



ST. HELENS

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

JULY 2016

Integrity, Innovation, Inspiration

1-2 Frecheville Court ◀ off Knowsley Street ◀ Bury BL9 0UF
T 0161 764 7040 ◀ **F** 0161 764 7490 ◀ **E** mail@kcp.co.uk ◀ **www.kcp.co.uk**



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ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	1
PART 1: INTRODUCTION.....	2
PART 2: VISION.....	8
PART 3: OBJECTIVES.....	9
PART 4: SPORT SPECIFIC ISSUES SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	10
PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS	17
PART 6: ACTION PLAN	31
PART 7: KEEP THE STRATEGY ROBUST AND UP TO DATE	76
APPENDIX ONE: GLOSSARY	80
APPENDIX TWO: STRATEGIC CONTEXT	82
APPENDIX THREE: FUNDING PLAN	90
APPENDIX FOUR: FOOTBALL SCENARIO.....	94

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
3G	Third Generation turf (artificial turf)
NGB	National Governing Body
FA	Football Association
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
RFU	Rugby Football Union
S106	Section 106
FIT	Fields in Trust
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
FPM	Facilities Planning Model
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
TGR	Team Generation Rate
CSP	County Sports Partnership
SHC	St. Helens Council

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for St. Helens Council (SHC) and its partners. Building upon the preceding Assessment Report it provides a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities between 2015 and 2025. The PPS covers the following playing pitches and outdoor sports:

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

The Strategy is capable of:

- ◀ Providing adequate planning guidance to assess development proposals affecting playing fields, as appropriate, directing open space contributions secured through development and informing and shaping local planning policy
- ◀ Informing the protection and provision of sports facilities and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and S106 and CIL schedules;
- ◀ Informing land use decisions in respect of future use of existing outdoor sports areas and playing fields (capable of accommodating pitches) across the Borough;
- ◀ Providing a strategic framework for the provision and management of outdoor sports across the Borough;
- ◀ Supporting external funding bids and maximise support for outdoor sports facilities; and
- ◀ Providing the basis for on-going monitoring and review of the use, distribution, function, quality and accessibility of outdoor sport.

1.1: Structure

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

- ◀ A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of playing pitches;
- ◀ A series of strategic recommendations which provide a strategic framework for the improvement, maintenance, development and, as appropriate, rationalisation of the playing pitch stock;
- ◀ A series of sport by sport recommendations which provide a strategic framework for sport led improvements to provision; and
- ◀ A prioritised area-by-area action plan to address key issues.

The Strategy and Action Plan recommends a number of priority projects for St. Helen's which should be implemented from 2015 to 2025. It is outlined to provide a framework for improvement and, although resources may not currently be in place to implement it, potential partners and possible sources of external funding will be identified.

The recommendations that come out of this strategy must be translated into Local Plan policy so there is a policy mechanism to support delivery and secure provision/investment where the opportunity arises.

ST. HELENS

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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

1.2 Context

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 Strategy has the following objectives - to:

- ◀ Inform the emerging planning policy within 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.

A new single Local Plan for the Borough is now being prepared to 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.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

1.4 Headline findings

The table below highlights the quantitative headline findings from the St. Helens Playing Pitch Assessment Report.

Sport	Analysis area	Current demand shortfall ¹	Future demand shortfall (2032) ²
Football (grass pitches)	Billinge & Seneley Green	2 adult match sessions 1 youth 9v9 match session	2 adult match sessions 0.5 youth 11v11 match sessions 1.5 youth 9v9 match sessions 1.5 mini 5v5 match sessions
	Earlestown & Newton	2.5 adult match sessions 6 youth 11v11 match sessions 4.5 youth 9v9 match sessions	2.5 adult match sessions 6 youth 11v11 match sessions 4.5 youth 9v9 match sessions
	Eccleston & Windle	1 youth 11v11 match session 0.5 youth 9v9 match sessions	1.5 youth 11v11 match sessions 0.5 youth 9v9 match sessions
	Haydock & Blackbrook	6.5 adult match sessions 1.5 youth 11v11 match sessions 1 youth 9v9 match session	6.5 adult match sessions 1.5 youth 11v11 match sessions 1 youth 9v9 match sessions 1 mini 5v5 match session
	Moss Bank & Town Centre	Current demand is being met	0.5 mini 7v7 match sessions 0.5 mini 5v5 match sessions
	Parr, Sutton & Bold	Current demand is being met	1.5 youth 9v9 match sessions 0.5 mini 5v5 match sessions
	Rainford	Current demand is being met	2 mini 5v5 match sessions
	Rainhill	1.5 adult match sessions	1.5 adult match sessions
	West Park & Thatto Heath	0.5 youth 11v11 match sessions	0.5 youth 11v11 match sessions
	St. Helens	12.5 adult match sessions 9 youth 11v11 match sessions 7 youth 9v9 match sessions	12.5 adult match sessions 10 youth 11v11 match sessions 4.5 youth 9v9 match sessions 0.5 mini 7v7 match sessions 5.5 mini 5v5 match sessions
	Football (3G AGPs)	St. Helens	3 full size 3G pitches based on FA model for training demand. Two existing 3G pitches are operating at capacity.

¹ Current demand is calculated from an analysis of overplay and spare capacity but also includes unmet and displaced demand identified.

² Please note that this is demand that will exist in 2032 if the current demand is not met.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Sport	Analysis area	Current demand shortfall ³	Future demand shortfall (2032) ⁴
Cricket	Billinge & Seneley Green	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	Earlestown & Newton	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	Eccleston & Windle	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	Haydock & Blackbrook	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	Moss Bank & Town Centre	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	Parr, Sutton & Bold	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	Rainford	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	Rainhill	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	West Park & Thatto Heath	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	St. Helens	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
Rugby union	Billinge & Seneley Green	No current demand for pitches	No demand expected
	Earlestown & Newton	Current demand is being met	0.5 match sessions.
	Eccleston & Windle	1 match sessions	1 match session
	Haydock & Blackbrook	No current demand for pitches	No demand expected
	Moss Bank & Town Centre	No current demand for pitches	No demand expected
	Parr, Sutton & Bold	No current demand for pitches	No demand expected
	Rainford	10 match sessions	10.5 match sessions
	Rainhill	No current demand for pitches	No demand expected
	West Park & Thatto Heath	4.5 match sessions	5 match sessions
	St. Helens	15.5 match sessions	17 match sessions
Rugby league	Billinge & Seneley Green	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	Earlestown & Newton	5 match sessions	5 match sessions
	Eccleston & Windle	8.2 match sessions	8.2 match sessions
	Haydock & Blackbrook	3.75 match sessions	4.25 match sessions
	Moss Bank & Town Centre	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	Parr, Sutton & Bold	1 match session	1 match session
	Rainford	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	Rainhill	Current demand is being met	Future demand can be met
	West Park & Thatto Heath	8 match sessions	8 match sessions.

³ Current demand is calculated from an analysis of overplay and spare capacity but also includes unmet and displaced demand identified.

⁴ Please note that this is demand that will exist in 2032 if the current demand is not met.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Sport	Analysis area	Current demand shortfall ³	Future demand shortfall (2032) ⁴
	St. Helens	25.95 match sessions	26.45 match sessions
Hockey (Sand AGPs)	Borough wide	Current demand being met for matches and training	2 match sessions and additional training sessions. Pitch will also require resurface

Current demand for tennis is being met; however, there is some latent demand reported by clubs for floodlighting (in order to increase hours of play and capacity) to Rainford Tennis Club in Rainford Area and provision of additional courts at Eccleston Park Tennis Club in Eccleston & Windle Area.

For bowls, current and future demand is generally being met. However, there is some overlap of greens in the Newton area which suggests that there is a need for access to one additional green.

Conclusions

The existing position for all pitch sports is either demand is being met or there is a shortfall. The future position shows the sports with current shortfalls is exacerbated and those where demand was being met will experience shortfalls. Therefore there is a need to protect all existing provision and create access to school sites or bring some disused sites back into use if feasible.

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' but may also include training sessions.

Based on how they tend to be played, this unit for football, rugby union and rugby league pitches relate 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.

Pitch capacity

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 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. Pitch quality is often influenced by weather conditions and drainage.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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*	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

Shortfalls

Please note that shortfalls are expressed in match equivalent sessions at this stage rather than converted to actual pitches as most shortfalls can be accommodated by improving pitch quality (and therefore capacity) to accommodate more match sessions. This is explored further within the action plan. However, where required to convert match sessions into pitches, the number of match sessions should be halved (to take account of teams playing on a home and away basis).

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

PART 2: VISION

2.1 Vision

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

'To provide an accessible, high quality and sustainable network of sports facilities, which provide opportunities for all residents to access good sport, physical activity and recreation facilities'.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

PART 3: OBJECTIVES

The St. Helens PPS is a strategy not just for the local authority, but holistically for sport across the Borough as a whole.

Delivery of the Strategy is the responsibility of and relies on, *all* stakeholders.

The following overarching objectives are based on the three Sport England themes (see figure 1 below). It is recommended that the following are adopted by the Council and its partners to enable it to achieve the overall vision of the Strategy and Sport England planning objectives.

AIM 1

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

AIM 2

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

AIM 3

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

Figure 1: Sport England themes



Source: Sport England 2015

PART 4: SPORT SPECIFIC ISSUES SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to help develop the recommendations/actions and to understand their potential impact a number of relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues in this section for the playing pitch sports resulting in the sport specific recommendations. These have been arrived at following consultation with the various sports NGBs and Sport England.

Football pitches

Key issues - grass

- ◀ Most football pitches available for community use are assessed as being of poor quality (56%) or standard quality (37%).
- ◀ 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 current unmet demand of one team at mini level reported by Bleak Hill Rovers JFC.
- ◀ Penlake JFC and Parkdale Sidac FC both currently have unsecure tenure as the owner of the site will not grant a long lease and is instead intending to apply to planning permission for housing developments, which will only be granted where there is alternative provision made for the clubs.
- ◀ Spare capacity on adult pitches (23 match sessions).
- ◀ Insufficient youth pitches available to meet total current demand (-18.5 match sessions) and future demand (-20.5 match sessions). In addition, 60 match sessions of youth 11v11 (U13-U16) football takes place on adult pitches.
- ◀ Insufficient 5v5 mini pitches available to meet total future demand (-5 match sessions).

Scenarios - grass

- ◀ **Improving pitch quality** - on all overplayed pitches (either through increased maintenance or drainage improvements in order to increase pitch capacity) to either standard or good quality will accommodate overplay expressed.
- ◀ However, given the cost of doing such work for all poor and standard quality pitches the continued maintenance required (and associated costs) alternatives need to be considered that can offer a more sustainable model for the future of football. The alternative to grass pitches is the use of AGPs for competitive matches and this is something that the FA is supporting, particularly for mini football.
- ◀ **Utilising spare capacity** - There are three adult pitches which express 0.5 spare capacity in the peak period which if retained could help to sustain/improve quality.
- ◀ This leaves 21.5 match sessions as actual spare capacity on adult pitches and is enough to cater for a future shortfall in youth match sessions (20.5).
- ◀ Opening up sites which are currently unavailable for community use i.e. school sites will accommodate future demand for mini pitches and unmet demand expressed by Bleak Hill Rovers JFC.
- ◀ **Removing unsecured sites** – there are nine pitches across two sites (Beeches Playing Fields and Sidac Sports) which are considered to have no security of continued use. If these were lost there would be a further shortfall in match sessions on youth and mini pitches. There would also be 7.5 match equivalents to relocate from these sites to adult pitches.

ST. HELENS

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Recommendations – grass

- ◀ Existing quantity of football pitches to be protected albeit reconfiguration from adult to youth is required.
- ◀ Where pitches are overplayed and assessed as standard or poor quality, prioritise investment into improving the quality of these pitches and review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain/improve pitch quality.
- ◀ Work with schools to maximise and secure access to mini pitches on school sites which are currently unavailable for community use.
- ◀ Spare capacity on adult football pitches to be retained at John Eddleston Trust Playing Fields, St Helen's Cricket Club and Rainford North End Playing Fields.
- ◀ Mitigate loss of playing field, pitches and ancillary that might occur as a result of the closure of Beeches Playing Fields and Sidac Sports Club. The mitigation should be to an equivalent or better quantity and quality in a suitable location with secure use of replacement sites for clubs using these pitches.
- ◀ Consider the future value of one and two pitch sites. As there are shortfalls across most pitch types the loss of these sites must be replaced in accordance with national, local and Sport England policy. The loss can be mitigated via investment (quantitative and qualitative) into the development of central venue sites and hub sites.
- ◀ Where appropriate, develop partnership and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded clubs to manage their own 'home' sites thus facilitating club development.

Key issues – Artificial Grass Pitches (3G)

- ◀ There are currently two 3G⁵ pitches in St. Helens, one at Rainhill High School Media Arts College (full size, FA certified) and one at Cowley International College (90mx60m).
- ◀ Construction of two 3G pitches is underway (completion due September 2016) at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground (one of which will be RFL and RFU compliant and one FA registered).
- ◀ St. Cuthbert's High School has successfully secured funding for a youth 11 v 11 3G pitch (88m x 56m) to accommodate youth U13/14's 11v11.
- ◀ Further to this, the FA is keen to look at a future development of a new full size 3G pitch at Sutton Leisure Centre and potentially Rainford Technology College.
- ◀ The FA now estimates that one full size AGP can service 42 teams. On the basis there are 326 teams playing competitive football in St. Helens, there is a recommended need for eight full size 3G pitches to cater for football training demand.
- ◀ Accounting for one new FA 3G pitch at Ruskin Drive and including Cowley although it is not quite full size, there is a shortfall of five full size 3G pitches in St Helens.
- ◀ A number of clubs access 3G pitches in neighbouring authorities. 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.
- ◀ There is also a growing demand for all age groups to play on 3G pitches, particularly at youth level where this is a shortfall of grass pitches.
- ◀ From 2014/15 only 3G pitches with a valid performance test and listed on the FA Register can be used for competitive play. Please note this is the responsibility of the pitch provider and has an associated cost of £1,500.

Scenarios – Artificial Grass Pitches (3G)⁶

- ◀ There are currently 111 mini teams playing within St. Helens. In order to accommodate all teams for competitive fixtures, seven 3G pitches would be required overall (a shortfall of five).

⁵ Third Generation Turf

⁶ Please refer to the Appendix for the full football scenario including programming of 3G pitches.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

- ◀ There are currently 59 youth 9v9 teams playing within St. Helens. In order to accommodate all teams for competitive fixtures and, therefore, 30 match equivalent sessions, five 3G pitches would be required overall (a shortfall of three).
- ◀ There are currently 91 youth 11v11 teams playing within St. Helens. In order to accommodate all teams for competitive fixtures and, therefore, 46 match equivalent sessions, 16 3G would be required overall (a shortfall of 14).

Recommendations – Artificial Grass Pitches

- ◀ As a priority, explore options to provide additional 3G pitches to meet current demand for training.
- ◀ Ensure that new and existing 3G pitches are tested and subsequently FA registered. In addition, ensure that existing and future 3G pitches are used to maximum potential to allow for future back to back programming of mini/youth matches at peak times.
- ◀ Ensure that sinking funds are in place to maintain 3G pitch quality in the long term.
- ◀ Carry out consultation with leagues/clubs to gauge acceptance/buy in of moving competitive play to 3G pitches in the future.
- ◀ Ensure further modelling/feasibility work is carried out to ensure sustainability of new 3G pitches to accommodate competitive fixtures.

Cricket pitches

Key issues

- ◀ Eight squares are assessed as standard quality. 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 CC.
- ◀ Three sites are currently overplayed by a total of 15 match sessions at Haydock CC, Rainhill CC and Rainford CC.
- ◀ Overplay at Haydock CC (11 sessions per season) is temporary and is not a long term concern.
- ◀ All other sites have some form of spare capacity, although only three 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.

Scenarios

- ◀ All overplay expressed (Rainhill CC two sessions per season and Rainford CC two sessions per season) can be sustained on current pitches through ensuring pitch quality is sustained/improved and through ensuring that maintenance levels are appropriate to current usage.
- ◀ 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 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 later this year will not only eliminate any overplay but in fact create 0.5 sessions of actual spare capacity at adult peak time.
- ◀ Plans at Ruskin Drive to reduce provision from two pitches to one pitch is supported by the analysis which shows no shortfall in cricket pitches in St. Helens and an oversupply at Ruskin Drive with no further local demand to utilise spare capacity identified.

ST. HELENS

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Recommendations

- ◀ Lancashire County Cricket Groundsmen Association and LCCB to work with clubs to review quality issues on those pitches assessed as standard quality.
- ◀ Address overplay on grass wickets through ensuring that maintenance levels are appropriate to current usage and where possible increasing the number of wickets on squares.
- ◀ Utilise spare capacity at club sites to accommodate possible future demand for LMS and junior/women/girls development.
- ◀ Work with clubs to ensure appropriate access to ancillary facilities supports provision of pitches/sites.
- ◀ Work with clubs to improve access to indoor training facilities during the winter months through Cricket Development Group.

Rugby union pitches

Key issues

- ◀ The majority of pitches (four) are assessed as poor quality. Three pitches are assessed as standard quality and none as good.
- ◀ Poor quality changing facilities is an issue at most rugby union club sites in St. Helens.
- ◀ 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 match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ Ruskin Drive Sports Ground will provide include a new AGP suitable for rugby union/league training and match play.

Scenarios

- ◀ **Improving pitch quality** - significant improvements are required to the maintenance programme at Liverpool St. Helens RFC and Ruskin Drive Sports Ground (Ruskin Park RFC) which are both overplayed. If maintenance was increased from poor to good this would increase capacity by 4.5 match sessions per week at Liverpool St. Helens RFC (albeit one pitch would still have some overplay) and 1.5 match sessions per week at Ruskin Drive which would address overplay. Improving the maintenance at West Park RFC would also increase pitch capacity by 2.5 match sessions per week.
- ◀ **More pitches** – It is unlikely that clubs are able to afford an increase in maintenance to the levels which would fully address capacity issues and therefore it is concluded that there is a shortfall of pitches to service West Park and Liverpool St. Helens. Therefore securing access to additional pitches is a priority for these two clubs of a least one floodlit pitch each.

Recommendations

- ◀ Address overplay at Liverpool St. Helens RFC via improvements to maintenance schedules and seek access to land either onsite or in the local vicinity to accommodate more floodlit pitches. Although please note that maintenance alone will not completely address overplay and so additional pitch space is required.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

- ◀ Address overplay at West Park RFC via improvements to maintenance schedules and seek access to land either onsite or in the local vicinity to accommodate more floodlit pitches. Although please note that maintenance alone will not completely address overplay and so additional floodlit pitch space is required.
- ◀ Seek funding options to improve ancillary facilities as required at club sites.
- ◀ Address overplay at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground via improvements to maintenance schedules.
- ◀ The quality of the pitch (including floodlights) at Newton Sports Club (Newton-le-Willows RFC) is insufficient to maintain current usage (from rugby union and league). Explore options to achieve this through mitigation package from the loss of Vulcan Sport Ground (which previously accommodated Vulcan RUFC which merged with Newton-le-Willows) or relocation of Newton Le Willows RUFC training demand.

Rugby league pitches

Key issues

- ◀ Pitches are generally assessed as standard (54%) or poor (43%) quality.
- ◀ Poor pitch quality is partly impacted by overuse from training on match pitches as the transition to the summer season allows.
- ◀ There is a need for 28 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 2.5 match sessions to cater for anticipated future demand.
- ◀ There are no designated Rugby League Community Standard compliant AGPs in St. Helens.
- ◀ Council plans for the development of Ruskin Drive Sports Ground include a new AGP suitable for rugby league/union training and match play.

Scenarios

- ◀ **Improving pitch quality** - on pitches overplayed by just one or two match sessions per week (either through increased maintenance or drainage improvements in order to increase pitch capacity) will generally address overplay i.e. at Blackbrook ARLFC, Blackbrook McDonald Ave Playing Fields, Bold Miners ARLFC, Clock Face Recreation Club, Haydock KGV Playing Fields, St Augustine Of Canterbury Catholic High School, Sutton Manor KGV Playing Fields, Eccleston Lions ARLFC and Thatto Heath ARLFC (one pitch).
- ◀ **Moving training off match pitches** – there is currently 26 match sessions of training taking place on senior rugby league pitches in St. Helens. If these were moved to dedicated training areas it would reduce the pitch shortfall to just two match sessions.
- ◀ Moving training off match pitches at Newton Sports Club, Portico Vine and Sutton Manor KGV in its entirety would address overplay albeit pitches would still be played to capacity.
- ◀ **In conclusion**, current shortfalls can be dealt with through a mixture of improving pitch quality and providing access to more floodlit training pitches or areas. There is not enough spare pitch capacity expressed in the respective areas to meet this level of demand currently or in the future.
- ◀ The additional 2.5 match sessions to cater for anticipated future demand requires access to more pitches.
- ◀ Although demand for rugby league training could constitute provision for at least one full size, floodlit pitch to accommodate both rugby league (and union), there is some concern that most clubs cannot afford to hire an AGP for training and would therefore prefer to use grass.

ST. HELENS

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Recommendations

- ◀ Where pitches are assessed as standard or poor quality, review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain/improve pitch quality.
- ◀ Work to reduce training on match pitches through access to dedicated floodlit training areas, including longer term support for one Community Standard RL AGP.
- ◀ Secure access to primary pitches to meet future demand, particularly at school sites.
- ◀ Work with clubs to ensure appropriate access to ancillary facilities supports provision of pitches/sites.

Hockey pitches (AGPs)

Key issues

- ◀ Selwyn Jones Sport Centre is rated as good quality and has recently been resurfaced. The remaining four sand AGPs are assessed as standard quality.
- ◀ 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.
- ◀ 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.
- ◀ 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.
- ◀ Rainford High Technology College is the only suitable AGP not available during peak time, although use of De La Salle School is limited due to a lack of floodlighting.
- ◀ There are number of potential developments, the most immediate of which includes the loss of one hockey suitable pitch at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground.
- ◀ 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. There is also spare capacity for hockey match play at Selwyn Jones Sports Centre, however, this is not ideal for Prescott HC.

Recommendations

- ◀ To work with Prescott HC to help facilitate membership growth and ensure sufficient access to Sutton Leisure Centre.
- ◀ Work with the Club to access additional AGPs with existing spare hockey capacity at De La Salle School in order to accommodate an increase in future demand.
- ◀ Retain a sufficient level of sand based pitch provision to accommodate current and future demand.

Tennis courts

Key issues

- ◀ A total of 17 courts (29%) assessed as average quality and 16 courts (27%) 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.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

- ◀ 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 four 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 identifies 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 an adequate supply of tennis courts to meet current and future demand, poor quality courts is restricting access and is the priority to address.

Recommendations

- ◀ Improve court quality and prioritise investment to sites which are available for public/community use.
- ◀ Ensure clubs can access the appropriate standard of courts to allow LTA competitions to be played.

Bowling greens

Key issues

- ◀ The number of greens in St. Helens has decreased in recent years and circa. ten greens have been lost.
- ◀ 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.
- ◀ 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 four greens showing evidence of overplay at Vulcan Village, Birchley St Mary's Parochial Club, Chancery Lane and Eccleston BC.
- ◀ There are plans for the development of a new green at Vulcan Village (Earlestown and Newton) 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.

Recommendations

- ◀ Address spare capacity and maximise the availability of bowling greens for pay and play in order to raise the profile of the game, increase levels of membership and the revenue generated by sites.
- ◀ Support clubs which plan to attract younger people through hosting events such as family days as well as establishing links with local primary schools.
- ◀ Where demand exists, ensuring that quality is sustained or improved.

PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategic recommendations for the Strategy have been developed from the key issues cutting across all outdoor sports and categorised under each of the Strategy Aims. They reflect overarching and common areas to be addressed which apply across outdoor sports facilities and may not be specific to just one sport.

AIM 1

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

Recommendations:

- a. Protect sports facilities where there is a need to do so through local planning policy.
- b. Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.
- c. Maximise community use of outdoor sports facilities where there is a need to do so.

Recommendation a – Protect playing field sites through local planning policy

The PPS Assessment shows that all currently used playing field sites require protection and therefore cannot be deemed surplus to requirements because of shortfalls now and in the future. Therefore, based on the outcomes of the PPS, local planning policy should reflect this situation.

NPPF paragraph 74 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

Lapsed and disused refers to playing field sites that formerly accommodated playing pitches but are no longer used for formal or informal sports use within the last five years (lapsed) or longer (disused).

The PPS Assessment shows that all currently used playing field sites require protection and therefore cannot be deemed surplus to requirements because of shortfalls now and in the future. Lapsed, disused, underused and poor quality sites should also be protected from development or replaced as there is a requirement for playing field land to accommodate more pitches to meet the identified shortfalls.

Disused or lapsed playing fields identified in the recommendations below include:

- ◀ John Eddleston Trust Playing Fields (disused cricket field)
- ◀ Rainhill Cricket Club (disused football pitch adjoining cricket field)

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

New housing development - where proposed housing development is located within access of a high quality playing pitch, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further pitch provision or improvements to existing pitches in that area in order to accommodate additional demand arising from that development. The PPS should be used to help determine what impact the new development will have on the demand and capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity or if new provision is required.

The PPS should be used to help inform Development Management decisions that affect existing or new playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities. All applications are assessed by the Local Planning Authority on a case by case basis taking into account site specific factors. In addition, Sport England as statutory consultee on planning applications that affect or prejudice the use of playing field will use the PPS to help assess that planning application against their Playing Fields Policy

Sport England's playing field policy exception E1 only allows for development of lapsed or disused playing fields if a PPS shows a clear excess in the quantity of playing pitch provision at present and in the future across all playing pitch sports types and sizes.

Policy Exception E1:

'A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated to the satisfaction of Sport England that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport'.

Where the PPS cannot demonstrate the site, or part of a site, is clearly surplus to requirements then replacement of the site, or part of a site, will be required to comply with Sport England policy exception E4.

Policy Exception E4:

'The playing field or fields to be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new playing field site or sites:

- ◀ of equivalent or better quality and
- ◀ of equivalent or greater quantity;
- ◀ in a suitable location and
- ◀ subject to equivalent or better management arrangements.

Further to this, all playing fields should be protected or replaced up until the point where all satisfied demand has been met within the study area or each individual sports catchment areas within a sub area.

Each currently disused/lapsed site is included within the action plan together with a recommendation in relation to the need to bring the site back into use or mitigate the loss on a replacement site to address the shortfalls identified with the Assessment.

Local authorities wanting to dispose of school playing field land need consent under Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, but consent is now also required for disposal of any land used by a school or academy under Schedule 1 to the Academies Act 2010. Academies also need consent to any leases or disposals under their Funding Agreement.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

It should be noted that consent under Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act does not necessarily mean subsequent planning approval will be granted. Therefore, any application for planning permission must meet the requirements of the relevant policy, in this case paragraph 74 of NPPF, Local Plan Policy and Sport England policy. Indeed, applicants are advised to engage Sport England before submitting applications. Robust implementation of the statutory obligation will ensure protection of school playing fields for use by pupils (and sometimes the community as a whole) to ensure receipt is ploughed back into sports education.

Recommendation b – Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs through a range of solutions and partnership agreements

There are two sites in St. Helens where security of tenure for the club/user is considered unsecure and existing pitches are at risk from development; Beeches Playing Fields and Sidac Sports. Planning permissions are already in place for these developments and all pitches are set to be replaced, which is further detailed within the action plan against these sites. Further to this is the development of Vulcan Sports Ground where three new pitches are being built to the north of the site.

It also refers to education sites where formal community use agreements are not in place. For example, West Park RFC has ad hoc use of Carmel College

A number of school sites are being used in St. Helens for competitive play, predominately for football. In all cases use of pitches has not been classified as unsecure, however, use is not necessarily formalised and further work should be carried out to ensure an appropriate Community Use Agreement (CUA) is in place (including access to changing provision where required) at the following sites:

- ◀ St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School (Blackbrook FC)
- ◀ Lyme Street Primary School (Earlestown Athletic JFC)
- ◀ Penkford School (Earlestown Athletic JFC)
- ◀ Rainhill High School Media Arts College (New Street FC)
- ◀ Newton Primary School (Newton-le-Willows FC)
- ◀ The District CE Primary School (Newton-le-Willows FC)
- ◀ Hope Academy (Newton-le-Willows FC)
- ◀ Queen's Park Primary School (St. Helens Town JFC)
- ◀ St Theresa's Catholic Primary School (Sutton Junior FC)
- ◀ Ashurst CP School (Young Gate FC)
- ◀ St Peter & St Paul RC Primary School (Young Gate FC)
- ◀ St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School (Young Gate FC)

NGBs can often help to negotiate and engage with schools, particularly academies where the local authority may not have direct influence. For further information on this, please refer to Objective g.

Sport England has also produced guidance, online resources and toolkits to help open up and retain school sites for community use and can be found at:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/accessing-schools/>

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Local sports clubs should be supported by partners including the Council, NGBs or the County Sports Partnership (CSP) to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership working. For example, support club development and encourage clubs to develop evidence of business and sports development plans to generate an income through their facilities. All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC)⁷. Clubs should also be encouraged to work with partners locally whether volunteer support agencies or linking with local businesses.

As well as improving the quality of well-used, local authority sites, there are a number of sites which have poor quality (or no) ancillary facilities. **The Council should further explore opportunities where security of tenure could be granted to the clubs playing on these sites (minimum 25 years as recommended by Sport England and NGBs) so the clubs are in a position to apply for external funding to improve the ancillary facilities.**

Further to this there could be examples in St. Helens where long term leases could be put into place for the continued use of a site. Each club should be required to meet service and/or strategic recommendations. However, an additional set of criteria should be considered, which takes into account the quality of the club, aligned to its long term development objectives and sustainability.

In the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review, which announced public spending cuts, it is increasingly important for the Council to work with voluntary sector organisations in order that they may be able to take greater levels of ownership and support the wider development and maintenance of facilities.

To facilitate this, the Council should support and enable clubs to generate sufficient funds to allow this.

Recommended criteria for lease of sport sites to clubs/organisations

Club	Site
<p>Clubs should have Clubmark/FA Charter Standard accreditation award.</p> <p>Clubs commit to meeting demonstrable local demand and show pro-active commitment to developing school-club links.</p> <p>Clubs are sustainable, both in a financial sense and via their internal management structures in relation to recruitment and retention policy for both players and volunteers.</p> <p>Ideally, clubs should have already identified (and received an agreement in principle) any match funding required for initial capital investment identified.</p> <p>Clubs have processes in place to ensure capacity to maintain sites to the existing, or better, standards.</p>	<p>Sites should be those identified as 'Club Sites' (recommendation d) for new clubs (i.e. not those with a Borough wide significance) but which offer development potential. For established clubs which have proven success in terms of self-management 'Key Centres' are also appropriate.</p> <p>As a priority, sites should acquire capital investment to improve (which can be attributed to the presence of a Clubmark/Charter Standard club).</p> <p>Sites should be leased with the intention that investment can be sourced to contribute towards improvement of the site.</p> <p>An NGB/Council representative should sit on a management committee for each site leased to a club.</p>

⁷ <http://www.cascinfo.co.uk/cascbenefits>

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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

The Council should establish a series of core outcomes to derive from clubs taking on a lease arrangement to ensure that the most appropriate clubs are assigned to sites. As an example outcomes may include:

- ◀ Increasing participation.
- ◀ Supporting the development of coaches and volunteers.
- ◀ Commitment to quality standards.
- ◀ Improvements (where required) to facilities, or as a minimum retaining existing standards.

In addition, clubs should be made fully aware of the associated responsibilities/liabilities when considering leases of multi-use public playing fields.

Community asset transfer

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

The Sport England Community Sport Asset Transfer Toolkit is a bespoke, interactive web based tool that provides a step by step guide through each stage of the asset transfer process: http://archive.sportengland.org/support_advice/asset_transfer.aspx

Recommendation c – Maximise community use of outdoor sports facilities where there is a need to do so

Education sites

In order to maximise community use of educational facilities it is recommended to establish a more coherent, structured relationship with schools. The ability to access good facilities within the local community is vital to any sports organisation, yet many clubs struggle to find good quality places to play and train. In St. Helens pricing policies at facilities can be barrier to access at some of the education sites but physical access and resistance from schools, especially academies, to open up provision is also an issue.

A large number of sporting facilities are located on education sites and making these available to sports clubs can offer significant benefits to both the school/college and the local clubs. The Council and other key partners must work with schools and colleges to develop an understanding of the issues that restrict or affect community access. Support should be provided, where appropriate, to address underlying problems. Consideration should be given to a centralised booking system for community use of schools and colleges to minimise administration and make access easier for the users.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

It is not uncommon for school pitch stock not to be fully maximised for community use. Even on established community use sites, access to grass pitches for community use is limited. The action plan identifies a number of school sites that have the potential to be further used for community use to help meet future shortfalls identified in the Area:

- ◀ Hope Academy for rugby league
- ◀ De la Salle High School AGP for hockey
- ◀ St. Helens College Sports Academy for football
- ◀ St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School for rugby league
- ◀ Ashurst CP School for football
- ◀ St Cuthbert's Catholic Community High School grass pitches for football
- ◀ St Theresa's Catholic Primary School for football
- ◀ Rainford High Technology College grass pitches for football

In some instances, for example, Rainford High and St Cuthbert's grass pitches are unavailable for community use due to poor quality and therefore remedial works will be required before community use can be established.

As detailed earlier, Sport England has also produced guidance, online resources and toolkits to help open up and retain school sites for community use and can be found at:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/accessing-schools/>

AIM 2

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

Recommendation:

- d. Improve quality
- e. Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) for the management and improvement of sites.
- f. Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding

Recommendation d – Improve quality

There are a number of ways in which it is possible to increase pitch quality, including for example, addressing overplay and improving maintenance. These are explored in more detail below.

Addressing quality issues

Generally where pitches are assessed as standard or poor quality and/or overplayed, review/improve maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain/improve pitch quality. Ensuring existing maintenance of good quality pitches continues is also important.

Based on an achievable target using existing quality scoring to provide a baseline, a standard should be used to identify deficiencies and investment should be focused on those sites which fail to meet the proposed quality standard (using the site audit database, provided in electronic format). The Strategy approach to these outdoor sports facilities achieving these standards should be to enhance quality and therefore the planning system should seek to protect them.

For the purposes of the Quality Assessments, this Strategy will refer to pitches and ancillary facilities separately as Good, Standard or Poor quality. In St. Helens, for example, some good quality sites have poor quality elements i.e. changing rooms or a specific pitch.

Good quality refers to pitches that have, for example, a good maintenance regime coupled with good grass cover, an even surface, are free from vandalism, litter etc. In terms of ancillary facilities, good quality refers to access for disabled people, sufficient provision for referees, juniors/women/girls and appropriate provision of showers, toilets and car parking. For rugby union, a good pitch is also pipe and/or slit drained.

Standard quality refers to pitches that have, for example, an adequate maintenance regime coupled with adequate grass cover, minimal signs of wear and tear, goalposts may be secure but in need of minor repair. In terms of ancillary facilities, standard quality refers to adequately sized changing rooms, storage provision and provision of toilets. For rugby union, drainage is natural and adequate.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Poor quality refers to pitches that have, for example, poor levels of maintenance coupled with inadequate grass cover, uneven surface and damage. In terms of ancillary facilities, poor quality refers to inappropriate size of changing rooms, no showers, no running water and old dated interior. For rugby union, drainage is natural and inadequate.

Please refer to the Sport England/NGB quality assessments. Sites played beyond capacity may require remedial action to help reduce this.

In terms of ancillary facilities, poor quality refers to inappropriate size of changing rooms, no showers, no running water and old dated interior. The following sites were highlighted as poor quality and in need of refurbishment:

- ◀ Newton Sports Club
- ◀ Bishop Road Playing Field
- ◀ Portico Vine ARLFC
- ◀ Ruskin Drive Sports Ground (currently being replaced)
- ◀ Haydock KGV Playing Field
- ◀ Parr Stocks Playing Fields
- ◀ Sutton Cricket Club
- ◀ Liverpool St. Helens RFC
- ◀ Rainford Tennis Club
- ◀ Rainford Rangers FC
- ◀ Holt Field, Rainhill
- ◀ Newton KGV Playing Fields

Without appropriate, fit for purpose ancillary facilities, good quality pitches may be underutilised. Changing facilities form the most essential part of this offer and therefore key sites such as those mentioned above should be given priority for improvement.

In order to prioritise investment into key sites **it is recommended that the steering group works up a list of criteria, relevant to the Area, to provide a steer on future investment.**

For improvement/replacement of AGPs refer to Sport England and the NGBs 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface for Hockey, Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union' document for a guide as to suitable AGP surfaces:

www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Addressing overplay

In order to improve the overall quality of the playing pitches stock; it is necessary to ensure that pitches are not overplayed beyond recommended weekly carrying capacity. This is determined by assessing pitch quality (via a non-technical site assessment) and allocating a weekly match limit to each. Each NGB recommends a number of matches that a good quality pitch should take:

Sport	Pitch type	No. of matches		
		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*	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		

* 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.

There are also a number of sites that are poor quality but are not overplayed. These sites should not be overlooked as often poor quality sites have less demand than other sites but demand could increase if the quality was to increase. Improving pitch quality should not be considered in isolation from maintenance regimes.

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

There is also a need to balance pitch improvements alongside the transfer of play to alternative pitch sites. Therefore, work with clubs to ensure that sites are not played beyond their capacity and encourage play, where possible, to be transferred to alternative venues which are not operating at capacity.

Increasing pitch maintenance

Standard or poor grass pitch quality may not just be a result of poor drainage. In some instances ensuring there is an appropriate maintenance for the level/standard of play can help to improve quality and therefore increase pitch capacity. Each NGB can provide assistance with reviewing pitch maintenance regimes.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

For example, the FA, ECB and RFL in partnership have recently introduced a Pitch Advisor Scheme and has been working in partnership with Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) to develop a Grass Pitch Maintenance service that can be utilised by grassroots football clubs with the simple aim of improving the quality of grass pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide football clubs with advice/practical solutions on a number of areas, with the simple aim of improving the club's playing surface.

In relation to cricket, maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of the sport. If the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous. The ECB recommends full technical assessments of wickets and pitches available through a Performance Quality Standard Assessment (PQS). The PQS assesses a cricket square to ascertain whether the pitch meets the Performance Quality Standards that are benchmarked by the Institute of Groundsmanship. Please note that PQS assessments are also available for other sports.

Recommendation e – Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) for the management and improvement of sites

To allow for facility developments to be programmed within a phased approach the Council should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of playing pitch sites and associated facilities. Please refer to Part 6 and Part 7: Action Plan for the proposed hierarchy.

Recommendation f – Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding

Partners, led by the Council, should ensure that appropriate funding secured for improved sports provision is directed to areas of need, underpinned by a robust strategy for improvement in playing pitch facilities.

In order to address the community's needs, to target priority areas and to reduce duplication of provision, there should be a coordinated approach to strategic investment. In delivering this recommendation the Council should maintain a regular dialogue with local partners and through the Playing Pitch Steering Group.

Some investment in new provision will not be made by the Council directly, it is important, however, that the Council therefore seeks to direct and lead a strategic and co-ordinated approach to facility development by education sites, NGBs, sports clubs and the commercial sector to address community needs whilst avoiding duplication of provision.

Please refer to Appendix Two for further funding information which includes details of the current opportunities, likely funding requirements and indicative project costs.

Sport and physical activity can have a profound effect on peoples' lives, and plays a crucial role in improving community cohesion, educational attainment and self-confidence. However, one of sport's greatest contributions is its positive impact on public health. It is therefore important to lever in investment from other sectors such as health and wellbeing for example.

AIM 3

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

Recommendations:

- g. Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock.
- h. Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.

Recommendation g - Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock

The Council and its partners should work to rectify identified inadequacies and meet identified shortfalls as outlined in the Assessment Report and the sport by sport specific recommendations.

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

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

There may be an opportunity to use some senior pitches to provide senior, junior or mini pitches (through different line markings/coning areas of the pitch). However, further work should be undertaken on this as an action for the Council/NGBs. Furthermore the re-designation of adult pitches that are not currently used may lead to a deficiency of adult pitches in the medium to longer term as younger players move up the ages. It is likely that for some sports, particularly football, that the provision of new pitches and facilities will be required in the future to support the predicted future demand.

Unmet demand, changes in sport participation and trends, and proposed housing growth should be recognised and factored into future facility planning. Assuming an increase in participation and housing growth occurs, it will impact on the future need for certain types of sports facilities. Sports development work also approximates unmet demand which cannot currently be quantified (i.e., it is not being suppressed by a lack of facilities) but is likely to occur. The following table highlights the main development trends in each sport and their likely impact on facilities. However, it is important to note that these may be subject to change.

Furthermore, retaining some spare capacity allows some pitches to be rested to protect overall pitch quality in the long term. Therefore, whilst in some instances it may be appropriate to re-designate a senior pitch where there is low demand identified a holistic approach should be taken to re-designation for the reasons cited. The site-by-site action planning will seek to provide further clarification on where re-designation is suitable.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Likely future sport-by-sport demand trends

Sport	Future development trend	Strategy impact
Football	The needs of the game will change significantly from the 2013/14 season with the implementation of the FA Youth Development Review. As a result, pitch demands will change. This could also see changes in the seasonal demand of pitches (youth football).	Consider re-allocating leases to Community Charter Standard clubs with a large number of teams. Work with clubs to identify facility development opportunities. Work with clubs in relation to their pitch demands as a result of the FA Youth Development Review.
	Demand for senior football is likely to be sustained based on current trends and the move to small sided football. County FA focus to maintain growth of youth football through to adults.	Sustain current stock but consideration given to reconfigure pitches if required.
	An increase in women and girls football following £2.4m investment over the next two years (2014-2016) from Sport England to increase the number of women and girls taking part in football sessions.	A need to provide segregated ancillary facilities and the potential need for more pitches.
Cricket	Demand is likely to remain static in St. Helens for both grass and non turf wickets for both junior and adult participation.	Isolated pockets of demand for access to additional facilities where pitches are operating at capacity i.e. Rainford CC.
	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.	Support clubs to ensure access to segregated changing and toilet provision and access to good quality cricket pitches to support growth.
Rugby union	The Rugby World Cup (2015) is predicted to see a further increase in the demand for rugby provision.	Clubs are likely to field more teams in the future. It is important, therefore, to work with the clubs to maintain the current pitch stock and to support facility development where appropriate.
Rugby league	RFL is working towards growing rugby league participation in St. Helens, including through growth at junior clubs, Play Touch RL and 9 aside RL.	Sustain current levels of access to grass pitches and improve pitch quality/capacity to accommodate current and future growth. Seek 3G pitch venues for Play Touch and grass pitches for 9 aside.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Sport	Future development trend	Strategy impact
AGPs	<p>Demand for 3G pitches for competitive football will increase. It is likely that future demand for the use of 3G pitches to service competitive football, particularly mini and youth will result in some reduced demand for grass pitches.</p> <p>Provision of 3G pitches which are World Rugby compliant will help to reduce overplay as a result of training on rugby pitches.</p> <p>RFL is seeking 3G venues to grow Touch RL in St. Helens.</p> <p>Some likely growth at Prescot HC, however, not sustainable enough to create demand for an additional pitch. Spare capacity to be utilised at existing sites.</p>	<p>Ensure that access to new AGP provision across the Borough is maximised and that community use agreements are in place.</p> <p>Utilise Sport England/NGB guidance on choosing the correct surface: http://www.sportengland.org/media/30651/Selecting-the-right-artificial-surface-Rev2-2010.pdf</p>
Bowls	<p>The general trend of demand for bowling greens remains static and is not thought likely that future demand will result in the need for new greens.</p>	<p>Current and future demand for bowling greens is being met by provision in St. Helens.</p>
Tennis	<p>It is likely that future demand for access to tennis courts in St. Helens will generally remain static.</p>	<p>Isolated pockets of demand to access additional courts i.e. Eccleston Park Tennis Club.</p> <p>Poor quality courts, especially parks courts, will require future investment in order to retain usage, even for recreational play. Increasing court capacity through floodlighting and/or increasing the quality of parks provision could build in future capacity to accommodate growth.</p>

Recommendation h - Identify opportunities to add to the overall pitch stock to accommodate both current and future demand

The Council should use, and regularly update, the Action Plan within this Strategy for improvements to its own pitches whilst recognising the need to support partners. The Action Plan lists improvements to be made to each site focused upon both qualitative and quantitative improvements as appropriate for each area.

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

Some sites (or adjacent land) in St. Helens also have the potential to accommodate more pitches which may be a solution to meeting shortfalls identified as is further explored within the action plan.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

It is important to consider that identified options for additional outdoor sports provision are likely to require planning permission. In which case, relevant national and local planning policy will apply to the proposals and all relevant material considerations taken into account.

Where proposals involve existing playing fields (including lapsed or disused), Sport England as a statutory consultee will apply their policy as outlined above.

PART 6: ACTION PLAN

Introduction

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

It should be reviewed in the light of staff and financial resources in order to prioritise support for strategically significant provision and provision that other providers are less likely to make. Recommendation e below explains the hierarchy of priorities on the list. It is imperative that action plans for priority projects should be developed through the implementation of the strategy.

The Council should make it a high priority to work with NGBs and other partners to comprise a priority list of actions based on local priorities, NGB priorities and available funding.

Recommendation - Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites

To allow for facility developments to be programmed within a phased approach the Council should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of playing pitch sites and associated facilities.

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

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

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Tiered site criteria

1. Strategic sites	2. Key centres	3. Local or Education sites
Strategically located in the Borough. Priority sites for NGB.	Strategically located within the analysis area.	Serves the local community.
Accommodates three or more grass pitches. Including provision of an AGP.	Accommodates two or more grass pitches.	Accommodates more than one pitch.
Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision.
Management control remains within the local authority/other provider or with an appropriate lease arrangement through a committee or education owned.	Management control remains within the local authority or with an appropriate club on a lease arrangement.	Club either has long-term lease/hires the pitch for the entire season or owns the site. Management control remains within the local authority/other provider or with an appropriate lease arrangement through a committee or education owned.
Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Standard maintenance regime either by the club or in house maintenance contract.
Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Appropriate access changing to accommodate both senior and junior use concurrently (if required).

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

The financial, social and sporting benefits which can be achieved through development of strategic sites (also known as hub sites) are significant. Sport England provides further guidance on the development of community sports hubs at:

<http://www.sportengland.org/media/122050/document-15-sustainable-community-sports-hub-toolkit-.pdf>

Where development of Strategic sites includes provision of 3G pitches for football it is **recommended that further modelling/feasibility work is carried out to ensure sustainability of new 3G pitches to accommodate competitive fixtures. However, as a priority consultation should be carried out with leagues/clubs to gauge acceptance/buy in of moving competitive play to 3G pitches in the future.**

2. Key centres although these sites are more community focused, some are still likely to service a wider analysis area (or slightly wider). However, there may be more of a focus on a specific sport i.e. a dedicated site.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

From a football perspective, these sites already seek to accommodate the growing emphasis on football venues catering for youth football (especially mini-soccer) matches. The conditions recommended for mini and youth football are becoming more stringent. This should be reflected in the provision of a unique tier of pitches for mini and youth football solely that can ensure player safety, as well as being maintained more efficiently. It is anticipated that both youth and mini-football matches could be played on these sites. Initial investment could be required in the short term and identified in the Action Plan.

Additionally, it is considered that some financial investment will be necessary to improve the ancillary facilities at both Strategic sites and Key Centre sites to complement the pitches in terms of access, flexibility (i.e. single-sex changing if necessary), quality and that they meet the rules and regulations of local competitions.

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

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

In addition there are a handful of sites which are considered low value for football in particular in St. Helens which if re provided on local strategic or key centres could be reallocated as open space or informal pitches. These have been categorised as potential **Reserve sites** within the action plan.

Management and development

The following issues should be considered when undertaking sports related site development or enhancement:

- ◀ Financial viability.
- ◀ Security of tenure.
- ◀ Planning permission requirements and any foreseen difficulties in securing permission.
- ◀ Adequacy of existing finances to maintain existing sites.
- ◀ Business Plan/Masterplan – including financial package for creation of new provision where need has been identified.
- ◀ Analysis of the possibility of shared site management opportunities.
- ◀ The availability of opportunities to lease sites to external organisations.
- ◀ Options to assist community groups to gain funding to enhance existing provision.
- ◀ Negotiation with landowners to increase access to private strategic sites.
- ◀ Football investment programme/3G pitches development with The FA.

ST. HELENS

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Action plan column explanation

Site ID

The unique reference given to the site as part of the playing pitch audit carried out as part of the Playing Pitch Assessment.

Site

Name of the playing field(s) or facility where sports are played.

Sport

Sport(s) known to be played on pitch(es)

Management

The body responsible for the playing pitch(es) including matters such as booking and maintenance. This does not necessarily reflect ownership of the site.

Current status

Summary of the pitches on the site taken from the Assessment Report including, amongst other information the number of pitches, their condition, teams who play on them and their capacity.

Recommended actions

Actions that are recommended to address the issues identified at the site in the Assessment report. These recommendations are in line with three Strategic Aims (set out in part 5).

Partners

The column indicating Partners refers to the main organisation that the Council will liaise with in helping to deliver the actions. This should automatically include the land owner of the site (where different from the management). The next stage in the development of the action plan will be to agree a Lead Partner to help deliver the actions.

Site hierarchy tier and priority level

Strategic sites have a **high** priority level as they have Borough wide importance and have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the key issues identified in the assessment.

Key centres are a **medium** priority and have analysis area importance and have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the issues identified in the assessment.

Low priority sites are club or education sites with local specific importance and have been identified on a site by site basis as issues appertaining to individual sites but that may also contribute to addressing the issues identified in the assessment.

ST. HELENS

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Costs

The strategic actions have also been ranked as low, medium or high based on cost. The brackets in which these sit are:

(L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above. These are based on Sport England's estimated facility costs which can be found at www.sportengland.org/media/198443/facility-costs-4q13.pdf

Timescales

The action plan has been created to be delivered over a ten year period. The information within the Assessment Report, Strategy and Action Plan will require updating as developments occur. The timescales relate to delivery times and are not priority based.

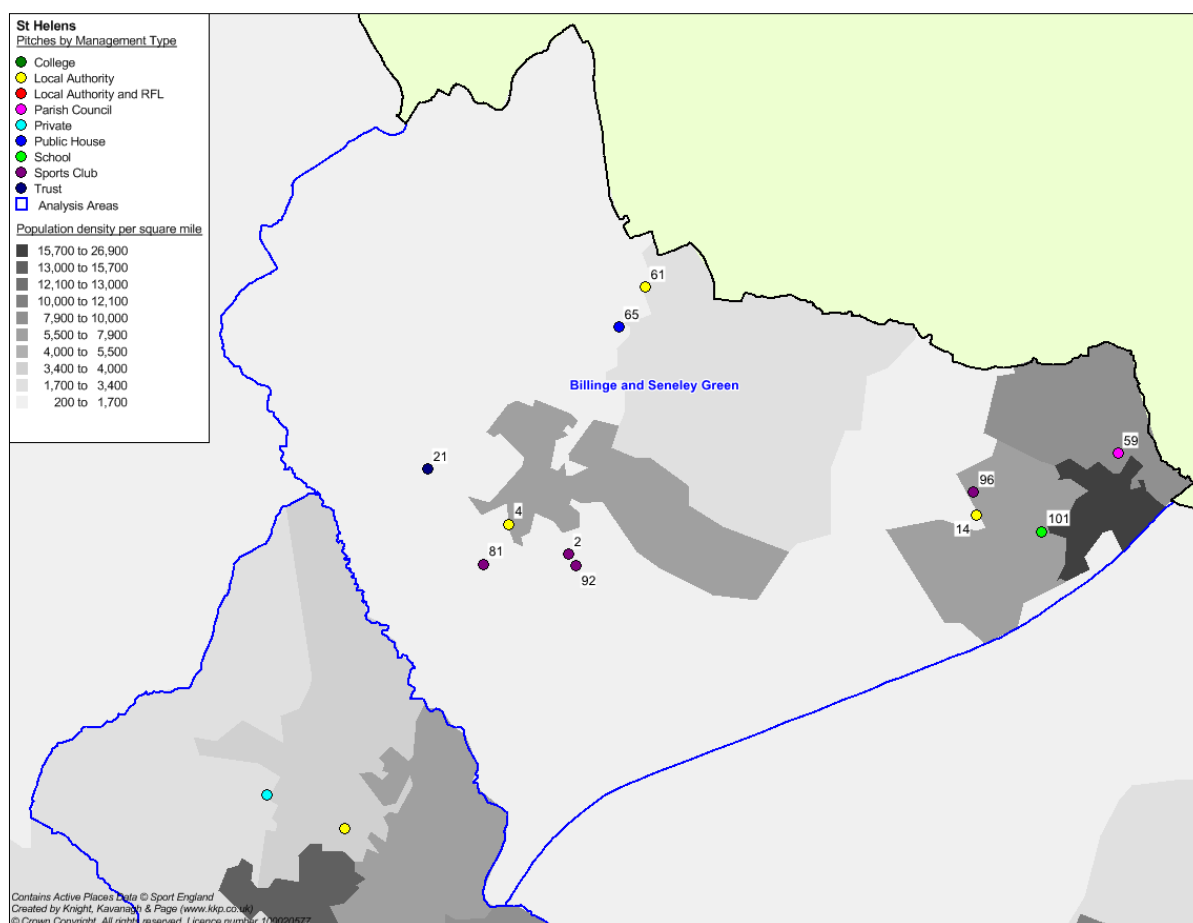
Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

Aim

Each action seeks to meet at least one of the three aims of the Strategy as detailed above; **Enhance, Provide, Protect.**

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

BILLINGE & SENELEY GREEN AREA



Football

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 2 adult and 1 youth 9v9 match sessions.	Shortfall of 2 adult, 0.5 youth 11v11, 1.5 youth 9v9 and 1.5 mini 5v5 match sessions.

- ✦ Some overplay on adult pitches in the Area as a result of standard quality pitches. Improving quality will address this level of overplay.
- ✦ Small amount of actual spare capacity which should be retained as required to help improve/protect quality.
- ✦ Potential for additional pitches at John Eddleston Playing Fields to meet shortfalls identified.
- ✦ Shortfall of five 3G pitches based on FA training model across the Borough.

Cricket

Summary of grass pitches required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Rugby union

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

Rugby league

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Future demand can be met.

- ◀ Poor quality pitch at Birch Grove Playing Fields (Garswood Stags ARLFC).

Hockey (sand AGPs)

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

Tennis

- ◀ There are enough courts that are available for community use to accommodate both the current and future demand.
- ◀ All park courts are free to use for the community, however, quality is an issue and often prevents use.
- ◀ No tennis courts within schools are available for community use.

Bowls

- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, as the majority of bowling greens are considered to have spare capacity. However, further investigation will be required to determine any loss.
- ◀ The majority of greens are good quality.

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ⁸	Cost ⁹	Aim
2	Billinge Football Club	Football	Sports Club	One good quality adult pitch played capacity including use by youth teams. No spare capacity for further use. Is a FA Step 7 ground.	Continue to maintain and improve standard of maintenance in order to sustain level of use. Work towards improvements to meet Step 6 ground grading requirements where appropriate.	Club FA	Local	M	M	Enhance
4	Birchley St Mary's Playing Field	Football	Local Authority	One standard quality adult pitch used by Billinge FC youth teams. No peak time spare capacity. No changing facilities on site.	Consider as a reserve site for football if teams can be relocated and pitch re provided at John Eddleston Playing Fields.	Council FA	Reserve	S	L	Enhance
14	Garswood Recreation Field	Football	Local Authority	Currently undergoing maintenance work, due to be available for 2015/16 season with intentions to be marked as 9v9.	Secure use for Seneley & Garswood FC in order to alleviate overplay at Birch Grove Playing Fields.	Council FA	Local	S	L	Protect
21	John Eddleston Playing Fields	Football	Trust	Two standard quality adult pitches predominately used by Billinge FC youth teams with minimal spare capacity.	Develop as a football hub site. Retain spare capacity to help improve/sustain quality. Explore potential for development of two more pitches to meet identified football shortfall on disused cricket area.	Trust Council FA	Local Football hub	S	L-M	Provide Enhance
59	Birch Grove Playing Fields	Football	Parish Council	Two adult, one 9v9 and one 5v5 used by Seneley & Garswood FC. All pitches of standard quality and overplayed except 5v5 which has spare capacity, though not available at peak time.	Secure use of Garswood Recreation Field in order to alleviate overplay on 9v9 pitch. Work to increase pitch quality and investigate options to transfer play to other sites to reduce overuse.	Parish Council FA	Key Centre	S	L-M	Enhance
		Rugby league		One poor quality senior pitch used by Garswood Stags ARLFC every other week. Spare capacity of 0.5 match sessions available at peak time. New club with potential growth.	Seek to improve pitch quality and ensure maintenance is appropriate for levels of use. Retain spare capacity to accommodate future growth.	Parish Council		M	M	Enhance
61	Bankes Park	Tennis	Local Authority	Two good quality macadam courts unused by local clubs.	Maximise opportunities for pay and play and informal tennis within the local community.	Council LTA	Local	S	L	Protect
65	Eagle & Child Pub (Billinge)	Bowls	Public House	One good quality crown green with spare capacity available.	Continue to ensure green provision and security of tenure at pub site.	Pub	Local	L	L	Protect
81	Birchley St Mary's Parochial Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One good quality crown green overplayed by 22 members.	Seek use of additional green provision in order to transfer play to reduce overuse.	Sports Club	Local	S	L	Protect
92	Nugent Fields	Football	Sports Club	Five standard quality pitches, comprised of two 5v5, two 7v7 and one 9v9. Used by Billinge FC mini and youth teams and subsequently spare capacity is not accessible at peak time.	Seek options to improve quality in order to build future capacity.	Sports Club FA	Local	M	M	Enhance
96	The Wooders	Football	Sports Club	One good quality adult pitch used by Garswood United FC adult and youth teams. Spare capacity available but not at peak time. Is an FA Step 7 ground.	Work towards improvements to meet Step 6 ground grading requirements where appropriate, including floodlighting and covered spectator area to enable promotion to North West Counties Football League.	Sports Club FA	Local	S-M	M	Enhance
101	Garswood Primary School	Football	School	One standard quality 7v7 pitch used by Seneley & Garswood FC and Town Green Athletic FC mini teams. Spare capacity of one match session but no peak time availability.	Work with the school to maintain relationship and ensure continued access for community use.	School FA	Local	L	L	Protect
9907	North Ashton Village Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One adequate quality private green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	M	L	Protect

⁸ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

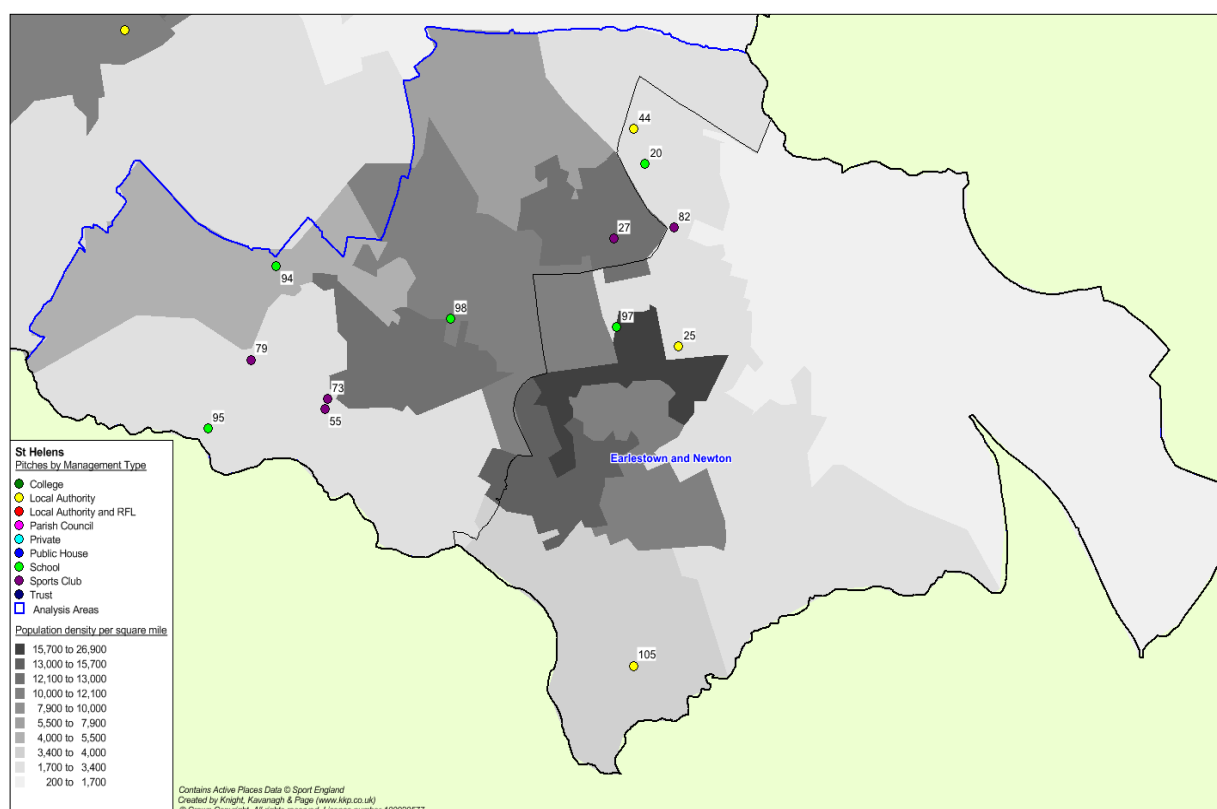
⁹ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ⁸	Cost ⁹	Aim
9908	Garswood and Simms Road Labour Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One adequate quality private green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	M	L	Protect

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

EARLESTOWN & NEWTON AREA



Football

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 2.5 adult, 6 youth 11v11 and 4.5 youth 9v9 match sessions.	Shortfall of 2.5 adult, 6 youth 11v11 and 4.5 youth 9v9 match sessions.

- Current shortfalls are a result of overplay due to poor quality pitches, particularly at Hope Academy which is significantly overplayed. Improving pitch quality will significantly help to address shortfalls.
- No peak time capacity and any spare capacity which should be retained as required to help improve/protect quality.
- Shortfall of five 3G pitches based on FA training model across the Borough.

Cricket

Summary of grass pitches required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Future demand can be met.

- Although demand is being met there is no peak time capacity and pitches are of standard quality.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Rugby union

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Shortfall of 0.5 match sessions.

- ◀ Newton Sports Club is used to capacity and pitch is standard quality.

Rugby league

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 5 match sessions.	Shortfall of 5 match sessions.

- ◀ Main pitch at Newton Sports Club is standard quality and overplayed resulting in the shortfalls expressed.

Hockey (sand AGPs)

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

- ◀ Selwyn Jones Sports Centre is unused for club/community hockey and is considered too far for access by Prescot HC.

Tennis

- ◀ There are enough courts that are available for community use to accommodate both the current and future demand.
- ◀ All park courts are free to use for the community, however, quality is an issue and often prevents use.
- ◀ No tennis courts within schools are available for community use.

Bowls

- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, as the majority of bowling greens are considered to have spare capacity. However, further investigation will be required to determine any loss.
- ◀ The majority of greens are good quality.

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

KKP Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ¹⁰	Cost ¹¹	Aim
20	Hope Academy	Football	School	One adult overplayed from school use and no community use. Two youth pitches significantly overplayed and used by Newton-le-Willows FC. All pitches are poor quality which is causing overplay.	Improve pitch quality of all pitches and remark adult pitch to accommodate youth community use. Also explore on site options to create more youth pitches possibly overmarked on rugby league pitch.	School FA	Education	L	L	Enhance
		Rugby league		One junior pitch available for community use but not used.	Explore potential to establish community use through a formal use agreement, if local demand exists.	School		S-M	L	
		Tennis		Eight hard polymeric surface courts separated into two areas, each floodlit with four courts. Also marked for small sided football but no community use for tennis.	Explore potential to establish community use through a formal use agreement, if local demand exists.	LTA				
25	Mesnes Park	Football	Local Authority	One adult and two mini pitches, all poor quality. Adult pitch is overplayed by 2.5 matches per week. Juniors including Earlestown Athletic JFC using adult pitches in additional to 2 adult Vulcan FC teams.	Improve pitch quality in order to help address overplay/shortfalls. Once adult pitches are re provided as part of Vulcan Sports Ground mitigation package relocate adult teams and remark as a youth pitch to accommodate shortfalls.	Council FA	Key Centre	S	L-M	Protect Enhance
		Bowls		Two good quality greens with over a greens worth of spare capacity available for additional use.	Maintain green quality whilst maximising potential for pay and play and casual use. Consider potential to accommodate overplay at other local sites such as St Patrick's Social Centre.	Council		L	L	
		Tennis		Two average quality macadam courts with floodlights. No current community use but likely casual use in summer.	Maximise opportunities for pay and play and casual use. Explore potential for use by Newton TC to accommodate displaced demand.	LTA		S	L	
27	Newton Sports Club	Football	Sports Club	One good quality adult pitch unavailable at peak time. Poor quality ancillary facilities.	Consider a joint funding bid across all sports to provide improved ancillary facilities.	Sports Club FA	Strategic	S	H	Protect Enhance
		Cricket		One standard quality square with 15 grass wickets and one non turf wicket. No peak time capacity on grass wickets. Homeground to Newton-le-Willows CC. Net facilities are tired and in need of repair and renovation. Poor quality ancillary facilities. Highlighted by the Club as a key issue.	Improve quality in order to build future capacity. Explore funding opportunities for net refurbishment. Consider a joint funding bid across all sports to provide improved ancillary facilities.	Sports Club LCCB		M	M	
		Rugby union		One standard quality pitch (M1/D1) used to capacity. Although homeground to Newton-le-Willows RFC the pitch is also used by rugby league teams. The back of the site where the rugby union pitch is located is owned by the Council. Poor quality ancillary facilities. Highlighted by the Club as a key issue.	Improve pitch quality in order to build future capacity. Explore options for mitigation package for improvements including floodlighting from Vulcan Sports Ground. Consider a joint funding bid across all sports to provide improved ancillary facilities.	Sports Club RFU		S	M	
		Rugby league		One standard quality pitch overplayed by five sessions per week. Used by Newton Storm ARLFC. Poor quality ancillary facilities. Highlighted by the Club as a key issue.	Explore option for access to additional pitch linked to re provision of pitches at Vulcan Sports Ground development. Consider a joint funding bid across all sports to provide improved ancillary	Sports Club RFL		S	M	

¹⁰ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

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

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

KKP Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ¹⁰	Cost ¹¹	Aim
		Tennis		Three average shale quality courts used by Newton TC. Poor quality ancillary facilities. Unmet demand of one senior team for league fixtures, currently displaced playing in Wigan.	facilities. Support club in continuing to deliver junior coaching and increasing junior membership. Ascertain potential for use of local floodlit courts such as Mesnes Park to accommodate displaced match play.	Sports Club LTA		S	L	
44	Selwyn Jones Sports Centre	AGP	Local Authority	One good quality sand dressed floodlit AGP refurbished in 2012. Community use currently extends to football training demand with no club hockey use. Used to capacity midweek but spare capacity at weekends.	Explore potential for AGP to be refurbished as 3G in order to meet future demand for competitive football in the Borough and in partnership with Newton-le-Willows FC. This would be based on future hockey growth being accommodated and secured at De La Salle School which is not currently available for community use.	Council FA EH	Education	M-L	H	Provide
55	Earlestown CC	Cricket	Sport Club	One standard quality square with 10 grass wickets. No spare capacity at adult peak times. However, there is spare capacity for junior teams playing midweek as the Club has no junior teams.	Improve quality in order to build future capacity.	LCCB	Local	M	M	Enhance
73	Viaduct Sports & Social Club	Bowls	Sport Club	One average quality green with spare capacity for additional play.	Sustain/improve quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
79	St Patrick's Social Centre	Bowls	Sport Club	One good quality green overplayed by approximately 25 members.	Ensure appropriate green maintenance is applied in order to sustain current quality and usage.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
82	Newton-le-Willows Conservative Club	Bowls	Sport Club	One good quality green. Private bowls club likely to be able to accommodate future demand.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
94	Lyme Street Primary School	Football	School	One standard quality mini pitch used by Earlestown Athletic JFC and no spare capacity at peak time.	Improve pitch quality through ensuring appropriate maintenance regime is in place.	School FA	Education	S-M	L-M	Enhance
95	Penkford School	Football	School	One standard quality youth 9v9 pitch used by Earlestown Athletic JFC and no spare capacity at peak time.	Improve pitch quality through ensuring appropriate maintenance regime is in place.	School FA	Education	S-M	L-M	Enhance
97	Newton Primary School	Football	School	One standard quality mini pitch used by Newton-le-Willows FC and no spare capacity at peak time.	Improve pitch quality through ensuring appropriate maintenance regime is in place.	School FA	Education	S-M	L-M	Enhance
98	The District CE Primary School	Football	School	One standard quality mini pitch used by Newton-le-Willows FC and no spare capacity at peak time.	Improve pitch quality through ensuring appropriate maintenance regime is in place.	School FA	Education	S-M	L-M	Enhance
105	Vulcan Village Playing Fields	Football	Local Authority	One standard quality youth 9v9 pitch which is used to capacity by Vulcan FC.	Review usage/spare capacity following development of new pitches as part of Vulcan Sports Ground proposals.	Council FA	Reserve	M	L	-

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

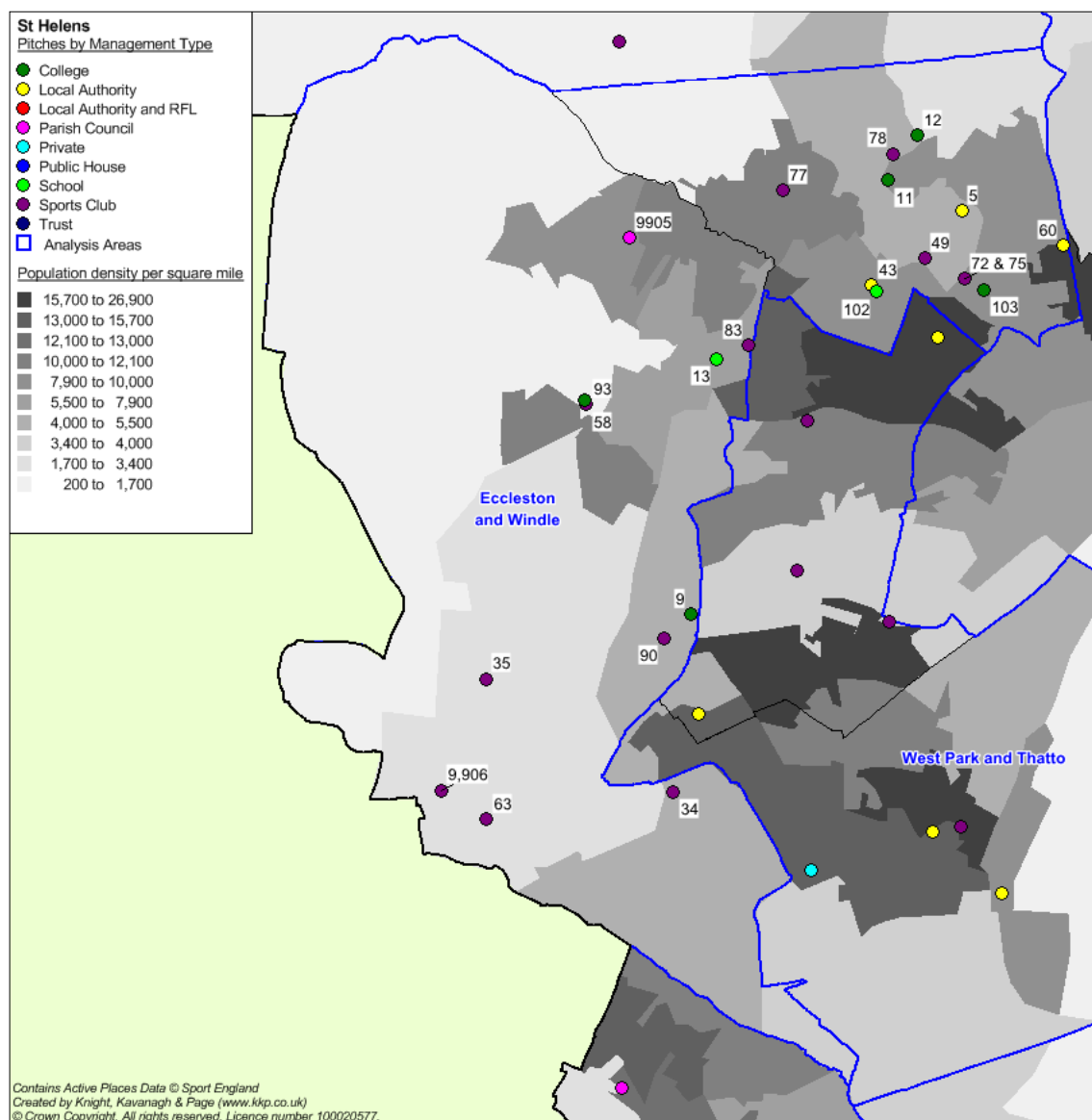
KKP Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim
-	Vulcan Sports Ground	Football/ rugby league/ union	Private	Site privately owned and set for housing development. Three new pitches are being built to the north and will be additional. It is anticipated that Vulcan FC will manage one and the Council the remaining two which will also form part of the Public Open Space. Formerly used by rugby league and union teams. For example, Vulcan RUFC amalgamated with Newton le Willows RUFC playing at Newton Sports Club. Floodlighting provision for the rugby club (servicing both rugby league and union) is very poor and the quality of the pitch is also poor. There is also a shortfall of rugby league match sessions identified in the Area.	Ensure a partnership approach to securing adequate mitigation which reflects existing shortfalls identified in this Strategy. Amended plans have been submitted that now include a rugby pitch as per the s106 agreement.	Council FA RFL RFU SE	-	S-M	H	-
		Bowls		One average quality green overplayed by approximately 68 members of Vulcan BC. Site owned privately owned and set for housing development including re provision of one new green. Repositioning of facilities to allow for the future development of a second green. Discussions are underway regarding an inspired facilities bid to meet the construction costs.	Seek alternative green provision if required in the interim whilst site is under development. Establish security of club tenure when new green is constructed onsite. Investigate secondary green access in order to alleviate overplay.				L	

¹² Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

¹³ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

ECCLESTON & WINDLE AREA



Football

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 1 youth 11v11 and 0.5 youth 9v9 match sessions.	Shortfall of 1.5 youth 11v11, 0.5 youth 9v9 match sessions.

- Overplay in the Area is a result of standard and poor quality pitches.
- Small amount of actual spare capacity which should be retained as required to help improve/protect quality.
- Potential for additional pitches at John Eddleston Playing Fields to meet other shortfalls identified.
- Shortfall of five 3G pitches based on FA training model across the Borough.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Cricket

Summary of grass pitches required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Future demand can be met.

- Reduction of one cricket square (Ruskin Drive) would not affect current or future capacity in the Area.

Rugby union

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 1 match session	Shortfall of 1 match session

- Poor/standard quality pitches and a shortfall of floodlit pitches is resulting in pitches being overplayed in the Area.

Rugby league

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 8.2 match sessions.	Shortfall of 8.2 match sessions.

- Poor/standard quality pitches is generally resulting in the shortfall of pitches.

Hockey (sand AGPs)

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected. However, potential use of existing provision to accommodate future demand from Prescott HC.

- Reduction of one sand based AGP to 3G will not affect current or future demand for hockey in the area if spare capacity for hockey can be accommodated at De la Salle High School.

Tennis

- There are enough courts that are available for community use to accommodate both the current and future demand.
- All park courts are free to use for the community, however, quality is an issue and often prevents use.
- No tennis courts within schools are available for community use.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Bowls

- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, as the majority of bowling greens are considered to have spare capacity. However, further investigation will be required to determine any loss.
- ◀ The majority of greens are good quality.

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ¹⁴	Cost ¹⁵	Aim
5	Bishop Road Playing Field	Football	Local Authority	Three adult pitches in standard condition with spare capacity and one mini pitch in poor condition unused. Site also has poor quality ancillary facilities.	Convert adult pitches to youth pitches to meet shortfalls and address overplay at other sites in the Area.	Council	Local	S	L	Provide
9	Carmel College	Football	College	Two adult pitches in poor condition. Room for additional playing capacity but unavailable for community use due to College fixtures.	Seek options to improve quality but retain for school use.	College	Education	M	L-M	Enhance Provide
		AGP		One 3G pitch (100x40) standard quality and well used for football and rugby training. Dimensions mean it is unsuitable for older junior and senior teams despite World Rugby certification for contact skill practice.	Ensure sinking fund is in place for future refurbishment of the carpet.	College FA		M	H	
		Rugby league		One senior pitch in standard condition. Some use by West Park RFC.	Formalise use of the site for West Park RFC. Explore options to remark as a rugby union pitch and maximise use.	College RFU		S	L	
11	Cowley International College	AGP	College	One medium pile 3G pitch (60mx90m) used for football and rugby. Played to capacity for midweek training, however, pitch is FA uncertified.	Maximise use of the site for competitive football and ensure FA pitch certification is gained.	College FA	Education	S	L	Protect
		Tennis		Three poor quality tarmac courts unavailable for community use.	No local demand for community use retain for school use.	School		L	L	
12	Cowley Language College Playing Fields	Rugby league	College	One good condition pitch following previous investment from St. Helens RLFC and is exclusively used by the Club. Two standard condition pitches are available for community use but unused.	No current local demand for use of the pitches. Retain for College use.	College	Education	L	L	Protect
13	De la Salle High School	Football	School	One poor quality youth 11v11 pitch available but unused for community use but is overplayed.	Seek options to improve quality but retain for school use.	School	Education	M	L-M	Enhance
		Rugby league		Two standard condition pitches are available for community use but unused.	No current local demand for use of the pitches. Retain for school use.			L	L	
		Hockey		Sand filled AGP not floodlit. Although the pitch is used to capacity for football, there is weekend capacity for hockey use if opened up.	Work with the School to establish future hockey use to accommodate potential future demand from Prescott HC currently playing at Sutton Leisure Centre.	School EH		S-M	L	
		Tennis		Five standard quality tarmac courts unavailable for community use.	No local demand for community use retain for school use.	School		L	L	
34	Portico Vine ARLFC	Rugby league	Sports Club	Three senior pitches all in poor condition overplay by five matches per season. Poor quality ancillary facilities.	Improve pitch quality and transfer play to Grange Park KGV to alleviate overplay. Seek funding options to improve pitch quality and ancillary facilities including car parking and changing provision.	Club Council RFL	Local	S-M	M	Enhance

¹⁴ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

¹⁵ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ¹⁶	Cost ¹⁷	Aim
35	Prescot & Odyssey Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports Club	Two squares with nine and 13 grass wickets respectively each square also has a non turf wicket. Three clubs use the grass wickets and Last Man Standing uses the non turf wickets. Both squares have some spare capacity. Prescot & Odyssey CC plans to increase by one team next season.	Ensure appropriate maintenance is applied in order to sustain quality. Retain spare capacity for future club growth.	LCCB	Local	L	L	Protect
		Bowls		One good quality private green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club		L	L	
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Football	Local Authority	Three adult grass football pitches overplayed by 1.5 match sessions per week and in poor condition.	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 (commencing October 2015) with a new changing facilities to serve all sports teams on the site.	Council FA RFU RFL LCCB SE	Strategic Football hub	S-M	H	Enhance Provide
		AGP		Full size sand filled floodlit AGP. Used to capacity for football training but unused for hockey as no local demand.	To be replaced by a 3G pitch within development plans for the site. Ensure business plan is refreshed to take account of rugby and football usage.					
		Rugby union		One pitch in poor condition (M0/D1). 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. Ancillary facilities are also poor quality. Identified demand for additional teams.	Planned developments for the site would not affect Ruskin Park RFC. However, a new changing block will be provided and intentions are for a 3G AGP to be World Rugby Regulation 22 which the Club would be able to have some use of as existing resident users.					
		Cricket		Two squares with 16 and 10 grass wickets respectively. Homeground to St. Helens CC. One pitch is overmarked onto football pitches but is unused.	Development plans for the site include the loss of one cricket square which currently overlaps football pitches. No demand is identified in the Area to retain the cricket pitch.					
		Rugby league		One pitch of standard quality heavily used (including for training) by Pilkington Recs RLFC resulting in overplay of 2 match sessions per week.	Rugby league pitch will be ready for Jan 2016. Council plans for the development of the site include a 3G AGP suitable for rugby league training and match play. New changing block will be ready Jan/Feb 2016.					

¹⁶ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

¹⁷ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ¹⁸	Cost ¹⁹	Aim
43	Ruskin Drive Sports Ground	Bowls	Local Authority	Two standard quality greens. Club reports issues with grass length and maintenance. Development plans for the site include refurbishment and resurfacing to improve the quality of the greens and the new changing facility will be for use by bowls clubs.	Improve quality and ensure appropriate maintenance is in place. Consider greens for self-management in the future.	Council	Strategic	S-M	H	Enhance Provide
		Tennis		Three poor quality clay courts. Club reports a decline in membership due to poor quality facilities.	Improve court quality as part of overall site development. Club to benefit from improved changing.	Council LTA				
49	Windleshaw Sports Ground (Previously St. Helens Cricket Club)	Football	Sports Club	One standard condition adult pitch with some minimal spare capacity at peak time. Good quality changing provision.	Retain spare capacity in order to help improve/sustain quality.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
58	Eccleston Lions ARLFC	Rugby league	Sports Club	One senior pitch in poor condition overplayed by 1.5 match sessions per week. No changing on site.	Improve pitch quality and seek access to St. Helens College Pitches (adjacent) for access to changing.	Club	Local	S-M	M	Enhance
				Disused bowling green on site.	Further investigate local demand.	Council		S	L	
60	Victoria Park	Bowls	Local Authority	Two good quality macadam courts recently refurbished.	Ensure maintenance is appropriate to help sustain court quality.	Council	Local	L	L	Protect
63	Eccleston Park Tennis Club	Tennis	Sports Club	Three shale and two euro clay courts, all good quality with two floodlit recently refurbished. Club reports demand for an additional court.	Explore options to develop an additional court on site or alternatively seek options for access to courts in the Area e.g. De la Salle High School.	LTA	Local	M-L		
72	Bishop Road Police Club Green	Bowls	Sports Club	One good quality private green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
75	Unison Sports & Social Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One good quality private green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
77	St. Helens Parish Church Bowling Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One good quality private green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
78	Windle Bowling Club	Bowls	Sports Club	Two good quality private greens, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
83	Greenall Social Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One good quality private green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
90	West Park RFC	Rugby union	Sports Club	Two senior pitches with adequate maintenance (M1) and natural adequate drainage (D1). Pitch One is not floodlit and is overplayed by one session per week. Pitch Two is floodlit and also accommodates all training and is overplayed by 3.5 sessions per week. Key need for access to additional pitches and floodlit training facilities. Partial refurbishment of changing facilities complete but club requires access to six changing rooms. Club is also in the process of purchasing its main pitch from owners Pilkingtons. Identified demand for additional teams.	In order to address overplay investigate potential for access to additional land/pitches in the local Area together with additional floodlighting options at home ground. Ensure maintenance of existing pitches is appropriate for levels of use. Support club where possible to complete ancillary facility refurbishment.	RFU Club Council	Local	S-M	M-H	Provide Enhance

¹⁸ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

¹⁹ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

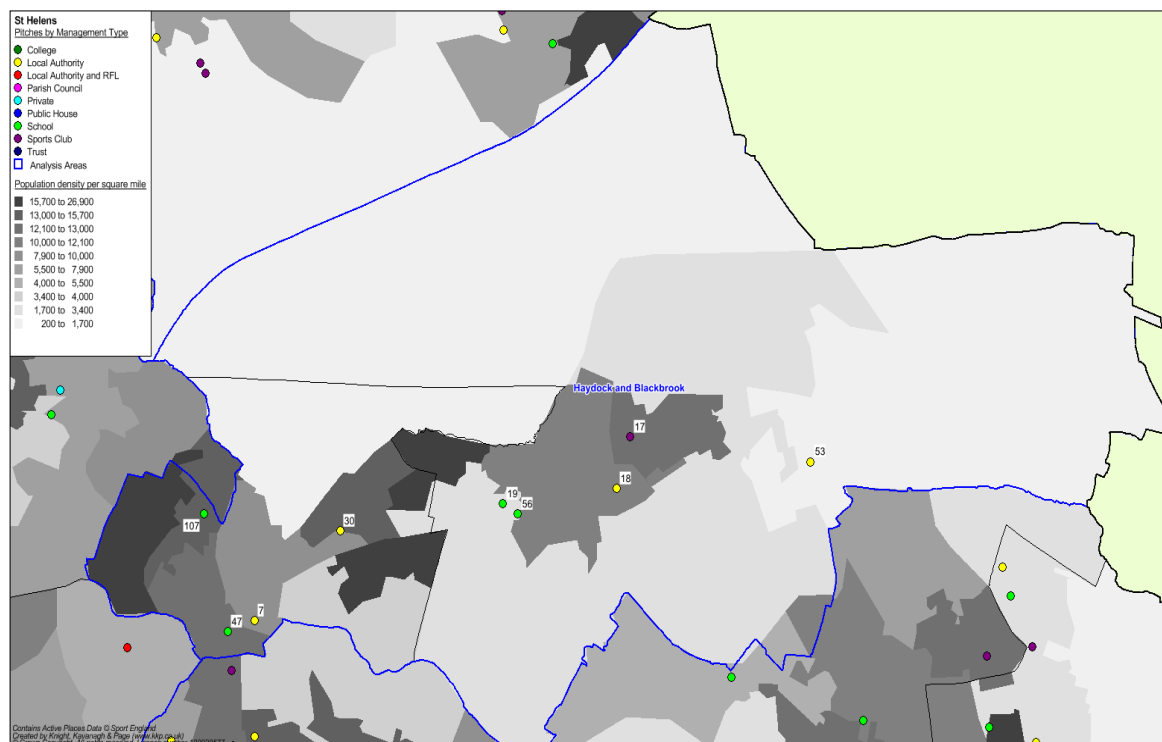
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ²⁰	Cost ²¹	Aim
93	St. Helens College Sports Academy Pitches	Football	College	One adult pitch in standard condition. Room for additional capacity at peak time.	Seek to improve pitch quality where possible through improved maintenance. Maximise use.	College FA	Education	L-M	S-M	Enhance
102	Queens Park Primary School	Football	School	One youth and two mini pitches all in standard condition. Used by St Helens Town JFC. No peak time capacity and youth pitch is slightly overplayed.	Seek to improve pitch quality and address overplay through improved maintenance.	School FA	Education	L-M	S-M	Enhance
103	Cowley Wynne Road Playing Field	Football	Cowley Language College	One youth pitch in standard condition with peak time capacity. Used by St. Helens Town JFC. No changing provision on site. Saints RLFC also trains here.	Seek to improve pitch quality where possible through improved maintenance. Maximise use to meet Area shortfalls.	FA	Local	S	L	Enhance
		Cricket		Available but unused artificial wicket.	Explore potential use for Last Man Stands.	LCCB		S	L	
9905	Eccleston Playing Field	Football	Parish Council	Two adult, three mini and three youth pitches all in poor condition. Youth 11v11 pitches are overplayed. Adult pitches have peak time spare capacity. Predominately used by Bleak Hill Rovers FC. Standard quality changing provision.	Improve pitch quality. Remark one adult pitch as youth 11v11 to cater overplay. Possible for FA Pitch Improvement Programme.	FA	Key Centre	S	M	Enhance
9906	Eccleston Lane Ends Recreation Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One good quality private green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect

²⁰ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

²¹ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

HAYDOCK & BLACKBROOK AREA



Football

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 6.5 adult, 1.5 youth 11v11 and 1 youth 9v9 session.	Shortfall of 6.5 adult, 1.5 youth 11v11, 1 youth 9v9 and 1 mini 5v5 match sessions.

- ⚡ Shortfall is a result of overplayed pitches in the Area as a result of standard and poor quality pitches.
- ⚡ Small amount of actual spare capacity which should be retained as required to help improve/protect quality.
- ⚡ Shortfall of five 3G pitches based on FA training model across the Borough.

Cricket

Summary of grass pitches required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Future demand can be met.

Rugby union

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Rugby league

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 3.75 match sessions.	Shortfall of 4.25 match sessions.

- ◀ Overplay in the Area is generally a result of standard and poor quality pitches.

Hockey (sand AGPs)

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

Tennis

- ◀ No current or future demand identified for courts.

Bowls

- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, as the majority of bowling greens are considered to have spare capacity. However, further investigation will be required to determine any loss.
- ◀ The majority of greens are good quality.

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ²²	Cost ²³	Aim
7	Blackbrook McDonald Ave Playing Fields	Football	Local Authority	One adult football pitch in standard condition. Used by Blackbrook FC but with peak time spare capacity. Good quality changing provision.	Retain spare capacity in order to help improve/sustain pitch quality.	Council	Local	S	L	Enhance
		Rugby league		One senior pitch in poor condition and overplayed by one session per week. Dips in one corner and gathers water. Limited maintenance. Used by Blackbrook ARLFC.	Improve pitch quality in order to address overplay and ensure maintenance is appropriate to levels of use. Link to Blackbrook ARLFC homeground.	Club		M	M	
6	Blackbrook ARLFC	Rugby league	Sport Club	One senior floodlit pitch in standard condition and overplayed by one match per week. Pitch has got slightly worse due to overuse and limited maintenance. Undulating but drainage is good. Standard quality changing provision.	Improve pitch quality in order to address overplay and ensure maintenance is appropriate to levels of use.	Club RFL	Local	M	M	Enhance
17	Haydock Cricket Club	Cricket	Sport Club	One standard quality square with 16 wickets overplayed by 11 matches per season. This is due to the additional use contributed by the two senior teams from Lostock CC temporarily using the ground, amounting to 36 matches per year beyond Haydock CC fixtures.	Overplay at the present time is only a temporary measure and the return of Lostock CC to Bolton and a newly built ground later this year will not only eliminate any overplay but in fact create actual spare capacity at adult peak time.	LCCB	Local	L	L	Protect
		Bowls	Sports Club	One good quality private green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	
18	Haydock KGV Playing Field	Football	Local Authority	Three adult pitches in poor condition overplayed by two sessions per week. Public access is an issue. Predominately used by Haydock FC. Poor quality changing provision.	Improve pitch quality and seek options to control public access. Seek funding options to improve ancillary facilities including changing and car parking. In the longer term explore options for access to additional land to meet current and future demand expressed by the Club.	Council FA	Key Centre Football hub	M	M-H	Enhance
		AGP		One half size 3G pitch with flood lighting which accommodates football/rugby.	Maximise use for rugby training to help alleviate some overplay from the grass pitches.	Council		S	L	
		Rugby league		One senior pitch in standard condition which is only slightly overplayed. Used by Haydock ARLFC. Poor quality changing provision.	Explore potential use of Haydock High School Fields to alleviate overplay and build school club links.	Club RFL		S	L	
		Bowls		One standard quality green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Council		L	L	
30	Park Street Playing Fields	Football	Local Authority	Two mini pitches (7v7) in poor condition. One pitch is available in the peak period. Poor quality changing provision.	Seek to improve pitch quality where possible through improved maintenance. No requirement for changing facilities. Explore options to consolidate with Vista Playing Fields.	Council	Local/ Reserve	L	L	Enhance

²² Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

²³ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

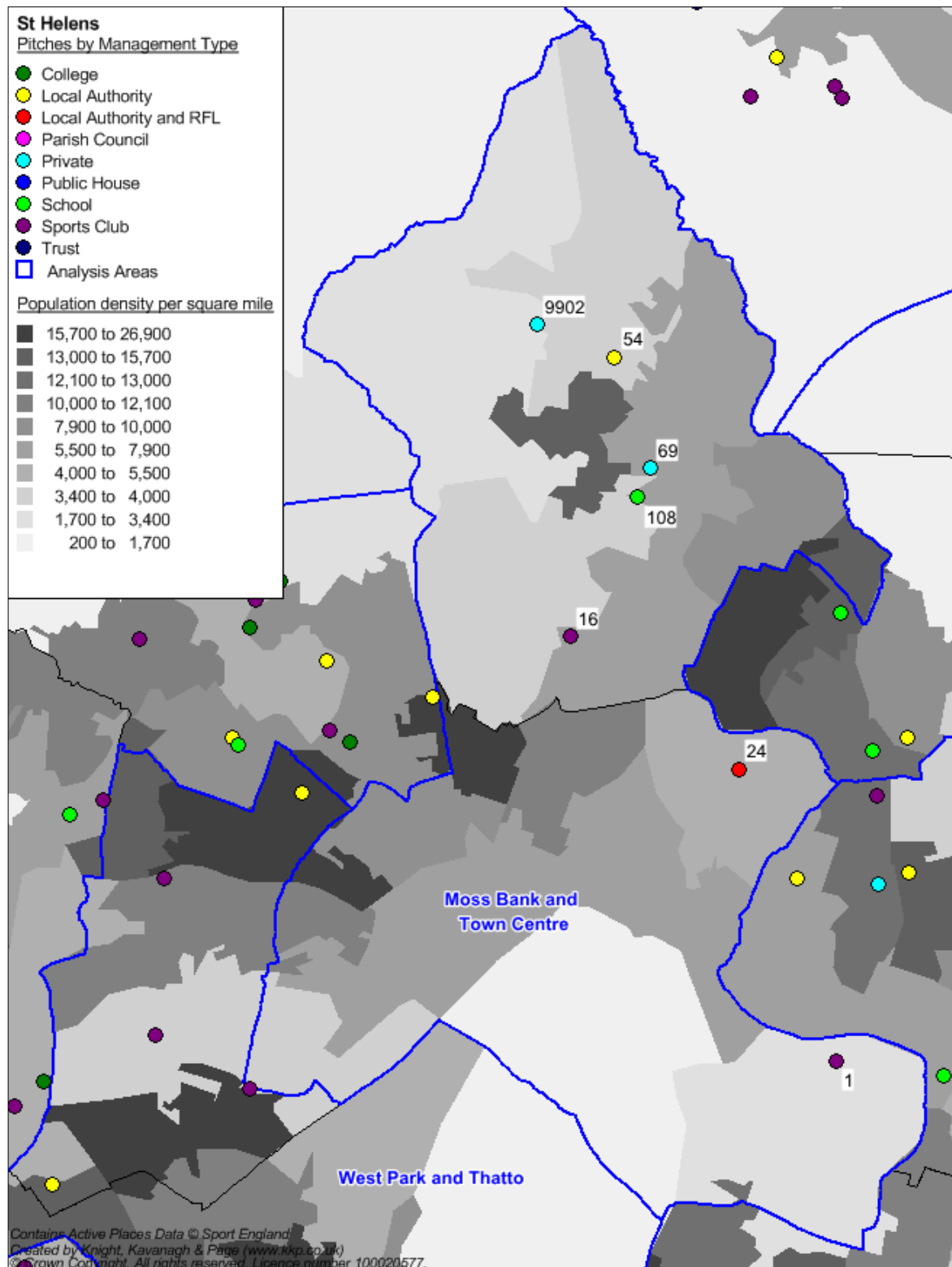
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ²⁴	Cost ²⁵	Aim
47	St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School	Rugby league	School	Two senior rugby league pitches in poor condition available for community use but unused. Pitches are now fenced which has helped to increase quality by reducing unofficial use.	Ensure appropriate maintenance is applied for levels of use. Explore future community use for Blackbrook ARLFC.	School	Education	S	L	Enhance Provide
		Football		Two adult pitches in poor condition used for community use and with school use is overplayed by five sessions per week. Pitches are now fenced which has helped to increase quality by reducing unofficial use.	Ensure appropriate maintenance is applied for levels of use.			S	L	
		AGP		Half size (60x33) sand dressed AGP with floodlighting used to capacity for football training.	Ensure sinking fund is in place for future replacement and consider change to 3G surface.			M	M	
56	Haydock High School Fields	Rugby league	School	Two senior pitches in poor condition available for community use but unused due to quality.	Improve pitch quality and establish community use for Haydock ARLFC.	School RFL	Local	S	M	Enhance
		Football		Two youth pitches (9v9, 11v11) both standard condition and both overplayed. Used by Haydock FC.	Ensure appropriate maintenance is applied for levels of use.	School		S	L	
53	Vista Playing Fields	Football	Local Authority	Two mini pitches (7v7) in poor condition. One pitch is available in the peak period. No changing provision.	Seek to improve pitch quality where possible through improved maintenance. No requirement for changing. Explore options to consolidate with Park Street Playing Fields.	Council	Local/ Reserve	L	L	Enhance
107	Ashurst CP School	Football	School	One mini (7v7) pitch in standard condition. Used for community use but one pitch is available at peak times.	Ensure appropriate maintenance is applied for levels of use. Seek options to maximise use of the site.	School	Education	S	L	Provide
19	Haydock Leisure Centre	AGP	School	Half size AGP (60x34). No floodlighting standard condition. Used to capacity for football training.	Ensure sinking fund is in place for future replacement and consider change to 3G surface.	School	Education	M	M	Enhance

²⁴ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

²⁵ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

MOSS BANK & TOWN CENTRE AREA



ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Football

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Shortfall of 0.5 mini 7v7 and 0.5 mini 5v5 match sessions.

- ◀ Current spare capacity expressed across all pitch types in the Area.
- ◀ Small amount of future shortfall is a result of overplayed pitches in the Area caused by standard and poor quality pitches at specific sites.
- ◀ Shortfall of five 3G pitches based on FA training model across the Borough.

Cricket

Summary of grass pitches required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	Future demand can be met.

Rugby union

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

Rugby league

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Future demand can be met.

- ◀ Poor and standard quality pitches in the Area. Spare capacity expressed could be used to address shortfalls from other Areas.

Hockey (sand AGPs)

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

Tennis

- ◀ No current or future demand identified for courts.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Bowls

- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, as the majority of bowling greens are considered to have spare capacity. However, further investigation will be required to determine any loss.
- ◀ The majority of greens are good quality.

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

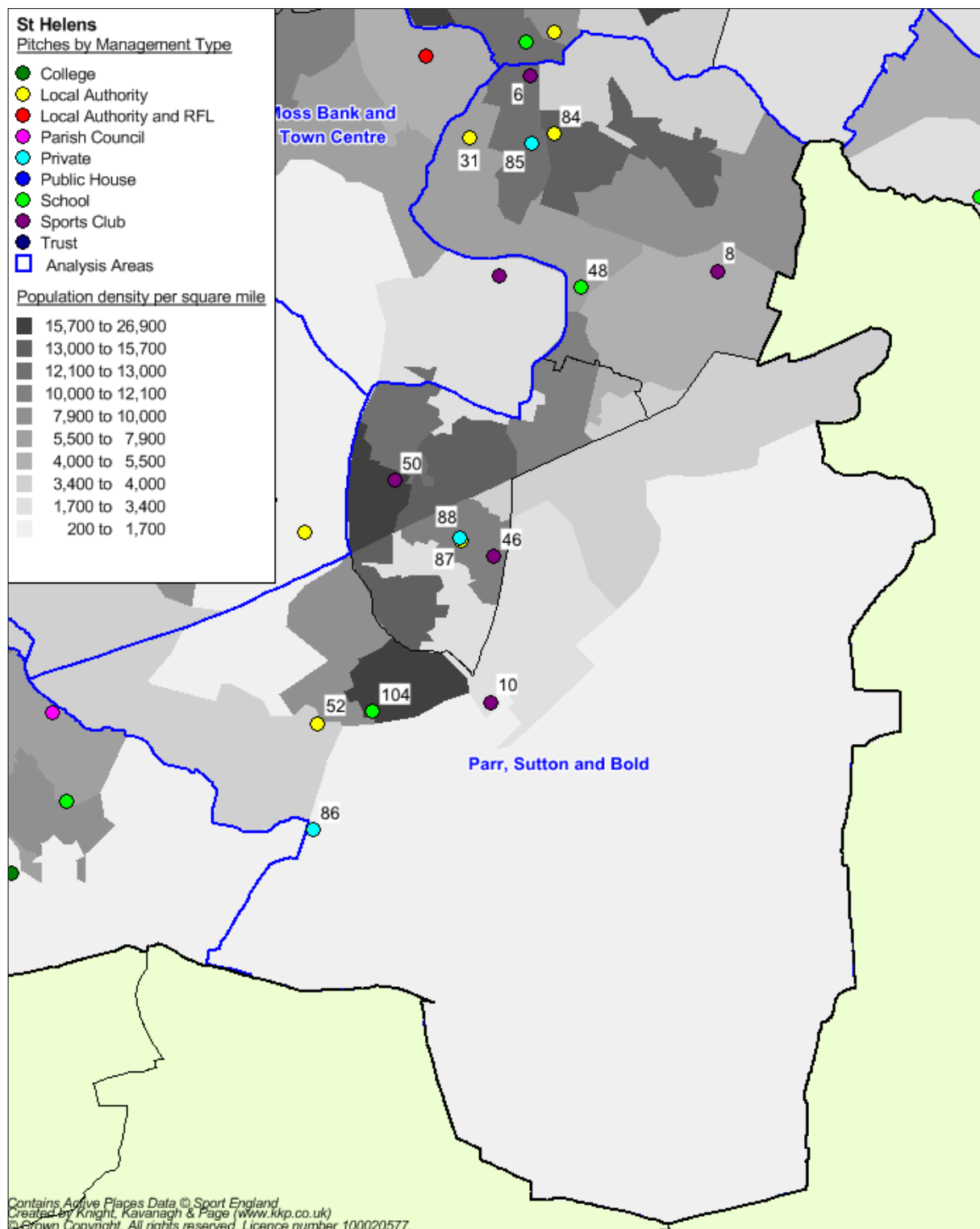
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ²⁶	Cost ²⁷	Aim
1	Beeches Playing Fields	Football	Sport Club	Two adult, two mini and one youth pitch, all in poor condition with no peak time capacity and some overplay. Used by Penlake JFC. Unsecured site due to pending housing development at the site. Proposals are subject to suitable alternative pitch provision being made.	Consider replacement pitches at Cromdale Grove Open Space. Site adjoins St Cuthbert's High School where there is also potential for a development a 3G pitch.	Council FA SE	-	S-M	H	-
-	Cromdale Grove Open Space	-	Local Authority	Currently open space with potential for three adult pitches.	Further investigate feasibility to re provide pitches from Beeches Playing Fields as part of S106 Agreement.	Council FA	Local	S-M	H	Provide
16	Haresfinch ARLFC	Rugby league	Sport Club	One senior pitch in standard condition with floodlighting. Spare capacity for 1.25 match sessions per week.	Maximise use of the site to cater for overplay/shortfalls from either Blackbrook ARLFC or Pilkington Recs ARLFC.	Club RFL	Local	S	L	Provide
24	Merton Bank Playing Fields	Football	Local Authority and RFL	Four pitches in poor condition (one adult, two mini and one youth) with spare capacity on the adult pitch. Used by Blackbrook FC. One adult pitch is owned by RFL.	Improve pitch quality. Possible for FA Pitch Improvement Programme. Asset Transfer of RFL owned pitch to the Club. Consider this in relation to the management of the rest of the site.	Council RFL FA	Key Centre	S-M	M	Enhance
54	Windermere Avenue	Rugby league	Local Authority	One poor quality senior pitch played to capacity. Used by Carr Mill Bears ARLFC which does not play league matches but trains weekly. Subject to unofficial use. No changing facility.	Improve quality and seek options for funding for changing facility linked to increased use for Portico ARLFC. If football teams can be transferred elsewhere consider conversion to rugby league linked to use by Portico ARLFC.	Council RFL	Local	M-L	M	Enhance Provide
		Football		One adult pitch standard quality with peak time availability. No changing facility.						
69	Carr Mill Hotel Pub	Bowls	Private	One good quality private greens, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
108	St Peter & ST Paul RC Primary School	Football	School	One youth pitch (9v9) in standard condition with a small amount of peak time capacity for further community use.	Retain spare capacity in order to help sustain/improve pitch quality.	School	Education	S	L	Enhance
9902	Black Horse Pub	Bowls	Private	One standard quality private greens, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect

²⁶ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

²⁷ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

PARR, SUTTON & BOLD AREA



ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Football

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Shortfall of 1.5 youth 9v9 and 0.5 mini 5v5 match sessions.

- ◀ Small amount of future shortfall is a result of overplayed pitches in the Area caused by standard and poor quality pitches at specific sites.
- ◀ Some spare capacity which could be used to accommodate other football formats and meet shortfalls in other pitch types.
- ◀ Shortfall of five 3G pitches based on FA training model across the Borough.

Cricket

Summary of grass pitches required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Future demand can be met.

Rugby union

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

Rugby league

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 1 match session	Shortfall of 1 match session

- ◀ Poor and standard quality pitches resulting in overplay/shortfalls.
- ◀ Some spare capacity which could service shortfall in other pitch types.

Hockey (sand AGPs)

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

Tennis

- ◀ No current or future demand identified for courts.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Bowls

- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, as the majority of bowling greens are considered to have spare capacity. However, further investigation will be required to determine any loss.
- ◀ The majority of greens are good quality.

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Aim
8	Bold Miners ARLFC	Football	Sports Club	Two adult and one mini pitch all standard quality and with some peak time capacity.	Ensure appropriate maintenance is applied for levels of use.	Club FA RFL	Local	S	L	Enhance Provide
		Rugby league		One pitch in poor condition (slopes and drainage is poor). Club folded in February 2015 and as such the pitch is now unused, however, there may be future potential to restart the Club.	Retain as strategic reserve in the event that the Club reforms and review the situation annually.					
-	Bold Miners Community Centre	Bowls	Sports Club	One green disused for the past five years.	To be brought back into use as a replacement green for Smithy Manor Pub and to be used by Bold BC (previously Smithy Manor BC).	Club Council	Local	S	M	Provide
10	Clock Face Recreation Club	Football	Sports Club	One adult and one mini pitch (7v7) both in poor condition. Adult pitch is overmarked with rugby.	No further use to be considered. Ensure appropriate maintenance is applied to help improve/sustain quality.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
		Rugby league		Four pitches (two senior, two primary) of standard quality and played to capacity. Good quality changing provision. Club also using Lindsey Street Open Space for mini team training venue but no pitch marked.	No further use to be considered. Ensure appropriate maintenance is applied to help improve/sustain quality. Consider marking pitch at Lindsey Street.			L	L	
31	Parr Stocks Playing Fields	Football	Local Authority	Four adult pitches of poor quality one pitch available at peak time. Used by a range of teams. Also poor quality changing.	Seek options to improve pitch quality and changing facilities. Convert one adult pitch to mini pitches to meet shortfalls identified.	Council	Key Centre	M	M	Enhance
46	Sidac Sports	Football	Sports Club	Two adult, one mini and one youth pitch, all standard quality with no peak time capacity. Unsecured site due to pending housing development at the site. Proposals are subject to suitable alternative pitch provision being made.	Seek potential grass solution at Sherdley Park and potential 3G pitch development at Sutton Leisure Centre.	Council FA SE	-	M	H	Provide
48	St Cuthbert's Catholic Community High School	Football Rugby league	School	One youth (9v9) pitch in poor condition played to capacity by the School. Available to the community but unused due to poor quality. One poor quality senior pitch. The full extent of its use is unclear. The School is part of the RFL Champion Schools Programme.	Improve pitch quality. Possible site for FA Pitch Improvement Programme. Potential site for provision of a 3G pitch linked to demand from Penlake JFC. Further to this there is a need a football/rugby 3G pitch in the Area. The Council, school, RFL and FA to liaise to find an acceptable solution in relation to potential 3G pitch development which would affect continued provision of the rugby pitch. Establish the strategic need for any future proposals within the Area but on a different site, if required.	Council FA School RFL	Education Football Hub	S-M	M-H	Enhance Provide
		Tennis		Two poor quality tarmac courts unavailable for community use.	No local demand for community use retain for school use.	School		L	L	
		AGP		Small (62x35) sand filled AGP with floodlighting used for football training.	Ensure sinking fund is in place for future refurbishment.	School		L	L	
50	Sutton Cricket Club	Cricket	Sport Club	One square with 16 wickets and good condition and no peak time capacity. Minor remedial work required to the pitch. Poor quality changing provision which does not meet league requirements.	Sustain pitch quality and seek options for funding to make necessary improvements to changing provision.	LCCB Club	Local	S	M	Enhance

²⁸ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

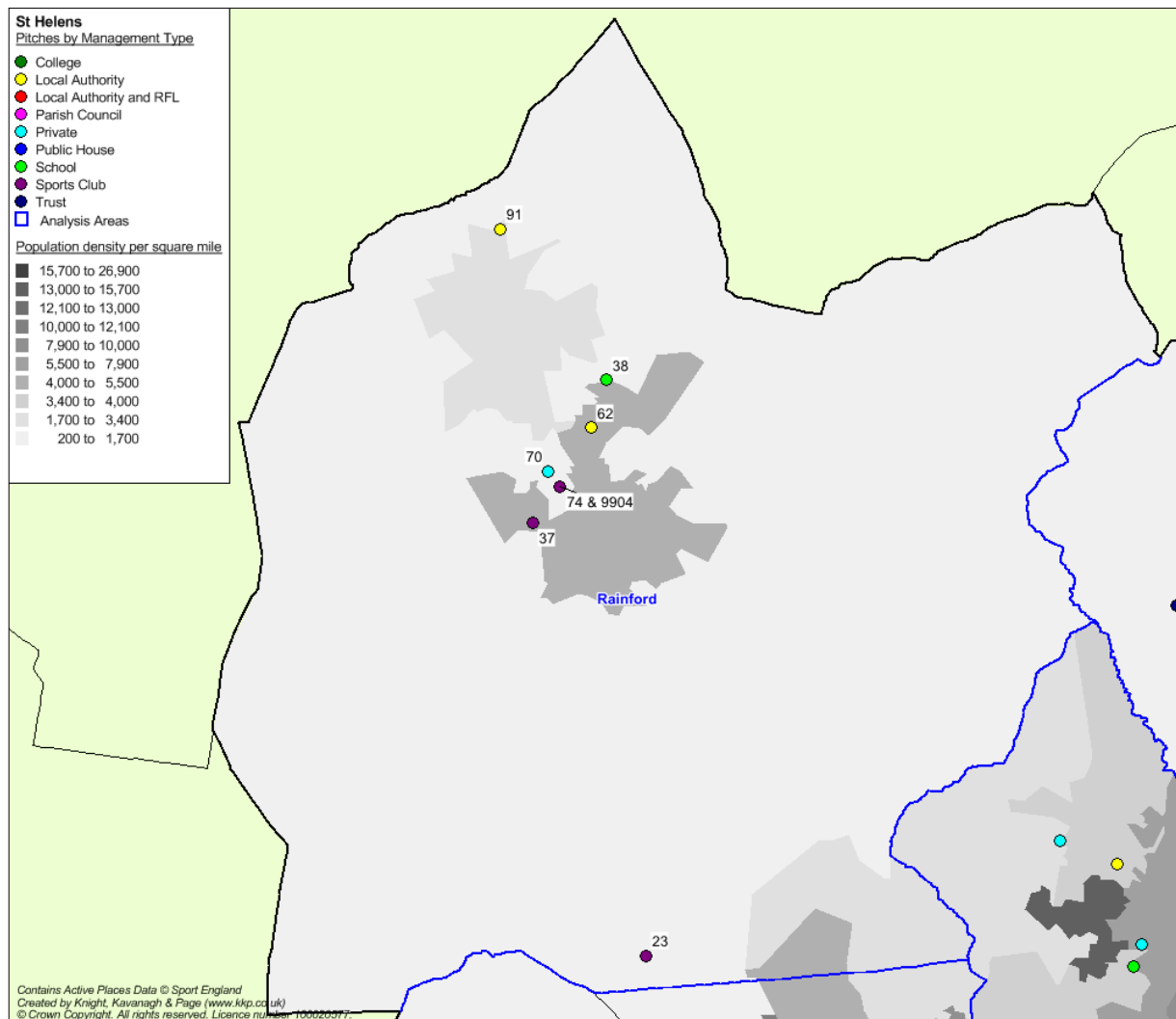
²⁹ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Aim
52	Sutton Manor KGV Playing Fields	Football	Local Authority	Two adult pitches in standard condition and one pitch available at peak time.	Improve pitch quality. Explore potential to convert one adult football pitch to rugby to meet overplay of the existing rugby pitch.	Council	Local	M	M	Enhance Provide
		Rugby league		One poor quality senior pitch overplayed by two matches per week. Used for junior training and matches by Clock Face ARLFC. New modular changing facility, good quality.						
84	Gaskell Park	Bowls	Local Authority	Two good quality greens, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Council	Local	L	L	Protect
85	Chancery Lane	Bowls	Private	One good quality private green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
86	Smithy Manor Pub	Bowls	Private	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.	Club	-	L	M	-
87	Sutton Park	Bowls	Local Authority	Two good quality greens, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Council	Local	L	L	Protect
88	Wheatsheaf Pub	Bowls	Private	One standard quality private green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
104	St Theresa's Catholic Primary School	Football	School	One youth pitch (9v9) of a good standard used by Sutton Junior FC and with spare capacity.	Maximise use to meet shortfalls identified in the Area.	School	Education	S	L	Protect

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

RAINFORD AREA



Football

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Shortfall of 2 mini 5v5 match sessions.

- ✦ No overplay on pitches in this Area. However, there is little actual spare capacity expressed so pitches are currently played to capacity.
- ✦ Poor quality pitches at specific sites.
- ✦ Potential for additional pitches at Rainford Rangers to meet shortfalls identified.
- ✦ Shortfall of three 3G pitches based on FA model across the Borough.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Cricket

Summary of grass pitches required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Future demand can be met.

Rugby union

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 10 match sessions.	Shortfall of 10.5 match sessions.

- ◀ Poor quality pitches and a shortfall of floodlit pitches is resulting in pitches being overplayed in the Area. Shortfall of pitches is at Liverpool St. Helens RFC.

Rugby league

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	Future demand can be met.

Hockey (sand AGPs)

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

Tennis

- ◀ There are enough courts that are available for community use to accommodate both the current and future demand. However, there is demand to increase court capacity through floodlighting at Rainford TC.
- ◀ All park courts are free to use for the community, however, quality is an issue and often prevents use.
- ◀ Tennis courts within schools are available for community use but unused.

Bowls

- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, as the majority of bowling greens are considered to have spare capacity. However, further investigation will be required to determine any loss.
- ◀ The majority of greens are good quality.

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ³⁰	Cost ³¹	Aim			
23	Liverpool St. Helens RFC	Rugby union	Sport Club	Three poor quality senior pitches all with floodlighting. Main pitch (assessed as M0/D3 quality rating) has new pipe drainage, floodlighting and main stand and is overplayed by four sessions per week. Pitch Two and Three (assessed as M0/D1 quality rating) are overplayed by six sessions per week. Training demand on pitches is a key issue and is a major factor influencing both the quality of the pitch and the level of overplay. Clubhouse facilities are poor and identified as a key area in need of improvement. Identified demand for additional teams.	In order to address overplay investigate potential for access to additional land/pitches both on site and in local Area. Explore options for development of rugby pitches at Rainford Rangers FC (located one mile away). Quality of existing floodlighting is inadequate and requires significant improvements to comply with modern standards. Explore funding options for major clubhouse refurbishment.	RFU Club	Local	S-M	M-H	Provide Enhance			
38	Rainford High Technology College	Football	School	One adult pitch in good condition used to capacity and unavailable for community use. Two youth pitches in poor condition and overplayed.	Improve quality of youth pitches and link community use to development of 3G pitch. Possible site for FA Pitch Improvement Programme.	School FA	Education	M	M	Enhance			
		AGP		Full size sand based AGP standard quality with floodlighting. No hockey club use. Used to capacity midweek by several football and rugby teams for training. Due to be resurfaced.	Support partnership between the School and Rainford Rangers FC to explore conversion to a 3G surface.								
		Rugby league		One standard quality junior pitch.	No local demand for community use retain for school use.						School	L	L
		Tennis		Three good quality courts available for community use but unused.	No local demand for community use retain for school use.						School	L	L
62	Spinney Park	Football	Local Authority	One adult pitch poor quality minimal use for youth football by Rainford Eagles FC. No changing available.	Consider future potential of the site for football – investigate re provision at Rainford Rangers FC.	Council	Reserve	L	L	Enhance			
		Bowls		One standard quality green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.						Local	L	L
		Tennis		Two poor quality macadam courts (no floodlighting).	Improve quality if demand exists and maximise for pay and play opportunities.								
70	Eagle & Child Inn (Rainford)	Bowls	Private	One standard quality private green, likely to be able to accommodate additional members.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect			
74	Rainford Tennis Club	Tennis	Sports Club	Three shale and three macadam courts, all good quality, refurbished in 2013. Club has aspirations to continue developing the site to improve changing facilities and install floodlights. Car parking is also poor.	Maximise use of the courts to meet unmet demand and seek opportunities for floodlighting some of the courts. Seek opportunities for funding to upgrade ancillary facilities including clubhouse and car parking.	LTA Council	Local	M	M-H	Enhance			
9904	Rainford Rangers FC	Football	Sports Club	Five pitch site (some over marking) including adult, youth and mini. All good quality and well maintained. No peak time capacity. Poor quality changing facilities. Club has displaced girls teams (currently playing in central venues in West Lancashire and Cheshire) and future demand for three additional mini teams.	Develop as a football hub site. Potential creation of additional pitches (subject to necessary Green Belt planning considerations).	Club FA Council	Strategic Football hub	S-M	M- H	Provide			

³⁰ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

³¹ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

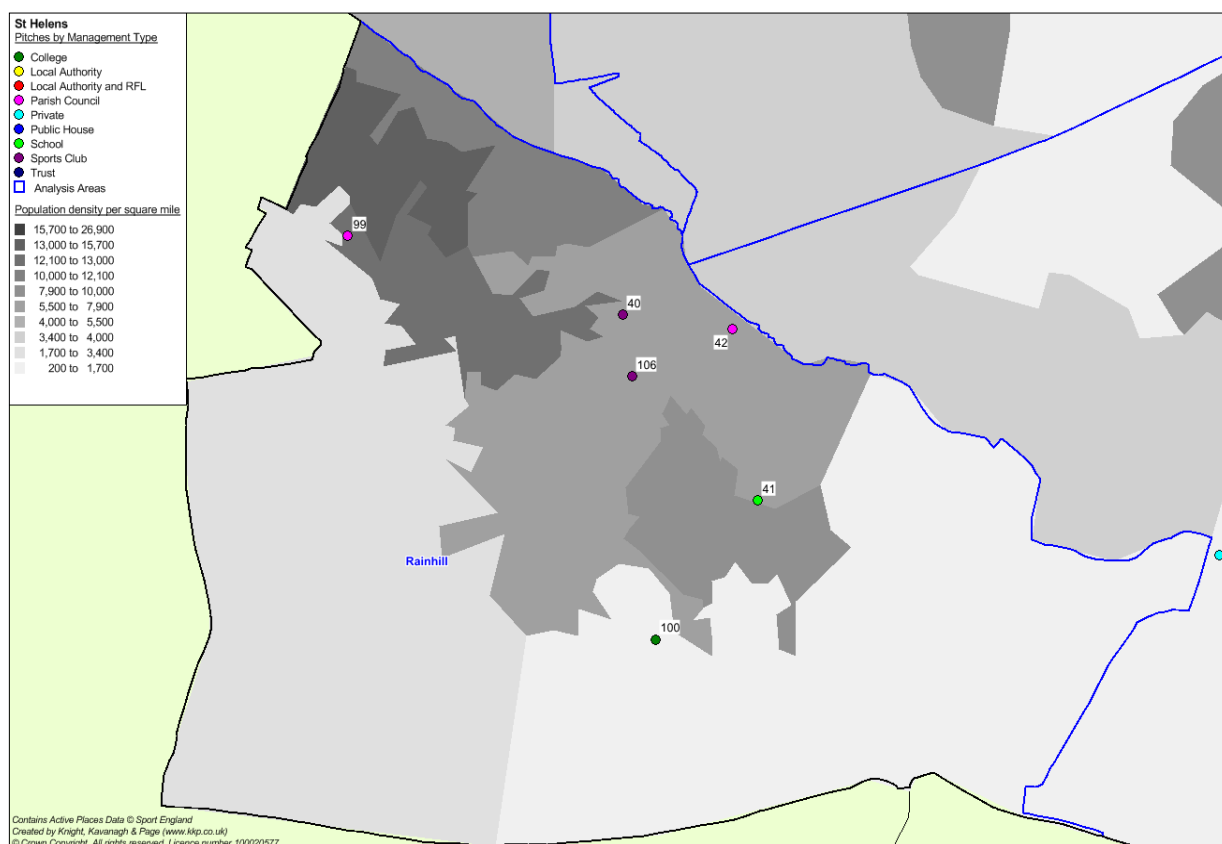
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ³²	Cost ³³	Aim
37	Rainford CC	Cricket	Sport Club	One square with 16 wickets standard condition. Pitch is overplayed and the Club is operating at capacity with aspiration for additional pitch to service future demand. New pavilion 2010. Car parking is an issue.	Ensure pitch maintenance is appropriate to current levels of use. Explore options for second pitch development at Rainford Rangers FC and linked to this seek options for increased car parking provision.	Club LCCB	Local	S	M	Provide
91	Rainford North End Playing Fields	Football	Local Authority	One adult pitch in standard condition. Club has folded and only minimal use of pitch by AFC Rainford.	Consider future potential of the site for football – investigate re provision at Rainford Rangers FC.	Council	Reserve	M	L	-

³² Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

³³ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

RAINHILL AREA



Football

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 1.5 adult match sessions.	Shortfall of 1.5 adult match sessions.

- ✦ Overplay on adult pitches in the Area is a result of poor quality pitches. Improving quality will address this level of overplay.
- ✦ Small amount of actual spare capacity which should be retained as required to help improve/protect quality.
- ✦ Shortfall of three 3G pitches based on FA model across the Borough.

Cricket

Summary of grass pitches required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Future demand can be met.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Rugby union

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

Rugby league

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Future demand can be met.

Hockey (sand AGPs)

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
No current demand for pitches.	No demand expected.

Tennis

- ◀ No current or future demand for courts in the Area. School provision is poor quality.

Bowls

- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, as the majority of bowling greens are considered to have spare capacity. However, further investigation will be required to determine any loss.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

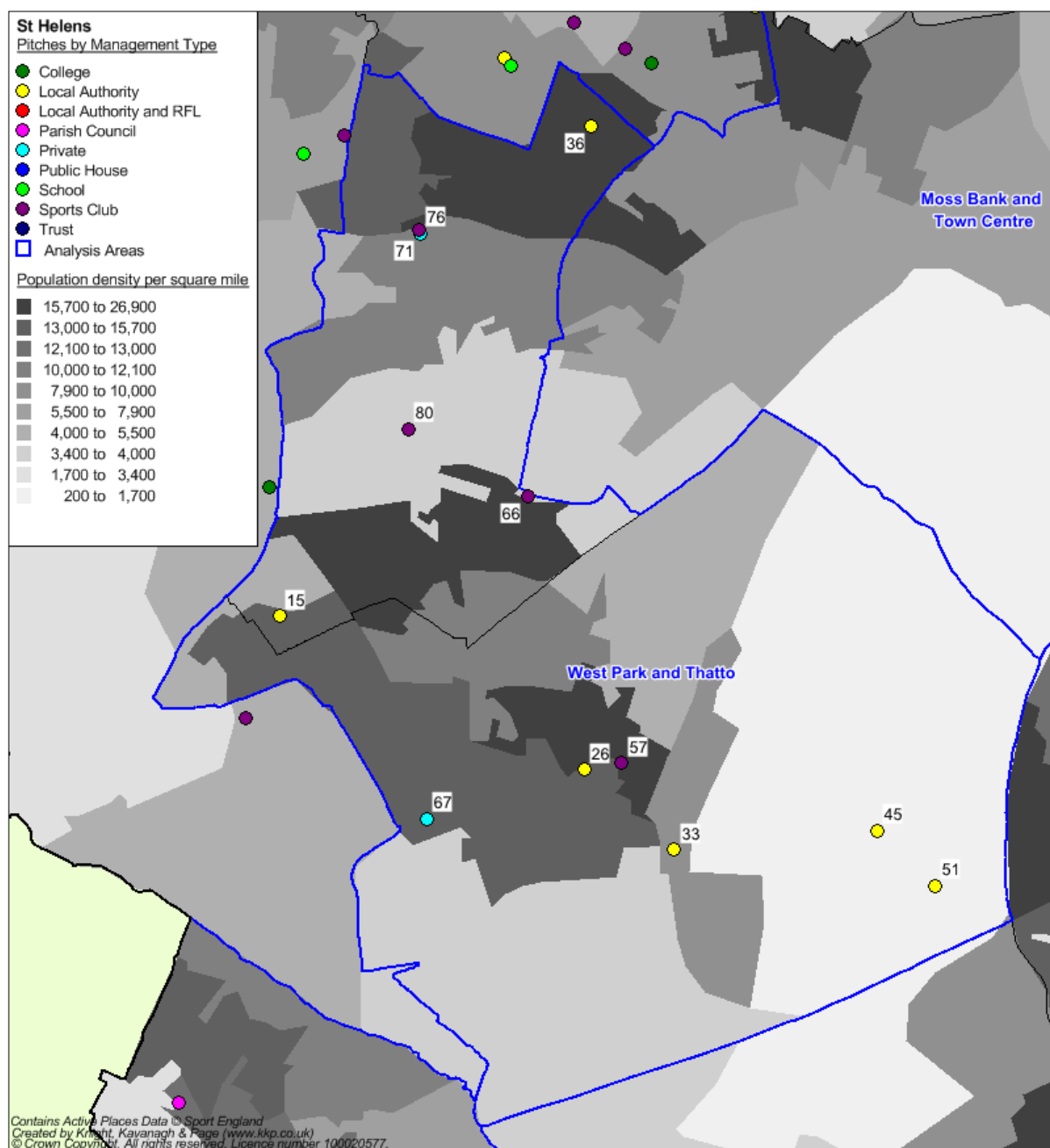
Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ³⁴	Cost ³⁵	Aim
40	Rainhill Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports Club	One good quality square with 12 wickets slightly overplayed.	Good quality square is able to be accommodate level of overplay without a negative impact on quality given the continued standard of maintenance conducted.	LCCB	Local	S	L	Protect Provide
		Bowls		One good quality private green likely to be able to accommodate future demand.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club		L	L	
		Football		One disused pitch adjoining cricket field.	Investigate potential development of pitch adjoining the cricket club to accommodate Rainhill Town FC (Step 7 Club) currently displaced to West Lancs.	FA		S	M	
41	Rainhill High School Media Arts College	Football	School	Two adult and three mini pitches all in poor condition and all overplayed as a result from school use. No community use.	Retain for school use and ensure pitch maintenance is appropriate to current levels of use.	School FA	Education	S	L	Enhance
		AGP		Full size 3G pitch with floodlighting in good condition. FA registered/tested. Liverpool FC has regular use of the pitch midweek for academy training which reduces the number of slots available to community clubs.	Maximise community use at weekends for competitive fixtures and ensure sinking fund is in place for future refurbishment.			S	M	
		Tennis		Four poor tarmac tennis courts with worn markings and no floodlights. Used as a playground area throughout the day.	Retain for school use.	School		L	L	
42	Rainhill Recreation Ground	Football	Parish Council	11 pitches of various sizes (adult to mini) all in poor condition with some over marking. Pitches are generally played to capacity and used by Rainhill United FC. Standard quality changing facility.	Improve pitch quality. Possible consideration for FA Pitch Improvement Programme.	FA Parish Council Club	Strategic Football hub	M	M	Enhance
99	Holt Field	Football	Parish Council	Four pitches of standard quality (one adult, two mini and one youth). All have spare capacity but only the adult pitch at peak time. Poor quality changing facility. Used by Rainford Rocket FC.	Retain spare capacity in order to help improve pitch quality. Seek funding options for improved changing facility.	FA Parish Council Club	Key Centre	S	M-H	Enhance
100	Tower College	Football	College	One youth pitch of standard quality with small amount of spare capacity at peak time.	Retain spare capacity in order to help improve pitch quality.	College	Local	L	L	Enhance
106	Rainhill Ex-Servicemen's Club	Football	Sports Club	One adult pitch of standard quality with spare capacity at peak time.	Retain spare capacity in order to help improve pitch quality.	Club	Local	L	L	Enhance

³⁴ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

³⁵ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

WEST PARK & THATTO HEATH AREA



Football

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 0.5 youth 11v11 match sessions.	Shortfall of 0.5 youth 11v11 match sessions.

- Small amount of shortfall which can easily be absorbed on existing stock with pitch quality improvements.
- Some spare capacity which may be able to service other formats/pitch types.
- Shortfall of three 3G pitches based on FA model across the Borough.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Cricket

Summary of grass pitches required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand is being met.	Future demand can be met.

Rugby union

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 4.5 match sessions	Shortfall of 5 match sessions

Rugby league

Summary of match sessions required to meet current and future demand

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Shortfall of 8 match sessions.	Shortfall of 8 match sessions.

- ◀ Requires access to additional pitches/sites to alleviate overplay at Thatto Heath ARLFC.

Hockey (sand AGPs)

Current picture	Future demand (2032)
Current demand being met.	Shortfall of 2 match sessions and additional training sessions. Pitch will also require resurfacing.

- ◀ Prescott HC based at Sutton Leisure Centre reports potential future demand. Given that the AGP is played to capacity for competitive hockey these sessions would need to be accommodated elsewhere but are not sufficient to create demand for a new pitch.

Tennis

- ◀ No current or future demand for club courts.
- ◀ All park courts are free to use for the community, however, quality is an issue and often prevents use.

Bowls

- ◀ Current supply is deemed adequate to service demand, as the majority of bowling greens are considered to have spare capacity. However, further investigation will be required to determine any loss.
- ◀ The majority of greens are good quality.

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ³⁶	Cost ³⁷	Aim
15	Grange Park KGV Playing Fields	Football	Local Authority	Two adult pitches of poor quality. Slightly overplayed. Standard quality changing facility.	Improve quality in order to accommodate overplay.	Council	Key Centre	M	M	Enhance
		Rugby league		One senior pitch in poor condition, currently unused and unmarked. Standard quality changing facility.	Explore options to improve quality and maximise use. Potential use for Portico ARLFC.			S-M	M	
26	Newton KGV Playing Fields	Football	Local Authority	Three adult pitches in poor condition and with peak time capacity. Poor quality changing facility.	Improve quality in order to increase capacity and reduce site to two pitches for rest and rotation purposes. Remark one adult pitch to youth 11v11 to accommodate displaced demand.	Council	Local	S	M	Enhance
33	Platts Fields	Rugby league	Local Authority	One senior pitch in standard condition. Council says good, flat and drains very well, some use by Thatto Heath ARLFC as overspill. Room for additional capacity.	Formalise use for Thatto Heath ARLFC and look at maximising capacity of the site.	Council RFL	Local	S	L	Protect
36	Queens Park Recreation Ground	Tennis	Local Authority	Seven tarmac courts in total, three are of poor quality and four of standard quality.	Improve quality where required and ensure appropriate maintenance is applied.	Council	Local	M	L-M	Enhance
51	Sutton Leisure Centre	AGP	Local Authority	Full size sand filled AGP with floodlighting which is in standard condition but over 10yrs old. Although there is football use of the pitch it is homeground to Prescott HC which is played to capacity. Future club growth could present a capacity issue on Saturday.	Protect for hockey use. Ensure sinking fund is in place for future refurbishment of the pitch. Work with the Club to secure access to De La Salle School AGP to accommodate future growth if this can't be achieved at Sutton.	EH Council	Strategic Football hub	M	M	Enhance Provide
		Football		Two adult pitches. One good quality located in centre of athletics track with floodlights. One poor quality albeit it is well drained and flat.	Develop as a football hub site linked to provision of additional pitches at Sherdley Park and investigate potential for provision of a 3G pitch linked to Parkdale Sidac FC. Improve pitch quality through ensuring appropriate maintenance regime is in place.			Council FA	S-M	
		Tennis		Two floodlit macadam courts of poor quality.	Improve quality if demand exists and maximise for pay and play opportunities.	Council		M	L-M	
45	Sherdley Park	-	Local Authority	Open space (parkland)	Explore potential to create new playing field linked to existing facilities at Sutton Leisure Centre to accommodate teams likely to be displaced from Sidac Sports i.e. Parkdale Sidac FC. Increase changing provision at Sutton leisure Centre to service the pitches.	Council FA		M	M	Provide

³⁶ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

³⁷ (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

**ST. HELENS
PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Hierarchy tier/priority	Timescales ³⁸	Cost ³⁹	Aim
57	Thatto Heath ARLFC	AGP	Sports Club	One small 3G pitch in a covered barn of standard quality used for training.	Maximise use to help reduce overplay of the pitches.	Club RFL	Local	S	L	Provide Enhance
		Rugby league		Four pitches (two primary and two senior) all of standard quality. Senior pitches are significantly overplayed (by 7.5 sessions per week).	Reduce use of the site and seek access to additional pitches/sites to alleviate overplay. Link to greater use of Platts Fields. Need for dedicated floodlit training space.			S-M	M	
66	Ravenhead Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One good quality private green likely to be able to accommodate future demand.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
67	Brown Edge Pub	Bowls	Private	One good quality private green likely to be able to accommodate future demand.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
71	BlackBull Pub	Bowls	Private	Bowling green likely to be disused and unlikely to have local demand.	Further investigate local demand.	Club	Local	S	L	-
76	Eccleston Bowling Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One standard quality private green likely to be able to accommodate future demand.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect
80	St. Helens Bowling Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One good quality private green likely to be able to accommodate future demand.	Sustain quality and maximise use to cater for potential future demand.	Club	Local	L	L	Protect

³⁸ Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

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PART 7: KEEP THE STRATEGY ROBUST AND UP TO DATE

Delivery

The Playing Pitch Strategy seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across St. Helens. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in this Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of St. Helens can be satisfied. The Strategy identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and identifies how best to resolve this in the future.

It is important that this document is used in a practical manner, is engaged with partners and encourages partnerships to be developed, to ensure that outdoor sports facilities are regarded as a vital aspect of community life and which contribute to the achievement of Council priorities.

The production of this Strategy should be regarded as the beginning of the planning process. The success of this Strategy and the benefits that are gained are dependent upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a strategic approach.

Each member of the steering group should take the lead to ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence. The role of the steering group should not end with the completion of the PPS document.

To help ensure the PPS is well used it should be regarded as the key document within the study area guiding the improvement and protection of playing pitch provision. It needs to be the document people regularly turn to for information on how the current demand is met and what actions are required to improve the situation and meet future demand. In order for this to be achieved the steering group need to have a clear understanding of how the PPS can be applied and therefore delivered. Key uses for the PPS include evidence for supporting funding bids, guidance to inform planning decisions and planning applications and decision making for capital investment.

The process of developing the PPS will hopefully have already resulted in a number of benefits that will help with its application and delivery. These may include enhanced partnership working across different agendas and organisations, pooling of resources along with strengthening relationships and understanding between different stakeholders and between members of the steering group and the sporting community. The drivers behind the PPS and the work to develop the recommendations and action plan will have also highlighted, and helped the steering group to understand, the key areas to which it can be applied and how it can be delivered.

Monitoring and updating

It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should be led by the local authority and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the steering group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery. This should form an on-going role of the steering group. It is possible that in the interim between annual reviews the steering group could operate as a 'virtual' group; prepared to comment on suggestions and updates electronically when relevant.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPS being signed off by the steering group, then Sport England and the NGBs would consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date. If the PPS is used as a 'live' document, and kept up to date, the time frame can be extended to five years.

Furthermore, the process of refreshing the PPS would be much less resource intensive if changes and updates have been made throughout the five years. If there are no updates to the document within the period the nature of the supply and in particular the demand for playing pitches is likely to have changed. Therefore, without any form of review and update within this time period it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

Ideally the PPS could be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the steering group. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment that would have been built up when developing the PPS. Taking into account the time to develop the PPS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

An annual review should not be regarded as a particularly resource intensive task. However, it should highlight:

- ◀ How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others)
- ◀ How the PPS has been applied and the lessons learnt
- ◀ Any changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs in the area (e.g. the most used or high quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues
- ◀ Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport
- ◀ Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

Once the PPS is complete the role of the steering group should evolve so that it:

- ◀ Acts as a focal point for promoting the value and importance of the PPS and playing pitch provision in the area
- ◀ Monitors, evaluates and reviews progress with the delivery of the recommendations and action plan
- ◀ Shares lessons learnt from how the PPS has been used and how it has been applied to a variety of circumstances
- ◀ Ensures the PPS is used effectively to input into any new opportunities to secure improved provision and influence relevant programmes and initiatives
- ◀ Maintains links between all relevant parties with an interest in playing pitch provision in the area;
- ◀ Reviews the need to update the PPS along with the supply and demand information and assessment work on which it is based. Further to review the group should either:
 - ◀ Provide a short annual progress and update paper;
 - ◀ Provide a partial review focussing on particular sport, pitch type and/or sub area; or
 - ◀ Lead a full review and update of the PPS document (including the supply and demand information and assessment details).

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Alongside the regular steering group meetings it is recommended that St. Helens Council holds annual sport specific meetings with the pitch sport NGBs and other relevant organisations. These meetings should look to update the key supply and demand information, if necessary amend the assessment work, track progress with implementing the recommendations and action plan and highlight any new issues and opportunities. Things to consider include formation of new teams or loss of teams, any new formats of the sports that would impact on facilities, changes in quality or creation of new facilities.

These meetings could be timed to fit with the annual affiliation process undertaken by the NGBs which would help to capture any changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area. Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites could be fed into these meetings. The NGBs will also be able to indicate any further performance quality assessments that have been undertaken within the study area. Discussion with the league secretaries may also indicate annual league meetings which it may be useful to attend to pick up any specific issues and/or enable a review of the relevant club details to be undertaken.

The steering group should regularly review and refresh area by area plans taking account of any improvements in pitch quality (and hence increases in pitch capacity) and also any new negotiations for community use of education or other private sites in the future. Updating the action plans will make the task of updating the PPS much easier.


It is important that the Council maintains the data contained with the accompanying Playing Pitch Database. This will enable it to refresh and update area by area plans on a regular basis. The accompanying databases are intended to be refreshed on a season by season basis and it is important that there is cross-departmental working, including for example, grounds maintenance and sports, to ensure that this is achieved and that results are used to inform subsequent annual sports facility development plans. Results should be shared with partners via a consultative mechanism.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Checklist

To help ensure the PPS is delivered and is kept robust and up to date, the steering group can refer to the new methodology Stage E Checklist: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>

Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date	Tick 	
	Yes	Requires Attention
Step 9: Apply & deliver the strategy		
1. Are steering group members clear on how the PPS can be applied across a range of relevant areas?		
2. Is each member of the steering group committed to taking the lead to help ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence?		
3. Has a process been put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered and the PPS is being applied?		
Step 10: Keep the strategy robust & up to date		
1. Has a process been put in place to ensure the PPS is kept robust and up to date?		
2. Does the process involve an annual update of the PPS?		
3. Is the steering group to be maintained and is it clear of its on-going role?		
4. Is regular liaison with the NGBs and other parties planned?		
5. Has all the supply and demand information been collated and presented in a format (i.e. single document that can be filtered accordingly) that will help people to review it and highlight any changes?		
6. Have any changes made to the Active Places Power data been fed back to Sport England?		

APPENDIX ONE: 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**.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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.

APPENDIX TWO: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The recommendations within this Strategy have been developed via the combination of information gathered during consultation, site visits and analysis. They reflect key areas to be addressed over its lifetime. However, implementation must be considered in the context of financial implications and the need for some proposals to also meet planning considerations.

National context

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

DCMS (Department for Culture Media & Sport) is currently (2015) consulting on a new strategy for sport. It will seek to address the following challenges:

- ◀ How to address the recent decline in the number of people that regularly take part in sport and deliver a long-term sustainable increase in participation;
- ◀ What type(s) of participation should be encouraged and how should they be measured;
- ◀ How to ensure that funding goes to those who can best deliver results;
- ◀ How to specifically target under-represented groups;
- ◀ Understanding the role of the private sector, and how public sector bodies, National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and other sports bodies should work with the private sector to help deliver an increase in participation;
- ◀ How to best support participation in new and/or non-traditional sports and activities;
- ◀ How to maximise the potential of new technology to increase participation;
- ◀ How to use the power of sport to achieve broader positive social outcomes and whether some funding should specifically be spent for that purpose.

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

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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.
- ◀ 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.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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.

The FA National Game Strategy (2015 – 2019)

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:

- ◀ Sustain and Increase Participation.
- ◀ Ensure access to education sites to accommodate the game.
- ◀ Help players to be the best that they can be and provide opportunities for them to progress from grassroots to elite.
- ◀ Recruit, retain and develop a network of qualified referees
- ◀ Support clubs, leagues and other competition providers to develop a safe, inclusive and positive football experience for everyone.
- ◀ Support Clubs and Leagues to become sustainable businesses, understanding and serving the needs of players and customers.
- ◀ Improve grass pitches through the pitch improvement programme to improve existing facilities and changing rooms.
- ◀ Deliver new and improved facilities including new Football Turf Pitches.
- ◀ Work with priority Local Authorities enabling 50% of mini-soccer and youth matched to be played on high quality artificial grass pitches.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Champion Counties Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017

The England and Wales Cricket Board unveiled a new strategic plan in 2013 which seeks to deliver successful England teams at all levels, to produce a vibrant domestic game as well as increasing participation during the period 2014-17. It builds on the 2005 plan, Building Partnerships and the subsequent 2009 initiative, Grounds to Play.

The plan will take advantage of local partnerships developed in earlier plans and support local delivery of priorities through the County network. It targets operational excellence to make maximum use of scarce resources and facilities during a time of economic austerity.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Among the targets set under the four pillars of Effective Governance, Vibrant Domestic Game, Enthusing Participation and Successful England teams, which are relevant to the playing pitch strategy, are:

- ◀ An increase in participation as measured by Sport England's Active People Survey from 183,400 to 197,500
- ◀ Expand the number of clubs participating in NatWest CricketForce from 2,000 to 2,200
- ◀ 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
- ◀ 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
- ◀ For each £1 provided in facility grants through the 'Sport England Whole Sport Plan Grant Programme' ensure a multiplier of three with other funding partners
- ◀ 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
- ◀ 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
- ◀ 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 following actions executed during the duration of Building Partnerships provide a strong base for this plan. Actions include:

- ◀ Streamlining ECB governance
- ◀ Building participation by more than 20% per annum (as measured through ECB focus clubs and County Cricket Boards)
- ◀ Developing women's cricket
- ◀ Attracting volunteers
- ◀ Expanding cricket's spectator base
- ◀ Introducing grants and loans to clubs
- ◀ Developing disabilities cricket

This plan therefore influences 'Grounds to Play' in the areas of facilities and coaches, which is where ECB investment will be focussed. Partnership funding and support will play a key role in the delivery of actions and maintaining the strength of the pillars.

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

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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

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

The 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 1.5 million 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

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

England Hockey (EH) - A Nation Where Hockey Matters (2013-2017)

EH have a clear vision, a powerful philosophy and five core objectives that all those who have a role in advancing Hockey can unite behind. With UK Sport and Sport England's investment, and growing commercial revenues, EH are ambitious about how they can take the sport forward in Olympic cycles and beyond.

"The vision is for England to be a 'Nation Where Hockey Matters'. A nation where hockey is talked about at dinner tables, playgrounds and public houses, up and down the country. A nation where the sport is on the back pages of our newspapers, where children dream of scoring a goal for England's senior hockey team, and where the performance stirs up emotion amongst the many, not the few"

England Hockey aspires to deepen the passion of those who play, deliver and follow sport by providing the best possible environments and the best possible experiences. Whilst reaching out to new audiences by making the sport more visible, available and relevant and through the many advocates of hockey.

Underpinning all this is the infrastructure which makes the sport function. EH understand the importance of volunteers, coaches, officials, clubs and facilities. The more inspirational people can be, the more progressive Hockey can be and the more befitting the facilities can be, the more EH will achieve. The core objectives are as follows:

- ◀ Grow our Participation
- ◀ Deliver International Success
- ◀ Increase our Visibility
- ◀ Enhance our Infrastructure
- ◀ Be a strong and respected Governing Body

England Hockey has a Capital Investment Programme (CIP), that is planned to lever £5.6 million investment into hockey facilities over the next four years, underpinned by £2m million from the National Governing Body. With over 500 pitches due for refurbishment in the next 4-8 years, there will be a large focus placed on these projects through this funding stream. The current level of pitches available for hockey is believed to be sufficient for the medium term needs, however in some areas, pitches may not be in the right places in order to maximise playing opportunities

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

'The right pitches in the right places'⁴⁰

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.

British Crown Green Bowling Association

Please note there is no current facility guidance provided by British Crown Green Bowling Association responsible for crown green bowls in England.

<http://crowngreenbowls.sharepoint.com/Pages/default.aspx>

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.

⁴⁰

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

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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>

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

APPENDIX THREE: FUNDING PLAN

Funding opportunities

In order to deliver much of the Action Plan it is recognised that external partner funding will need to be sought. Although seeking developer contributions in applicable situations and other local funding/community schemes could go some way towards meeting deficiencies and/or improving provision, other potential/match sources of funding should be investigated. Below is a list of current funding sources that are relevant for community improvement projects involving sports facilities.

Awarding body	Description
Big Lottery Fund http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/	Big invests in community groups and to projects that improve health, education and the environment
Sport England : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement Fund • Sportsmatch • Small Grants • Protecting Playing Fields • Inspired Facilities • Strategic Facilities Fund http://www.sportengland.org/funding.aspx http://www.sportengland.org/funding/our-different-funds/strategic-facilities/	Sport England is keen to marry funding with other organisations that provide financial support to create and strengthen the best sports projects. Applicants are encouraged to maximise the levels of other sources of funding, and projects that secure higher levels of partnership funding are more likely to be successful.
Football Foundation http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/	This trust provides financial help for football at all levels, from national stadia and FA Premier League clubs down to grass-roots local development.
Rugby Football Foundation - The Grant Match Scheme www.rugbyfootballfoundation.org	The Grant Match Scheme provides easy-to-access grant funding for playing projects that contribute to the recruitment and retention of community rugby players. Grants are available on a 'match funding' 50:50 basis to support a proposed project. Projects eligible for funding include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pitch Facilities – Playing surface improvement, pitch improvement, rugby posts, floodlights. 2. Club House Facilities – Changing rooms, shower facilities, washroom/lavatory, and measures to facilitate segregation (e.g. women, juniors). 3. Equipment – Large capital equipment, pitch maintenance capital equipment (e.g. mowers).
EU Life Fund http://ec.europa.eu/environment/funding/intro_en.htm	LIFE is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU.
EH Capital Investment Programme (CIP)	The CIP fund is for the provision of new pitches and re-surfacing of old AGPs. It forms part of EH's 4 year Whole Sport's Plan.
National Hockey Foundation http://www.thenationalhockeyfoundation.com/	The Foundation primarily makes grants to a wide range of organisations that meet one of our chosen areas of focus: Young people and hockey. Enabling the development of hockey at youth or community level.

Protecting Playing Fields

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

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

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

The programmes three priorities are:

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

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

Strategic Facilities Fund

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

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

ST. HELENS

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Key features which applications must demonstrate are:

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

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

The Strategic Facilities Fund will prioritise projects that:

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

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

Funder's requirements

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

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

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Indicative costs

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

http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/design_and_cost_guidance.aspx

The costs are for the development of community sports facilities and are based on providing good quality sports facility for the 1st Quarter 2015. These rounded costs are based on schemes most recently funded through the Lottery (and therefore based on economies of scale), updated to reflect current forecast price indices provided by the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS), prepared by Technical Team Lead of Sport England.

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

APPENDIX FOUR: FOOTBALL SCENARIO

Improving pitch quality is one way to increase the capacity at sites. Given the cost of doing such work and the continued maintenance required (and associated costs) alternatives need to be considered that can offer a more sustainable model for the future of football. The alternative to grass pitches is the use of AGPs for competitive matches and this is something that the FA is supporting, particularly for mini football.

Summary of competitive teams playing on grass pitches in St. Helens

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

If all mini and youth football played on AGPs

In order to test the scenario a programme of play for AGPs has been created based on the current peak time demand for mini/youth pitches in St. Helens. In terms of programming; one full size AGP can accommodate four 5v5 pitches, two 7v7 pitches, two 9v9 pitches or one youth 11v11 pitch and any one time.

Mini 5v5 & 7v7 combined programme (Saturday)

Time slot	Matches per full size AGP	Total teams/matches
9.00am – 10.00am	4 x mini (5v5)	54/27
10.00am – 11.00am	6 x mini (7v7)	56/28
11.00am – 12.00pm		
12.00pm – 1.30pm		

How many AGPs would be required if all mini teams were moved to 3G?

There are currently 110 mini teams in St. Helens which would require 7 AGPs if all were to play in the time slots highlighted in the table above.

Youth 9v9 programme (Saturday)

Time slot	Matches per full size AGP	Total teams/matches
9.00am – 10.30am	2 x youth (9v9)	58/29
10.30am – 12.00pm	2 x youth (9v9)	
12.00pm – 1.30pm	2 x youth (9v9)	

ST. HELENS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

How many AGPs would be required if all youth 9v9 teams were moved to 3G?

There are currently 58 youth 9v9 teams which would require 4.83 (rounded to 5) additional AGPs on a Saturday to accommodate 9v9 at its current peak time (Sat am).

Youth 11v11 programme (Sunday)

Time slot	Matches per full size AGP	Total teams/matches
10.30pm – 12.30pm	1 x youth (11v11)	91/46
12.30pm – 2.30pm	1 x youth (11v11)	
2.30pm – 4.30pm	1 x youth (11v11)	

How many AGPs would be required if all youth 11v11 teams were moved to 3G?

There are currently 91 youth 11v11 teams which would require 15.3 (rounded to 16) AGPs if all were to play in the time slots highlighted in the table above.

Modelling caveats

The calculations do not take into account whether the AGPs could be located to meet the demand and that all leagues would accept playing on AGPs and reschedule fixtures accordingly. It is also recommended that further modelling/feasibility work is carried out to ensure sustainability of 3G pitches being programmed as such.