



# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## UPDATE REPORT AUGUST 2024

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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### GLOSSARY

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AP	Active Partnership
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
ASC	All Stars Cricket
BARLA	British Amateur Rugby League Association
CAT	Community Asset Transfer
CASC	Community Amateur Sports Club
CC	Cricket Club
CCB	Cheshire Cricket Board
CFA	Cheshire Football Association
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FF	Football Foundation
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FIT	Fields in Trust
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GMA	Grounds Management Association
HC	Hockey Club
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LCF	Lancashire Cricket Foundation
LFA	Liverpool Football Association
LFFP	Local Football Facility Plans
LMS	Last Man Stands
LPR	Local Plan Review
MES	Match Equivalent Sessions
NGB	National Governing Body
NHS	National Health Service
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NTP	Non Turf Pitch
PP	PitchPower
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
PQS	Performance Quality Standard
RFL	Rugby Football League
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RUFC	Rugby Union Football Club
S106	Section 106
SE	Sport England
TGR	Team Generation Rate
WR	World Rugby
U	Under

## **PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

This update report sets out the changes in the demand for and supply of playing pitches in Halton since the previous annual update was carried out by the Council in 2023. The baseline data is taken from the Halton Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) 2020.

The document includes updates to the overall supply and demand analysis for each of the sports based on the original Assessment Report. It also renews relevant sections from the Strategy & Action Plan document including recommendations, housing scenarios and site by site action plan.

Information has been provided by the Council and the relevant national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) for each sport regarding alterations in supply, quality (including ancillary provision) and affiliation data since the 2023 update.

Conducting annual reviews will help to keep the PPS live and up to date. This includes an update of the supply and demand data which is within this document (known as the Stage E process within the PPS guidance). There will come a point where the Steering Group will conclude that there have been significant changes to a sport or Study Area/Sub Area that require a full refresh of the Playing Pitch Strategy, or when the core data has aged beyond five years since its original capture. The Steering Group should scope the extent of the work (Stage A of the PPS Guidance). The refresh will involve following all stages and steps of Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance.

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## PART 2: FOOTBALL

### 2.1: Introduction

The organisations primarily responsible for the development of football in Halton are Liverpool and Cheshire FAs (LFA/CFA). 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.

#### **Consultation**

In order to update the data in this section of the report, consultation has been carried out with Liverpool and Cheshire FAs, the Football Foundation and the Council, as well as the provision of updated affiliation data (2023/24) and PitchPower quality assessment reports and the Halton Sports Partnership.

### 2.2: Supply

As seen in the table below, there has been an increase in community available provision on an authority wide level with an increase in youth 11v11, youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches. Notable changes in provision have come at Arley Drive which was previously unused, however, now accommodates one youth 11v11 pitch. There has also been the creation of five mini pitches at FPA Sports Hub.

Table 2.1: Comparison of supply of community available grass football pitches from 2020 to 2024

Analysis area	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Totals
<b>2020</b>						
Runcorn	12	9	5	9	10	<b>45</b>
Widnes	19	12	5	7	9	<b>52</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>2024</b>						
Runcorn	12	11	6	11	9	<b>49</b>
Widnes	14	12	5	10	13	<b>53</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>102</b>

The number of unavailable grass pitches has marginally reduced from 14 to 11 with the pitches at Moorfield Primary School, Pewithall Primary School and St Clement's Catholic Primary School now available for community use and used by football teams.

#### **Disused provision**

There is disused football provision at Hale Park, Birchfield Sports and Social Club, Moorfield Sports and Social Club, Prescot Road Playing Fields and Pavilions Club. Information surrounding these sites can be found in Part 9: Disused sites.

#### **Future provision**

Widnes FC is in the process of submitting plans to develop its current home ground King George V Playing Fields (Widnes). The Club has revised its plans based on Sport England comments from a previously submitted planning application (23/00008/FUL) which was withdrawn in March 2024.

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Its new plan (planning reference 24/00172/FUL) takes into consideration findings from the 2020 Halton PPS, and its identified grass pitch football shortfalls, with the proposed plan indicating the development of one stadia grass pitch (suitable for Step 4 football) one further adult grass pitch (training pitch), two youth 9v9, two mini 7v7 and three mini 5v5 grass pitches. It also includes the development of accompanying ancillary provision and a multi-use games area (MUGA) on a disused bowling green. The site would also be available for wider community use and not solely for Widnes FC and its multiple teams.

The Club would also require a long term agreement from the Council to secure its tenure and allow it to access relevant funds from NGBs such as the Premier League Stadium Fund.

Stakeholders (FF/CFAs/SE/the Council) indicate there are several issues regarding the application which need to be overcome before potential approval. These include, but are not limited to, the current planned location of hard standing which impedes the flexibility of future pitch reconfiguration and the upgrading of the current ancillary provision to meet relevant ground grading requirements. There is also a need to understand the cost implications of such a substantial development and where potential funding would be obtained.

Planning approval, 22/00004/FUL, has been obtained for the creation of a special education school called The Raise Academy off Naylor Road (WA8 0BS – Widnes Analysis Area). The application includes the creation of one mini 7v7 pitch and one small size 3G pitch with no sports lighting. There will be a community use agreement in situ once established with the hours of use being 18:00 – 21:00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 14:00 at the weekend.

## 2.3: Quality

The quality of football pitches across Halton in 2020 was assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the FA<sup>1</sup>) 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 (50-80%), Poor (<50%). The final quality ratings assigned to the sites also take into account the user quality ratings gathered from consultation.

Pitch quality was originally determined in 2020, with quality ratings reviewed as part of this 2024 update via consultation and through utilising more recent PitchPower reports.

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 are able to accommodate each week without it having a detrimental effect on quality. Conversely, well maintained pitches that are tended to regularly 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 compares the quality of pitches that are available for community use in Halton from the 2020 PPS and the update (2024).

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for football pitches

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Table 2.2: Pitch quality assessments (community use pitches)

Analysis area	Adult pitches			Youth pitches			Mini pitches		
	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor
<b>2020</b>									
Runcorn	-	3	9	-	5	9	-	10	9
Widnes	1	12	6	-	15	2	1	9	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2024</b>									
Runcorn	-	4	8	-	5	12	2	8	10
Widnes	4	8	2	3	12	2	4	12	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>

Since the previous study, the number of good quality pitches has increased by 11 with at least one good quality pitch now at the following sites: FPA Sports Hub, Halebank Recreation Ground, Jaguar Land Rover Sports and Social Club, APEC Taxis Stadium, St Micheals Primary School and Wilmere Lane Playing Fields.

Despite this most poor quality pitches are still located at Council sites such as Haddocks Wood Playing Fields, FPA Sports Hub, King George V Playing Fields, Prescott Road Playing Fields and Runcorn Heath Playing Fields.

The improvements in pitch quality have broadly come as a result as of Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (GPMF) linked to PitchPower assessments.

Identified quality changes have been based upon information provided through the PitchPower reports (Cheshire and Liverpool FAs/Football Foundation) as non-technical assessments have not been carried out as part of this update report. Quality scores that have not changed were checked and challenged with relevant stakeholders to ensure their accuracy. The summary of these changes can be found in Table 2.4. The Council did not indicate any other pitch quality alterations above those provided in the PitchPower reports.

### *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 FF's PitchPower web app to carry out an 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 web app 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 also required to submit a PitchPower assessment for each of their pitches as a condition of any grant funding application for FF grass pitch investment, such as the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund.

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



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Organisations receiving FF funding to improve their grass pitches must carry out two assessments a year, with at least one in the mandatory November – March window.

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 adult and youth 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 (PQS) rating system developed by the GMA, with the FF and Sport England agreeing alignment with the capacity guidance within the existing PPS Guidance. This alignment is shown in the table below.

Table 2.3: Agreed equivalent PPS quality rating for PQS ratings

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

In Halton, nine sites have received PitchPower assessments. The findings of these have resulted in the following overall quality changes.

Table 2.4: Summary of quality changes based on recent Pitch Power reports and FF consultation

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Comments
1	Arley Drive Playing Fields	Widnes	Site was previously unused and now contains two standard quality youth 9v9 pitches. Site has room for these pitches to be extended to youth 11v11 size if required.
19	Halebank Recreation Ground	Widnes	One adult pitch that has gone from standard to good quality based on PP reports.
30	APEC Taxis Stadium	Runcorn	One adult, three youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, two mini 7v7 and three mini 5v5 pitches. Two mini 5v5 pitches have changed from standard to good quality and one youth 11v11 has gone from standard to poor quality based on PP reports. All remaining pitch qualities have remained the same.
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	Widnes	One poor quality adult pitch that has improved to standard quality based on PP reports.
42	Runcorn Boys Club	Runcorn	One adult pitch that has gone from poor to standard quality based on PP reports.
45	Sandymoor School	Runcorn	One standard quality youth 11v11 pitch has gone from standard to poor quality based on PP reports.
49	St Clement's Catholic Primary School	Runcorn	One adult pitch that has gone from poor to standard quality based on PP reports.
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	One adult, two youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, one mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 all of which have gone from a standard to a good quality based on PP reports.

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Comments
73	FPA Sports Hub	Widnes	Site was previously unused and now contains three mini 5v5 (one good, one standard and one poor quality) and two mini 7v7 pitches (one standard and one poor quality). Pitch qualities are based on PP reports.

In addition to PitchPower, the FA has a general pitch improvement strategy, in partnership with the GMA. As part of this, it has a Pitch Advisory 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 FF and the FA have also recently developed a new Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (GPMF) that allows eligible organisations to apply for funding for maintenance assistance, consumables and/or equipment. Whilst local authorities are currently ineligible applicants through this fund, eligible organisations using local authority sites, typically clubs and leagues can apply provided they have evidenced landlord permission via a service level agreement.

Funding is awarded over a six-year period, with this including up to 100% of the total cost for years one and two and 66% of the cost in years three and four, which furthers tapers down to 33% for years five and six. Although a six-year fund, the grant terms and conditions cover a 10-year period to instil commitment from the recipient clubs.

## 2.4: Demand

As seen in the table below there has been an overall increase in demand for football in Halton with growth in youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 age groups. Comparatively there have been decreases in both adult and mini 5v5 formats, with the latter remaining approximately the same. Since 2020 there has been a total increase of 54 teams.

Table 2.5: Summary of competitive teams currently playing in Halton by age group

Analysis area	Adult Men's	Adult Women's	Youth 11v11 Boys	Youth 11v11 Girls	Youth 9v9 Boys	Youth 9v9 Girls	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
<b>2020</b>									
Runcorn	12	3	29	2	17	2	25	30	120
Widnes	24	2	27	2	16	2	17	22	112
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>232</b>
<b>2024</b>									
Runcorn	11	2	42	7	22	2	27	21	134
Widnes	21	1	32	10	24	2	32	30	152
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>286</b>
<b>% change</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>325%</b>	<b>33%</b>		<b>40%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>23%</b>

There has also been an increase in use of 11v11 size 3G pitches to meet competitive demand mainly due the conversion of the hockey suitable artificial grass pitch (AGP) to a 3G surface at Brookvale Recreation Centre. The total usage of 3G pitches for competitive matches has gone from 22 in 2020 to 33 teams.

*Future demand from population increases*

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The previous study (2020) used both population increases and club aspirational growth plans to quantify the future demand figures used in the overall supply and demand analysis. However, based on consultation with the respective CFAs and the FF, a different approach for future demand will be used for this update report.

As seen in the table above, a percentage change in the demand figures can be identified for each age group (male/female) based on current and historical affiliation data. Using this information together with strategic growth plans for football by the relevant NGBs (FF/LFA/CFA) an overall average growth of 23% will be applied to each format, excluding adult men's which has seen a decline in participation nationally.

For Halton this represents an increase of one adult women's team (0.5 match equivalent sessions), 21 youth 11v11 teams (10.5 match equivalent sessions), 12 youth 9v9 teams (six match equivalent sessions), 14 mini 7v7 teams (seven match equivalent sessions) and 12 mini 5v5 teams (six match equivalent sessions). This demand will be spread evenly across both the Runcorn and Widnes analysis areas where possible.

## 2.5: Supply and demand analysis

It should be noted that although not presented below a full review of site capacity has been carried out using the updated levels of supply and demand. This has been done as broadly speaking there have been marginally alterations on a site by site basis with most capacity remaining the same.

### *Spare capacity summary*

In 2020 actual spare capacity totalled 15.5 match equivalent sessions per week. Upon the refresh of the supply and demand the levels of spare capacity has marginally decreased to a total of 11.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 2.6: Summary of actual spare capacity in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
<b>2020</b>						
Runcorn	-	-	-	1	1	<b>2</b>
Widnes	6	4	0.5	1	2	<b>13.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15.5</b>
<b>2024</b>						
Runcorn	1.5	-	0.5	0.5	0.5	<b>3</b>
Widnes	3.5	1	1	1	2	<b>8.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>11.5</b>

Most actual spare capacity is still identified on adult pitches, although some is also identified on the remaining pitch types. Spare capacity has reduced the most on youth 11v11 pitches which correlates with increase in demand for this pitch type.

### *Overplay*

Overplay occurs when there is more play accommodated on a site than it is able to sustain, which can often be due to the low carrying capacity of pitches. In Halton, in the previous PPS, overplay totalled 13 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 2.7: Summary of overplay in match equivalent sessions per week

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Analysis area	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
<b>2020</b>						
Runcorn	1	4.5	4	-	-	<b>9.5</b>
Widnes	1	-	2.5	-	-	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2024</b>						
Runcorn	3.5	8.5	3.5	2	-	<b>17.5</b>
Widnes	2.5	1	4	1.5	0.5	<b>9.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>27</b>

As can be seen, Halton wide overplay has increased from 13 to 27 match equivalent sessions per week. It should be noted that shortfalls specifically on youth 9v9 pitches has increased. This is based on an increase in demand in conjunction with a decline in pitch quality. The sites listed below have at least one, or more, pitches that are overplayed:

- ✦ Frank Myler Pavilion
- ✦ Grange Academy
- ✦ Haddocks Wood Playing Fields
- ✦ King George V Playing Fields
- ✦ APEC Taxis Stadium
- ✦ Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy
- ✦ Pewithall Primary School
- ✦ Prescott Road Playing Fields
- ✦ Runcorn Heath Playing Fields
- ✦ Wade Deacon High School
- ✦ Sandymoor School
- ✦ St Micheals Primary School
- ✦ St Peter & St Paul Catholic College
- ✦ Westfield Primary School
- ✦ Weston County Primary School
- ✦ Holy Spirit RC Primary School
- ✦ Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy

Having considered supply and demand, the tables below identify current demand (i.e. spare capacity taking away overplay and any exported demand) in each of the analysis areas for each pitch type, based on match equivalent sessions. As mentioned above, future demand has been calculated to an average of 23% increase in demand for each age group apart from adult men's football based on increases evident within this document.

## Adult pitch analysis

Table 2.8: Supply and demand balance of adult pitches in match equivalent sessions per week

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
<b>2020</b>					
Runcorn	-	1	1	0.5	1.5
Widnes	6	1	5	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>2024</b>					
Runcorn	1.5	3.5	2	-	2
Widnes	3.5	2.5	1	0.5	0.5

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Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>

Since the original collation of data spare capacity on adult pitches has decreased from having spare capacity of four match equivalent sessions to a shortfall of one match equivalent session per week with a future shortfall of 1.5 match equivalent session per week. Capacity shortfalls remain focused in the Runcorn Analysis Area.

### ***Youth 11v11 pitch analysis***

Table 2.9: Supply and demand balance of youth 11v11 pitches in match equivalent sessions per week

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
<b>2020</b>					
Runcorn	-	4.5	4.5	1	5.5
Widnes	4	-	4	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>2024</b>					
Runcorn	-	8.5	8.5	5	13.5
Widnes	1	1		5.5	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>19</b>

Shortfalls on youth 11v11 pitches across Halton have increased significantly from 0.5 match equivalent session per week in 2020 to 8.5 match equivalent sessions per week in 2024. The previous spare capacity in the Widnes Analysis Area has completely from spare capacity of four match equivalent sessions per week to being at capacity. It must also be noted that several youth 11v11 teams are playing on adult pitches, meaning shortfalls would greatly increase should these sides transfer to the correct pitch type.

When including anticipated future demand this shortfall increased to 19 match equivalent sessions.

### ***Youth 9v9 pitch analysis***

Table 2.10: Supply and demand balance of youth 9v9 pitches in match equivalent sessions per week

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
<b>2020</b>					
Runcorn	-	4	4	0.5	4.5
Widnes	0.5	2.5	2	0.5	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2024</b>					
Runcorn	0.5	3.5	3	3	6
Widnes	1	4	3	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>

Comparatively to youth 11v11 provision the supply and demand analysis for youth 9v9 pitch types has remained the same with a shortfall of six match equivalent sessions per week. The

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only change has been the future deficit which has gone from seven to 12 match equivalent sessions per week.

### *Mini 7v7 pitch analysis*

Table 2.11: Supply and demand balance of mini 7v7 pitches in match equivalent sessions per week

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
<b>2020</b>					
Runcorn	1	-	1	-	1
Widnes	1	-	1	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2024</b>					
Runcorn	0.5	2	1.5	3.5	5
Widnes	1	1.5	0.5	3.5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>

There has been a decrease in capacity on mini 7v7 pitch types since the original collation of data which sees spare capacity of two match equivalent sessions per week turned into a shortfall of two match equivalent sessions per week. This shortfall increases to nine match equivalent sessions per week when factoring in future demand.

### *Mini 5v5 pitch analysis*

Table 2.12: Supply and demand balance of mini 5v5 pitches in match equivalent sessions per week

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
<b>2020</b>					
Runcorn	1	-	1	3	2
Widnes	2	-	2	4.5	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>2024</b>					
Runcorn	0.5	-	0.5	3	2.5
Widnes	2	0.5	1.5	3	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>

Currently, mini 5v5 pitches have minimal spare capacity of two match equivalent sessions per week. This has marginally decreased by one match equivalent session. After future demand is included, this spare capacity is alleviated with an overall shortfall of four match equivalent sessions being established.

## **2.6: Conclusion**

Using the supply and demand analysis tables, it is determined that there is current spare capacity mini 5v5 pitches, with shortfalls on all remaining pitch types. After factoring in future demand from anticipated growth, based on historical increases since 2020, shortfalls are evident on all pitch types with significant shortfalls being on youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitch types.

Table 2.13: Summary of supply and demand in match equivalent sessions per week

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Pitch type	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
<b>2020</b>					
Adult	6	2	4	2.5	1.5
Youth 11v11	4	4.5	0.5	3	3.5
Youth 9v9	0.5	6.5	6	1	7
Mini 7v7	2	-	2	-	2
Mini 5v5	3	-	3	7.5	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11.5</b>
<b>2024</b>					
Adult	5	6	1	0.5	1.5
Youth 11v11	1	9.5	8.5	10.5	19
Youth 9v9	1.5	7.5	6	6	12
Mini 7v7	1.5	3.5	2	7	9
Mini 5v5	2.5	0.5	2	6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>45.5</b>

When compared to 2020, the overall supply and demand has worsened in Halton, as shortfalls are now evident on adult and mini 7v7 pitch types. For adult pitches this due to the reduction of community available grass pitches, whereas, for mini 7v7 pitch types this is due to an increase in demand.

Although there have been improvements in quality, this is only at specific sites, with most demand still actively using poor quality pitches at Council sites such as Haddocks Wood Playing Fields, FPA Sports Hub, King George V Playing Fields, Prescott Road Playing Fields and Runcorn Heath Playing Fields.

Shortfalls for youth 11v11 pitches have also worsened due to an increase in demand of 31 teams. This increase in youth 11v11 teams has also contributed to the overplay in adult provision as older youth teams, such as U16s, U17s and U18s, accessing adult pitches rather than dedicated youth 11v11 pitches to meet their demand requirements.

Future demand, which is based on an average historical growth in participation, identifies current shortfalls are to worsen particularly on youth pitches. In addition, the current spare capacity on mini 5v5 pitches is anticipated to be alleviated with a minor deficit arising.

### Football – grass pitch summary

- ▶ **Using the supply and demand analysis tables, it is determined that there is current spare capacity on mini 5v5 pitches in Halton with shortfalls on all remaining pitch types.**
- ▶ **In comparison to 2020, the overall supply and demand position has worsened in Halton, as shortfalls are now evident on adult and mini 7v7 pitch types.**
- ▶ **When factoring in future demand the overall shortfall worsens significantly from 15.5 to 45.5 match equivalent sessions.**
- ▶ The audit identifies a total of 102 community available grass football pitches within Halton. An increase of 7% since the 2020 study from 97 pitches.
- ▶ Previously unused site, Arley Drive, is now actively used for football.
- ▶ There is disused football provision at Hale Park, Birchfield Sports and Social Club, Moorfield Sports and Social Club, Prescott Road Playing Fields and Pavilions Club.
- ▶ Widnes FC is in the process of submitting plans to develop its current home ground King George V Playing Fields (Widnes).
- ▶ Broadly pitch quality has increased since 2020 with more good quality pitches. With this being said the majority of poor quality provision is still located at Council sites.
- ▶ Halton with growth in youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 age groups. Comparatively there have been decreases in both adult and mini 5v5 formats. Since 2020 there has been a total increase of 54 teams.
- ▶ In 2020 actual spare capacity totalled 15.5 match equivalent sessions. Upon the refresh of the supply and demand the levels of spare capacity has marginally decreased to a total of 11.5 match equivalent sessions.
- ▶ Halton wide overplay has increased from 13 to 27 match equivalent sessions per week. It should be noted that shortfalls specifically on youth 9v9 pitches has increased.



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

### 3.1: Introduction

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 3G Pitch Register. As such, in addition to training demand, 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 union, more commonly known as 'Regulation 22', which provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for the sport. The artificial surface standards identified allows contact training and matches to be played on surfaces that meet the required standard, meaning full contact activity, including tackling, rucking, mauling and lineouts, 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 suitable to be accommodated on 3G pitches for training and match play include American football and lacrosse. Many test contractors 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.

EH'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.

### ***Consultation***

In order to update this section consultation has been carried out with Liverpool and Cheshire FAs, the Football Foundation, the Halton Sports Partnership and the Council.

### 3.2: Supply

The recommended dimensions for a full size 3G pitch for football are 100 x 64 metres. This extends to an area of 106 x 70 metres with the recommended minimum three metre run off area included. These dimensions allow for all age group match play to take place including adults, youth 11v11 and younger age groups via overmarked pitches e.g., the marking out of two youth 9v9 pitches for under 11/12s.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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If a new pitch is proposed to measure below the recommended dimensions, then justification must be provided for this in relation to the identified needs it will provide for and/or site constraints. In doing so, the impacts of a reduced pitch size in meeting current and future needs must be considered e.g., a pitch not providing the recommended dimensions for adult match play and/or only being able to accommodate one rather than two overmarked 9v9 pitches. This justification needs to be included in the planning application details submitted to the relevant Local Planning Authority for the new pitch.

Unless otherwise stated and justified for an individual pitch, proposals in this PPS for any new 3G artificial grass pitches are based on providing them to the recommended dimensions.

For the purposes of this report, please note that 3G pitches are separated into two categories, with these being 11v11 pitches and smaller size pitches. The 11v11 pitches include all those considered to be full size as per the definition above, as well as some marginally undersized ones that can still accommodate 11v11 football (anything larger than 91 x 55 metres). Nationally, many are slightly smaller than full size due to being converted from sand-based provision. Smaller size pitches are all those that do not meet the required dimensions for any form of 11v11 football.

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Table 3.1: 11v11 size 3G pitches in Halton

Analysis area	Site ID	Site name	Community use?	Post code	Size	Sports lighting?	Measurements <sup>2</sup>	Certification	Expiry
Runcorn	7	Brookvale Recreation Centre	Yes	WA7 6EP	11v11	Yes	100x64	FIFA	31/05/26
Runcorn	15	Grange Academy	Yes	WA7 5DX	11v11	Yes	96x56	-	-
Runcorn	23	Heath Leisure	Yes	WA7 4QX	Small	Yes	25x15	-	-
Widnes	37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	Yes	WA8 7HU	11v11	Yes	100x64	FA	31/05/26
Runcorn	45	Sandymoor School	Yes	WA7 1QU	Small	Yes	82x50	FA	31/05/25
Widnes	46	DCBL Stadium Halton	No	WA8 7DZ	11v11	Yes	112x68	FIFA, World Rugby RFL	31/05/26 24/10/25 Unknown
Widnes	56	Wade Deacon High School	Yes <sup>3</sup>	WA8 7TD	11v11	Yes	100x64	-	-

In total across Halton there are five 11v11 size 3G pitches and two small size pitches with one each located at Sandymoor School and Heath Leisure. Since the original audit in 2020 there has been an overall increase of one 11v11 pitch, this being the conversion of the hockey suitable AGP at Brookvale Recreation Centre to a 3G surface in 2022. There has also been an increase of one small size pitch at Heath Leisure which was created circa 2019 shortly after the completion of the original PPS. The only other changes are the pitch at Sandymoor School now being considered community available, in comparison to the pitch at DCBL Stadium Halton which is now considered to be unavailable for community use. It should be noted that the usage of the pitch at Sandymoor School is through a licence agreement with the Sandymoor Parish Council rather than a formal community use agreement.

Information gathered as part of the 2024 refresh indicates that pitch has reduced accessibility for community clubs particularly midweek for training demand. Widnes Vikings RLFC now regularly use the pitch in evenings for training purposes rather than during the day. Similarly, Widnes FC use the facilities midweek to meet its training demand. Both clubs also use the pitch to meet competitive fixtures at the weekend.

### *Governing Body Certification*

The 11v11 pitches at Brookvale Recreation Centre, Ormiston Chadwick Academy, Sandymoor School and DCBL Stadium Halton are all either FIFA or FA certified and on the FA Register to accommodate match play demand. The pitch at the latter site is also WR and RFL compliant. The pitch at Wade Deacon High School is known to be used to accommodate both training and competitive demand from Pex Hill FC despite not being official certified or registered for match play use.

<sup>2</sup> Size is in metres

<sup>3</sup> This pitch is used by Pex Hill FC through a self management agreement and it not available for wider community access.

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## ***Future provision***

The Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) in 2019 identifies two potential 11v11 size 3G projects; one being at Frank Myler Pavilion (Widnes Analysis Area), and one being generalised to the Runcorn Analysis Area. Since the 2020 PPS there has been one 11v11 size 3G development in the Runcorn Analysis Area (Brookvale Recreation Centre) and no developments within the Widnes Analysis Area. The aforementioned development was an area wide project identified within the LFFP.

In addition to these developments identified in the Local Football Facility Plan, which is due to be updated with information from this document, there are two more potential projects identified through consultation with Halton Council, Liverpool and Cheshire FAs and the Football Foundation which could be considered as detailed below.

There are known aspirations to create a 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitch at St Peter & St Paul Catholic College (Widnes Analysis Area). Although no official plans have been submitted the potential project is believed to link to the current users of the grass pitches on the site, and the wider football community.

Runcorn Linnets FC also has ambitions to establish an 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitch at APEC Taxis Stadium (Runcorn Analysis Area) although again no official plans have been submitted. This is in addition the hybrid pitch which is already on site within the stadium.

It should be noted that both these clubs, Runcorn Linnets FC and Widnes FC, are National League System football clubs with multiple youth and mini teams (31 and 42 teams respectively). Any development of 3G pitch provision would mainly cater for training and competitive demand for each of the club's adult men's first teams, rather than providing a full community use programme for the full range of youth and mini teams. This being said, the development of 3G provision could provide the potential to free up availability on other football provision which would increase overall capacity across Halton.

As mentioned in Part 2: Football, there has been planning approved for the creation of a small size 3G pitch without sports lighting at The Raise Academy off Naylor Road (WA8 0BS – Widnes Analysis Area). There will be a community use agreement in situ once established with the hours of use being 18:00 – 21:00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 14:00 at the weekend.

### **3.3: Quality**

Depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of an artificial grass pitch 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 pitch replacement funds be put into place by providers to enable long-term sustainability, ongoing repairs and future refurbishment beyond this period.

The table below examines the age and quality of all 11v11 size and small 3G pitches in Halton from the 2020 PPS and their current quality (2024).

Table 3.2: Age and quality of community available 11v11 size 3G pitches

Analysis area	Site ID	Site	Year installed/ resurfaced	Size	Quality (2020)	Quality (2024)
Runcorn	7	Brookvale Recreation Centre	2022	11v11	N/A	Good

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Analysis area	Site ID	Site	Year installed/ resurfaced	Size	Quality (2020)	Quality (2024)
Runcorn	15	Grange Academy	2013	11v11	Standard	Poor
Runcorn	23	Heath Leisure	2019	Small	N/A	Good
Widnes	37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	2017	11v11	Good	Standard
Runcorn	45	Sandymoor School	2019	Small	Good	Good
Widnes	46	DCBL Stadium Halton	2019	11v11	Good	Good
Widnes	56	Wade Deacon High School	2013	11v11	Standard	Poor

Pitches at Sandymoor School, DCBL Stadium and Brookvale Recreation Centre are all considered to be good quality having all been refurbished within the previous five years, whereas the pitch at Ormiston Chadwick Academy has reduced from good to standard quality.

The provision at Grange Academy and Wade Deacon High School has also reduced in quality from standard to poor quality and is now beyond their recommended lifespan of ten years.

### *Management and security of tenure*

The pitches at Brookvale Recreation Centre and DCBL Stadium Halton are managed by the Council. It should be noted the latter site has a tenant's agreement in place with Widnes Vikings RLFC which guarantees the Club secured access to the 3G pitch for a set number of hour a week.

Provision at Grange Academy and Wade Deacon High School is managed internally by the school whereas Ormiston Chadwick Academy use Edu Lettings which manages the bookings.

### *Availability and usage*

Previous booking information was not made available meaning details on the pitch capacity was unknown. Due to the aforementioned change in contractors, a more detailed analysis of the availability of pitch can be obtained.

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).

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Table 3.3: Summary of 11v11 size 3G pitch availability

Site ID	Site	Size	Availability	Midweek capacity usage	Weekend capacity usage
7	Brookvale Recreation Centre	11v11	Reserved for school use 09:00–17:00 before opening to the community from 17:00–22:00 midweek. At weekends, the pitch is available to the community from 10:00-17:00. As such, it is also available for the full 30 hours per week.	94%	75%
15	Grange Academy	11v11	Unknown	-	-
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	11v11	Reserved for school use 09:00–16:00 before opening to the community from 16:00–21:30. At weekends, the pitch is available to the community from 08:00-20:00. As such, it is also available for the full 34 hours per week.	83%	69%
46	DCBL Stadium Halton	11v11	Considered unavailable for community use due to reduced accessibility amongst use by Widnes Vikings RLFC and Widnes FC.	-	-
56	Wade Deacon High School	11v11	Exact hours of usage are unknown however it is solely used by Pex Hill FC both midweek and at the weekend.	-	-

As mentioned above, the provision at DCBL Stadium Halton is no longer considered available for community use as there is limited access for community clubs. The pitch is not available for use at the weekend as it is used for Widnes FC, City of Liverpool FC and Widnes Vikings RLFC. It is also unavailable on Fridays to the community and has approximately only two hours free Monday to Thursday during peak time for community clubs. The pitch during the evenings is used by Widnes Vikings Foundation, Widnes Vikings RLFC (Women’s Team), Widnes FC and Halton Farnworth (rugby and football teams).

It is worth noting that demand from City of Liverpool FC is imported into Halton to meet NLS ground grading requirement which are not currently met in the neighbouring authority of Knowsley. This is a two year agreement which will end in 2026.

## 3.4: Supply and demand analysis

### *FA training scenario*

The FA considers high quality third generation artificial grass pitches as an essential tool in promoting coach and player development. The FA can support intensive use and as such are great assets for both playing and training. Primarily such facilities have been installed for community use and training, however, are increasingly used for competition which The FA wholly supports.

The FA's long-term ambition is to provide every affiliated team in England the opportunity to train once per week on sports lit 3G surface, together with priority access for every Charter Standard Community Club through a partnership agreement. The FA standard is calculated by using the latest Sport England research "AGPs State of the Nation March 2012" assuming that 51% of AGP usage is by sports clubs when factoring in the number of training slots available per pitch at peak times. It is estimated that one 11v11 AGP can service 38 teams.

For the model, in addition to 11v11 pitches being included, some smaller sized pitches can also be incorporated as nationally many are suitable for accommodating training demand, especially larger ones.

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 11v11 size pitch (0.75 to 0.5 pitches<sup>4</sup>), whilst a pitch that is large enough for mini matches (but not youth or adult) is the equivalent of quarter of a 11v11 size pitch (0.25 pitches<sup>5</sup>). Any pitch smaller than this is discounted as they are too small to accommodate purposeful training activity (although it is recognised that they can meet wider community needs), as are any pitches that are unavailable for community use.

For the purposes of this report and based on it size the pitch at Sandymoor School equates to 0.75 equivalents, whereas the pitch at Heath Leisure is considered too small to accommodate any meaningful training demand (25mx15m).

The model assumes that all pitches are fully available for club use at peak time when in practice a number of pitches operate commercial small sided leagues which reduce capacity available. It also projects all football teams as training on 11v11 size 3G pitches when in practice a proportion of football training demand should be retained on sand based AGPs in order to maintain financial and commercial sustainability of these pitches.

When applying the above methodology in 2020 on an analysis area level there was a need for an additional two 11v11 size 3G pitch equivalents solely within the Runcorn Analysis Area.

Table 3.4: Current demand for 3G pitches in Halton for affiliated football team training (38 teams per pitch)

Analysis area	Current number of teams	Current requirement	Current number of 11v11 size 3G pitches	Current shortfall
<b>2020</b>	-	-	-	-
Runcorn	120	3.15 - <b>3</b>	1	2
Widnes	112	2.94 - <b>3</b>	3	-
<b>2024</b>	-	-	-	-

<sup>4</sup> Between 73m x 46m and 82m x 50m

<sup>5</sup> Between 37m x 27m and 55m x 37m

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Analysis area	Current number of teams	Current requirement	Current number of 11v11 size 3G pitches	Current shortfall
Runcorn	134	3.52 – 3.5	2.75	0.75
Widnes	150	3.94 - 4	2	2

It should be noted that there has been a change in the current number of 11v11 size 3G pitches for the 2024 analysis. There has been an increase of 1.5 11v11 size 3G pitch equivalents in the Runcorn Analysis Area due to provision at Sandymoor School now being considered available for community use in addition to the refurbishment of the hockey suitable AGP at Brookvale Recreation Centre to a 3G surface.

In comparison, there has been a reduction of capacity equivalent to one 11v11 size 3G pitch in the Widnes Analysis Area. Based on findings within this document the pitch at DCBL Stadium Halton is no longer considered as accessible for wider community use (outside of usage from Widnes Vikings RLFC and Widnes FC).

Comparatively in 2024, there has been an increase in the overall shortfall of provision mainly due to the increase in demand figures. The shortfall in the Runcorn Analysis Area has decreased from two to one 11v11 size 3G pitches, despite an increase in demand, due to the aforementioned developments at Sandymoor School and Brookvale Recreation Centre.

In the Widnes Analysis Area, the deficit has increased from none to two 11v11 size 3G pitches. This is based upon an increase in demand and the fact DCBL Stadium Halton now considered not available for wider community use.

The table below explores what the requirement for 3G provision would be when factoring in the future demand referenced in Part 2: Football.

Table 3.5: Future demand for 3G pitches in Halton for affiliated football team training (38 teams per pitch)

Analysis area	Future number of teams	Future requirement	Current number of 11v11 size 3G pitches	Future shortfall
<b>2020</b>	-	-	-	-
Runcorn	130	3.42 – 3	1	2
Widnes	130	3.42 – 3	3	-
<b>2024</b>	-	-	-	-
Runcorn	159	4.18 – 4.25	2.75	1.5
Widnes	161	4.23 – 4.25	2	2.25

Overall, the shortfall would increase to 3.75 11v11 size pitch equivalents which is an increase of 0.25 in the Widnes Analysis Area and an increase of 0.75 in the Runcorn Analysis Area.

### *Rugby union and rugby league*

There is one 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitch in Halton located at DCBL Stadium Halton. This currently meets training and competitive demand from Widnes Vikings RLFC and Widnes FC and offers little capacity for further external community users.



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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Shortfalls exist for rugby union (Runcorn and Widnes analysis areas) and rugby league (Widnes Analysis Area) grass pitches with aspirations evident, particularly for rugby league, to access more artificial provision for training in order to alleviate overplay.

As a result, gaining greater access for community clubs for the provision at DCBL Stadium Halton should be explored. Alternatively, more WR and RFL compliant 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitch provision should be established. This can be achieved through refurbishing current provision when required or be implemented when creating new provision.

### **3.5: Conclusion**

In conclusion, there is an insufficient supply of 11v11 size 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated future training demand based on the FA training model in Halton. As such, it is determined that an increase in provision is required. In addition, as most of the provision is either FA or FIFA registered there is a need to maximise pitches for competitive demand.

There are no formal sites currently identified for a potential 11v11 size sports lit 3G development within the Runcorn Analysis Area, however, solely based on size, aspirations, and current infrastructure the following sites could be explored; Haddocks Wood Playing Field, APEC Taxis Stadium, Runcorn Heath Playing Fields and Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields. Similarly for the Widnes Analysis Area the subsequent sites could be explored: Frank Myler Pavilion, King George V Playing Fields, Leigh Recreation Playing Fields, Saints Peter & Paul Catholic High School and Wilmere Lane Playing Fields.

As mentioned above, Runcorn Linnets FC (APEC Taxis Stadium) and Widnes FC (Saints Peter & Paul Catholic High School/King George V playing fields) are National League System football clubs with multiple youth and mini teams (31 and 42 teams respectively).

When also taking into consideration shortfalls in grass rugby union and rugby league pitches any new 11v11 size 3G pitches should be examined for multi-sport use (WR/RFL compliance). Alternatively, there is a potential case to deliver and sustain more than the FA Training Scenario depending on levels of rugby league and rugby union requirements.

Furthermore, to ensure that current supply and any future supply are maintained to a good enough standard to accommodate demand, providers are encouraged to put pitch replacement funds in place to ensure long-term sustainability. This will allow for re-surfacing to take place when required and will ensure that FA Registration can be retained.

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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## 3G summary

- ◀ **There is an insufficient supply of 11v11 size 3G pitches to meet current for football in Halton with a need for 0.75 in the Runcorn Analysis Area and two in the Widnes Analysis Area.**
- ◀ **In comparison to 2020, there has been an increase in the overall shortfall by an additional 0.75 11v11 size equivalents.**
- ◀ When factoring in anticipated future demand this shortfall increases by one 11v11 pitch equivalents.
- ◀ There are five 11v11 size 3G pitches in Halton with all but one available for community use (DCBL Stadium Halton). The community available pitches are spread evenly with two in both the Runcorn and Widnes analysis areas.
- ◀ The pitch at DCBL Stadium Halton was previously (2020) considered available, however, it is now mainly used by semi professional and professional clubs leaving limited capacity for wider community use.
- ◀ In addition, there is also two smaller size community available 3G pitch servicing Halton located at Sandymoor School and Heath Leisure, respectively.
- ◀ The pitches at Brookvale Recreation Centre, Ormiston Chadwick Academy, Sandymoor School and DCBL Stadium Halton are either FIFA or FA certified and, on the FA, 3G Pitch Register, with the latter also WR and RFL compliant.
- ◀ Pitches at Sandymoor School, DCBL Stadium and Brookvale Recreation Centre are all considered to be good quality having all been refurbished within the previous five years, whereas the pitch at Ormiston Chadwick Academy has reduced from good to standard quality.
- ◀ The provision at Grange Academy and Wade Deacon High School have also reduced in quality from standard to poor quality. Neither is on the FA 3G Pitch Register.
- ◀ There are aspirations to create 3G pitch provision at St Peter & St Paul Catholic School and APEC Taxis Stadium.
- ◀ As the only WR compliant 3G is not available for community use there is no WR compliant 3G available for the community game.

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## PART 4: CRICKET

### 4.1: Introduction

The Cheshire Cricket Board (CCB) is the main governing and representative body for Cricket within Halton. 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 Halton. It is currently working with the ECB on delivering its Strategy, 'Inspiring Generations', which has been live since 2020.

#### **County Facilities Strategy**

The CCB has recently completed its County Facilities Strategy (CFS) in partnership with the ECB. The CFS is a ten-year plan which involves engagement with key stakeholders, including, leagues, active partnerships, county pitch advisors and Sport England.

To inform the strategies, the ECB has set out guidelines to ensure that the following facilities are considered throughout the development of the strategies:

- ◆ Traditional facilities (pitches, outfield, pavilions, practice areas)
- ◆ Non-traditional facilities (multi-use games areas, tapeball/softball spaces, courts/cages)
- ◆ Indoor facilities (multi use halls, cricket specific halls, match play venues)

The CFS is to be used to shape investment decisions and priorities for CCB moving forward.

#### **Consultation**

In order to update this section of the report, consultation has been carried out with CCB, ECB, Halton Sports Partnership and the Council.

### 4.2: Supply

As seen in the table below, there has been no change in number of community available grass cricket squares since the original PPS, with there still being one in each analysis area.

Table 4.1: Summary of number of grass wicket squares across Halton

Analysis area	No. of grass squares
Runcorn	1
Widnes	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>

The table below identifies the active cricket sites in Halton in addition to the number of senior grass, junior grass and artificial non-turf wickets (NTPs). For reference a junior wicket is less than 22 yards in length.

Table 4.2: Summary of cricket provision in Halton

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Post code	No. of squares	No. of wickets		
					Senior grass	Junior grass	NTPs
44	Runcorn Sports Club	Runcorn	WA7 4SD	1	11	2	-
61	Widnes Cricket Club	Widnes	WA8 9LA	1	10	4	1

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The ECB highlights that NTPs which follow its TS6 guidance on performance standards are suitable for high level, senior play and are considered able to take 60 matches per season, although this may include training sessions via the use of mobile nets.

In Halton, there is just one NTP accompanying a grass wicket square. This is at Widnes Cricket Club. In addition, there is one standalone NTP located at Cronton Sixth Form College albeit this is poor quality and considered disused by the College.

### ***Disused provision***

There is disused cricket provision at Birchfield Sports and Social Club and Moorfield Sports and Social Club. Information surrounding these sites can be found in Part 9 Disused sites.

The main reason Moorfield CC folded was due to price increases from the former management company on the site, with players dispersing to other clubs in the locality and therefore increasing demand elsewhere.

Cricket (Birchfield Park CC) was played at the Birchfield Sports and Social Club until the site's closure in 2020. Widnes CC wish to open discussions to bring the cricket square back into use, but to date have been unable to establish contact with the landowner.

### ***Future developments***

Runcorn CC mentioned in the 2023 update for aspirations for a NTP and supplementary grass wickets in addition to upgrading maintenance machinery which was damaged during a flood in winter 2022.

### **4.3: Quality**

As part of the PPS guidance, there are three levels to assessing the quality of cricket pitches: good, standard and poor. Maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of cricket; if the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous.

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows: Good (>80%), Standard (51-80%), Poor (50% and below). The final quality ratings assigned to the sites also take into account the user quality ratings gathered from consultation.

The quality of the squares at Runcorn Sports Club and Widnes Cricket Club are good quality which is the same as the both the PPS audit and PPS update. With this being said, the condition of the NTP accompanying the square at Widnes Cricket Club has worsened and requires improvements.

Widnes CC is exploring potential option to install new outfield drainage, however, at this stage it is considered purely aspirational.

PitchPower reports are anticipated to be available to ECB County Pitch Advisors in 2024 with the quality ratings referenced above being based upon historical data and current understanding.

### ***Ancillary facilities***

Runcorn Sports Club submitted a planning application (23/00130/FUL) in March 2023 for a proposed extension and remodel of its existing ancillary provision to ensure its long term

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viability and make it more accessible for all. A verdict on the application is anticipated in Spring 2024.

Based on evidence within the 2023 update Widnes CC secured grant funding to upgrade its changing rooms and showering facilities to make them more approachable for women and girl members.

## *Training facilities*

Both clubs have access to non turf practice nets on their sites with each planning to either refurbish or replace their nets in the near future. Widnes CC current practice nets back onto the outfield meaning they cannot be used at the same time a fixture is being played. The Club is looking to relocate them however options are limited. It also is exploring options to put a roof over the nets so they can be used during the winter.

Runcorn CC would like to explore the idea of some additional grass practice wickets and are also considering installing an NTP to alleviate demand on the current grass pitches and increase capacity.

## **4.4: Demand**

As seen in the table below, overall demand figures have remained reasonably static since the original study. Runcorn CC has reduced by one junior girls team whereas Widnes CC has reduced by two junior boys teams.

Table 4.3: Summary of number of competitive teams in Halton

Club name	Senior men's	Senior women's	Junior boys'	Junior girls'	Total
<b>2020</b>					
Runcorn CC	3	1	4	1	<b>9</b>
Widnes CC	3	-	6	-	<b>9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2024</b>					
Runcorn CC	4	1	4	-	<b>9</b>
Widnes CC	3	1	4	-	<b>8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17</b>

The women's softball teams at both Runcorn and Widnes Cricket League have dedicated grass wickets on the square, although for some matches (festivals) the outfield is used to enable multiple games to take place at once.

Both clubs will also be running the All Stars cricket development programme in 2024, however, neither will be operating Dynamos sessions.

## ***Future demand from population increases***

Based on the previous study, which used population growth to 2037 (in line with the current Local Plan) to determine future demand, there is not enough growth to create a whole team across any of the age groups.

**4.5: Supply and demand 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 pitch 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 presents the current pitch stock available for cricket and illustrates the number of competitive matches per season per square.

For good quality squares, capacity is considered to be five matches per 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 safe for play.

The number of matches played by each team has been derived from consultation with the clubs. Where consultation was not possible, the 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

Please note that non-turf wickets have been discounted from the table below. No non-turf wicket squares are recorded as accommodating more than 60 matches per season; therefore, all non-turf wickets are considered to have spare capacity. This translates to actual spare capacity for junior cricket as peak time is midweek, whereby non-turf wickets are more commonly used and matches can be played on a variety of days.

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 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.

Table 4.4: Capacity of cricket squares in Halton 2024

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Com use?	Post code	Security of tenure	No. of squares	Pitch quality	No. of grass wickets	Type of wicket	Accumulative grass capacity (sessions per season)	Actual play (sessions per season)	Accumulative grass capacity rating (sessions per season)	Potential spare capacity for senior cricket? (Saturday PM)	Potential spare capacity for senior cricket? (Sunday PM)	Potential spare capacity for junior cricket?
44	Runcorn Sports Club	Runcorn	Yes	WA7 4SD	Secure	1	Good	11	Senior	55	48	7	No	No	Yes
44	Runcorn Sports Club	Runcorn	Yes	WA7 4SD	Secure	1	Good	2	Junior	10	16	6	No	No	No
61	Widnes Cricket Club	Widnes	Yes	WA8 9LA	Secure	1	Good	10	Senior	50	38	12	No	Yes	Yes
61	Widnes Cricket Club	Widnes	Yes	WA8 9LA	Secure	1	Good	4	Junior	20	16	4	No	No	No

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## ***Saturday cricket capacity balance***

The table below examines the 2020 supply and demand analysis against the most recent analysis which factors in pitch enhancements and changes in demand which have occurred for Saturday cricket.

Table 4.5: Capacity balance of grass cricket squares for Saturday cricket in match sessions per season

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Overplay (MES)	Current total (MES)
<b>2020</b>			
Runcorn	-	-	
Widnes	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	-	-	
<b>2024</b>			
Runcorn	-	-	
Widnes	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	-	-	

As seen the overall supply and demand analysis across Halton for Saturday cricket has not changed since the original assessment. Both clubs (Runcorn CC and Widnes CC) have two Saturday teams and have no additional capacity to accommodate any further teams at this peak period.

## ***Sunday cricket capacity balance***

The table below examines the 2020 supply and demand analysis against the most recent analysis which factors in pitch enhancements and changes in demand that have occurred for Sunday cricket.

Table 4.6: Capacity balance of grass cricket squares for Sunday cricket in match sessions per season

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Overplay (MES)	Current total (MES)
<b>2020</b>			
Runcorn	8	-	8
Widnes	8	-	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	-	<b>16</b>
<b>2024</b>			
Runcorn	-	-	
Widnes	10	-	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	-	<b>10</b>

Spare capacity still exists within the Widnes Analysis Area (Widnes Cricket Club) for an additional Sunday team, comparatively, the spare capacity that did exist in 2020 in the Runcorn Analysis Area (Runcorn Sports Club) has now gone as there are now two Sunday teams in operation.

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## **Midweek (Junior) cricket capacity balance**

The table below examines the 2020 supply and demand analysis against the most recent analysis which factors in pitch enhancements and changes in demand for midweek (junior) cricket.

Table 4.7: Capacity balance of grass cricket squares for junior cricket in match sessions per season

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Overplay (MES)	Current total (MES)
<b>2020</b>			
Runcorn	-	-	
Widnes	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	-	-	
<b>2024</b>			
Runcorn	-	6	6
Widnes	12	-	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

As seen the overall spare capacity of cricket provision for midweek (junior) cricket has increased this is due to the reduction of teams at Widnes CC in comparison to 2020. There is spare capacity at peak time (Sundays) to accommodate two Junior teams for Widnes CC, however, this would be on the senior wicket rather than dedicated junior provision. In comparison, the junior wicket at Runcorn CC is overplayed by six match equivalent sessions a season.

### *Future demand*

Although there is no anticipated future demand from population growth, there are known aspirations at the clubs, ECB and Cheshire Cricket to continue to increase demand. For this to be actualised, particularly for Saturday and Midweek demand, there is need to reestablish more cricket provision in Halton as there are no alternative sites where cricket can be played.

There are two disused sites in Halton which previously provided cricket squares, Birchfield Sports and Social Club (Widnes Analysis Area – WA8 9ES) and Moorfield Sports and Social Club (Widnes Analysis Area – WA8 3HQ), which have been disused since 2020 and 2016, respectively. In order to provide more capacity for cricket one or both of these sites could be brought back into use or alternatively new provision would need to be created. More information can be found in Part 9 Disused sites.

## **4.6: Conclusion**

The overall supply and demand for cricket in Halton has broadly remained the same since the 2020 PPS. There is still no capacity for additional Saturday senior cricket and limited spare capacity on Sundays and Midweek for further teams. There is also a minor shortfall of dedicated junior provision at Runcorn CC. Birchfield Sports and Social Club and Moorfield Sports and Social Club are still disused with emphasis on potentially reinstating one or more of the sites in order to provide additional capacity for cricket.



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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### Cricket summary

- ◀ **There is currently no spare capacity of cricket squares at peak times (Saturdays) in Halton and limited spare capacity on Sundays and in midweek when factoring future demand.**
- ◀ There are two grass wicket squares in Halton with one each at Runcorn Sports Club and Widnes Cricket Club.
- ◀ In Halton, there is just one NTP accompanying a grass wicket square. This is at Widnes Cricket Club. In addition, there is one standalone NTP located at Cronton Sixth Form College albeit this is poor quality and considered disused by the College.
- ◀ There is disused cricket provision at Birchfield Sports and Social Club and Moorfield Sports and Social Club.
- ◀ The quality of the squares at Runcorn Sports Club and Widnes Cricket Club are good quality which is the same as the both the PPS audit and PPS update.
- ◀ Runcorn CC mentioned in the 2023 update for aspirations for a NTP and supplementary grass wickets in addition to upgrading maintenance machinery.
- ◀ Runcorn Sports Club submitted a planning application (23/00130/FUL) in March 2023 for a proposed extension and remodel of its existing ancillary provision.
- ◀ Based on evidence within the 2023 update Widnes CC secured grant funding to upgrade its changing rooms and showering facilities.
- ◀ Both Runcorn CC and Widnes CC have aims to refurbish or replace current training facilities in the near future.

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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## PART 5: RUGBY UNION

### 5.1: Introduction

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is the national governing body and is split into four areas across the country with a workforce team that covers development, coaching, governance and competitions. Club developers, coach developers, club volunteers and teachers deliver programmes in schools and clubs across Halton.

The RFU governs a variety of formats and programmes, including 15-a-side, 10-a-side, 7-a-side 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.

The rugby union playing season operates from September to May, with senior men's fixtures generally being held on Saturday afternoons whilst ladies, juniors and mini fixtures usually taking place on Sundays.

#### **Consultation**

In order to update this section of the report, consultation has been carried out with the RFU, Halton Sports Partnership and the Council.

### 5.2: Supply

It should be noted that since the PPS in 2020, the RFU has redefined its pitch sizes which are outlined in the table below.

Table 5.1: Rugby union pitch dimensions

Team reference	Age group	Team type	Pitch type
Senior men	Over 18 years old	Senior	Senior
Senior women	Over 18 years old	Senior	Senior
Colts	17-18 years old	Under 17 - Under 18	Senior
Age grade boys	13-16 years old	Under 13 - Under 16	Junior
Age grade girls	13-16 years old	Under 13 - Under 16	Junior
Age grade mixed	7-12 years old	Under 7 - Under 12	Mini

This change in pitch size has not directly affected the quantity of provision across Halton.

As seen in the table overleaf the overall number of senior pitches has remained the same, however, there has been a slight change in the sites where the provision is located. The senior pitch at Birchfield Sports and Social Club is no longer actively used as the site is now disused. This has been replaced by a senior pitch being established at Wilmere Lane Playing Fields. Both sites are located in the Widnes Analysis Area. The remaining provision is spread across Moore RUFC, Prescot Road Playing Fields and Widnes RUFC with each site accommodating two pitches.

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Table 5.2: Supply of all rugby union pitches across Halton

Analysis area	No. of senior pitches	No. of junior pitches	No. of mini pitches
<b>2020</b>			
Runcorn	2	-	-
Widnes	5	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>2024</b>			
Runcorn	2	-	-
Widnes	5	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

There are no dedicated junior or mini pitches across Halton. It should also be noted that all senior pitched are available for community use and are actively used.

### ***Disused provision***

As mentioned, Birchfield Sports and Social Club, which was actively used for rugby union in the original PPS audit (2020) is now disused. The site contained one senior pitch. The former users of the pitch Birchfield RUFC now play at Wilmere Lane Playing Fields on a rugby league pitch which is overmarked for rugby union. Information surrounding Birchfield Sports and Social Club can be found in Part 9 Disused sites.

### **5.3: Quality**

The quality of rugby pitches across Halton were 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 as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

Theses 2020 quality scores, for the purposes of this report, have been cross referenced with the RFU and any recent Pitch Advisory Reports to obtain the 2024 ratings.

The methodology for assessing rugby pitch quality looks at two key elements: the maintenance programme and the level of drainage on each pitch. 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. 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

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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

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 that has been installed in the last five years.

Please see table overleaf for the full quality breakdown.

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Table 5.6: Summary of rugby union grass pitch quality in Halton

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Post code	Community use?	Number of pitches	Pitch type	Sports lit?	Non-technical assessment score	Quality rating
32	Moore RUFC	Runcorn	WA4 6UU	Yes	1	Senior	Yes	M1/D1	Standard
32	Moore RUFC	Runcorn	WA4 6UU	Yes	1	Senior	No	M1/D2	Standard
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Widnes	WA8 7PD	Yes	1	Senior	Yes	M0/D0	Poor
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Widnes	WA8 7PD	Yes	1	Senior	No	M0/D0	Poor
63	Widnes RUFC	Widnes	WA8 7NU	Yes	1	Senior	Yes	M1/D2	Standard
63	Widnes RUFC	Widnes	WA8 7NU	Yes	1	Senior	No	M1/D1	Standard
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	WA8 5UW	Yes	1	Senior	No	M1/D1	Standard

There has been one change in the quality scores since the 2020 PPS. The poor quality pitch previously located at Birchfield Sports and Social Club (M0/D1) has been replaced with a standard quality pitch (M1/D1) at Wilmere Lane Playing Fields.

Consultation with the RFU indicates that the sports lit senior pitch at Widnes RUFC, despite having a M1/D2 quality score realistically only has the carrying capacity of a M1/D0 (poor quality) pitch. The pitch does have purpose built drainage, however, in practice the system is not working effectively making it redundant. As a result, moving forward for the supply and demand analysis this pitch will be given capacity rating of a poor quality M1/D0 pitch rather than a standard quality M1/D2 pitch. Furthermore, information provided by the Halton Sports Partnership indicates there is a need to improve the quality of the carparking at Widnes RUFC.

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

Table 5.7: 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

## 5.4: Demand

### *Competitive play*

Since the 2020 PPS there has been an increase in the number of teams playing rugby union across Halton. Demand from Birchfield RUFC has remained the same with one senior men's team, whereas both Moore RUFC and Widnes RUFC have seen an increase in the number of teams they field. Moore RUFC has increased by one senior and one junior team and Widnes RUFC has increased by two junior and two mini teams.

Please note that the 2023 figures have been supplied by RFU from its affiliation data.

Table 5.8: Summary of number of rugby union teams in Halton

Club	Analysis area	Senior (19+)	Junior (13-18)	Mini (6-12)
<b>2020</b>				
Birchfield RUFC	Widnes	1	-	-
Moore RUFC	Runcorn	3	-	-
Widnes RUFC	Widnes	3	5	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2024</b>				
Birchfield RUFC	Widnes	1	-	-
Moore RUFC	Runcorn	4	1	-
Widnes RUFC	Widnes	3	7	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>

It should also be noted that Moore RUFC operates a walking rugby section. The Club is also the only one in Halton to have any form of dedicated female team with one senior women's and one age grade girl team.

### *Future demand from population increases*

Based on the previous study, team generation rates used to calculate the future number of teams likely were based on population growth to 2037 (in line with the Local Plan), however, there is not enough growth to indicate creation of future teams across any age group.

## 5.5: Supply and demand analysis

The table below examines the 2020 supply and demand analysis against the most recent analysis which factors in changes to pitch quality and levels of demand.

Table 5.9: Summary of supply and demand balance on senior rugby union pitches in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity <sup>6</sup>	Overplay	Current total
<b>2020</b>			
Runcorn	-	1.75	1.75
Widnes	-	0.5	0.5
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>2.25</b>	<b>2.25</b>
<b>2024</b>			
Runcorn	-	3.25	3.25
Widnes	-	1.5	1.5
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.75</b>

As seen the overall shortfall of rugby union provision has increased from 2.25 to 4.75 match equivalent sessions per week. This is mainly due to the increases in competitive and training demand from both Moore RUFC and Widnes RUFC in cohesion with pitch quality remaining the same.

### *Future demand*

Although there is no anticipated future demand from population growth, there are known aspirations at the clubs and RFU to continue to increase demand particularly for women and girls. For this to be actualised there is a need to generally improve pitch quality through maintenance and drainage enhancements, particularly at Moore RUFC, Widnes RUFC and Prescott Road Playing Fields.

## 5.6: Conclusion

Like 2020, given the abovementioned shortfalls, priority should be placed first and foremost on alleviating overplay. Given that the majority of overplay is a result of training demand on grass pitches, it is considered that there is a potential need for additional sports lighting, further pitch quality improvements and/or access to World Rugby compliant 3G pitches.

For reference the table below identifies where alterations to supply and demand have been applied.

Table 5.10: Summary of alteration in the supply and demand of senior rugby union pitches

Site ID	Site name	Comments
32	Moore RUFC	Shortfall of 0.5 match equivalent sessions increased to a total of 1.5 match equivalent sessions due to an increase in competitive and training demand (one senior and one junior team)
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Due to an increase in demand from users Widnes RUFC the pitches have gone from being played to capacity to having a shortfall of 0.75 match equivalent sessions.

<sup>6</sup> In match equivalent sessions per week

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Site ID	Site name	Comments
63	Widnes RUFC	Due to an increase in demand from Widnes RUFC and reducing carrying capacity of the sports lit pitch overplay has increased from 1.75 to 2.5 match equivalent sessions.
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	A dual use pitch with rugby league and rugby union which is considered to be played to capacity.

### Rugby union summary

- ◀ **Overall, there is a current shortfall of 4.75 match equivalent sessions per week on senior rugby union pitches to meet current demand.**
- ◀ **Since the 2020 study, shortfalls have been exacerbated with higher levels of overplay present.**
- ◀ Within Halton there are seven senior pitches which is the same as 2020.
- ◀ The senior pitch formally located at Birchfield Sports and Social Club is now disused.
- ◀ There has been one change in quality scores since the 2020 PPS. The poor quality pitch previously located at Birchfield Sports and Social Club (M0/D1) has been replaced with a standard quality pitch (M1/D1) at Wilmere Lane Playing Fields.
- ◀ There are still drainage issues at Prescott Road Playing Fields and the sports lit senior pitch at Widnes RUFC. There are also drainage issues on the club's other pitches with both suffering from water retention.
- ◀ Widnes RUFC aspires to improve the quality of its carparking at its home site.
- ◀ Since the 2020 PPS there has been an increase in the number of teams playing rugby union across Halton.
- ◀ Demand from Birchfield RUFC has remained the same with one senior men's team, whereas both Moore RUFC and Widnes RUFC have seen an increase in the number of teams they field. Moore RUFC has increased by one senior and one junior team and Widnes RUFC has increased by two junior and two mini teams.
- ◀ As the only WR compliant 3G is not available for community use there is no WR compliant 3G available for the community game.



## PART 6: HOCKEY

### 6.1: Introduction

Hockey in England is governed by England Hockey (EH).

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 third generation turf pitches (3G), 40mm pitches may be suitable for introductory level hockey, such as school curriculum low level hockey. EH's Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy details suitability of surface type for varying levels of hockey, as shown below.

Table 6.1: England Hockey guidelines on artificial surface types suitable for hockey

Category	Surface	Playing Level	
		Essential	Desirable
1	Water surface approved within the FIH Global/National Parameters	International hockey (training and matches).	Domestic National Premier League competition; Higher levels of player pathway (performance centres and upwards).
2	Sand dressed surfaces within the FIH National Parameter	Domestic National Premier League competition; Higher levels of player pathway (academy centres and upwards).	All adult and junior league hockey; Intermediate or advanced school hockey; EH competitions for clubs and schools.
3	Sand filled surfaces within the FIH National Parameter	All adult and junior club training and league hockey; EH competitions for clubs and schools; Intermediate or advanced school hockey.	Lower level hockey (introductory level).
4	All 3G surfaces	No hockey.	Lower level hockey (introductory level) when no category 1-3 surface is available.

In addition to the above pitch types, EH 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>7</sup>, is a versatile surface that will ensure that the sports do not need to compromise on the playing experience; it is a sand dressed synthetic turf with a compatible shock pad. The concept is designed to provide facilities, including at schools, with a dynamic carpet which reduces the amount of space required and enables the provision to be utilised to its full potential.

For senior teams, a full-size pitch for 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. England Hockey preference is for four metre side and five metre end run offs, with a preferred overall area of 101.4 x 63 metres.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.englishockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=2596&sectionTitle=Gen+2+Playing+Surface>

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It is considered that a hockey pitch can accommodate a maximum of four matches on one day, providing that it has sports lighting. Training is generally midweek for senior activity and requires access to a pitch and sports lights, whereas many junior teams train on a Sunday as well as during midweek.

## **Consultation**

In order to update this section of the report, consultation has been carried out with England Hockey, Halton Sports Partnership (including Runcorn HC) and the Council.

## **6.2: Supply**

The audit identifies one hockey suitable AGP in Halton with details surrounding this pitch in the table below.

Table 6.2: Full size hockey suitable pitches in Halton

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Post code	Community use?	Sports lit?	Size (metres)
55	The Heath School	Runcorn	WA7 4SY	Yes	Yes	100x60

There has been a loss of one full size hockey suitable AGP since the collation of the dataset for the 2020 PPS. The pitch at Brookvale Recreation Centre (Runcorn Analysis Area - WA7 6EP) has been converted to a 3G surface in 2022.

### *Management and security of tenure*

The pitch at The Heath School is managed internally by the school and sub-let to Edu Lettings. This previously was previously contracted to School Lettings Solutions (2020) before the company went into administration. Runcorn HC rents the use of the pitch via Edu Lettings on a seasonal basis and is considered to have unsecure tenure, despite having a working relationship with the provider.

### *Availability and usage*

Previous booking information was not made available meaning details on the pitch capacity was unknown. Due to the aforementioned change in contractors, a more detailed analysis of the availability of pitch can be obtained.

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). At the Heath School, the AGP is reserved for curricular use from 09:00-17:00 Monday to Friday, before opening to the community from 17:00 to 21:00. At weekends the pitch is available to the community from 09:00–18:00. Therefore, the pitch is available for the full 34 hours per week of peak period.

Although the exact users are unknown, the pitch is at approximately 67% capacity midweek with available full slots on Mondays and Fridays and partial pitch availability on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. In comparison, on average, the pitch is only generally booked for four hours on a Saturday and one hour on a Sunday resulting in 32% usage at the weekend.

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## 6.3: Quality

The pitch at The Heath School has not changed quality since the 2020 assessment with it still being rated as poor quality, despite having a deep clean in during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Runcorn HC indicates during periods of heavy rain the pitch becomes unplayable with areas of standing water and inadequate grip.

The 2023 PPS update indicates that S106 monies had been allocated to the site for pitch refurbishments through a planning application (17/00468/FUL) to ensure long term sustainability, however, this did not come to fruition as the application was withdrawn in January 2022.

## 6.4: Demand

There is only one hockey club within Halton, Runcorn HC, which plays and trains at The Heath School. The table below summarises the Clubs demand throughout the different iterations of the PPS.

Table 6.5: Summary of number of hockey teams playing in Halton

Name of club	Men's teams	Women's teams	Junior / Mini teams	Total
<b>2020 PPS</b>				
Runcorn HC	3	2	2	7
<b>2023 Update</b>				
Runcorn HC	2	2	1	5
<b>2024 Update</b>				
Runcorn HC	2	2	1	5

As seen, there is an overall decrease in competitive teams since the 2020 study with a reduction of one men's team and one dedicated junior/mini team. Anecdotal evidence indicates that poor pitch quality at The Heath School is in part responsible to the decline in participation at the Club particular for the youth section.

## 6.5: Supply and demand analysis

The PPS Guidance suggests that a sports lit pitch is able to accommodate four match equivalent sessions (MES) on a Saturday with teams playing in a home and away format, as such this equates to one AGP being able to cater for eight 'home' teams. Teams play matches on a home and away basis and therefore one team requires 0.5 match sessions per week on its 'home' AGP.

Based on the above information there a total of four senior teams that are currently playing their competitive matches within Halton. This means there is a requirement for one full size hockey suitable AGPs, rounded up from 0.5 AGPs.

Therefore, in theory, there is enough hockey suitable provision across Borough to meet current and future levels of demand. However, there are issues that need to be taken into consideration that are affecting Runcorn HC particularly surrounding pitch quality and tenure.

## 6.6: Conclusion

Although the AGP at The Heath School is sufficient to meet the current and future demand from Runcorn HC there is an immediate need to protect the longevity of the site. In particular the pitch surface needs an immediate refurbishment as further prolonged usage will result in it becoming useable. In addition to this, the Club also requires protected long term access to the pitch to secure its tenure and allow it to grow.

### Hockey summary

- ◀ **There is a need for one full size hockey suitable AGPs to accommodate all current and future demand in Halton, however, there is a need to address quality, accessibility, and capacity issues. There has been no change since the 2020 study.**
- ◀ There is currently one full size hockey suitable AGP in Halton which is located at The Heath School.
- ◀ There has been a loss of one full size hockey suitable AGP since the collation of the dataset for the 2020 PPS. The pitch at Brookvale Recreation Centre (Runcorn Analysis Area - WA7 6EP) has been converted to a 3G surface in 2022.
- ◀ The quality of the pitch at The Heath School is still poor quality and has worsened since the 2020 PPS with multiple fixtures being postponed or cancelled.
- ◀ There is only one hockey club within Halton, Runcorn HC, which plays and trains at The Heath School. The number of teams it fields has slightly decreased from seven to five since the 2020 study.

## PART 7: RUGBY LEAGUE

### 7.1: 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. The RFL also administers the amateur and junior game across the country in association with the British Amateur Rugby League Association (BARLA).

Most community club rugby league is now 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 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. U12s and above generally play on senior pitches. Teams from u7s to u11s are known as primary teams, with teams from u12s to u18s known as junior teams.

### **Consultation**

In order to update this section of the report, consultation has been carried out with the RFL, Halton Sports Partnership and the Council.

### 7.2: Supply

Nationally, most rugby league pitches are classified as being senior sized, with cones used to mark out pitches for primary and junior teams. However, there may be instances (particularly on school sites and large club sites) where designated junior or primary pitches are provided.

In the 2020 PPS the audit identified a total of 21 grass rugby league pitches (13 senior and eight junior) across nine sites. All but one of these pitches (a senior pitch at Ormiston Chadwick Academy) are available for community use.

Table 7.1: Supply of all rugby league pitches across Halton

Analysis area	No. of senior pitches	No. of junior pitches	No. of primary pitches
<b>2020</b>			
Runcorn	1	-	-
Widnes	12	8	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>2024</b>			
Runcorn	1	-	-
Widnes	14	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

The number of pitches in 2024 is similar to the original data with a total of 23 pitches. The main changes have been an increase of dedicated primary and senior pitches and a reduction of junior provision. The majority of these pitches are available for community use with one senior pitch at Ormiston Chadwick Academy and one primary pitch at Ditton Primary School being considered unavailable.

The below summarises the alterations in pitch provision since the 2020 audit:

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

- ◀ One primary pitch at Ditton Primary School
- ◀ Moorfield Sports and Social Club is now disused (previously two junior and two senior pitches)
- ◀ One senior and one junior pitch at Moorfield Primary School
- ◀ One senior pitch at Frank Myler Pavilion
- ◀ No provision at King George V Playing Field (previously one senior pitch)
- ◀ Wilmere Lane Playing Field has gone from having one senior and five junior pitches to three senior, two junior and three mini pitches. One of the senior pitches is also used for rugby union demand.

## ***Disused sites and provision***

As mentioned, Moorfield Sports and Social Club, which was actively used for rugby league in the original PPS audit (2020) is now disused. The site contained two senior and two junior rugby league pitches. The former users of the site, Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC, now play at Moorfield Primary School.

Pavilions Club has been disused since circa 2016, historically the site has been used for football and rugby league, the latter last actively marked in 2012.

Information surrounding these disused sites can be found in Part 9: Disused sites.

In addition to disused sites there are number of sites which are still actively used for sport which previously accommodated rugby league provision. Further to Leigh Recreation Playing Fields and Widnes RUFC, which were identified in 2020, the senior pitch at King George V Playing Fields is no longer marked following the former users, Halton Simms Cross ARLFC, folding in 2022/23.

## ***Ownership/management***

Site ownership is varied between clubs renting a site from a wider sports club (or a sports and social club) and clubs which rent or lease pitches from the Council. Tenure of sites in Halton is considered secure if a club has a long-term lease or there is a guarantee that pitches will continue to be provided over the next three years. The below table examines the previous tenure in 2020 against the current arrangements known in 2024.

Table 7.2: Summary of security of tenure of rugby league clubs in Halton

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Club	Tenure	Comments
	<b>2020</b>				
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	Halton Simms Cross ARLFC	<b>Unsecure</b>	Rent from Halton Borough Council
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC	<b>Unsecure</b>	Rented from Sports and Social Club
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	Widnes St Maries ARLFC	<b>Unsecure</b>	Rented from Sports and Social Club
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	Runcorn ARLFC	<b>Unsecure</b>	Rent from Halton Borough Council
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC	Secure	Leased from Halton Borough Council

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Club	Tenure	Comments
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Widnes	West Bank Bears ARLFC	Secure	Leased from Halton Borough Council
	<b>2024</b>				
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	Widnes	Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC	<b>Unsecure</b>	Rent from the Council
33	Moorfield Primary School	Widnes	Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC	<b>Unsecure</b>	Rent from the School
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	Runcorn ARLFC	<b>Unsecure</b>	Rent from Halton Borough Council
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC	Secure	Leased from Halton Borough Council
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Widnes	West Bank Bears ARLFC	Secure	Leased from Halton Borough Council
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Widnes	Widnes St Maries ARLFC	<b>Unsecure</b>	Rent from Sports Club

There have been a number of changes in sites used across Halton since 2020 due to the folding of Halton Simms Cross ARLFC and the closure of Moorfield Sports and Social Club. As mentioned, the site used by the former club, King George V Playing Fields, is no longer in active use for rugby league and is now solely used for football (Widnes FC).

In comparison both Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC and Widnes St Maries ARLFC have had to relocate following the closure of Moorfield Sports and Social Club. The former club now rents the use of pitches at Moorfield Primary School and Frank Myler Pavilion and the latter rents the use of pitches at Ted Gleave Sports Ground from lease holders West Bank Bears ARLFC. Neither of these clubs are considered to have long term security of tenure.

Due to the lack of Council operated rugby league pitches across Halton, once the clubs were displaced from the Sports and Social Club site, they had limited options available for relocation. This left both clubs renting facilities with unsecure tenure meaning they could be displaced again in the immediate future at short notice.

The Council indicates pitch configurations have now taken place (2024) at Frank Myler Pavilion and Runcorn Heath Playing Fields to permanently create a dedicated rugby league pitch, however, both sites require pitch improvements.

### *Ancillary provision*

Evidence provided by the RFL and Halton Sports Partnership indicates that Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC struggles to gain access to changing rooms and carparking at Moorfield Primary School which leads it to occasionally use both pitch and ancillary provision at Frank Myler Pavilion.

West Bank Bears ARLFC aspires to expand its current clubhouse and upgrade its storage facilities at Ted Gleave Sports Ground where it keeps its training equipment and maintenance machinery.

Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC is not only the largest club in Halton but also the biggest community club nationally. As such it is consistently challenged by the lack of ancillary facilities particularly to accommodate growth in women and girls demand. It therefore requires further investment for additional changing rooms to sustain participation.

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## 7.3: Quality

Non-technical site assessments were carried out for all rugby league pitches in the Borough and assessed as one of three categories, 'good', 'standard' or 'poor'. Carrying capacity of a pitch is dependent upon the quality of a pitch which is outlined below:

Table 7.3: Summary of quality and carrying capacity for rugby league pitches

Category	Capacity
Good	3 matches per week
Standard	2 matches per week
Poor	1 match per week

The table below summarises pitch quality at all community accessible rugby league pitch across Halton from 2020 and compares it to current ratings (2024).

Table 7.4: Comparison of community available rugby league pitch quality

Site Id	Site name	Analysis area	Number of pitches	Pitch size	2020 Quality	2024 Quality
9	Cronton Sixth Form College	Widnes	1	Senior	Standard	Standard
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	Widnes	1	Senior	-	Poor
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	Widnes	1	Senior	Standard	-
33	Moorfield Primary School	Widnes	1	Senior	-	Poor
33	Moorfield Primary School	Widnes	1	Junior	-	Poor
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	2	Senior	Poor	-
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	2	Junior	Poor	-
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	Runcorn	1	Senior	Poor	Good
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	Widnes	2	Senior	Standard	Standard
56	Wade Deacon High School	Widnes	3	Senior	Poor	Poor
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	3	Senior	Standard	Good
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	2	Senior	Standard	Good
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Widnes	3	Senior	Standard	Good
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Widnes	1	Senior	Standard	Standard
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	Widnes	1	Senior	Standard	Standard

PitchPower reports carried out in 2023 on behalf of the RLF has led to the changes in quality at Runcorn Heath Playing Fields and Wilmere Lane Playing Fields. For more information surrounding PitchPower reports please review Part 2: Football.

Broadly speaking the overall quality of grass rugby league pitches has improved since 2020 with more good quality provision and less standard and poor quality pitches. This is mainly due to the aforementioned improvements at Runcorn Heath Playing Fields and Wilmere Lane Playing Fields. The reduction of poor provision is also a result, in part, the closure of Moorfield Sports and Social Club which previously accommodated two senior and two junior pitches all of which were poor quality.

West Bank Bears ARLFC plans to complete spotlighting on its grass pitch to enable training throughout the year. This could leave to the deterioration of quality, however, creating access for the Club to use 3G provision could alleviate this issue.



# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## 7.4: Demand

Demand for rugby league pitches in Borough tends to fall within the categories of organised competitive play and organised training.

### *Competitive play*

In 2020 there were a total of 42 competitive rugby league teams playing in Borough, including the three teams from semi-professional club Widnes Vikings RLFC. The table overleaf examines the changes since the original data to current demand figures (2024).

Table 7.5: Summary of rugby league demand in Halton by analysis area

Club name	Senior	Junior	Primary	Total
<b>2020</b>				
Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC	1	7	11	<b>19</b>
Halton Simms Cross ARLFC	1	-	-	<b>1</b>
Runcorn ARLFC	1	-	-	<b>1</b>
West Bank Bears ARLFC	2	2	5	<b>9</b>
Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC	1	3	4	<b>8</b>
Widnes St Maries ARLFC	-	1	-	<b>1</b>
Widnes Vikings RLFC	2	1	-	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>2024</b>				
Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC	3	8	12	<b>23</b>
Halton Simms Cross ARLFC	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
Runcorn ARLFC	1	-	-	<b>1</b>
West Bank Bears ARLFC	2	3	4	<b>9</b>
Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC	1	2	4	<b>7</b>
Widnes St Maries ARLFC	2	-	-	<b>2</b>
Widnes Vikings RLFC	2	-	-	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>44</b>

Demand in 2024 indicates rugby league has seen a marginal increase of senior teams and a small reduction of junior teams since 2020 with primary teams remaining the same.

On a club level, Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC has seen the largest growth in demand with an additional four teams. The Club is by far the largest in Halton and has received significant levels of investment from the RFL in recent years including Grass Pitch Maintenance Funding.

Comparatively, the RFL indicates three 'at risk' clubs in the Authority namely, Halton Simms Cross ARLFC, Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC and Widnes St Maries ARLFC. The former club (Halton Simms Cross ARLFC) has not formed a team so far for the 2024 season with online information indicating it may have folded.

It should be noted that the RFL reports concerns with the long term impacts on demand at Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC if it is unable to access appropriate changing and toilet facilities at Moorfield Primary School. The Club requires secured access to the provision as soon as possible, whether or not a wider development takes place involving Moorfield Sports & Social Club.

### *Training*

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Evidence in the 2020 study, and current information, indicates that clubs across Halton primarily train on grass rugby league pitches. This is contributing to levels of overplay particularly at those sites with few and/or poor quality pitches such as Moorfield Primary School and Ted Gleave Sports Ground. With this being said, Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC junior teams are known to access the sports lit Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Frank Myler Pavilion for seven hours a week from January to March.

A potential option to assist in reducing levels of overplay from training demand would be for clubs to access relevant RFL certified artificial provision (3Gs). There is currently one RFL compliant 11v11 size 3G pitch in Halton located at DCBL Stadium, however, access for community clubs is limited due to evening usage from Widnes Vikings RLFC and Widnes FC.

Greater access to this pitch for community rugby league clubs would be beneficial to alleviate shortfall, alternatively to potential to install or create more community available RFL complaint 3G pitches should be examined.

### *Future demand from population increases*

Based on the previous study, team generation rates used to calculate the future number of teams likely were based on population growth to 2037 (in line with the Local Plan), however, there is not enough growth to indicate creation of future teams across any age group.

### **7.5: Supply and demand analysis**

The table below examines the 2020 supply and demand analysis against the most recent analysis which factors in changed to pitch quantity and quality and levels of demand.

Table 7.6: Supply/demand balance of senior rugby league pitches at senior peak time in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total
<b>2020</b>			
Runcorn	-	-	
Widnes	-	0.5	0.5
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>2024</b>			
Runcorn	0.5	-	0.5
Widnes	1.5	5.75	4.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5.75</b>	<b>3.75</b>

The table above shows that levels of spare capacity and overplay have increased across Halton. The spare capacity is generated from Runcorn Heath Playing Fields (improvement in quality based on PP reports) and Wilmere Lane Playing Fields (increase in senior provision and pitch improvements based on PP reports).

Comparatively, overplay has also increased with increases in both competitive and training demand accessing limited pitch stock (Ted Gleave Sports Ground) or limited poor quality pitches (Moorfield Primary School).

In comparison, the table below examines the supply and demand analysis of junior rugby league pitches within Halton. As seen the shortfall of pitches has greatly reduced since 2020 going from 5.25 to just one match equivalent session per week.

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Table 7.7: Supply/demand balance of junior rugby league pitches at junior peak time in match equivalent sessions

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total
<b>2020</b>			
Runcorn	-	-	
Widnes	-	5.25	5.25
<b>Total</b>	-	5.25	5.25
<b>2024</b>			
Runcorn	-	-	
Widnes	-	1	1
<b>Total</b>	-	1	1

The rationale behind why they have been a reduction is due to more junior teams accessing the increased number of senior pitches in the Authority. Additionally, the junior pitches which are still used at Wilmere Lane Playing Fields have improved in quality.

Primary pitches are considered to be played to capacity at peak time with no evidence of spare capacity or overplay.

### *Future demand*

Although there is no anticipated future demand from population growth, there are known aspirations at the clubs and RFL to continue to increase demand particularly for women and girls. In order for future demand come to fruition there is a need to alleviate overplay and provide additional capacity through pitch enhancement, transferal of training demand to artificial provision or reinstating/creation new pitches.

## **7.6: Conclusion**

Compared to 2020, the shortfalls of rugby league provision have altered due primarily to a change in the quantity of certain pitch types. The reduction in dedicated junior pitches has resulted in greater utilisation of senior pitches for this age group. As a result, there has been an increase in the shortfall of senior provision and the reduction of overplay on junior pitches.

There is also a need to find permanent long term secure home venues for Widnes St Maries ARLFC and Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC whether this is at their current sites or reinstatement of disused provision (Moorfield Sports & Social Club).

For reference the table below identifies where alterations to supply and demand have been applied.

Table 7.8: Summary of alteration in the supply and demand of senior rugby league pitches

Site ID	Site name	Comments
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	One poor quality senior pitch occasionally used by Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC. No spare capacity due to quality and it is not overplayed.
33	Moorfield Primary School	One junior and one senior pitch both of which are poor quality. Junior pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent session whereas the senior pitch is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions per week.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Site ID	Site name	Comments
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	One good quality senior pitch with actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week at senior peak time (Saturday PM).
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	Senior pitches have spare capacity of 1.5 match equivalent sessions at senior peak time (Saturday PM). Junior and primary pitches have no spare capacity at peak time.
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	One junior and one senior pitch both of which are standard quality. The junior pitch is played to capacity whereas the senior pitch is overplayed by 3.75 match equivalent sessions per week.

### Rugby league summary

- ◀ **Overall, there is a current shortfall of 3.75 match equivalent sessions per week on senior rugby league pitches and a shortfall of one match equivalent session on junior pitches.**
- ◀ **Since the 2020 study, shortfalls have increased on senior pitches and reduced on junior pitches.**
- ◀ The number of pitches in 2024 is similar to the original data with a total of 23 pitches. In comparison to 21 in 2020.
- ◀ The two senior and two junior pitches formally located at Moorfield Sports and Social Club are now disused.
- ◀ Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC struggles to gain access to changing rooms and carparking at Moorfield Primary School.
- ◀ West Bank Bears ARLFC aspires to expand its current clubhouse and upgrade its storage facilities at Ted Gleave Sports Ground.
- ◀ Broadly speaking the overall quality of grass rugby league pitches has improved since 2020 with more good quality provision and less standard and poor quality pitches.
- ◀ Demand in 2024 indicates rugby league has seen a marginal increase of senior teams and a small reduction of junior teams since 2020 with primary teams remaining the same.

## PART 8: OTHER SPORTS

### 8.1: American football

The British American Football Association (BAFA) is the National Governing Body for the sport of American football in Great Britain and is responsible for all regulatory, competition, performance and development aspects of the game.

Halton Spartans is the only known club based in Halton. Consultation attempts were made; however, the Club was non-responsive. Therefore, information to inform this study was gathered from online research, where possible.

In the original PPS the Club had one team that participated in the BAFA NFL NFC 1 South and played out of the DCBL Stadium Halton (Widnes). Recent online information provided by the Club (2023) indicates, that due to unforeseen circumstances, it has dropped out of the NFC down to associate status for 2024 season. It has also relocated its demand from DCBL Stadium Halton and now exports to a 3G pitch at Rainhill High School (St Helens).

It is unknown if the Club aspires to return into Halton, however, as its demand has been exported since circa 2020 it is anticipated to remain outside of the Authority for the foreseeable future.

### 8.2: Baseball

Baseball Softball UK (BSUK) is the development agency for baseball and softball in the United Kingdom. Since 2000, BSUK has provided services to the sports' governing bodies, the British Baseball Federation (BBF) and British Softball Federation (BSF) with the aim of developing and increasing the levels of participation, skill and achievement in baseball and softball. This occurs at both junior and adult levels, from school and grassroots through to domestic adult clubs up to the Great Britain national teams. A baseball season typically operates between April to September in England.

In November 2019, Halton Baseball Club merged with Trojans Baseball Club, after years of declining membership. Halton Trojans now functions as one of Trojans Baseball Clubs three teams offering an entry level playing opportunity for those wanting to get into the sport. Similar to 2020, the team is still based out of John Mills Ballpark, which was used by Halton Baseball Club prior to the merger.

Since the merger, Trojans Baseball Club took on the previous lease of the site, which was previously between Halton Baseball Club and the Council. The Club reported in 2020 that the diamond was poor quality and indicated that it will need to invest in the site to improve its quality. Attempts were made to consult with the Club for this document however it was non responsive. Therefore, the current quality and levels of demand are unknown.

With the above taken into consideration, it is considered that Trojans Baseball Club can accommodate all demand for the sport across the Borough although there maybe some investment required at the site to ensure that quality is suitable.

#### Other sports summary

- There is considered to be suitable amounts of provision to meet current and future levels of demand Baseball demand in Halton.
- As demand for American Football is now exported to St Helens there is no immediate requirement to provide suitable supply for the support unless the Halton Spartans aspires to return.

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## PART 9: DISUSED SITES

Sites that have previously been used for sport but that are not currently being used at all by any users and are not available for community hire either (often being unmarked). Once sites are disused for five or more years, these fall outside of Sport England’s statutory remit but still have to be assessed using the criteria in paragraph 103 of the NPPF, with Sport England still likely to challenge a proposed loss which fails to meet such criteria. It should be emphasised that the lawful planning use of a such a site is still that of a playing field until such time as its use is formally changed or it is developed for a non-sport use.

If disused playing field sites are allocated as playing field land in the Local Plan, then Sport England remains a statutory consultee even if they have not been used for the previous five years.

The following table below identifies currently disused sites within Halton and any changes from previously identified disused sites from the previous study.

It should be noted that Arley Drive Playing Fields, which was identified as unused site in 2020, is now an active football site.

Table 9.1: Summary of disused sites within Halton

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Post code	Comments
4	Birchfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	WA8 9ES	Site previously accommodated a six wicket grass square, one senior grass rugby union pitch and one adult football pitch (on cricket outfield). The provision was used by Birchfield Park CC and Birchfield RUFC until the sites closure in 2020. The football pitch was last actively marked circa 2017. In 2023 the accompanying ancillary provision were left derelict after an arson attack.
18	Hale Park	Widnes	L24 4AF	Site previously accommodated one adult and one youth 11v11 pitch and is now used as open green space.
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	Widnes	WA8 3HQ	Site closed in 2021 previously accommodating two adult football pitches, a six wicket grass cricket square, two senior and two junior rugby league pitches in addition to a bowling green and relevant ancillary provision. Previously used by Moorfield U16s FC, Widnes Moorfield Tigers RLFC and Moorfield CC. The former Club has relocated to Frank Myler Pavilion. Moorfield CC has folded and Widnes Moorfield Tigers RLFC now plays at Moorfield Primary School with some occasional use of Frank Myler Pavilion. Comparatively Moorfield CC ceased playing on the site following price increases from the former management company, with players dispersing to other

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Post code	Comments
				clubs in the locality and therefore increasing demand elsewhere. In November 2023 a planning application was submitted (23/00459/FUL) for the development of the site. More information surrounding this can be found below the table.
39	Pavilions Club	Runcorn	WA7 4EX	Former ICI Recreation Club site which accommodated one adult pitch (Step football), two adult and one senior rugby league pitch. The aforementioned provision was last marked circa 2012, however, the site has more recently (2016) had five mini 7v7 pitches marked on part of the playing field land. In 2017 a planning application (17/00468/FUL) was submitted to develop the site. This was eventually withdrawn after an appeal in January 2022.
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	Widnes	WA8 7PD	Prescot Road Playing Field currently is separated into three parcels of land which are under three separate tenures: the Council, Widnes RUFC and private ownership. The parcel of land which is owned by the Council, currently accommodates four mini pitches that are used by Pex Hill FC. The Club reports that it previously had access to an additional three youth 11v11 pitches at the site, before these were sold in 2013 from a private ownership to another to private owner. These are now considered disused. In January 2024 a planning application was submitted (24/00021/OUT) for the development of the disused area of the site. More information surrounding this can be found below the table.

For reference paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets three criterion that ensures existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

Paragraphs 101, 102, and 103 set the parameters for the designation of Local Green Space. Such spaces may include playing fields and outdoor sport facilities.

**As mentioned, there is more information below surrounding the planning proposals for Moorfield Sports and Social Club and Prescott Road Playing Fields. Sport England have objected to both proposals (linked below) as the proposed mitigation is not considered**

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

acceptable to compensate for the substantial amount of playing field that could be used to accommodate a variety of pitch sports.



20230110 Moorfield  
SE Response 66239.p



20240205 Prescott Rd  
SE Reponse 66675.pd

## *Moorfield Sports and Social Club*

As discussed, there is currently a planning application (23/00459/FUL) for the development of Moorfield Sports and Social Club from Bellway Homes. For reference an arial imaginary of the site has been provided below.

The main body of the site is located north of a pathway which included the ancillary provision, bowling green, cricket square and nets, one dedicated adult football pitch, one junior rugby league pitch and one senior rugby league pitch which has also been used for adult football. The playing field land to the south of the pathway accommodated one junior and one senior rugby league pitch.

Figure 9.1: Arial imaginary of Moorfield Sports and Social Club from 2016



The proposal indicates the entire development of the northern section of the site and the creation of a FIFA and WR compliant sports lit 3G pitch (approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  size) and a full size grass sports pitch and ancillary provision to the south. It also includes the improvement and development of a senior rugby league pitch and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) on playing field land located at Moorfield Primary School which is adjacent to Moorfield Sports and Social Club.



## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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The mitigation strategy, which has been included within the planning application, indicates sufficient capacity will be provided to meet current and future demand from former users Moorfield U16s FC and Widnes Moorfield Tigers RLFC. It could also provide additional capacity for wider community access. It also indicates the provision to be developed at the Moorfield Sports and Social Club will ultimately be gifted to the clubs.

Although it is agreed that proposed mitigation would provide suitable capacity to meet demand from Moorfield U16s FC and Widnes Moorfield Tigers RLFC, there are still wider shortfalls of playing field provision across Halton (football, rugby union and rugby league) which could be alleviated through the reinstatement of Moorfield Sports and Social Club. The mitigation also does not include any form of compensation for the loss of the former cricket square.

It should be noted that the RLF indicates that it has recently funded pitch improvements and goalpost at Moorfield Primary School to help meet the demand from Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC.

With there being current and future shortfalls evident for football, rugby league and rugby union in addition to future shortfalls for cricket there is a clear need to retain all current and disused playing field land with Halton. This is in line with both NPPF and Sport England guidance.

### *Prescot Road Playing Fields*

The planning application (24/00021/OUT) submitted on behalf of Miller Homes indicates plans to build on the disused piece of playing field land which previously accommodated three youth 11v11 pitches. The parcels of land which are Council and Widnes RUFC owned would remain the same, with a small increase to the former to allow for the creation of a youth pitch for Pex Hill FC. The only other mitigation suggested is the improvements to drainage to the remaining playing field land to enhance quality and to provide maintenance equipment for football.

There is no acknowledgment of the Authority wide current and future shortfall of youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches, no evidence of wider consultation with Widnes RUFC, Sport England, FA, FF or RFU to understand their views and no attempts made to indicate whether or not it is possible to provide or create new paying field land. It instead focuses on a localised assessment of surrounding sites and their capacity to justify an oversupply of provision which is inaccurate.

With there being current and future shortfalls evident for football, rugby league and rugby union in addition to future shortfalls for cricket there is a clear need to retain all current and disused playing field land with Halton. This is in line with both NPPF and Sport England guidance.

## PART 10: STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

It should be noted that even though there have been some alterations in the overall supply and demand analysis for some sports, with an increase in shortfalls particular on grass football, rugby league and rugby union pitches, these are considered marginal. Therefore, broadly speaking the strategic recommendations made in the Halton PPS Strategy & Action Plan (2020) within Part 4 Sport Specific Issues Scenarios and Recommendations and Part 5 Strategic Recommendations are still applicable. Any specific alterations to the sports by sports recommendations have been highlighted below in yellow.

Individual site-specific alterations to recommendations have been highlighted within the updated Action Plan within this document.

### *Grass football pitch recommendations*

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of pitches, including disused provision, in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- ◀ As there are current identified shortfalls for football, rugby union and rugby league, in addition to future cricket shortfalls, ensure disused provision at Hale Park, Birchfield Sports and Social Club, Moorfield Sports and Social Club, Pavilions Club and Prescot Road Playing Fields are protected with options explored to bring them back into use to alleviate identified overplay.
- ◀ Utilise the Football Foundation's PitchPower app to assist in the improvement and ongoing maintenance of provision.
- ◀ Support eligible organisations to access funding to improve pitches at their sites, such as through the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (GPMF).
- ◀ Convert pitches to a more appropriate pitch type where such demand is already being received and where no teams will be adversely affected (i.e., adult to youth 11v11).
- ◀ Where pitches are overplayed and assessed as poor or standard quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality.
- ◀ Transfer play from sites which remain overplayed to alternative sites with spare capacity or to sites which are not currently available for community use.
- ◀ Explore opportunities to gain long-term access to sites not currently offering secured use or where community use is not currently offered.
- ◀ Explore opportunities to provide clubs with long term tenure on sites if it is logistically feasible, sustainable and beneficial for all stakeholders.
- ◀ Work to accommodate future demand at sites which are not operating at capacity or at sites not currently available for community use that could be moving forward.
- ◀ Improve ancillary facilities where this is a clear need to do so.
- ◀ Ensure clubs playing within, or with aspirations to play within, the National League System have access to the required extent and quality of facilities to progress.
- ◀ Explore opportunities for club-led management and maintenance models at sites where appropriate.
- ◀ Ensure provision of toilets as a minimum requirement to service football pitch sites.
- ◀ Focus on the development of good quality pavilion provision at key strategic multi-pitch sites, club/league managed sites and those with a focus on growth of women and girls participation.
- ◀ Where sports lighting is provided, encourage conversion of halogen systems to LED in order to improve energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact.
- ◀ Assess the need for new football provision linked to any large housing development (i.e., over 300 dwellings) and assess this through the production of a sport needs assessment to determine on or off site requirements.

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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- ◀ Where a housing development is not of a size to justify on-site football provision, consider using contributions to improve existing sites within the locality, with priority placed on priorities and needs identified in the PPS Action Plan and the LFFP.
- ◀ Where a development is of a size to justify on-site football provision, focus on the creation of multi-pitch sites that reduce existing shortfalls.

## *3G pitch recommendations*

- ◀ Protect current stock of 3G pitches in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- ◀ Create three additional 11v11 size 3G pitches to alleviate football shortfalls with one each in the Runcorn Analysis Area and two in the Widnes Analysis Area.
- ◀ Explore the potential of gaining greater access to the pitch at DCBL Stadium Halton, particularly for rugby league and rugby union training, in order to alleviate identified shortfalls.
- ◀ If greater access cannot be obtained at DCBL Stadium Halton explore the possibility of any new 3G provision being RFL/WR compliant with secured access for clubs in order to reduce shortfalls.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches are priced competitively against the cost of hiring a grass pitches and are aimed at local grassroots clubs, with associated pitch replacement funds established.
- ◀ Ensure discussions take place between the Council, EH, SE, County FAs and FF before any conversion or creation of new provision in order to understand the potential effect on the sustainability of existing AGP stock.
- ◀ Carry out further feasibility work to identify suitable locations for new 3G pitches and ensure this is done in consultation with the relevant stakeholders including Sport England and the appropriate NGBs.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches are constructed to meet NGB compliant specifications based on proposed users and formats of use, including football, rugby union and rugby league.
- ◀ Ensure all current and future 3G providers have a pitch replacement fund in place for long-term sustainability and seek to resurface provision when it is required.
- ◀ Encourage more football match play demand to transfer to 3G pitches, where possible, particularly from council sites and for mini demand.
- ◀ Seek FIFA/FA testing of all existing and new 3G pitches and ensure they are on the FA 3G Pitch Register so that they can be used for competitive football matches and ensure re-testing is carried out when it is required.
- ◀ For any pitches built to RFU/RFL specifications, seek World Rugby compliancy so that they can be used for full contact activity and ensure re-testing when it is required (every two years).
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches with external funding have community use agreements in place and seek to use this to also tie in access to grass pitch and other sporting provision, where relevant.
- ◀ Ensure appropriate continued and future access to 3G provision for other sports where it is desired e.g., American football.
- ◀ Encourage conversion of halogen floodlighting systems to LED to improve energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact.

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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### *Cricket recommendations*

- ◀ Protect all cricket squares in current use, and disused provision, in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- ◀ As there are current identified shortfalls for football, rugby union and rugby league, in addition to future cricket shortfalls, ensure disused provision at Birchfield Sports and Social Club, Moorfield Sports and Social Club, Pavilions Club and Prescott Road Playing Fields are protected with options explored to bring them back into use to alleviate identified overplay.
- ◀ Work with both Runcorn CC and Widnes CC and their grounds staff to review quality issues on squares and to ensure quality is sustained as good.
- ◀ Examine potential options to create additional capacity for cricket within Halton in order to provide the ability for Runcorn CC and Widnes CC to grow. This primarily would be through the reinstatement of disused provision Moorfield Sports and Social Club or Birchfield Sports and Social Club.
- ◀ Explore the feasibility of assisting Runcorn CC within its plans to develop its ancillary provision.
- ◀ Explore options to accommodate expressed future demand through the installation of NTP at Runcorn Cricket Club.
- ◀ Explore options to provide both clubs with suitable training provision at their home ground/s.
- ◀ Where new housing or building developments are under consideration adjacent to existing cricket facilities, ensure a ball strike risk assessment is undertaken and ensure any clubs which could be affected are signposted to the ECB.
- ◀ Continue to deliver the Dynamos and All Stars cricket as well as women & girls programmes and seek to increase junior and female participation as a result.
- ◀ Work to increase women and girls' participation in line with the emerging Inspiring Generations ECB Strategy and protect existing provision so that women and girls have a suitable place to practise and play.

### *Grass rugby union recommendations*

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of rugby union pitches, including disused provision, in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- ◀ As there are current identified shortfalls for football, rugby union and rugby league, in addition to future cricket shortfalls, ensure disused provision at Birchfield Sports and Social Club, Moorfield Sports and Social Club, Pavilions Club and Prescott Road Playing Fields are protected with options explored to bring them back into use to alleviate identified overplay.
- ◀ Utilise the Football Foundation's PitchPower app to assist in the improvement and ongoing maintenance of provision.
- ◀ Explore options to improve the drainage of both pitches at Widnes RUFC.
- ◀ Improve pitch quality at Moore RUFC, Widnes RUFC and Prescott Road Playing Fields to alleviate overplay and create actual spare capacity for increased demand.
- ◀ Work with Moore RUFC to explore the feasibility of installing additional Sports lighting on the second pitch.
- ◀ Support ancillary facility developments at Moore RUFC.
- ◀ Continue to develop strong relationships between rugby union clubs and schools through curricular and extracurricular programmes in order to increase levels of mini and junior participation.
- ◀ Explore the potential of gaining greater access to the pitch at DCBL Stadium Halton, particularly for rugby union training, in order to alleviate identified shortfalls.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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- ◀ If greater access cannot be obtained at DCBL Stadium Halton explore the possibility of any new 3G provision being RFL/WR compliant with secured access for clubs in order to reduce shortfalls.
- ◀ Assess the need for new rugby union provision linked to any large housing development (i.e., over 300 dwellings) and assess this through the production of a sport needs assessment to determine on or off site requirements.
- ◀ Where a development is of a size to justify on-site rugby union provision, ensure that any proposals for new pitches will attract adequate demand.
- ◀ Where a development is not of a size to justify on-site rugby union provision, or if sufficient demand cannot be attracted, consider using contributions to improve existing sites within the locality.

### *Hockey recommendations*

- ◀ As priority, seek to refurbish the pitch at The Heath School with a hockey suitable surface and ensure a sinking fund is in place for long-term sustainability in cohesion with securing long term security of tenure for Runcorn HC.
- ◀ Explore potential options with the schools PFI regarding refurbishment.
- ◀ Ensure The Heath School is protected as the main hockey site within Halton in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- ◀ Ensure that future demand from EH's initiative, Hockey Heroes (aimed at growing participation for under 10s), can be accommodated.
- ◀ When 3G pitch stock increases, encourage the transfer of football demand from the sand-based AGPs in order to free up increased capacity for hockey activity, whilst ensuring enough football demand is retained for long-term financial sustainability.

### *Grass rugby league recommendations*

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of rugby league pitches, including disused provision, in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- ◀ As there are current identified shortfalls for football, rugby union and rugby league, in addition to future cricket shortfalls, ensure disused provision at Birchfield Sports and Social Club, Moorfield Sports and Social Club, Pavilions Club and Prescott Road Playing Fields are protected with options explored to bring them back into use to alleviate identified overplay.
- ◀ Utilise the Football Foundation's PitchPower app to assist in the improvement and ongoing maintenance of provision.
- ◀ Assist in finding a secure permanent home venue for Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC and Widnes St Maries ARLFC which has suitable quality and quality of provision to meet current and future levels of demand.
- ◀ Explore securing access to all community used sites through long term tenure agreements.
- ◀ Assist clubs in improving ancillary provision where deemed necessary, particularly for Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC at Wilmere Lane Playing Fields
- ◀ Improve poor and standard quality pitches to reduce overplay and create future spare capacity through work with the Ground Maintenance Association and volunteer workforce.
- ◀ Explore the best suited option to create additional provision at Ted Gleave Sports Ground to fully eradicate overplay.
- ◀ Continue to develop strong relationships between rugby clubs and schools through curricular and extracurricular programmes in order to increase levels of mini and junior participation.

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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- ◀ Explore the potential of gaining greater access to the pitch at DCBL Stadium Halton, particularly for rugby league training, in order to alleviate identified shortfalls.
- ◀ If greater access cannot be obtained at DCBL Stadium Halton explore the possibility of any new 3G provision being RFL compliant with secured access for clubs in order to reduce shortfalls.

### *Other sports (Baseball/softball and American football) recommendations*

- ◀ Existing quantity of Baseball provision to be protected.
- ◀ Assist Trojans Baseball Club in improving the quality of the diamond at John Mills Ballpark.
- ◀ Explore if Halton Spartans aspires to return back into Halton and if it does ensure it has secured access to relevant supply (grass or 3G) to meet its demand requirements.

## **PART 11: ACTION PLAN**

Based on the findings from the above update report the Action Plan has been updated as seen in the tables overleaf.

Please note that any alterations made to the Action Plan since its adoption in 2020 has been highlighted in yellow.

For more details surrounding the terminology within this section please review the adopted Halton Council Strategy & Action Plan (2020).

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## RUCORN ANALYSIS AREA

### Key recommendations

- ◆ To meet the future shortfalls, improve poor quality football pitches through enhanced levels of maintenance.
- ◆ Convert pitches to a more suitable pitch type to meet increases in demand such as adult to youth 11v11.
- ◆ Protect disused provision in accordance with NPPF and Sport England guidelines and examine the potential of reinstating provision to alleviate identified shortfalls.
- ◆ As a priority refurbish the hockey suitable AGP at The Heath School and look to secure long term access for Runcorn HC.
- ◆ Assist clubs in ancillary provision improvements where required.
- ◆ Examine securing tenure for clubs where not already apparent.
- ◆ Explore options to create at least one 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitch to alleviate identified current shortfalls, examining the potential to make in WR compliant to alleviate grass pitch rugby union shortfalls (Moore RUFC).
- ◆ Explore options to create capacity to allow for future growth for Runcorn CC.
- ◆ Look to improve the quality of pitches at Moore RUFC and install additional sports lighting in order to assist in reducing shortfalls.

Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>8</sup>	Cost <sup>9</sup>	Aim
3	Beechwood County Primary School	WA7 2TT	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch that is played to capacity at peak time.	Improve pitch quality as appropriate to meet curricular and extracurricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance Protect
5	Bridgewater Park Primary School	WA7 2LW	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
7	Brookvale Recreation Centre	WA7 6EP	3G	Council	One good quality 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitch which is FIFA certified. This has been converted from a hockey suitable AGP since the 2020 PPS audit.	Sustain quality as appropriate to meet levels of demand. Ensure a pitch replacement fund is in situ. Ensure it is retested for FIFA certification when required.	Council FF CFA	Key centre	L	L	L	Protect
11	Daresbury County Primary School	WA4 4AJ	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 5v5 pitch that has spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
15	Grange Academy	WA7 5DX	Football	Education	One youth 11v11 and one youth 9v9, both of which are poor quality and mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitch which are standard quality. The youth 11v11 pitch is overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions and the youth 9v9 pitch is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions. The mini pitches have spare capacity discounted due to quality and unsecure tenure. Pitches are used by Heath Rangers FC.	Improve pitch quality with an enhanced maintenance regime. Explore securing community access for Heath Rangers FC through a CUA.	Education FF CFA	Key centre	L	S - M	L - M	Protect Enhance
15	Grange Academy	WA7 5DX	3G	Education	One poor quality 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitch built in 2013. Pitch is not on the FA pitch register.	Look to refurbish the pitch as the surface is beyond its recommended lifespan. Ensure a pitch replacement fund is in situ. Once refurbished look to put it on the FA register and open up for full community access (weekend).	Education FF CFA	Key centre	H	S	H	Protect Enhance

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

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



**HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
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Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>8</sup>	Cost <sup>9</sup>	Aim
17	Haddocks Wood Playing Fields	WA7 1QH	Football (3G)	Council	Two adult, two youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, three mini 7v7 and two mini 5v5 pitches all of which are poor quality. The youth 11v11 pitches are overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions with the adult pitches overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions. The remaining pitches have spare capacity discounted due to quality and unsecure tenure. Due to its size the site has the potential to accommodate a 11v11 size 3G pitch.	Improve pitch quality with a continual enhanced maintenance regime. Explore potential options to improve the quality and access to onsite ancillary provision. Explore potential options to reduce levels of dog fouling. In order to alleviate identified shortfalls, explore the feasibility of the site for 3G development.	Council FF CFA	Key centre	H	S	M	Enhance Protect
21	Halton Lodge School	WA7 5LU	Football	Education	One standard quality youth 9v9 pitch that is not available for community use.	Sustain quality through appropriate maintenance and retain as current use.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Protect
24	Holy Spirit RC Primary School	WA7 2NL	Football	Education	One poor quality youth 9v9 pitch overplayed by one match equivalent session through community, curricular and extracurricular usage.	Improve pitch quality with enhanced levels of maintenance to better meet community, curricular and extracurricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	M	S	L-M	Protect Enhance
30	APEC Taxis Stadium	WA7 6GJ	Football (3G)	Sports club (leased from Council)	One sport lit adult (Step hybrid pitch), three youth 11v11, one youth 9v9 two mini 7v7 and three mini 5v5 pitches. The adult pitch is standard quality, there are two standard and one poor quality youth 11v11 pitch overplayed accumulatively by 1.5 match equivalent sessions, one standard quality youth 9v9 played to capacity, two standard quality mini 7v7 pitches played to capacity at peak time and two good and one standard quality mini 5v5 pitch with actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions. Its main clubhouse for its senior teams is good quality, however, the ancillary facilities for its youth and mini teams is poor quality. There are aspirations to create a 3G pitch on the site.	Sustain good pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Monitor the utilisation and impact/success of the hybrid pitch. Improve standard and poor quality pitches with enhanced levels of maintenance. Explore the feasibility of improving the quality of ancillary provision for youth and mini teams. Ensure pitch and ancillary provision continues to meet the relevant requirement for the level of Step football being played on the site. In order to alleviate identified shortfalls, explore the feasibility of the site for 3G development.	Sports club FF CFA Council	Key centre	M	S - M	M - H	Protect Provide Enhance
32	Moore RUFC	WA4 6UU	Rugby union	Sports club	Two senior pitches one which is fully sports lit. The sports lit pitch has the quality rating of M1/D1 with the other pitch being M1/D2 quality. Pitches are accumulatively overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions. Site is owned by Moore RUFC; the Club indicates ancillary facilities are of good quality but its clubhouse needs expanding in order to accommodate planned establishment of mini, junior and female sections. The Club also hopes to improve showers and boiler.	Improve levels of pitch maintenance in order to reduce identified overplay. Explore installing sports lights on the other pitch in order for competitive and training demand to be evenly dispersed. Explore the feasibility of enhancing changing provision in order to better	Sports club RFU	Local	M	M	L - M	Protect Enhance

**HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
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Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>8</sup>	Cost <sup>9</sup>	Aim
						accommodate mini, junior and female demand. Assist the Club in improving the quality of its boiler and showering facilities.						
36	Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy	WA7 6EP	Football	Academy	Three poor quality adult pitches which are overplayed by three match equivalent sessions through community, curricular and extracurricular demand. Pitches are used by Runcorn Sports FC and Beechwood JFC.	Improve pitch quality with an enhanced maintenance regime. Explore securing tenure for community users through a CUA.	Academy FF CFA	Local	M	S	L-M	Enhance Protect
38	Palace Fields Primary Academy	WA7 2QW	Football	Academy	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Academy FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
39	Pavilions Club	WA7 4EX	Disused (Football Rugby league)	Commercial	Former ICI Recreation Club site which accommodated one adult pitch (Step football), two adult and one senior rugby league pitch. The aforementioned provision was last marked circa 2012, however, the site has more recently (2016) had five mini 7v7 pitches marked on part of the playing field land. In 2017 a planning application (17/00468/FUL) was submitted to develop the site. This was eventually withdrawn after an appeal in January 2022.	Explore feasibility of bringing the playing field back into use given local shortfalls and ensure replacement provision is provided in line with national planning policy should a proposal come forward that will result in permanent loss.	Commercial FF CFA RFL Council SE	Local	M	S	M	Protect Provide
40	Pewithall Primary School	WA7 4XQ	Football	Education	One poor quality youth 11v11 pitch overmarked by one mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitch. Youth 11v11 pitch is overplayed by 2.5 match equivalent sessions and the mini 7v7 pitch is overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions. The mini 5v5 pitch is played to capacity.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet community, curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	M	S-M	L	Enhance Protect
42	Runcorn Boys Club	WA7 5WN	Football	Sports club	One standard quality adult pitch that has actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions at peak time.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Utilise spare capacity to alleviate shortfalls and/or accommodate future demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	M	S	L	Protect
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	WA7 4QR	Football (3G)	Council	Three adult and two youth 11v11 pitches that are all poor quality. The youth 11v11 pitches are overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions whereas the adult pitches have actual spare capacity discounted due to quality issues. Due to its size the site has the potential to accommodate a 11v11 size 3G pitch.	Improve pitch quality through enhanced levels of maintenance. In order to alleviate identified shortfalls, explore the feasibility of the site for 3G development.	Council FF CFA	Local	M	S	L – M	Enhance Protect

**HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
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Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>8</sup>	Cost <sup>9</sup>	Aim
43	Runcorn Heath Playing Fields	WA7 4QR	Rugby league	Council	One good quality senior pitch has actual spare capacity at peak time amounting to 0.5 match equivalent sessions.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Utilise actual spare capacity to alleviate shortfalls and/or accommodate future demand.	Council RFL	Local	L	L	L	Protect
44	Runcorn Sports Club	WA7 4SD	Cricket	Sports club	One good quality square with 13 grass wickets. Spare capacity to accommodate additional Sunday fixtures and a small amount of capacity for Junior demand midweek. The Club reports aspirations for a NTP on its main square for both competitive and training purposes and refurbishment of existing NTP training facility. It has submitted a plan to extend and remodel its ancillary provision (23/00130/FUL)	Sustain square quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Explore the feasibility of installing a NTP onsite. Assist the Club where possible with its ancillary and training provision plans.	Sports club ECB CCB	Local	M	S-M	M-H	Protect Provide Enhance
45	Sandymoor School	WA7 1QU	Football	Academy	One poor quality youth 11v11 pitch that is overplayed by one match equivalent session. Used by Beechwood JFC and Sandymoor JFC.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Look to secure access for Sandymoor and Beechwood junior football clubs through a CUA.	Academy FF CFA Parish Council	Key centre	L	S - M	L	Protect Enhance
45	Sandymoor School	WA7 1QU	3G	Academy	One good quality small size floodlit 3G pitch (85x55) that is FA registered. The pitch is fully available for community use through a licence agreement with Sandymoor Parish Council.	Sustain pitch quality through appropriate levels of maintenance and ensure it remains on the FA register. Ensure the pitch is utilised as much as possible for both training and competitive demand. Ensure a pitch replacement fund is in place and where possible guarantee pricing keeps the provision accessible.	Academy FF CFA Parish Council	Key centre	L	S - M	L	Protect Enhance
48	St Chad's Catholic and Church Of England High School	WA7 5YH	Football	Education	Two poor quality youth 11v11 pitches that are played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular activity. Pitches are not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
49	St Clement's Catholic Primary School	WA7 4NX	Football	Education	One poor quality adult pitch that is played to capacity through community, curricular and extra curricular activity.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	S	L	Enhance
50	St Martin's Catholic Primary School	WA7 6HZ	Football	Education	One poor quality youth 9v9 pitch that is played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular activity. Pitch is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance

**HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>8</sup>	Cost <sup>9</sup>	Aim
51	St Mary's Church Of England Primary School	WA7 2NR	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch that is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
54	The Brow Community Primary School	WA7 2HB	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 5v5 pitch that is not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA	Local	L	L	L	Enhance
55	The Heath School	WA7 4SY	Football	Academy	Two poor quality youth 11v11 pitches that are played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular activity. Pitches are not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Education FF CFA EH	Key centre	L	L	L	Enhance
55	The Heath School	WA7 4SY	Hockey suitable AGP	Academy	One full size sports lit hockey suitable AGP that is available for community use. Runcorn HC currently rents the use of the pitch on an annual basis. It is considered to be poor quality as it has not been refurbished since installation in 2005, despite being deep cleaned 2019.  Multiple fixtures a season are having to be postponed or cancelled due to the poor quality of the pitch and its issues of holding water.	As a priority, protect and refurbish the pitch as a hockey suitable surface. Look to secure tenure for Runcorn HC on the site. Ensure a sinking fund is in situ once refurbished.	Academy EH Sports club SE	Local	H	S	H	Enhance Protect
58	Westfield Primary School	WA7 4TR	Football	Education	One youth 9v9 and one mini 7v7 pitch both of which are poor quality. Spare capacity on the mini 7v7 is discounted due to quality and unsecure tenure. The youth 9v9 pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to better accommodate community, curricular and extracurricular.	Education FF CFA	Local	M	S	L	Enhance Protect
59	Weston County Primary School	WA7 4RA	Football	Education	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch that is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to better accommodate community, curricular and extracurricular.	Education FF CFA	Local	M	S	L	Enhance Protect
60	Weston Point Community Primary School	WA7 4EQ	Football	Education	One standard quality mini 7v7 pitch that has spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to better accommodate community, curricular and extracurricular.	Education FF CFA	Local	M	S	L	Enhance Protect
68	Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields	WA7 2PG	Football (3G)	Council	One youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, one mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitch all of which are standard quality. The youth 11v11 and mini 7v7 pitch are played to capacity at peak time. The youth 9v9 and mini 5v5 pitch both have spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions at peak time. All of the pitches suffer from waterlogging. Brookvale United FC has requested a lease for the site from the Council, reporting that if it is successful it would explore potential funding options to improve quality.	Sustain pitch quality through appropriate levels of maintenance. Utilise spare capacity to alleviate overplayed sites or to accommodate future demand. Explore the feasibility of giving long term tenure to Brookvale United FC as long as the agreement is agreeable for all stakeholders. Explore the feasibility of improving onsite ancillary provision.	Council FF CFA Sports club	Local	M	S - M	L - M	Protect Enhance

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Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>8</sup>	Cost <sup>9</sup>	Aim
					Onsite ancillary provision is standard quality albeit modernisation is required. Due to its size the site has the potential to accommodate a 11v11 size 3G pitch.	In order to alleviate identified shortfalls, explore the feasibility of the site for 3G development.						
71	Halton Baseball and Softball Club (John Mills Ballpark)	WA7 6GJ	Baseball / Softball	Sports club	One poor quality baseball diamond leased to Trojans Baseball Club. The Club aspires to have long term tenure of the site.	Assist the Club in securing long term tenure and improve the quality of the baseball diamond.	Council Sports club BSUK	Local	M	S	L-M	Protect Enhance
72	Runcorn Town FC (Pavilions Club)	WA7 4EX	Football	Commercial	One standard quality adult pitch with actual spare capacity at peak time of 0.5 match equivalent sessions. Used by Runcorn Town FC who play regional feeder league football which is one step below the non league pyramid.	Improve pitch quality with enhanced levels of maintenance. Ensure the site meets relevant ground grading requirements if the club were to be promoted.	Commercial FF CFA Sports club	Local	M	L	L	Enhance

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## WIDNES ANALYSIS AREA

### Key recommendations

- ✦ To meet the future shortfalls, improve poor quality football pitches through enhanced levels of maintenance.
- ✦ Convert pitches to a more suitable pitch type to meet increases in demand such as adult to youth 11v11.
- ✦ Protect disused provision in accordance with NPPF and Sport England guidelines and examine the potential of reinstating provision to alleviate identified shortfalls.
- ✦ Look to secure permanent home venues with sufficient pitch and ancillary requirements to meet the demand for Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC and Widnes St Maries Vikings ARLFC.
- ✦ Assist clubs in ancillary provision improvements where required.
- ✦ Examine securing tenure for clubs where not already apparent.
- ✦ Explore options to create at least two 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitches to alleviate identified shortfalls, examining the potential to make in WR compliant to alleviate grass pitch rugby union shortfalls.
- ✦ Explore options to create capacity to allow for future growth for Widnes CC.
- ✦ Look to improve the quality of pitches at Widnes RUFC and Prescot Road Playing Fields and install additional sports lighting in order to assist in reducing shortfalls.

Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>10</sup>	Cost <sup>11</sup>	Aim
1	Arley Drive Playing Fields	WA8 4XS	Football	Council	Two standard quality youth 9v9 pitches which are played to capacity at peak time.	Improve pitch quality with enhanced levels of maintenance.	Council FF LFA	Local	M	S	L	Protect Enhance
4	Birchfield Sports and Social Club	WA8 9ES	Disused (Rugby union Cricket)	Sports club	Site previously accommodated a six wicket grass square, one senior grass rugby union pitch and one adult football pitch (on cricket outfield). The provision was used by Birchfield Park CC and Birchfield RUFC until the sites closure in 2020. The football pitch was last actively marked circa 2017. In 2023 the accompanying ancillary provision were left derelict after an arson attack.	Explore feasibility of bringing the playing field back into use given local shortfalls and ensure replacement provision is provided in line with national planning policy should a proposal come forward that will result in permanent loss.	Sports club RFU Council	Local	H	L	L-H	Protect Enhance Provide
9	Cronton Sixth Form College	WA8 5WA	Football	Education	Two standard quality adult pitches that have spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain quality with appropriate levels of maintenance and retain as current use.	Education FF LFA	Local	L	L	L	Protect
9	Cronton Sixth Form College	WA8 5WA	Cricket	Education	One standalone NTP that is poor quality and considered disused by the College.	Look to improve and retain as current use.	Education ECB CCB	Local	L	L	L	Protect
9	Cronton Sixth Form College	WA8 5WA	Rugby league	Education	One standard quality senior pitch that has spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. Pitch is available for community use but is currently unused.	Sustain quality with appropriate levels of maintenance and retain as current use.	Education RFL	Local	L	L	L	Protect
10	Crow Wood Park	WA8 3LL	Football	Council	One poor quality adult pitch that is available for community use but currently unused. Spare capacity discounted due to pitch quality.	Improve pitch quality with enhanced levels of maintenance. Once pitch has improved in quality look to maximise community use.	Council FF LFA	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
12	Ditton Primary School	WA8 7HD	Rugby league	Education	One poor quality primary rugby league pitch not available for community use.	Improve pitch quality as required to meet curricular and extracurricular demand.	Education RFL	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance

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

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

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Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>10</sup>	Cost <sup>11</sup>	Aim
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	WA8 7EZ	Football	Council	Three adult, two youth 9v9, two mini 7v7 and three mini 5v5 pitches all of which are standard quality. The adult pitches have actual spare capacity of one match equivalent session, the mini 7v7 pitches have spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions and the mini 5v5 pitches have spare capacity of one match equivalent session. The youth 9v9 pitches are overplayed by one match equivalent session. There are aspirations to create a 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitch on the site.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Look to improve the quality of the youth 9v9 pitches to alleviate overplay. Utilise spare capacity to alleviate shortfalls and/or accommodate future demand. Explore the feasibility of creating a 11v11 size sports lit pitch on the site.	Council FF LFA	Key centre	H	S - M	H	Protect Provide Enhance
13	Frank Myler Pavilion	WA8 7EZ	Rugby league	Council	A poor quality senior rugby league pitch used occasionally by Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC. Spare capacity discounted due to poor quality.	Improve pitch quality as required based on levels of demand using the provision. Ensure the pitch is retained as required to meet demand.	Council RFL	Key centre	M	S - M	L	Protect Enhance
18	Hale Park	L24 4AF	Disused (Football)	Council	The site previously accommodated one adult and one youth 11v11 pitch however it is now used as open green space.	Explore feasibility of bringing the playing field back into use given local shortfalls and ensure replacement provision is provided in line with national planning policy should a proposal come forward that will result in permanent loss.	FF LFA SE Council	Local	L	L	L	Protect
19	Halebank Recreation Ground	WA8 8UX	Football	Sports club (leased from Council)	One good quality adult pitch that has actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions at peak time.	Sustain pitch quality as appropriate to meet demand. Utilise spare capacity to alleviate shortfalls and/or accommodate future demand.	Sports club FF LFA	Local	L	L	L	Protect
26	Jaguar Land Rover Sports and Social Club	WA8 5AJ	Football	Commercial	One adult and one mini 5v5 pitch both of which are good quality. The adult pitch is played to capacity at peak time whereas the mini 5v5 pitch has actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Look to utilise spare capacity for future demand and transfer of demand off overplayed sites.	Commercial FF LFA	Local	L	L	L	Protect
27	King George V Playing Fields (Widnes)	WA8 8DB	Football	Council	Two adult pitches, one youth 9v9, one mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitches. All pitches are poor quality apart from the mini 5v5 pitch which is standard quality. The adult pitches are overplayed by two match equivalent session the youth 9v9 pitch is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions and the mini 7v7 pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent session. The mini 5v5 pitch is played to capacity at peak time. Pitches suffer from poor drainage and dog fouling. Widnes FC (Step club) has plans to obtain a long-term lease/freehold at the site in order to	Assist the Club with its plans to secure long term tenure and develop the site ensuring it benefits the wider community and addresses identified shortfalls. Ensure the site meets relevant requirements for Step football. Explore the feasibility of creating a 11v11 size sports lit pitch on the site, factoring in its availability for wider community use and not solely for Widnes FC.	Council FF LFA SE	Local	H	M	H	Protect Provide Enhance

**HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
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Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>10</sup>	Cost <sup>11</sup>	Aim
					create its own home ground. It is in the process of resubmitting a planning application, after taking into consideration recommendations made from stakeholders. This includes creating two adult pitches, one of which would be a stadia pitch, two youth 9v9, two mini 7v7 and three mini 5v5 pitches to alleviate PPS shortfalls. The site would be accessible for the wider community. Due to its size the site has the potential to accommodate a 11v11 size 3G pitch.							
28	Leigh Recreation Playing Fields	WA8 7BG	Football	Council	Three adult and three youth 11v11 all of which are standard quality. The adult pitches have actual spare capacity at peak time of 0.5 match equivalent sessions whereas the youth 11v11 pitches are played to capacity at peak time. Due to its size the site has the potential to accommodate a 11v11 size 3G pitch.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Look to utilise spare capacity for future demand and transferal of demand off overplayed sites. Explore the feasibility of creating a 11v11 size sports lit pitch on the site.	Council FF LFA	Local	M	S - M	L - M	Protect Enhance Provide
33	Moorfield Primary School	WA8 3HJ	Rugby league	Education	One junior and one senior pitch both of which are poor quality. Pitches have been created to accommodate the demand from Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC. Junior pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent sessions whereas the senior pitch is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions. The RFL has invested some monies to improve pitch quality. The Club does not have formal tenure and struggles to access relevant ancillary provision.	Improve pitch quality with enhanced levels of maintenance. Look to secure long term tenure on the site for the club in order to access relevant funding to improve access and quality of ancillary provision. Ensure access to relevant ancillary provision as soon as possible no matter if a wider development takes place.	Education RFL	Local	H	S	L - M	Protect Provide Enhance
34	Moorfield Sports and Social Club	WA8 3HQ	Disused (Football Rugby league Cricket)	Sports club	Site closed in 2021 previously accommodating two adult football pitches, a six wicket grass cricket square, two senior and two junior rugby league pitches in addition to a bowling green and relevant ancillary provision. Previously used by Moorfield U16s FC, Widnes Moorfield Tigers RLFC and Moorfield CC. The former Club has relocated to Frank Myler Pavilion. Moorfield CC has folded and Widnes Moorfield Tigers ARLFC now plays at Moorfield Primary School with some occasional use of Frank Myler Pavilion. In November 2023 a planning application was submitted (23/00459/FUL) for the development of the site.	Explore feasibility of bringing the playing field back into use given local shortfalls and ensure replacement provision is provided in line with national planning policy should a proposal come forward that will result in permanent loss.	Sports club FF LFA RLF ECB CCB SE Council	Local	H	L	L-H	Protect Enhance Provide



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Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>10</sup>	Cost <sup>11</sup>	Aim
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	WA8 7HU	Football	Academy	One standard quality adult pitch that has spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality to better meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Academy FF LFA	Local	L	L	L	Protect
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	WA8 7HU	3G	Academy	One 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitch that is standard quality having been built in 2017. Pitch is available for community use and is FA certified.	Sustain quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Ensure there is a pitch replacement fund in place for the eventual refurbishment. Ensure the pitch remains community available and on the FA register.	Academy FF LFA	Local	L	L	L	Protect
37	Ormiston Chadwick Academy	WA8 7HU	Rugby league	Academy	One poor quality senior pitch that is played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular demand.	Improve pitch quality to better meet curricular and extra curricular demand.	Academy RFL	Local	L	L	L	Protect
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	WA8 7PD	Football	Council	Two mini 7v7 and two mini 5v5 pitches all of which are poor quality. The mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches are each overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions. Pitches suffer from poor drainage, waterlogging and dog fouling.	Improve poor quality football and rugby union pitches with enhanced levels of maintenance. In the longer term, explore the feasibility of improving onsite drainage for both football and rugby union pitches.	Council Sports clubs FF LFA	Key centre	M - H	S - M	L - M	Protect Provide
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	WA8 7PD	Rugby union	Sports club	Two poor quality senior pitches (M0/D0), one of which is sports lit. Widnes RUFC has a freehold of the pitches, which are overplayed by 0.75 match equivalent sessions. The pitches are only maintained to a basic level as the Club cannot fully access the site with its maintenance equipment.	Improve poor quality football and rugby union pitches with enhanced levels of maintenance. In the longer term, explore the feasibility of improving onsite drainage for both football and rugby union pitches. Explore options to improve access for maintenance equipment.	Council Sports clubs RFU	Key centre	M - H	S - M	L - M	Protect Provide
41	Prescot Road Playing Fields	WA8 7PD	Disused (Football)	Private	Prescot Road Playing Field currently is separated into three parcels of land which are under three separate tenures: the Council, Widnes RUFC and private ownership. The parcel of land which is owned by the Council, currently accommodates four mini pitches that are used by Pex Hill FC. The Club reports that it previously had access to an additional three youth 11v11 pitches at the site, before these were sold in 2013 from a private ownership to another to private owner. These are now considered disused. In January 2024 a planning application was submitted (24/00021/OUT) for the development of the disused area of the site.	An adult rugby pitch has been marked out and used during 2024 season, on the privately owned land, the owner is aware of this use. Explore feasibility of bringing the playing field back into use given local shortfalls and ensure replacement provision is provided in line with national planning policy should a proposal come forward that will result in permanent loss.	Sports club FF LFA RFU SE Council Private	Local	H	L	L-H	Protect Enhance Provide

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Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>10</sup>	Cost <sup>11</sup>	Aim
46	DCBL Stadium Halton	WA8 7DZ	3G	Council	A good quality 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitch which FIFA/WR and RFL complaint. The pitch is primarily used by larger, semi professional or professional clubs, such as Widnes Vikings RLFC, Widnes FC and City of Liverpool FC, leaving availability limited for other community clubs. It is therefore considered unavailable.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Ensure a pitch replacement fund is in place for long-term sustainability. Explore options to open up the pitch for wider community access particularly for football and rugby league.	Council Sports club FF LFA RFL RFU	Key centre	H	S	L	Protect
52	St Michaels Catholic Primary School	WA8 8TD	Football	Education	One good quality adult pitch that is played to capacity. There is no actual spare capacity at peak time.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate maintenance. Look to secure tenure for community users.	Education FF LFA	Local	L	S	L	Protect
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	WA8 7DW	Football (3G)	Education	Two youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, two mini 7v7 and two mini 5v5 pitches all of which are standard quality. Pitches are used by Widnes FC. Due to its size the site has the potential to accommodate a 11v11 size 3G pitch.	Sustain pitch quality with an appropriate maintenance regime. Ensure Widnes FC has security of tenure on the sites pitches. Explore the feasibility of creating a 11v11 size sports lit pitch on the site for community use, not solely Widnes FC.	Education FF LFA	Local	L	L	L	Protect
53	St Peter & St Paul Catholic College	WA8 7DW	Rugby league	Education	Two standard quality senior pitches that have spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality and retain as current use.	Education RFL	Local	L	L	L	Protect
56	Wade Deacon High School	WA8 7TD	Football	Education	One youth 11v11 and one youth 9v9 pitch both of which are standard quality. Spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. Issues with unauthorised access.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Council and FF/LFA need to engage with the School to ensure the existing CUA is being implemented.	Education FF LFA	Local	M	S	L	Protect Provide Enhance
56	Wade Deacon High School	WA8 7TD	3G	Education	One poor quality 11v11 size floodlit 3G pitch which was built in 2013. Pitch is not FA/FIFA certified. Pitch is unavailable at the weekend for community use which is a breach of an agreement made when it was constructed.	Improve through refurbishment. Ensure the pitch is retested FA/FIFA compliancy when appropriate. Ensure there is a pitch replacement fund in place. Examine why the pitch is unavailable at the weekend and look to re-establish community use within this time period.	Education FF LFA	Local	H	S	H	Protect Enhance
56	Wade Deacon High School	WA8 7TD	Rugby league	Education	Two poor quality senior pitches that are played to capacity through curricular and extra curricular usage.	Improve pitch quality to better sustain curricular and extra curricular usage.	Education RFL	Local	L	S	L	Protect Enhance
61	Widnes Cricket Club	WA8 9LA	Cricket	Sports club	One good quality square with 14 grass wickets accompanied by an NTP. Site is owned by Widnes CC, with the Club exploring options to improve outfield drainage, upgrade its practice facilities and enhance its clubhouse provision. It needs access to additional provision for future demand.	Sustain square quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Explore greater utilisation of onsite NTP to create more capacity. Assist the Club in providing improving the quality of training	Sports club ECB CCB	Local	M	S	L - M	Protect Enhance

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Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>10</sup>	Cost <sup>11</sup>	Aim
						provision, outfield drainage and ancillary facilities.						
63	Widnes RUFC	WA8 7NU	Rugby union	Sports club	Two senior rugby union pitches, one of which is sports lit. The pitches are accumulatively overplayed by 2.5 match equivalent sessions. Both onsite pitches have ineffective drainage systems, causing significant waterlogging issues. Ancillary facilities on site are good quality although the car park needs refurbishment.	Improve pitch quality with enhanced levels of maintenance. Ensure issues with waterlogging are resolved. Once pitches at Prescott Road Playing Fields have improved in quality, look at dispersing demand equally across all pitches to minimise overplay. Assist the Club in improving the surface of its carpark.	Sports club RFU	Local	M	M	M - H	Protect Provide Enhance
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	WA8 5UW	Football (3G)	Sports club (leased from the Council)	One adult, two youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, one mini 7v7, one mini 5v5 pitch all of which are good quality. The adult, mini 5v5, youth 11v11 pitches each have spare capacity of one match equivalent sessions whereas the mini 7v7 pitch has spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions. The youth 9v9 pitch has not spare capacity at peak time. Due to its size the site has the potential to accommodate a 11v11 size 3G pitch.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Look to utilise spare capacity to alleviate shortfalls and/or accommodate future demand. Ensure ancillary provision is readily available for all community users. Explore the feasibility of creating a 11v11 size sports lit pitch on the site.	Sports club FF LFA	Key centre	M	L	L	Protect Provide
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	WA8 5UW	Rugby league (3G)	Sports club (leased from the Council)	Three senior, two junior and three primary pitches all of which are good quality. The senior pitches have an actual spare capacity of 1.5 match equivalent sessions, whereas the other pitch types are played to capacity at peak time. Site is leased to Halton Farnworth Hornets ARLFC. One of the senior pitches is also used for rugby union (Birchfield RUFC). Due to its size the site has the potential to accommodate a 11v11 size 3G pitch.	Sustain pitch quality with appropriate levels of maintenance. Look to utilise spare capacity to alleviate shortfalls and/or accommodate future demand. Ensure ancillary provision is readily available for all community users. Explore options to increase the number of changing rooms to better accommodate women and girls demand. Continue to support the requirements for Birchfield RUFC until it a long term home site can be found. Explore the feasibility of creating a 11v11 size sports lit pitch on the site.	Sports club RL RFU	Key centre	M	L	L	Protect Provide
65	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields	WA8 5UW	Rugby union	Sports club (leased from the Council)	One rugby union pitch which is overmarked onto a senior rugby league pitch. Use by Birchfield RUFC.	Continue to support the requirements for Birchfield RUFC until it a long term home site can be found.	Sports club RFU RL	Key centre	M	L	L	Protect Provide

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Site ID	Site	Post code	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales <sup>10</sup>	Cost <sup>11</sup>	Aim
70	Ted Gleave Sports Ground	WA8 0PZ	Rugby league	Sports club (leased from the Council)	One senior and one junior pitch both of which are standard quality with the former pitch fully sports lit. The senior pitch is played to capacity whereas the junior pitch is overplayed by 3.75 match equivalent sessions. Site is leased to West Bank Bears ARLFC which has plans to expand its current clubhouse and storage. The Club has plans to complete sport lighting on its pitch to allow all year use which could lead to quality deterioration.	Assist the Club in improving pitch quality through enhanced levels of maintenance. Assist the Club in creating additional pitches or facilitate access to alternative provision in order to alleviate overplay. Assist the Club with its ancillary provision plans. Explore utilising RFL compliant 3G provision, such as DCBL Stadium, to negate increased pitch usage.	Sports club RFL	Local	H	S - M	L - M	Enhance Provide
73	FPA Sports Hub	L24 4AF	Football	Council	Two mini 7v7 pitches, one of which is standard and the other is poor quality, and three mini 5v5 pitches with one food, one standard and one poor quality. There is no spare capacity at peak time. Used by FGS and FPA football clubs.	Improve pitch quality with enhanced levels of maintenance. Ensure ancillary provision is of suitable quantity/quality to meet demand.	Council FF LFA	Local	M	S - M	L - M	Protect Enhance

## PART 12: HOUSING SCENARIOS

The original PPS provided an estimate of demand for pitch sport based on population forecasts and club consultation to 2037 (in line with the emerging Delivery and Allocation Local Plan period). This future demand was translated into teams likely to be generated, rather than actual pitch provision required. The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) adds to this, updating the likely demand generated for pitch sports based on housing increases and converts the demand into MES and the number of pitches required. It also gives the associated costs of supplying the increased pitch provision. The PPC splits the total pitch requirement into natural turf pitches to meet peak period demand, artificial grass pitches to meet training demand, and the additional number of changing rooms required to support the new demand.

The scenarios below are examples of how the PPC can be used in order to understand the potential additional demand for pitch sports from housing growth in addition to potential associated costs. It is recommended that the Council work with Sport England to develop a process and guidance to obtain developer contributions from single or cumulative housing developments.

Scenarios one and two are based on a specific number of dwellings where the additional population is not known. These use an occupancy rate of 2.4 people per dwelling to estimate what the likely resident population will be:

- ◀ **Scenario One** - additional demand for pitch sports generated from housing growth from 350 dwellings (the yearly requirement identified in the Local Plan but only applied to a single year for this scenario).
- ◀ **Scenario Two** - additional demand for pitch sports generated from housing growth from 484 dwellings (a “real world” example linked to the development of West of Hale Gate Rd).
- ◀ **Scenario Three** - additional demand for pitch sports generated from housing growth covering the entire Local Plan period (2021-2037). Total an additional population of 6,018.

**It should be noted that these are the same scenarios in the original PPS, however, updates in costings and participation have been made to provide revised figures. The figures from 2020 have been included in the relevant tables for comparison.**

### **Scenario One**

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth from 350 dwellings with an occupancy rate of 2.4 per household is 840 people. Based on 2024 demand figures population increases equates to accumulated one MES of demand per week for football, rugby union and rugby league. This is an increase from the original figure of 0.87 MES, with the growth mainly coming from youth and mini football demand.

In comparison demand for AGPs for hockey and cricket have marginally decreased from 0.03 to 0.02 MES and 1.02 to 0.88 a season, respectively.

Training demand equates to 1.72 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches which has risen from 1.5 hours. The remaining training demand requirements are broadly the same with some minor decreases for hockey (AGP) and rugby union (sports lit grass pitch).

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Table 12.1: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 350 dwellings

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 350 dwellings	
	Match demand (MES) per week <sup>12</sup>	Training demand <sup>13</sup>
<b>2020</b>		
Adult football	0.13	1.50 hours
Youth football	0.31	As above
Mini soccer	0.30	As above
Rugby union	0.04	0.04 MES
Rugby league	0.09	0.10 MES
Adult hockey	0.02	0.05 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0.01	0.01 hours
Cricket	1.02	-
<b>2024</b>		
Adult football	0.10	1.72 hours
Youth football	0.44	As above
Mini soccer	0.32	As above
Rugby union	0.05	0.05 MES
Rugby league	0.09	0.10 MES
Adult hockey	0.01	0.04 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0.01	0.01 hours
Cricket	0.88	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifestyle costs. These are based on Sport England Facilities Costs (Third Quarter 2023).

Table 12.2: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost	Lifecycle Cost (per annum)	Number	Capital cost
<b>2020</b>					
Adult football	0.13	£13,029	£2,749	0.27	£44,950
Youth football	0.31	£24,660	£5,179	0.39	£65,781
Mini soccer	0.30	£7,468	£1,568	0	£0
Rugby union	0.04	£5,672	£1,214	0.08	£13,978
Rugby league	0.09	£9,867	£2,181	0.18	£29,601
Cricket	0.02	£6,227	£1,258	0.04	£7,283
Sand based AGPs	0	£3,297	£102	0.01	£1,370
3G	0.04	£38,609	£1,458	0.08	£13,387
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.89 / 0.04</b>	<b>£108,829</b>	<b>£15,709</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>£176,350</b>
<b>2024</b>					
Adult football	0.10	£10,789	£2,126	0.20	£38,499
Youth football	0.44	£39,470	£7,973	0.57	£110,824
Mini soccer	0.32	£9,490	£1,879	0.00	£0

<sup>12</sup> As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

<sup>13</sup> Hours equate to access to a 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost	Lifecycle Cost (per annum)	Number	Capital cost
Rugby union	0.05	£8,209	£1,519	0.10	£19,527
Rugby league	0.09	£12,203	£2,258	0.17	£33,033
Cricket	0.02	£6,695	£1,232	0.04	£7,617
Sand based AGPs	0	£2,813	£73	0.01	£1,162
3G	0.05	£51,178	£1,551	0.09	£17,620
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.06<sup>14</sup> / 0.05</b>	<b>£140,847</b>	<b>£18,847</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>£228,283</b>

As seen in the table above there have been increases in all aspects using 2024 demand data, particularly surrounding costs, with this being said the small amount of additional demand generated suggests improvements to existing sites within the locality may be required rather than new provision.

## Scenario Two

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth from 484 dwellings with an occupancy rate of 2.4 per household is 1,162 people. Similar to the previous scenario, using up to date figures there overall increase for football, rugby union and rugby league match demand (1.22 MES to 1.38 MES). In comparison match demand for AGPs for hockey (0.03 MES) has remained the same whereas cricket has marginally decreased from 1.42 to 1.22.02 MES a season.

Training demand equates to 2.38 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches which has risen from 2.08 hours. The remaining training demand requirements are broadly the same with some minor decreases for hockey (AGP) and rugby union (sports lit grass pitch).

Table 12.3: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 484 dwellings

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 484 dwellings	
	Match demand (MES) per week <sup>15</sup>	Training demand <sup>16</sup>
<b>2020</b>		
Adult football	0.18	2.08 hours
Youth football	0.44	As above
Mini soccer	0.42	As above
Rugby union	0.06	0.06 MES
Rugby league	0.12	0.14 MES
Adult hockey	0.02	0.07 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0.01	0.01 hours
Cricket	1.42	-
<b>2024</b>		
Adult football	0.14	2.38 hours
Youth football	0.61	As above
Mini soccer	0.44	As above

<sup>14</sup> Grass pitches / Artificial provision

<sup>15</sup> As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

<sup>16</sup> Hours equate to access to a 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 484 dwellings	
	Match demand (MES) per week <sup>15</sup>	Training demand <sup>16</sup>
Rugby union	0.07	0.07 MES
Rugby league	0.12	0.14 MES
Adult hockey	0.02	0.05 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0.01	0.01 hours
Cricket	1.22	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifestyle costs. These are based on Sport England Facilities Costs (Third Quarter 2023).

Table 12.4: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost	Lifecycle Cost (per annum)	Number	Capital cost
<b>2020</b>					
Adult football	0.18	£18,024	£3,803	0.37	£62,181
Youth football	0.44	£34,113	£7,164	0.54	£90,997
Mini soccer	0.42	£10,331	£2,169	0	£0
Rugby union	0.06	£7,847	£1,679	0.11	£19,337
Rugby league	0.12	£13,650	£3,017	0.24	£40,949
Cricket	0.03	£8,615	£1,740	0.06	£10,075
Sand based AGPs	0.01	£4,561	£141	0.01	£1,896
3G	0.05	£53,409	£2,016	0.11	£18,519
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.25 / 0.06</b>	<b>£150,550</b>	<b>£21,729</b>	<b>1.44</b>	<b>£243,954</b>
<b>2024</b>					
Adult football	0.14	£14,920	£2,939	0.27	£53,238
Youth football	0.61	£54,592	£11,028	0.79	£153,305
Mini soccer	0.44	£13,125	£2,599	0.00	£0
Rugby union	0.07	£11,353	£2,100	0.14	£27,006
Rugby league	0.12	£16,877	£3,122	0.24	£45,685
Cricket	0.03	£9,260	£1,704	0.05	£10,535
Sand based AGPs	0	£3,890	£101	0.01	£1,607
3G	0.07	£70,783	£2,145	0.13	£24,370
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.41<sup>17</sup> / 0.07</b>	<b>£194,800</b>	<b>£25,738</b>	<b>1.63</b>	<b>£315,747</b>

Again, as seen in the table above there have been increases in all aspects using 2024 demand data, particularly surrounding costs, with this being said the small amount of additional demand generated suggests improvements to existing sites within the locality may be required rather than new provision.

<sup>17</sup> Grass pitches / Artificial provision



# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

## Scenario Three

The estimated additional demand derived from an increase of 6,018 in the population equates to 7.14 MES of demand per week for football, rugby union and rugby league an increase from 6.13 in 2020. Similar to the previous two scenarios match demand for AGPs for hockey and cricket has marginally decreased.

Training demand equates to 12.34 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches which has risen from 10.78 hours. The remaining training demand requirements are broadly the same with some minor decreases for hockey (AGP) and rugby union (sports lit grass pitch).

Table 12.5: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 6,018 population increase

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 6,018 population increase	
	Match demand (MES) per week <sup>18</sup>	Training demand <sup>19</sup>
<b>2020</b>		
Adult football	0.95	10.78 hours
Youth football	2.25	As above
Mini soccer	2.18	As above
Rugby union	0.30	0.31 MES
Rugby league	0.63	0.74 MES
Adult hockey	0.12	0.35 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0.05	0.06 hours
Cricket	7.34	-
<b>2024</b>		
Adult football	0.71	12.34 hours
Youth football	3.17	As above
Mini soccer	2.29	As above
Rugby union	0.36	0.39 MES
Rugby league	0.61	0.72 MES
Adult hockey	0.09	0.26 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0.02	0.04 hours
Cricket	6.31	-

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

Table 12.6: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost	Lifecycle Cost (per annum)	Number	Capital cost
<b>2020</b>					
Adult football	0.95	£93,344	£19,696	1.9	£322,036
Youth football	2.25	£176,670	£37,101	2.79	£471,272
Mini soccer	2.18	£53,502	£11,235	0	£0

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

<sup>19</sup> Hours equate to access to a 11v11 sports lit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

# HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost	Lifecycle Cost (per annum)	Number	Capital cost
Rugby union	0.3	£40,639	£8,697	0.59	£100,145
Rugby league	0.63	£70,691	£15,623	1.25	£212,072
Cricket	0.15	£44,615	£9,012	0.31	£52,177
Sand based AGPs	0.03	£23,621	£732	0.06	£9,818
3G	0.28	£276,604	£10,443	0.57	£95,908
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.78 / 0.33</b>	<b>£779,685</b>	<b>£112,539</b>	<b>7.47</b>	<b>£1,263,428</b>
<b>2024</b>					
Adult football	0.71	£77,290	£15,226	1.42	£275,785
Youth football	3.17	£282,758	£57,117	4.09	£794,079
Mini soccer	2.29	£67,974	£13,459	0.00	£0
Rugby union	0.36	£58,810	£10,880	0.72	£139,897
Rugby league	0.61	£87,427	£16,174	1.22	£236,655
Cricket	0.14	£47,965	£8,826	0.28	£54,569
Sand based AGPs	0.02	£20,148	£524	0.04	£8,324
3G	0.32	£366,612	£11,109	0.65	£126,224
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.28<sup>20</sup> / 0.35</b>	<b>£1,008,984</b>	<b>£133,315</b>	<b>8.42</b>	<b>£1,635,532</b>

Comparable to the other scenarios there has been a small increase in the number of grass pitches and artificial provision required to meet the potential increase of 6,018 people, however, the costs have significantly increase within the same timeframe.

## Conclusions

For scenarios One and Two, the tables above show that through housing growth, demand will be generated for each pitch sport to a lesser or greater extent. It is unlikely there will be a requirement for new provision. Instead, as the demand generated from the housing growth does not equate to a whole pitch for any of the sports, contributions would be better focused on improving existing sites to increase capacity to an appropriate level. The PPS and in particular the Action Plan, as well as future consultation with NGBs, should be used to inform this (e.g. to select suitable sites).

Scenario Three indicates that, over the course of the Local Plan period, housing growth will result in increased demand equating to the need for three youth and two mini football pitches. In addition, there is demand generated for other pitch sport types which indicate improvements to existing pitches are required. Whilst this initially seems substantial, it must be noted that these figures are based upon the whole of Halton and account for the entire period of the local plan development. In reality, the requirements will be staggered, with existing provision able to meet some if not all of the needs when developments are considered on a case-by-case basis. This would be achieved through contributions being directed towards improvements rather than new provision.

<sup>20</sup> Grass pitches / Artificial provision

## HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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Experience shows that only significantly large housing sites are likely to generate demand for new provision to be created in their own right, however, the scenarios above do show the progression and that the cumulative impact of development on existing pitch provision needs to be taken into account. Where new pitches are required, consideration should be given to providing multi-pitch sites with suitable ancillary provision, including appropriate clubhouse/changing facilities and car parking. Single pitch sites which have been provided traditionally by developers are not considered to offer long-term sustainability. As such, if numerous developments in an area warrant new pitch provision, consideration should be given to pooling resources to create one larger site, rather than numerous smaller sites.

It is strongly recommended the Council work with Sport England to develop a process and guidance to calculate and obtain developer contributions.