross Country League during the winter, as well as traditional road races during the summer. It currently has circa 55 members.

## SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

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The Club previously had a base in Oldbury; however, it has recently relocated to Walsall Rugby Club, in Walsall. This therefore results in some form of exported demand.

### ***Warley Wasps Triathlon & Running Club***

The Club is primarily a triathlon club catering for all ages and abilities but like many triathlon clubs also affiliates to England Athletics. It holds road running sessions every Tuesday and Thursday evening, using the Gospel Oak Pub, in Tipton, as a starting point. As part of this, it has a dedicated running group.

### ***Run Together***

Run Together is an official England Athletics recreational running project which aims to get the whole nation running. Its aim is to provide fun, friendly, supportive and inclusive running opportunities for everyone, regardless of ability and availability. It believes that running is more fun and easier to become part of a lifestyle when shared with others.

There are no active Run Together groups in Sandwell, although a number do operate nearby in Birmingham. A key focus for England Athletics is increasing demand for participation in initiatives such as Run Together, meaning this could be targeted moving forward, especially given the number of other clubs that could be involved.

### ***Park Run***

Park Run is a series of 5k runs held on Saturday mornings in areas of open space around the UK, with 1,063 events now operating across the Country. They are open to all, free, and are safe and easy to take part in. Runners must first register online in order to access a printed barcode which gives them access to all Park Run events.

In Sandwell, a Park Run event is held each week at Sandwell Park Farm. It has been held 121 times, with an average attendance of 131.1 runners.

For those aged between 4 and 14, junior Park Run events are also available, with one held in Sandwell every Sunday at West Smethwick Park. This is a brand new event, beginning in September 2021. The first iteration attracted 13 runners, which will be expected to increase over the coming weeks/months.

### ***Other running events***

Annual 10k and 5k runs take place at Sandwell Valley Park, in May. These have capacity for 600 entrants. In addition, Sandwell Valley Park is also used for Race for Life events.

### ***Couch to 5k***

Couch to 5k is a national health initiative promoted by the National Health Service (NHS) to encourage absolute beginners get into running as part of establishing and maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle including regular exercise.

The plan consists of three runs per week and a day of rest in between, with a different schedule for each of the nine weeks to completion. It starts with a mix of running and walking, to gradually build up fitness and stamina, in order to create realistic expectations and a sense of achievability to encourage participants to stick with it. The end goal of the plan is for the participant to be able to run 5k.

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Through the Couch to 5k plan the NHS particularly promotes the health benefits of running and regular exercise which underpin the initiative, such as improved heart and lung health, weight loss and possible increases in bone density which can help protect against bone diseases such as osteoporosis. This also includes mental benefits of running through goal setting and challenge setting, which can help boost confidence and self-belief. Furthermore, running regularly has been linked to combating depression.

It is believed that an increase in people running through the Couch to 5k plan may increase interest and possibly have a knock-on effect of leading to increased demand at running groups and clubs as people may wish to continue develop their running further.

In Sandwell, the Sandwell Leisure Trust operates its own Couch to 5k initiative, stating that its research identified that people were not comfortable running by themselves in open areas. As such, it has created a closed environment enabling runners to train with like-minded people and with a weekly coach session also included. The programme has utilised Portway Lifestyle Centre, Tipton Sports Academy, Hadley Stadium and Haden Hill Leisure Centre, with over 650 people thus far attracted.

### ***Latent/unmet demand***

Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in athletics but 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies significant latent demand amounting to 5,955 6,355 people within Sandwell, which is a high figure compared to Walsall (4,731 people) and Wolverhampton (4,999 people), but lower than Dudley (6,355 people).

No clubs in Sandwell express latent or unmet demand. None have waiting lists in place and they are all actively looking for new members.

### ***Future demand***

All clubs consulted with express an aspiration to grow membership, although the majority state that this is difficult to quantify as they will do their utmost not turn demand away.

England Athletics also believes that demand is likely to increase in the future, particularly for initiatives such as Park Run, although again to what extent is difficult to quantify.

## **12.4: Supply and demand analysis**

Sandwell is very well provided for in relation to athletics tracks, with three 400-metre facilities provided. This is considered sufficient to meet demand, with only one track and field club currently based in the Borough (Tipton Harriers). All other clubs are primarily road running clubs that do not access the track facilities.

As only Tipton Sports Academy is currently used for club athletics, priority should be placed on protecting the facility and ensuring that quality remains sufficient to accommodate the level of demand received. Retaining the provision at Sandwell Academy and Phoenix Collegiate is less of a requirement as no known community use is received, although the schools themselves may have demand that necessitates retention, especially given the recent improvements at Phoenix Collegiate.

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Regarding Hadley Stadium, no evidence has been uncovered that would necessitate bringing the athletics track back into use, although cycling use is noted. As such, it could be deemed surplus to requirements for this purpose and an alternative use for the facility could be established. However, as part of this, an informal athletics facility could form part of the replacement given England Athletics current focus on such provision.

Away from track and field, emphasis should also be placed on supporting the other activities taking place in Sandwell, with a focus on retaining and increasing participation and growing the various initiatives that are in place.

### **Athletics – supply and demand summary**

- ◀ Sandwell is very well provided for in relation to athletics, with three 400-metre tracks provided.
- ◀ Priority should be placed on protecting the track Tipton Sports Academy and ensuring that is of a sufficient quality to accommodate the levels of demand received.
- ◀ Retaining the provision at Sandwell Academy and Phoenix Collegiate is less of a requirement as no known community use is received, although the schools themselves may have demand that necessitates retention.
- ◀ The track at Hadley Stadium is deemed surplus to requirements in its current form, with an alternative use therefore requiring exploration, although this could include informal athletics provision.
- ◀ Emphasis should also be placed on supporting the other activities taking place in Sandwell, with a focus on retaining and increasing participation and growing the various initiatives that are in place.

### **Athletics – supply summary**

- ◀ There are four purpose-built athletics tracks in Sandwell, at Hadley Stadium, Phoenix Collegiate, Sandwell Academy and Tipton Sports Academy.
- ◀ There is also small 40-metre straight athletics track provided at The Meadows School.
- ◀ Both Hadley Stadium and Tipton Sports Academy provide 400-metre synthetic tracks with eight lanes and floodlighting, whilst Phoenix Collegiate provides a 400-metre cinder track with six lanes (non-floodlit).
- ◀ Sandwell Academy provides a 200-metre “mini” track.
- ◀ The track at Tipton Sports Academy is assessed as standard quality, with tracks repairs required in addition to surface cleaning and overspray; the throwing cage also failed a recent TrackMark inspection.
- ◀ The track at Hadley Stadium is also assessed as poor quality and is no longer useable due to health and safety issues.
- ◀ Recent improvements have been undertaken in regards to the track at Phoenix Collegiate, resulting in its quality improving from a previously poor standard. In addition, a 7<sup>th</sup> lane has been added.

### **Athletics – demand summary**

- ◀ Five clubs have a current focus on athletics and/or running activity in Sandwell.
- ◀ Tipton Harriers uses the track at Tipton Sports Academy as its base.
- ◀ West Bromwich Harriers now uses Walsall Rugby Club, in Walsall, as a base (exported demand).
- ◀ Park Run is held each week at Sandwell Park Farm, whilst a junior Park is held every Sunday at West Smethwick Park.
- ◀ Most clubs express an aspiration to grow membership, whilst England Athletics also believes that demand is likely to increase in the future, particularly for initiatives such as Park Run.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

## PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

### PART 13: GOLF

#### 13.1: Introduction

Golf is the fifth largest participation sport in England, with around 730,000 members belonging to one of 1,800 affiliated clubs and a further two million people playing independently outside of club membership. There are an estimated 3,000 golf courses across the Country, with approximately 90 designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest because apart from the intensively managed trees and greens they have other habitats with high wildlife value. Many other courses also exist within designated Heritage Coast sites, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or listed Historic Parklands.

Nationally, the sport is governed by England Golf. Its role includes providing competitions for players of all ages and abilities, identifying and developing the most talented golfers, maintaining a uniform system of handicapping, administering and applying the rules, and introducing new golfers via its initiatives such as 'Get into Golf'.

#### **Consultation**

This section was informed via consultation with England Golf, which provided information relating to all facilities and clubs within Sandwell.

#### 13.2: Supply

There are three different types of golf facilities recognised by Sport England and governed by England Golf, as defined in the table below. Facilities such as pitch and putt courses and miniature/crazy golf courses (as offered at Sandwell Valley Country Park) are not included as these are not considered to be traditional formats of the game and are not comparable offerings.

*Table 13.1: Definitions of golf facilities*

Facility type	Description
Standard	A standard par course, with a minimum of 9 holes but normally associated with 18-hole courses; many 9-hole courses have different tee boxes which allow the provision to be played as an 18-hole course. Some courses provide 27 holes, with any two loops of 9-holes played to make up an 18-hole round.
Par 3	Shorter length of holes than a standard course, with no hole longer than Par 3. Most likely to be a 9-hole course although 18-hole offerings do exist. Does not include pitch and putt courses, which are even shorter offerings and are not considered to be a traditional version of the sport.
Driving Range	Includes covered and uncovered driving range bays but not practice areas within golf courses; ranges are based on the hiring of balls, with users not required to retrieve, whereas practice areas are generally for members to use with their own balls (although a growing number have dispensers). Does not include 'entertainment' ranges or virtual offerings, although some driving ranges have expanded to also provide these features.

Within Sandwell, there are five golf venues that provide facilities conforming with the above definitions, as identified in Table 13.1 and Table 13.2 below. Two are located in each of the Rowley Regis and West Bromwich analysis areas, whilst one is located in the Smethwick Analysis Area.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Figure 13.1: Location of golf courses in Sandwell

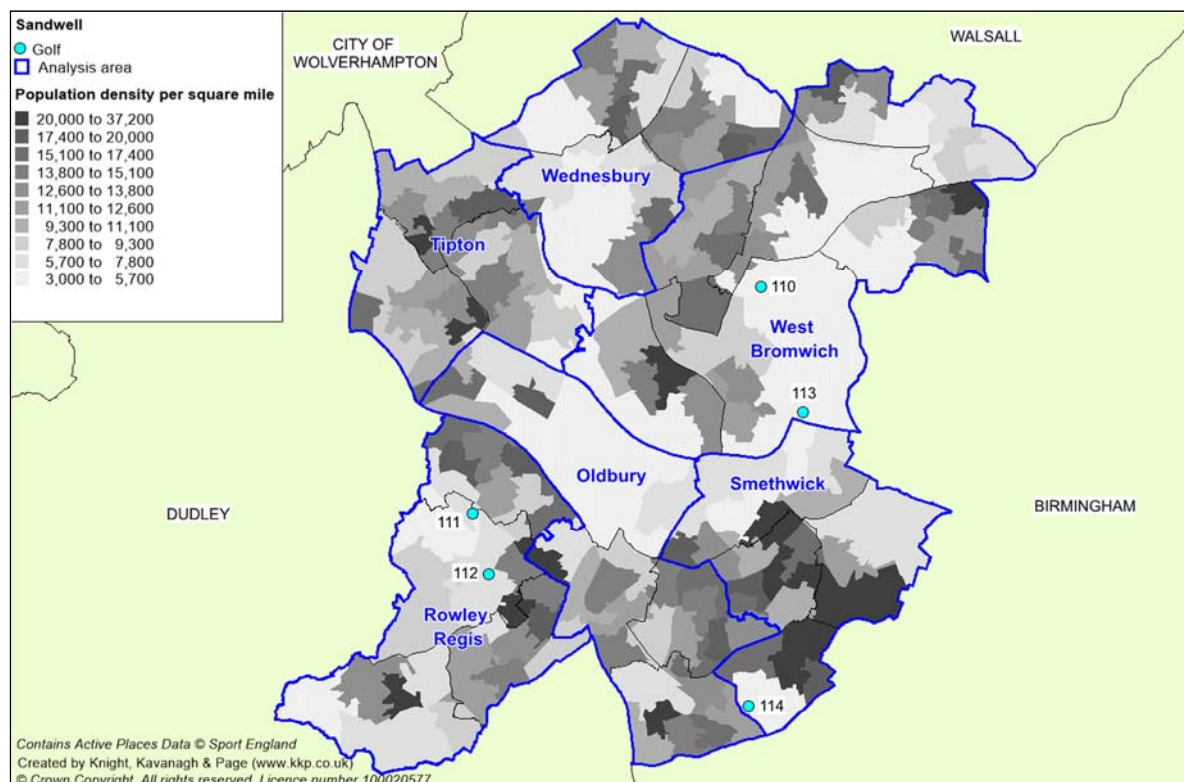


Table 13.2: Golf facilities within Sandwell

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area
110	Dartmouth Golf Club	B71 4DW	West Bromwich
111	Dudley Golf Club	B65 9DP	Rowley Regis
112	Rowley Golf Centre	B65 9AA	Rowley Regis
113	Sandwell Park Golf Club	B71 4JJ	West Bromwich
114	Warley Woods Golf Club	B67 5ED	Smethwick

## Disused provision

In addition to the above sites, there is disused golf provision identified at Brandhall Golf Club. This previously provided an 18-hole course but closed in 2020 as the level of financial subsidy required was not able to be sustained. Options for the future of the site have been developed and consulted upon by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and a decision about the future uses of the site will be made during 2022.

Sport England reports that it would want any development to enable investment to take place into improving the quality of the golfing offer locally. This could be achieved by directing contributions to other golf sites that require improvement.

## Standard hole golf courses

All five golf sites within Sandwell provide one standard hole course, with two 18-hole courses and three 9-hole courses in place. These are summarised in the Table below.

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Table 13.3: Summary of standard hole provision in Sandwell

Site ID	Site name	Holes	Par	Yardage <sup>10</sup>			Slope rating
110	Dartmouth Golf Club	9	36	3,060	2,929	2,745	114-124
111	Dudley Golf Club	18	69	5,753	5,529	5,013	111-134
112	Rowley Golf Centre	9	36	-	1,900	-	-
113	Sandwell Park Golf Club	18	71	6,468	6,209	5,545	129-133
114	Warley Woods Golf Club	9	34	-	2,646	2,314	111-122

Of the two 18 holes courses, Sandwell Park Golf Club provides the longest offering, with Dudley Golf Club providing the shortest. However, both are in the range of what you would expect from traditional provision. Shorter courses tend to offer some variety that may appeal more so to a defined market that would not feel comfortable playing lengthier provision e.g. beginner and/or casual golfers.

Nationally, many 9-hole courses are shorter than the front or back nine of an 18-hole course, primarily to attract and cater for a different userbase. This is the case at Warley Woods Golf Club and Rowley Golf Centre, but not at Dartmouth Golf Club where two tee beds are provided on each hole to replicate an 18-hole offering at over 6,000 yards.

### *Slope ratings*

Slope ratings are new to golf across the World. The intention is for them to allow the handicap system to reflect course difficulty and the difference in difficulty for all players compared to scratch golfers. In effect, this enables each player to have a handicap that will vary from course-to-course, depending on difficulty, as well as a general handicap.

The maximum slope rating is 155, whereas the minimum is 55. The standard difficulty is considered to be 113, which means that the courses in Sandwell are generally considered to be more difficult than the mean, with them collectively ranging from 111-134 (the slope rating varies depending on which tee is used).

No slope rating is provided for Rowley Golf Centre as the site is unaffiliated to England Golf. This means that an assessment has not taken place.

### **Par 3 golf holes**

Most commonly, Par 3 provision is used by beginner and casual players, although they are also frequented by more traditional golfers wanting to practice their short game. That being said, there are no Par 3 golf courses provided in Sandwell, with only one provided across the four Black Country authorities. This is at Fishley Park Leisure Centre, in Walsall.

The closest Par 3 course to Sandwell is located at Wast Hills Golf Centre, in Birmingham.

### **Driving range bays**

Rowley Golf Centre provides a covered 22-bay driving range, in addition to its standard hole course. This is available for anyone to use on a pay and play basis and the provision is serviced by floodlighting to allow all-year round and late evening usage.

<sup>10</sup> White denotes Championship tees, yellow denotes men's tees and red denotes ladies' tees.



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Table 13.4: Summary of driving range bays in Dudley

Site ID	Site name	No. of bays	Floodlit?	Pay and play?
112	Rowley Golf Centre	22	Yes	Yes

The driving range at Rowley Golf Centre has recently installed TopTracer technology. Many driving range providers nationwide are updating their facilities with such technology in a bid to increase demand. The entertainment system allows for users to simulate playing on courses across the world and provides ball tracking and statistical feedback.

### **Management and ownership**

There are three main types of ownership and management models of golf facilities in England; members clubs, proprietary clubs and municipal facilities, as summarised in the table below.

Table 13.5: Types of ownership and management of golf facilities

Management type	Description
<b>Members</b>	Traditionally owned by members and run by committees. They are likely to hire caterers and green staff. Most members' clubs offer some level of pay and play and encourage golf societies but are mostly focused on membership numbers.
<b>Proprietary</b>	Owned or managed by businesses or individuals, these can include country club type facilities at the high end of the golfing market alongside more localised facilities. Many have clubs operating within them but can also take a much more relaxed attitude to dress and traditions of golf. Pay and play opportunities tend to be a key feature of the business plan.
<b>Municipal</b>	These are generally owned by a local authority, although in a growing number of instances, management has been contracted and externalised to private companies. Due to a lack of financial viability, many have closed across the Country in recent years and many that remain are under threat.

It is recognised that members clubs and visitors to such clubs are normally expected to dress appropriately, have a registered handicap certificate (a certificate issued by the Council of National Golf Unions (CONGU)) and be familiar with the rules and etiquette of the game. This is not uncommon at some proprietary clubs, but municipal courses tend to be more relaxed and do not require people to have handicaps, making golf much more accessible.

Consequently, municipal courses are, in many instances, seen as entry level facilities, with players using them before having the confidence to move on to a members' or high-end proprietary club (although many people can and do stay attached to a particular course). They also tend to offer a more affordable golfing experience.

The business model for members clubs tends to rely heavily on income through membership subscriptions and use of ancillary facilities, rather than from pay and play usage, although attention has somewhat switched at many sites in recent years due to demand falling. The same can be said for some proprietary clubs, although, in general, more emphasis is placed on supplementing regular activity with green fee sales. Conversely, municipal sites have always been heavily reliant on visitors even though membership packages are normally available (often in the shape of season tickets). On occasion, these can be linked to access to other local authority operated sports facilities, such as leisure centres and swimming pools.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Despite the above generalisations, each golf facility, regardless of management type, will have its own processes in terms of how much focus is placed on membership and pay and play usage, or whether it equally encourages both. There is no correct way to run a site. A club that focuses on members has guaranteed income, but this can often deter more casual players or nomadic golfers through, for example, a lack of peak time availability. In contrast, a site that depends on visitors can struggle to be viable if there are spells of inclement weather during summer months and can discourage people that want to be part of a club environment.

In Sandwell, Dartmouth, Dudley and Sandwell Park golf clubs are members clubs, whereas Rowley Golf Centre is a proprietary facility. Warley Woods Golf Club is also regarded as a proprietary course as it does not have a members club operating from it; however, it is less commercial than most proprietary offerings as it is managed by a Trust (Warley Woods Community Trust).

*Table 13.6: Summary of ownership/management in Sandwell*

Site ID	Site name	Management type
110	Dartmouth Golf Club	Members
111	Dudley Golf Club	Members
112	Rowley Golf Centre	Proprietary
113	Sandwell Park Golf Club	Members
114	Warley Woods Golf Club	Proprietary

As mentioned previously, Rowley Golf Centre is not affiliated to England Golf. This means that any competitions held are not governed by the NGB and do not qualify for handicap certifications or changes. Non-affiliation is most commonly the case at venues that have a focus on informal activity and is particularly common at sites that consider themselves to be primarily driving ranges.

## **Pricing**

A key issue for the wider golf population is whether golf courses are available to the general population at a price point which is accessible to the majority of residents. Better quality courses tend to cost more to use, whilst 18-hole provision is generally more expensive to access than 9-hole provision.

Nationally, over the past few years, many facilities have altered their pricing structures to allow for discounts following a previous decline in golf membership. England Golf has positively encouraged this as its view is that clubs are more likely to experience growth when flexible packages are available. For instance, some now offer five and/or six day memberships (whereby members can access the course on specific days but not on one or both weekend days), whilst others provide discounts that are no longer limited solely to junior players (e.g. discounts for those aged 18-21 and 21-30 or for those aged 65 and over). In the past, it was common for many clubs to have waiting lists in place for membership. Before the pandemic, waiting lists had become rare but after being one of the first sports to return to play, demand for golf has been increasing and now around a third of all golf clubs have waiting lists in place.

England Golf reports that the average cost of a full adult membership across the Country is currently £901.00. In Sandwell, membership to both Dartmouth Golf Club (£755) and Dudley Golf Club (£869.50) is below this figure, although at the former this can be attributed to it providing a 9-hole course rather than an 18-hole course. Membership is also cheaper at Warley Woods Golf Club; however, given the operational structure of the site, this cost does not provide free course access. Pay and play fees are still applicable to members.

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At the other end of the scale, membership to Sandwell Park Golf Club, at £1,125 per year, is significantly above the national average. This suggests that the facility is relatively high-end.

Green fees are available at all five sites, although Sandwell Park Golf Club does not actively offer weekend access due to tee times generally being reserved for competitions. This site is the most expensive to access, whilst Rowley Golf Centre is comfortably the cheapest.

*Table 13.7: Pricing structures at golf facilities within Sandwell*

Site ID	Site name	Joining fee	Full membership (per year)	Green fee (per round)	
				Weekday	Weekend
110	Dartmouth Golf Club	N/A	£755.00	£20.00	£25.00
111	Dudley Golf Club	N/A	£869.50	£20.00	£25.00
112	Rowley Golf Centre	N/A	N/A <sup>11</sup>	£7.50	£8.50
113	Sandwell Park Golf Club	N/A	£1225.00	£55.00	N/A <sup>12</sup>
114	Warley Woods Golf Club	N/A	£55.00 <sup>13</sup>	£15.50	£16.90

In addition to the course at Rowley Golf Centre, the driving range is accessible for pay and play usage. It costs £4 for 50 balls or £7 for 100 balls, with reductions in place for those with a loyalty card (which costs £35).

## Quality

There are no official national or county golf facility rankings. Generally, the better course quality and supporting infrastructure is, the higher the joining/membership and green fees are likely to be. Some sites gain status through hosting county, national and international golf events and some tend to feature in ranking articles put together by golf magazines.

Quality of the golf courses in Sandwell is relatively good across the five sites, with no significant issues identified. Sandwell Park Golf Club in particular is considered to be good quality, with the venue having dedicated green keeping staff which provide a frequent and sophisticated maintenance regime that operates all-year round. Dartmouth Golf Club provides the longest opening hole in Europe and the longest Par 5 hole in Britain, which gives it a unique selling point.

The ancillary facilities are also for the most part good across Sandwell, again particularly at Sandwell Park Golf Club where a new clubhouse was built at the turn of the century. Golf clubs often need such revenue sources to operate effectively and the provision of a good quality, well equipped clubhouse is a key opportunity to provide a secondary income stream. This emanates from a variety of sources including bar and catering income from members and visitors as well as venue hire for special occasions including weddings, christenings and funerals.

From a golfing perspective, given the current emphasis on increasing levels of female and junior golf membership across the Country, it is also imperative that ancillary provision can adequately cater for all types of members e.g. by providing gender specific changing facilities.

Dudley Golf Club has recently received Sport England funding to build a lift within its clubhouse, improving access and improving its DDA compliance. In addition, Warley Woods

<sup>11</sup> No membership scheme is in place

<sup>12</sup> Pay and play at weekends is only available to those accompanied by a member

<sup>13</sup> Pay and play fees are still applicable

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Golf Club has an aspiration to improve its clubhouse. England Golf has advised that this would be a preferred site for investment.

## 13.3: Demand

Around 2004, participation in golf began declining; however, recent signs show that the reduction has not only levelled off but that demand has started to increase, especially following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, both in 2020 and 2021. As one of the first sports to be allowed on both occasions, people have been able to play whilst maintaining social distancing and England Golf has provided very clear guidance as to how this should manifest itself (e.g. by not allowing the flag to be taken out or rakes to be used). Some courses have reported a near doubling of usual demand compared to pre-pandemic levels, highlighting that a significant opportunity now exists to retain increased participation in the long-term.

### Membership

England Golf suggests that the average membership of a golf club nationally is 386, which is based on a central national handicap platform.

In Sandwell, the table below provides the most recent membership numbers at the golf facilities within the Borough, based on latest England Golf affiliation data. Membership across the clubs equals 932 members.

Table 13.8: Summary of golf membership within Sandwell

Site ID	Site name	No. of members
110	Dartmouth Golf Club	124
111	Dudley Golf Club	231
112	Rowley Golf Centre	N/A
113	Sandwell Park Golf Club	432
114	Warley Woods Golf Club	145

Three of the four clubs (Dartmouth, Dudley and Warley Woods golf clubs) with a membership scheme are operating below the national average, and quite significantly so in relation to. However, this does not necessarily indicate insufficient demand, especially at Warley Woods Golf Club, which has an emphasis on pay and play use.

Membership at Sandwell Park Golf Club is above the national average.

### Membership trends

In line with a national trend of increasing membership, membership at Dartmouth Golf Club, Sandwell Park Golf Club and Warley Woods Golf Club has increased since 2015, with 17, 35 and 45 more members attached to each of the three sites respectively. In contrast, membership at Dudley Golf Club has reduced by 34 members. Overall, this means that there has been an increase of 63 members across the clubs, although this does not include membership that was attached to the now closed Brandhall Golf Club.

Table 13.9: Changes in demand since 2015

Site ID	Club name	2015 members	Current members	Change
110	Dartmouth Golf Club	107	124	+15.89%
111	Dudley Golf Club	265	231	-12.83%
112	Rowley Golf Centre	N/A	N/A	-

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Site ID	Club name	2015 members	Current members	Change
113	Sandwell Park Golf Club	397	432	+8.82%
114	Warley Woods Golf Club	100	145	+45.00%

Whilst the reasons for the reductions at Dudley Golf Club are unknown, it must be noted that 81% of the clubs identified across the four Black Country authorities have seen a decrease in membership since 2015. This suggests dwindling participation rates across the sub-region, although it does not necessarily mean that less people are playing golf. It may be that users are now accessing clubs in other local authorities, or they have become nomadic (i.e. still playing golf but using a variety of venues to do so).

## ***Pay and play***

Whilst pay and play usage has increased across England in recent years, usage figures within Sandwell are not known as it is not something that is tracked by England Golf. However, it would be expected that demand would be highest at Rowley Golf Centre and Warley Woods Golf Club given the operational structures in place and the cheaper price points for access.

## ***Unmet demand***

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to golf facilities. This could be reflected via a waiting list at a club, although it is likely that people on a waiting list are still playing golf elsewhere, either via membership of another club or through pay and play access. As such, unmet demand in Sandwell is considered to be very minimal, with all of the sites offering a membership scheme actively looking for new members.

## ***Latent demand***

Latent demand is demand for golf that is not currently being realised. This could be for numerous reasons, such as time constraints, financial reasons and a lack of suitable, available provision. To that end, Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in golf but 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies latent demand of 2,942 people within Sandwell.

Whilst the reasoning for the latent demand is unknown and is likely to be varied, the data does show relatively high demand which would significantly increase membership and/or pay and play usage across facilities if realised. England Golf is supportive of clubs that proactively target new audiences in an attempt to tap into such demand i.e. through developing a variety of golfing offers, coaching programmes and a range of membership options.

In addition, England Golf has a mapping tool that enables an assessment of potential demand within a 20-minute drive time of each golf facility, with the population broken down into nine golfing segments.

These segments are defined to help provide an indication as to what type of golfing offer each would be most likely to access. They are:

- ◀ Relaxed members
- ◀ Older traditionalists
- ◀ Younger traditionalists
- ◀ Younger fanatics
- ◀ Younger actives
- ◀ Late enthusiasts
- ◀ Occasional time pressed
- ◀ Social couples
- ◀ Casual fun

Across Sandwell, Sandwell Park Golf Club is identified as having the largest potential demand, with 241,719 people falling within the segments within a 20-minute drive time. This is the

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largest identified potential demand across all of the golf facilities in the Black Country region. Dudley Golf Club has the smallest potential demand, equating to 103,582 people.

The demand for each of the sites is relatively evenly split across the nine segments; the highest demand is from “younger traditionalists” (116,852 people), whilst the lowest is from “older traditionalists” (87,152 people).

### ***Future demand***

England Golf has an aim to increase membership of clubs nationally although after reaching its previous membership target, no longer has a fixed target of growth. Nationally, many clubs, especially the most established ones, will be happy to retain current demand levels, whilst many others will be open to growing further and some considerably so. In that regard, England Golf reports that many of the clubs are proactively targeting new audiences through coaching programmes and wider range of membership and playing options.

### **13.4: Supply and demand analysis**

With five golf facilities in Sandwell and a mix of 18-hole and 9-hole courses, as well as a well-equipped driving range, supply is well placed to meet demand. This is especially the case given the various operational structures in place, with some facilities prioritising membership and others prioritising pay and play usage and with some offering a high price point and others offering a low price point. This suggests that all types of golfers are being catered for.

Notwithstanding the above, demand at the golf facilities, for the most part, appears to be relatively low. Whilst this indicates that the high levels of latent and future demand can be accommodated, it also brings into question the sustainability of some of the provision should usage not increase. However, this does not necessarily mean that any sites can be lost, with further interrogation required should any proposals come forward (via a separate needs assessment). Some venues can operate successfully despite a low membership base and may be required to serve a specific purpose, meaning that further work would be required, particularly in relation to the business models in place and the level of casual usage received.

In the meantime, emphasis should be placed on protecting the facilities that are provided, with options explored to increase demand to more sustainable levels. England Golf can assist in this regard, primarily through a variety of tools that can be used to better understand the local market. There may also be opportunities for some clubs across the area to work more collaboratively in terms of creating pathways where appropriate to collectively cater for all types of players.

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### **Golf – supply and demand summary**

- ◀ With five golf facilities in Sandwell and a mix of 18-hole and 9-hole courses, as well as a well-equipped driving range, supply is well placed to meet demand.
- ◀ Notwithstanding the above, demand appears to be relatively low, although this does not necessarily mean that any sites can be lost, with further interrogation required should any proposals come forward.
- ◀ In the meantime, emphasis should be placed on protecting the facilities that are provided, with options explored to increase demand to more sustainable levels.

### **Golf – supply summary**

- ◀ There are currently five golf sites in Sandwell.
- ◀ In addition, there is disused provision at Brandhall Golf Club, which previously provided an 18-hole course but did not re-open following initial Covid-19 restrictions.
- ◀ All five sites provide a standard hole course, with two 18-hole courses (Dudley Golf Club and Sandwell Park Golf Club) and three 9-hole courses (Dartmouth Golf Club, Rowley Golf Centre and Warley Woods Golf Club) in place.
- ◀ No Par 3 course is provided.
- ◀ Rowley Golf Centre provides a 22-bay, covered and floodlit driving range.
- ◀ Dartmouth, Dudley and Sandwell Park are members clubs, whilst Rowley Golf Centre and Warley Woods Golf Club are proprietary facilities; no municipal courses are provided.
- ◀ Sandwell Park Golf Club operates above the national average for membership costs, suggesting that it is a high-end facility, whereas the remaining sites are below the rate.
- ◀ In terms of quality of the golf facilities, it is relatively good across Sandwell with no significant issues identified, especially at Sandwell Park Golf Club.
- ◀ Warley Woods Golf Club has aspirations to improve its clubhouse facilities, which England Golf is particularly supportive of.

### **Golf – demand summary**

- ◀ Three of the four clubs (Dartmouth, Dudley and Warley Woods golf clubs) operating a membership scheme (Rowley Golf Centre does not) are below the national membership average (which is 386 members).
- ◀ Sandwell Park Golf Club is operating above the national average.
- ◀ Membership since 2015 has increased at Dartmouth Golf Club, Sandwell Park Golf Club and Warley Woods Golf Club but has reduced at Dudley Golf Club.
- ◀ Membership has increased collectively across the clubs by 63 members, although this does not take into account the membership that was attached to Brandhall Golf Club.
- ◀ England Golf's mapping tool identifies a significant amount of potential demand, with Sandwell Park shown to have a particularly high population base (the highest in the Black Country region).
- ◀ Pay and play usage is unknown but is likely to be highest at sites such as Rowley Golf Centre given the operational structure in place and the lower price point.

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### PART 14: OUTDOOR WATER SPORTS

Water sports in England are governed by various bodies, including:

- ◀ British Canoe Union
- ◀ British Kite Surfing Association
- ◀ British Rowing
- ◀ British Sub-Aqua Club
- ◀ British Swimming
- ◀ British Water Ski
- ◀ Royal Yachting Association
- ◀ Surfing Great Britain

Swan Pool, at Sandwell Valley Park, offers various opportunities to participate in water sports in Sandwell.

#### 14.1: Supply

Swan Pool is a large body of water within Sandwell Valley Park that offers opportunities for sailing, canoeing and open water swimming (in addition to fishing and angling). However, due to Sandwell's Water Safety Policy, many activities can only be undertaken by members of a recognised club.

#### 14.2: Demand

There are two clubs identified as currently using Swan Pool; Sandwell Valley Sailing Club and Oldbury Swimming & Triathlon Club. In addition, various lifeguard and sea cadet clubs utilise the provision, whilst Birmingham Canoe Club imports some demand to Smethwick Swimming Centre.

##### ***Sandwell Valley Sailing Club***

Sandwell Valley Sailing Club is based at Swan Pool, offering a regular sailing programme for both males and females of all ages and abilities. This includes weekly training sessions and friendly race events. It meets on Thursday afternoons (and evenings in the summer) as well as on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, although other sessions can be arranged on other days if sufficient demand exists.

Membership to the Club costs £60 per year for adults and £37 per year for juniors and students. However, a water licence is also required by the Council, which equates to £75 per year for adults and £43 per year for juniors. A joining fee is also applicable (£10 for adults and £5 for juniors).

The Club allows users to use their boats and offers storage facilities for these to be kept. If there is no ownership, boat hire is available for both single-handed boats and double-handed boats.

##### ***Oldbury Swimming & Triathlon Club***

The Club uses Swan Pool from May until September each year for open water swimming, with sessions held on Monday evenings and Sunday mornings. The sessions on Mondays are generally for adults only, whilst all ages are welcome on Sundays. For health and safety, each swimmer must have a whistle whilst in the water.



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Each year, Sandwell Valley Park hosts an adult and a junior triathlon. These use Swan Pool for the swimming aspect of the events.

### ***Birmingham Canoe Club***

As its name suggests, Birmingham Canoe Club generally accesses provision in Birmingham; however, during winter, it uses Smethwick Swimming Centre for sessions.

### **14.3: Supply and demand analysis**

Through Swan Pool, Sandwell is relatively well provided for in terms of outdoor water sports given that it is not a coastal authority. To ensure this remains the case, the venue should be protected for continued use. In addition, further opportunities could be explored for extending the activities that are offered, although this is dependent on demand that is in existence and the potential for additional clubs to be created. Currently, any isolated demand for activities such as rowing, kayaking and water-skiing will need to travel to clubs outside of Sandwell, i.e. those based in Dudley at Dudley Water Sports Centre.

#### **Outdoor water sports – supply and demand summary**

- ◀ Through Swan Pool, Sandwell is relatively well provided for in terms of outdoor water sports given that it is not a coastal authority.
- ◀ The venue should be protected for continued use and further opportunities could be explored for extending the activities that are offered.

#### **Outdoor water sports – supply summary**

- ◀ Swan provides facilities in Sandwell that are compatible with a number of water sports and other water-related activities.
- ◀ Due to Sandwell's Water Safety Policy, such activities can only be undertaken by members of a recognised club.

#### **Outdoor water sports – demand summary**

- ◀ Sandwell Valley Sailing Club is based at Swan Pool, offering a regular sailing programme for both males and females of all ages and abilities.
- ◀ Oldbury Swimming & Triathlon Club uses Swan Pool from May until September each year for open water swimming.
- ◀ Each year, Sandwell Valley Park hosts an adult and a junior triathlon which use Swan Pool for the swimming aspect of the events.
- ◀ As its name suggests, Birmingham Canoe Club generally accesses provision in Birmingham; however, during winter, it uses Smethwick Swimming Centre for sessions.

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### **PART 15: OTHER GRASS PITCH SPORTS**

#### **15.1: American football**

##### ***Introduction***

The British American Football Association (BAFA) is responsible for the governance of the sport which is continuing to grow in popularity in the UK and there are now hundreds of clubs and thousands of players competing regularly across the country.

The American football season in England generally runs from May until August.

##### ***Consultation***

There is one American football club in Sandwell, known as Sandwell Steelers. The Club engaged in a telephone consultation.

##### ***Supply***

There are no dedicated American football pitches within Sandwell. Instead, an over marked football pitch at Tipton Sports Academy is used for matches by Sandwell Steelers, whilst 3G pitches at Gospel Oak Academy and Portway Leisure Centre are used for training. This is reported as being problematic by the Club, which states that it ideally wants to be located at one venue.

The Club identifies that storage is an issue across the facilities currently used, whilst availability is also limited, with this resulting in it also exporting its youth demand outside of Sandwell to Walsall Rugby Club (using an over marked rugby union pitch). It is actively searching for a single venue to be based from, with options including the aforementioned Walsall Rugby Club as well as the University of Wolverhampton and George Salter Academy. Ultimately, it needs a location that can enable it to play all its matches, have 8-10 hours of training time and provide sufficient storage for its equipment.

American football clubs generally need large storage spaces at venues used due to the nature of the sport and the equipment required. Currently, Sandwell Steelers has to spread its equipment across its members houses before transporting it on match and training days. It owns a shipping container but cannot utilise the provision as it has nowhere to place it.

The Club also requires access to large changing rooms given the size of matchday squads. Presently, it only has access to the changing provision at Tipton Sports Academy, which it reports as being adequate.

##### ***Demand***

Sandwell Steelers fields four teams; a senior men's team, a senior women's team, a youth team and a flag team. To enable this, it currently has 40 players within the men's team and 15 players within each of the three other teams, although it reports that, for sustainability, it ideally needs 55 players for the men's team and 25 players for the remaining teams.

Moving forward, the Club also has aspirations to develop an additional youth team. The current team is made up of players in the 13-16 age bracket, whilst the future demand is for a team within the 16-18 age bracket. The intention is for existing players to feed through, with them then being backfilled within the younger age group.

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The Club plays its senior matches at Tipton Sports Academy and its youth matches at Walsall Rugby Club (exported demand), whilst training midweek at Gospel Oak Academy and at weekends at Portway Leisure Centre.

### ***Supply and demand analysis***

A resolution is required to Sandwell Steelers' existing issues that are derived from it currently needing to use multiple venues. If this is not achieved within Sandwell, there is a very real possibility of the Club eventually exporting all its demand outside of the Borough, as it currently does with its youth team (venues outside of Sandwell are being explored).

As American football can be played on 3G pitches, both for matches and training, relocating all of the Club's demand to such provision should be explored. This could either be by utilising and re-marking an existing pitch or through ensuring a future pitch can support the sport. By utilising 3G provision, it will ensure that all of the Club's demand can be met without impacting on the quality and capacity of grass pitches/areas.

It is essential that any venue can provide or host sufficient storage areas, whilst large changing rooms are also needed due to squad sizes required.

## **15.2: Baseball/softball**

### ***Introduction***

Baseball and softball are both governed by Baseball and Softball UK (BSUK), which is currently aiming to build the number of teams playing regularly throughout the country. Baseball is played between two teams of nine players, which take turns batting and fielding across nine innings, whilst softball has two varieties: slow-pitch softball and fast-pitch softball. Both sports in England operate from April until September.

### ***Consultation***

N/A

### ***Supply***

No baseball/softball pitches are evident in Sandwell. Across the Black Country region, there is supply in Dudley, at Thorns Leisure Centre, and in Wolverhampton, at Colton Hills Community School.

### ***Demand***

No baseball/softball clubs are identified in Sandwell.

Across the Black Country authorities, both Dudley and Wolverhampton have a baseball club (Stourbridge Titans and Wolverhampton baseball clubs). It is possible that some isolated demand from Sandwell is being accommodated within these, although only senior teams are currently fielded.

### ***Supply and demand analysis***

It is likely that any demand for baseball or softball is being accommodated in neighbouring authorities. As such, the sports should not be considered a priority for development.

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## 15.3: Gaelic football

Britain GAA is the Provincial Council of Gaelic football and hurling outside of Ireland. It is made up of seven counties, with Sandwell and the other Black County authorities falling into the Warwickshire region. The playing season runs from May until August.

### **Consultation**

N/A

### **Supply**

There are no Gaelic football pitches provided in Sandwell. Within the Black Country, there is provision in Wolverhampton, whilst numerous pitches are also provided in Birmingham.

### **Demand**

No demand for Gaelic football has been identified in the Borough, with no clubs in existence either currently or historically.

### **Supply and demand analysis**

N/A

#### **Other grass pitch sports – supply and demand summary**

- ◀ A resolution is required to Sandwell Steelers' existing issues that are derived from it currently needing to use multiple venues.
- ◀ No supply or demand is identified in relation to baseball/softball or Gaelic football, meaning no action is required.

#### **Other grass pitch sports – supply summary**

- ◀ There are no dedicated American football pitches within Sandwell; instead, an over marked football pitch at Tipton Sports Academy is used as well as 3G provision at Gospel Oak Academy and Portway Leisure Centre.
- ◀ Sandwell Steelers wants to be based from one venue, reporting availability and storage as particular issues.
- ◀ There are no baseball/softball diamonds in Sandwell.
- ◀ There are no Gaelic football pitches provided in the Borough.

#### **Other grass pitch sports – demand summary**

- ◀ Sandwell Steelers currently fields four teams (senior men's, senior women's, youth and flag).
- ◀ As well using the facilities in Sandwell, it also exports demand to Walsall Rugby Club, in Walsall.
- ◀ No baseball/softball or Gaelic football demand is identified, although some isolated demand may be travelling to clubs in nearby authorities.

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### APPENDIX 1: SPORTING CONTEXT

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

#### National context

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

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

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

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

#### ***Sport England: Uniting the Movement 2021***

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

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

There are three key objectives to the Strategy:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **National Planning Policy Framework (2021)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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### ***The FA National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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### ***The FA: National Game Strategy (2018-2021)***

The FA launched its new National Game Strategy in July 2018 which aims to inspire a life-long journey in football for all. To achieve this, the strategy will focus on five key aspects of the game:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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### ◀ **Transform women's and girls' cricket**

- ◀ Grow the base through participation and facilities investment
- ◀ Launch centres of excellence and a new elite domestic structure
- ◀ Invest in girls' county age group cricket
- ◀ Deliver a girls' secondary school programme

### ◀ **Support our communities**

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

### ***The Rugby Football Union Strategy 2021 Onwards***

Through the strategy, the RFU aims to enrich lives, introduce more people to rugby union and develop the sport for future generations. The goal is to achieve this by strengthening and uniting rugby union in England and producing consistently winning England teams.

Eight key strategic priorities are identified with all investment decisions aligned to these. The strategy also outlines the RFU's core activities which form the backbone of its business operations and services to the game.

The priorities include four 'Game Objectives' and four 'Driving Objectives' as detailed below.

#### Game Objectives:

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

#### Driving Objectives:

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

### ***Rugby Football League Strategic Plan 2015 – 2021***

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

- ◀ Financially viable and sustainable professional clubs creating stable employment opportunities, showcasing local, national and international playing talent, and leading the sport's development - and making a difference - in their own communities;
- ◀ Welcoming community clubs, putting players first, offering recreational enjoyment for children and adults alike in a safe and inclusive environment;
- ◀ A central organisation that stands out for excellence, innovation, mutual respect, integrity and inclusion that understands its role in servicing the wider sport;
- ◀ A sports that lives its values in all its decisions and actions.

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This vision is underpinned by 13 core principles, including:

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

### ***Rugby League World Cup 'Inspired by 2021' Legacy Programme***

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

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

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

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

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

We know that delivering success on the international stage stimulates the nation's pride in their hockey team and, with the right events in place, we will attract interest from spectators, sponsors and broadcasters alike. The visibility that comes from our success and our occasions will inspire young people and adults to follow in the footsteps of their heroes and, if the right opportunities are there to meet their needs, they will play hockey and enjoy wonderful experiences.

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

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

The core objectives are as follows:

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

### *Club participation*

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

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

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

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

England Hockey's Facilities Strategy can be found [here](#).

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

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

The 3 main objectives of the facilities strategy are:

#### **1. PROTECT: To conserve the existing hockey provision**

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

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

- The current facilities stock is ageing and there needs to be strategic investment into refurbishing the pitches and ancillary facilities. England Hockey works to provide more support for clubs to obtain better agreements with facilities providers & education around owning an asset.

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

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

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### ***LTA Facilities Investment Strategy – Vision for the 2020 and beyond***

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

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

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

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

The key principles of the framework are to:

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

### ***England Netball - Your Game, Your Way 2013-17***

Even though this Plan is out of date, England Netball remains committed to its '10-1-1' mission, vision and values that form the fundamentals for its strategic planning for the future for the sport and business.

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.

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- ◀ 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ***England Athletics Facility Strategy (2018 – 2025)***

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

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

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

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

### **England Golf Course Planner – Strategic Direction (2021-2025)**

England Golf has always had a mission to lead, support, inspire and deliver for its community of golfers, golf clubs and counties. To help enable this, its Course Planner forms the core of its strategy, with 18 guiding principles established that are designed to best position growth in the game:

- ◀ Strengthen governance in all aspects of the sport
- ◀ Deliver safeguarding throughout the golfing community
- ◀ Utilise data and technology to enhance decision making
- ◀ Drive equality and equity in everything it does
- ◀ Support golf clubs with member recruitment and retention
- ◀ Connect and engage with all golfers
- ◀ Inspire and educate golf’s network of volunteers
- ◀ Increase golf’s influence
- ◀ Advocate and inform on all elements of sustainability
- ◀ Drive diversity at all levels of golf
- ◀ Create more opportunities for junior and young adults
- ◀ Promote the health and wellbeing of golf
- ◀ Inspire more women and girls to play golf
- ◀ Develop greater access for disabled people
- ◀ Enthuse all golfers through relatable role models
- ◀ Communicate a positive perception change for golf
- ◀ Deliver an excellent talent development pathway
- ◀ Host best-in-class competitions for all golfers

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## APPENDIX 2: NON TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT SHEETS

### Grass football pitch non-technical assessment sheet

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Football							
Please complete one form per pitch							
Site reference:				Site Name:			
6 figure grid reference				Pitch ID(s):			
Number of football pitches on site:				Pitch size:	(Adult 11v11, Youth 11v11, 9v9, 7v7 Mini, 5v5, 7v7)		
Availability				Are any other pitches marked out over this pitch?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Weather at time of visit & date of visit				If yes, please indicate what pitches are overmarked? (i.e. one youth pitch is overmarked on a adult pitch) in Pitch Issues			
Pitch Issues:							
Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)							
Element (Gathered via a non technical site assessment)	Rating			Guidance notes			Comments
<b>Playing surface</b>							
Grass Cover	Good >80%		Adequate 60-80%		Poor <60%		Advice is to walk through the middle of the pitch
Does the pitch meet The FA minimum size?	Yes - as per the FA recommended size		Within FA recommended guidelines		No		See size chart below for recommended dimensions
Slope of pitch (gradient and cross fall)	Flat		Moderate		Severe		
Length of grass	Good		Too long		Too short		Good 30mm-50mm, Too long 51mm plus, Too short 29mm less
Evenness of pitch	Good		Adequate		Poor		
Problem Areas: Evidence of dog fouling/glass/litter/vehicle tracks	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots		
Problem Areas: Evidence of unofficial use/damage to the surface	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots		
Problem Areas: Evidence of poor drainage	No evidence of standing water or poor drainage		Some evidence of poor drainage		Yes, poor drainage		
<b>Maintenance programme (information from maintenance schedule/grounds team/club survey)</b>							<b>Section total</b>
Grass cutting	Yes, as required		Yes, but not frequent enough		No		
Seeded	Yes, as required		Not known		No		
Aerated (per year)	Three or more times		Once/ twice		No		
Sand dressed	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No		
Fertilised	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No		
Weed killed	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No		
							<b>Section total</b>
NB If none of this information is provided you should assume that only the grass is being cut and the rest of the maintenance items should be marked with the lowest score option.							
PITCH SCORE				0.0%	RATING		Poor



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## Cricket non-technical assessment

Element	Rating			Guidance notes	Comments (use the guidance notes to help complete)
<b>About the cricket outfield</b>					
Grass coverage	Good	Acceptable	Poor	 Falls below the ECD basic standard	
Length of grass	Good	Acceptable	Poor	14-16, 12mm - 25mm	
Evenness	Even	Uneven		Ball should run without deviation or ramp	
Evidence of Dog fouling/glass/stones/litter?	None	Yes	Immediate action required	May also wish to refer to user survey. If yes, refer to maintenance/site manager	
Evidence of Unofficial use?	None	Yes	Immediate action required	eg informal, casual use, unbooked use, kids kickabout etc. May also wish to refer to user survey. If yes, refer to maintenance/site manager	
Evidence of Damage to surface?	None	Yes	Immediate action required	eg from animals - rabbits, gulls and fence etc may also wish to refer to user survey	
<b>Artificial wickets</b>					
Is the wicket and surrounds married in	Yes	No		There should be no trip points	
Evenness of wicket	Even	Uneven		There should be no contours in surface levels	
Stump holes	Yes	No		Should be no wider than a standard cricket ball	
Moss or materials in the surface	Yes	No		There should be none	
Rips or surface lifting	Yes	No		If "yes" contact site manager	
Surface worn in high traffic areas - creases	Yes	No		If "yes" contact site manager	
Hardness - does the ball rebound when thrown straight down?	Yes	No			
<b>Grass wickets</b>					
Presence of line markings	Yes	No			
Evidence of rolling - is wicket smooth and uniform	Yes	No			
Evidence of straight cut and height	Yes	No		3mm to 4mm wicket/12mm roll of grass	
Evidence of repair work on old wickets	Yes	No			
Grass coverage (square and wickets)	Yes	No		 Falls below the ECD basic standard	
Hardness - does a cricket ball thrown straight down into the surface rebound?	Yes	No			
<b>Changing/ Pavilion</b>					
Umpires provision	Yes	No			
Toilets	Yes	No			
Hot/cold water	Yes	No			
Heating	Yes	No			
Condition of building	Good	Acceptable	Requires attention		
<b>NTP</b>					
Is the wicket and surrounds married in (no trip points)	Yes	No			
Evenness of wicket (no contours in surface levels)	Even	Uneven			
Stump holes (no wider than a standard cricket ball)	Yes	No			
Moss or materials in the surface (should be none)	Yes	No			
No rips or surface lifting	Yes	No			
Surface worn in high traffic areas - crease	Yes	No			
Hardness - does the ball rebound when thrown straight down	Yes	No			
Is the steel frame/posts upright?	Yes	No			
Are steel cross members detached?	Yes	No			
Are all posts and net fixings in place?	Yes	No			
Can a ball pass through any part of the netting?	Yes	No			
Is appropriate safety/supervisory signage present?	Yes	No			

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## Rugby pitch non-technical assessment sheet

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Rugby Union										
Please complete one form per pitch										
Site reference										Site Name
6 figure grid reference										Pitch ID(s)
Date of assessment										Pitch size (Senior, Mini/Midi)
Number of pitches on site										Are any other pitches marked out over this pitch?
Availability										<small>If yes, please indicate what pitches are overmarked? (i.e. one mini/ midi pitch is overmarked on a senior pitch) in Pitch Issues</small>
<small>Community Use - used, Community Use - unused, No Community Use, Available but Unused</small>										
Weather at time of visit										
General comments/observations										
<b>Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)</b>										
Qualitative information (gathered on site)	Rating						Guidance notes	Comments		
Grass Coverage	Good		Adequate		Poor		>90% = good. <80% = poor			
Size of pitch	Acceptable (between recommended minimum and maximum sizes)		Flag for further investigation (below recommended minimum size)		Unacceptable (above maximum size)		Maximum size = width 70m, goal line to goal line 100m, in goal area 22m, run offs 5m where practical. Recommended minimum size = width 68m, goal line to goal line 94m, in goal area 6m, run offs 5m where practical.			
Length of grass	Too Long		Good		Too short		Too long = >75mm. Too short = <50mm			
Problem Areas: Evidence of glass/litter/vehicle tracks/dog fouling	None		Yes - some		Yes lots					
<b>GOALPOSTS</b>										
Are goalposts installed?	Yes		No							
Is there any obvious danger on posts?	Yes		No							
Are the posts stable in the ground?	Yes		No							
Is the crossbar fixed securely?	Yes		No							
Is there evidence of rust on the posts?	Yes		No							
<b>ANCILLARY</b>										
Is the pitch floodlit?	Yes		No							
Is there changing accommodation for the pitch?	Yes		No							
Is an appropriate level of car parking available?	Yes		No							
<b>Pitch maintenance (information gathered via club survey/ pitch provider consultation) - refer to the guidance notes below</b>										
Aerated (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never			
Sand dressed (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never			
Fertilised (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never			
Weed killed (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never			
Chain harrowed	every week		fortnightly		monthly		never			
										<b>Pitch Maintenance Score</b>
<b>Drainage</b>	Natural (inadequate) SCORE D0		Natural (adequate) SCORE D1		Pipe drained SCORE D2		Pipe and slit drained SCORE D3		Unknown SCORE D0	Natural (adequate) = 3 or less training/match cancellations per season Natural (inadequate) = 4 or more training match cancellations per season *Based on a pipe drained system at 5m centres that has been installed in the previous eight years. **Based on a slit drained system at 1m centres completed in the previous five years.

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Artificial grass pitches non-technical assessment (including third generation turf pitches)

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Artificial grass pitches									
Site reference			Site Name						
6 figure grid reference			Pitch ID						
Number of AGPs on site			Pitch size	Full (i.e., 100m x 60m)			Half (i.e., 60m x 40m)		
Availability			Community Use - used, Community Use - unused, No Community Use, Available but Unused						
Type of pitch	Long Pile 3G (65mm with shock pad)		Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)		Short Pile 3G (40mm)				
	Sand Dressed		Sand Filled		Water based				
<b>Assessment Criteria</b> (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)									
Element	Rating						Guidance notes	Site comments	
Age of Surface	less than 2 years		2-5 years		5-10 years		over 10 years		
Evidence of moss/lichen (all surfaces)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Loose gravel (macadam surface)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Holes or rips in surface (macadam, art. grass or polymeric surfaces)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Grip underfoot	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Line markings - quality	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Problem Areas: Evidence of Glass/ stones/ litter	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Problem Areas: Evidence of inappropriate use	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Problem Areas: Evidence of damage to surface	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots		If no evidence, assume none.		
Access for disabled players. i.e.: ramps onto courts, width of gates	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Condition of posts/ nets/ goals	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Surrounding fencing	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Adequate safety margins (w here appropriate)	Yes - fully		No- but adequate		No - not adequate				
Is the AGP floodlit?	Yes		No						
Is the AGP left open at all times?	Yes		No						
Are there dug outs?	Yes		No						
Are there youth shelters/spectator seating around AGP?	Yes		No						
Is there changing accommodation for the AGP?	Yes		No						
Maximum score	93	Scoring:	Poor	<=50	Total Score	0			
			Standard	51-79	Potential Rating	Poor			
			Good	80+					

# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Court non-technical assessment (netball and tennis)

## Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Tennis/ Netball/ Basketball Courts

KKPref										
Site name:										
Number of courts -	Tennis			Netball		Basketball			Five-a-side	
General Playground or specific sports court area?										
Court surface	Management					Community Use?				
	Artificial turf, Clay, Grass, Macadam, Polymeric, Shale					Club, LA - Parks, Parish Council, Public, School				

**Assessment Criteria** (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)

Element	Rating						Comments			
<b>About the courts</b>										
Evidence of moss/lichen (all surfaces)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots					
Loose gravel (macadam surface)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots					
Holes or rips in surface (macadam, art. grass or polymeric surface)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots					
Grip underfoot	Good		Adequate		Poor					
Line markings - quality	Good		Adequate		Poor					
Surrounding fencing	Good		Adequate		Poor					
Size of courts	Yes - fully		No - but adequate		No - not adequate					
Adequate safety margins	Yes - fully		No - but adequate		No - not adequate					
Slope of courts	Flat		Slight		Gentle		Moderate		Severe	
Problem Areas: Evidence of Glass/ stones/ litter	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots					
Problem Areas: Evidence of inappropriate use	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots					
Access for disabled players - ie: ramps onto courts, width of gate	Good		Adequate		Poor					
<b>Changing Accomodation</b>										
Changing Accomodation	Yes		No							
<b>About the equipment</b>										
Posts and net	Good		Adequate		Poor					
Are the courts locked when not in use?	Yes		No							
Practice wall	Yes		No							



# SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Athletics tracks non-technical assessment

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Athletics Tracks						
KKPref	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>					
Site name:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>					
Track surface	<input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/>	Grass, polymeric, cinder, other specify	Specify If 'Other'	<input style="width: 40%;" type="text"/>		
No. of Lanes	<input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/>	Length of track:	<input style="width: 20%;" type="text"/>	Community Use:	<input style="width: 40%;" type="text"/>	
<b>Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each track with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)</b>						
Element	Rating					Comments
<b>About the track facilities</b>						
Damage to the track surface	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots	
Grip underfoot	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Line markings - quality	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Track edging	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Disabled access	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Problem Areas: Evidence of Glass/ stones/ litter	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots	
Floodlighting	Yes			No		
Is the track fenced?	Yes			No		
<b>Surface of run ups - long/triple jump, high jump</b>						
Surface of run ups - long/triple jump, high jump	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Adequate landing areas - jumps	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Adequate safety margins	Yes - fully		No-but adequate		No-not adequate	
Take off boards	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Landing mats	Yes			No		
Surface of throw ing areas - shot, discuss, hammer	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Adequate safety margins - throw s	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Throw ing cages	Yes			No		
<b>Access to toilets</b>						
Access to toilets	Yes			No		
Changing accomodation	Yes			No		
Changing accomodation - quality	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Club room	Yes			No		
Car parking	Good		Adequate		Poor	
<b>General Comments</b>						
<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>				<b>ENTER Athletics</b>		Please make sure there is no filter on in sheet At_db !