

Playing Pitch Strategy 2010 - 2030

Executive Summary



V4

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Strategic Leisure, part of the URS/Scott Wilson Group, was appointed by Wakefield Council (WC) to develop a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS).
- 1.2 This PPS is based on a review of the previous Playing Pitch Plan and is an assessment of supply and demand for key pitch sports across the district, specifically: football, cricket, rugby league, rugby union and hockey. The assessment follows the methodology and framework detailed in Sport England's 'Towards a Level Playing Field' (2003).
- 1.3 The assessment of demand and supply of outdoor bowling greens and tennis courts falls outside the scope of the Sport England assessment methodology. However summary data and findings will be presented in section 5 to assist the development and management of these resources.
- 1.4 The PPS takes account of the quantity, quality and access of facilities, using an eight stage assessment method developed by Sport England and the Central Council for Physical Recreation, and this supersedes earlier Playing Pitch Strategies.
- 1.5 Ensuring a strategic approach to the provision of high quality, accessible pitch provision is important in meeting the aims and objectives of several national and local strategies. These are summarised in the main report. Overall, the local Playing Pitch Strategy provides a framework for:
 - Making informed planning decisions;
 - Targeting financial support and investment in facilities; and
 - Planning the delivery of sports development programmes.
- 1.4 The assessment findings reported and resulting issues, challenges and recommendations need to be considered alongside the outputs of other research and planning, and in particular the Wakefield Council Open Spaces Study and the PPG17 report.

2. Approach to developing the Strategy

- 2.1 Developing the strategy included comprising desk research, consultation, data analysis and scenario modelling. Research also included visiting all playing pitch sites with community use, and rating facilities for quality and access. This included the completion of a non-technical visual assessment for each pitch facility identified, providing a classification of quality. The non-technical visual assessment has been used alongside previous technical assessments carried out on these pitches to provide an improvement plan for sports pitch sites.
- 2.2 Overall the research to compile the strategy has involved:

- Reviewing existing strategies and policies relating to sports pitch provision across the District
- Interviews with core stakeholders, including Council Officers and National Governing Body of Sport representatives;
- Questionnaires administered to all schools across the District
- Questionnaires and telephone interviews with sports clubs across the District; and
- Site visits to 163 playing pitch sites.

2.3 The Strategy is based on assessments of the current, and the future (estimated changes over the next 4 and 20 years) supply of and demand for the sports identified above.

3. Overview of Playing Pitch Supply and Assessment of Demand

3.1 The pitch audit identified that there are **163** playing pitch sites and **309** playing pitches (Football, Cricket, Rugby League, Rugby Union and full-size artificial grass pitches). Providers range from local authority community parks, education sites (schools and colleges), parish councils and privately owned sites.

Table 1.1: All Playing Pitch Sites in Wakefield

Playing Pitch Type	Total Number of Pitches	Pitches with Community Access	%Community Use
Senior Football Pitch	121	115	95%
Junior Football Pitch	98	47	48%
Mini Soccer Pitch	36	27	75%
Sub-Total Football	255	189	74%
Cricket Pitch	50	43	86%
Rugby League	56	48	86%
Rugby Union	23	20	87%
Full-Size Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP)	9 (+1x3G)	9 (+1x3G)	100%
TOTALS	393(+1x3G)	309(+1x3G)	79%

3.2 There are currently 309 (79%) of playing pitches available with community access. The 84 pitches without community access are located on education sites.

- 3.3 Nearly 40% of all community use pitch sites identified are in council ownership. 16% of all community use pitch sites are on education sites, 6% sites are owned by Parish or Town Councils the remainder of pitch sites 38% are privately owned or Trusts.
- 3.4 In order to assess the levels of provision for Football, Cricket, Rugby and Hockey across the district it is important to compare the quantity of facilities with the current level of demand in order to establish whether there is a surplus or deficiency in provision.
- 3.5 The current demand for pitches is established through a range of methods including:
- An initial sports club questionnaire sent to identified clubs and schools within the district
 - Additional telephone consultation with key sports clubs/schools
 - Analysis of local league handbooks
 - Consultation with key stakeholders and sports specific contacts e.g. NGBs
 - Input from Wakefield Council
 - Internet research
- 3.6 A total of 845 teams have been identified as playing regular fixtures throughout the relevant season. A full and comprehensive list of teams is provided in the appendices of this report. The data in Table 1.2 is presented on a sport-by-sport basis.

Table 1.2: Numbers of Teams

Sport and Team Type	Age Group	Number of Teams
Football		
Mini-soccer (U7-U10s) – mixed	6-9yrs	113
Junior football – boys	10-15yrs	159
Junior football – girls	10-15yrs	11
Men’s football	16-45yrs	190
Women’s football	16-45yrs	12
Totals for football		485
Cricket		
Junior cricket – boys	11-17yrs	57

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Sport and Team Type	Age Group	Number of Teams
Junior cricket – girls	11-17yrs	1
Men’s cricket	18-55yrs	81
Women’s cricket	18-55yrs	0
Totals for Cricket		139

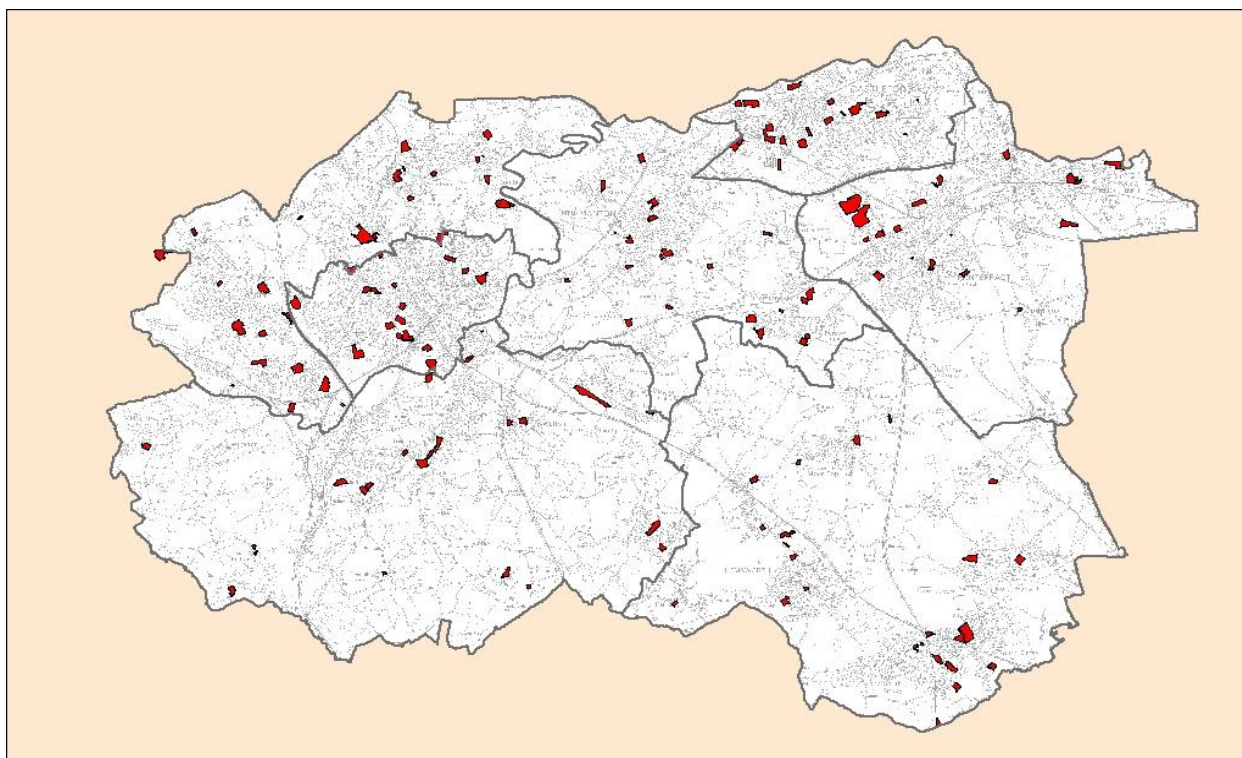
Hockey		
Junior hockey – Boys	11-15yrs	8
Junior hockey – Girls	11-15yrs	8
Men’s hockey	16-45yrs	14
Women’s hockey	16-45yrs	14
Totals for Hockey		44

Rugby Union		
Mini-rugby – mixed	8-12yrs	12
Junior rugby – boys	13-17yrs	11
Junior rugby – girls	16-17yrs	0
Men’s rugby	18-45yrs	19
Women’s rugby	18-45yrs	0
Totals for Rugby Union		42

Rugby League		
Junior rugby – boys 13 – 17 years	13-17yrs	22
Junior rugby – girls 13 – 17 years	16-17yrs	4
Men’s rugby	18-45yrs	27
Women’s rugby	18-45yrs	2
Totals for Rugby League		55

3.7 In addition to the teams in the table above (which uses Sport England's 'Toward a Level Playing Field' tool kit), other age groups for the different sports include 53 under 13yr rugby league teams, 4 under 11yr hockey teams and 23 under 11 yr cricket teams. The Football Association also states within the Wakefield Participation Report 2010 – 11 Season that there are 247 small sided teams (5-a-side) registered in Wakefield. This is a high figure considering there is only one small sided indoor facility in Wakefield with 3rd generation pitches for hire and league use.

Fig 1 - General spread of sports pitches across the district.



4. Changes since the previous Playing Pitch Strategy

- 4.1 Changes to the overall levels of demand since the previous playing pitch plan provides a key indication of overall trends or growth and retraction. Where there has been little growth in sports, this can indicate that optimal levels of demand have been met or there is little potential for further growth. The following changes between the plan developed in 2005 and the current strategy are identified in table 1.3.
- 4.2 The table identifies an increase in men's senior football team's, women's football and mini soccer, and a slight decrease in girl's football, although this could mean that girls have progressed into women's football. Junior boy's football has increased by 3 teams.

4.3 Rugby League identified a decrease of 1 adult men’s team and a decrease in junior boy’s teams, while there is a slight decrease in women’s teams, and the number of girl’s teams remains the same. In addition to the above teams there are 53 under 13 teams playing rugby league across the district.

Table 1.3: Changes in Number of Teams 2005 - 2011

Sport	Seniors 2005		Seniors 2011		Juniors 2005		Juniors 2011		Mini 2005	Mini 2011
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Football	168	3	190	12	156	18	159	11	71	113
Rugby League	28	3	27	2	35	4	22	4	-	-
Rugby Union	20	0	19	0	6	0	11	0	3	12
Cricket	66	1	81	0	47	0	57	1	-	-
Hockey	13	10	14	14	7	10	8	8	-	-

4.4 Rugby Union shows a decrease of 1 men’s team, junior boy’s teams and mini teams have increased since 2005.

4.5 Cricket shows a large increase in senior men’s teams, a decrease in women’s teams but an increase of ten colt’s teams and one girl’s team in 2011.

5. Summary of Assessment findings: sport by sport headlines

5.1 Football

- There is a current deficiency in mini soccer and junior football pitches – however the surplus in senior pitches allows a number of junior games to be played on senior pitches. Pitch quality also allows more than the standard 2 games per week to be played at some sites which allows the current level of demand to be met
- There are quality issues across the district – a number of changing facilities are of poor quality. Pitch quality also varies significantly across the district. A number of pitches suffer from water logging.
- Future demand estimates growth in team numbers – if realised this will result in deficiencies across the district, for mini and junior provision.

Current provision will not meet this additional demand unless the surpluses in senior pitches are utilised

- The changes to youth soccer age groups and size of pitches possibly from 2013/14 season will have an impact on the current size of pitches and number of games played particularly for under 9's and 13's.
- There are a number of specific issues relating to 'stifled' demand – either clubs requiring higher standard provision (to meet league standards) than can be provided by the Council or themselves, or demand being curtailed through a lack of capacity

5.2 Cricket

- There is a small theoretical surplus in pitches across the district, as a result pitches are sufficient in quantitative terms to meet current demand
- Most clubs own or manage their own facilities and pitch quality is good across the district. There are some requirements to address changing room facilities and refurbish these across the district.
- There is a reasonable spread of clubs across the district and most clubs have capacity for new members. However access is more limited for residents in the Wards of Wakefield East, Wakefield North and Pontefract South.
- Current provision will be sufficient to service the levels of future demand over the next 5-20 years to meet growth across the District.
- There is a need to improve upon indoor cricket facilities
- Primary Schools should have access to a safe surface indoors or outdoors on which to deliver its curriculum and/or out of school hours cricket activities. Primary School should also have access to Cricket Focus Clubs. Colourful usable play ground markings for cricket would also be effective.
- Secondary Schools should have access to a safe surface indoors and or outdoors on which to deliver its curriculum and or out of school hour's activities. Every Secondary School should have access to an artificial match or practice playing surface either on a school site or a club site and every secondary school should have access to a sports hall with indoor nets.
- Old Sharlston Cricket Club is seeking a new pavilion. Cricket outfields at Lee Moor Road Stanley and Altofts Miners Welfare need to have improved drainage, top dress and reseeded. South Kirby CC is refurbishing their pavilion on an ongoing basis using volunteers.

5.3 Rugby League

- There is adequate provision in quantitative terms to meet current demand. However, the current surplus of senior rugby league pitches is reduced when school use is taken into account.

- Current provision will be sufficient to service future demand if current TGRs are sustained.
- There are limited opportunities to play rugby league in the following wards in the district due to lack of clubs or pitch provision; Horbury and South Ossett, Pontefract South, South Elmsall and South Kirby, and Wakefield North.
- The start of the summer season commences in March 2012.
- There is a need for a 3rd generation artificial pitch with floodlights to assist with club training needs

5.4 Rugby Union

- The audit has identified 42 teams or team equivalents playing rugby union across the District, and a total of 23 pitches (20 with community access)
- The majority of pitches are located on rugby club sites, although demand for Rugby Union appears to be low when comparing Team Generation Rates with other playing pitch sports.
- There is adequate provision in quantitative terms to meet current demand – however, the current surplus of senior rugby pitches is reduced when the growing demand for junior and mini-rugby is taken into consideration and the use by school teams is considered.
- Current provision will be sufficient to service future demand if current TGRs are sustained. This will be maintained as long as junior and mini teams continue to play on senior pitches on a Sunday.

5.4 Hockey

- There are limited opportunities across certain parts of the district to play Hockey – there are no artificial grass pitches or clubs located in a majority of Wards and hockey clubs based only in three wards.
- On the surface there appears to be adequate provision in quantitative terms to meet current demand. However, hockey is only currently played on three artificial turf pitches and these are also shared with football. The standard of hockey played at Wakefield and Slazenger Hockey Clubs is high. Both clubs youth teams have to play their matches outside of Wakefield and training requirements of these clubs is very demanding on the current facilities.
- For the above reason the Council should support the development of a second water based AGP at Wakefield Hockey Club.
- There will be an issue with Slazengers playing surface in the future.

5.5 Bowls

The assessment of demand for and supply of outdoor bowling greens falls outside the scope of the assessment methodology detailed in 'Towards a Level Playing Field' (Sport England 2003). However:

- A total of 54 crown bowling greens were identified throughout the District. The distribution of these facilities varies from 1 ward having no bowling green facilities to all other wards having between 1 and 5 crown bowling greens. The current level of provision is 0.168 greens per 1,000 people across the District. There are 51 known clubs across Wakefield District.
- Bowling Greens as accommodate a range of formal and casual use. Demand manifests itself through differing uses, such as formal bowling teams using facilities for league games, or for individuals to bowl on a more casual or informal basis.
- Bowling greens throughout Wakefield are mainly provided as public facilities (often in recreation grounds) and private facilities (through private bowling clubs).
- Main problems perceived by the clubs include vandalism, the need for specialist grounds maintenance, and improvement to toilet facilities and greens on council owned facilities.
- Clubs identified a lack of external and internal funding, difficulty in retaining and recruiting members and lack of appropriate facilities – toilets especially at council owned or leased facilities with no disabled access.

5.6 Tennis

The assessment of demand for and supply of tennis courts falls outside the scope of the assessment methodology detailed in 'Towards a Level Playing Field' (Sport England 2003).

- Tennis courts are provided in a variety of settings, including schools, parks and both public and private sports grounds. They are provided for casual opportunities and formal competitive play. As with bowls, the demand for tennis is varied, ranging from facilities to accommodate formal league matches to casual games between friends and family.
- A total of 55 tennis courts (either casual access or via club membership / formal hire) are available across the District, providing 0.25 tennis courts per 1000 population.
- The current requirement based on the Lawn Tennis Association standard (against the population data of 321,617 for Wakefield) equates to 143 courts of which 99 should be floodlit.
- The current number of tennis courts identified is 80. This amounts to a shortfall of 63 courts against the LTA standard.

6. Policy Options

6.1 The policy options are considered for addressing the findings of the assessment undertaken for each sport. An overview of the options and their appropriateness for Wakefield are also considered. Drawing on this, a set of standards and recommendations are provided to address gaps and any deficiencies highlighted.

6.2 The vision for future provision of playing pitches in Wakefield, based on the findings of this study is to:

“Ensure the community has access to good quality, multi-pitch facilities, and changing and ancillary facilities, for organised sport, training, competition, and informal activity.”

6.3 It is clear from the appraisals that although there is no one policy option that will adequately address the assessment findings and issues and challenges emerging from these, a number do present a viable approach on which to base a future strategy.

6.4 However, a reality is that public sector funding is going to be reducing and not increasing – this means the context for delivery of a future strategy is focused on protecting existing provision and that new and improved facilities have to be realised through external funding (capital and revenue). This means the following:

- Ensuring current facilities are used as effectively as possible with clear management, maintenance and booking responsibilities
- Delivery of improvements through partnership working with private, other public and voluntary sectors
- Enabling leases and/or Community Asset Transfers to community sports hubs (multi-sport groups, collectives and social enterprises) where there are clear sports participation benefits, with appropriate access rights for schools, leagues and other user groups – this would require Dedicated Officer enabling support

6.5 The general strategy for the district comprises the following priority themes. Underpinning all options is the need for investment. This is a given in relation to the assessment results where across the board there are deficiencies in quality, particularly around changing provision and water logged pitches. The Playing Pitch Strategy must:

6.6 Maximise the impact of current assets and be protective of what is currently provided: For Wakefield Council this means taking a more holistic and co-ordinated view of its existing pitch stock (across directorates, i.e. including Education pitches on schools) and bringing into use facilities that do not currently have community use. In addition new facilities such as 3G pitches

should be considered at schools that are being considered for improvements, refurbishment or are to be rebuilt. Partnership funding for facilities should be discussed with the NGBs.

- 6.7 Be delivered in partnership: Linked to the above theme, it is important that the Council works in partnership (ongoing) to address the assessment findings. There are a number of key partners and stakeholders involved in the development of, and provision of sports pitches. The recommendations need 'buy in' from both internal and external partners, including Town and Parish Councils, Miners Welfares, and NGBs. Partnership working needs to be effective in minimising increases in maintenance and management costs, through design, co-location, community involvement, and Community Asset Transfer, ("community sport development led") and community sports hubs (where suitable and completed in the enabling way).
- 6.8 If leasing of some sites is pursued, there needs to be recognition that the Council does not simply divest of sites or its responsibilities to the community, but actually transfers time and expertise formerly used to manage sites to advising, training and supporting the "new providers".
- 6.9 There are possibly two major changes taking place in outdoor sports. Rugby Football League has already agreed the change from winter to a summer season starting from March 2012. The second is the consultation currently being undertaken by the Football Association on changes to the Youth Game. The changes to the Youth Football are likely to be sanctioned in May 2012 and come into place in the 2013/14 season. Both of these changes will have implications for the Council. Relevant Officers of the Council must work with the Rugby Football League and Football Association Governing Bodies to be prepared for these changes.
- 6.10 Maximise current investment opportunities and adopt a prioritised process of site identification to guide the development of new provision that uses external funding where available. Ensuring Section 106 monies / community infrastructure levy and other investment through the planning process and local regeneration is targeted at the right types of provision in the right areas is important. It is unlikely, even through maximising the above practices that all shortfalls in quantity and in particular quality will be met. Monies from developer contributions should in the main be targeted at improving the quality and value of existing sites. These sites are identified in Appendix 6 of the main report.
- 6.11 Link to the priorities and drivers of other strategies. Acknowledgement that Team Generation Rates (the numbers of people required to generate enough demand for a sports team) in some of the district wards are low (compared to district and national averages) and need to be considered. There will be a role for wider partners, such as local sports partnerships, in addressing some of the issues identified.

- 6.12 Prioritise multi-pitch and multi-sport sites initially - It is widely accepted that it is more cost effective to invest in sites benefiting a number of sports and securing year round use. This could take the form of the community sports hub where a number of local organisations come together with the wider community to develop and manage provision. On a practical level there is the potential for shared maintenance costs across a number of stakeholders and different sports. The hub would then be supported in the enabling role by the council. This option needs incentives for clubs to come together.
- 6.13 The policy options are summarised in Table 1.4: together with a brief evaluation of their relevance for Wakefield. It is clear from a review of the assessment findings that no one policy option will sufficiently address the deficiencies and issues highlighted. As a result our recommendations draw on a variety of these options.

Table 1.4: Policy Options

Policy Option	Most appropriate when...	Relevance for Wakefield
Changing the use of existing pitches	There is a large surplus in provision for one sport, and deficiency in others	Re-designation of existing senior football pitches which are clearly surplus to provision would help to address identified current and future pitch deficiencies in mini and junior football and summer rugby league. This option could also assist in focussing resources on multi-pitch sites which could become 'hubs' for outdoor sport/sports
Dual-use facilities and greater use of education pitches	There is a large stock of high quality education facilities not in community use, and commitment from schools to open their facilities for wider use	24 education owned sites already in use throughout the district, many with good links to clubs and community associations. A further 41 school sites have been identified currently with no community use, and there is an opportunity to bring these into play (Appendix 5 of the main report)
Enhancing carrying capacity through improving the quality of pitches	There is potential to improve a number of key sites	Pitches are generally of a good quality according to the visual inspection but overplaying will reduce capacity. A number of pitches are used beyond ideal capacity already. Identified Improvement requirements for sites are shown in Appendix 6 of the main report.
Bringing into play unmarked and disused facilities	There is land available that could be used for playing pitch provision which is currently disused or unmarked and could address some deficiencies	There are disused pitch sites identified but these are disused for a reason. Appendix 7 in the main report identifies sites with possible additional potential.

Policy Option	Most appropriate when...	Relevance for Wakefield
Management options, including long term leasing of pitches	There is a track record of this policy resulting in more effective investment and access to external funding, improvements in quality etc and where there is also adequate provision to service demand created by the emergence of new clubs / teams	Long-term leasing could enable clubs to secure funding although it can limit availability of pitches to the wider community.
Develop new facilities on new sites to meet future demand	There is a lack of provision overall and deficiencies across a number of sports which cannot be fully addressed by implementing the policy options outlined above	Possible option, at least for some sports. Where appropriate and if deliverable, this option could also be used to create a number of strategically located hub sites, with shared access to changing and other ancillary facilities, which represent good value in terms of investment.
Create opportunities for increased female participation	There is a notable lack of Women's and Girls team participating in outdoor sports such as Football, Rugby and Cricket.	The Council needs to consider the options for developing opportunities to engage women and girls in outdoor sport, especially Rugby Union, Football and Cricket. One option would be to consider strategically located multi-pitch sites where participants would have access to opportunities in a number of sports.
Rationalisation of existing pitches	A clear surplus of pitches has been identified even taking into account re-marking pitches to address other local deficiencies, and allowing some contingency for resting and rotation.	A significant surplus of senior football pitches has been identified; this most recent assessment re-enforces the previous findings of the 2005 study. The Council should consider disposal / change of use on a site by site basis and reflect the findings of the Open Space Strategy currently being undertaken.

7. Local Standards of Provision

- 7.1 In this section a number of recommendations for local standards of provision are made. The assessment findings are drawn upon to recommend the levels of provision required to meet anticipated future demand in terms of quantity, quality and access.
- 7.2 The need to set Local Standards for future playing pitch provision reflect the policy guidance of PPG17 (of which Towards a Level Playing Field is a

recognised and required component), which requires that quantity, quality and accessibility standards are applied following audit and assessment, to inform future planning policy and delivery of provision. Standards are set on the basis of required provision to meet both current needs and, where estimations have been possible, future demand and growth anticipated within specific sports.

7.3 Local standards have been set in relation to quantity and quality, based on:

- Assessment results and the adequacy of current provision to meet known and estimated demand;
- Anticipated changes to demand based on current participation rates;
- Anticipated changes to demand based on participation increases and demographic changes
- Current and desired quality of facilities.

Quantity standards:

7.4 Quantity standards have been derived on the basis of the assessment results and estimations of future demand. The recommended standards reflect the assessment results and findings of local consultation. Standards have been set to reflect pitch requirements to meet peak demand and are proposed for all types of natural turf pitches assessed. For the purpose of setting standards, the assessment has been undertaken for each pitch sport and appropriate sub-categories where different types or specification of pitch are required. This specifically concerns football where mini soccer teams and youth teams require appropriately sized pitches.

7.5 With mini soccer each team play 2 matches per session and pitches generally accommodate 2 or 3 games per session. For junior football, rugby, cricket and hockey, most junior teams make use of senior pitches where required.

7.6 The local standards recommended are based on the actual number of pitches required to meet current demand. It is also prudent to ensure that there is an adequate surplus to enable pitches to be taken out of use periodically for major renovation works. Advice from Sport and Landscape Development (a specialist natural turf consultancy) indicates that spare supply equating to 10% of the total required number of pitches would be prudent. This effectively allows every pitch to be taken out of use for a season once every ten years.

7.7 This allows time for any essential renovation and re-instatement of drainage works. A number of recommendations are made later in the report in consideration to meeting local standards of provision.

Table 1.5: Application of Quantity Standards

Pitch Type	Current Provision	Required Provision 2030	Surplus or Deficiency at Peak Demand
Mini Soccer	27	39	-12
Junior Football	47	63	-16
Senior Football	115	61	+54
Cricket	43	43	0
Rugby League Senior	42	29	+ 13
Rugby League Junior	6	16	- 10
Rugby Union Senior	19	10	+9
Rugby Union Junior	1	9	- 8
AGP (full size) Hockey	9	9	0

- 7.8 Table 1.5: shows that there is a deficiency of mini soccer and junior football pitches in Wakefield, a large surplus in provision for senior football and no deficit for cricket a surplus for rugby union and rugby league at senior pitch level but deficits in junior pitches and sufficient AGPs used for hockey if planning permission is given to Wakefield Hockey Club.
- 7.9 It needs to be kept in context and recognised that the deficiencies in junior football are met by teams utilising senior pitches. The quality of pitches also allows more matches to take place and the tournament format for mini soccer utilises pitches up to 3 times a session.
- 7.10 The findings are based on the assessments previously recorded in Section 4. We recommend the levels of required provision are adopted as local provision standards. However, they represent an increase in current levels. They therefore cannot be met fully in the short term unless the deficiencies are met by converting any surplus senior pitches into junior and mini.
- 7.11 In addition, Sports Development Officers and the Council Pitch providers need to discuss the implications of the new summer season for Rugby League commencing March 2012 and the new youth age groups and pitch sizes for football that are likely to be sanctioned by the Football association in May 2012 and come into affect in the 2013/14 football season

- 7.12 A number of recommendations are outlined below to seek to address the deficiencies. A number of policy options are considered and additional pitch provision could be secured through a number of policies.
- 7.13 On the basis that Sport England currently considers a Playing Pitch Strategy to be out of date if it has not been completed in the past three years it is suggested that this assessment is reviewed by Wakefield District in three years time.

Quality standards

- 7.14 Quality standards have been set on the basis of the quality assessment results and the categorisation of scored pitches using the electronic toolkit accompanying “*Toward a Level Playing Field*”. The quality standard is based on all pitches being rated within the “Good” classification. In simple terms, **the standard for playing pitch provision is “all pitches available for the community to use will be of a good standard”**. Ratings for pitches fall into the categories shown in Table 1.6:
- 7.15 Provision standards should be set and applied to identify deficiencies in provision. This has been done through the completion of quality assessments on pitches.

Table 1.6: Quality Categories

Playing Pitches		Ancillary / Changing Room Facilities	
Pitch Score	Pitch Rating	Site Score	Quality Rating
90% +	Excellent Pitch	90% +	Excellent Facilities
65% - 90%	A Good Pitch	60% - 80%	Good Facilities
55% - 64%	An Average Pitch	40% - 59%	Average Facilities
30% - 54%	A Below Average Pitch	30% - 39%	Poor Facilities
<30%	A Poor Pitch	< 30%	Very Poor Facilities

Access Standards:

- 7.16 Access standards are arguably more difficult to set for playing pitch provision than other types of green space facility. For example, provision standards for formal parks ordinarily take the form of a number of hectares of provision per 1,000 of the general population, with quality often linked to national standards (e.g. Green Flag Award). The access element of a provision standard is normally comprised of a distance threshold based on all residents residing within a set distance of a facility. Setting standards relating to access to playing pitches is difficult for a number of key reasons, including:
- Access can be affected directly by quality – some teams will play at higher standards than others and as result may require higher specifications of facility provision
 - The level of hire fees and charges can also affect access, although this does not appear to be a major factor in Wakefield
 - The presence of ancillary facilities also has a significant bearing on access – some leagues will not permit teams to play at venues not adequately served by changing rooms; and
 - Opinions on acceptable distance thresholds vary significantly, as identified through the consultation process. In many cases close proximity to a facility for home games is less relevant given that teams travel on alternate weeks for away games
- 7.17 In terms of geographical access to facilities, the research undertaken has sought to determine an acceptable catchment area for playing pitch sites through consulting with local people and sports clubs and assessing the quality and potential of existing provision. The study has found that there is a variance in acceptable travel time to pitch facilities ranging from 5 minutes to 45 minutes.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 There are a number of recommendations to address the findings of the assessment. These draw on the policy options above and include a number of general recommendations and those specific to each sport assessed. In developing these recommendations, we have reflected on the following:
- Playing pitches can play an important role in helping the Council deliver some of its corporate objectives by providing accessible spaces for local residents to participate in activities.
 - Playing pitches will be an important resource in helping the Council to achieve its participation and performance targets.
 - The location and accessibility of playing pitches to the local community remains an important factor when considering local provision and applying local standards.

8.2 A number of recommendations are made to address the assessment findings:

Playing Pitch Strategy Recommendations	
General	<p>G1 Given the findings of the assessment and the reliance on Council and Private Facilities there is a need to strengthen and develop partnership working with private providers, Governing Bodies and neighbouring authorities. Addressing the deficiencies recorded cannot be the sole responsibility of any one agency / organisation.</p> <p>G2 Explore and develop closer partnership working with Education and the role of school facilities to support mini and junior sports and potentially provide additional community accessible facilities for indoor cricket training. There is a likely need for this recommendation to be supported by revenue funding to support additional maintenance costs and administration relating to pitch bookings.</p> <p>G3 Community use agreements, to an agreed specification, should be required from future school and sports club redevelopment schemes. Agreements can be required through the planning process where: There will be a resulting loss in area or quantity of pitch provision This will aid the achievement of PPG17's objectives of remedying local deficiencies School playing fields are likely to have qualitative improvements, and there are identified qualitative deficiencies, whilst community use agreements should be required from future school redevelopment schemes.</p> <p>G4 Subject to resources, continue to develop regular consultation with pitch users to establish trend data in relation to satisfaction, ratings of quality and common pitch issues. This is partially undertaken via the pitch booking forms administered by the Council to users of public pitches, and through the Sports Development Team.</p> <p>G5 Work with clubs to aid club and sport development. There are clubs that have reached capacity in terms of expansion through success and would benefit from further support and assistance.</p> <p>G6 Improvement to sites and facilities is shown in Appendix 6 of the main report. Use this information to bring in partnership funding to invest in facilities and improve facilities. Section 106 funding off site funding could be targeted to improve these facilities as well as seeking funding and grants with NGB, and sport club partners.</p> <p>G7 Condition surveys on changing facilities should be undertaken at regular intervals to identify any remedial work that may be required, identify any additional disability access requirements and provide an estimated lifespan for the building.</p> <p>G8 Undertake a feasibility study into developing central venue/hub facility/facilities for clubs. A hub facility could also be used as the venue for developing girls and women's teams to participate in sports such as football, rugby union/league and cricket. A central hub would be ideal to deal with the new pitch sizes and number of pitches that will be needed to meet the demands of the changes to Youth Football.</p> <p>G9 Update the supply and demand information collated as part of the study on an annual basis as part of evaluating action and delivery. A full playing pitch assessment should be repeated every 3 years or as near as possible to fit in with the area planning process. This ongoing updating and monitoring process should be facilitated through a formal Playing Pitch Strategy Group, comprising representatives from the Council (sport and leisure, education assets, planning and grounds maintenance), NGBs and Sport England.</p>

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<p>Football</p>	<p>F1 The re-designation of existing good quality surplus senior football pitches to junior and mini pitches to address the current and future deficits in this type of provision, and realise a stock of high quality, high carrying capacity pitches.</p> <p>F2 Consider whether all existing senior football pitches continue to be marked as such also provides the opportunity to de-classify some existing pitch sites and retain as green space for a range of informal uses, and potentially future pitches as demand requires.</p> <p>F3 The type of senior football pitch that would be a priority for re-designation to mini or junior provision would be a good quality pitch, preferably multi-pitch or with the potential to become so, ideally with provision for training i.e. synthetic surfaces, served by at minimum toilets suitable for junior and mini players. Preferably with good changing facilities.</p> <p>F4 The type of site that would be a priority for investment would be an existing good quality multi-pitch site, or have the potential to become so (multi-pitch meaning mini, junior and senior pitches for either one sport, or a range of sports, plus ideally at least synthetic training provision), have existing changing provision of reasonable quality and that meet the needs of all users i.e. women and girls, disability participants etc (or facilities that could become so with limited investment) e.g. Pontefract Park and Empire Stores. Council and education pitches should be considered under this category.</p> <p>F5 Consider through the planning system additional facility that provides for the small sided game of football i.e. 'Goals' type of facility</p> <p>F6 The type of site that could potentially be considered for rationalisation would be one with a single pitch, where a pitch(es) is poor quality, and where there is poor quality or no changing facilities (or limited facilities i.e. no provision for women and girls, or not compliant with DDA). If poor quality pitches can be replaced with better quality provision through either re-designation/opening up access to other existing pitches on school sites, any capital gained through sale of sites should be ring-fenced for re-investment into pitch development and changing room improvement.</p> <p>F7 Although a comparison of TGRs for the district compared to national averages suggests relatively high levels of demand, there are some areas of the district where TGRs are significantly lower. Football development work should be focused on these areas.</p> <p>F8 Work with the West Riding FA and Sheffield and Hallamshire FA to develop Club Development within the district to develop the women and girls game, disability game and encourage clubs to become charter standard. A Wakefield Football Partnership should be considered so a Football Development plan can be developed and implemented.</p>
<p>Cricket</p>	<p>C1 As cricket develops further there will be a pressure on facilities particularly on a Saturday when most of the adult matches are played. If deficiencies start to occur with facilities due to higher demand Sunday league should be considered.</p> <p>C2 The Council must engage with the Wakefield Cricket Development Group that was reformed in 2010 and work with the Yorkshire Cricket Board to identify potential solutions and work within the parameters and priorities of the West Yorkshire Facilities Strategy. There is an opportunity to have a District wide development plan in place via the Wakefield Cricket Development Group.</p> <p>C3 Support is given to local clubs to maintain the quality and capacity of local facilities.</p> <p>C4 Support should be given to clubs that need to address issues with pavilions and</p>

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	<p>changing room facilities and refurbish these across the district.</p> <p>C5 Development of cricket would be appropriate in areas where there is currently little access to cricket e.g. in the Wards of Wakefield East, Wakefield North and Pontefract South.</p> <p>C6 There is a need for the Council to work with the YCB to improve upon access to indoor cricket facilities.</p> <p>C7 Primary Schools should have access to a safe surface indoors or outdoors on which to deliver its curriculum and/or out of school hours cricket activities. Primary School should also have access to Cricket Focus Clubs. Colourful usable play ground markings for cricket would also be effective.</p> <p>C8 Secondary Schools should have access to a safe surface indoors and or outdoors on which to deliver its curriculum and or out of school hour's activities. Every Secondary School should have access to an artificial match or practice playing surface either on a school site or a club site and every secondary school should have access to a sports hall with indoor nets.</p>
Rugby League	<p>RL1 The Council, Clubs and the RFL need to work in partnership to ensure that summer rugby league can take place in Wakefield.</p> <p>RL2 The Council to work with the NGB and clubs who wish to expand their playing facilities.</p> <p>RL3 The Council including the Children's Services to work with the NGB to identify a site for a rugby specific AGP and seek funding for such a pitch to assist with training requirements for rugby across the District.</p> <p>RL4 There are limited opportunities to play rugby league in the following wards in the district due to lack of clubs or pitch provision; Horbury and South Ossett, Pontefract South, South Elmsall and South Kirby, and Wakefield North. The sport should be promoted to these residents and a development plan for the sport should be implemented across the district.</p> <p>RL5 A development plan for Rugby League should be developed and implemented across the District.</p>
Rugby Union	<p>RU1 The Council to work with the NGB and clubs who wish to expand their playing facilities e.g. Sandall RUFC.</p> <p>RU2 The Council including Children Services to work with the NGB to identify a site for a rugby specific AGP and seek funding for such a pitch to assist with training requirements for rugby across the district.</p> <p>RU3 There are limited opportunities to play rugby union with only 7 of the 21 wards having facilities and clubs based within them. A development plan for the sport should be developed and implemented across the District.</p>
Hockey	<p>H1 The Council to work with the NGB and clubs who wish to expand their playing facilities e.g. Wakefield Hockey Club and supports the planning application for a new water based AGP at Wakefield Hockey Club.</p> <p>H2 With four main clubs in the district the Council should be in a position to work with these clubs to produce a development plan for Hockey across the district which includes Children Services.</p>
Bowls	<p>B1 Work with the local Crown Green Bowls Leagues and Clubs to increase the participation in bowls, increase participation amongst younger people, and only consider the closure of a bowls facility if a club was to disband.</p>

	<p>B2 Priority should be given to the improvement of 'below average' sites.</p> <p>B3 Review security measures at greens located in parks, in light of the reduction in staff presence on some sites.</p> <p>B4 Improve the publishing of information at parks about opportunities to play bowls</p>
Tennis	<p>T1 Engage with Yorkshire LTA to help deliver the LTA Peoples Play Strategy and increase participation at tennis courts by participating in LTA programmes and promoting tennis facilities.</p> <p>T2 Retain the current provision of tennis courts and work with key partners, Yorkshire LTA and private clubs to maintain quality and improve access for potential new participants.</p> <p>T3 Develop a programme of court improvement in the Council's Parks.</p> <p>T4 Ensure public courts have appropriate fencing, quality nets and equipment – all weather nets where appropriate, markings are clear and surfaces are clean and free of debris.</p> <p>T5 Develop a District wide tennis development plan in conjunction with the Yorkshire LTA and tennis clubs</p>

9. Implementation and Monitoring

- 9.1 A Playing Pitch Strategy Partnership Group representing a range of Council departments, such as Sport and Culture, Communities, and education, will take on the responsibility of delivering on the recommendations where possible, and monitoring developments to ensure the provision of sufficient quality of good playing pitches that are accessible across the district.

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