



ST. HELENS COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

ASSESSMENT REPORT

FEBRUARY 2016

Integrity, Innovation, Inspiration

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ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

3G	Third Generation (artificial grass pitch)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
BC	Bowling Club
CC	Cricket Club
CFL	Cheshire Football League
CSP	County Sports Partnership
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FE	Further Education
FPM	Facilities Planning Model
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HC	Hockey Club
HE	Higher Education
JFC	Junior Football Club
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
KGV	King George V
LCCB	Lancashire County Cricket Board
LDF	Local Development Framework
LMS	Last Man Stands
LP	Local Plan
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OSSRA	Open Space, Sport & Recreation Assessment
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PQS	Performance Quality Standard
PF	Playing Field
RFL	Rugby Football League
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RFC	Rugby Football Club
RLFC	Rugby League Football Club
S106	Section 106
SDCFL	St. Helens & District Combination Football League
SHC	St. Helens Council
SRJAFL	St. Helens & Rainhill Junior Alliance Football League
TC	Tennis Club
TGR	Team Generation Rate
U	Under
WJL	Warrington Junior Football League

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) Assessment Report prepared by Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) for St. Helens Council (“the Council”). It forms part of a wider Open Space, Sport & Recreation Assessment (OSSRA) including an assessment of indoor sports facilities and open spaces.

This report presents a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch facilities in accordance with Sport England’s Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy. It has been followed to develop a clear picture of the balance between the local supply of, and demand for, playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.

The guidance details a stepped approach to developing a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). These steps are separated into five distinct sections:

- ◀ Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach
- ◀ Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision
- ◀ Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views
- ◀ Stage D: Develop the strategy
- ◀ Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date

Stages A-C are covered in this report.

Stage A: Tailoring the approach

The vision driving the Assessment is: *‘To provide an accessible, high quality and sustainable network of indoor sports facilities, which provide opportunities for all residents to access good sport, physical activity and recreation facilities’.*

In order to meet the Council’s corporate priority to *“encourage participation in sport, physical activity and the arts, to promote physical and mental wellbeing”*, the assessment has the following objectives - to:

- ◀ Inform the emerging planning policy within the Local Development Framework, particularly the Local Plan.
- ◀ Inform the Borough’s future sports and health strategies and investment plans.
- ◀ Ensure the most efficient management and maintenance of sports facility provision in response to identified pressures.
- ◀ Provide adequate planning guidance to assess development proposals affecting sport and leisure facilities.
- ◀ Inform land use decisions in respect of future use of existing sport and leisure facilities.
- ◀ Provide the basis for ongoing monitoring and review of the use, distribution, function, quality, and accessibility of outdoor sport, physical activity facility provision, and playing pitches.

In terms of the Council’s role as Local Planning Authority, the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted on 31st October 2012. The Core Strategy sets a targeted growth strategy over the Plan period until 2027, directing new development predominately within the existing urban area, also requiring a Green Belt review to accommodate post 2022 development needs.

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In November 2015, the Council announced its intention to prepare an entirely new Local Plan along with a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) outlining a timetable for its production. This decision followed the commissioning of two studies to determine housing and employment land objectively assessed needs (OAN) for the Borough which found that growth needs are now very different to those in the adopted Core Strategy, with further implications for how much development should take place and where.

The new single Local Plan for the Borough will replace the Core Strategy (2012) and the Saved UDP Policies (2007) and include the following:

- The vision and objectives for development in the Borough up to 2038;
- The overall spatial strategy including the amount, form and distribution of development;
- Strategic policies guiding the amount, form and location of new development;
- Site allocations for new development including (amongst other topics), housing, employment, retail, and leisure, identifying key areas for protection, setting out changes to the Green Belt and designating areas where particular policies apply; and
- Detailed policies to be applied when considering applications for development.

A public consultation on the scope of the new Local Plan – the ‘Scoping Consultation’ - took place between January and March 2016.

In addition to the generic key drivers set out above the main pitch sport National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) have sport specific key drivers for the St. Helens PPS:

National Governing Body (NGB)	Key drivers
The Football Association (FA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Working towards The FA National Facilities Strategy 2013–2015 and The FA National Game Strategy 2011–2015 (currently being reviewed). ◀ Prioritising pitch improvement through the regional pitch advisor scheme. ◀ To increase access to 3G pitches to meet demand from the Youth Review linked to priority for FA funding. ◀ Provide pitches and facilities to meet FA standards where needed. ◀ Implement an accurate pricing policy for grassroots football clubs including discounts for FA Charter Standard Clubs. ◀ Ensure there is an appropriate maintenance of grass and artificial pitches particularly to pitches which have been grant funding (i.e., Football Foundation). ◀ To ensure sustainable assets which may be appropriate for community asset transfer as per Facilities Strategy ensuring ‘right clubs right sites’ approach.
English Cricket Board (ECB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Working towards ECB Champion Counties Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017. ◀ Improve the quality of cricket pitches to achieve a greater capacity. ◀ Ensure there is access to education sites to accommodate cricket. ◀ Ensure there is enough provision for predicted growth. ◀ Enhancing opportunities for informal cricket e.g. Last Man Stands (LMS).

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National Governing Body (NGB)	Key drivers
England Hockey (EH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Establish 'The Single System' in the study area to support the development pathway for players, coaches and officials of all ages and abilities to reach their full potential. ◀ Ensure there is access to good quality artificial grass pitches and ancillary facilities both now and in the future. ◀ Ensure any new hockey provision in the study area supports localised hockey demand and any hockey development programmes.
Rugby Football League (RFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ To address improve pitch quality across the Borough. ◀ To ensure there is access to good quality training and ancillary facilities. ◀ To seek opportunities to be less reliant upon public sector provision. ◀ To ensure sustainable assets which may be appropriate for community asset transfer.
Rugby Football Union (RFU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Working towards the RFU National Facilities Strategy (2013-2017). ◀ To ensure there is sustainable access to pitches to satisfy predicted growth (particularly in light of the World Cup 2015). ◀ To protect and improve quality of pitches, ancillary facilities and floodlights as current and future demand requires. ◀ To improve access to training areas in order to preserve pitches for matches.

Scope of the project

The Assessment Report provides detail in respect of what exists in the Borough, its condition, distribution and overall quality. It also considers the demand for facilities based on population distribution and planned growth. The study covers all playing pitches as well as some non-pitch sports. The full list of sports facilities covered is set out below:

- ◀ Football pitches
- ◀ Cricket pitches
- ◀ Rugby league pitches
- ◀ Rugby union pitches
- ◀ Artificial grass pitches (AGPs)
- ◀ Bowling greens
- ◀ Tennis courts

Rounders is also played within the Borough albeit there is not a lot of activity and pitches are generally overmarked onto cricket and football pitches. It will therefore be given a 'lighter touch' approach.

The extent of the study area

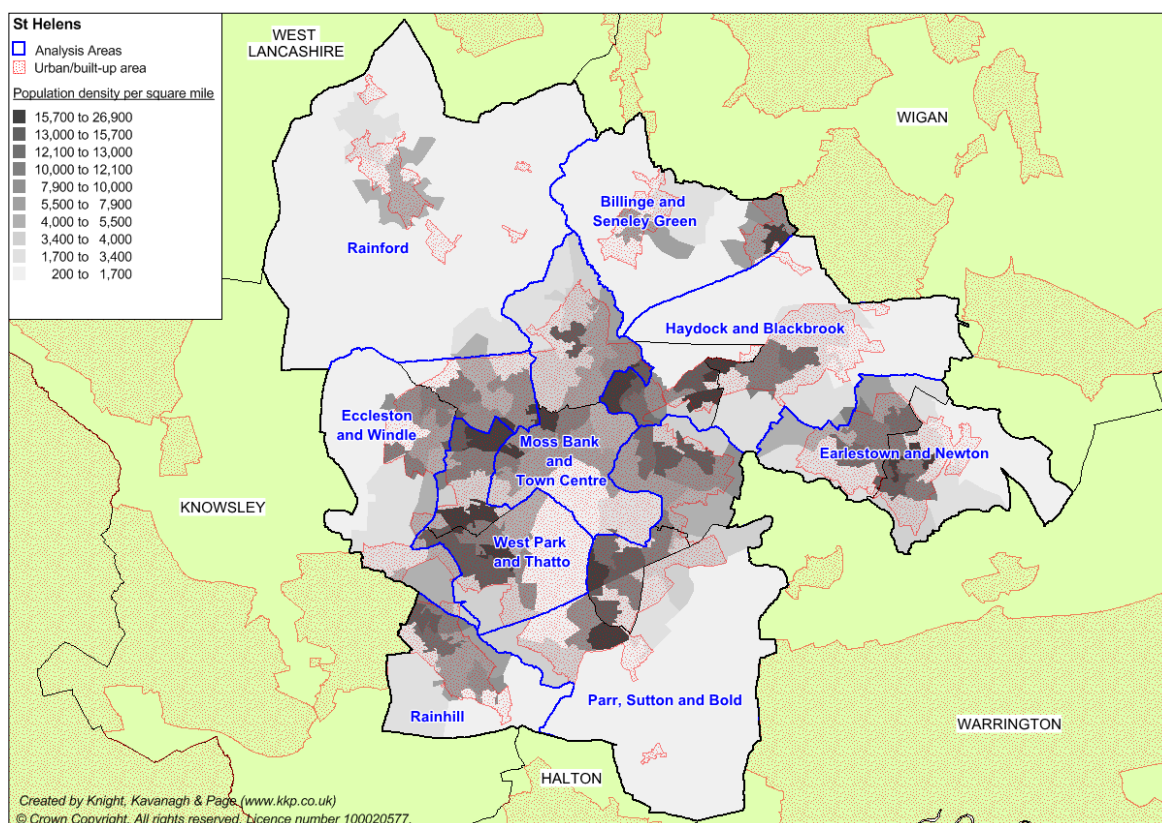
The study area will comprise the whole of the SHC administrative area which includes the settlements of Newton-le-Willows, Earlestown, Haydock, Rainhill, Eccleston, Clock Face, Billinge and Rainford. It borders West Lancashire to the North, Wigan to the East, Warrington and Halton to the South and Knowsley to the West.

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In order to differentiate between the settlements of the Borough and help identify the cross boundary issues, analysis areas have been adopted. Breaking up the Assessment and Strategy in this way will help people identify the implications for their area:

- ◀ Billinge & Seneley Green
- ◀ Earlestown & Newton
- ◀ Eccleston & Windle
- ◀ Haydock & Blackbrook
- ◀ Moss Bank & Town Centre
- ◀ Parr, Sutton & Bold
- ◀ Rainford
- ◀ Rainhill
- ◀ West Park & Thatto Heath

Figure 1.1: St. Helens analysis areas



What makes the study area different?

The town is home to St. Helens RLFC which recently saw the completion of the new Saints stadium 'Langtree Park'. Rugby league is a major participation and spectator sport for St. Helens and as such has a significant presence.

Football, rugby league, and rugby union, both senior and junior, continue to be the main pitch sports in the borough. There is also a growing interest in hockey, demonstrated by Prescott Hockey Club re-locating to St. Helens two years ago.

There are a growing number of junior football teams in the Borough and there is a move toward having a more centralised league with multiple teams based on one large site rather than the traditional home and away set up of many small playing fields.

Cricket is represented by eight clubs, which is considered significant for a Borough the size of St. Helens.

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Given the mix of rural and urban areas in St. Helens, there is also a complex mix of site ownership and management. For example, there are seven parish councils in St. Helens which include Rainhill, Eccleston and Garswood that own and manage playing pitch facilities.

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

It is essential that a PPS is based on the best and most accurate and up-to-date information available about the supply of and demand for playing pitches. This section provides detail about how this information has been gathered in St. Helens.

An audit of playing pitches

PPS guidance uses the following definitions of a playing pitch and playing field. These definitions are set out by the Government in the 2010 'Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order'.¹

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

This PPS counts individual grass pitches (as a delineated area) as the basic unit of supply. The definition of a playing pitch also includes AGPs.

Quantity

The assessment has sought to identify and include all playing pitches, irrespective of ownership, management and use. Playing pitch sites were initially identified using Sport England's Active Places web based database. The Council and NGBs supported the process by checking and updating this initial data. This was also verified against club information supplied by local leagues. For each site the following detail is recorded in the project database:

- ◀ Site name, address (including postcode) and location
- ◀ Ownership and management type
- ◀ Security of tenure
- ◀ Total number, type and quality of pitches
- ◀ A description and the quality of the ancillary facilities

Accessibility

Not all pitches offer the same level of access to the community. The ownership and accessibility of sports pitches also influences their actual availability for community use. Each site is assigned a level of community use as follows:

- ◀ **2) Available for community use and used by community [Unsecured]** - pitches in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire and currently in use by teams playing in community leagues.

¹. www.sportengland.org>Facilities and Planning> Planning Applications

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- ◀ **1) Available for community use and used by community [Secured]** - there should be a good degree of certainty that the pitch will be available to the community for at least the following three years. A judgement is made based on the information gathered and a record of secured or unsecured community use put against each site.
- ◀ **3) Available for community use but unused by community [Secured]** - pitches that are available for hire but are not currently used by teams which play in community leagues; this most often applies to school sites but can also apply to sites which are expensive to hire or poor quality.
- ◀ **4) Available for community use but unused by community [Unsecured]**
- ◀ **5) Not available for community use** - pitches which as a matter of policy or practice are not available for hire or use by teams playing in community leagues. This should include professional club pitches along with some semi-professional club pitches where play is restricted to the first or second team, or schools or colleges which have confirmed that they do not hire them out.

Quality

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

It is not just the quality of the pitch itself which has an effect on its capacity but also the quality, standard and range of ancillary facilities. The quality of both the pitch and ancillary facilities will determine whether a pitch is able to contribute to meeting demand from various groups and for different levels and types of play.

The quality of all pitches identified in the audit and the ancillary facilities supporting them is assessed regardless of ownership, management or availability. Along with capturing any details specific to the individual pitches and sites, a quality rating is recorded within the audit for each pitch.

The ratings are used to help estimate the capacity of each pitch to accommodate competitive and other play within the supply and demand assessment (see later for more detail).

In addition to undertaking non-technical assessments (using the templates provided within the guidance and as determined by NGBs), users and providers were also consulted with regard to quality and in some instances the quality rating adjusted to reflect this.

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Developing a picture of demand

Current demand

Presenting an accurate picture of current demand for playing pitches (i.e. recording how and when pitches are used) is important in order to carry out the full supply and demand assessment. Demand for playing pitches tends to fall within the categories:

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

In addition, unmet and displaced demand for provision is also identified on a sport by sport basis. Unmet demand is defined as the number of additional teams that could be fielded if access to a sufficient number of pitches (and ancillary facilities) was available. Displaced demand refers to teams that are generated from residents of the area but due to any number of factors do not currently play within the area.

Future demand

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

Population growth

The current resident population in St. Helens is 176,221². By 2032 the Borough's population is projected to increase to 187,893³ an increase of 11,672 (or equivalent to a percentage increase of 6.6%) according to ONS data.

Further to this there is predicted to be a reduction in the number of men and women in St. Helens by 2032 particularly at 18-55 year old age bracket (5% and 7% respectively). However, the ONS forecast an increase in the number of boys and girls under the age of 18 (x% and y% respectively).

Match sessions

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

²Source: ONS Mid-2013 Population Estimates for Lower Layer Super Output Areas in England and Wales by Single Year of Age and Sex and ONS 2012-based projections 2012-2032. Released: 29 May 2014

³Source: ONS 2012-based projections 2012-2037. Released: 29 May 2014

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Based on how they tend to be played, the “match equivalent session” unit for football, rugby union and rugby league pitches relates to a typical week within the season for each sport. For cricket pitches it is appropriate to look at the number of match equivalent sessions over the course of a season.

Team generation rates (TGR)

TGRs provide an indication of how many people it takes to generate a single team (for all pitch sports) and can help with estimating the change in demand for pitch sports that may arise from any population change in the study area.

A TGR can be calculated by dividing the current population within an age group for a sport by the number of teams in the area within that age group. In order to calculate future demand (to 2032) for pitches, current team generation rates (TGRs) are used.

Future demand for playing pitches is presented on a sport by sport basis within the relevant sections of this report.

Example

An area may have 10 youth boys’ football teams of a particular age category and a current population of 900 boys within the relevant age group. This would equate to a TGR of one team per 90 boys in the age group (i.e. suggesting that it currently takes 90 boys within the age group to generate one team). A PPS may be looking ten years into the future at which point the population of this age group is projected to total 1,440. The TGR would therefore suggest that the projected increase of 540 junior boys within this age group may generate an additional six teams.

If it assumed that the six teams will play home and away fixtures they will demand a home pitch for matches every other week, equating to 0.5 match equivalent sessions a week or three match equivalent sessions a week for the six teams. The breakdown of when matches are played in the study area suggests that two thirds take place on a Sunday morning and the other third on a Saturday morning. Allocating the six teams in line with this current breakdown would generate a demand for two match equivalent sessions during the peak period of Sunday morning and one elsewhere in the week (i.e. Saturday mornings). The project team should also indicate the likely training requirements for such teams based on knowledge of how teams currently train and any known changes in how training activity may take place (e.g. use of AGPs once a week).

Consultation

A variety of consultation methods is used to collate demand information. Face to face consultation was carried out with key clubs from each sport. This allowed for collection of detailed demand information and exploration of key issues to be interrogated and more accurately assessed.

For data analysis purposes an online survey (converted to postal if required) was utilised. This was sent to all clubs not covered by face to face consultation.

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Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views

Supply and demand information gathered within Section B was used to assess the adequacy of playing pitch provision. It focused on looking at how much use each site could potentially accommodate (on an area by area basis) compared to how much use is currently taking place.

Pitch capacity

The capacity for pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is mostly determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of playing sport. In extreme circumstances it can result in the inability of the pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off peak times. Factors affecting pitch quality include unauthorised use, weather conditions, soil condition and drainage.

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

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

Later in this assessment, the current quality and use of each pitch is assessed against the recommended pitch capacity to indicate how many match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket) a pitch could accommodate. For example, a good quality adult football pitch should be able to accommodate 3 match equivalent sessions per week (mini football 6 per week), a standard quality pitch 2 (4 for mini football) and a poor quality pitch just 1 session per week (2 for mini football).

⁴ Please note that the RFU believes that it is most appropriate to base the calculation of pitch capacity upon an assessment of the drainage system and maintenance programme afforded to a site.

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This is compared to the actual number of matches actually taking place and categorised as follows to identify:

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

The assessment also notes how many match equivalent sessions are available at the peak periods as this is when most demand occurs and most teams will only want to play at that time. Peak periods vary from sport to sport and depend on the age group playing. The following table gives a breakdown of what is considered the peak period for each sport.

Peak periods by sport

Sport	Peak period for play
Football	Sunday mornings (adult)
Cricket	Saturday afternoons (adult) Midweek (junior)
Rugby union	Saturday afternoons (adult) Sundays (junior and mini)
Rugby league	Saturday afternoons (adult) Sunday mornings (junior and mini)

Develop the current picture of provision

Once capacity is determined on a site by site basis, actual spare capacity is calculated on an area by area basis via further interrogation of temporal demand. Although this may have been identified it does not necessarily mean that there is surplus provision. For example, spare capacity may not be available at when it is needed or the site may be retained in a 'strategic reserve' to enable pitch rotation to reduce wear and tear.

Capacity ratings assist in the identification of sites for improvement, redevelopment or rationalisation.

Scenario testing

It may be useful to take some time at the beginning of this stage to explore the key findings and issues from the assessment work (Stage C) in order to develop the recommendations and actions. This will help to understand the potential impact of any recommendations and actions along with ensuring they are study area, sport and site specific. Looking at a number of relevant scenario questions will help to do this.

Section D: Develop the strategy

By completing Stages A, B and C it is possible to identify several findings and issues relating to the supply, demand and adequacy of playing pitch provision in St. Helens. This report seeks to identify and present the key findings and issues prior to development of the Strategy (Stage D).

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General audit summary

Table 1.1: Summary of all playing pitches in St. Helens

Pitch type														
Football ⁵					Rugby union ⁶		Rugby league ⁷			Cricket	AGPs Full size 3G	AGPs Full size Sand	Tennis courts	Bowling greens
Adult	Youth		Mini		Senior	Mini/ midi	Senior	Junior	Primary					
11v11	9v9	11v11	5v5	7v7										
63	21	10	18	22	7	-	31	2	4	10	2	5	59	37

⁵ For football please note that mini soccer 5v5 refers to U7s-U8s teams, mini soccer 7v7 refers to U9-U10, youth football 9v9 refers to U11-U12 teams and youth football 11v11 refers to U13-U16 teams.

⁶ As a guide all rugby union pitches are classified as senior sized. However, there may be instances (particularly on school sites and large club sites) where separate dedicated mini/midi pitches are provided. Youth rugby (U13 to U17 teams) and Colts rugby (U18 to U19 teams) is played on a senior pitch and mini/midi teams play principally on half a senior pitch.

⁷ For rugby league please note that junior refers to 12–18yrs teams and primary refers to 7–11yrs teams

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PART 2: FOOTBALL

2.1: Introduction

Two organisations are primarily responsible for the development of football in St. Helens though the majority of clubs affiliate to Liverpool FA. A number of clubs instead affiliate to Lancashire FA, generally based on locality within the Borough. These organisations are 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.

This section of the report focuses on the supply and demand for grass football pitches. Part 6 captures supply and demand for artificial grass pitches (AGPs). In the future it is anticipated that there will be a growing demand for the use of AGPs for competitive football fixtures, especially to accommodate mini and youth football.

Team definitions

- ◀ Adult 11v11 football refers to teams of players aged 16-45
- ◀ Youth 9v9 football refers to teams of players aged U11-U12
- ◀ Youth 11v11 football refers to teams of players aged U13-U16
- ◀ Mini 5v5 football refers to teams of players aged U7-U8 and mini 7v7 refers to teams of players aged U9s-U10.

Consultation

In addition to face to face consultation with key clubs, an electronic survey was sent to all football clubs playing in St. Helens. Contact details were provided by each County FA and the invitation to complete the survey was distributed via email. Consultation (either through a survey or face to face interview) was completed by 45 clubs representing a 79% club response rate or 89% of all teams. The results are used to inform key issues within this section of the report. The following clubs were met with face to face:

- ◀ Bleak Hill Rovers JFC
- ◀ Haydock JFC
- ◀ Penlake JFC
- ◀ St. Helens Town JFC
- ◀ FC St. Helens
- ◀ Seneley & Garswood JFC

Consultation was also undertaken with local leagues, including:

- ◀ St. Helens & District Combination Football League (SDCFL)
- ◀ Cheshire Football League (CFL)
- ◀ St. Helens & Rainhill Junior Alliance Football League (SRJAFL)
- ◀ Warrington Junior Football League (WJL)
- ◀ Warrington & District Football League (WDFL)

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2.2: Supply

The audit identifies a total of 134 grass football pitches⁸ in St. Helens. Of these, 129 are known to be available, at some level, for community use.

There is also one full size 3G AGP which is approved and certified to be used for competitive fixtures located at Rainhill High School, and an uncertified pitch at Cowley Language College.

Table 2.1: Summary of grass pitches available for community use

Analysis area	Available for community use				
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5
Billinge & Seneley Green	7	-	2	3	3
Earlestown & Newton	3	2	3	3	2
Eccleston & Windle	12	4	2	3	3
Haydock & Blackbrook	6	-	-	3	2
Moss Bank & Town Centre	4	-	3	2	2
Parr, Sutton & Bold	11	-	3	2	1
Rainford	3	3	2	1	2
Rainhill	7	-	5	5	3
West Park & Thatto Heath	7	-	-	-	-
ST. HELENS	60	9	20	22	18

Most pitches in St. Helens are adult sized and is in part due to youth 11v11 teams playing on adult sized pitches. Please note that as part of the FA Youth Review, The FA has produced national pitch sizes for mini soccer, 9v9, youth football and adult football in order to create more national consistency as previous maximum and minimum were often adapted to fit the space available and have been open to local interpretation.

Adult pitches in use by both adult and youth teams include:

- ◀ Birchley St Mary's Playing Field
- ◀ John Eddleston Trust Playing Fields
- ◀ Merton Bank Playing Fields
- ◀ Mesnes Park
- ◀ Haydock KGV Playing Fields
- ◀ Sutton Manor KGV Playing Fields
- ◀ Birch Grove Playing Fields

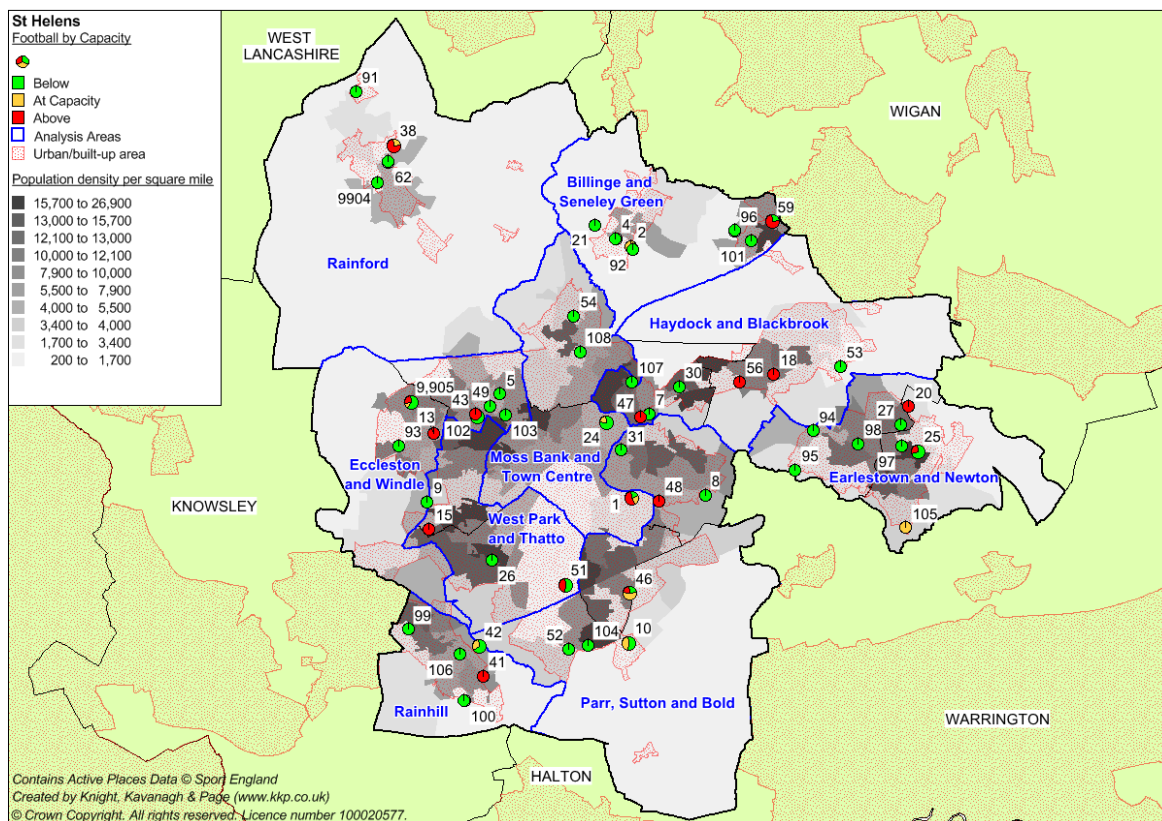
Further to this, all adult pitches used by youth teams are identified in Table 2.9.

The possibility of providing suitable 11v11 youth pitches at these sites will be considered in the Strategy.

⁸ Please note that where some small primary schools did not respond to the survey some pitches may not be captured although these pitches will be for school use only and not used by community teams.

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Figure 2.1: Location and capacity of football pitches in St. Helens



See Table 2.9 for key to the map.

Pitch quality

The quality of football pitches in St. Helens has been assessed via a combination of non-technical assessments (as determined by The FA) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

Pitch quality is primarily influenced by the carrying capacity of the site; often pitches are over used and lack the drainage necessary to improve quality.

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>80%), Standard (50-80%), Poor (< 50%). It should be noted that all of the sites that received a 'standard' rating from the non-technical assessments scored between 50% and 57%.

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The table below summarises the quality of grass pitches that are available for community use.

Table 2.2: Pitch quality assessments (community use pitches)

Adult pitches			Youth pitches			Mini pitches		
Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor
5	21	34	3	10	16	3	16	21

The non-technical pitch quality audit shows that 57% of the adult pitches available for community use are poor quality and a further 35% are standard quality. Just over half (55%) of youth pitches are assessed as poor quality and the remaining are standard (35%) or good (10%) quality. Most mini pitches are assessed as poor quality (52%).

In general, club consultation indicates that pitch quality over the previous three years has varied. Over half of responding clubs (59%) believe there has been no difference in pitch quality, most of which play at Council managed sites.

A fifth of clubs were of the opinion that the pitch quality has got slightly better, whilst only 2% of clubs thought it had got much better. Around 11% of clubs report that the pitch quality was slightly poorer than last season, whilst 8% report that the pitch is much poorer. The quality ratings assigned to sites in St. Helens also take account of the user quality ratings gathered from consultation.

Private sites (e.g. sports clubs) typically offer better quality facilities than Council parks/playing fields and school pitches. In general, such sports clubs tend to have dedicated ground staff or volunteers working on pitches and the fact that they are often secured by fencing prevents unofficial use. Private site hire is often at full cost recovery. The maintenance and use of Council sites tends to be less frequent and unofficial use of these sites can further exacerbate quality issues.

Specific comments relating to the pitch conditions at individual sites can be seen in the table below. The comments are a combination of club feedback and site assessment information.

Table 2.3: Summary of pitch quality comments

Site	Comments
Grange Park KGV Playing Fields	Poor quality pitches that received limited maintenance work, marking and cutting is inadequate. Drainage is poor and pitches therefore cut up badly. Goalposts are leaning to one side and the surface is not rolled therefore it is uneven
Bold Miners ARLFC	The pitch slopes and drainage is poor, meaning that water runs off and collects by the clubhouse. Not cut frequently and in need of aeration
Newton KGV Playing Fields	The pitches are poor and hold water. Line markings are okay but the goals are offset. The site is fenced but the gate is often left open and so the pitches are subject to frequent unofficial use. The pitches are played most weeks and get little rest
Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	The pitch used by Pilkingtons FC is not well maintained and is often too wet meaning the surface churns up too easily. Technical area around the dugouts is marked too close to the pitch, less than the required distance by Cheshire League rules
Parr Stocks Playing Fields	Pitch quality is generally poor and is rarely marked out sufficiently. Grass is also not cut frequently enough

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Site	Comments
Queens Park Primary School	When the grass grows quickly towards the end of the season and is cut, the dead grass is left in heaps and not removed from the pitch

One of the main reasons for a decline in pitch quality is related to reports of limited maintenance carried out by the Council, or a lack of available funds to carry out maintenance opportunities at private club sites. Other reasons for the decline in pitch quality include:

- ◀ Over marked pitches
- ◀ Amount of rainfall in the 2014/15 season
- ◀ Uneven and hard surfaces
- ◀ Overplay in bad weather
- ◀ Casual use
- ◀ Dog foul/litter
- ◀ Lack of investment and limited maintenance
- ◀ Infrequent grass cutting
- ◀ Lack of remedial work i.e. seeding
- ◀ Adult matches churning up pitches before afternoon youth games

Ancillary facilities

Changing facilities are an issue at some football sites. Some of the facilities are described as poor quality by users and not all sites have changing provision although all responding clubs state they have access to changing rooms if required. Of the 134 football pitches in St. Helens, 22% do not have accompanying changing provision available for community use. Most pitches without changing provision are located at park sites or primary schools used by mini and youth teams which typically do not require use of changing rooms.

Clubs response to quality of changing facilities:

Good	Standard	Poor
38%	35%	27%

Of the clubs who provided a response to the question, most (38%) were of the opinion that changing facilities were good. A similar proportion (35%) reported that provision was of standard or adequate quality. Just over a quarter believe that changing room facilities are poor, most of which are located at Council owned sites. Bishop Road Playing Fields was highlighted by several clubs as particularly poor and the building subject to vandalism. SDCFL teams generally use Council managed sites and the League highlights that provision of sufficient changing facilities to serve each pitch is regarded to be of greater priority and importance than pitch quality.

The ancillary facilities at Haydock KGV Playing Fields are particularly poor to service Haydock FC and the junior section. The changing rooms themselves are poor and in need of refurbishment with a communal shower area. Water often leaks into the building and on Saturday afternoons the building becomes very congested due to rugby league and other football teams using the pitches at the same time. Parking provision is very limited and cars generally have to park along the street causing further congestion in the area.

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Although Rainford Rangers JFC has no changing facilities it reports that most teams at mini level and younger juniors do not and would not use them anyway. This is a particular trend nationwide in that most mini and junior teams are using changing facilities increasingly less and that access to toilet facilities are of greater priority.

Football pyramid facilities

There are five clubs in St. Helens that play within the football pyramid:

- ◀ St. Helens Town FC (Step 5)
- ◀ Penlake FC (Step 7)
- ◀ Garswood United FC (Step 7)
- ◀ Pilkington FC (Step 7)
- ◀ Billinge FC (Step 7)

Clubs within the step system must adhere to ground requirements set out by the FA. The higher the level of football being played the higher the requirements. Clubs cannot progress into the league/step above if the ground requirements do not meet the correct specifications. Ground grading, as it is referred to, assesses grounds from A to H, with 'A' being the requirements for Step 1 clubs. Please refer to Appendix 5 for full details on the requirements of the step system.

St. Helens Town FC plays at Step 5 of the football pyramid system and is the highest ranked of all clubs in the Borough. The Club has been unable to find suitable facilities within St. Helens to cater for this level of football and subsequently plays first team fixtures at Brocstedes Park in Ashton-in-Makerfield, home to Ashton Athletic FC.

The key issue facing the Club is the desire to return to play within St. Helens as this is where it feels its identity lies. A possible solution may be use of the proposed new pitch to be created as part of the Ruskin Drive Sports Ground development.

The four other clubs play in the Cheshire Football League which is on Step 7 of the football pyramid. Penlake FC is unable to play at Beeches Playing Fields because the pitch does not meet league requirements and therefore has to rent the main pitch at Sutton Leisure Centre to play home matches.

Garswood United FC intends on installing floodlighting at The Wooders and has aspirations to create a covered standing area which would allow promotion into the North West Counties Football League.

Security of tenure

Tenure of sites in St. Helens is generally secure i.e. through a long term lease or a guarantee that the pitch will continue to be provided over the next three years at least, with most local authority sites ensuring community use is available whether owned by the Council or parish councils. The Council also has a lettings policy in place for its winter sports. However, the following three unsecured sites were identified:

1.) Parkdale Sidac JFC and Sidac Sports and Social FC currently operate as two sections of one main club body and play at Sidac Sports and Social Club, which is owned by Innovia Films Limited. The junior section is growing and already has 18 teams with intention to add more for next season.

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Innovia continue to own the site itself but previously gifted the social club building to the two amalgamated clubs, however, no lease or formal agreement was put in place between the two parties. Innovia is looking to develop the site for housing and has twice had planning applications rejected, principally because an alternative site (which neighbours the current site) offered for the re-provision pitches did not satisfy Sport England or the FA requirements. The Club continues to hold no secure tenure of the site beyond the short term.

2.) Penlake JFC is faced with losing its homeground having been granted planning permission for a housing development, with the Club to be relocated to a new site close to their current site. This move was originally schemed to take place in 2010, however, the recession has delayed this and no date has yet been fixed. The Club will remain playing at Beeches Playing Fields until the new facility is ready for use.

3.) Vulcan FC previously played at Vulcan Sports Ground which closed in April 2002 and was sold along with the adjacent industrial site for housing. The section 106 contributions linked to this project required the developer to provide replacement facilities after the construction of the 250th dwelling, though the recession has meant that in 2015 less than 150 dwellings have been built. Vulcan FC continued to use the site for a few years before moving to a number of other sites in the Area including Mesnes Park and Vulcan Village Playing Fields and plan to return to the new facility once built and take on a lease to operate it long term.

Casual use

Several football teams play on sites that are not fenced, including several Council owned pitches which tend to be open to the general public and are used for recreational play and dog walking etc. This additional wear and damage is an issue for clubs as it decreases the quality of the pitches and in turn the carrying capacity for matches and training. This is a noted problem at the following sites:

- ◀ Haydock KGV Playing Fields
- ◀ St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School

Future development

The Council has ongoing plans for the development of Ruskin Drive Sports Ground which includes the creation of a new premier match pitch, spectator area and floodlighting. Two of the football pitches are to form one new pitch, rotated across the existing pitches, with the other to be re-provided in the form of the new 'stadium' pitch. Plans also include the creation of a new FA certified 3G pitch for matches and training, with a new changing facilities to serve all sports teams on the site.

One additional youth 9v9 football pitch is to be created at Garswood Recreation Ground, of which Seneley & Garswood JFC has first option of an annual rolling hire agreement. The pitch is expected to be ready to use for the beginning of the 2015/16 season.

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2.3: Demand

Through the audit and assessment, a total of 326 teams were identified as playing matches on football pitches within St. Helens. These consists of: 67 adult mens teams, 149 youth boys teams, (of which four are youth girls teams) and 110 mini soccer teams (of which 2 are girls' only teams). No teams were identified as consistently playing home matches on AGP surfaces.

Table 2.4: Summary of competitive teams currently playing in St. Helens

Analysis area	No. of teams playing					Total teams by area
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Billinge & Seneley Green	8	24	9	10	9	60
Earlestown & Newton	3	11	9	10	10	43
Eccleston & Windle	16	16	7	7	10	56
Haydock & Blackbrook	8	8	4	4	6	30
Moss Bank & Town Centre	1	8	7	5	5	26
Parr, Sutton & Bold	13	8	9	6	4	40
Rainford	1	7	4	6	4	22
Rainhill	8	7	9	8	6	38
West Park & Thatto Heath	9	2	-	-	-	11
ST. HELENS	67	91	58	56	54	326

The highest number of teams in any one team category or analysis area is 24 being the youth 11v11 category in the Billinge & Seneley Green area. The area represents 26% of the teams playing in St. Helens at this level and has the greatest proportion of teams (18%) overall of any area. The Eccleston & Windle Area has a similarly large number of teams, contributing 17% of teams in the Borough. West Park & Thatto Heath Area has a noticeably low number of teams overall totalling just 11, representing 3% of all teams.

Much of the adult play is focused around the Eccleston & Windle (24%) and Parr, Sutton & Bold (19%) areas. In comparison, both Moss Bank & Town Centre and Rainford have one adult team each, whilst the Earlestown & Newton Area has just three teams.

The majority of youth 11v11 (24) teams derive from the Billinge & Seneley Green Area, which also contributes a high number of youth 9v9 teams (9). This is largely due to the presence of large clubs such as Billinge FC and Seneley & Garswood JFC. There are no youth 9v9 teams playing in the West Park & Thatto Heath Area. Haydock & Blackbrook and Rainford have fewer teams (4 each) than the other six analysis areas across which youth 9v9 teams are relatively evenly distributed.

The Earlestown & Newton Area has the highest number of mini football teams (20) in any one analysis area, though Billinge & Seneley Green has similarly high number with 19 teams. The Rainford and Parr, Sutton & Bold areas have relatively few teams with four each, whilst West Park & Thatto Heath Area has no mini teams.

There are four girls' teams currently playing in St. Helens, although girls are permitted to play football in mixed teams up until the age of U15. St. Helens Town JFC, Town Green Athletic FC and Bleak Hill Rovers JFC all field specific girls teams at youth level, whilst

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Rainford Rangers JFC also has two mini teams made up of only girls. There are a number of other girls' teams playing outside of the Borough due to leagues operating on a central venue basis, for example two teams from Vulcan FC play at Moss Farm (Cheshire) in the Cheshire Girls League.

Clubs were asked whether there had been a change in the number of teams over the previous three years. The response rates for those which answered those relevant questions can be seen in the table below:

Table 2.5: Change in the number of teams over the previous three years

Team type	Clubs response		
	Increased	Decreased	Stayed the same
Adult	31	23	4
Youth	8	3	15
Mini	10	-	15

The highest increase in teams is identified at adult level where 53% of responding clubs report additional teams. This is contrary to national trends which show the number of adult football teams and participation to be in decline. On balance, a high proportion 40% report a decrease in adult teams which overall may counteract increases at other clubs.

Furthermore, the reason that an increase in mini teams does not always lead to an increase in adult teams is that nationally there has been a trend of 11-a-side adult men's teams decreasing due to players opting to play small sided versions of the game instead. The way in which people, especially adult men, want to play football is changing. People want to be able to fit it in to their busy lifestyle and the small sided formats and shorter games allow players to do this without giving up their weekends. If this trend continues there is likely to be demand for more access to 3G pitches.

Responding clubs indicate that the number of youth teams has generally remained the same (58%). Although mini soccer team numbers has increased (40%) most remained static (60%) like at youth level. This could be due to several factors including a saturation when it comes to access to pitches at peak time, although available club resources such as available coaches and managers could also play a part.

Leagues

The main league for adult football within St. Helens is the St. Helens & District Combination Football League (SDCFL) which consists of 23 teams across two divisions. Matches take place on Saturday afternoons and all but two teams are based in St. Helens. The League reports that demand has slightly decreased over recent seasons although two new teams have already put forward applications to join next season. Decline in demand is largely due to the majority of adult teams playing in leagues generally operating outside of St. Helens, particularly the Warrington & District Football League (WDFL) which is larger and is made up of six divisions. St. Helens based teams mainly play on pitches within the Borough but choose to do so as part of the WDFL as it is generally considered to warrant a better standard of play.

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The St. Helens & Rainhill Junior Alliance Football League (SRJAFL) is made up of around 40 clubs across nine age divisions from U7s to U16s, with matches taking place on Saturday mornings. Only around 12 clubs are based in St. Helens and instead most teams come from Widnes, Wigan and Liverpool, including a recent influx of teams from Runcorn.

Most junior teams in St. Helens play as part of the Warrington Junior football League (WJFL) because it is much larger with five divisions in most age groups, therefore teams are easily able to find a division which is of a suitable and optimal ability level. The SRJAFL previously played on Sundays but changed to play exclusively on Saturdays due to competition from the WJFL. All matches from age U13s upwards in the WJFL are played on Sundays, although a recent trend has been for teams to play twice each week in both WJFL and SRJAFL (and is factored into current play where appropriate).

The League has over 840 member teams, of which, over 170 teams are from St. Helens based clubs which is expected to rise to over 200 teams for the 2015/16 season. Applications from new clubs are unable to be considered such is the size of the league and only applications for new teams from existing member clubs are permitted. The league reports that St. Helens based teams do not export demand to facilities in Warrington and generally find pitches within the Borough.

The SDCFL and SRJAFL have begun discussions with Liverpool CFA regarding the potential to amalgamate the two leagues in order to strengthen football in St. Helens in the long term. The SRJAFL only currently caters for youth football up to U16 age but suggestions are for the creation of new U17 and U18 age groups so to minimise the number of players lost to the game in their late teens. It is anticipated that this would in turn benefit the SDCFL in providing a pathway for young players to transition into adult football more easily, hopefully increasing the number of players and teams playing within the SDCFL and St. Helens area.

Unmet demand

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to pitches. It is usually expressed, for example, when a team is already training but is unable to access a match pitch, or when a league has a waiting list due to a lack of pitch provision, which in turn is hindering the growth of the League.

Only Bleak Hill Rovers FC identifies explicit unmet demand in that it has 12 players at mini level which only train and do not play matches. The Club reports this to be because of limited pitch availability at Eccleston Playing Fields and a requirement for further volunteers to organise a team. A number of clubs state that if they had access to more pitches they would have more teams; however, none were able to quantify this and were unable to directly link it to a lack of access to pitches.

Displaced demand

Displaced demand refers to St. Helens registered teams that are currently accessing pitches outside of the Area for their home fixtures, normally because their pitch requirements cannot be met, which is usually because of pitch supply or in some cases quality issues.

In St. Helens most of the displaced demand comes from mini and youth teams. Many are playing at central venues in leagues based outside of the Borough such as West Lancashire, Liverpool, Wigan and Cheshire.

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Table 2.6: Summary of displaced demand

Club	Team	Where displaced
Rainford Rangers FC	U11s	Liverpool Road Playing Fields – Skelmersdale JFL Central Venue (West Lancashire)
	Girls U12s	Heron Eccles Playing Fields – Liverpool Girls League Central Venue (Liverpool)
Rainhill Rocket FC	U14s	Two Butt Lane, Whiston (Knowsley)
Rainhill Town FC	First	JMO Sports Park (West Lancashire)
Rainhill United FC	U16s	Wilmere Lane Playing Fields (Widnes)
	U12s & U14s	Heron Eccles Playing Fields (Liverpool)
Seneley & Garswood	Some teams (training)	St Edmund Arrowsmith School (Ashton)
St. Helens Town FC	1st	Brocstedes Park (Ashton)
	U19s, U21s	Sporting Edge (West Lancashire)
	U17s	JMO Sports Park, Skelmersdale (West Lancashire)
	All training	JMO Sports Park, Skelmersdale (West Lancashire)
Vulcan FC	Girls U10s & U14s	Moss Farm (Cheshire)
Young Gate FC	U8s x2	Robin Park Soccerdome – Wigan YFL Central Venue (Wigan)

Aside from teams playing at central venues, notable displaced demand includes St. Helens Town FC which not only travels to Ashton-in-Makerfield (Wigan) to access suitable league pitch provision but also exports demand to nearby West Lancashire to access 3G pitch provision for youth matches at Sporting Edge and JMO Sports Park for training and U17s matches. Rainhill United FC also uses JMO Sports Park for matches.

Some of the displaced demand can be attributed to the area in which teams are based, for example, Rainhill Rocket FC is based in Rainhill near to Knowsley. This may go some way to explain why one youth team plays in Whiston because although demand may be displaced from St. Helens, in reality facilities in Whiston may be closer and therefore more easily accessible. Also, presumably an element of the membership will be from the Whiston area.

Seneley & Garswood JFC also reports travelling to Ashton in Makerfield to use the AGP at St Edmund Arrowsmith School because it is closer to Garswood than other facilities in St. Helens.

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Future demand

Population increases

Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth.

Table 2.7: Team generation rates

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group (2032)	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Mens (16-45)	32,392	67	1:483	32,330	66.9	0
Senior Women (16-45)	32,969	0	0	31,885	0.0	0.0
Youth Boys (10-15)	6,063	145	1:42	6,672	159.6	14.6
Youth Girls (10-15)	5,530	4	1:1383	6,386	4.6	0.6
Mini-Soccer Mixed (6-9)	7,720	110	1:70	8,349	119.0	9.0

Population increases are likely to result in a growth in participation at youth boys level amounting to 14 additional teams. The projected increase at youth girls' level using current TGRs is not enough to create another team, with players likely to be assimilated into existing squads (however, see the following point about participation increases). Mini soccer demand is expected to continue to develop, creating the need for nine additional teams.

Participation increases

There is a focus by Sport England on developing girl's football within St. Helens and this is likely to lead to more girls' teams in the future and therefore demand for more pitches.

Some clubs plan to increase the number of teams for next season, mostly at mini level transitioning through from development groups into U7 teams.

Table 2.8: Summary of future demand expressed by clubs

Club	Comments
Seneley & Garswood JFC	Looking to have a youth girls team training early 2015 with a view to registering a team next season
	Plans to have three new mini teams at U7s fed in from the current U6 development group
Penlake JFC	Plans to add one team at U9s and a further two teams from the U6 development group
St. Helens Town JFC	Intentions for two additional mini teams from U6 development group
	Would like to add a women's adult team for next season or the year after
Haydock JFC	Intentions for two additional mini teams from U6 development group
Rainford Rangers JFC	Intentions for three additional mini teams from U6 development group
Clock Face Miners FC	The Club seeks to add another mini team at U7 each year, whilst it also plans to add another boys 9v9 team
Garswood United FC	To add a boys 11v11 team to play at the current club ground

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Club	Comments
Rainford Eagles JFC	The Club seeks to add another mini team at U7 each year
Sankey Vale FC	Club intends to add a second men's adult team
St Mark's Athletic FC	Hopes to have another boys 11v11 team playing at Bishop Road next season in the WJFL
Young Gate FC	Intentions for two new mini teams at U7s which will initially play at Robin Park (central venue) in the Wigan YFL

Where the above is quantified, it is factored into future demand in the conclusions tables in addition to population increases identified and applied to TGRs.

A number of clubs (eleven) report realistic plans to increase the number of teams they provide, all of which identify that additional teams will be accommodated at current sites. Where quantified, clubs plan to provide an additional one men's, one women's, three youth (boys), one youth (girls) and seventeen mini teams. Based on a home and away basis (i.e. two teams on one pitch) there is a need for an additional adult pitch, two youth pitches (though pitch size format may vary) and eight mini pitches (as two teams intend to play at a central venue).

Imported demand

Little imported demand was identified as travelling into St. Helens to access pitches. Sankey Vale FC which plays at Sutton Manor KGV Playing Fields is known to be based outside of the Area in Warrington. Sutton Manor is located fairly close to Great Sankey, approximately five miles away and easily accessible by car. Carrs FC also imports demand and the team is based in the Halton (Widnes) area. The Club is of the opinion that the pitches in St. Helens are better quality and more affordable.

2.4: Capacity analysis

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

As a guide, the FA has set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its current quality (pitch capacity). Taking into consideration the guidelines on capacity the following was concluded in St. Helens:

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

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Table 2.9 applies the above pitch ratings against the actual level of weekly play recorded to determine a capacity rating as follows:

Potential capacity	Play is below the level the site could sustain
At capacity	Play matches the level the site can sustain
Overused	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

Education sites

To account for curricular and extra-curricular use of education pitches by pupils the capacity at such sites will need to be adjusted. The only time this would not happen is when a school does not use its pitches at all and the sole use is community use.

In order to reflect daily curriculum use, school team training, extracurricular clubs and fixtures, a supplement of three match equivalent sessions has been added to pitches at school sites where appropriate. Most sites have a significant amount of use, with the exception of Carmel College where use only really extends to college fixtures which have already been accounted for.

Spare capacity

The next step is to ascertain whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be deemed 'spare capacity'. There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

Peak time

It is important to acknowledge that although most adult football is played Saturday afternoon (61 of 67 teams), peak time for adult pitches is considered to be Sunday morning. This is because a large proportion of adult pitch demand is generated from the high number (73 of 91 - 80%) of youth teams playing 11 a side matches on adult pitches on Sunday morning.

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Table 2.9: Football pitch capacity analysis

Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Security of tenure ⁹	Management	Analysis area	Ancillary facilities quality rating	Pitch type	Pitch size	Adult pitches also used for youth 11v11 football	Quality rating ¹⁰	No. of pitches	Current play ¹¹ (match equivalent sessions per week) ¹²	Site capacity (sessions per week) ¹³	Capacity Rating (match equivalent sessions per week)	Match equivalent sessions available in peak period ¹⁴	Comments
2	Billinge Football Club	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Billinge and Seneley Green	Poor	Adult		Yes	Good	1	3	3	0		
4	Birchley St Mary's Playing Field	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Billinge and Seneley Green	-	Adult		Yes	Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	No pitches available in peak period
21	John Eddleston Trust Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Trust	Billinge and Seneley Green	Standard	Adult		Yes	Standard	2	3	4	1	0.5	Spare capacity every other week at peak time
59	Birch Grove Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Billinge and Seneley Green	Standard	Adult		Yes	Standard	2	6.5	4	2.5		
							Mini	(5v5)		Standard	1	2.5	4	1.5	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Youth	(9v9)		Standard	1	3	2	1		
92	Nugent Fields	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Billinge and Seneley Green	-	Mini	(5v5)		Standard	2	2	8	6	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Mini	(7v7)		Standard	2	2	8	6	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Youth	(9v9)		Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	No pitches available in peak period
96	The Wooders	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Billinge and Seneley Green	Good	Adult		Yes	Good	1	2	3	1	-	No pitches available in peak period
101	Garswood Primary School	Yes	Secure	School	Billinge and Seneley Green	-	Mini	(7v7)		Standard	1	3	4	1	-	No pitches available in peak period
20	Hope Academy	Yes- unused	Secure	School	Earlestown and Newton	Good	Adult			Poor	1	0 + 3	1	2		
		Yes					Youth	(11v11)		Poor	2	2 + 6	2	6		
		Yes					Youth	(9v9)		Poor	1	2.5 + 3	1	4.5		
25	Mesnes Park	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Earlestown and Newton	Standard	Adult		Yes	Poor	1	3.5	1	2.5		
							Mini	(5v5)		Poor	1	1	2	1	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Mini	(7v7)		Poor	1	1	2	1	-	No pitches available in peak period
27	Newton Sports Club	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Earlestown and Newton	Poor	Adult		Yes	Good	1	1.5	3	1.5	-	No pitches available in peak period
94	Lyme Street Primary School	Yes	Secure	School	Earlestown and Newton	-	Mini	(5v5)		Standard	1	1.5	4	2.5	-	No pitches available in peak period
95	Penkford School	Yes	Secure	School	Earlestown and Newton	-	Youth	(9v9)		Standard	1	1	2	1	-	No pitches available in peak period
97	Newton Primary School	Yes	Secure	School	Earlestown and Newton	-	Mini	(7v7)		Standard	1	3.5	4	0.5	-	No pitches available in peak period
98	The District CE Primary School	Yes	Secure	School	Earlestown and Newton	-	Mini	(7v7)		Standard	1	2	4	2	-	No pitches available in peak period

⁹ Unless local information suggests otherwise it can be assumed that the availability of all pitches in LA, town and parish council and sports club ownership will be secure.

¹⁰ Assessed via a combination of non-technical assessments (as determined by The FA) and user consultation

¹¹ Current usage figures account for where teams are playing two league games per week and where known training and informal use. An adjustment of +3 match sessions per pitch has been applied to school sites to account for weekday play

¹² A supplement of three match equivalent sessions has been added to pitches at school sites where appropriate

¹³ Based on FA standards for number of matches the pitch can accommodate per week depending on pitch type/size and quality rating (see section 2.4)

¹⁴ Sunday AM

**ST. HELENS COUNCIL
PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT**

Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Security of tenure ⁹	Management	Analysis area	Ancillary facilities quality rating	Pitch type	Pitch size	Adult pitches also used for youth 11v11 football	Quality rating ¹⁰	No. of pitches	Current play ¹¹ (match equivalent sessions per week) ¹²	Site capacity (sessions per week) ¹³	Capacity Rating (match equivalent sessions per week)	Match equivalent sessions available in peak period ¹⁴	Comments
105	Vulcan Village Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Earlestown and Newton	-	Youth	(9v9)		Standard	1	2	2	0		
5	Bishop Road Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Eccleston and Windle	Poor	Adult		Yes	Standard	3	3	6	3	2.5	Spare capacity including peak time
		Yes-unused	Secure				Mini	(5v5)		Poor	1	0	2	2	1	Spare capacity including peak time
9	Carmel College	No	Secure	College	Eccleston and Windle	-	Adult			Poor	2	1	2	1	0.5	Spare capacity every other week at peak time
13	De La Salle High School	Yes-unused	Secure	School	Eccleston and Windle	Poor	Youth	(11v11)		Poor	1	0 + 3	1	2		
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Eccleston and Windle	Poor	Adult		Yes	Poor	3	4.5	3	1.5		
49	St. Helens Cricket Club	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Eccleston and Windle	Good	Adult		Yes	Standard	1	1	2	1	0.5	Spare capacity every other week at peak time
93	St. Helens College Sports Academy Pitches	Yes	Secure	College	Eccleston and Windle	Good	Adult			Standard	1	0.5	2	1.5	1	Spare capacity including peak time
102	Queen's Park Primary School	Yes	Secure	School	Eccleston and Windle	-	Mini	(5v5)		Standard	1	3	4	1	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Mini	(7v7)		Standard	1	2	4	2	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Youth	(9v9)		Standard	1	2.5	2	0.5		
103	Cowley Wynne Road Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	School	Eccleston and Windle	-	Youth	(11v11)		Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Spare capacity including peak time
9905	Eccleston Playing Field	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Eccleston and Windle	Standard	Adult			Poor	2	1	2	1	2	Spare capacity including peak time
							Mini	(5v5)		Poor	1	2	2	0		
							Mini	(7v7)		Poor	2	1.5	4	2.5	0.5	Spare capacity every fortnight at peak time Capacity to be retained to protect poor quality pitch
							Youth	(11v11)		Poor	2	4	2	2		
							Youth	(9v9)		Poor	1	1	1	0		
7	Blackbrook McDonald Ave Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Haydock and Blackbrook	Good	Adult			Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Spare capacity including peak time
18	Haydock KGV Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Haydock and Blackbrook	Poor	Adult		Yes	Poor	3	5	3	2		
30	Park Street Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Haydock and Blackbrook	Poor	Mini	(7v7)		Poor	2	1	4	3	1	Spare capacity including peak time
47	St Augustine Of Canterbury Catholic High School	Yes	Secure	School	Haydock and Blackbrook	Standard	Adult		Yes	Poor	2	1.5 + 6	2	5.5		
53	Vista Road Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Haydock and Blackbrook	-	Mini	(5v5)		Poor	2	3	4	1	-	No pitches available in peak period
56	Haydock High Fields	No	Secure	School	Haydock and Blackbrook	Standard	Youth	(11v11)		Standard	1	0.5 + 3	2	1.5		
							Youth	(9v9)		Standard	1	2 + 3	2	1		
107	Ashurst CP School	Yes	Secure	School	Haydock and Blackbrook	-	Mini	(7v7)		Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Spare capacity including peak time

**ST. HELENS COUNCIL
PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT**

Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Security of tenure ⁹	Management	Analysis area	Ancillary facilities quality rating	Pitch type	Pitch size	Adult pitches also used for youth 11v11 football	Quality rating ¹⁰	No. of pitches	Current play ¹¹ (match equivalent sessions per week) ¹²	Site capacity (sessions per week) ¹³	Capacity Rating (match equivalent sessions per week)	Match equivalent sessions available in peak period ¹⁴	Comments
1	Beeches Playing Fields	Yes	Unsecure	Sports Club	Moss Bank and Town Centre	Poor	Adult		Yes	Poor	2	3.5	2	1.5		
							Mini	(5v5)		Poor	1	2	2	-		
							Mini	(7v7)		Poor	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Youth	(9v9)		Poor	1	1.5	1	0.5		
24	Merton Bank Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Moss Bank and Town Centre	-	Adult		Yes	Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	1	Spare capacity including peak time
							Mini	(5v5)		Poor	1	0.5	2	1.5	0.5	Spare capacity every fortnight at peak time Capacity to be retained to protect poor quality pitch
							Mini	(7v7)		Poor	1	1	2	1	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Youth	(9v9)		Poor	1	1	1	-		
54	Windermere Avenue	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Moss Bank and Town Centre	-	Adult			Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Spare capacity including peak time
108	St Peter & St Paul RC Primary School	Yes	Secure	School	Moss Bank and Town Centre	-	Youth	(9v9)		Standard	1	0.5	2	1.5	0.5	Spare capacity every other week at peak time
8	Bold Miners ARLFC	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Poor	Adult		Yes	Standard	2	2.25	4	1.75	1.75	Spare capacity including peak time. Mini team using half of the pitch so full pitch only available every other week.
							Mini	(5v5)		Standard	1	1	4	3	-	No pitches available in peak period
10	Clock Face Recreation Club	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Good	Adult			Poor	1	1	1	-		
							Mini	(7v7)		Poor	1	0.5	2	1.5	0.5	Pitch is marked over rugby league behind the clubhouse and therefore used all year round. No further use to be advised
31	Parr Stocks Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Poor	Adult			Poor	4	3	4	1	1	Spare capacity including peak time
46	Sidac Sports	Yes	Unsecure	Sports Club	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Good	Adult		Yes	Standard	2	4	4	-		
							Mini	(7v7)	Yes	Standard	1	2.5	4	1.5	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Youth	(9v9)		Standard	1	3	2	1		
48	St Cuthberts Catholic Community High School	Yes-unused	Secure	School	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Standard	Youth	(9v9)		Poor	1	0 + 3	1	2		
52	Sutton Manor KGV Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Poor	Adult		Yes	Standard	2	1.5	4	2.5	1	Spare capacity including peak time
104	St Theresa's Catholic Primary School	Yes	Secure	School	Parr, Sutton and Bold	-	Youth	(9v9)		Good	1	1	4	3	-	No pitches available in peak period
38	Rainford High Technology College	No	Secure	School	Rainford	Standard	Adult			Good	1	0 + 3	3	-		
		Yes-unused					Youth	(11v11)		Poor	2	0 + 6	2	4		
		Yes-unused					Youth	(9v9)		Poor	1	0 + 3	1	2		
62	Spinney Park	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Rainford	-	Adult		Yes	Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	1	Spare capacity including peak time

**ST. HELENS COUNCIL
PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT**

Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Security of tenure ⁹	Management	Analysis area	Ancillary facilities quality rating	Pitch type	Pitch size	Adult pitches also used for youth 11v11 football	Quality rating ¹⁰	No. of pitches	Current play ¹¹ (match equivalent sessions per week) ¹²	Site capacity (sessions per week) ¹³	Capacity Rating (match equivalent sessions per week)	Match equivalent sessions available in peak period ¹⁴	Comments
91	Rainford North End Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Rainford	Standard	Adult			Standard	1	0.5	2	1.5	0.5	Spare capacity every other week at peak time
9904	Rainford Rangers Football Ground	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Rainford	Poor	Adult		Yes	Good	1	1.5	3	1.5	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Mini	(5v5)		Good	1	2	6	4	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Mini	(7v7)		Good	1	3	6	3	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Mini	(5v5)		Good	1	1.5	4	2.5	-	5v5 pitch is marked inside 11v11 pitch. No pitches available in peak period
							Youth	(11v11)		Good	1	2	4	2	-	No pitches available in peak period
41	Rainhill High School Media Arts College	No	Secure	School	Rainhill	Good	Adult			Poor	2	1.5 + 3	2	2.5		
		Yes-unused					Mini	(7v7)		Poor	3	0 + 9	3	6		
42	Rainhill Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Rainhill	Standard	Adult		Yes	Poor	5	4.5	5	0.5	3	Spare capacity including peak time
							Mini	(5v5)		Poor	2	1.5	4	2.5	0.5	Spare capacity every fortnight at peak time Capacity to be retained to protect poor quality pitch
							Mini	(7v7)		Poor	1	2	2	-		
							Youth	(9v9)		Poor	3	3	3	-		
99	Holt Field	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Rainhill	Poor	Adult		Yes	Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	1	Spare capacity including peak time
							Mini	(5v5)		Standard	1	1.5	4	2.5	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Mini	(7v7)		Standard	1	2	4	2	-	No pitches available in peak period
							Youth	(9v9)		Standard	1	1	2	1	-	No pitches available in peak period
100	Tower College	Yes	Secure	College	Rainhill	-	Youth	(9v9)		Standard	1	0.5	2	1.5	0.5	Spare capacity every other week at peak time
106	Rainhill Ex-servicemen's Club	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Rainhill	Poor	Adult			Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Spare capacity including peak time
15	Grange Park KGV Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	West Park and Thatto Heath	Standard	Adult			Poor	2	2.5	2	0.5		
26	Newton KGV Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	West Park and Thatto Heath	Poor	Adult		Yes	Poor	3	1.5	3	1.5	2.5	Spare capacity including peak time
51	Sutton Leisure Centre	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	West Park and Thatto Heath	Standard	Adult			Poor	1	0 + 3	2	1		
									Yes	Good	1	1.5	3	1.5	1	Spare capacity including peak time

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Actual spare capacity has been aggregated up (highlighted as green in the comments column in the table above) by area and by pitch type.

Table 2.10: Actual spare capacity summary

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions per week)				
	Adult	Youth (11v11)	Youth (9v9)	Mini (7v7)	Mini (5v5)
Billinge & Seneley Green	0.5	-	-	-	-
Earlestown & Newton	-	-	-	-	-
Eccleston & Windle	6	1	-	0.5	1
Haydock & Blackbrook	1	-	-	2	-
Moss Bank & Town Centre	2	-	0.5	-	0.5
Parr, Sutton & Bold	3.75	-	-	-	-
Rainford	1.5	-	-	-	-
Rainhill	5	-	0.5	-	0.5
West Park & Thatto Heath	2.5	-	-	-	-
ST. HELENS	22.25	1	1	2.5	2

The table shows a total of 29.75 match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity. There is one mini 5v5 pitch at Bishop Road Playing Fields which is available for community use but has no recorded play and has been included in the analysis above.

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 the pitches). In summary, 28 pitches are overplayed across thirteen sites, by a total of 36.5 match equivalent sessions. Only sites which have are overplayed and have current community use have been included in the overplay summary, therefore school sites which are overplayed due to curriculum use and school fixtures have been omitted from the table below. Overplay is mainly due to poor quality of pitches, of which 21 are assessed as poor quality. Pitches are often poor due to receiving little maintenance or remedial work and therefore have limited capacity for use.

Notably overplayed sites include Hope Academy where youth 11v11 and 9v9 pitches are overplayed by six and 4.5 match equivalent sessions respectively. This is primarily due to the poor quality pitches and weekday use by the academy exacerbated by the weekend community use by Newton-le-Willows FC. The high level of overplay at St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School can be attributed to the same factors. The site is used by the school throughout the week and is subject to unofficial use by local youths as there is access via a public footpath. The limited maintenance and subsequent poor quality limits the capacity before any community use.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 2.11: Overlay summary

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match equivalent sessions per week)
1	Beeches Playing Fields	Moss Bank and Town Centre	Adult	2	1.5
1	Beeches Playing Fields	Moss Bank and Town Centre	Youth 9v9	1	0.5
15	Grange Park KGV Playing Fields	West Park and Thatto Heath	Adult	2	0.5
18	Haydock KGV Playing Fields	Haydock and Blackbrook	Adult	3	2
20	Hope Academy	Earlestown and Newton	Youth 11v11	2	6
20	Hope Academy	Earlestown and Newton	Youth 9v9	1	4.5
25	Mesnes Park	Earlestown and Newton	Adult	1	2.5
41	Rainhill High School Media Arts College	Rainhill	Adult	2	2.5
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Eccleston and Windle	Adult	3	1.5
46	Sidac Sports	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Youth 9v9	1	1
47	St Augustine Of Canterbury Catholic High School	Haydock and Blackbrook	Adult	2	5.5
56	Haydock High Fields	Haydock and Blackbrook	Youth 11v11	1	1.5
56	Haydock High Fields	Haydock and Blackbrook	Youth 9v9	1	1
59	Birch Grove Playing Fields	Billinge and Seneley Green	Adult	2	2.5
59	Birch Grove Playing Fields	Billinge and Seneley Green	Youth 9v9	1	1
102	Queen's Park Primary School	Eccleston and Windle	Youth 9v9	1	0.5
9905	Eccleston Playing Field	Eccleston and Windle	Youth 11v11	2	2

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 2.12: Overplay summary

Analysis area	Overplay (match equivalent sessions per week)		
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9
Billinge & Seneley Green	2.5	-	1
Earlestown & Newton	2.5	6	4.5
Eccleston & Windle	1.5	2	0.5
Haydock & Blackbrook	7.5	1.5	1
Moss Bank & Town Centre	1.5	-	0.5
Parr, Sutton & Bold	-	-	1
Rainford	-	-	-
Rainhill	2.5	-	-
West Park & Thatto Heath	0.5	-	-
ST. HELENS	18.5	9.5	8.5

2.6: Conclusions

Having considered supply and demand, the tables below identify the overall spare capacity in each of the analysis areas for the different pitch types, based on match equivalent sessions. Future demand is based on Team Generation Rates (TGRs) which are driven by population increases as well as club development plans.

Table 2.13: Summary of demand for adult pitches (on secured sites)

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions)	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Displaced demand	Current total	Future demand (2032)	Total
Billinge & Seneley Green	0.5	2.5	-	2		2
Earlestown & Newton	-	2.5	-	2.5		2.5
Eccleston & Windle	6	1.5	-	4.5	0.5	4
Haydock & Blackbrook	1	7.5	-	6.5		6.5
Moss Bank & Town Centre	2	-	-	2		2
Parr, Sutton & Bold	3.75	-	-	3.75	0.5	3.25
Rainford	1.5	-	-	1.5		1.5
Rainhill	5	2.5	0.5	2		2
West Park & Thatto Heath	2.5	0.5	1.5	0.5		0.5
ST. HELENS	22.25	17	2	3.25	1	2.25

The table above shows that overall in St. Helens there is spare capacity to accommodate adult teams both now and in the future across all analysis areas. There are approximately 3.25 surplus match sessions currently, though when future demand from club feedback and team generation rates is considered along with demand currently displaced, there will be a total of 2.25 surplus match sessions. Though there is capacity available overall, there are notable shortfalls in three analysis areas: Billinge & Seneley Green, Earlestown & Newton and particularly in the Haydock & Blackbrook area by 6.5 sessions.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

In addition to the above, if community use is lost at unsecured sites (Beeches Playing Fields and Sidac Sports) there would be a requirement to relocate 7.5 match equivalent sessions on adult pitches to accommodate existing demand.

Table 2.14: Summary of demand for youth 11v11 pitches (on secured sites)

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions)	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Displaced demand	Current total	Future demand (2032)	Total
Billinge & Seneley Green	-	-	-	-	0.5	0.5
Earlestown & Newton	-	6	-	6	-	6
Eccleston & Windle	1	2	-	1	0.5	1.5
Haydock & Blackbrook	-	1.5	-	1.5	-	1.5
Moss Bank & Town Centre	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parr, Sutton & Bold	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rainford	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rainhill	-	-	1.5	1.5	-	1.5
West Park & Thatto Heath	-	-	0.5	0.5	-	0.5
ST. HELENS	1	9.5	2	10.5	4.5	15

The table above shows that currently there is an undersupply of youth 11v11 pitches in St. Helens, evidenced by a total overplay of 9.5 match sessions. This comes mainly from the Earlestown & Newton Area where there is overplay of six match sessions. There is also two match equivalents of displaced demand, most of which comes from Rainhill United FC based in Rainhill. It is important to acknowledge that St. Helens is underserved by youth 11v11 pitches and that the level of expected overplay would be far greater if youth 11v11 teams were only playing on youth 11v11 pitches rather than also on adult pitches.

Table 2.15: Summary of demand for youth 9v9 pitches (on secured sites)

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions)	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Displaced demand	Current total	Future demand (2032)	Total
Billinge & Seneley Green	-	1	-	1	0.5	1.5
Earlestown & Newton	-	4.5	-	4.5	-	4.5
Eccleston & Windle	-	0.5	-	0.5	-	0.5
Haydock & Blackbrook	-	1	-	1	-	1
Moss Bank & Town Centre	0.5	-	-	0.5	-	0.5
Parr, Sutton & Bold	-	-	-	-	0.5	1.5
Rainford	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rainhill	0.5	-	0.5	-	-	-
West Park & Thatto Heath	-	-	-	-	-	-
ST. HELENS	1	7	0.5	6.5	5	11.5

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

The current picture shows that there is an undersupply of youth 9v9 pitches leading to current overplay of 6.5 match sessions across the Borough. There is a notably high level of overplay in the Earlestown & Newton Area, totalling 4.5 sessions. Some clubs highlight intentions for additional teams contributing one additional match session overall. St. Helens is not catered for enough to meet current or future demand expressed by both clubs and team generation rates at 9v9 level.

In addition to the above, if community use is lost at unsecured sites (Beeches Playing Fields and Sidac Sports) there would be a requirement to relocate 4.5 match equivalent sessions on youth 9v9 pitches to accommodate existing demand.

Table 2.16: Summary of demand for mini 7v7 pitches (on secured sites)

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions)	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Displaced demand	Current demand	Future demand (2032)	Total
Billinge & Seneley Green	-	-	-	-	-	-
Earlestown & Newton	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eccleston & Windle	0.5	-	-	0.5	-	0.5
Haydock & Blackbrook	2	-	-	2	-	2
Moss Bank & Town Centre	-	-	-	-	0.5	0.5
Parr, Sutton & Bold	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rainford	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rainhill	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Park & Thatto Heath	-	-	-	-	-	-
ST. HELENS	2.5	-	-	2.5	2.5	-

All current demand is being accommodated on 7v7 pitches in St. Helens and no overplay or unmet demand was identified. There is some capacity available at peak time for further growth in the Eccleston & Windle and Haydock & Blackbrook areas. Clubs highlight an increase in demand expected in the Moss Bank & Town Centre which will in turn evidence and undersupply of 0.5 match sessions. When incorporating predicted future demand from team generation rates there will be no available match sessions at peak time and mini 7v7 pitches will be played to capacity.

In addition to the above, if community use is lost at unsecured sites (Beeches Playing Fields and Sidac Sports) there would be a requirement to relocate four match equivalent sessions on mini 7v7 pitches to accommodate existing demand.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 2.17: Summary of demand for mini 5v5 pitches (on secured sites)

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions)	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Displaced demand	Current demand	Future demand (2032)	Total
Billinge & Seneley Green	-	-	-	-	1.5	1.5
Earlestown & Newton	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eccleston & Windle	1	-	-	1	1	-
Haydock & Blackbrook	-	-	-	-	1	1
Moss Bank & Town Centre	0.5	-	-	0.5	1	0.5
Parr, Sutton & Bold	-	-	-	-	0.5	0.5
Rainford	-	-	-	-	2	2
Rainhill	0.5	-	-	0.5	-	0.5
West Park & Thatto Heath	-	-	-	-	-	-
ST. HELENS	2	-	-	2	9.5	7.5

At present there is no overplay on 5v5 pitches in St. Helens, leading to available capacity of two match sessions at present. Increases in future demand will result in a shortfall of 9.5 match sessions overall with notable deficits of two match sessions in the Rainford area and 1.5 in the Billinge & Seneley Green Area. St. Helens is able to accommodate current demand within current 5v5 mini pitch provision, however, significant increases predicted in future demand forecast that further access to additional match sessions on 5v5 pitches will be required.

In addition to the above, if community use is lost at unsecured sites (Beeches Playing Fields and Sidac Sports) there would be a requirement to relocate two match equivalent sessions on adult pitches to accommodate existing demand.

Impact of future developments

Should planned developments go ahead, the loss of one poor quality adult pitch and construction of a new stadium pitch would increase capacity on adult pitches at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground to four sessions, assuming that the new pitch is to be good quality. This represents a gain of one match session on the current available capacity. There would also be a further three match sessions available on youth 9v9 pitches when Garswood Recreation Field is available for use, assuming the pitch is of good quality following renovation.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Football – grass pitch summary

- ◀ The audit identifies a total of 134 football pitches in St. Helens. Of these, 127 are available, at some level, for community use.
- ◀ Most football pitches available for community use are assessed as being of poor quality (56%) or standard quality (37%), with less than a quarter (7%) assessed as good.
- ◀ Penlake JFC and Parkdale Sidac FC both have unsecure tenures on their home site due to housing development proposals (subject to suitable alternative provision being made for the clubs).
- ◀ The Council has plans to develop Ruskin Drive Sports Ground to include a new ‘stadium’ pitch on the site, which may be used by St. Helens Town FC amongst other clubs.
- ◀ 328 teams were identified as playing on pitches within St. Helens.
- ◀ There is current unmet demand of one team at mini level reported by Bleak Hill Rovers JFC.
- ◀ There is displaced demand mostly from mini and girls teams accessing central venues in certain leagues. Rainhill Town FC and St. Helens Town FC both export demand due to a reported lack of suitable facilities in the area.
- ◀ The SDCFL and SRJAFL are investigating the possibility of amalgamation in order to provide a pathway from youth football into adult teams. Hopes are that this will both help to retain participants and lead to a stronger SDCFL.
- ◀ There is a total of 29.75 match sessions of actual spare capacity across the Borough, of which 22.25 are on adult pitches. There is one mini 5v5 pitch at Bishop Road Playing Fields available for community use but has no recorded play.
- ◀ Thirteen sites are overplayed by a total of 36.5 match sessions per week. There are 28 overplayed pitches, of which 21 are assessed as poor quality.
- ◀ There is a shortfall of youth match sessions at both 9v9 and 11v11 formats to accommodate current and future demand, whilst increases in future demand would cause a shortfall at the mini 5v5 level.
- ◀ There is spare capacity to accommodate both current and future demand on adult pitches, though 36.5 match sessions are currently contributed by youth 11v11 matches. Transfer of play onto youth 11v11 pitches would help to increase available capacity for adult football.
- ◀ If community use is lost on unsecured sites, 20 match equivalents that take place on such pitches would need to be relocated.
- ◀ If successful, future developments at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground and Garswood Recreation Field would create capacity for a further match session on adult pitches and a further three on youth 9v9 pitches respectively.

PART 3: CRICKET

3.1: Introduction

The Lancashire County Cricket Board (LCCB) is the main governing and representative body for cricket within the County, including St. Helens. Its aim is to promote the game at all levels through partnerships with professional and recreational cricketing clubs, and other appropriate agencies.

For senior cricket in St. Helens there are two main leagues, they are the Liverpool & District Cricket Competition (LDCC) and Southport & District Amateur Cricket League (SDACL). Many of the more established clubs play in the LDCC which is an ECB Premier League and takes place primarily on Saturday afternoons but with some Sunday afternoon fixtures. There is one league playing on Sunday afternoons which is the West Lancashire Cricket League (WLCL).

The youth league structure in St. Helens tends to be club based matches which are played mid-week. Therefore there is usually no conflict with access to squares¹⁵, with the exception of sites where Last Man Stands¹⁶ (LMS) is played. Junior cricket primarily takes place as part of the Merseyside Youth Cricket League (MYCL) and the Wigan & District Junior Cricket League (WDJCL).

Team definitions

- ◀ Senior cricket refers to teams with players aged 18–55 years
- ◀ Junior cricket refers to teams with players aged 7-18 years

Consultation

There are eight clubs playing within St. Helens. Club consultation was carried out via a combination of face to face meetings and by online survey, with all clubs except Rainhill CC and Earlestown CC having registered their views.

¹⁵ The rectangular central area of the cricket field used to accommodate the pitch (wicket)

¹⁶ 8-a-side, 20-over game of cricket lasting 2 hours

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

3.2: Supply

In total, there are 10 grass cricket squares in St. Helens all of which are available for community use. No natural turf cricket squares were identified at school sites although there is an artificial wicket at Cowley Wynne Road Playing Fields.

Table 3.1: Summary of squares

Analysis area	Grass cricket squares	Artificial wickets
Billinge & Seneley Green	-	-
Earlestown & Newton	2	1
Eccleston & Windle	4	4
Haydock & Blackbrook	1	-
Moss Bank & Town Centre	-	-
Parr, Sutton & Bold	1	-
Rainford	1	-
Rainhill	1	1
West Park & Thatto Heath	-	-
ST. HELENS	10	6

Almost half of cricket squares in St. Helens (four) are located in the Eccleston & Windle area, whilst the remainder of provision is relatively evenly spread between five other areas. There are three analysis areas with no cricket provision, they are:

- ◀ Billinge & Seneley Green
- ◀ Moss Bank & Town Centre
- ◀ West Park & Thatto Heath

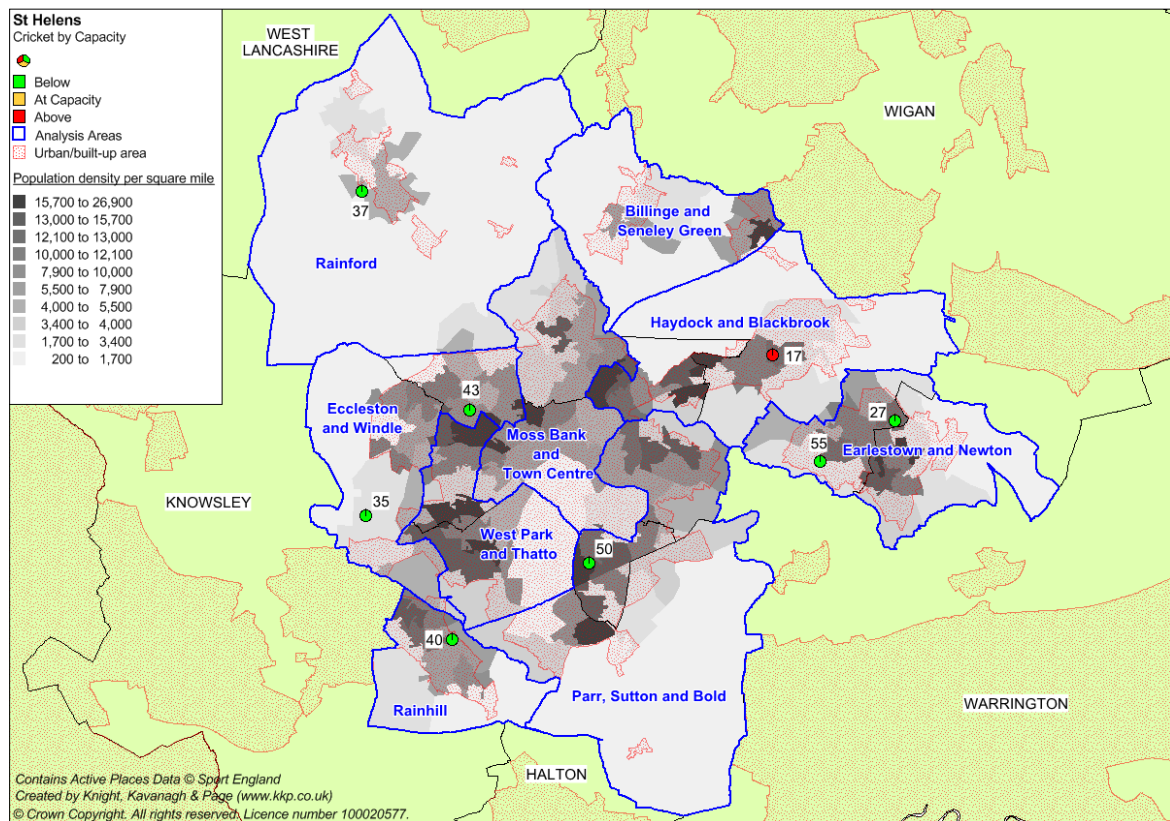
In addition there are six artificial wickets, of which, four are located in the Eccleston & Windle area. Nineteen junior matches per season are played on the artificial wicket at Newton Sports Club but no competitive senior club cricket takes place on artificial wickets, although they may be used for training purposes with the aid of mobile nets. Artificial wickets at Rainhill CC and Prescot & Odyssey CC are used regularly in the evenings midweek by LMS which is detailed further later in the section.

One cricket square has recently been lost at St. Helens CC as the site is now used primarily for football, as the Cricket Club was dissolved in 2011. There is also one artificial wicket at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground which is now disused. A further artificial wicket was lost at Rainford CC which was removed from the edge of the grass square.

The map below shows the location of all cricket squares in St. Helens. For a key to the map see Table 3.5.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Figure 3.1: Location of cricket squares in St. Helens



Security of tenure

All cricket sites in St. Helens are privately owned by clubs, with the exception of Ruskin Drive Sports Ground which is local authority owned. It should be noted that development plans for the site include the loss of one cricket 10 wicket square which currently overlaps adult football pitches.

St. Helens Town is the only club in the area to hire cricket provision annually from St. Helens Council. As a large multi-sport site and with no other incumbent clubs, club tenure of the site at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground is considered to be secure.

Rainford CC previously had an annual rolling lease on the site which was previously managed by St. Helens Council on behalf of Knowsley Estates. The Club successfully negotiated a 30 year lease in 2010 in order develop on the site and therefore tenure is deemed to be secure.

Newton-le-Willows CC form one section of Newton Sports Club. The cricket pitch and front grounds are owned by Legh Estates, to which the sports club pays an annual fee for use. The front grounds are subject to a covenant which states that cricket must be played onsite, subsequently ensuring that tenure is secure.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Surface quality

The non-technical assessments carried out on cricket squares in St. Helens (refer to the Appendix for the criteria used) found two grounds to be of good quality and eight were of standard quality, with no poor quality squares. Squares assessed as good quality were at Sutton CC and Rainhill CC.

Rainford CC reports that in instances of heavy rain, water gathers on the edge of the square and also forms a large pool in front of the pavilion. The artificial pitch previously part of the square was removed as it had become sunken and began to hold water. The Club highlight that much of the maintenance equipment and machinery available is old and dated which can at times make it difficult to conduct due repair work.

Sutton CC indicates that the pitch has improved significantly over the last five years due to the regular attention of a designated groundsman. The Club did, however, state that there are some dips in the square which it intends to correct over the coming seasons.

Newton-le-Willows CC has concerns regarding the quality of the square at Newton Sports Club and believe that it generates inconsistent bounce of the ball which is potentially dangerous.

St. Helens Town CC rates the square at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground to be of below average quality and that the maintenance work conducted is not up to the required standard. Particular issues include the grass not cut short enough, wickets not rolled adequately and limited end of season remedial work.

Maintaining high square 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. To obtain a full technical assessment of wicket and squares, the ECB recommends a Performance Quality Standard Assessment (PQS). The PQS looks at a cricket square to ascertain whether the square meets the Performance Quality Standards which are benchmarked by the Institute of Groundsmanship. The report identifies surface issues and suggests options for remediation together with likely costs. For further guidance on this, please contact the ECB.

Ancillary facilities

Ancillary facilities at club sites are generally fit for purpose but are a key issue for clubs. Two of the six responding clubs report their clubhouses and changing facilities are good quality; Haydock CC and Rainford CC, the latter having recently had a new pavilion built in 2010.

Newton-le-Willows CC identify the poor quality of its ancillary facilities (at Newton Sports Club) as a key issue, particularly the changing rooms. There are five changing rooms which are also used for other sports, all of which are poor quality, including umpires provision. Communal showers are in place and an old style bath is still in existence. The clubhouse itself is subject to frequent vandalism including burglary and burnt out cars are occasionally found on the site. The Club highlights the need to improve changing and clubhouse facilities and to sufficiently secure the site but states that it is restricted from doing so by cost.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Sutton CC has similar issues regarding changing facilities which are also of poor quality. There are two changing rooms with a communal shower area containing three shower heads which does not comply with LDCC requirements of three available shower heads per team. The Club identifies the requirement to improve the quality of changing and shower provision, particularly umpires changing provision is not fit for purpose.

In comparison, Rainford CC has good quality changing rooms and clubhouse facilities, however; identifies a need for increased car parking provision as a particular issue for the Club. The ground is located down a path with limited entry by car, resulting in cars parking along the main road and causing congestion/potential safety concerns. The neighbouring football club has the same problem and the two clubs are keen to address this as part of any potential development of the sites.

Training

Both Rainford CC and Newton-le-Willows CC highlight issues with outdoor training provision. Net facilities at Newton Sports Club are tired and in need of repair and renovation. Much like the rest of the site, they have been subject to vandalism and misuse.

Rainford CC has no fixed net facilities and has no room to build any, having to use mobile nets on the grass square to accommodate training. The Club therefore finds it difficult to access the square for training frequently enough due to the large amount of junior cricket being played midweek. This is a key driver behind the aspirations for either an additional square on neighbouring land or an artificial wicket on the outfield.

League requirements

League requirements are more stringent for Saturday cricket with the LDCC particularly stating square requirements that clubs must adhere to, including security of tenure, even square, well maintained outfield, covers, sight screens, etc. Local authority sites are therefore usually considered unsuitable for use by the higher level Saturday teams, though St. Helens Town CC plays in the league and thus Ruskin Drive Sports Ground is deemed to be of acceptable quality.

Developments

The Council has plans to develop the site at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground where there are currently two cricket squares, one which is to be lost as part of the redevelopment. The intended development will, however, include a new scoreboard and the building of a new multi-sport changing block which would be accessible to all resident clubs.

Rainford CC has aspirations for a second cricket pitch on the neighbouring land which is owned by The Knowsley Estate, part of which is currently for agricultural use and part used by Rainford Rangers FC. The Club is working alongside the football club and has approached The Knowsley Estate to investigate the feasibility of converting the land, which is leased to agriculture for a further four years, to be for sporting use.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

3.3: Demand

Cricket clubs in St. Helens range from small clubs offering one or two teams to those with several senior and junior teams at different age groups. Demand for cricket in St. Helens totals 11 clubs generating 50 teams. There are 26 senior and 24 junior teams. There is one specific girls team at Rainford CC but there are no ladies teams.

Table 3.2: Summary of teams by analysis area

Analysis area	No. of competitive teams	
	Seniors	Juniors
Billinge & Seneley Green	-	-
Earlestown & Newton	6	4
Eccleston & Windle	7	2
Haydock & Blackbrook	4	4
Moss Bank & Town Centre	-	-
Parr, Sutton & Bold	3	3
Rainford	3	7
Rainhill	3	4
West Park & Thatto Heath	-	-
ST. HELENS	26	24

There are also some clubs with U9s sections playing Kwik Cricket¹⁷, for example, Rainford CC. These have been excluded from the analysis as play takes place on the outfield rather than the grass square. Where play takes place on artificial wickets this has been indicated in Table 3.5.

Temporal demand

An analysis of match play identifies that peak time demand for cricket squares is split almost evenly between Saturday PM (18 teams) and midweek (17 teams). Demand for squares on Saturday afternoons is high, so much so that many third or fourth teams play on Sundays in the LDCC Sunday section or WLCL because their pitches are all in use on Saturdays. The amount of junior cricket played throughout the week in the evenings means that there is almost constant demand throughout the week.

Last man stands (LMS)

LMS currently operates in St. Helens based at Prescot & Odyssey CC and Rainhill CC. Play takes place over three artificial wickets which were put onto the squares at each site and funded by LCCB, on the condition that LMS matches took place two nights a week at each venue. The League was in operation for the first time in 2014 and did so with a five team structure, though intentions are for growth to an eight team format in 2015. This would be based on four matches weekly with two fixtures at each site, totalling 40 league games per season.

¹⁷ A simplified form of cricket aimed at children aged under 11

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Leagues

Table 3.3: Summary of the key leagues operating in St. Helens

League	No. of clubs based in St. Helens	Match day	Comments
Liverpool & District Cricket Competition (LDCC)	15	Saturday PM (10) & Sunday PM (5)	ECB Premier League. The League is currently operating at capacity with no requests to join. Matches are primarily operated on Saturday afternoons but due to the number of senior sides and limited amount of pitches available it runs a section on Sundays, in which a number of third and fourth teams from larger clubs such as Newton-le-Willows CC, Rainford CC and Rainhill CC play.
Merseyside Youth Cricket League (MYCL)	7	Midweek (4) & Sunday AM (3)	Prescot & Odyssey CC, Rainford CC and Rainhill CC are all members of the league. Matches are typically played midweek, though Under 13 fixtures take place on Sunday mornings.
Southport & District Amateur Cricket League (SDACL)	6	Saturday PM	The League reports capacity for 60 teams, however, a lack of local authority squares in other Boroughs meant two recent applications were unable to be accepted.
Southport & District Junior Cricket League (SDJCL)	4	Midweek	Divisions at four age groups which are U11, U13, U15 and U18. Rainford CC is the only St. Helens based club to play in the league, fielding a team at each age group.
West Lancashire Cricket League (WLCL)	3	Sunday PM	The League is made up of two divisions, each consisting of six teams. Haydock CC, Newton-le-Willows CC and Sutton CC all have additional teams playing in the league because it operates on Sundays when their respective grounds have squares available.
Wigan & District Junior Cricket League (WDJCL)	12	Midweek (10) & Sunday AM (2)	WDJCL matches usually take place midweek with the exception of the Under 9s section which operates on Sunday mornings.

Unmet demand

Newton-le-Willows CC indicate an increase in membership, so much so that there is some unmet demand at junior level. The Club highlight it has 20 juniors at U9 but is only able to accommodate 10 as part of a team at any one time. This was attributed to a deficiency in qualified and available coaches to set up a second team at that age group, rather than a lack of accessible facilities or capacity.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Imported and exported demand

No demand from St. Helens based teams was identified as being exported to other local authorities and as such is retained in the area.

There is evidence of imported demand from three clubs, amounting to four senior teams. Lostock CC is a Bolton based club which currently has two senior teams playing at Haydock CC. The Club has been playing in St. Helens temporarily for the last few years whilst it awaits the construction of a new ground in Bolton, due to be completed summer 2016.

Wavertree CC and Dalton CC import demand from nearby Liverpool and West Lancashire respectively. Each club has one senior team playing at Prescot & Odyssey CC, used as an alternative venue to accommodate their third teams due to lack of capacity at peak time on their own grounds in Liverpool and West Lancs.

Future demand

Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth.

Table 3.4: Team generation rates

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team generation rate	Future population within age group (2032)	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Mens (18-55)	42,828	26	1:1647	40,672	24.7	0
Senior Womens (18-55)	43,423	0	0	40,378	0.0	0.0
Junior Boys (7-17)	11,256	23	1:489	12,151	24.8	1.8
Junior Girls (7-17)	10,478	1	1:10478	11,625	1.1	0.1

Population increase is likely to result in the creation of one additional junior team. Based on the number of current junior fixtures, there will therefore be a further requirement of approximately eight more match sessions. The number of teams at senior level is expected to remain static.

Three clubs stated intentions to increase the number of teams, as shown below:

Club	Additional team	Average match sessions required
Newton-le-Willows CC	Under 17s	6
Prescot & Odyssey CC	Mens 3rd	12
Prescot & Odyssey CC	Juniors x2	16
St. Helens Town CC	Juniors x2	16

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Women's and girls' cricket is a national priority and there is a target to establish two girls' and one women's team in every local authority over the next five years. 8-10% of the Whole Sport Plan funding is focused around women and girls and talent ID. Three schools (De La Salle High School, Rainford High Technology College and Hope Academy) currently help deliver girls only coaching sessions through Sportivate in conjunction with LCCB. Girls also get the opportunity to experience cricket through sessions delivered through the Chance to Shine Programme in both Primary and Secondary Schools.

Newton-le-Willows CC has recently established a women's team which currently trains, with a view to playing occasional friendly fixtures next season on Sunday afternoons. The Club is enthusiastic about growing women's cricket and hopes that it will be able to attract more players with the help of the schools programmes running in the Borough.

Rounders

Rounders is a popular sport in St. Helens although league participation has declined by more than half the number of teams over the past decade. Matches are played throughout the summer at a number of sites, usually on the outfield of cricket pitches. Sites used are:

- ◀ Clock Face Recreation Club (14 fixtures)
- ◀ Haydock CC (10 fixtures)
- ◀ St. Helens CC (16 fixtures)
- ◀ Ruskin Drive Sports Ground (40 fixtures)

Two sites are currently used for cricket located at Haydock CC and Ruskin Drive Sports Ground. Cricket was previously played St. Helens CC but the venue is now used for football.

There is one league made up of six teams, with matches usually played midweek between Monday and Wednesday. This has the potential to pose a logistical problem to cricket clubs looking to increase the number of junior teams playing midweek, particularly at Haydock CC, though at present there are no reports of any issues between the two sports. This is less of a concern at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground where although St. Helens Town CC is actively looking to develop a junior section, there are two cricket pitches which is enough to accommodate any potential junior matches alongside rounders play.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

3.4: Capacity analysis

The supply assessment for cricket is fundamentally different from the other natural grass pitch sports in that it focuses on wickets in addition to pitches. For example, it is common for one cricket pitch to accommodate up to 15 wickets, which may include a non-turf wicket. Different wickets will be used to accommodate different matches. Therefore, along with the total number of pitches on a site the total number of wickets per pitch is recorded.

Capacity analysis for cricket is measured on a seasonal rather than weekly basis. This is due to playability (i.e. only one match is generally played per square per day at weekends or weekday evening). Wickets are rotated throughout the season to reduce wear and allow repair. Therefore, it is more accurate to assess capacity seasonally rather than weekly. The capacity of a square to accommodate matches is driven by the number and quality of wickets. This section presents the current square stock available for cricket. It illustrates the:

- ◀ Number of grass and artificial cricket wickets per square
- ◀ Number of competitive matches per season per square

To help calculate square capacity, the ECB suggests that a good quality wicket should be able to take:

- ◀ 5 matches per season per grass wicket (adults).
- ◀ 60 matches per season per synthetic wicket (adults).

This information is used to allocate capacity ratings as follows:

Potential capacity	Play is below the level the site could sustain
At capacity	Play matches the level the site can sustain
Overused	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

Some competitive play takes place on artificial wickets at both senior and junior level, highlighted in Table 3.5

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING SQUARE ASSESSMENT

Table 3.5: Cricket square capacity

Site ID	Site name	Ownership/management	Analysis area	Security of tenure	Teams accommodated	No. of squares	No. of artificial wickets	No. of grass wickets per square	Actual play ¹⁸ (match sessions per season)	Capacity ¹⁹ (match sessions per season)	Capacity rating (sessions per season)
17	Haydock Cricket Club	Sports Club	Haydock and Blackbrook	Secure	Haydock CC, Lostock CC	1	-	16	91	80	11
27	Newton Sports Club	Sports Club	Earlestown and Newton	Secure	Newton-le-Willows CC	1	1	15	57 (+19)	75 (+60)	-18 (+41)
35	Prescot & Odyssey Cricket Club	Sports Club	Eccleston and Windle	Secure	Prescot & Odyssey CC, Dalton CC, Wavertree CC	2	1	13 + 9	63 (+20)	110 (+120)	-47 (+100)
37	Rainford Cricket Club	Sports Club	Rainford	Secure	Rainford CC, Rainford High School	1	-	16	82	80	2
40	Rainhill Cricket Club	Sports Club	Rainhill	Secure	Rainhill CC	1	1	12	62 (+20)	60 (+60)	2 (+40)
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground ²⁰	Local Authority	Eccleston and Windle	Secure	St. Helens Town CC	2	-	16 + 10	34	130	-96
50	Sutton Cricket Club	Sports Club	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Secure	Sutton CC	1	-	16	68	80	-12
55	Earlestown CC	Sports Club	Earlestown and Newton	Secure	Earlestown CC	1	-	10	24	50	-26

¹⁸ Play on artificial wickets shown in brackets

¹⁹ Based on ECB standards for number of matches per season the wicket the can accommodate (artificial wicket capacity shown in brackets)

²⁰ Redevelopment of this site will result in the loss of the 10 wicket square reducing capacity to 80 match sessions per season.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING SQUARE ASSESSMENT

Capacity summary

- ◀ Natural turf squares at three sites in St. Helens are overplayed by a total of 15 match sessions per season and have no capacity to accommodate further play.
- ◀ Seven squares across five sites have recorded play and spare capacity, totalling 199 match sessions per season.
- ◀ The capacity ratings above refer to natural turf wickets, whereby any additional play on, or capacity provided by artificial wickets used for competitive play is denoted in brackets which by their nature can accommodate a higher amount of play.
- ◀ Nineteen competitive matches were identified as taking place on the artificial wicket at Newton Sports Club at Under 9 and Under 11 level. LMS play is applied to artificial wickets at Prescot & Odyssey CC and Rainhill CC.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

3.5: Supply and demand analysis

Spare capacity

The next step is to ascertain whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be deemed 'spare capacity'. There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular training sessions, or to protect the quality of the site.

There are six sites which show potential spare capacity on grass wickets in St. Helens, totalling 207 match sessions per season. This does not consider artificial wickets which may be used for some junior matches to help alleviate grass wicket usage.

The peak time for playing senior cricket is Saturday PM, whilst the peak time for junior cricket is midweek. Where there is a significant amount of potential capacity available, this may not represent actual space capacity, or whether square capacity is available at the peak time.

The table below identifies whether any spare capacity is at peak time and can be deemed as 'actual spare capacity':

Table 3.6: Summary of actual spare capacity

ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of squares	Amount of spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Squares available in peak period (Senior) ²¹	Squares available in peak period (Junior) ²²	Comments
27	Newton Sports Club	Earlestown and Newton	1	-18	-	-	No spare capacity at peak times
35	Prescot & Odyssey Cricket Club	Eccleston and Windle	2	-47	0.5	1.5	Squares available at senior peak time. Availability at junior peak time though only on three nights due to LMS activity
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Eccleston and Windle	2	-96	1	2	Squares available at both senior and junior peak times

²¹ Saturday PM

²² Midweek

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of squares	Amount of spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Squares available in peak period (Senior) ²¹	Squares available in peak period (Junior) ²²	Comments
50	Sutton Cricket Club	Parr, Sutton and Bold	1	-12	-	-	No spare capacity at peak times
55	Earlestown CC	Earlestown and Newton	1	-26	-	1	Squares available at junior peak time

Actual spare capacity indicates that two of the five sites with available match sessions have accessible squares at senior peak time. Prescott & Odyssey Cricket Club has one pitch available every other week which is sufficient to provide for one more senior team on a home and away basis. Ruskin Drive has one square available each week and is therefore able to provide for two further senior teams.

It should be noted that the two sites which display spare capacity at senior peak time (Prescot & Odyssey Cricket Club and Ruskin Drive Sports Ground) do so largely because they are dual pitch sites.

There are three sites with squares available at junior peak time. Earlestown CC and St. Helens Town CC have no junior teams and subsequently there is little midweek usage, with the exception of rounders at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground. Similarly, Prescott & Odyssey CC only has one junior team playing midweek however LMS also takes place.

Overplay

Three sites in St. Helens are overplayed by a total of 15 match sessions per season, located in the Haydock and Blackbrook, Rainhill and Rainford areas.

Table 3.7: Summary of overplay

ID	Site name	Analysis area	Quality	No. of grass wickets	Amount of overplay (match sessions per season)
17	Haydock Cricket Club	Haydock and Blackbrook	Standard	16	11
37	Rainford Cricket Club	Rainford	Standard	16	2
40	Rainhill Cricket Club	Rainhill	Good	12	2

The largest amount of overplay is at Haydock CC, where 16 wickets on the standard quality square are overplayed by a total of 11 matches per season. This is due to the additional use contributed by the two senior teams from Lostock CC (Bolton) temporarily using the ground, amounting to 36 matches per year beyond Haydock CC fixtures. Despite the site displaying evidence of overplay at the present time, this is only a temporary measure and the return of Lostock CC to Bolton and a newly built ground in 2016 will not only eliminate any overplay but in fact create 0.5 squares of actual spare capacity at adult peak time.

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There is a small amount of overplay at Rainhill CC totalling two games per season over recommended capacity. This degree of overuse is considered to be minimal given the good quality square and therefore is able to be accommodated by the current capacity without a negative impact on quality given the continued standard of maintenance conducted. Alternatively, Rainhill CC has an artificial wicket on which some play could take place if appropriate.

Similarly, Rainford CC exhibits the same level of overplay, though the square is assessed as standard quality rather than good. The Club would like to install an artificial wicket to replace the one removed in years previous, with the intention of some Under 11s matches to be played on it and to be used for net practice. This would help to reduce usage and subsequently eliminate overplay. Alternatively, an improvement in quality from standard to good would mean that the minimal amount of overuse at present should be able to be accommodated within the current provision.

3.6 Conclusions

In summary, St. Helens is considered able to accommodate current demand for cricket provision. The level of overplay across the three sites identified above is not of concern, as the nature of overplay at Haydock CC is temporary and will not exist moving forward following the 2015 season. Overplay at the remaining two sites is minimal and can be accommodated by existing provision in its present condition, though no additional use should be advocated.

Cricket clubs in St. Helens tend to play all matches on one site, with no clubs making use of alternative venues, instead choosing to vary day of use rather than venue. This considered, St. Helens is able to accommodate future demand expressed by clubs and there is sufficient capacity at their respective home grounds to do so, as shown below:

Club	Additional team	Average match sessions required	Capacity rating (match sessions per season)
Newton-le-Willows CC	Under 17s	6	-18
Newton-le-Willows CC	Under 9s (unmet demand)	11	
Prescot & Odyssey CC	Mens 3rd	12	-47
Prescot & Odyssey CC	Juniors x2	16	
St. Helens Town CC	Juniors x2	16	-96

LMS is expected to expand at Precott & Odyssey CC which would make use of the artificial wicket and therefore not impact on available capacity for matches on natural turf wickets, however; the timing of matches may present an obstacle to the intended increase in junior teams at the Club as both LMS and junior matches take place midweek.

Rainford CC experiences similar issues regarding clashes midweek and has desires for a second pitch with an artificial wicket. The current square is overplayed and the Club hopes that it would alleviate both overplay and clashes with junior matches which currently limits practice time available on the square, especially for senior teams.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Actual spare capacity indicates that there are enough squares available at peak times to accommodate additional demand at Prescot & Odyssey CC for senior (0.5 squares) and junior cricket (1.5 squares). Similarly, there are two squares available at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground at junior peak time. This is not the case at Newton Sports Club, where there is no spare capacity at either senior or junior peak time which may pose an obstacle to any further growth. St. Helens is also able to cater for future demand generated Borough wide by population increase.

A notable issue in St. Helens is the lack of actual spare capacity on Saturday afternoons which is peak time for senior cricket. There are a number of teams playing on Sunday afternoons which in some cases may prefer to play on Saturdays but are unable to because of limitations on available squares. All sites with the exception of Newton Sports Club have squares available on Sunday afternoons; therefore it is likely that any further growth at senior level would need to be accommodated on Sundays notwithstanding access to additional sites beyond current provision.

Cricket summary

- ◀ In total, there are 10 grass cricket squares and five artificial wickets identified in St. Helens, all of which are in secured community use, accommodating 50 teams (26 senior and 24 junior teams).
- ◀ Two squares are assessed as good quality (Sutton CC and Rainhill CC) and eight as standard. No squares are assessed as poor.
- ◀ Ancillary facilities are a key issue to several clubs. Changing room and shower provision is poor at Newton Sports Club and Sutton CC. Car parking is a problem at Rainford.
- ◀ Three sites are overplayed, to a total of 15 match sessions at Haydock CC, Rainhill CC and Rainford CC.
- ◀ Overplay at Haydock CC is temporary and is not a long term concern. Otherwise, overplay is considered to be minimal and can be absorbed by current quality of provision.
- ◀ All other sites have some form of spare capacity, although only three of these five sites have squares available at peak times.
- ◀ Ruskin Drive Sports Ground is the only Council owned site and is underutilised with a significant amount of spare capacity.
- ◀ There is sufficient capacity within St. Helens to accommodate overplay, unmet and future demand at the required peak times.
- ◀ Actual spare capacity at senior peak time is limited to dual pitch sites at Prescot & Odyssey CC and Ruskin Drive Sports Ground. Conversely, all sites but Newton Sports Club have squares available on Sunday afternoon.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

PART 4: RUGBY UNION

4.1: Introduction

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is split into six areas across the country with a workforce team that covers development, coaching, governance and competitions. St. Helens falls within North West (part of Area 5), with a county development manager and a team of community rugby coaches that deliver core programmes in schools and clubs. The variety of programmes, which include 15-a-side, 10-a-side, 7-a-side, Tag and the O2 Touch programme all aim to increase and retain participation within the game. In order to sustain and increase participation in the game facilities need to be appropriate, affordable and accessible.

There are four main rugby union clubs based within St. Helens:

- ◀ Liverpool St. Helens RFC
- ◀ West Park RFC
- ◀ Ruskin Park RFC
- ◀ Newton-le-Willows RFC

Team definitions

- ◀ Senior teams (19 to 45)
- ◀ Youth teams (U13 to U17)
- ◀ Colts teams (U18 to U19)
- ◀ Mini/Midi teams (U7 to U12)

As a guide all rugby union pitches are classified as senior sized. However, there may be instances (particularly on school sites and large club sites) where separate dedicated mini/midi pitches are provided.

Youth rugby and colts rugby is played on a senior pitch and mini/midi teams play principally on half a senior pitch.

Club consultation

As the three largest clubs in the area, face to face consultation was carried out with Liverpool St. Helens RFC, West Park RFC and Ruskin Park RFC to discuss issues which are used to inform this section of the report. Newton-le-Willows RFC completed a survey by telephone.

4.2: Supply

In total, seven senior rugby union pitches are located across four sites in St. Helens, all of which are available for community use. All pitches are located at sports club sites and there are none at schools or managed by the Council. There are no mini pitches and all seven are senior size.

There is no full size World Rugby Regulation 22 AGPs in St. Helens. The nearest is located at Sporting Edge in West Lancashire, however, no clubs report travelling outside of the area to access it. There is a certified AGP located at Carmel College however the dimensions of the pitch mean that it is suitable for skill practice but not match play.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 4.1: Summary of senior grass rugby union pitches

Analysis area	No. of available pitches
Billinge & Seneley Green	-
Earlestown & Newton	1
Eccleston & Windle	1
Haydock & Blackbrook	-
Moss Bank & Town Centre	-
Parr, Sutton & Bold	-
Rainford	3
Rainhill	-
West Park & Thatto Heath	2
ST. HELENS	7

Liverpool St. Helens RFC is located in the Rainford analysis area and has three floodlit senior pitches which host men's senior, boys junior and mini rugby. The site is used regularly by a number of other teams, most notably Lancashire County representative teams for training.

West Park RFC has two senior pitches, one of which is floodlit and used for training, whilst the main pitch has a stand but no floodlighting. The Club has three adult teams playing on Saturday afternoons and much like Liverpool St. Helens RFC has a thriving junior and mini section including two junior girls teams.

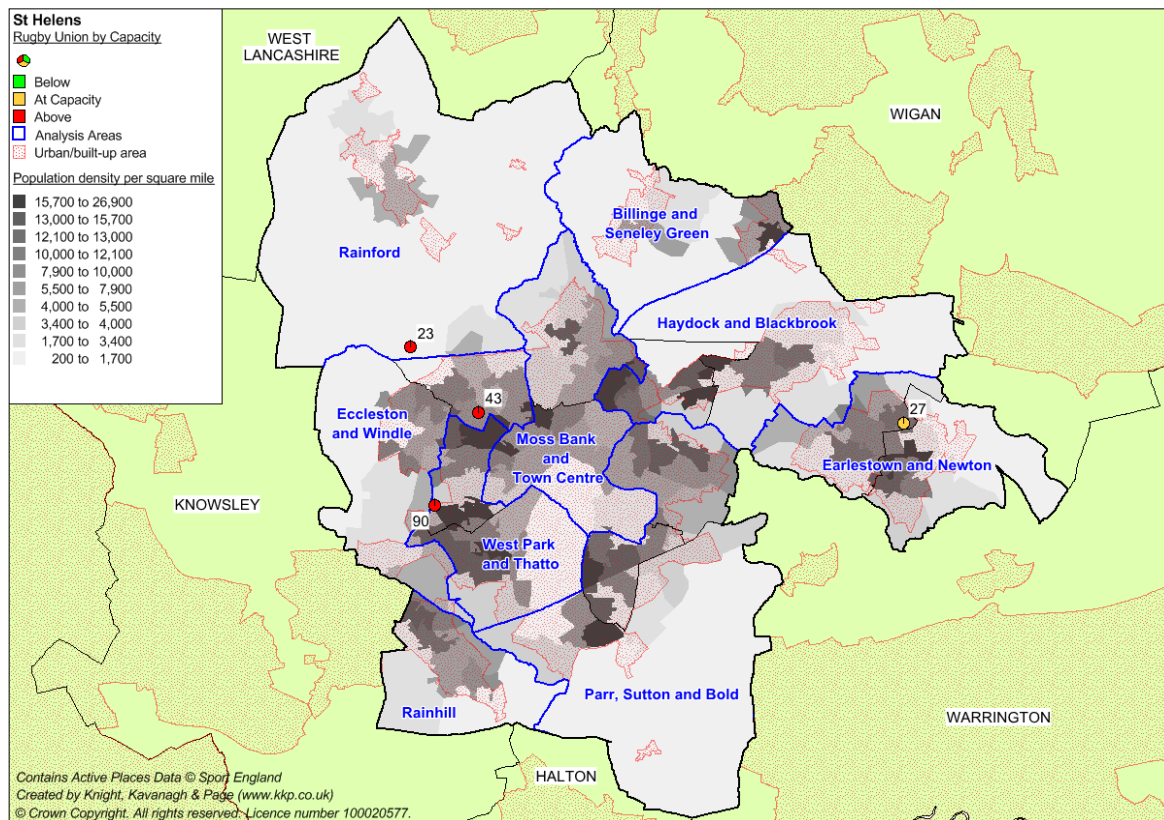
Ruskin Park RFC is based at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground which is a multi-sport site with variety of sports pitches. There is one senior rugby union pitch with a covered standing area and a floodlit area behind used for training. Much like Ruskin Park RFC, Newton-le-Willows RFC is based at Newton Sports Club, a multi-sport site where there is one senior pitch.

NB: The audit only identifies dedicated, line marked pitches. For rugby union pitch dimension sizes please refer to the RFU guidelines; 'Grass Pitches for Rugby' at www.rfu.com

For a key to the map overleaf see Table 4.5.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Figure 4.1: Location of rugby union pitches in St. Helens



Ownership/management

Three of the four clubs in St. Helens have ownership of their home grounds and as such are considered to have secure tenure of the site. West Park RFC owns all of the site except the main pitch which it is currently in the process of trying to purchase from current owners Pilkingtons, however, it is still remains in secured use.

Newton-le-Willows RFC plays at Newton Sports Club which has split ownership between three parties. The front of the site including the access pathway is owned by the Legh Estate, whilst the back of the site where the rugby union pitch is located is owned by the Council. The Club pays an annual fee to each for use of the site, whilst it has ownership of a small proportion of the land around to the side of the clubhouse.

Only Ruskin Park RFC does not own its home pitch, renting the pitch at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground on an annual basis from the Council at a cost of around £1,200 for matches for the season, with training sessions an additional £9 per session.

Pitch quality

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.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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 4.2: Definition of maintenance categories

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

Table 4.3: 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 4.4: 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

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

The table below shows quality ratings for each of the sites in St. Helens based on non-technical site assessment scores.

Table 4.5: Site quality ratings

Site ID	Site name	Ownership/ Management	Community use?	Analysis area	Pitch type	Non tech score	Quality rating	No. of pitches	Comments
23	Liverpool St. Helens RFC	Sports Club	Yes	Rainford	Senior	M0 / D3	Poor	1	The main pitch had a separate drainage system installed which drains both the pitch itself and also carries water from the other two pitches away from the site into the neighboring field. The pipe drainage system on pitches two and three is very old and therefore considered to be D1, whilst there is an area by the dug outs on pitch one which is believed to have a minor blockage. Maintenance is limited due to cost and suitable whether to carry out due work.
23	Liverpool St. Helens RFC	Sports Club	Yes	Rainford	Senior	M0 / D1	Poor	2	
27	Newton Sports Club (Newton-le-Willows RFC)	Sports Club	Yes	Earlestown and Newton	Senior	M1 / D1	Standard	1	There is one rugby union pitch onsite which is used only for matches and some use from the rugby league section for junior and mini matches on Sunday mornings. The pitch is in relatively good condition as training takes place on the neighboring floodlit rugby league pitch.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Site ID	Site name	Ownership/ Management	Community use?	Analysis area	Pitch type	Non tech score	Quality rating	No. of pitches	Comments
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground (Ruskin Park RFC)	Local Authority	Yes	Eccleston and Windle	Senior	M0 / D1	Poor	1	The pitch is built upon an old athletics track which subsequently is unable to drain water away along the profile where it previously existed, causing the pitch to hold water towards the sidelines and in goal areas. Limited maintenance is carried out by the Council which also lets the pitch to other teams such as Pilkington Recs ARLFC.
90	West Park RFC	Sports Club	Yes	West Park and Thatto Heath	Senior	M1 / D1	Standard	2	Both pitches are reported to drain well, so much so that pitch two sometimes becomes too hard. Maintenance is carried out by a subcontractor and is generally well done. Water sometimes runs down the bank beside pitch two onto pitch one, causing the touchline to become boggy. Pitch two is heavily used for training.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Ancillary facilities

All clubs in St. Helens have access to changing room provision for home games at their main sites.

West Park RFC is in the process of refurbishing the four changing rooms onsite. Two have been completed and were supported by grant funding received from the Sport England Inspired Facilities Fund, whilst two are in progress and due to be completed when the Club has raised the required funds. It states a requirement for six changing rooms in order to also cater for the additional pitch the Club has use of at Carmel College and aspires in future to knock through the communal showers to create a further two.

The site at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground has four accessible changing rooms though Ruskin Park RFC only makes use of two. The site is split; the changing facilities are managed by the Council but the clubhouse is managed by Ruskinvest, therefore generating revenue is problematic. Changing facilities are poor with communal showers although planned developments for the site include a new changing block. Car parking was highlighted as a particular problem on match days when several other sports all play at the site causing it to become congested.

Newton-le-Willows RFC identifies the quality of ancillary facilities at Newton Sports Club as a key issue and that the site as a whole is tired and in need of investment. Changing rooms are poor quality and are served by a communal shower which is inadequate, especially to accommodate other sports such as cricket or football when more than one section of the sports club is playing at home. The changing rooms have been broken into several times and the piping and shower heads stolen, prompting the sports club to install CCTV cameras. Car parking is a notable problem on match days and the grass area onsite is frequently used as an overspill parking area.

Liverpool St. Helens RFC has two changing rooms and a further six smaller changing rooms to serve the three senior pitches onsite. The Club has limited funding available and as such has been unable to make required improvements to changing facilities. Clubhouse facilities have also been identified as a key area in need of improvement and the Club is seeking grant funding through the RFU to help facilitate this.

Development

Liverpool St. Helens RFC has previously submitted a grant application for Protecting Playing Fields funding in order to carry out pitch improvement work. The application was unsuccessful but the Club will look to apply again at the next possible opportunity. The Club is currently seeking RFU Social Spaces funding to make improvements to the clubhouse, whilst long term investment into the changing rooms is required to provide good quality facilities moving forward.

West Park RFC has plans to finish refurbishment of two changing rooms and officials changing which is currently underway. The clubhouse roof has been identified as requiring some repair and the Club intends to apply for funding via the RFU Social Spaces Fund in order to carry out the work. The Club identifies a key need for access to additional pitches and floodlit training facilities.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Ruskin Park RFC successfully received £500 grant funding from Lancashire RFU towards mobile floodlighting for the Ruskin Drive Sports Ground pitch. The Club is hoping to secure the same amount from RFU central funding so that it can purchase a set of lights. This will help to resolve the current issues with visibility on the current training area, allowing training on other available grass space and for touch rugby to run for more weeks of the year.

The Council plans to enhance Ruskin Drive Sports Ground albeit this would not affect Ruskin Park RFC. Intentions are for a World Rugby Regulation 22 AGP to be built which the Club would be able to have some use of as existing resident users.

4.3: Demand

Demand for rugby pitches in St. Helens tends to fall within the categories of organised competitive play, organised training and casual use.

Competitive play

Three rugby union clubs play in St. Helens, providing a total of 31 teams. There are nine senior teams, eight junior boys teams, two junior girls teams and 12 mini teams.

Table 4.6: Summary of demand by analysis area

Club	Analysis area	Team type	Team play	No. of rugby union teams		
				Senior	Juniors	Mini
Liverpool St. Helens RFC	Rainford	Senior men	Sat PM	3	-	-
Liverpool St. Helens RFC	Rainford	Junior boys	Sun AM	-	3	-
Liverpool St. Helens RFC	Rainford	Junior boys	Sun PM	-	1	-
Liverpool St. Helens RFC	Rainford	Mini	Sun AM	-	-	6
Newton-le-Willows RFC	Earlestown & Newton	Senior men	Sat PM	1	-	-
Ruskin Park RFC	Eccleston & Windle	Senior men	Sat PM	2	-	-
West Park RFC	West Park & Thatto Heath	Senior men	Sat PM	3	-	-
West Park RFC	West Park & Thatto Heath	Junior boys	Sun AM	-	3	-
West Park RFC	West Park & Thatto Heath	Junior boys	Sun PM	-	1	-
West Park RFC	West Park & Thatto Heath	Mini	Sun AM	-	-	6
West Park RFC	West Park & Thatto Heath	Girls	Sun PM	-	2	-
ST. HELENS TOTAL				9	10	12

At Liverpool St. Helens RFC there are three men's teams playing senior league rugby. The junior section has four teams playing matches on Sundays and the mini section has six teams playing friendly matches on an inter-club festival basis on Sunday mornings. The Club recently lost one team at senior colts' level as many left the area to go to university.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Similarly, West Park RFC also has a strong youth setup, with four junior boys' teams and six mini teams playing on Sundays. The Club also has the only two junior girl's teams in St. Helens, both of which play on Sunday afternoons. Some players were gained from Liverpool St. Helens RFC at senior colts level when the team there ceased, as they wanted to play senior colts rugby rather than senior rugby and so had to seek out another colts team. The Club has worked hard to develop links with both local schools and Harefinch ARLFC to encourage participation and help to maintain and increase junior membership.

Ruskin Park RFC only caters for senior rugby union and fields two senior teams. Demand has been static for a number of years, though last year there were difficulties in keeping the second team running. This year the Club has focused on establishing a consistent second team and has attracted some cross code participation from rugby league players to help do so.

Newton-le-Willows RFC is a one team club playing at Newton Sports Club where there is one rugby union pitch. There is also one rugby league pitch and both sports make use of both pitches. The Club plays in the North Lancashire League Division Two which has lost three teams this season, leaving only nine teams in the League. Considerations have been given to the possibility of changing to play in the South Lancashire and Cheshire Leagues in order to secure more home fixtures, as there are concerns that the Club needs to maintain interest from players and generate revenue to keep the social club running.

Vulcan RFC previously played at Vulcan Sports Ground which closed in April 2002 and was sold along with the adjacent industrial site for housing. However, the Club folded within a year of the facility closing. It is not anticipated that the Club would be resurrected even on the basis of re-providing pitches. Any demand from this club was absorbed by Newton-le-Willows RFC albeit it still only has one team.

Training

At Liverpool St. Helens RFC all senior and junior training takes place across all three floodlit match pitches. Senior teams train together for 90 minutes, whilst junior teams get an hour of training per team each week. Mini teams currently train on the AGP at Rainford High Technology College between December and March, totalling around three hours use each week, though this means teams have to travel outside of the local community to access AGP provision. Lancashire County representative squads also train at the site on Monday evenings and Sunday lunchtimes. Training demand on pitches at Liverpool St. Helens RFC is a key issue and is a major factor influencing both the quality of the pitch and the level of overplay.

West Park RFC has much the similar issue regarding Pitch Two which is floodlit and subsequently used for all senior and junior training, however; the current quality of floodlighting is in need of improvement. The pitch is used Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights, with junior teams only getting access to a quarter of a pitch to use. Mini teams train on the AGP at Carmel College one night a week which is next door to the site but the dimensions of the AGP mean it is unsuitable for older junior and senior teams despite Reg 22 certification for contact skill practice. The Club identifies overuse of pitch two as a key concern and acknowledges the need for access to another suitable training facility or to increase the number of floodlit pitches in order to alleviate training use on pitch two which impacts on the quality for match play.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Ruskin Park RFC does not train on the match pitch but on a floodlit training area twice a week behind one end of the pitch. The area is poorly drained as is the quality of floodlighting.

Newton-le-Willows RFC train at the home ground on the adjacent rugby league pitch to make use of the floodlights. Use of the two is shared between rugby league and rugby union sections and they are liberally used as somewhat dual use pitches. The Club states that the floodlighting is poor and not fit for matches although it is manageable for training. This pitch is of poor quality; grass cover is patchy and drainage is poor. Quality has reduced since sand was applied several years ago which was of the wrong type and worsened the quality rather than improving it.

Unmet demand

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to pitches. It is usually expressed, for example, where a team is already training but is unable to access a match pitch or where a league has a waiting list due to a lack of pitch provision, which in turn is hindering its growth. Liverpool St. Helens RFC highlights a high number of players in some of its mini age group squads and that it could potentially field duplicate teams. The Club was unable to quantify how many teams and whether it would be feasible given the current coaching resources.

Casual/unofficial use

None of the responding clubs report any issues with unofficial use or damage to pitches. The only other identified additional use is at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground where an O2 Touch Centre League runs touch rugby throughout the summer. Matches take place on the pitch with each taking up a third, in a league which runs one evening each week from March through to August.

Future demand

Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth.

Table 4.7: Team generation rates

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group (2032)	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Mens (19-45)	29,094	9	1:3233	28,991	9.0	0.0
Senior Women (19-45)	29,793	0	0	28,720	0.0	0.0
Junior Boys (13-18)	6,533	8	1:817	6,721	8.2	0.2
Junior Girls (13-18)	6,076	2	1:3038	6,394	2.1	0.1
Mini rugby mixed (7-12)	11,253	12	1:938	12,767	13.6	1.6

Future population projections forecast an increase in demand for junior rugby at both boys and girls groups, although any increases would not be sufficient to generate additional teams. Growth in mini rugby anticipates the creation of one additional team.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Both West Park RFC and Liverpool St. Helens RFC indicate a desire to increase the number of teams, both of which would like to add a fourth men's senior team. West Park RFC currently manages to field a fourth team on occasions for friendly matches but would like to make this an established league team within the next two years.

Liverpool St. Helens RFC would like another team based for the purpose of developing players aged 18 to 25, although is wary of North West Leagues Rule 19 that applies (teams forfeiting matches in excess of three times are removed from leagues) and is concerned about not being able to establish the team consistently and the effect that could have on the other senior teams.

Newton-le-Willows RFC also has intentions to add another senior team, either as a second mens team or at Vets level. The Club states that any additional team would also play at Newton Sports Club.

Further to this the RFU also identifies an increase in O2 touch players at Ruskin Park.

4.4: Capacity analysis

The capacity for pitches to regularly accommodate competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality, and therefore the capacity, of a pitch affect the playing experience and people's enjoyment of playing rugby. In extreme circumstances it can result in the inability of the pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off peak times. To enable an accurate supply and demand assessment of rugby pitches, the following assumptions are applied to site by site analysis:

- ◀ All sites that are used for competitive rugby matches (regardless of whether this is secured community use) are included on the supply side.
- ◀ All competitive play is on senior sized pitches (except for where mini pitches are provided).
- ◀ From U13 upwards, teams play 15 v15 and use a full pitch.
- ◀ Mini teams (U7-12) play on half of a senior pitch i.e. two teams per senior pitch.
- ◀ For senior and youth teams the current level of play per week is set at 0.5 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis (assumes half of matches will be played away).
- ◀ For mini teams, play per week is set at 0.25 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis and playing across half of one adult team.
- ◀ All male adult club rugby takes place on a Saturday afternoon.
- ◀ All U13-18 rugby takes place on a Sunday morning.
- ◀ Training that takes place on club pitches is reflected by the addition of team equivalents.
- ◀ Team equivalents have been calculated on the basis that 30 players (two teams) train on the pitch for 90 minutes (team equivalent of one) per night.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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

Table 4.8: 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

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

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

Education sites

There are no rugby union pitches at school sites in St. Helens, largely because rugby league is a popular sport in the Borough and is taught as the favoured code in most schools. West Park RFC does, however, make use of the rugby league pitch at Carmel College which neighbours its home ground. Teams get changed at the club and are then able to walk through onto the adjacent school site which is used at least once a fortnight to accommodate excess demand at peak times.

The peak period

In order to fully establish actual spare capacity, the peak period needs to be established. Peak time for senior rugby union matches in St. Helens is Saturday afternoons and junior and mini teams play on Sundays on senior pitches. Therefore, the peak time for requirement of senior pitches is actually Sundays, but not for senior rugby as the majority of demand comes from junior and mini teams.

**ST. HELENS COUNCIL
PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT**

Table 4.9: Rugby union provision and level of community use within St. Helens

Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Security of tenure	Management	Analysis area	Ancillary facility quality rating	Pitch type	Quality rating ²³	No. of pitches	Current Play (match equivalent sessions (per week) ²⁴	Site capacity (match sessions per week) ²⁵	Capacity rating (match equivalent sessions per week)	Comments
23	Liverpool St. Helens RFC	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Rainford	Poor	Senior	M0 / D3 (Poor)	1	6	2	4	Main pitch is used for senior and junior matches, all mini matches, club training and training for Lancashire Under 20s. Has new pipe drainage, floodlighting and main stand.
23	Liverpool St. Helens RFC	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Rainford	Poor	Senior	M0 / D1 (Poor)	2	9	3	6	Pitches two and three are used for senior matches and training, junior matches and training and additional use by Lancashire junior representative squads for training.
27	Newton Sports Club (Newton-le-Willows RFC)	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Earlestown and Newton	Poor	Senior	M1 / D1 (Standard)	1	2	2	-	The pitch receives little rugby union match play as the Club only has one team, however, the rugby league section use the pitch weekly for primary matches which are marked with cones.
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground (Ruskin Park RFC)	Yes	Secure	Local Authority	Eccleston and Windle	Poor	Senior	M0 / D1 (Poor)	1	2.5	1.5	1	Only one senior rugby union match takes place on the pitch each week, however it is also let out to Pilkington Recs ARLFC which splits use for mini and junior rugby between this pitch and the rugby league pitch onsite.
90	West Park RFC	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	West Park and Thatto Heath	Adequate	Senior	M1 / D1 (Standard)	1	3	2	1	Pitch one is not floodlit and is only used for senior, junior and mini matches. There is occasional use by Carmel College but this is infrequent.
90	West Park RFC	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	West Park and Thatto Heath	Adequate	Senior	M1 / D1 (Standard)	1	5.5	2	3.5	Pitch two is floodlit therefore accommodates all training for senior and junior teams in addition to use for senior, junior and mini matches. Training demand amounts to three hours per week, with several junior teams restricted to a quarter of a pitch on which to train.

²³ Based on maintenance and drainage scores from non technical assessment (as set out in Table 4.5)

²⁴ All junior play takes place on adult pitches and this has been added to calculate the actual play on sites. Team equivalents for training sessions taking place on match pitches have also been added. Where university training usage is unknown two match equivalent sessions have been added to current play.

²⁵ Guided by RFU standards on number of matches pitch can accommodate per week based on quality rating

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

4.5: Supply and demand analysis

Spare capacity

The next step is to ascertain whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be deemed 'actual capacity'. There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

No sites show spare capacity and all but one are overplayed. The lack of spare capacity on pitches is a reflection of generally poor pitch quality and a subsequent limitation in recommended pitch capacity per week. This is exacerbated by training demand or demand from other users, not allowing pitches to be repaired properly and imparting consistent use every few days throughout the season with little rest. Limited maintenance programmes in most cases are doing little to offset or compensate persistent use.

Overplay

Three sites are overplayed by a total of 15.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 4.10 Overplay summary

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Capacity rating
23	Liverpool St. Helens RFC	Rainford	2	10
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Eccleston and Windle	1	1
90	West Park RFC	West Park and Thatto Heath	2	4.5

The pitches at Liverpool St. Helens RFC are used heavily for matches and particularly training due to the large number of senior and junior teams, in excess of the recommended capacity. The tendency for the Club to make use of the pitches for training because they are floodlit and may be considered a low cost option impacts greatly on the level of overplay, with ten of the match equivalent sessions of use attributed to training, five of which are by Lancashire representative squads. This extra use by other teams contributes significantly to overplay.

Ruskin Drive Sports Ground is overplayed by one match equivalent per week. The pitch is able to accommodate the two rugby union teams playing as training does not take place on the pitch, however, the additional use from Pilkington Recs ARLFC on Sunday mornings results in the pitch being overplayed. This is not something the Club is able to control, as management of bookings and maintenance is managed by the Council.

West Park RFC is overplayed by 4.5 match sessions per week. Four of the sessions take place on Pitch Two which is where most overplay is concentrated, as floodlighting makes it the only accessible training area. Mini teams are already training offsite in order to alleviate training demand but there is need to access additional suitable training facilities to further reduce overuse. The Club already has to use the rugby league pitch at Carmel College to accommodate a fixture when there are a number of junior teams at home on Sundays.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

4.6: Conclusions

Having considered supply and demand above, the table below identifies the overall spare capacity in each of the analysis areas, based on match equivalent sessions.

Table 4.11: Summary of demand for rugby pitches (secured use)

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity(match equivalent sessions)	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current demand	Future demand	Total
Billinge & Seneley Green	-	-	-	-	-
Earlestown & Newton	-	-	-	0.5	0.5
Eccleston & Windle	-	1	1	-	1
Haydock & Blackbrook	-	-	-	-	-
Moss Bank & Town Centre	-	-	-	-	-
Parr, Sutton & Bold	-	-	-	-	-
Rainford	-	10	10	0.5	10.5
Rainhill	-	-	-	-	-
West Park & Thatto Heath	-	4.5	4.5	0.5	5
ST. HELENS	-	15.5	15.5	1.5	17.0

Overall there is a shortfall of 15.5 match equivalent sessions in St. Helens to accommodate current demand. Additional future demand of 1.5 match sessions will be required when considering future demand highlighted by clubs and team generation rates. St. Helens does not have the available capacity at present to accommodate these required match sessions.

Current demand comes mainly from the Rainford and West Park & Thatto Heath areas where there is overplay from the two larger clubs; Liverpool St. Helens RFC and West Park RFC. This is partly influenced by the limited maintenance of pitches restricted by cost which subsequently limits the recommended capacity, combined with excessive use of the pitches for training. There is currently no spare capacity on pitches and there are no additional unused pitches, as rugby union in St. Helens is typically played at club sites. The area is generally underserved for rugby union pitches and there are no alternative pitches to make use of, therefore both clubs have the need for access to an alternative floodlit training area, AGP or grass pitch to alleviate overuse of pitches and accommodate future growth.

The Eccleston & Windle Area is overplayed by one match equivalent per week due to additional use of the pitch at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground for rugby league. The pitch is actually used for rugby league more than it is for rugby union. Ruskin Park RFC train on an area beside the pitch and have just two teams playing matches. Improvements to pitch maintenance would help to reduce current overplay and a collaborative approach between Council and club could present opportunities for the Club to carry out additional maintenance given access to required equipment.

Earlestown & Newton Area is currently played to capacity. However, addition of a second team at Newton-le-Willows RFC would result in a shortfall of pitches in the future due to current pitch condition. The Club highlights that the rugby league pitch onsite would be free at peak time as the senior rugby league team folded last season, however, given the amount of rugby league use it currently receives and training from both sections this would not be advised.

Rugby union summary

- ◀ In total, seven senior rugby union pitches are located across four sites in St. Helens, all of which are available for community use. There are no junior or mini pitches.
- ◀ All pitches are located at sports club sites, with the exception of Ruskin Drive Sports Ground which is managed by the Council.
- ◀ The majority of pitches (four) in St. Helens are assessed as poor quality. Three pitches are assessed as standard quality and none as good.
- ◀ Newton-le-Willows RFC highlight the changing facilities at Newton Sports Club as poor quality and a key issue. Changing rooms at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground are also poor.
- ◀ Changing and ancillary facilities at Liverpool St. Helens are regarded as poor quality and the Club is seeking grant funding to make improvements.
- ◀ There are four clubs in St. Helens, fielding a total of 31 teams. There are nine senior mens teams, 12 mini teams and ten junior teams, of which two are girls' teams.
- ◀ There is no spare capacity at any of the four sites with rugby union pitches.
- ◀ Six of the seven pitches are overplayed by a total of 15.5 match sessions per week. Most of this overplay (10 sessions) is due to training on match pitches at Liverpool St. Helens RFC.
- ◀ Overplay is due to excessive training use of pitches (West Park RFC and Liverpool St. Helens RFC) or use by other users such as rugby league teams (Ruskin Drive Sports Ground).
- ◀ Overall there are insufficient pitches in St. Helens to service current and future demand, totalling a future requirement for a further 17.5 match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ The Council has notable plans for the development of the Ruskin Drive Sports Ground site. This would include a new World Rugby Regulation 22 AGP available for training and match play.
- ◀ A lack of floodlit pitch provision for rugby union (both grass and AGP) is a key contributing factor to overplay in the Borough. More accessible floodlit pitches would allow for greater distribution of training demand and would help reduce existing levels of overuse.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

PART 5: RUGBY LEAGUE

5.1: Introduction

The Rugby Football League (RFL) is the governing body for rugby league in Britain and Ireland. 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 structure 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).

All rugby league in St. Helens is now played in the summer season (from February to October). Senior play takes place in the North West Men's League and National Conference League, whilst all junior and primary level rugby takes place as part of the North West Counties junior and youth leagues.

There is one professional club in the Borough; Saints RLFC, playing at Langtree Park Stadium which compete in the RFL Super League. However, there is no wider community use of Stadium.

Team definitions

- ◀ Senior teams (19 – 45yrs)
- ◀ Youth and junior teams (12 – 18yrs)
- ◀ Primary teams (7 – 11yrs)

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

Consultation

In addition to consultation with the RFL, feedback from the 13 clubs playing in St. Helens was received through face to face consultation or via online survey. A club response rate of 62% was achieved (eight clubs) which equates to a team response rate of 93%. Those clubs which did not respond are generally one senior team clubs. Results are used to inform key issues within this section of the report.

5.2: Supply

There are 37 dedicated rugby league pitches in St. Helens (31 senior, two junior and four primary) across 24 sites. Four pitches are unavailable for community use, located at Carmel College (one pitch), Cowley Language College Playing Fields (one pitch) and two pitches at Haydock Leisure Centre. Cowley College and Carmel College are education sites which generally have no community use beyond school teams, though the latter allows some use of the pitch by West Park RUFC as an agreed key holder.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Table 5.1: Summary of grass rugby league pitches

Analysis area	No. of available pitches	No. of unavailable pitches
Billinge & Seneley Green	1	-
Earlestown & Newton	2	-
Eccleston & Windle	10	2
Haydock & Blackbrook	5	2
Moss Bank & Town Centre	2	-
Parr, Sutton & Bold	7	-
Rainford	1	-
Rainhill	-	-
West Park & Thatto Heath	6	-
ST. HELENS	33	4

Figure 5.1 Location of rugby league pitches

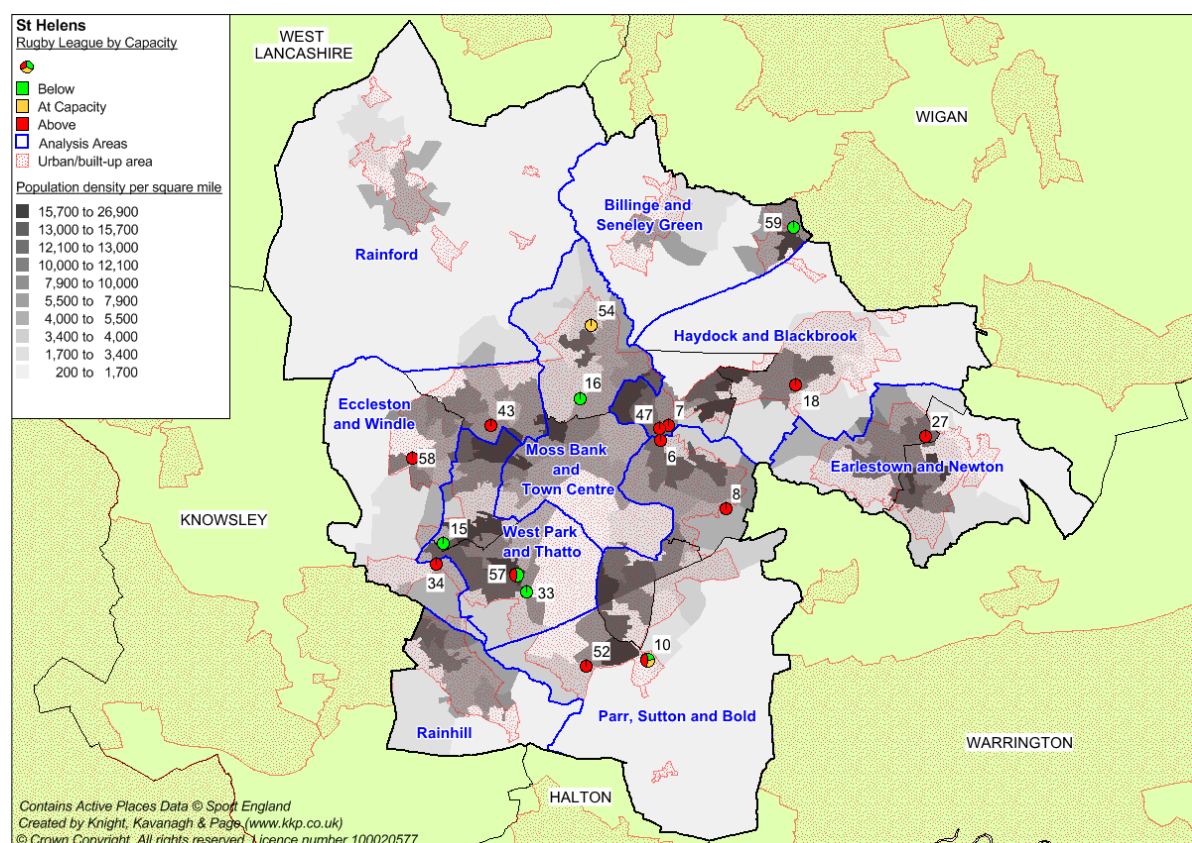


Table 5.2: Key to map

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	No. of senior pitches	No. of junior pitches	No. of primary pitches
6	Blackbrook ARLFC	Haydock and Blackbrook	Yes	1	-	-
7	Blackbrook McDonald Ave Playing Fields	Haydock and Blackbrook	Yes	1	-	-

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	No. of senior pitches	No. of junior pitches	No. of primary pitches
8	Bold Miners ARLFC	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Yes	1	-	-
9	Carmel College	Eccleston and Windle	Yes	1	-	-
10	Clock Face Recreation Club	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Yes	2	-	2
12	Cowley Language College Playing Fields	Eccleston and Windle	No	1	-	-
12	Cowley Language College Playing Fields	Eccleston and Windle	Yes-unused	2	-	-
13	De La Salle High School	Eccleston and Windle	Yes-unused	2	-	-
15	Grange Park KGV Playing Fields	West Park and Thatto Heath	Yes-unused	1	-	-
16	Haresfinch ARLFC	Moss Bank and Town Centre	Yes	1	-	-
18	Haydock KGV Playing Fields	Haydock and Blackbrook	Yes	1	-	-
19	Haydock High School	Haydock and Blackbrook	Yes-unused	2	-	-
20	Hope Academy	Earlestown and Newton	Yes	-	1	-
27	Newton Sports Club	Earlestown and Newton	Yes	1	-	-
33	Platts Field	West Park and Thatto Heath	Yes	1	-	-
34	Portico Vine ARLFC	Eccleston and Windle	Yes	3	-	-
38	Rainford High Technology College	Rainford	Yes	-	1	-
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Eccleston and Windle	Yes	1	-	-
47	St Augustine Of Canterbury Catholic High School	Haydock and Blackbrook	Yes	2	-	-
48	St Cuthberts Catholic Community High School	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Yes-unused	1	-	-
52	Sutton Manor KGV Playing Fields	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Yes	1	-	-
54	Windermere Avenue	Moss Bank and Town Centre	Yes-unused	1	-	-
57	Thatto Heath ARLFC	West Park and Thatto Heath	Yes	2	-	2
58	Eccleston Lions ARLFC	Eccleston and Windle	Yes	1	-	-
59	Birch Grove Playing Fields	Billinge and Seneley Green	Yes	1	-	-

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Ownership/management

Site ownership is varied between clubs with ownership or a lease of a sport club site and clubs which rent pitches from the Council. There are also a number of pitches at education sites, however, most are unavailable for community use or currently unused. Tenure of all sites currently in community use is secure.

Seventeen teams currently rent Council pitches for either matches and/or training. The Council owns six sites each with one rugby league pitch:

- ◀ Grange Park KGV Playing Fields
- ◀ Haydock KGV Playing Fields
- ◀ Platts Field
- ◀ Ruskin Drive Sports Ground
- ◀ Sutton Manor KGV Playing Fields
- ◀ Windermere Avenue

One site (Birch Grove Playing Fields) is owned and managed by Garswood Parish Council. Only one team from Garswood Stags ARLFC uses the pitch though the site also contains football pitches.

Clock Face ARLFC is a sports club site which is owned by the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) which previously provided sports and social facilities for those who worked in mining. The social club continues to operate with Clock Face ARLFC social club as trustees.

There are eight education sites which contain rugby league pitches, most of which are unused by community clubs. Some schools report facilities to be available but there is a lack of demand to let in the area, for example, Rainford High Technology College where there are no competitive teams. Others such as Haydock High School do not let the pitches because they are of poor quality and don't want to damage them further.

Pitch quality

Non-technical site assessments were carried out for all rugby league pitches in St. Helens 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:

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

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

The Table below summarises pitch quality following the site visits to all pitches (including those not available for community use).

Table 5.3: Summary of pitch quality

Analysis area	Quality of pitches		
	Good	Standard	Poor
Billinge & Seneley Green	-	-	1
Earlestown & Newton	-	2	
Eccleston & Windle	1	6	4
Haydock & Blackbrook	-	1	6
Moss Bank & Town Centre	-	1	1
Parr, Sutton & Bold	-	5	2
Rainford	-	1	-
Rainhill	-	-	-
West Park & Thatto Heath Heath	-	4	2
ST. HELENS	1	20	16

Just over half (54%) of rugby league pitches in St. Helens are rated as standard quality and a further 43% are rated as poor. The only good quality pitch is located at Cowley Language College which is exclusively used by Saints RLFC for daily training and has received significant investment into the quality of the playing surface.

Pitch quality is impacted largely by two factors; usage and maintenance. Several rugby league pitches in St. Helens are Council owned. The quality and regularity of maintenance can therefore vary depending on resources and budgets. As budgets continue to be reduced the quality of Council owned pitches are also likely to deteriorate further.

Ancillary facilities

Most clubs in St. Helens have access to changing room provision for home games; however, in general these are regarded as poor quality.

Newton Storm ARLFC reports that facilities at Newton Sports Club are poor and in need of investment. Shower provision is poor and juniors do not use the changing area which also serves the other sections of the sports club. The building is prone to vandalism and has been broken into several times.

Portico Vine ARLFC highlights changing room and clubhouse provision as a key issue and that it requires updating to cater for disability access and female changing in particular.

Haydock ARLFC highlights the changing facilities at Haydock KGV Playing Fields as particularly poor. There are seven accessible changing rooms to serve four pitches but this can become problematic and congested on Saturdays when both rugby league and football pitches are all in use. In addition it is difficult to accommodate the referee in the same building as stated in the league rules. The Club recently carried out some refurbishment of the building but it remains overall poor quality.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

The changing rooms at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground are also rated as poor quality by Pilkington Recs ARLFC. The building is owned by Ruskinvest and the Council has ongoing plans for development of the site. The communal shower room is of particularly poor quality and car parking is problematic due to the high numbers of fitness users and other sports teams which play at the site. The Club currently plays in the National Conference League (NCL) and the pitch does not have dug outs as required by the League.

In contrast Changing facilities at Blackbrook ARLFC and Thatto Heath ARLFC are rated as good. The former also has access to the external changing block at St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School to help accommodate demand at peak times.

Facility development

The Council has existing plans for the development of Ruskin Drive Sports Ground, currently home to Pilkington Recs ARLFC. Plans involve extending the footprint of the existing grass rugby league pitch and converting this to a 3G AGP with floodlights suitable for rugby league training and match play. Plans also include a new changing block available to all sports teams using the site.

5.3: Demand

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

Competitive play

There are a total of 84 competitive rugby league teams playing in St. Helens. There are also a further two teams fielded by Cowley Language College and Carmel College respectively. Three teams do not play regular competitive leagues fixtures; Thatto Heath Crusaders ARLFC girls' team play occasional friendly matches and Carr Mill Bears ARLFC has two primary teams which take part in training sessions.

Of the senior teams, there is one ladies team at Thatto Heath Crusaders ARLFC. Girls are able to play primary rugby in mixed teams up to the age of 12, after which they play in specific girls teams at junior level up to the age of 18. There is also one dedicated junior girls' team also at Thatto Heath Crusaders ARLFC.

Table 5.4: Summary of demand by analysis area

Analysis area	No. of competitive rugby league teams		
	Senior	Junior	Primary
Billinge & Seneley Green	1	-	-
Earlestown & Newton	-	2	6
Eccleston & Windle	6	8	7
Haydock & Blackbrook	3	8	12
Moss Bank & Town Centre	1	-	1
Parr, Sutton & Bold	2	4	6
Rainford	-	-	-
Rainhill	-	-	-
West Park & Thatto Heath Heath	4	6	7
ST. HELENS	17	28	39

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

The majority of demand is based around the Haydock & Blackbrook Area where there are 23 teams, whilst the Billinge & Seneley Green Area has the fewest number of teams with just one. Both the Rainhill and Rainford areas have no rugby league teams.

Haydock RLFC has one senior, three primary and two junior teams, all playing at Haydock KGV Playing Fields. The Club traditionally had more teams and there were previously two senior pitches at the site until demand began to decline. Due to coinciding with an increase in football demand, it was agreed that the second rugby league pitch could become a football pitch until such time that Haydock ARLFC established the number of teams again. Efforts have been made to build up the junior section which now reports demand for the second pitch to be reinstated. However, the growing popularity of football on the site is causing difficulties in accommodating this.

Clock Face ARLFC fields two senior, six primary and four junior teams with senior and some junior teams playing onsite, whilst other junior teams play at Sutton Manor KGV Playing Fields. A recent dispute between the adult and junior section regarding use of the senior pitches has resulted in mini teams leaving the site. These mini teams now play and train at Lindsay Street Playing Field where pitches are marked with cones. It is possible that junior and mini teams may leave the Club to form part of another club in the area.

Pilkington Recs ARLFC has two senior, five primary and four junior teams. Following the sale of its former site (City Road) the Club's home ground is now Ruskin Drive Sports Ground with developer contributions going towards its planned redevelopment. The Club is concerned with regard to the re-provision of facilities including the additional cost of pitch rental and the length of time that investment is taking.

Training

Winter rugby league training is accommodated across a combination of AGPs, indoor sports halls and gyms. It is a regular issue for clubs in terms of finding appropriate facilities. Little training takes place on competitive pitches in the winter as few clubs have floodlit facilities. However, throughout the summer season clubs tend to train on pitches. Many clubs attempt to train around the outside of the pitches to avoid damage, but in reality a significant proportion of training takes place on the competitive pitches.

There are no designated Rugby League Community Standard AGPs in St. Helens and consultation suggests that there is demand for an additional full size, floodlit pitch to accommodate both rugby league and union demand, especially for training. This is due to the excessive training that takes place on pitches. A number of teams report making use of small sized AGPs for training outside of the summer months due to a lack of other floodlit grass facilities. Thatto Heath ARLFC makes use of an indoor training barn onsite, Haydock ARLFC previously had some use of the AGP at Haydock KGV Playing Fields and Blackbrook ARLFC has use of the AGP at St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School. However, these AGPs are sand based, not of adequate size and would not be recommended for contact training.

Pilkington Recs ARLFC highlights access to training facilities at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground as a key issue. The Club previously trained twice a week for around 21 total hours but upon moving to the site has found it difficult to access enough time on the AGP due to long standing historic block bookings by football clubs.

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Clubs in St. Helens are generally of the mind-set that training on the match pitch is a low cost option and is easily accessible because of the increased daylight hours in summer. In reality, this increased usage impacts on pitch quality when pitches become dry and hard in some cases. Any remedial work carried out during the winter may not be effective in repairing the damage as weather is often poor, limiting the amount of maintenance work that can be properly carried out.

Casual use

As the majority of rugby league is played on Council owned pitches these sites tend to be public open spaces and are used for recreational play and dog walking etc. This additional wear and damage is an issue for clubs as it decreases the quality of the pitches and in turn the carrying capacity for matches and training. This is a noted problem at the following sites:

- ◀ Haydock KGV Playing Fields
- ◀ St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School
- ◀ Thatto Heath ARLFC (Pitch Two & primary pitches)

Unmet demand

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to pitches. It is usually expressed, for example, when a team is already training but is unable to access a match pitch, or when a league has a waiting list due to a lack of pitch provision, which in turn is hindering the growth of the League. There are no actual reports of unmet demand in St. Helens, however, twelve pitches are overplayed mainly due to poor quality (overplay is explored later in the section).

Displaced/exported demand

No teams identify travel outside of the local authority area to access match pitches or training facilities. The nature of the transition to summer season rugby has meant that the majority of clubs make use of their existing home pitches or other grass areas to train as the weather and visibility allows.

Future demand

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts. Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth.

Table 5.5: Team generation rates

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group (2032)	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Mens (19-45)	29,094	17	1:1,711	28,991	16.9	0
Senior Women (19-45)	29,793	1	1:29,793	28,720	1.0	0.0
Junior Boys (12-18)	7,480	28	1:267	7,819	29.3	1.3
Junior Girls (12-18)	6,971	1	1:6,971	7,451	1.1	0.1
Primary rugby mixed (7-11)	9,411	41	1:230	10,614	46.2	5.2

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Team generation rates based on future population projections forecast the creation of at least one new boys' junior team and five new mini teams. Increase in junior girls is not enough to culminate in the creation of a new team and it is likely that these participants will be assimilated into existing squad sizes. Predictions anticipate no increase at the senior age group.

Two clubs intend to increase the number of teams for next season. Haydock ARLFC plans to add one mini team at U7s for next season according to its plan for membership growth. The Club has received enquiries in recent years about the possibility of establishing a girls' team and is keen to do so but is currently unable to due to the changing facilities at Haydock KGV Playing Fields being unsuitable. Similarly, Newton Storm ARLFC plans to add another mini team at U7s age.

5.4: Capacity analysis

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

As a guide, The RFL has set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its current quality (pitch capacity). Taking into consideration the guidelines on capacity the following was concluded in St. Helens:

Pitch quality	Matches per week
Good	3
Standard	2
Poor	1

Table 5.6 overleaf applies the above pitch ratings against the actual level of weekly play recorded to determine a capacity rating as follows:

Potential capacity	Play is below the level the site could sustain
At capacity	Play matches the level the site can sustain
Overused	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

The next step is to ascertain whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be deemed 'actual capacity'. There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis. Where actual spare capacity exists it is highlighted in the comments column in Table 5.7.

ST. HELENS COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

The peak period

In order to fully establish actual spare capacity, the peak period needs to be established. For senior rugby league matches the peak period is considered to be Saturday afternoon. However, demand for senior rugby league pitches is actually highest on Sunday mornings, due to the large number of junior (U13-U18s) and mini teams playing on senior pitches at this time.

Rugby league within schools is considered to be a winter sport and as such all school fixtures take place throughout the winter season. School pitches are also used regularly to accommodate curriculum use and school training sessions. In order to reflect this, an additional three match equivalent sessions of play has been added per pitch at school sites where applicable (shown in bold).

**ST. HELENS COUNCIL
PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT**

Table 5.6: Rugby league capacity table (community use pitches)

Site ID	Site name	Ownership/management	Security of tenure	Analysis area	Ancillary facility rating	Pitch type ²⁶	Floodlit	Quality rating ²⁷	No. of pitches	Current play (match equivalent sessions per week) ²⁸	Site capacity (match sessions per week) ²⁹	Capacity rating (match equivalent sessions per week)	Comments
6	Blackbrook ARLFC	Sports Club	Secured	Haydock and Blackbrook	Poor	Senior	Yes	Standard	1	3	2	1	Pitch has got slightly worse due to overuse and limited maintenance. Undulating but drainage is good. Used for primary, mini and senior matches.
7	Blackbrook Mcdonald Ave Playing Fields	Sports Club	Secured	Haydock and Blackbrook	-	Senior	No	Poor	1	2	1	1	Dips in one corner and gathers water. Limited maintenance due to cost. Used for mini and junior matches.
8	Bold Miners ARLFC	Sports club	Secured	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Poor	Senior	No	Poor	1	Unused	1	1	Bold Miners ARLFC recently folded in February 2015 and as such the poor quality pitch onsite now lies unused
10	Clock Face Recreation Club	CISWO/Sports Club	Secured	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Good	Primary	No	Standard	2	5	4	1	Mini teams no longer playing onsite, primary pitches used as training areas every weeknight.
10	Clock Face Recreation Club	CISWO/Sports Club	Secured	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Good	Senior	No	Standard	1	1	2	1	Pitch one only used for senior team fixtures in order to maintain the quality. Had recent maintenance work carried out.
10	Clock Face Recreation Club	CISWO/Sports Club	Secured	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Good	Senior	No	Standard	1	1	2	-	Pitch two is over marked for football and is to be used by Matthiola FC throughout the winter. All year round use therefore no further use to be considered. Some junior rugby league match use.
15	Grange Park KGV Playing Fields	Local Authority	Secured	West Park and Thatto Heath	Standard	Senior	No	Poor	1	Unused	1	1	Poor quality pitch, currently unused and unmarked.
16	Haresfinch ARLFC	Sports Club	Secured	Moss Bank and Town Centre	Standard	Senior	Yes	Standard	1	0.75	2	1.25	One senior pitch used for one senior matches and one mini team.
18	Haydock KGV Playing Fields	Local Authority	Secured	Haydock and Blackbrook	Poor	Senior	No	Standard	1	2.25	2	0.25	Pitches used heavily for senior and junior matches. Public access with lots of littering and dog fouling.

²⁶ As a guide, all rugby league pitches are classified as being senior sized, with cones used to mark pitches for primary teams. However, there may be instances (particularly on school sites and large club sites) where designated junior or primary pitches are provided. Pitch size should be looked at against the RFL pitch size dimensions, please see the RFL Pitch Size Guidance available on the Facilities Trust website at www.rflfacilitiestrust.co.uk

²⁷ Based on non-technical assessment

²⁸ Current play takes into account both winter and summer play and training and where known casual use. An adjustment of +3 match sessions per pitch has been applied to school sites to account for weekday play

²⁹ RFL standards for number of matches the pitch can accommodate per week depending on pitch type/size and quality rating (see section 5.4)

**ST. HELENS COUNCIL
PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT**

Site ID	Site name	Ownership/management	Security of tenure	Analysis area	Ancillary facility rating	Pitch type ²⁶	Floodlit	Quality rating ²⁷	No. of pitches	Current play ²⁸ (match equivalent sessions per week)	Site capacity (match sessions per week) ²⁹	Capacity rating (match equivalent sessions per week)	Comments
27	Newton Sports Club	Sports Club	Secured	Earlestown and Newton	Poor	Senior	Yes	Standard	1	7	2	5	Used heavily for junior matches and training for all teams, including the rugby union team which trains one night a week.
33	Platts Field	Local Authority	Secured	West Park and Thatto Heath	-	Senior	No	Standard	1	1	2	1	Pitch used for matches by St. Helens Wild Boars and as an alternative venue by Thatto Heath Crusaders ARLFC junior teams, drains fairly well
34	Portico Vine ARLFC	Sports Club	Secured	Eccleston and Windle	Poor	Senior	No	Poor	3	8	3	5	Pitches used for training by senior, junior and mini teams and are subject to dog fouling.
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Local Authority	Secured	Eccleston and Windle	Poor	Senior	No	Standard	1	3.75	2	1.75	Used heavily for matches and training by Pilkington Recs ARLFC senior, junior and mini teams.
47	St Augustine Of Canterbury Catholic High School	School	Secured	Haydock and Blackbrook	Standard	Senior	No	Poor	2	0.5 + 3	2	1.5	Pitch prone to unofficial use and dog walking. 0.5 match equivalents added to reflect this.
52	Sutton Manor KGV Playing Fields	Local Authority	Secured	Parr, Sutton and Bold	Poor	Senior	No	Poor	1	3	1	2	Poor quality pitch used by Clock Face ARLFC junior teams for training and matches.
54	Windermere Avenue	Local Authority	Secured	Moss Bank and Town Centre	-	Senior	No	Poor	1	1	1	-	Used by Carr Mill Bears ARLFC which does not play league matches but trains weekly. Subject to unofficial use.
57	Thatto Heath ARLFC	Sports Club	Secured	West Park and Thatto Heath	Good	Primary	No	Standard	2	3.5	4	0.5	Adjacent to the main pitch, part of an open access area and subject to dog fouling. Mainly used for mini matches and training.
57	Thatto Heath ARLFC	Sports Club	Secured	West Park and Thatto Heath	Good	Senior	No	Standard	1	9.5	2	7.5	Used for matches as well as all summer training by senior and junior teams.
57	Thatto Heath ARLFC	Sports Club	Secured	West Park and Thatto Heath	Good	Senior	No	Poor	1	3	1	2	Poor quality pitch which must remain a public right of way, therefore prone to regular unofficial by local children and dog walkers. 0.5 match equivalents added to reflect this. Mainly used for junior matches.
58	Eccleston Lions ARLFC	Sports Club	Secured	Eccleston and Windle	-	Senior	No	Poor	1	2.5	1	1.5	Used by one senior team for matches and training twice each week.

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PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT**

Site ID	Site name	Ownership/management	Security of tenure	Analysis area	Ancillary facility rating	Pitch type ²⁶	Floodlit	Quality rating ²⁷	No. of pitches	Current play ²⁸ (match equivalent sessions per week)	Site capacity (match sessions per week) ²⁹	Capacity rating (match equivalent sessions per week)	Comments
59	Birch Grove Playing Fields	Garswood Parish Council	Secured	Billinge and Seneley Green	Standard	Senior	No	Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	Only used every other week by Garswood Stags ARLFC, previously used for football.

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5.5: Supply and demand analysis

Spare capacity

A number of sites are shown to have potential spare capacity but not all is actual spare capacity, whereby pitch capacity is present and pitches are available at peak time. Actual spare capacity has been combined by area and is summarised below:

Table 5.7: Actual spare capacity summary

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Match equivalent sessions available in senior peak period ³⁰	Match equivalent sessions available in junior/primary peak period ³¹
8	Bold Miners ARLFC	Parr, Sutton and Bold	1	1
15	Grange Park KGV Playing Fields	West Park and Thatto Heath	1	1
16	Haresfinch ARLFC	Moss Bank and Town Centre	0.5	0.75
33	Platts Field	West Park and Thatto Heath	0.5	0.5
57	Thatto Heath ARLFC	West Park and Thatto Heath	-	0.5 (primary)
59	Birch Grove Playing Fields	Billinge and Seneley Green	0.5	0.5
ST. HELENS			3.5	3.75 (+ 0.5 primary)

The table shows that there is some actual spare capacity available for all three pitch types. Pitches with the most available match sessions at peak time are located mainly within the West Park & Thatto Heath Heath area, largely due to the pitch at Grange Park KGV Playing Fields which is currently unused. Of the seven sites with available capacity, three are managed by the local authority.

Platts Field has spare capacity available every other week as it used by St. Helens Wild Boars on Saturday afternoons and Thatto Heath Crusaders ARLFC as an overspill venue when required.

Grange Park KGV Playing Fields currently shows no signs of use and no teams report using the site. The pitch is poor quality and therefore can only take one match per week yet is available at both senior and junior peak time.

Birch Grove Playing Fields has one senior pitch which is currently only used by Garswood Stags ARLFC on Saturday afternoons. Therefore, the pitch has available capacity for a match every other week at either senior or junior peak time.

Haresfinch ARLFC fields just one senior and one primary team. The pitch subsequently has spare capacity for one match every fortnight at senior peak time or 0.75 match sessions at junior peak time, which represents one junior and one mini match or three mini matches.

³⁰ Saturday afternoon

³¹ Sunday morning

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Bold ARLFC recently folded in February 2015 and therefore no longer use the site. Subsequently, the pitch has capacity for one match session per week which is available at both senior and junior peak times.

Overplay

Eleven sites are overplayed by a total of 29.5 match equivalent sessions per week. This is predominantly a result of poor quality pitches. Of particular concern is the main pitch at Thatto Heath Crusaders ARLFC which is overplayed by 7.5 match equivalents per week due to heavy usage for training and matches at senior and junior age groups.

Newton Sports Club and Portico Vine ARLFC are also notably overplayed by five match equivalent sessions each. This is again due to a large number of teams training on match pitches which are assessed as poor or standard quality because the change to summer season rugby and prolonged daylight hours allows.

School sites are generally used heavily throughout the course of the school week for curriculum and after school fixtures. Further community use of poor quality school pitches which often receive limited maintenance results in overplay or exacerbate existing levels of overuse.

Overplay can only be alleviated by improving pitch quality or providing more pitches or areas to be used for training; there is not enough spare capacity expressed in the areas of overplay to meet this level of demand.

5.6: Conclusions

Having considered supply and demand scenarios above, the tables below identify the overall spare capacity in each of the analysis areas for the different pitch types, based on match equivalent sessions.

Table 5.8: Spare capacity of match equivalent sessions per week on senior pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions)	Demand (match equivalent sessions)		
		Overplay	Future demand	Total demand
Billinge & Seneley Green	0.5	-	-	0.5
Earlestown & Newton	-	5	-	5
Eccleston & Windle	-	8.25	-	8.25
Haydock & Blackbrook	-	3.75	-	3.75
Moss Bank & Town Centre	0.5	-	-	0.5
Parr, Sutton & Bold	1	2	-	1
Rainford	-	-	-	-
Rainhill	-	-	-	-
West Park & Thatto Heath	1.5	9.5	-	8
ST. HELENS	3.5	28.5	0.5	25.5

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The table shows that overall in St. Helens there is currently a deficit of 28.5 match equivalent sessions on senior pitches. The highest level of overplay comes from the West Park & Thatto Heath Area, though the Eccleston & Windle Area also exhibits high levels. There is no anticipated increase in senior demand, though an additional junior boys team would most likely play on a senior pitch and would subsequently require a further 0.5 match sessions. Overall there is currently not enough match equivalent sessions in St. Helens to accommodate current or future demand at either senior or junior peak time.

It is important to note that much of the overuse is caused by junior teams playing on senior pitches in areas where there are large clubs with many junior and primary teams, such as West Park & Thatto Heath Heath. A large majority of the overuse is attributed to training sessions taking place on match pitches. Furthermore, most are assessed as poor quality which reduces the carrying capacity and ability to accommodate matches.

At present there are only 0.5 match sessions available on primary pitches in the Borough. Future demand projections and club feedback anticipates the creation of seven new primary teams. There are currently insufficient match sessions to cater for this future demand although the nature of primary play in St. Helens suggests that these teams may play on half of senior pitches or on unmarked grass areas marked out with cones.

Rugby league summary

- ◀ There are 37 dedicated rugby league pitches in St. Helens (31 senior, two junior and four primary) across 24 sites. All but four pitches are available for community use.
- ◀ Pitches are generally assessed as standard (54%) or poor (43%) quality. Only one pitch at Cowley Language College Playing Fields is assessed as good.
- ◀ There are 17 teams which rent the pitches from St. Helens Council, though others lease the land on which sports club sites are situated. All pitches available for community use are in secured use.
- ◀ Poor pitch quality is partly impacted by overuse from training on match pitches as the transition to the summer season allows.
- ◀ There are a total of 84 rugby league teams competing in St. Helens, made up of 17 senior, 28 junior (U13-U18) and 39 primary (U7-U12) teams. There one ladies team and one girls team, both at Thatto Heath Crusaders ARLFC.
- ◀ There is a need for 25.5 match equivalent sessions on senior pitches in St. Helens in order to accommodate overplay and future demand. The main issue is that almost half of rugby league pitches are poor quality, limiting the recommended capacity.
- ◀ There are enough primary pitches to accommodate current demand but a requirement for an additional 3.5 match sessions to cater for anticipated future demand.
- ◀ Overplay can only be dealt with by improving pitch quality or providing access to more training pitches or areas, ideally with floodlights. There is not enough spare capacity expressed in the respective areas to meet this level of demand currently or in the future.
- ◀ There are no designated Rugby League Community Standard compliant AGPs in St. Helens; there is demand for at least one full size, floodlit pitch to accommodate both rugby league (and union), especially for training.
- ◀ Council plans for the development of Ruskin Drive Sports Ground include a new AGP suitable for rugby league training and match play.
- ◀ Clubs generally overuse match pitches and have the attitude that they can be used for training because summer season daylight hours allow. There is also a general reluctance to access AGPs from most clubs which tend to view them as unaffordable.

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PART 6: HOCKEY

6.1: Introduction

Hockey in England is governed by England Hockey (EH). Competitive league hockey matches can only be played on sand filled/based, sand dressed or water based pitches. Although 40mm 3G can be considered suitable for some recreational and school use this surface is not suitable for club matches.

It is considered that a hockey pitch can accommodate a maximum of four matches on the peak day (Saturdays) provided that the pitch has floodlighting.

Club consultation

Prescot HC is the only community hockey club within St. Helens. An online survey was sent to the Club, via which it registered information on demand and views on associated facility issues.

6.2: Supply

There are five full size artificial grass pitches (AGPs) in St. Helens suitable for competitive hockey, of which three are sand filled and two are sand dressed. There are no water based pitches. See AGP Part 6 for full details.

Table 6.1: Summary of hockey suitable AGPs

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Surface type
13	De La Salle High School	Eccleston and Windle	Sand filled
38	Rainford High Technology College	Rainford	Sand dressed
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Eccleston and Windle	Sand filled
44	Selwyn Jones Sports Centre	Earlestown and Newton	Sand dressed
51	Sutton Leisure Centre	West Park and Thatto Heath	Sand filled

Provision for hockey is distributed between four analysis areas; the only area with more than one suitable pitch is the Eccleston and Windle. Only one pitch is currently used for hockey, located at Sutton Leisure Centre.

Quality

Of the five sand based AGPs in St. Helens, all but one is assessed as standard quality and no pitches are rated as poor. One pitch at Selwyn Jones Sports Centre is rated as good quality and has recently been resurfaced.

Prescot HC has been playing on the pitch at Sutton Leisure Centre for the past two seasons and is of the opinion that it is of good quality and well maintained. The pitch is over ten years old and is therefore considered due for replacement, though the surface quality indicates it may previously have been somewhat underused. The pitch does retain water in cases of heavy rainfall, possibly due to patches which may have become sunken or drain poorly below the surface.

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Availability and usage

All hockey suitable AGPs in St. Helens are available for community use at some level but only the pitch at Sutton Leisure Centre is currently used for club hockey.

Table 6.2: Summary of hockey usage AGP

Site ID	Site name	Surface type	Floodlit?	Quality ³²	Total number of hours available for community use during peak period	Total number of hours used	Comments
13	De La Salle High School	Sand filled	No	Standard	Monday-Friday : 18hrs (summer only – no floodlighting) Weekend : 12hrs Total: 30hrs	10 hrs (in winter)	Not currently used for club hockey. Having no floodlighting limits community use during winter. The pitch is available at weekends between 9am and 3pm but the lack of floodlighting limits use to two or three hockey games per day.
38	Rainford High Technology College	Sand dressed	Yes	Standard	Monday-Thursday: 12hrs Friday & Weekend: Unavailable Total: 12hrs	12 hrs	Not currently used for club hockey. Unavailable to hire on Fridays or weekends as stipulated in the school PFI contract but is used to capacity midweek by several football and rugby teams for training.
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Sand filled	Yes	Standard	Monday-Friday : 18hrs Weekend : 16hrs Total: 34hrs	18 hrs	Spare capacity for hockey matches, however, there is little capacity to accommodate midweek training due to competition with football demand.
44	Selwyn Jones Sports Centre	Sand dressed	Yes	Good	Monday-Friday : 18hrs Weekend : 16hrs Total: 34hrs	18hrs	Spare capacity for hockey matches, however, there is little capacity to accommodate midweek training due to competition with football demand.

³² Quality is assessed via a combination of non technical assessments carried out by KKP but also take account of user views and opinions.

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Site ID	Site name	Surface type	Floodlit?	Quality ³²	Total number of hours available for community use during peak period	Total number of hours used	Comments
51	Sutton Leisure Centre	Sand filled	Yes	Standard	Monday-Friday : 18hrs Weekend : 16hrs Total: 34hrs	24 hrs	Prescot HC reports no current capacity issues for match play but identifies that planned growth could present a capacity issue on Saturday. Although the Club's preference is a second pitch at Sutton Leisure Centre. Existing spare slots are at 5-6pm and 9-10pm which is consider undesirable by the Club.

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6.3: Demand

Prescott HC is the only community hockey club in St. Helens, providing two senior men's and two senior ladies teams playing regular league fixtures. It also fields two vets and two mixed teams playing infrequent matches in cup competitions, as well as two junior teams.

The Club was traditionally based in Knowsley having previously played at Prescott Leisure Centre for over 50 years, until proposed developments to the site caused the Club to look elsewhere and choose to play within St. Helens where the support of the Council has helped it to grow. The Club now considers the Sutton area to be its base and therefore caters for local demand within the St. Helens area.

Over the past two years Prescott HC has increased membership by four teams through the establishment of vets and junior sections. Plans are for further growth in membership with the addition of two more senior teams to total three teams in both men's and ladies sections. Intentions are also to add a further three junior teams; one boys and two girls, which across all ages groups represents five new teams for the 2015/16 season. Much work has been done in local schools to increase junior membership and the Club has delivered coaching sessions to young people through Sportivate in 2014 with intentions to continue in 2015.

The key issue at present is the rate at which the Club is growing and securing available pitch time at Sutton Leisure Centre (this is the Club's preferred homeground). The Club trains midweek and therefore has to compete for capacity with football training demand. Requirements for additional training sessions could also be problematic and the Club states that it may have to consider use of an alternative pitch.

Prescott HC also highlights shower facilities as an issue at Sutton Leisure Centre. The Club uses the external changing block which is of good quality but reports that the electronic entry system is broken which proves difficult and that the showers do not provide hot water.

6.4: Supply and demand analysis

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) – National Facilities Audit Dataset (January 2014)

The FPM is a model used as a starting point to help assess the strategic provision of sports facilities, including AGPs. The model is prescriptive and not predictive in that it does not provide precise estimates of the use of proposed facilities. Rather it prescribes an appropriate level of provision for any defined area in relation to demand and which reflects national expectations and policies. It is not a substitute for considering local club needs and should be used alongside any local assessment.

The bullet points below outline the conclusions drawn from the Sport England FPM run in St. Helens. The run shows that satisfied demand is relatively high but that a high proportion is done so by facilities outside of the Borough. St. Helens is supplied to capacity with full size AGPs, with demand balancing supply.

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The bullet points below are hockey specific statements from the FPM model:

- ◀ The demand and supply for AGPs is finely balanced.
- ◀ There are four hockey suitable AGPs in St. Helens, though this equates to 1.1 pitches available at hockey peak time.
- ◀ Outputs do not indicate that unmet demand is of a level that would justify additional AGP provision.
- ◀ Relatively high satisfied demand (83%) with a high proportion of demand (70%) exported to facilities outside of the Borough.
- ◀ High unmet demand due to lack of capacity in the existing AGP stock, contributing 80% of combined unmet demand.
- ◀ Geographically, the small amount of unmet demand is spread across all the built up areas in St. Helens and there are no 'hot spots' or concentrations of unmet demand.
- ◀ Used capacity is high (100%) although 74% of the used capacity is derived from imported demand.
- ◀ Around a quarter (26%) of demand is retained which suggests that the location of sand based AGPs in St. Helens does not relate well to the location of demand from St. Helens residents.
- ◀ Aggregated unmet demand map – high across the entire Borough, but the highest levels are located around Haydock and Newton Le Willows (which will reflect their position close to motorway junctions). Unmet demand from St. Helens residents here equates to only 0.2 of a pitch, thus most of the aggregated demand in this area must relate to non St. Helens residents.

Please note that the FPM key findings relate to the dataset as of January 2014, however; an additional full size 3G AGP has now been installed at Rainhill High Technology College. Given the provision of an additional football suitable surface, it may be that some demand for football training on sand based AGPs has since reduced in favour of 3G and that some capacity may have become available.

6.5 Conclusions

St. Helens is adequately provided for with regards to AGPs suitable for hockey matches at present. However, future demand from Prescott HC (which could result in five new teams) would require access to a further pitch for Saturday matches. This may be a possibility to explore at De La Salle School, albeit the Club would prefer a second pitch at Sutton Leisure Centre. As detailed earlier there is also spare capacity for hockey match play at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground and Selwyn Jones Sports Centre, however, this is not ideal for Prescott HC.

New developments

Rainford High Technology College is a PFI funded school and as part of the contract it is agreed that the AGP is to be resurfaced in circa five years. The school has discussed with Rainford Rangers FC about its possible conversion to a 3G surface.

St. Helens Council currently has ongoing development plans for the site at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground. This includes the demolition of the existing sand filled pitch to be replaced by a new full size 3G pitch. However, the use and therefore impact of this AGP is not clear at this time and will need to be reviewed in the future when known.

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If both of these developments were to go ahead it would not impact greatly on availability of AGPs for hockey matches at weekends. Considering future demand reported by the Club, there would be the need for approximately five slots each weekend, of which Sutton Leisure Centre is considered able to accommodate eight over Saturday and Sunday. However, it could put increasing pressure on the ability to access capacity for training throughout the week, as competition with football is expected to remain despite less accessible sand based pitches. Ruskin Drive is approximately three miles away from Sutton Leisure Centre and may attract some football demand, therefore creating some spare capacity at Sutton Leisure Centre but this is difficult to anticipate for.

Hockey summary

- ◀ There are five AGPs suitable for competitive hockey within St. Helens, of which there are three sand filled and two sand dressed surfaces. Only Sutton Leisure Centre is currently accommodating hockey use.
- ◀ Selwyn Jones Sport Centre is rated as good quality and has recently been resurfaced. The remaining four AGPs are assessed as standard quality.
- ◀ Sutton Leisure Centre AGP is over ten years old and is assessed as standard quality. It would normally be considered for resurfacing but Prescott HC reports it to be well maintained.
- ◀ Prescott HC is the only community hockey club in St. Helens, providing two senior men's and two senior ladies teams playing regular league fixtures. It also fields two vets and two mixed teams playing infrequent matches in cup competitions, as well as two junior teams. Membership is growing and plans are to add an additional two senior and three junior teams for the coming season.
- ◀ The Club believes that it may struggle for available pitch capacity at Sutton Leisure Centre with continued growth. It may consider the use of additional pitches if required.
- ◀ Rainford High Technology College AGP is unavailable at peak hockey times for competitive use (school policy) and the school is in discussion with Rainford Rangers FC about its possible conversion to a 3G surface in the future (circa five years when the carpet needs resurfacing).
- ◀ De La Salle High School is available at weekends between 9am and 3pm but a lack of floodlighting limits use to two or three hockey games per day in winter.
- ◀ Selwyn Jones Sport Centre is available for hockey matches at weekends but is played to capacity midweek by football usage/training.
- ◀ Plans are in place for Ruskin Drive AGP to be resurfaced from sand to 3G.
- ◀ Generally there is very limited capacity for hockey training in the evenings due to football bookings.
- ◀ St. Helens is adequately provided for with regards to AGPs suitable for hockey matches at present. However, future demand from Prescott HC (which could result in five new teams) would require access to a further pitch for Saturday matches. There is spare capacity for hockey match play at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground and Selwyn Jones Sports Centre, however, this is not ideal for Prescott HC.

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PART 7: ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES (AGPS)

7.1 Introduction

There are several surface types that fall into the category of artificial grass pitch (AGP). The three main groups are rubber crumb (third generation turf 3G), sand (filled or dressed) and water based.

Competitive football can take place on 3G surfaces that have been FA or FIFA certified and a growing number of 3G pitches are now used for competitive match play at mini soccer and youth level. Only competition up to (but not including) regional standard can take place on a 40mm pile. Football training can take place on sand and water based surfaces but is not the preferred option.

Competitive league hockey matches can only be played on sand based, sand dressed or water based artificial grass pitches (AGPs). Although competitive play cannot take place on third generation turf pitches (3G), 40mm pitches may be suitable, in some instances, for school training and are preferred to poor grass or tarmac surfaces. For adults, a full size pitch for competitive matches must measure 100x60 yards.

World Rugby produced the 'Performance Specification for Artificial Grass Pitches for Rugby', more commonly known as 'Regulation 22' that provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union (this is also adopted by rugby league). The artificial surface standards identified in Regulation 22 allows matches to be played on surfaces that meet the standard. Full contact activity, including tackling, rucking, mauling and lineouts can take place.

Table 7.1: AGP type and sport suitability

Surface	Category	Competitive use	Comments
Rubber crumb	Long Pile 3G (60mm with shock pad)	Football, rugby league, rugby union	Rugby surface – must comply with World Rugby Type 22 (rugby union) and Community Standard (rugby league), requires a minimum of 60mm.
Rubber crumb	Long Pile 3G (55-60mm)	Football	Preferred football surface.
Rubber crumb	Short Pile 3G (40mm)	Football	Acceptable surface for some competitive football.
Sand	Sand Filled	Hockey	Competitive hockey and football training.
Sand	Sand Dressed	Hockey	Preferred hockey surface and suitable for football training
Water	Water based	Hockey	Preferred hockey surface and suitable for football training if irrigated.

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7.2 Current provision

The table below provides a list of the current supply of AGPs identified in St. Helens. There are seven full size AGPs in St. Helens, all of which have floodlights with the exception of De La Salle School.

Table 7.2: AGPs in St. Helens

ID	Site name	Ownership/management	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Pitch type
11	Cowley International College	School	Eccleston and Windle	1	Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)
13	De La Salle High School	School	Eccleston and Windle	1	Sand filled
38	Rainford High Technology College	School	Rainford	1	Sand dressed
41	Rainhill High School Media Arts College	School	Rainhill	1	Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Council	Eccleston and Windle	1	Sand filled
44	Selwyn Jones Sports Centre	Council	Earlestown and Newton	1	Sand Dressed
51	Sutton Leisure Centre	Council	West Park and Thatto Heath	1	Sand filled

The table below identifies the analysis areas that full size AGPs are located in:

Table 7.3: AGPs by analysis area

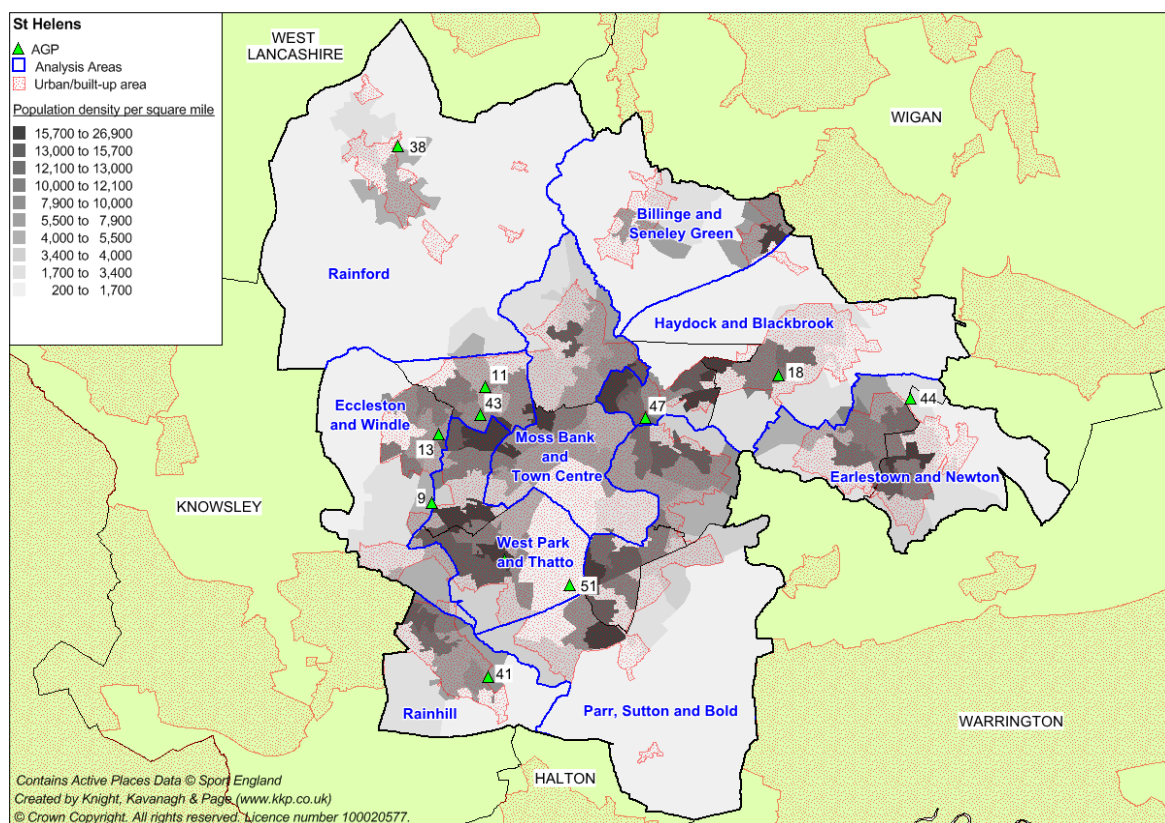
Analysis area	Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)	Sand Dressed	Sand Filled
Billinge & Seneley Green	-	-	-
Earlestown & Newton	-	1	-
Eccleston & Windle	1	-	2
Haydock & Blackbrook	-	-	-
Moss Bank & Town Centre	-	-	-
Parr, Sutton & Bold	-	-	-
Rainford	-	1	-
Rainhill	1	-	-
West Park & Thatto Heath	-	-	1
ST. HELENS	2	2	3

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The most common type of surface is sand filled. There are just two 3G pitches in St. Helens and an additional two sand dressed pitches. There is one FA certified 3G pitch at Rainhill High School Media Arts College suitable for competitive football match play. Much of the full size AGP provision is focused in the Eccleston & Windle Area where three of the seven pitches are situated. Four analysis areas do not have a full size AGP, they are:

- ◀ Billinge & Seneley Green
- ◀ Haydock & Blackbrook
- ◀ Moss Bank & Town Centre
- ◀ Parr, Sutton & Bold

Figure 7.4: Location of current full size AGPs in St. Helens



7.3 Availability

The following table summarises the availability of full size AGPs for community use in St. Helens. In addition, it records the availability of provision within the peak period. Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) applies an overall peak period for AGPs of 34 hours a week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00).

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Tenure of a site is considered secure if it is likely to be retained and available for community use for the following three years. Tenure may be described as unsecure where there is some uncertainty regarding the future of the site, potential development, or a change in policy or management such as the transfer of schools to academy status.

Table 7.4: AGP availability define security of tenure

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Availability for community use?	Security of tenure?	Availability for community use in the peak period
11	Cowley International College	Eccleston and Windle	1	Yes	Secured	Monday-Friday : 18hrs Weekend : 16hrs Total: 34hrs
13	De La Salle High School	Eccleston and Windle	1	Yes	Secured	Monday-Friday : 18hrs (summer only – no floodlighting) Weekend : 12hrs Total: 30hrs
38	Rainford High Technology College	Rainford	1	Yes	Secured	Monday-Thursday: 12hrs Friday & Weekend: Unavailable Total: 12hrs
41	Rainhill High School Media Arts College	Rainhill	1	Yes	Secured	Monday-Friday : 18hrs Weekend : 16hrs Total: 34hrs
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Eccleston and Windle	1	Yes	Secured	Monday-Friday : 18hrs Weekend : 16hrs Total: 34hrs
44	Selwyn Jones Sports Centre	Earlestown and Newton	1	Yes	Secured	Monday-Friday : 18hrs Weekend : 16hrs Total: 34hrs
51	Sutton Leisure Centre	West Park and Thatto Heath	1	Yes	Secured	Monday-Friday : 18hrs Weekend : 16hrs Total: 34hrs

In the main, availability of provision in the peak period is generally good. Where there is provision on education sites, this is generally made available after school and at weekends.

There are only two 3G pitches in St. Helens, both located at school sites and with some capacity limitations. Saints RLFC are a stakeholder in the 3G pitch at Cowley International College and are based on the site, meaning there is often limited access for both school and clubs as the professional senior side and respective academy sides make daily use of the pitch for training.

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Similarly, the 3G pitch at Rainhill High School Media Arts College was part funded by Liverpool FC, which has a partnership with the school and academy players are taught there. The Club has regular use of the pitch midweek for academy training which reduces the number of slots available to community clubs.

A number of clubs access AGPs in neighbouring authorities, particularly 3G pitches. For example, Rainford Rangers FC travel into West Lancashire to access the 3G pitch at Sporting Edge for training along with small sided 3G cages for mini fixtures.

Pricing and cost

All of the AGPs in St. Helens are available for community use, yet it should be acknowledged that cost of booking may influence usage of certain sites and possibly travel outside of the local community to access a site elsewhere in the local authority. For example, football clubs with many junior teams can often find it hard to identify capacity and pay for training slots for a high number of teams.

Table 7.5: Comparison of pitch hire costs for St. Helens AGPs

Site ID	Site name	Full pitch (per hour)		Pitch segment (per hour)	
		Adult	Junior	Adult	Junior
11	Cowley International College	£75		£25 (1/3 pitch)	
13	De La Salle High School	£60		£35 (half pitch)	
38	Rainford High Technology College	£66	£48	£38 (half pitch)	£26 (half pitch)
41	Rainhill High School Media Arts College	£90.00		£36.00 (1/3 pitch)	
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	£45.10		£22.55	
44	Selwyn Jones Sports Centre	-		£25 (1/3 pitch)	
51	Sutton Leisure Centre	£82.85	£48.30	£45.15 (half pitch)	£28 (half pitch)
Neighbouring authorities (based on block booking midweek)					
-	Ormskirk School (Sand based, West Lancashire)	£52.50	£30	N/A	
-	Golborne High School (Sand based, Wigan)	£30	£15	N/A	
-	Sporting Edge (3G pitch, West Lancashire)	£125	£80	£30 (1/3 pitch)	£20 (1/3 pitch)
-	St Peter's Catholic High School (3G pitch, Wigan)	£40		£35 (half pitch)	

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The most expensive full size AGP is located at Rainhill High School Media Arts College which costs £90.00 per hour for full pitch hire. Sutton Leisure Centre is similarly priced at £82.85, however, offers various reductions including 15% discount for block bookings and a cheaper rate of £23.10 at weekends based on hire of a half pitch.

In comparison, Ruskin Park Sports Ground also offers a sand filled surface at an hourly full pitch rate of £45.10, which at peak time for football demand is almost half the cost compared to Sutton Leisure Centre, another Council managed facility.

Pricing of AGPs is varied in comparison with pitches in nearby local authorities. For example, for 3G pitches costs of £75 at Cowley International College and £90 at Rainhill High School Media Arts College in relation to £125 for midweek peak time booking at Sporting Edge (West Lancashire). Yet in comparison to St Peter's Catholic High School (Wigan) which is located seven miles away (20 minutes by car - cost £40), both pitches are significantly less affordable. 3G pitch pricing varies considerably dependant on provider and business model. Hire costs of sand based surfaces are more competitive, for example the price at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground (£45.10) sits some way between prices at Ormskirk School (West Lancashire - £52.50) and Golborne High School (Wigan - £30). Prices may also be reflective of associated costs at some sites such as schools, including staffing and security.

A number of providers offer reductions, such as Cowley International College which offers a 25% discount for teams booking the 3G pitch at weekends for a full season as their home pitch, yet no teams were identified as doing so. Selwyn Jones Sports Centre offers a third pitch for just £12 at weekends when demand for football use declines. In addition to Sutton Leisure Centre, De La Salle high School and Rainford High Technology College offer a 20% reduction by way of VAT for block bookings of ten or more sessions. Conversely, some sites may have additional charges like Rainford High Technology College where changing room hire comes at a further cost of £10 for adults or £11 for juniors.

7.4 Quality

Of the seven pitches in St. Helens, four are assessed as standard quality and three pitches are assessed as good quality. No sites have pitches assessed as poor quality, whilst all pitches are floodlit with the exception of De La Salle High School.

The carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately 10 years. Most AGPs in St. Helens are fewer than five years old or have recently been replaced. Two pitches at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground and Sutton Leisure Centre are over nine years old and so would normally be considered due for imminent carpet replacement.

Table 7.6: Summary of quality

Site ID	Site name	Surface type	Year built (refurbished)	Floodlit?	Quality
11	Cowley International College	Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)	2011	Yes	Good
13	De La Salle High School	Sand filled	2010	No	Standard
38	Rainford High Technology College	Sand dressed	2008	Yes	Standard

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Site ID	Site name	Surface type	Year built (refurbished)	Floodlit?	Quality
41	Rainhill High School Media Arts College	Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)	2013	Yes	Good
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Sand filled	1996 (2006)	Yes	Standard
44	Selwyn Jones Sports Centre	Sand Dressed	1997 (2012)	Yes	Good
51	Sutton Leisure Centre	Sand filled	2004	Yes	Standard

From 2014/15 only 3G pitches with a valid performance test and listed on the FA Register (<http://3g.thefa.me.uk/>) can be used for competitive play. This is to ensure the pitch has the same playing characteristics as natural turf and ensures that the pitches are safe to use. The pitch at Rainhill High School Media Arts College is FA certified and therefore meets the aforementioned required test criteria.

7.5 Supply and demand analysis

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) – National Facilities Audit Dataset (January 2014)

The FPM is a model used as a starting point to help assess the strategic provision of sports facilities, including AGPs. The model is prescriptive and not predictive in that it does not provide precise estimates of the use of proposed facilities. Rather it prescribes an appropriate level of provision for any defined area in relation to demand and which reflects national expectations and policies. It is not a substitute for considering local club needs and should be used alongside any local assessment.

The bullet points below outline the conclusions drawn from the Sport England FPM run in St. Helens. The run shows that satisfied demand is relatively high but that a high proportion is done so by facilities outside of the Borough. St. Helens is supplied to capacity with full size AGPs, with demand balancing supply.

The bullet points below are statements from the FPM model:

- ◀ The demand and supply for hockey suitable AGPs is finely balanced.
- ◀ Demand for football outweighs supply by just over 25% or 1.1 pitches
- ◀ Outputs do indicate that unmet demand is of a level that would justify additional AGP provision
- ◀ Relatively high satisfied demand for hockey (83%) with a high proportion of demand (70%) exported to facilities outside of the Borough
- ◀ Satisfied demand for football is the highest across Merseyside (97%) although most is met outside of the Borough (54%), representing the second highest authority exporting demand in the region
- ◀ Geographically, unmet demand is spread across all the built up areas in St. Helens and there are no 'hot spots' or concentrations of unmet demand.
- ◀ Aggregated unmet demand map for football – a number of areas in the west where a potential AGP could satisfy demand amounting to one pitch, although most comes from non-St. Helens residents within the catchment

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Please note that the FPM key findings relate to the dataset as of January 2014, however; an additional full size 3G AGP has now been installed at Rainhill High Technology College. Given the provision of an additional football suitable surface, it may be that some demand for football training on sand based AGPs has since reduced in favour of 3G and that some capacity may have become available.

New developments

Rainford High Technology College is a PFI funded school and as part of the contract it is agreed that the AGP is to be resurfaced within the next five to seven years. The school has discussed with Rainford Rangers FC about its possible conversion to a 3G surface.

St. Helens Council currently has ongoing development plans for the site at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground. This includes the demolition of the existing sand filled pitch to be replaced by a new full size FA and World Rugby Reg 22 certified 3G pitch.

St. Cuthbert's High School have aspirations for a 3G pitch onsite and have held preliminary discussions with Penlake JFC with a view to investigating potential collaborative opportunities to seek grant funding.

The FA model

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 floodlit 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 type per hour from 5pm-10pm Mon-Fri and 9am-5pm Saturday & Sundays. It is estimated that one full size AGP can service 60 teams.

On the basis there are 326 teams playing competitive football in St. Helens, there is a recommended need for five full size 3G pitches, currently there are two in the area.³³

There are, however, a number of smaller sized pitches that help to accommodate demand, for example from mini teams. These can be seen in the table below:

Site ID	Site name	Surface type	Quality	Quantity	Size
9	Carmel College	Short Pile 3G (40mm)	Standard	1	100x40
18	Haydock KGV Playing Fields	Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)	Standard	1	60x40
19	Haydock Leisure Centre	Sand Filled	Standard	1	60x34

³³ This is based on the assumption all teams would be willing to train and play on AGP rather than grass given the opportunity.

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Site ID	Site name	Surface type	Quality	Quantity	Size
47	St Augustine Of Canterbury Catholic High School	Sand dressed	Standard	1	60x33
57	Thatto Heath ARLFC	Short Pile 3G (40mm)	Standard	1	Covered Barn
48	St Cuthberts Catholic Community High School	Sand Filled	Standard	1	62x35

Local demand

Hockey

As concluded with Part 6, St. Helens is adequately provided for with regards to AGPs suitable for hockey matches at present. However, future demand from Prescott HC (which could result in five new teams) would require access to a further pitch for Saturday matches. There is spare capacity for hockey match play at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground and Selwyn Jones Sports Centre, however, this is not ideal for Prescott HC.

Football

Competitive football for on 3G AGPs is generally not preferred in St. Helens, with no teams currently playing competitive matches on 3G as regular their home pitch. The nature of play on 3G pitches is therefore most likely infrequent as an alternative when natural turf pitches are unsuitable for play. Artificial surfaces are, however, used regularly for training with both pitches used to capacity.

AGP summary

- ◀ There are seven AGPs in St. Helens made up of two 3G surfaces, and five sand based. There is one FA certified 3G pitch at Rainhill High School Media Arts College.
- ◀ In the main, availability of provision in the peak period is generally good. Where there is provision on education sites, this is generally made available after school and at weekends.
- ◀ Three of the seven pitches in St. Helens are assessed as good quality. Four sites are assessed as standard quality, with no poor quality pitches.
- ◀ The carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately 10 years. Pitches at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground and Sutton Leisure Centre are considered to require imminent carpet replacement as both are more than nine years old.
- ◀ The FA estimates that one full size AGP can service 60 teams. On the basis there are 326 teams playing competitive football in St. Helens, there is a recommended need for five full size 3G pitches to cater for football demand, currently there are two (this is based on the assumption all teams would be willing to train and play on AGP rather than grass given the opportunity).
- ◀ The Sport England FPM shows that all AGPs are operating at full capacity and that demand for football outweighs supply by over 25% or the equivalent of one pitch.
- ◀ In summary, supply and demand analysis (including FPM findings) highlights that St. Helens is currently well served for hockey suitable AGPs but 3G pitches are operating at capacity for football training.
- ◀ There are plans for the construction of a new World Rugby Reg 22 and FA certified 3G at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground to replace the existing pitch. There is also the possibility that the pitch at Rainford High Technology College may be converted to 3G.

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PART 8: BOWLING GREENS

8.1: Introduction

All bowling greens in St. Helens are crown greens, there are no flat greens. The British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA) is the governing body responsible for ensuring effective governance of crown green bowls across the Country. County representation of the Borough is by the Merseyside County Crown Green Bowls Association. The bowling season for crown green runs from April to September.

Consultation

There are 38 clubs using bowling greens in St. Helens. Of these, 25 replied to the survey equating to a response rate of 66%. Bowls is popular in St. Helens and there are many active teams. Many teams play on multiple days of the week as part of different leagues. The main leagues servicing the area are:

- ◀ St. Helens & District Bowling League
- ◀ Westhead & District League
- ◀ Aughton & District League
- ◀ St. Helens & District Pensioners Bowling League
- ◀ Newton Seniors Bowling League
- ◀ St. Helens & District Churches Bowling League
- ◀ Orrell & District Bowling League
- ◀ Wigan District CMS Bowling League
- ◀ Warrington & North Cheshire League

8.2: Supply

All bowling greens in St. Helens are crown greens, provided across 34 sites. Ownership and management varies between private clubs, council owned sites and a number of pub sites. Over half of sites (53%) are club owned/leased, whilst 22% are located on private land (hotel or pub) and are rented by a club. Of the remaining seven, sites are owned by the Council and one by a community group.

Table 8.1: Summary of the number of greens by analysis area

Analysis area	Number of greens
Billinge & Seneley Green	4
Earlestown & Newton	6
Eccleston & Windle	9
Haydock & Blackbrook	2
Moss Bank & Town Centre	1
Parr, Sutton & Bold	8
Rainford	2
Rainhill	1
West Park & Thatto Heath Heath	4
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There are five sites in St. Helens that have two bowling greens, they are:

- ◀ Mesnes Park
- ◀ Ruskin Drive Sports Ground
- ◀ Windle Bowling Club
- ◀ Gaskell Park
- ◀ Sutton Park

All analysis areas have bowling green provision however distribution is not evenly spread throughout St. Helens. The Eccleston & Windle area has the most greens with nine representing around a quarter (24%) of the available stock. Other areas with a relatively large number of greens include Parr, Sutton & Bold (22%) and Earlestown & Newton (16%). Five of the nine analysis areas have two or fewer greens, together accounting for just 22% of all greens. They are:

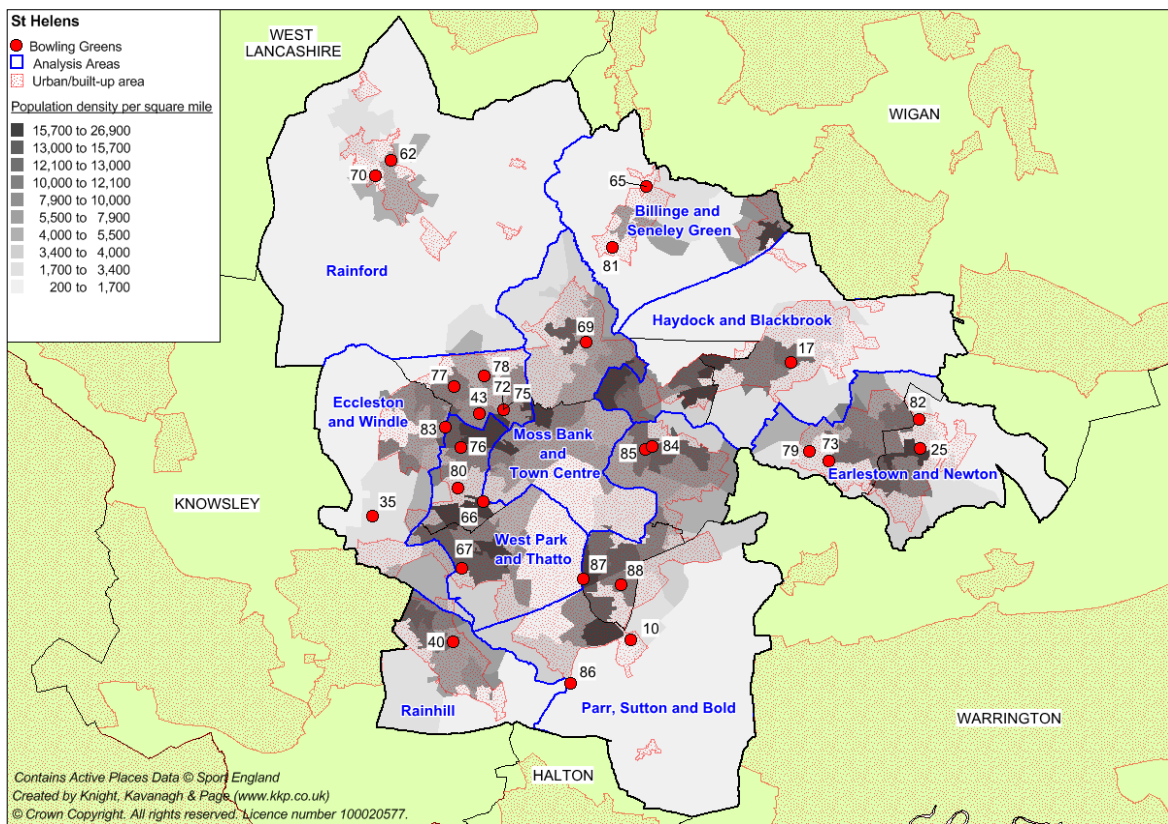
- ◀ Billinge & Seneley Green (4)
- ◀ Haydock & Blackbrook (2)
- ◀ Moss Bank & Town Centre (1)
- ◀ Rainford (2)
- ◀ Rainhill (1)

Disused/lapsed sites

A number of bowling greens have been left to become disused, located at both Council managed and club sites. Some have lost additional greens though bowling provision remains onsite, such as the Ravenhead Club where the second of two greens is now disused. Greens at Victoria Park (two greens) and most notably Queens Park Recreation Ground (three greens) are no longer used for play. Three further single green sites are now disused, located at Newton Sports Club, Haydock Rugby & Community Club and the Black Bull Pub.

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Figure 8.1: Distribution of bowling greens across St. Helens



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Table 8.2: Key to map

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of greens	Quality ³⁴	Ownership
10	Clock Face Recreation Club	Parr, Sutton and Bold	1	Good	Sports Club
17	Haydock Cricket Club	Haydock and Blackbrook	1	Good	Sports Club
18	Haydock KGV Playing Fields	Haydock and Blackbrook	1	Average	Local Authority
25	Mesnes Park	Earlestown and Newton	2	Good	Local Authority
35	Prescot & Odyssey Cricket Club	Eccleston and Windle	1	Good	Sports Club
40	Rainhill Cricket Club	Rainhill	1	Good	Sports Club
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Eccleston and Windle	2	Average	Local Authority
62	Spinney Park	Rainford	1	Average	Local Authority
65	Eagle & Child Pub (Billinge)	Billinge and Seneley Green	1	Good	Public House
66	Ravenhead Club	West Park and Thatto Heath	1	Good	Sports Club
67	Brown Edge Pub	West Park and Thatto Heath	1	Good	Public House
69	Carr Mill Hotel Pub	Moss Bank and Town Centre	1	Good	Public House
70	Eagle & Child Inn (Rainford)	Rainford	1	Good	Public House
72	Bishop Road Police Club Green	Eccleston and Windle	1	Good	Sports Club
73	Viaduct Sports & Social Club	Earlestown and Newton	1	Average	Sports Club
75	Unison Sports & Social Club	Eccleston and Windle	1	Good	Sports Club
76	Eccleston Bowling Club	West Park and Thatto Heath	1	Average	Sports Club
77	St. Helens Parish Church Bowling Club	Eccleston and Windle	1	Good	Sports Club
78	Windle Bowling Club	Eccleston and Windle	2	Good	Sports Club
79	St Patrick's Social Centre	Earlestown and Newton	1	Good	Community
80	St. Helens Bowling Club	West Park and Thatto Heath	1	Good	Sports Club
81	Birchley St Mary's Parochial Club	Billinge and Seneley Green	1	Good	Sports Club
82	Newton-le-Willows Conservative Club	Earlestown and Newton	1	Good	Sports Club
83	Greenall Social Club	Eccleston and Windle	1	Good	Sports Club
84	Gaskell Park	Parr, Sutton and Bold	2	Good	Local Authority

³⁴ Assessed via a non technical assessment. Please refer to Appendix 4 for the criteria used.

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of greens	Quality ³⁴	Ownership
85	Chancery Lane	Parr, Sutton and Bold	1	Good	Sports Club
86	Smithy Manor Pub	Parr, Sutton and Bold	1	Good	Public House
87	Sutton Park	Parr, Sutton and Bold	2	Good	Local Authority
88	Wheatsheaf Pub	Parr, Sutton and Bold	1	Average	Public House
9901	Vulcan Sports Ground	Earlestown and Newton	1	Average	Private
9902	Black Horse Pub	Moss Bank and Town Centre	1	Average	Public House
9906	Eccleston Lane Ends Recreation Club	Eccleston and Windle	1	Good	Sports Club
-	North Ashton Bowling Green, Garswood	Billinge and Seneley Green	1	Unknown	Private
-	Garswood and Simms Road Labour Club	Billinge and Seneley Green	1	Unknown	Private

Please note the last two entries were only identified at the end of the assessment and as such are not included on the map.

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Quality

Non-technical site assessments show that 28 greens (76%) in St. Helens to be assessed as good quality, whilst the remaining nine (24%) were assessed as average. No greens were assessed as poor quality. There is no clear relationship between management type and green quality, though just over half (57%) of good quality greens are located at sports club sites. This is most likely due to security from public access, increased ability to store maintenance equipment onsite and club members taking time to properly maintain the surface.

Few responding clubs gave comment on specific quality issues with their home green. Ruskin Park BC highlights the length of grass at Ruskin Park Sports Ground as too long and that it is not cut short enough by the Council. Only Eccleston BC provides further comment and reports that the green at Eccleston BC drains poorly.

Of clubs which responded to the survey, 30% state that their green was slightly better quality than the previous year, citing more favourable weather and off season maintenance as reasons why. The same proportion reports no difference in quality, whilst those which state it was much better or slightly poorer account for 20% each.

Eccleston BC reports that it has been subject to vandalism having been broken into on several occasions and had the green mower stolen. St. Helens Police Club BC experienced similar issues whereby the roof was damaged, possibly in an attempt to access the building.

Ancillary facilities

Eccleston BC indicates that the site has poor quality parking and that the area needs surface repairs. Parking seems to be an issue at some pub sites, for example, Wheatsheaf BC reports that parking is difficult at the Wheatsheaf Pub and there are limited spaces, as does Eagle & Child BC at the Eagle & Child Inn (Rainford). Aside from parking, no other comments regarding security or ancillary facilities were submitted.

None of the responding clubs have access to changing facilities, yet this was not highlighted as of particular concern and so it is assumed that there is little requirement for access to changing facilities to accompany bowling provision.

Ownership and management

The Council owns and maintains ten greens across six sites, all of which have two greens each with the exceptions of Haydock KGV Playing Fields and Spinney Park which are single green sites.

Greens are available to hire on a seasonal basis at the cost of £76.94 per evening required or one off bookings are also available upon request. All six sites have access to a pavilion which is available to hire at a cost of £115.34 per season.

There are seven greens located at pub sites in St. Helens. It is likely that pubs are reluctant to put a great deal of time and money into maintaining greens as they seek to retain bar and restaurant profits. There may also be a lack of knowledge from owners regarding maintenance of bowling greens and the need to do so, with any work carried out likely to be done by club members on a voluntary basis. For example, Eagle & Child BC are granted use of the green at Eagle & Child Inn (Rainford) free of charge, on the agreement that maintenance is carried out by the Club with no contribution from the pub.

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The majority (18) of greens are located at club sites, some of which incorporate social clubs. The revenue generated at several sports and social club sites enables the greens to be maintained regularly by club members generally to a better standard, which is reflected in the quality ratings. One further green at the former Vulcan Sports Ground is privately owned, the land having been sold to a housing developer.

Proposals

The Council has ongoing plans for the redevelopment of Ruskin Park Sports Ground which currently offers provision for a variety of sports. This would include refurbishment and resurfacing to improve the quality of the two existing greens and surrounds, currently assessed as average quality. A new changing facility is also to be built for use by all teams at the hub site, including bowls clubs.

The existing green at the former Vulcan Sports Ground is set to be demolished as part of the wider redevelopment of the former Vulcan Works site which is currently underway. As part of the proposals, replacement sporting facilities are to be built on a nearby site which includes new bowling green provision. It is anticipated that the bowling club will be relocated from their existing green in autumn 2016 (at the end of the bowling season) with a new green ready for use before the spring 2017 bowling season.

The green at Smithy Manor Pub was previously used by Smithy Manor BC. The Club has had to leave because lease of the pub has been sold to another party who wishes to take it out of use. Smithy Manor BC has now renamed as Bold BC and is to play at Bold Miners Community Centre where the green is to be brought back into use having been disused for the past five years.

Threats

There are a number of pub sites in St. Helens with bowling provision which are used regularly, however; there may be somewhat of a local trend towards the possible future loss of greens at pubs as evidenced in neighbouring West Lancashire. Recent years have indicated a reduction in drinking outside of the home and pub closures have been common across the country. Cost of upkeep and maintenance may therefore present a threat to the quality or existence of bowling greens at pub sites. There are no current reports of potential losses at pub sites in St. Helens but it is important to acknowledge their contribution to existing provision and similar experiences locally which may in turn translate to St. Helens.

8.3: Demand

There are 40 bowling clubs in St. Helens, each with multiple teams playing various evenings and afternoons throughout the week. Only one club (Wheatsheaf BC) does not enter teams in competitive leagues and only intra-club play takes place. The analysis below summarises information gathered from consultation with bowls clubs playing in St. Helens:

- ◀ The level of membership of clubs varies from 17 to 128 members
- ◀ St Patrick's & St David's BC has the smallest membership with 17 members
- ◀ The largest club is Vulcan BC with 128 members and 11 league teams

If play from Vulcan BC has to be relocated during the development period this may present a challenge given the large number of members it has, however it is anticipated that new replacement facilities will be in place

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Generally clubs and leagues in St. Helens report that membership levels have either remained static or decreased in the last three years and no clubs have a waiting list for new members. Only Vulcan BC reports an increase, fielding two more teams this season due to an increase in members. The overall decline in teams may be due to access to facilities in some cases; however, most clubs acknowledge a lack of interest in the sport amongst the local community, with few new bowlers taking up the sport. This adds to a player base which is largely drawn from the elderly community and in most cases the fall in numbers has been attributed to aging players, with a lack of younger or newer players coming into the sport to sustain demand. Ruskin Park BC for one identifies that teams have dropped out of local leagues due to a lack of players.

Eccleston BC has one junior member and is the only responding club to identify junior membership. There are three reasonably accessible junior bowling leagues in the area; the West Lancs & Sefton Junior Bowls League (WLSJBL), Warrington Junior Bowls League (WJBL) and the Chorley & District Junior League (CDJL). Eccleston BC previously fielded a junior team in the CDJL in 2013 but withdrew from the League in 2014.

There are four main leagues based within the St. Helens area. Many clubs, teams and bowlers may play in a number of these leagues simultaneously throughout the week and so although there may be a substantial number of teams; many are made up of the same players, thus representing a smaller player base.

Displaced demand

A number of teams also travel outside of St. Helens to play in leagues in West Lancashire, Wigan and Warrington therefore being able to offer players the chance to play most nights of the week. It may be that the lack of leagues / quality of leagues in St. Helens could be restricting the amount of activity.

8.4 Capacity analysis

Capacity is very much dependent on the leagues and the day that they operate. A green may have no spare capacity on an afternoon/evening when a popular league is operating but may be empty for the rest of the week.

England Bowls indicates that approximately 60 members are needed to sustain one green. This is supported in other local authority areas, for example in St. Helens; greens that accommodate six teams (ten members per team) are considered to be at capacity. Using this as a guide the table below looks at the capacity of bowling greens in St. Helens based upon club membership. A green with 60 members is considered to be at capacity.³⁵

Under capacity	Membership is below the level the site could sustain
At capacity	Membership matches the level the site can sustain
Over capacity	Membership exceeds the level the site can sustain

³⁵ It should be noted that some greens may be at capacity with fewer than 60 members but also that some greens will be able to sustain more than 60 members.

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Table 8.3: Bowling green capacity

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of greens	Clubs	Club members using the green	Recommended capacity ³⁶	Capacity
10	Clock Face Recreation Club	Parr, Sutton and Bold	1	Clock Face Recs BC	40	60	20
17	Haydock Cricket Club	Haydock and Blackbrook	1	Haydock CC BC	40	60	20
18	Haydock KGV Playing Fields	Haydock and Blackbrook	1	Haydock RR BC	Unknown	60	Unknown
25	Mesnes Park	Earlestown and Newton	2	Mesnes Park Pensioners BC	53	120	67
35	Prescot & Odyssey Cricket Club	Eccleston and Windle	1	Prescot CC BC	40	60	20
40	Rainhill Cricket Club	Rainhill	1	Rainhill Recreation BC	Unknown	60	Unknown
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Eccleston and Windle	2	Ruskin Park BC, Ruskin Sports BC, Triplex BC	50	120	70
62	Spinney Park	Rainford	1	Rainford North End BC	Unknown	60	Unknown
65	Eagle & Child Pub (Billinge)	Billinge and Seneley Green	1	Billinge BC	Unknown	22	38
66	Ravenhead Club	West Park and Thatto Heath	1	British Plate BC	Unknown	60	Unknown
67	Brown Edge Pub	West Park and Thatto Heath	1	Brown Edge BC	Unknown	60	Unknown
69	Carr Mill Hotel Pub	Moss Bank and Town Centre	1	Carr Mill BC	Unknown	45	15
70	Eagle & Child Inn (Rainford)	Rainford	1	Eagle & Child BC	50	60	10
72	Bishop Road Police Club Green	Eccleston and Windle	1	St. Helens Police Club BC	49	60	11
73	Viaduct Sports & Social Club	Earlestown and Newton	1	Earlestown Viaduct BC	34	60	26

³⁶ Based on England Bowls' indication of the number of members are needed to sustain one green (see section 8.4).

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of greens	Clubs	Club members using the green	Recommended capacity ³⁶	Capacity
75	Unison Sports & Social Club	Eccleston and Windle	1	Unison BC	Unknown	60	Unknown
76	Eccleston Bowling Club	West Park and Thatto Heath	1	Eccleston BC	79	60	19
77	St. Helens Parish Church Bowling Club	Eccleston and Windle	1	Windle Ladies BC, Parish Church BC, Beechams Windle BC	45	60	15
78	Windle Bowling Club	Eccleston and Windle	2	Windle Pensioners BC	90	120	30
79	St Patrick's Social Centre	Earlestown and Newton	1	St Patrick's BC	85	60	25
80	St. Helens Bowling Club	West Park and Thatto Heath	1	St. Helens BC	12	60	48
81	Birchley St Mary's Parochial Club	Billinge and Seneley Green	1	Birchley St Marys BC, St Patrick's & St David's BC, Wesley Church BC	82	60	22
82	Newton-le-Willows Conservative Club	Earlestown and Newton	1	Newton Conservative Club BC	Unknown	60	Unknown
83	Greenall Social Club	Eccleston and Windle	1	Greenalls BC	Unknown	60	Unknown
84	Gaskell Park	Parr, Sutton and Bold	2	Gaskell Park Pensioners BC	15	120	105
85	Chancery Lane	Parr, Sutton and Bold	1	Parr Conservatives BC	90	60	30
87	Sutton Park	Parr, Sutton and Bold	2	Sutton Park Pensioners BC	12	120	108
88	Wheatsheaf Pub	Parr, Sutton and Bold	1	Wheatsheaf BC – no teams	Unknown	60	60
9901	Vulcan Sports Ground	Earlestown and Newton	1	Vulcan BC	128	60	68
9902	Black Horse Pub	Moss Bank and Town Centre	1	Black horse BC	Unknown	60	Unknown
9906	Eccleston Lane Ends Recreation Club	Eccleston and Windle	1	Eccleston Lane Ends BC	Unknown	60	Unknown

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8.5: Supply and demand analysis

The largest club in the area is Vulcan BC with 128 members. The green caters for a large membership base and 11 teams playing consistently throughout the week, sometimes twice daily, in excess of twice the green capacity.

Four other sites exhibit overuse. Birchley St Mary's Parochial Club is overplayed by 22 members, caused largely by the fact that three different clubs all use the one green. Wesley Church BC did not respond to the survey to provide membership numbers, so it is likely that the level of overplay is actually in excess of that recorded. Eccleston BC is overplayed by 19 members and given that the green is of average quality, it is unlikely that this level of overuse can be sustained in its current condition without deterioration in quality in the longer term. Chancery Lane is overplayed by 30 members from Parr Conservatives BC. The green is good quality and overplay indicates the need for access to another green. St Patricks Social Centre is overplayed by a total of 25 members and though the green is good quality it is unable to sustain this level of overuse.

There are two clubs currently based at Ruskin Park Sports Ground; Ruskin Park BC which has 30 members and Ruskin Sports BC which has 20. Given that the site has two greens, a total playing membership of 50 is relatively few and there is a sizeable amount of capacity to develop membership of both clubs. Sports development objectives linked to the redevelopment of facilities at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground focus on growing bowls membership at the resident clubs in order to maximise the use of the greens which are to be improved.

Bowls summary

- ◀ There are 39 bowling greens in St. Helens provided across 34 sites. The majority are located at club sites or pub sites, with ten owned by the Council.
- ◀ Bowling green distribution is not evenly spread throughout St. Helens. The Eccleston & Windle area has nine, representing around a quarter of greens in the Borough. Five of the nine analysis areas have two greens or fewer.
- ◀ The number of greens in St. Helens has decreased in recent years. Eleven greens have been lost, including seven at Council owned sites; Ruskin Drive Sports Ground, Victoria Park and Queens Park Recreation Ground.
- ◀ All greens in the Borough are assessed as good (76%) or Average (24%) quality.
- ◀ There is a general perception that the quality and maintenance of privately/club owned and maintained greens are of a better standard than greens at pub sites. This is likely to be due to cost of upkeep or a lack of equipment and knowledge of maintenance.
- ◀ There are 40 clubs using bowling greens in St. Helens. Generally clubs in St. Helens report that membership levels have either remained static or decreased in the last three years due to aging players. Only Vulcan BC cites a planned increase in teams and membership.
- ◀ There are five greens showing evidence of overplay at Vulcan Sports Ground, Birchley St Mary's Parochial Club, Chancery Lane, St Patricks Social Centre and Eccleston BC.
- ◀ There are plans for the development of a new green at Vulcan Sports Ground to reprovide for the loss of the existing green to housing development. This will not be sufficient to accommodate the existing overplay.
- ◀ Plans for the Council redevelopment of Ruskin Drive Sports Ground include the resurfacing of the two existing greens and a new shared changing facility.
- ◀ St. Helens is generally well served for bowling greens at present. The key issue facing bowls clubs is the decrease in playing members and sports development factors rather than a lack of accessible facilities.

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PART 9: TENNIS

9.1: Introduction

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is the organisation responsible for the governance of tennis and administers the sport locally across St. Helens.

Consultation

A survey was distributed to all four tennis clubs in St. Helens, all of which provided a response. The four clubs within St. Helens are:

- ◀ Eccleston Park TC
- ◀ Newton TC
- ◀ Rainford TC
- ◀ Ruskin Park TC

9.2: Supply

There are a total of 59 tennis courts identified in St. Helens. The courts are located across 16 sites including private sports clubs, parks and centres. Fourteen courts (24%) are unavailable for community use, all of which are at school sites.

Please note that for the purposes of this report, availability for community use refers to courts in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management recorded as being available for hire by individuals, teams or clubs.

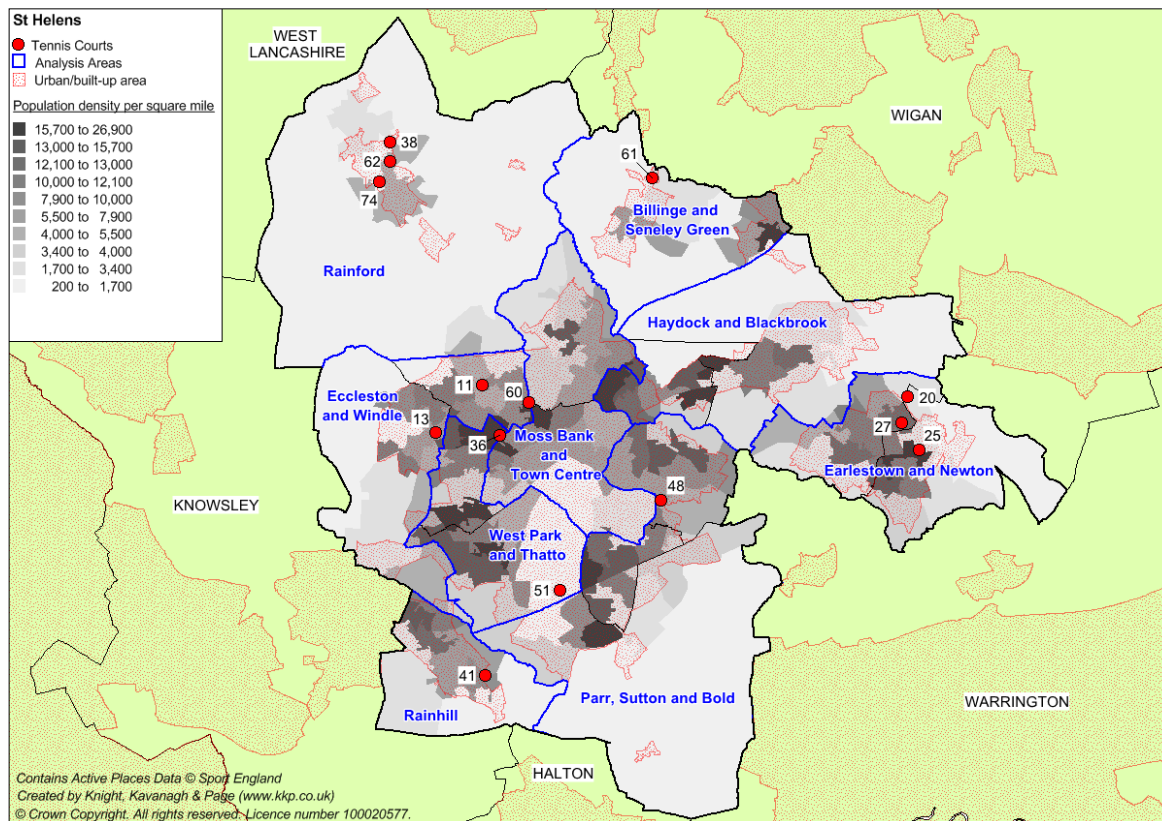
Table 9.1: Summary of the number of courts by analysis area

Analysis area	No. of sites	No. of courts
Billinge & Seneley Green	1	2
Earlestown & Newton	3	13
Eccleston & Windle	5	18
Haydock & Blackbrook	-	-
Moss Bank & Town Centre	-	-
Parr, Sutton & Bold	1	2
Rainford	3	11
Rainhill	1	4
West Park & Thatto Heath	2	9
ST. HELENS	16	59

Most tennis courts (31%) are located in the Eccleston & Windle Area, though eight of the 18 courts are unavailable for community use. Earlestown & Newton Area also has a large proportion of courts (13), all of which are available for community use, making it the area with the most available courts. The Haydock & Blackbrook and Moss Bank & Town Centre areas have the least tennis provision, neither of which have any courts.

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Figure 9.1: Location of tennis courts in St. Helens



Please refer to Table 9.2 for a key to the map.

Table 9.2: Courts by ownership/type

Analysis area	No. of club courts	No. of council courts	No. of school courts
Billinge & Seneley Green	-	2	-
Earlestown & Newton	3	2	8
Eccleston & Windle	5	5	8
Haydock & Blackbrook	-	-	-
Moss Bank & Town Centre	-	-	-
Parr, Sutton & Bold	-	-	2
Rainford	6	2	3
Rainhill	-	-	4
West Park & Thatto Heath Heath	-	9	-
ST. HELENS	14	20	25

Most courts in St. Helens are located at school sites (42%). Hope Academy provides the largest number of courts with eight, whilst Rainford TC has the most courts at a club site with six.

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There are 20 courts located at Council sites, seven of which are located at Queens Park Recreation Ground. The West Park & Thatto Heath Area subsequently represents the largest proportion (45%) of courts at Council sites. Exactly three quarters of Council provided courts are located at park sites, with the exceptions of Sutton Leisure Centre and Ruskin Drive Sports Ground. There is no Council tennis court provision in four of the nine analysis areas, as follows:

- ◀ Haydock & Blackbrook
- ◀ Moss Bank & Town Centre
- ◀ Parr, Sutton & Bold
- ◀ Rainhill

Fourteen courts in St. Helens (24%) are identified as being floodlit, spread across four sites. These are found at Mesnes Park (Council), Eccleston Park Tennis Club (Sports Club), Sutton Leisure Centre (Council) and Hope Academy (School).

In addition to the courts identified above a number of schools also identify having tennis court provision. Generally these are multipurpose facilities used as playgrounds and/or over marked with other sports such as netball. In most cases schools identify that provision is not floodlit or used outside of school hours. A summary of school provision is provided below:

Table 9.3: School provision summary

School	Number of courts	Summary
Cowley International College	3	Tarmac surface, poor quality and used in practice as playground or car parking area.
De La Salle High School	5	Five average quality courts, over marked with netball.
Hope Academy	8	Two hard surface areas with separating fencing, each floodlit and consisting of four courts. One area also used for 5v5 pitches widthways, the other used as one larger football area. Available for hire at £8 per hour.
Rainford High Technology College	3	Tarmac surface, good quality. Available to hire at £15 per hour but no community use identified.
Rainhill High School Media Arts College	4	Tarmac surface with worn markings and no floodlights. Used as a playground area throughout the day.
St Cuthbert's Catholic Community High School	2	Marked with tennis/netball. Used as playground with no surrounding fencing. Poor quality.

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Table 9.4: Summary of provision site by site

Site ID	Site name	Maintained	Analysis area	Availability for community use?	No. of courts	Floodlit Courts	Court type	Court quality ³⁷
11	Cowley International College	School	Eccleston and Windle	No	3	-	Tarmac	Poor
13	De La Salle High School	School	Eccleston and Windle	No	5	-	Tarmac	Average
20	Hope Academy	School	Earlestown and Newton	Yes - unused	8	8	Polymeric	Good
25	Mesnes Park	Council	Earlestown and Newton	Yes	2	2	Macadam	Average
27	Newton Sports Club	Sports Club	Earlestown and Newton	Yes	3	-	Shale	Average
36	Queen's Park Recreation Ground	Council	West Park and Thatto	Yes	4	-	Tarmac	Average
36	Queen's Park Recreation Ground	Council	West Park and Thatto	Yes	3	-	Tarmac	Poor
38	Rainford High Technology College	School	Rainford	Yes - unused	3	-	Tarmac	Good
41	Rainhill High School Media Arts College	School	Rainhill	No	4	-	Tarmac	Poor
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Council	Eccleston and Windle	Yes	3	-	Clay	Poor
48	St Cuthberts Catholic Community High School	School	Parr, Sutton and Bold	No	2	-	Macadam	Poor
51	Sutton Leisure Centre	Council	West Park and Thatto	Yes	2	2	Macadam	Poor
60	Victoria Park	Council	Eccleston and Windle	Yes	2	-	Macadam	Good
61	Bankes Park	Council	Billinge and Seneley Green	Yes	2	-	Macadam	Good
62	Spinney Park	Council	Rainford	Yes	2	-	Macadam	Poor
63	Eccleston Park Tennis Club	Sports Club	Eccleston and Windle	Yes	5	2	3x Shale 2x Euroclay	Good

³⁷ Assessed using a non-technical site assessment pro-forma and also takes account of user comments.

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Site ID	Site name	Maintained	Analysis area	Availability for community use?	No. of courts	Floodlit Courts	Court type	Court quality ³⁷
74	Rainford Tennis Club	Sports Club	Rainford	Yes	3	-	Shale	Good
					3	-	Macadam	Good

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Quality

A total of 26 courts (44%) are assessed as good quality and 14 courts (24%) as average quality. The remaining 19 (32%) courts are assessed as poor quality which are a range of macadam and tarmac surfaces.

Table 9.5: Summary of the quality of courts by surface type

Surface type	Good	Average	Poor
Clay	2	-	3
Shale	6	3	-
Macadam/ Polymeric/ Tarmac	18	11	16
Grass	-	-	-
ST. HELENS	26	14	19

Issues affecting the courts assessed as average and poor quality include evidence of moss, loose gravel, poor grip underfoot, and/or poor line marking.

Rainford TC deems its six courts to be of good quality. There are three clay/shale surface and three macadam courts which were newly refurbished in 2013 in conjunction with the Council; the Club having secured funding from the LTA, Sport England and Cory Environmental Trust. Similarly, within the last two years the Council has assisted with the refurbishment of two courts and installation of floodlights at Eccleston Park Tennis Club, whilst also carrying out refurbishment of two Council managed courts at Victoria Park, all of which are assessed as good quality.

Conversely, Ruskin Park TC notes that the courts at Ruskin Park Sports Ground are poor quality and in need of refurbishment. The facility is managed by the Council which has ongoing plans to develop the whole site as a community sporting hub, including the replacement of the three existing courts with five or six new ones of which three will be floodlit. This will also incorporate new changing facilities to cater for the multi sport site.

Following on from the aforementioned court improvements, Rainford TC has aspirations to continue developing the site to improve changing facilities and install floodlights.

Ancillary provision

All clubs each rate the changing facility provision used as being adequate in terms of quality. Since the refurbishment of the courts at Rainford TC, the Club now plans to focus on the improvement of clubhouse facilities and electricity provision. It indicates car parking as poor and a key issue, leading cars to park on the main road causing congestion and potential safety issues. The site is situated in the centre of Rainford, neighbouring Rainford Rangers FC and Rainford CC, both of which also experience similar problems and add to the congestion at peak times.

Plans are also in place for the improvement of changing facilities at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground with the envisaged creation of a new changing block to cater for the multi sport site, including Ruskin Park TC members.

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9.3: Demand

Competitive tennis

There are four tennis clubs located in St. Helens. The main league for competition is the Liverpool & District Tennis League which is made up of ten men's sections, five ladies sections and four junior sections at three age groups, with matches taking place in the evening midweek.

Table 9.6: Summary of club membership

Name of club	Number of members		Number of teams	
	Senior	Junior	Senior	Junior
Eccleston Park TC	90	50	8	2
Rainford TC	60	80	5	5
Ruskin Park TC	25	15	3	-
Newton TC	31	28	5	-

Rainford TC is a large club and offers tennis at senior and junior levels for both males and females. The coaching programme includes mini tennis and family fitness sessions through to structured coaching sessions for both juniors and seniors. The Club enters five teams each at junior and senior age groups, competing in the Liverpool & District Tennis League and the Aegon Team Tennis Competition. The site is leased from Derby Estates and Rainford TC is keen to continue to develop facilities, particularly the addition of floodlights which it cites as a key limitation in delivery of the coaching programme, estimating that throughout the winter only 25% of sessions are able to run due to the loss of daylight hours in the evenings.

Throughout the summer months the Club uses the courts at Spinney Park in order to accommodate additional demand for training through the evenings. It reports that membership has increased over recent years, partly due to the improvement of club facilities, though many people take up interest in playing tennis by doing so in a community setting and that the deterioration in quality of Spinney Park has impacted negatively on that.

Eccleston Park TC is similarly large club with around 140 members. The Club is actively involved in encouraging junior participation and juniors are able to attend coaching sessions free of charge, many of whom later join. Several senior teams play throughout the week but the Club would like an additional court so that two matches can take place each night rather than one, in order to increase hours of court time available. Winter play is currently limited to two courts as three shale courts are not floodlit. Membership is growing and two more senior teams have been added this year but the Club is of the opinion that it requires more accessible court capacity in order to continue growth.

In contrast, Ruskin Park TC has experienced a decline in membership and believes that the continually deteriorating quality of facilities at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground is a contributing factor. The Club states that it would like to increase membership though in the short term is not prioritising growth, instead focusing on keeping the Club in existence in wait of the proposed development onsite. It is concerned that a drive to increase membership will be in vain and that potential members will soon be disaffected with the relatively poor quality of facilities. Poor quality means the courts are unable to be used for much of the year when and there is no alternative venue.

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Newton TC has also experienced a decline in senior membership and believes this to be due to the relatively poor quality facilities onsite which may be unattractive to past or potential members. On the other hand, junior membership is increasing through development of a junior coaching programme although there are no competitive junior teams at present. The Club reports displaced demand from the Mens section, as two teams travel to Pennington Park in Lowton (Wigan) to access courts because there are not enough courts at Newton Sports Club to accommodate all four Mens teams. The Club highlights its main focus as continuing to grow the junior section whilst trying to improve both the quality and supply of courts onsite.

Informal tennis

Courts on education sites are largely unavailable for community use, likely due to the poor quality of areas where marked courts are used daily as playground and social areas. Both Hope Academy and Rainford High Technology College make the courts available to hire but upon consultation neither school identified any community use.

It is likely that demand for recreational play increases annually following events such as Wimbledon. Although it is hard to measure casual use as some courts, it is assumed that courts are generally busy throughout the summer months when weather is favourable. Council managed courts at park sites are often publicly accessible free of charge, including Mesnes Park, Queens Park Recreation Ground and Spinney Park. Block bookings in excess of ten occasions are available at the cost of £19.32 per court.

Additional demand

Rainford TC identifies clear unmet demand for additional sessions, equating to the need for a further 58 hours of court time each week. This is largely caused by the unavailability of hours during autumn and winter due to the lack of floodlights onsite, as well as at Spinney Park which is sometimes used as a secondary facility. The Club believes that if it had access to more hours of court time it would be able to field more competitive teams across all age groups.

Ruskin Park TC believes that better facilities would improve the appeal of the club and that upon redevelopment of the site there may be an increase in demand based on increased attractiveness to potential members.

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Tennis summary

- ◀ There are a total of 59 tennis courts provided in St. Helens across 16 sites. Provision can be found on a range of sites including sports clubs and parks. There are 20 courts across council managed sites.
- ◀ In addition, there are six secondary schools providing 25 courts, 11 of which are available to the community, located at Hope Academy and Rainford High Technology College.
- ◀ A total of 26 courts (44%) are assessed as good quality and 14 courts (24%) assessed as average quality. The remaining 19 courts (32%) are assessed as poor quality.
- ◀ Of particular concern is the current poor quality of courts at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground which is affecting usage and subsequent membership at Ruskin Park TC.
- ◀ Three sites have floodlit courts, located at Mesnes Park, Eccleston Park TC and Hope Academy.
- ◀ There are four tennis clubs located in St. Helens. Rainford TC and Ruskin Park TC suggest they have development plans or aspirations to improve current facilities, including the Council redevelopment of Ruskin Park Sports Ground to provide five or six new tennis courts.
- ◀ Membership trends contrast between clubs. Rainford TC and Eccleston Park TC highlight an increase in both senior and junior members, whilst Ruskin Park TC and Newton TC identify a decline in membership (related to poor quality courts).
- ◀ Responding clubs suggest that with better ancillary facilities and/or with greater availability of court time they could provide more teams/increase membership levels.
- ◀ Although there is adequate number of courts in St. Helens, poor quality is restricting access and is the priority to address. A lack of floodlights also appears to be limiting court usage on some sites.

APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

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

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

Carrying capacity is the amount of play a site can regularly accommodate (in the relevant comparable unit) for community use without adversely affecting its quality and use. This is typically outlined by the NGB

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

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

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

Match equivalent sessions is an appropriate comparable unit for pitch usage. For football, rugby union and rugby league, pitches should relate to a typical week within the season and one match = one match equivalent session if it occurs every week or 0.5 match equivalent sessions if it occurs every other week (i.e. reflecting home and away fixtures). For cricket pitches it is appropriate to look at the number of match equivalent sessions over the course of a season and one match = one match equivalent session.

Overplay is when a pitch is used over the amount that the carrying capacity will allow, (i.e. more than the site can accommodate). Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected.

Spare capacity is the amount of additional play that a pitch could potentially accommodate in addition to current activity. There may be reasons why this potential to accommodate additional play should not automatically be regarded as actual spare capacity, for example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below its carrying capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of friendly matches and training activity. This needs to be investigated before the capacity is deemed **actual spare capacity**.

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

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APPENDIX 2: CONSULTEE LIST

Organisation	Name	Designation
St. Helens Council	David Boocock	Head of Youth & Sports Development
St. Helens Council	Gerard Woods	Team Leader- Planning Policy Team
St. Helens Council	Jamie Longmire	Planning Officer
St. Helens Council	Dave Bloor	Head of Parks, Landscape & Street Scene
St. Helens Council	Councillor Andy Bowden	Cabinet Member – Public Health & Wellbeing
Sport England	Paul Daly	Planning Manager
Liverpool FA	Alice Watson	County Development Manager
Lancashire FA	Derek Egan	County Development Manager
Lancashire County Cricket Board	Bobby Denning	Managing Director
RFL	Carol Doran	National Facilities Manager
RFU	Tom Bartram	Area Facilities Manager
England Hockey	Julie Longden	Relationship Manager
St. Helens Council	Ian Lynch	Sports Development Officer
Billinge FC	Jayne Wood	Secretary
Birchley St Mary's BC	Tom Ollerton	Manager
Bird i'th Hand FC	Keith Brown	Secretary
Blackbrook	John Fairhurst	Secretary
Bleak Hill Rovers JFC	John Monsvoll	Treasurer & CWO
Boilermwkers Arms FC	Gary Whittingham	Secretary
Carborundum FC	Martyn Frackelton	Secretary
Carmel College	Mike Moran	Site/Premises Officer
Carr Mill Bears	Steve Floyd	
Carr Mill FC	Adam Jones	
Carrs FC	Neil Perry	Secretary
Clock Face Miners A.F.C	Graeme Tomkins	Secretary
Clock Face Miners ARLFC	Chris Hughes	Chairman
Commercial mHotel FC	Robert Mulvey	Manager/Secretary
Cowley International College	Barbara Wright	Finance Manager
Cowley International College	John Finney	Site Manager
De La Salle School	Graham Fry	Site Manager
Eagle & Child BC	Mr B. Tarry	Secretary
Earlestown Athletic FC	Keith Green	Secretary
Earlestown United FC	Martin Lucas	Secretary
Eccleston BC	Eric Thorley	Secretary
Eccleston Park TC	Patricia Stirling	Treasurer

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Organisation	Name	Designation
Garswood United FC	Gary Ormrod	Secretary
Griffin FC	Colin Sutton	Secretary
Haydock ARLFC	Rob Kempster	Club Rep
Haydock Cricket Club	Andrew Lyon	Club Welfare Officer
Haydock JFC	Geoff Bate	Chairman
Hope Academy	Gary Finney	Site Manager
Liverpool St. Helens RUFC	Ray French	President
Mesnes Park Pensioners BC	ALAN PARR	
Newton Athletic	Maurice Duckworth	
Newton Storm ARLFC	Ian Wynn	Chairman
Newton-le-Willows CC	Ian Walker	Section Treasurer
Newton-le-Willows RUFC	Peter Frodsham	
Old Congs FC	Roy Simpson	Secretary
Parkdale Sidac JFC	Andrew Buck	Chairman
Penlake JFC	Dave Hayward	Vice President & League
Pilkington FC	Colin Burchall	Secretary
Portico Vine ARLFC	Andrew Connor	Chairman
Prescot & Odyssey CC	Shaun Haigh	Club Development Officer
Prescot Cables FC	Doug Lace	Secretary
Prescot HC	Melanie Heaps	Secretary
Rainford Cricket Club	John Williams	Chairman
Rainford Eagles JFC	Paul Kelly	Secretary
Rainford High Technology College	Martin Owen	Business Manager/Accountant
Rainford North End BC	T. Mayer	Secretary
Rainford Rangers JFC	Graham Fenney	Chairman
Rainford Rangers JFC	Keith Winstanley	Groundsman
Rainford TC	Dave Hillier	Chairman
Rainhill High School Media Arts College	Michaela Peers Zilkova	Finance Assistant
Rainhill Rocket FC	Kevin Hannah	Secretary
Rainhill Town AFC	Neil Thompson	Secretary
Rainhill United JFC	Philip Vose	
Real Haydock	Gareth Worswick	
RockWare FC	Craig Walker	Secretary
Ruskin Park BC		
Ruskin Park RUFC	Martin Swift	Chairman
Ruskin Sports BC	John Stamp	Secretary
Ruskin TC	John Leyland	Chairman
Sankey Vale FC	Phil Smith.	Secretary
Seneley & Garswood JFC	Tom Nugent	Club Development & CWO
Shaw Street FC	Robert Lloyd	Secretary
Sidac Sports & Social FC	Mr L Pilling	Secretary

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Organisation	Name	Designation
St Augustine Catholic High School	Deirdre Wilde	Business Manager
St Cuthbert's Catholic Community College for Business & Enterprise	Paul Magee	Business Manager
St. Helens & District Combination FL	Robert Deakin	
St. Helens & Rainhill Junior Alliance FL	Paul Hughes	Fixtures Secretary
St. Helens Police Club BC	Trevor Bold	Secretary
St. Helens Rovers Football Club	Philip Schonewille	Chairman
St. Helens Town AFC	Secretary	Secretary
St. Helens Town JFC	Steve Leather	Club Secretary
St Marks Athletic FC	Steve Jackson	Manager
St Patricks & St Davids BC	John & Vivien Smith	
St. Helens Town CC	Fred Crawford	Secretary
Sutton Cricket & Tennis Club	Steve Hughes	Treasurer
Sutton JFC	Jenny Leyland MBE	Secretary
Sutton junction FC	Mike Shone	Secretary
Thatto Heath Crusaders ARFLC	Mike Denning	Chairman
Town Green Athletic	Mike Ashton	
Viaduct BC	Arthur Critchley	Secretary
Vulcan BC	S. J. Hughes	Secretary
Vulcan Junior FC	Andy Boyak	
Warrington District FL	Steve Lyons	Secretary
West Park	Brian Witcherley	Secretary
West Park Rugby Club	Colin Hilton	Club Secretary
Wheatsheaf BC	Phil Banks	
Whiston Vets	Mark Wealleans	Secretary
Windle Labour	Terry Hewitt	
York FC	Anthony Innelli	Secretary
Young Gate FC	Peter Baines	Secretary

APPENDIX 3: SPORTING CONTEXT

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

National context

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

Sport England: A Sporting Habit for Life (2012-2017)

In 2017, five years after the Olympic Games, Sport England aspires to transforming sport in England so that it is a habit for life for more people and a regular choice for the majority. Launched in January 2012 the strategy sets out how Sport England will invest over one billion pounds of National Lottery and Exchequer funding during the five year plan period. The investment will be used to create a lasting community sport legacy by growing sports participation at the grassroots level following the 2012 London Olympics. The strategy will:

- ◀ See more people starting and keeping a sporting habit for life
- ◀ Create more opportunities for young people
- ◀ Nurture and develop talent
- ◀ Provide the right facilities in the right places
- ◀ Support local authorities and unlock local funding
- ◀ Ensure real opportunities for communities

The vision is for England to be a world leading sporting nation where many more people choose to play sport. There are five strategic themes including:

- ◀ Maximise value from current NGB investment
- ◀ Places, People, Play
- ◀ Strategic direction and market intelligence
- ◀ Set criteria and support system for NGB 2013-17 investment
- ◀ Market development

The aim by 2017 is to ensure that playing sport is a lifelong habit for more people and a regular choice for the majority. A specific target is to increase the number of 14 to 25 year olds playing sport. To accomplish these aims the strategy sets out a number of outcomes:

- ◀ 4,000 secondary schools in England will be offered a community sport club on its site with a direct link to one or more NGBs, depending on the local clubs in a school's area.
- ◀ County sports partnerships will be given new resources to create effective links locally between schools and sport in the community.
- ◀ All secondary schools that wish to do so, will be supported to open up, or keep open, their sports facilities for local community use and at least a third of these will receive additional funding to make this happen.
- ◀ At least 150 further educational colleagues will benefit from a full time sports professional who will act as a College Sport Maker.
- ◀ Three quarters of university students aged 18-24 will get the chance to take up a new sport or continue playing a sport they played at school or college.
- ◀ A thousand of our most disadvantaged local communities will get a Door Step Club.

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- ◀ Two thousand young people on the margins of society will be supported by the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust into sport and to gain new life skills.
- ◀ Building on the success of the Places People Play, a further £100 million will be invested in facilities for the most popular sports.
- ◀ A minimum of 30 sports will have enhanced England Talent Pathways to ensure young people and others fulfil their potential.

National Planning Policy Framework

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The FA National Game Strategy (2011 – 2015)

The Football Association's (FA) National Game Strategy provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities, expenditure proposals and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a four year period. The main issues facing grassroots football are identified as:

- ◀ Growth and retention (young and adult players)
- ◀ Raising standards and behaviour
- ◀ Better players
- ◀ Running the game
- ◀ Workforce
- ◀ Facilities

'The National Game Strategy' reinforces the urgent need to provide affordable, new and improved facilities in schools, clubs and on local authority sites. Over 75% of football is played on public sector facilities. The leisure budgets of most local authorities have been reduced over recent years, resulting in decaying facilities that do not serve the community and act as a disincentive to play football. The loss of playing fields has also been well documented and adds to the pressure on the remaining facilities to cope with the demand, especially in inner city and urban areas.

The growth of the commercial sector in developing custom built five-a-side facilities has changed the overall environment. High quality, modern facilities provided by Powerleague, Goals and playfootball.net for example, have added new opportunities to participate and prompted a significant growth in the number of five-a-side teams in recent years.

The FA National Facilities Strategy (2013 – 2015)

The recently launched National Facilities Strategy sets out the FA's long term vision for development of facilities to support the National Game. It aims to address and reflect the facility needs of football within the National Game. The National Game is defined as all non-professional football from Steps 1-7 of the National League System down to recreational football played on open public space. The role of facilities will be crucial in developing the game in England. One of the biggest issues raised from 'the Big Grassroots Football Survey' by that of 84% respondents, was 'poor facilities'.

The FA's vision for the future of facilities in England is to build, protect and enhance sustainable football facilities to improve the experience of the nation's favourite game. It aims to do this by:

- ◀ Building - Provide new facilities and pitches in key locations to FA standards in order to sustain existing participation and support new participation.
- ◀ Protecting - Ensure that playing pitches and facilities are protected for the benefit of current and future participants.
- ◀ Enhancing - Invest in existing facilities and pitches, ensuring that participation in the game is sustained as well as expanded.

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The Strategy commits to delivering in excess of £150m (through Football Foundation) into facility improvements across the National Game in line with identified priorities:

- ◀ Natural grass pitches improved – target: 100
- ◀ A network of new AGPs built – target 100
- ◀ A network of refurbished AGPs – target 150
- ◀ On selected sites, new and improved changing facilities and toilets
- ◀ Continue a small grants programme designed to address modest facility needs of clubs
- ◀ Ongoing support with the purchase and replacement of goalposts

It also commits to:

- ◀ Direct other sources of investment into FA facility priorities
- ◀ Communicate priorities for investment across the grassroots game on a regular basis
- ◀ Work closely with Sport England, the Premier League and other partners to ensure that investment is co-ordinated and targeted

Champion Counties – England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Strategic Plan (2013 – 2017)

“Champion Counties” - continues to focus on the four pillars, as identified in the ECB’s previous strategy: “Grounds to Play”. The pillars are:

- ◀ Energising people and partnerships through effective leadership and governance
- ◀ Building a Vibrant domestic game through operational excellence and delivering a competition structure with appointment to view
- ◀ Engaging participants through the maintenance of existing facilities, supporting club/school links, supporting volunteers and expanding women’s and disabilities cricket
- ◀ Delivering Successful England teams and world class global events

The key measures for the life span of the plan are as follows:-

- ◀ Increase the subset of participation measured by Sport England’s Active People Survey from 183,400 to 197,500.
- ◀ Increase attendances at LV= CC, YB50 and FLT20 by 200,000.
- ◀ Complete sponsorship and broadcasting agreements through 2019.
- ◀ Win the World Test Championship and Women’s World Cup in 2017.
- ◀ Win The Ashes and World Cup in 2015.
- ◀ Expand the number of clubs participating in NatWest Cricket Force from 2,000 to 2,200.
- ◀ Complete co-operation agreements for each of the 39 County Boards with their First Class County or Minor County partner.
- ◀ Deliver two world class global events in 2017 which exceed budget and exceed customer satisfaction targets.
- ◀ Increase the number of cricket’s volunteers to 80,000 by 2017.
- ◀ Expand the number of participants in women’s and disabilities cricket by 10% by 2017.
- ◀ Award all Major Matches through 2019 by December 2014.
- ◀ To increase the number of TwelfthMan members from 220,000 to 250,000 by 2017.
- ◀ Complete an approved Community Engagement programme with all 18 First Class Counties and MCC.
- ◀ Provide First Class Counties with total fee payments of £144m between 2014 and 2017.
- ◀ For each £1 provided in facility grants through the Sport England Whole Sport Plan grant programme ensure a multiplier of 3 with other funding partners.

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- ◀ Provide a fund of £8.1m of capital investment to enhance floodlights, sightscreens, replay screens, power sub-stations and broadcasting facilities at First Class County venues.
- ◀ Provide an interest-free loan fund to community clubs of £10 million.
- ◀ Leverage the 2014 tour by India to engage with a minimum of 10,000 cricket supporters of Asian origin. Qualify and engage 50 Level 4 coaches to support the development of professional cricketers.
- ◀ Expand the number of coaches who have received teacher level 1, 2 or 3 qualifications to 50,000.
- ◀ Deliver an annual fixture for the Unicorns against a touring (Full, A or U19) ICC member nation.
- ◀ Provide a fund of £2 million for community clubs to combat the impact of climate change.
- ◀ Introduce a youth T20 competition engaging 500 teams by 2017.

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

The recently launched RFU National Facility Strategy 2013-2017 provides a framework for development of high-quality, well-managed facilities that will help to strengthen member clubs and grow the game in communities around them. In conjunction with partners, this strategy will assist and support clubs and other organisations, so that they can continue to provide quality opportunities for all sections of the community to enjoy the game. It sets out the broad facility needs of the sport and identifies investment priorities to the game and its key partners. It identifies that with 470 grass root clubs and 1500 players there is a continuing need to invest in community club facilities in order to:

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

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

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

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

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

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The Rugby Football League Facility Strategy

The RFL's Facilities Strategy was published in 2011. The following themes have been prioritised:

- ◀ Clean, Dry, Safe & Playable
- ◀ Sustainable clubs
- ◀ Environmental Sustainability
- ◀ Geographical Spread
- ◀ Non-club Facilities

The RFL Facilities Trust website www.rflfacilitiestrust.co.uk provides further information on:

- ◀ The RFL Community Facility Strategy
- ◀ Clean, Dry, Safe and Playable Programme
- ◀ Pitch Size Guidance
- ◀ The RFL Performance Standard for Artificial Grass Pitches
- ◀ Club guidance on the Annual Preparation and Maintenance of the Rugby League Pitch

Further to the 2011 Strategy detail on the following specific programmes of particular relevance to pitches and facility planning are listed below and can be found via the trust link (see above):

- ◀ The RFL Pitch Improvement Programme 2013 – 2017
- ◀ Clean, Dry and Safe programmes 2013 - 2017

England Hockey (EH)

'The right pitches in the right places'³⁸

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

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

³⁸<http://englandhockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=1143§ionTitle=The+Right+Pitches+in+the+Right+Places>

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2015-2018 British Tennis Strategy

The new strategy is presented in a concise one page framework that includes key strategies relating to three participation "focus" areas, six participation "drivers" and three participation "enablers". To achieve success, the 12 strategy areas will need to work interdependently to stem the decline and unlock sustainable growth:

The three participation "focus" areas are where tennis is consumed:

1. Deliver great service to CLUBS
2. Build partnerships in the COMMUNITY, led by parks
3. Enhance the tennis offer in EDUCATION

The six participation "drivers" are the areas that will make the biggest difference where tennis is consumed. They must all be successful on a standalone and interconnected basis and include:

1. Becoming more relevant to COACHES
2. Refocusing on RECREATIONAL COMPETITION
3. Providing results orientated FACILITY INVESTMENT
4. Applying best in class MARKETING AND PROMOTION
5. JUMP STARTING THE PEAK SUMMER SEASON
6. Establishing a "no compromise" HIGH PERFORMANCE programme with focus.

The final layer is comprised of three participation "enablers" that underpin our ability to be successful. These enablers are rooted in how the LTA will get better; how the entire network of 4 / 17/03/2015 partners must be harnessed to work together and the need to raise more financial resources to fund our sport's turnaround. They include:

1. Becoming a more effective and efficient LTA
2. Harnessing the full resource network
3. Generating new revenue

For further information and more detail on the framework please go to <http://www.lta.org.uk/about-the-lta/structure-vision>

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APPENDIX 4: NON TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Cricket

Element	Rating				Guidance notes	Site comments (use the guidance notes to help complete)
About the cricket outfield						
Grass coverage	Good	Acceptable	Poor		<80% falls below the ECB basic standard	
Length of grass	Good	Acceptable	Poor		Ideally 12mm - 25mm	
Evenness	Even		Uneven		Ball should run without deviation or ramp	
Evidence of Dog fouling/glass/stones/litter?	None	Yes		Immediate action required	May also wish to refer to user survey. If yes, refer to contractor/site manager	
Evidence of Unofficial use?	None	Yes		Immediate action required	e.g. informal, casual use, unbooked use, kids kickabout etc. May also wish to refer to user survey. If yes, refer to contractor/site	
Evidence of Damage to surface?	None	Yes		Immediate action required	e.g. from vermin/animals - rabbit, gulls and foxes etc may also wish to refer to user survey	
Artificial Wickets						section total
Is the wicket and surrounds married in	Yes		No		There should be no trip points	
Evenness of wicket	Even		Uneven		There should be no contours in surface levels	
Stump holes	Yes		No		Should be no wider than a standard cricket ball	
Moss or materials in the surface	Yes		No		There should be none	
Rips or surface lifting	Yes		No		If "yes" contact site manager	
Surface worn in high traffic areas - creases	Yes		No		If "yes" contact site manager	
Hardness - does the ball rebound when thrown straight down?	Yes		No			
Grass Wickets						section total
Presence of line markings	Yes		No			
Evidence of rolling	Yes		No		i.e. is wicket smooth and uniform	
Evidence of straight cut and height	Yes		No		3mm on match wicket/12mm rest of square	
Evidence of repair work on old wickets	Yes		No			
Grass coverage (square and wickets)	Yes		No		Scale: 80%+ = Yes, 80%> = No Please note that <80% falls below the ECB basic standard	
Hardness - does a cricket ball thrown straight down into the surface rebound/bounce?	Yes		No			
Changing/ Pavilion						section total
Umpires provision	Yes		No			
Toilets	Yes		No			
Hot/cold water	Yes		No			
Heating	Yes		No			
Condition of building	Good	Acceptable	Requires attention			
Non Turf Cricket Practice Nets						section total
Is the wicket and surrounds married in (no trip points)	Yes		No			
Evenness of wicket (no contours in surface levels)	Even		Uneven			
Stump holes (no wider than a standard cricket ball)	Yes		No			
Moss or materials in the surface (should be none)	Yes		No			
No rips or surface lifting	Yes		No			
Surface worn in high traffic areas - crease	Yes		No			
Hardness - does the ball rebound when thrown straight down	Yes		No			
Is the steel frame/ posts upright?	Yes		No		Ideally assessed with a spirit level but can be achieved by eye.	
Are steel cross members detached?	Yes		No			
Are all posts and net fixings in place?	Yes		No			
Can a ball pass through any part of the netting?	Yes		No			
Is appropriate safety/ supervisory signage present?	Yes		No			

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Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Bowling green

KKPref	<input type="text"/>
Site name:	<input type="text"/>
Number of greens	<input type="text"/>
Flat/crown	<input type="text"/> Community Use? <input type="text"/>

Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)

Element	Rating			Comments
About the greens				
Grass cover	Over 70% <input type="checkbox"/>	40-69% <input type="checkbox"/>	less than 40% <input type="checkbox"/>	
Evenness of surface	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	
Signs of wear and tear	None <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes - some <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes - lots <input type="checkbox"/>	
Condition of ditches/boarding	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	
Surface of surrounding hard areas	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the green and surrounding area fenced?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Fencing around the green and ancillaries	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	
Problem areas: litter, glass, fouling, leaf fall on the green	None <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes - some <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes - lots <input type="checkbox"/>	
Problem Areas: Evidence of inappropriate use on the green	None <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes - some <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes - lots <input type="checkbox"/>	
Access for disabled players/spectators - ie: ramps onto greens, width of gates	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	
Ancillary facilities				
Changing Accomodation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Toilets	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Car parking	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
General comments about the site:				
<input type="text"/>				

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APPENDIX 5: REQUIREMENTS OF STEP SYSTEM

Step/ Grade	Min Capacity	Pitch Barrier	Technica l area	Floodlights	Turnstiles	Spectator Accommodation	Press seating	Toilets within ground	Players Changing	Match Officials Changing
7	No minimum and no boundary fencing required	Post and rope around all sides that accommodate spectators. Minimum of 1.83m (ideally 2m) away from touchline and if hard standing exists (not compulsory) it should be minimum of 0.9 metres width.	Not essential but its desirable that a technical area exists within the laws of the game	Not compulsory	Not required, however where one exists it must be fixed and fully operational	No specific requirements for accommodation	None Required	Provision should be made for adequate toilet facilities	Existing must be 12m ² , with 4 shower heads and adequate toilets for players. New build 18m ² .	Minimum 4m ² , 1 shower and access to toilets (not necessarily inside the changing room). New build 6m ² . Provision for both male and female officials required.

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Step/ Grade	Min Capacity	Pitch Barrier	Technica l area	Floodlights	Turnstiles	Spectator Accommodation	Press seating	Toilets within ground	Players Changing	Match Officials Changing
Entry to Step 6/ H	No minimum, but ground must be enclosed with fencing 1.83m high	1.1m high and 1.83 m away from touchline (ideally 2m). Hard standing width of 0.9m on spectator side of barrier on a minimum of 2 adjacent sides from the entrance.	Same side of pitch, ideally 3m apart and seat 8 people or 4m in length	Average lux of 120 for existing or 180 lux must be provided for new	1 required or a pay box.	Can be on 1 side only. 50 minimum covered. No allocation required for Directors	None Required	2 WC's should be required	Existing must be 12m2, with 4 shower heads, 1 wash hand basin, 1 WC. New build 18m2.	Minimum 4m2, 1 shower, 1 WC (exclusive use but not necessarily en suite) and 1 wash hand basin. New build 6m2. Provision for both male and female officials required.
6/ G	No minimum, but ground must be enclosed with fencing 1.83m high	1.1m high and 1.83 m away from touchline (ideally 2m). Hard standing width of 0.9m on spectator side of barrier on a minimum of 2 sides on adjacent sides from the entrance.	Same side of pitch, ideally 3m apart and seat 8 people or 4m in length	Average lux of 120 for existing or 180 lux must be provided for new	1 required or a pay box.	Can be on 1 side but preferably 2 sides. 100 minimum covered of which 50 must be seated and located in one stand. No allocation required for Directors	None Required	Male: 2 urinals or equivalen t and 1 WC. Female: 2WC's	Existing must be 12m2, with 4 shower heads, 1 wash hand basin, 1 WC. New build 18m2.	Minimum 4m2, 1 shower, 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin. New build 6m2. Provision for both male and female officials required.

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Step/ Grade	Min Capacity	Pitch Barrier	Technica l area	Floodlights	Turnstiles	Spectator Accommodation	Press seating	Toilets within ground	Players Changing	Match Officials Changing
5/ F	No minimum, but ground must be enclosed with fencing 1.83m high	1.1m high and 1.83 m away from touchline (ideally 2m). Hard standing width of 0.9m on spectator side of barrier on a minimum of 3 sides.	Same side of pitch, ideally 3m apart and seat 8 people or 4m in length	Average lux of 120 for existing or 180 lux must be provided for new	1 required or a pay box.	Can be on 1 side but preferably on 2 sides of ground. 200 minimum covered of which 100 must be seated (can be 2 stands each 50) 16 seats allocated to Directors. Public address system required.	None Required	Male: 2 urinals or equivalent and 1 WC. Female: 2WC's	Existing must be 12m2, with 4 shower heads, 1 wash hand basin, 1 WC. New build 18m2.	Minimum 4m2, 1 shower, 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin. New build 6m2. Provision for both male and female officials required.

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Step/ Grade	Min Capacity	Pitch Barrier	Technical area	Floodlights	Turnstiles	Spectator Accommodation	Press seating	Toilets within ground	Players Changing	Match Officials Changing
Seeking promotion from 5- 4/ E	1,000	1.1m high and 1.83 m away from touchline (ideally 2m). Must be in filled so ball can't pass through. 0.9m hard standing on all 4 areas of the ground	Same side of pitch, ideally 3m apart and seat 8 people or 4m in length	Average lux of 120 for existing or 180 lux must be provided for new	2 required with 0.9m hard standing to all spectator areas.	Preferably on at least 2 sides of ground. 250 minimum covered of which 150 must be seated in not more than 2 stands (no stand can have less than 50 seats). 16 seats allocated to Directors. Also need separate Directors room for hospitality serving minimum 16 people. Separate medical room required, not accessed through changing rooms. Public address system required.	Minimum 2 with lights and writing facilities	Male: 2 urinals or equivalent and 1 WC. Female: 2WC's	Existing must be 12m2, with 4 shower heads, 1 wash hand basin, 1 WC. New build 18m2.	Minimum 4m2, 1 shower, 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin. Bell buzzer required. New build 6m2. Provision for both male and female officials required.

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Step/ Grade	Min Capacity	Pitch Barrier	Technical area	Floodlights	Turnstiles	Spectator Accommodation	Press seating	Toilets within ground	Players Changing	Match Officials Changing
4/ D	1,300 with potential to increase to 1,950	1.1m high and 1.83 m away from touchline (ideally 2m). Must be in filled so ball can't pass through. 0.9m hard standing on all 4 areas of the ground	Same side of pitch, ideally 3m apart and seat 8 people or 4m in length	Average lux of 120 for existing or 180 lux must be provided for new	2 required with 0.9m hard standing to all spectator areas.	Preferably on at least 2 sides of ground. 300 minimum covered of which 150 must be seated in not more than 2 stands (no stand can have less than 50 seats). 24 seats allocated to Directors. Also need separate Directors room for hospitality serving minimum 24 people. Separate medical room required, not accessed through changing rooms. Public address system required.	Minimum 2 with lights and writing facilities	Male: 2 urinals or equivalent and 1 WC. Female: 2WC's	Existing must be 12m2, with 4 shower heads, 1 wash hand basin, 1 WC. New build 18m2.	Minimum 4m2, 1 shower, 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin. Bell buzzer required. New build 6m2. Provision for both male and female officials required.

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Step/ Grade	Min Capacity	Pitch Barrier	Technica l area	Floodlights	Turnstiles	Spectator Accommodation	Press seating	Toilets within ground	Players Changing	Match Officials Changing
3/ C	1,950, with potential to increase to 3,000	1.1m high and 1.83 m away from touchline (ideally 2m). Must be in filled so ball can't pass through. 0.9m hard standing on all 4 areas of the ground	Same side of pitch, ideally 3m apart and seat 8 people or 4m in length	Average lux of 120 for existing or 180 lux must be provided for new	3 required with 0.9m hard standing to all spectator areas.	Preferably on 2 sides of ground. 500 minimum covered of which 250 must be seated (no more than 2 stands, minimum of 50 per stand). 24 seats allocated to Directors. Also need separate Directors room for hospitality serving minimum 24 people. Separate medical room required, not accessed through changing rooms. Public address system required.	4 with lights and writing facilities	Male: 4 urinals or equivalent and 2 WC's. Female: 2WC's	Existing must be 12m2, with 4 shower heads, 1 wash hand basin, 1 WC. New build 18m2.	Minimum 4m2, 1 shower, 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin. Bell buzzer required. New build 6m2. Provision for both male and female officials required.

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Step/ Grade	Min Capacity	Pitch Barrier	Technica l area	Floodlights	Turnstiles	Spectator Accommodation	Press seating	Toilets within ground	Players Changing	Match Officials Changing
2/ B	3,000, with potential to increase to 4,000	1.1m high and 1.83 m away from touchline (ideally 2m). Must be in filled so ball can't pass through. 0.9m hard standing on all 4 areas of the ground	Same side of pitch, ideally 3m apart and seat 11 people or 5.5m in length	Average lux of 180	6 required with 0.9m hard standing to all spectator areas.	Preferably on 2 sides of ground. 500 minimum covered of which 250 must be seated and located in one stand. 24 seats allocated to Directors. Also need separate Directors room for hospitality serving minimum 24 people. Separate medical room required, not accessed through changing rooms. Public address system required	6 with lights and writing facilities	Male: 4 urinals or equivalent and 2 WC's. Female: 2WC's	Must be 18m2, with 4 shower heads, 1 wash hand basin, 1 WC.	Minimum 4m2, 1 shower, 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin. Bell buzzer required. New build 6m2. Provision for both male and female officials required.

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Step/ Grade	Min Capacity	Pitch Barrier	Technica l area	Floodlights	Turnstiles	Spectator Accommodation	Press seating	Toilets within ground	Players Changing	Match Officials Changing
1/ A	4,000, with potential to increase to 5,000	1.1m high and 2.25 m away from touchline (ideally 2.75m). Must be in filled so ball can't pass through. 1m hard standing on all 4 areas of the ground	Same side of pitch, ideally 3m apart and seat 11 people or 5.5m in length	Average lux of 250	8 required with 1m hard standing to all spectator areas.	Preferably on 2 sides of ground. 500 minimum covered of which 250 must be seated and located in one stand. 24 seats allocated to Directors. Also need separate Directors room for hospitality serving minimum 24 people. Separate medical room required, not accessed through changing rooms. Public address system required	12 with lights and writing facilities	Male: 4 urinals or equivalent and 2 WC's. Female: 2WC's	Must be 18m2, with 4 shower heads, 1 wash hand basin, 1 WC and 2 urinals.	Minimum 6m2, 1 shower, 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin. Bell buzzer required. New build 6m2. Provision for both male and female officials required.