OLDHAM COUNCIL:
PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

STRATEGY REPORT
FEBRUARY 2025

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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OLDHAM PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS 1
PART 1: INTRODUCTION 2
PART 2: VISION AND AIMS 6
PART 3: HEADLINE FINDINGS 8
PART 4: SPORT SPECIFIC ISSUES SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 11
PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS 49
PART 6: ACTION PLAN 62
PART 7: HOUSING GROWTH SCENARIOS 63
PART 8: DELIVER THE STRATEGY AND KEEP IT ROBUST AND UP-TO-DATE 66
APPENDIX ONE: SPORTING CONTEXT 70
APPENDIX TWO: SUPPLY AND DEMAND SUMMARY 83

ABBREVIATIONS

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
OC	Oldham Council
BCGBA	British Crown Green Bowling Association
CFA	County Football Association
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EN	England Netball
EG	England Golf
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FF	Football Foundation
FE	Further Education
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GBA	Governing Bodies Association
HE	Higher Education
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LFA	Lancashire County Football Association
MFA	Manchester Football Association
LCF	Lancashire Cricket Foundation
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
PPOSS	Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy
PfE	Places for Everyone
RFL	Rugby Football League
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RUFC	Rugby union football club
S106	Section 106
SE	Sport England
TGR	Team generation rate
WR	World Rugby
WRCFA	West Riding County Football Association

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd (KKP) has been appointed by Oldham Council (OC) to deliver a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) covering all formal playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities across the Authority to assist it to strategically plan for the future.

Building upon the preceding Assessment Report, this Strategy and Action Plan provides a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing playing pitch and accompanying ancillary facilities up to 2041 (in line with the Local Plan review). It has been developed to provide:

- A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities.
- A number of aims to help deliver the recommendations and actions.
- A series of strategic recommendations which provide a framework for the improvement, maintenance, development and, as appropriate, rationalisation of the playing pitch and outdoor sport facility stock.
- A series of sport-by-sport recommendations which provide a strategic framework for sport led improvements to provision.
- A prioritised area-by-area Action Plan to address key issues on a site-by-site basis.

The Strategy is delivered in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) Guidance (for playing pitch sports) and Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (for "non-pitch" sports). Sport England's PPS Guidance details a stepped approach, separated into five distinct sections:

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

This report represents Stage D of the process, with stages A-C covered in the preceding Assessment Report and Stage E to follow the Stage D element. The lifespan of a PPOSS is considered to be three years, although this can be increased if it updated (Stage E).

A PPOSS delivers the evidence required to ensure that sufficient land is available to meet existing and projected future outdoor sport requirements. Its robust evidence base should inform and be implemented into planning policy and other relevant corporate strategies to enable local policies, planning and sport development criteria to work efficiently and effectively. It is capable of:

- Providing a clear framework for all playing pitch and outdoor sport providers, including the public, private and third sectors.
- Clearly addressing the needs of all identified sports within the area, highlighting particular local demand issues.
- Addressing issues of population growth and major growth/regeneration areas.
- Addressing issues of cross boundary facility provision.
- Addressing issues of accessibility, quality and management with regard to facility provision.
- Standing up to scrutiny at a public inquiry as a robust study.
- Supporting funding applications.
- Providing realistic aspirations which are implementable within the local authority's budgetary position and procurement regime.

The Strategy and Action Plan (the latter contained in a separate document) recommends a number of priority projects relating to sports provision which should be realised over the Local Plan period. It provides a framework for improvement and, although resources may not currently be in place to implement all aspects, potential partners and possible sources of external funding.

Partner organisations in Oldham have a vested interest in ensuring that existing playing pitches, outdoor sports facilities and ancillary provision are protected and enhanced. As such, many of the objectives and actions within this document need to be delivered and implemented by a wide range of bodies such as national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), sports organisations and education establishments. In some instances, Oldham Council will not be the only organisation which delivers these actions or recommendations as the PPOSS is not solely just for the Council to act upon. It applies to/for all the stakeholders and partners involved.

Scope

The scope of the PPOSS focuses on all local provision, regardless of ownership and management arrangements. Sports included within the project are as follows:

- Football pitches.
- Third generation artificial grass (3G) pitches.
- Cricket pitches.
- Rugby union pitches.
- Hockey artificial grass pitches (AGPs).
- Rugby league pitches.
- Athletics facilities.
- Tennis courts.
- Netball courts.
- MUGAs (multi use games areas).
- Bowling greens.
- Golf facilities.

Study area

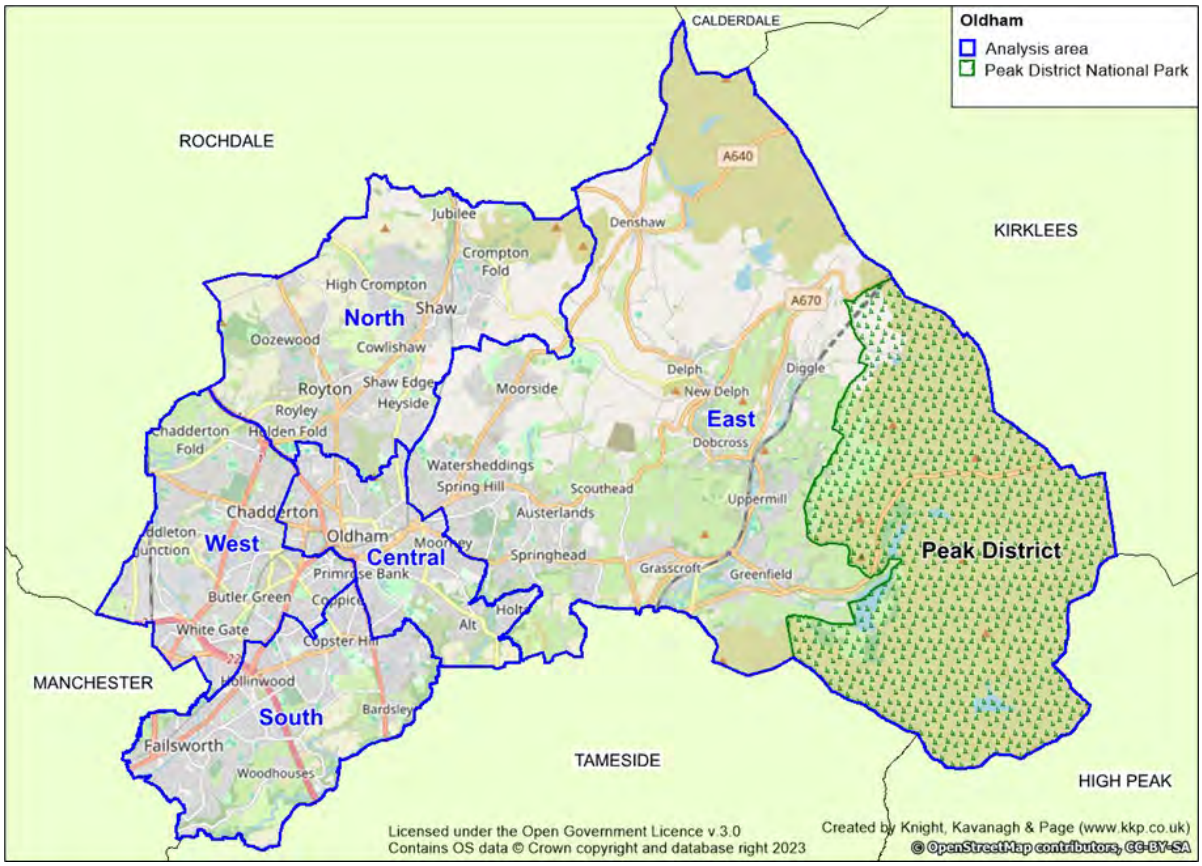
The assessment covers the Borough boundary area of Oldham; however, the data gathered has been presented in such a way as to be further analysed by smaller analysis areas. There are also a number of sports teams from inside Oldham that use facilities outside of the Borough. This cross-boundary movement has been explored to determine the level of imported and exported demand, recognising, for example, that people travel to and make use of strategic facilities irrespective of administrative boundaries.

For the purpose of this study, Oldham has been broken down into five analysis areas as seen below.

- Central.
- East.
- North.
- South.
- West.

The analysis areas are shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Map of Oldham with analysis areas



It should be noted that there is currently no provision within the Peak District, however, any future PPOSS matter which may impact the Peak Park should be addressed through ongoing Duty to Cooperate meetings. Oldham Council is the Local Planning Authority for the Central, East, North, West and South analysis areas. However, it should be noted that Oldham Council is not the Local Planning Authority for the Peak District.

Local context

Oldham Local Plan

Oldham Council is preparing a new Local Plan that will guide future development in the Borough through to 2041.

Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan was adopted on 21st March 2024 and now forms part of Oldham's Development Plan. PfE is a Joint Development Plan for the nine districts of Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan. PfE provides support with strategic planning matters that are of significance across the Joint Plan area (such as identifying future levels of housing and employment growth, as well as policies related to the environment, climate change and transport).

Oldham's Local Plan will contain a range of locally specific planning policies, including those on the protection and improvement of open space provision. Further information on the preparation of the Local Plan is available online[1].

[1] See Local Development Scheme Timetable for updates: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201231/emerging_planning_policy/230/local_development_scheme_timetable

A new PPOSS will provide an up-to-date evidence base and policy for the provision of new, and the improvement of existing, outdoor sports facilities to ensure the planned housing growth is supported by appropriate sporting infrastructure.

National context

Concern at national government level over the loss of playing fields prompted the development of localised playing pitch assessments and strategies which identify current and future requirements for playing fields. Developing a strategic approach to the analysis of playing pitch supply and demand is necessary to:

- Protect playing pitches against development pressures in, and around, urban areas.
- Identify pitch (natural grass and artificial) supply and demand issues in relation to predicated population changes.
- Address 'demand' pressures created as a result of specific sports development pressures e.g., growth of mini soccer and wider use of artificial grass pitches.
- Address budget pressures and public-sector cuts.

The Oldham PPOSS will provide an evidence base for planning decisions and funding bids and will ensure that this evidence is sound, robust and capable of being scrutinised through examination whilst meeting the requirements of national planning guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

Section eight of the NPPF deals specifically with the topic of healthy communities, with Paragraph 103 stating that "planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate."

Paragraph 104 sets three criterion that ensures existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

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

Paragraphs 105, 106, and 107 set the parameters for the designation of Local Green Space. Such spaces may include playing fields and outdoor sport facilities.

PART 2: VISION AND AIMS

Vision

A vision has been set out to provide a clear focus with desired outcomes for the PPOSS.

> "To ensure that there are enough playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities in Oldham of the right type and quality to help its residents to increase their physical activity levels and support their mental and physical health and wellbeing now and in the future."

To achieve this vision the PPOSS will deliver the following objectives:

- Ensure that all valuable facilities are protected for the long-term benefit of sport.
- Promote a sustainable approach to the provision of playing pitches and management of sports clubs.
- Ensure that there are enough facilities in the right place to meet current and projected future demand.
- Ensure that all clubs have access to facilities of appropriate quality to meet current needs and longer-term aspirations.

The following overarching aims are based on the three Sport England planning objectives. It is recommended that they are adopted by the Council and partners to enable delivery of the overall PPOSS vision and Sport England planning objectives.

AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities where it is needed to meet current and future needs.

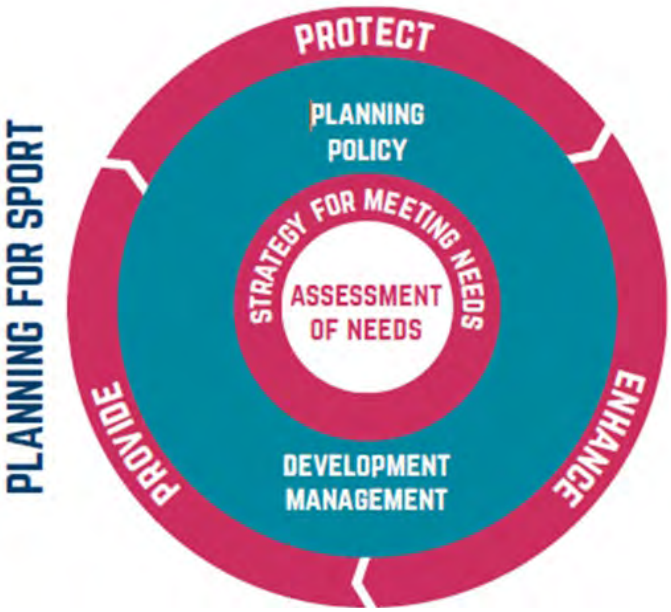
AIM 2

To **enhance** outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites.

AIM 3

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

Figure 2.1: Sport England planning objectives



Source: Sport England, Planning for Sport Guidance (April 2024)

PART 3: HEADLINE FINDINGS

The table below highlights the quantitative headline findings identified for all pitch and outdoor sports included within the scope of the preceding Assessment Report. MES stands for match equivalent sessions and has been used as the comparable unit for natural grass pitches. Converting both the amount of play a site can accommodate (its carrying capacity) and how much play takes place there (its current use) into the same unit of demand enables a comparison to be undertaken.

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 for matches, it is appropriate for the comparable unit to be match equivalent sessions.

Based on how they tend to be played, this unit for football and rugby union pitches relates to a typical week within the season for each sport. For cricket pitches it is appropriate to look at the number of match equivalent sessions over the course of a season. How much play a cricket pitch can accommodate is primarily determined by the number and quality of wickets on a pitch. Only one match is generally played per pitch per day at a senior level. However, play is rotated across the wickets to reduce wear and allow for repair. Each wicket can accommodate a certain amount of play per season as opposed to a week.

The Sport England PPS guidance does not advocate the conversion of MES to pitches as there is not always a case for providing pitches to meet the demand/shortfalls expressed.

For example, improving the quality of pitches can also increase the capacity of existing pitches to accommodate such demand. For qualitative findings and site-specific findings, please see Part 4: Sport Specific Recommendations and Scenarios, and Part 6: Action Plan (contained in a separate document).

For artificial surfaces (AGPs/3G pitches), how much play can be accommodated is primarily determined by availability, rather than how much play it can accommodate before its quality is adversely affected as with natural grass pitches. Therefore, whole pitches are used as the comparable unit. Similarly, for the other non-pitch sports (i.e., bowls and tennis etc) where it is not as easy to determine carrying capacity, whole facilities are used as the comparable unit.

Future demand in the Assessment report has been determined by using Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator which looks at population change over a predetermined period. For Oldham this has been set to forecasted population rates in 2041 in line with the emerging Local Plan. It should be noted, it is expected that the growth of football teams will exceed what is projected through population growth. Evidence of this can be found in Part 4: Sport Specific Recommendations and Scenarios.

Table 3.1: Quantitative headline findings (pitch sports)

Sport	Pitch type	Current supply/demand balance (match equivalent sessions)	Future supply/demand balance (match equivalent sessions)[2]
Football	Adult	Shortfall of 15.5	Shortfall of 19.5
Football	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 12.5	Shortfall of 19
Football	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 3	Shortfall of 7
Football	Mini 7v7	Sufficient supply	Shortfall of 4.5

[2] It should be noted that this future demand figure is at a Boroughwide level, and some analysis areas may have greater shortfalls than others.

Sport	Pitch type	Current supply/demand balance (match equivalent sessions)	Future supply/demand balance (match equivalent sessions)[2]
Football	Mini 5v5	Sufficient supply	Shortfall of 3.5
Football	3G 11v11	Shortfall of 3.5 pitches	Shortfall of 4.5 pitches
Cricket	Senior (Saturday)	Shortfall of 192	Shortfall of 252
Cricket	Senior (Sunday)	Shortfall of 132	Shortfall of 132
Cricket	Junior (midweek)	Shortfall of 84	Shortfall of 114
Rugby union	Senior	Shortfall of 6.5	Shortfall of 6.5
Rugby league	Senior	Shortfall of 17	Shortfall of 19.5
Hockey	AGP	Sufficient supply if quality improvements occur at Newman RC College	Sufficient supply if quality improvements occur at Newman RC College

Table 3.2: Headline findings (remaining sports)

Sport	Headline findings
Tennis	For club-based tennis, where known through consultation, Saddleworth Cricket, Bowling & Tennis Club has sufficient capacity to facilitate club demand, however, Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club is operating over its perceived capacity. Away from clubs, whilst no courts are identified as having any capacity issues, it cannot be said that supply is sufficient to meet demand due to the amount of unmet and latent demand evident both nationally and in Oldham. Additionally, there are no padel tennis courts in Oldham, however, Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club has recently been approved planning permission for two covered padel courts.
Padel	There is an identified need based on population demand amounting to 19 padel courts with no courts currently provided. Therefore, the LTA is supportive of plans for new provision to be established, however, should not be detrimental to tennis and where possible have a positive impact on both sports.
Netball	There is enough netball provision in Oldham to meet current demand. There is only minor use on outdoor courts in Oldham with only The Hathershaw College being used mainly due to the difficulty of gaining access to indoor courts during the exam season.
Bowls	Supply is considered sufficient to meet both current and future demand, with no additional greens required. With the Borough being adequately catered for from a supply and demand analysis perspective, the focus is ensuring the long-term survival of Westwood Park Vets.
Athletics	In Oldham, supply (through The Radclyffe School) is considered sufficient to meet demand, with one club specialising in both track and field currently based in Oldham (Oldham & Royton Harriers Athletics Club) totalling 243 members.
Golf	With seven golfing sites in Oldham and a mix of 18-hole courses, Par 3 and three driving ranges, supply is well placed to meet demand. This is especially the case given the various operational structures in place, with some facilities offering a high price point and others offering a low price point, and with some prioritising membership and others focusing on pay and play usage. This suggests that all types of golfers can be collectively catered for.
MUGAs	Current supply of MUGAs is sufficient to cater for current demand with at least one MUGA being provided in each analysis area.

Conclusions

The existing position for all sports is either that demand is being met or that there is a shortfall. For most sports played on natural turf grass pitches there are identified shortfalls. As such, there is a clear need to protect all existing playing pitch provision so that all demand is met, or there is a requirement to replace provision to an equal or better quantity and quality before it is lost, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy.

Where demand is being met, this does not equate to a surplus of provision. Instead, any spare capacity should be considered as a solution to overcoming shortfalls.

Most of the current identified grass pitch shortfalls can be met by better utilising current provision, such as through improving quality, installing additional sports lighting, improving ancillary facilities, increasing match play on 3G pitches, and enabling access to existing unused provision, such as at unavailable school sites. However, future demand needs to be monitored as the need for new provision or need to bring disused provision back into use may be greater given the growth of football is expected to exceed what is projected through population growth.

Notwithstanding the above, in regard to artificial pitches, there is a clear quantified shortfall of 3G pitches for football training that can only be rectified through the installation of new facilities. The development of 3G pitches could also help to alleviate grass pitch shortfalls via the transfer of play.

PART 4: SPORT SPECIFIC ISSUES SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, in order to help develop recommendations and actions for each sport, and to understand their potential impact, a number of relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues identified in the preceding Assessment Report for each sport. This will then inform sport specific recommendations.

4.1: Football – grass pitches

Assessment Report summary

Supply and demand summary

- **Current supply of football pitch provision is insufficient with shortfalls evident on adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitch types.**
- **When considering future demand, these shortfalls will worsen to 53.5 match equivalent sessions. This is exacerbated due to a high level of demand and poor pitch quality.**

Supply summary

- The audit identifies a total of 79 grass football pitches across 45 sites in Oldham, however, 69 pitches across 38 sites are identified as being available for community use at some level (although not necessarily used).
- Most community available pitches can be found in the North Analysis Area with 20 pitches provided (30%). The Central Analysis Area provided the least number of community available pitches with just seven (10%).
- There are six sites, which were not marked as formal pitches for the 2023/24 season.
- A planning application has recently been approved for the replacement of an existing grass training pitch known as Little Wembley (Oldham Athletic Football Club) with a new 11v11 3G pitch and sports lighting which will be both football and rugby league compliant.
- Oldham Athletic Football Club has a longer term aspiration to improve the grass pitches on Clayton Playing Fields including reorientation of pitches to create space for an additional 11v11 grass football pitch and upgrade the entire site to increase the carrying capacity of all grass pitches.
- Tenure of sites in Oldham is generally secure i.e., through a long-term lease or a guarantee that pitches will continue to be provided over the next three years.
- The quality of football pitches across Oldham has been assessed via a combination of site visits carried out in January 2024, PitchPower reports, and user consultation. Most pitches are assessed as either standard or poor quality (90%), with only seven pitches assessed as good quality.
- Six sites are considered to have poor quality ancillary facilities located at Churchill Playing Fields, George Street Playing Fields, Heyside Playing Fields, Mabel Road, New Barn Playing Fields and Snipe Clough.

Demand summary

- In total there are 559 teams across 73 clubs which originate from Oldham. Of these 376 teams utilise pitches for matches in Oldham during the 2023/24 season. This is made up of 79 men's, six women's, 154 youth boys', 24 youth girls' and 113 mini teams.
- The South Analysis Area has the highest number of teams with 186 (49%) whilst the Central Analysis Area has the fewest with only 10 teams (3%).
- Three teams from three clubs play within the football pyramid, Oldham Athletic FC (Step 1), Avro FC (Step 4) and Chadderton FC (Step 5).
- In Oldham, there is currently no women's team competing in the Women's National League System
- Of responding clubs, Chadderton FC, Saddleworth 3Ds, Santos, Uppermill FC, Heyside FC and Springhead FC all indicate they could field additional teams if they had access to better pitch provision, however, none of the clubs quantify a specific amount.

- According to affiliation data from 2023/24 season, there are 183 Oldham based teams playing matches at venues outside of the Borough. Of the 183 teams, 112 of these are playing outside of Oldham to access central venues due to the league they play in. Whilst the remaining teams which are exporting demand outside of the Borough do not play in central venue leagues.
- Of responding clubs, five report aspirations to increase the number of teams they provide, totalling a predicted growth of 28 teams.
- In Oldham, 25 pitches across 13 sites are overplayed by a combined total of 35 match equivalent sessions per week. Pitches are generally overplayed due to a high level of demand coupled with poor pitch quality.

Scenarios

Alleviating overplay/improving pitch quality

In total there are 25 pitches overplayed in Oldham across 13 sites, equating to 35 match equivalent sessions per week. Improving quality of these pitches (i.e., through increased maintenance or improved drainage) will increase capacity at the sites and consequently reduce both current and future shortfalls.

To illustrate the above, Table 4.1 highlights the current levels of overplay that would be alleviated if quality improved to good at each site. As a reminder, the capacity rating for each type and quality rating as detailed in the table below:

Adult pitch quality	Adult matches per week	Youth pitch quality	Youth matches per week	Mini pitch quality	Mini matches per week
Good	3	Good	4	Good	6
Standard	2	Standard	2	Standard	4
Poor	1	Poor	1	Poor	2

Table 4.1: Overplay if all pitches were good quality (match equivalent sessions)

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Current quality	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (MES)	Good quality rating (MES)
3	Ashfields Crescent Playing Fields	East	Poor	Adult	1	1	1
5	Avro Football Club (Vestacare Stadium)	South	Good	Youth 9v9	1	0.5	0.5
10	Cathedral Road	West	Poor	Adult	2	0.5	3.5
16	Churchill Playing Fields	East	Poor	Adult	2	1.5	1
17	Clayton Playing Fields	Central	Standard	Adult	2	2.5	0.5
17	Clayton Playing Fields	Central	Poor	Adult	3	2	4
21	Crompton Cricket Club	North	Standard	Adult	1	1.5	0.5
23	Crossley Playing Fields	West	Poor	Adult	2	0.5	3.5
23	Crossley Playing Fields	West	Poor	Youth 11v11	2	1.5	4.5

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Current quality	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (MES)	Good quality rating (MES)
36	George Street Playing Fields	North	Poor	Adult	1	2	0
69	Oasis Oldham Academy	South	Poor	Youth 11v11	1	7.5	0.5
107	The Hathershaw College	South	Poor	Adult	2	4	0
108	The Oldham Academy North	North	Poor	Youth 11v11	1	4	1
108	The Oldham Academy North	North	Poor	Youth 9v9	1	3.5	0.5
113	Waterhead Academy (Counthill Road)	East	Poor	Youth 11v11	2	0.5	5.5
129	Oldham Athletic AFC (Training Pitch)	Central	Standard	Adult	1	2	1

The impact of improving overplayed pitches to good quality is shown in the table above. In the main, overplay would be alleviated across nine sites providing 17 pitches, however, eight pitches across seven sites would remain overplayed. The overall impact of this results in overall overplay being reduced from 35 match equivalent sessions per week to 4.5.

Table 4.2: Impact of improving pitch quality on overall supply and demand

Pitch type	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Adult	2	17.5	15.5	4	19.5
Youth 11v11	**1**	13.5	12.5	6.5	19
Youth 9v9	1	4	3	4	7
Mini 7v7	**0**	**0**	0	4.5	4.5
Mini 5v5	**0**	**0**	0	3.5	3.5
If improvements are made					
Adult	2	2	**0**	4	**4**
Youth 11v11	**1**	1.5	**0.5**	6.5	**7**
Youth 9v9	1	1	**0**	4	**4**
Mini 7v7	**0**	**-**	**0**	4.5	**4.5**
Mini 5v5	**0**	**-**	**0**	3.5	**3.5**

As seen in the table above, if quality was improved to good, overplay would be removed from adult, youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitch types. However, youth 1v11 pitch types will still be overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions. When factoring in future demand shortfalls are identified across all pitch types, however these would be less, with this reducing from 53.5 match equivalent sessions to 23 match equivalent sessions.

Future demand

This scenario considers the impact that future demand derived from club ambitions will have on the supply and demand balance (as identified via consultation with clubs throughout the Borough). Please note that the Assessment Report only considers future demand derived from population projection growth.

Table 4.3: Summary of participation growth by analysis area

Analysis area	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Totals
Central	0.5	0.5	-	1	0.5	**2.5**
East	0.5	-	2.5	2	2.5	**7.5**
North	-	-	-	-	-	**0**
South	1	-	1	0.5	-	**2.5**
West	-	-	1.5	-	-	**1.5**
Oldham	**2**	**0.5**	**5**	**3.5**	**3**	**14**

Future demand from club ambitions totals 28 teams from five clubs and the table below shows the potential impact on the supply/demand balance by analysis area.

Table 4.4: Impact of future demand from clubs

Pitch type	Current supply/demand balance	Potential future demand (club aspirations)	Potential future supply/demand balance
Adult	**15.5**	**2**	**17.5**
Youth 11v11	**12.5**	**0.5**	**13**
Youth 9v9	**3**	**5**	**8**
Mini 7v7	**0**	**3.5**	**3.5**
Mini 5v5	**0**	**3**	**3**

If achieved, future demand from clubs will exacerbate shortfalls on adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches. Additionally, a shortfall arises on both mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches.

Future demand through forecasted growth

This scenario examines the effect of future demand based on forecasted growth from historical Manchester FA and West Riding FA affiliation data.

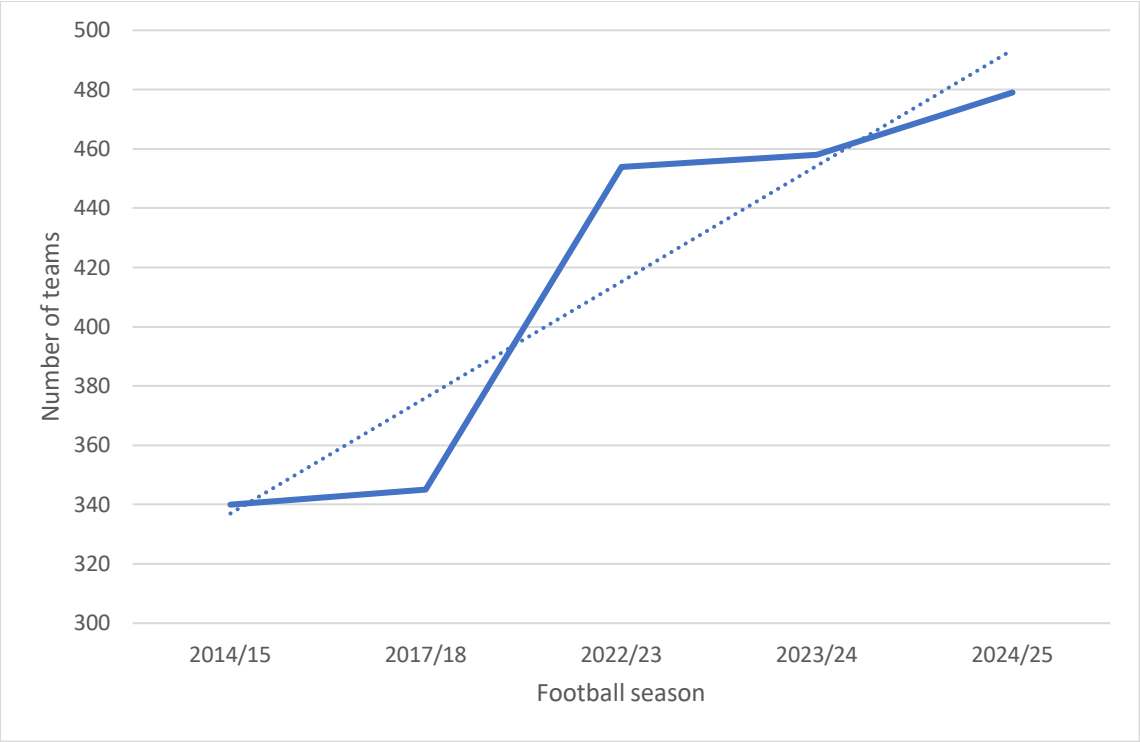
Manchester FA

The graph overleaf plots the forecasted growth for the 2025/26 season. It takes into account the following demand from previous seasons:

- 2014/15: 340 teams affiliated to Manchester FA.
- 2017/18: 345 teams affiliated to Manchester FA.
- 2022/23: 454 teams affiliated to Manchester FA.
- 2023/24: 458 teams affiliated to Manchester FA.
- 2024/25: 479 teams affiliated to Manchester FA.

With an average per season increase in football demand of 3.7%, trend forecasting predicts an increase of 18 teams for 2025/26 season. If achieved this would give a total of 497 affiliated teams playing in Oldham (which affiliate to Manchester FA) and equating to the need for a further nine match equivalent sessions per week across the Authority.

Figure 4.1: Growth in football teams across Oldham that affiliate to Manchester FA (2014-2024)



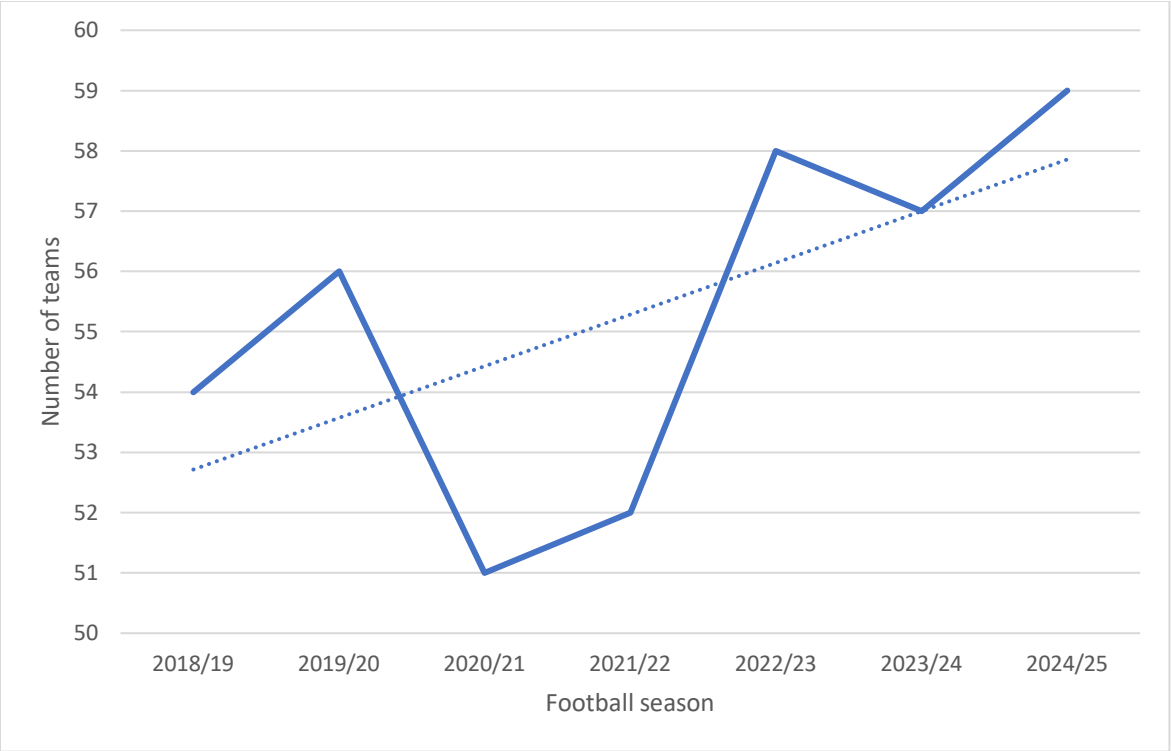
West Riding FA

The graph overleaf plots the forecasted growth for the 2025/26 season. It takes into account the following demand from previous seasons:

- 2018/19: 54 teams affiliated to West Riding FA.
- 2019/20: 56 teams affiliated to West Riding FA.
- 2020/21: 51 teams affiliated to West Riding FA.
- 2021/22: 52 teams affiliated to West Riding FA.
- 2022/23: 58 teams affiliated to West Riding FA.
- 2023/24: 57 teams affiliated to West Riding FA.
- 2024/25: 59 teams affiliated to West Riding FA.

With an average per season increase in football demand of 3.7%, despite a reduction in teams in the 2020/2021 season, trend forecasting predicts an increase of two teams for 2025/26 season. If achieved, this would give a total of 61 affiliated teams playing in Oldham (which affiliate to West Riding FA) and equating to the need for a further one match equivalent sessions per week across the Authority.

Figure 4.2: Growth in football teams across Oldham that affiliate to West Riding FA (2018-2024)



Given the current shortfalls identified for grass football pitches this scenario further evidences the need to improve pitch quality at priority sites and develop more pitches (which could include 3G pitches) to better support this anticipated growth in demand.

Loss of access to unsecure sites

The table below outlines sites in Oldham which are currently accessed by community clubs where tenure is unsecure.

In instances where clubs do not have formal tenure agreements in place, clubs could theoretically be asked to vacate at any time which would result in each requiring alternate provision to service existing levels of demand.

Table 4.5: Current demand taking place on grass pitches at unsecure sites

Site	Club	Teams
Co-op Academy Failsworth	Uppermill FC Athletico Failsworth FC Avro FC Mighty Dragons JFC Oldham Town Junior FC	1 team 1 team 1 team 1 team 1 team
Oasis Oldham Academy	Chadderton Colts AFC Reserves Hollinwood FC Oldham Community FC Sublime Athletic FC	1 team 2 teams 11 teams 3 teams
Saddleworth School	Saddleworth FC	3 teams
The Hathershaw College	AFC Oldham 2005 Clarksfield & Glodwick FC	3 teams 1 team

Site	Club	Teams
	Fitton All-stars Hathershaw Owls FC Oldham Ability Counts Oldham Saints FC	1 team 1 team 4 teams 2 teams
The Oldham Academy North	Santos Chadderton FC Chadderton Park Sports Club Clarksfield & Glodwick FC Shawside Junior Football Club	6 teams 1 team 1 team 1 team 9 teams
Waterhead Academy (Counthill Road)	Saddleworth 3Ds	12 teams

There are 67 teams from 21 clubs accessing six sites with unsecure tenure of which all are located at education sites. The impact on removal of six sites for community access is highlighted in the table below.

Table 4.6: Current supply and demand balance without unsecure sites

Pitch/facility type	Current supply/ demand balance	Potential supply/ demand balance
Adult	Shortfall of 15.5 MES per week	Shortfall of 22 MES per week
Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 12.5 MES per week	Shortfall of 26 MES per week
Youth 9v9	Shortfall of three MES per week	Shortfall of 7.5 MES per week
Mini 7v7	Played to capacity	Played to capacity
Mini 5v5	Played to capacity	Played to capacity

As can be seen, if all access to unsecure sites was to be lost, shortfalls increase on adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitch formats. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure the grass pitches at unsecure sites continue to stay open to community use, given the reliance upon these sites for community football. Site owners should also be encouraged and supported to formalise longer term lease agreements with clubs to further secure long-term access and opportunities to secure community use agreements with education providers should be explored and maximised to seek greater security and reduce risk for these users.

Recommendations

- Protect the existing quantity of pitches (unless replacement provision meets NPPF and Sport England Playing Field Policy requirements and is agreed upon and provided), in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- Where pitches are overplayed and assessed as poor or standard quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality.
- Explore the feasibility of offering specific strategic sites for long term lease or CUA if agreeable with relevant stakeholders such as Football Foundation and the relevant County FA.
- Utilise the Football Foundation's PitchPower app to assist in the improvement and ongoing maintenance of provision.
- Work to accommodate future demand at sites which are not operating at capacity.
- Work to alleviate identified overplay on grass football pitches, particularly those at youth 11v11 pitch format.

- Improve ancillary facilities where there is a demand to do so and where it can benefit the wider footballing offer, prioritising club-led sites, multi-pitch sites and sites which play key strategic roles for adult football and women and girls' participation.
- Given the substantial number of teams accessing sites with unsecure tenure (67 teams from 21 clubs), where appropriate, help to formalise long term usage agreements with clubs to further secure long-term access especially at education sites.
- Ensure that any residential development considers potential increases in demand for the sport and that new provision or contributions are properly sought through utilisation of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator.
- Work with Manchester FA, Lancashire FA, West Riding FA and the Football Foundation to update the current LFFP.

4.2: Third Generation turf (3G) pitches

Assessment Report summary

Supply and demand summary

- **In Oldham, there is insufficient supply of 3G pitches (11v11 size) to meet football training demand (based on the FA training model of one 11v11 pitch accommodating 38 teams) with a current shortfall of 3.5 11v11 3G pitches identified and with a total anticipated future shortfall of 4.5 11v11 3G pitches for football.**

Supply summary

- There are seven 11v11 3G pitches in Oldham across seven sites. All seven pitches are sports lit and available for community use.
- Three 11v11 3G pitches are located in the North Analysis Area, three located in the South Analysis Area and one 11v11 3G pitch is located in the West Analysis Area.
- As well as the 11v11 3G pitches, there are also 18 smaller size outdoor 3G pitches across 14 sites in Oldham. Of these, 14 pitches are available to the community and are sports lit leaving 22% of the small sided provision unavailable for community use.
- Most of the smaller size pitch provision is provided in the East Analysis Area (six of 18 – 33%), followed by the South Analysis Area providing five smaller size pitches (28%).
- The pitch located at The Hathershaw College is the only small sided 3G pitch which is FA approved and therefore is sanctioned to safely can accommodate match play.
- A planning application has recently been approved for the replacement of an existing grass training pitch known as Little Wembley (Oldham Athletic Football Club) with a new 11v11 3G pitch with sports lighting which will be both football and rugby league compliant.
- Chadderton FC has been awarded FF grant funding to replace its grass stadia pitch with a new 11v11 3G pitch with accommodating car parking and sports lighting.
- The Hathershaw College has recently been awarded funding to resurface and extend the size of the existing 3G pitch to 11v11 size. Furthermore, there is an application for a new 11v11 3G pitch located at Oasis Academy Leesbrook which is being funded by the Academy.
- In Oldham, the 3G pitch located at Avro Football Club (Vestacare Stadium), Co-op Academy Failsworth, Crompton House C of E School, Oasis Academy Oldham, Oldham Academy North, Royton and Crompton E-Act Academy and The Hathershaw College are all on the FA 3G Pitch Register.
- Six of the seven 11v11 3G pitches are managed by education providers with only the 3G pitch located at Avro Football Club (Vestacare Stadium) managed by the Sports Club.
- The smaller size 3G pitches are managed by either commercial management (four or 22%) or education providers (14 or 78%).
- In Oldham, the 3G pitches located at both Royton and Crompton E-Act Academy and Oldham Academy North are assessed as good quality. The 11v11 3G pitches located at North Chadderton School is assessed as poor quality.
- There are four good quality, 10 standard quality and four poor quality smaller size 3G pitches located at Broadfield Primary School, Honeywell Business & Community Centre and Waterhead Academy.
- All midweek and weekend availability is currently at capacity or close to capacity in Oldham.

- There is currently no World Rugby compliant/RFL Community Standard 3G pitches in Oldham.

Demand summary

- Although there are 183 teams which export match demand outside of Oldham there is still a need to train locally. Therefore, given there is a total of 559 teams which originate in Oldham, there is a theoretical need for 15 11v11 3G pitches (rounded up from 14.7). As there are currently 11.5 pitch equivalents provided, this means that there is a potential need for 3.5 additional 11v11 3G pitches to meet all current training demand.
- When considering future demand for an additional 41 teams (based on growth identified in Part 2 of this report), there is potential demand for 16 full size pitches overall (rounded up from 15.79), which means a theoretical future shortfall of 4.5 11v11 3G pitches.
- When broken down a shortfall is identified in each analysis area apart from the Central Analysis Area.

Scenarios

Accommodating football training demand

In order to satisfy current football training demand (based on the FA's scenario of one 11v11 size 3G pitch equivalent being able to cater for 38 community football teams) there is a shortfall of 3.5 11v11 size equivalent 3G pitches to accommodate all current training demand in Oldham as seen below.

Table 4.7: Current demand for 11v11 3G pitches by analysis area

Analysis area	Current number of teams	11v11 size 3G requirement	Current number of 3G pitches	Theoretical shortfall
Central	32	0.84 – 1	1.5	0.5
East	91	2.39 – 2	1.25	0.75
North	127	3.34 - 3	3	-
South	250	6.58 – 7	4.75	2.25
West	59	1.55 - 2	1	1
Oldham	**559**	**14.7 - 15**	**11.5**	**3.5**

The highest need for 3G pitches is in the South Analysis Area where there is a shortfall of 2.25 11v11 pitches.

The table below shows the impact of providing new 3G pitch provision at Little Wembley[3] (planning approved, Central Analysis Area) and at Chadderton FC (available summer 2025, West Analysis Area) against the current and anticipated future number of teams. Additionally, this includes the extension to the 3G pitch at The Hathershaw College (South Analysis Area) to 11v11 size creating an additional 0.25.

For the purpose of this scenario the 3G pitch at Little Wembley will account for 0.5 of a pitch due to programmed use from Oldham Athletic Community Trust and rugby league leaving roughly half the programme available for affiliated football training. In total, the below tables will show the impact of an additional 1.75 pitches.

[3] It should be noted that this is subject to funding.

Table 4.8: Current supply impact for an additional 1.75 3G pitches in Oldham (based on 38 teams per pitch)

Current number of teams	3G pitch requirement	Future number of 11v11 size 3G pitch equivalents	Current shortfall
559	15 (14.7)	13.25	1.75

Table 4.9: Future supply impact for an additional 1.75 3G pitches in Oldham (based on 38 teams per pitch)

Future number of teams	3G pitch requirement	Future number of 11v11 size 3G pitches equivalents	Future shortfall
600	16 (15.8)	13.25	2.75

Table 4.10: Current demand for 3G pitches in Oldham by analysis area against future supply impact for an additional 1.75 3G pitches

Analysis area	Current number of teams	3G pitch requirement	Future number of 3G pitches	Current shortfall
Central	32	0.84 – 1	2	1
East	91	2.39 – 2	1.25	0.75
North	127	3.34 - 3	3	-
South	250	6.58 – 7	5	2
West	59	1.55 - 2	2	-
Oldham	**559**	**15 (14.7)**	**13.25**	**1.75**

If the two new additional 3G pitches are developed and The Hathershaw College pitch extended to 11v11 size, this would reduce the current shortfall of 11v11 3G pitches at a Boroughwide level from 3.5 to 1.75 pitches. There is still a clear need for additional pitches to meet the current shortfalls, even more so given the identified shortfalls for rugby league and rugby union.

It should be noted that the current 1.5 pitch equivalent in the Central Analysis Area is made up of four small sided 3G pitches. Therefore, clubs which originate from the Central Analysis Area are currently based in other analysis areas due to the lack of pitch supply, which means following the development of the new 3G pitch at Little Wembley, clubs such as Oldham Athletic FC Girls & Women FC (nine teams in the South Analysis Area), Boundary Park Juniors FC (six teams in the North Analysis Area) and Santos AFC (12 teams in the North Analysis Area) will then move to the Central Analysis Area which will alleviate shortfalls in other areas.

Moving football mini match play demand to 3G pitches

To further the use of 3G pitches for matches, the FA is particularly keen to work with local authorities and providers within local authorities to understand the potential demand for 11v11 size sports lit 3G pitches to cater for different formats of match play.

The FA has an ambition to transfer 50% of mini play on to 3G pitches nationally. Thus, a programme of play has been created for Oldham to determine how many 3G pitches would be required to accommodate this, given that peak time for both mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 football is Saturday mornings.

Table 4.11: Moving all mini matches to 3G pitches

Time	AGP	Total games/teams
9.30am – 10.30am	4 x 5v5	4/8
10.30am – 11.30am	2 x 7v7	2/4
11.30am – 12.30pm	2 x 7v7	2/4
12.30pm – 1.30pm	2 x 7v7	2/4

Of the 559 teams which originate in Oldham, if all 102 teams playing 7v7 football and 193 teams playing 5v5 football, based of the table above, this would create a need for 24 11v11 size 3G pitches for this scenario to be achieved. Therefore, to make this more realistic, this scenario is calculated based on teams currently utilising pitches in Oldham, 70 teams playing 7v7 football and 43 teams playing 5v5 football at peak time.

Based on the above programming and separate start times for mini 5v5 and mini 7v7 matches, the overall need is for six (rounded up from 5.83) 11v11 size 3G pitches to accommodate all current mini match play demand.

Therefore, with seven 11v11 size pitches in Oldham, this scenario can be achieved if programming to enable this can be agreed.

World Rugby compliant/RFL Community Standard 3G pitches

WR produced the 'performance specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby', more commonly known as 'Regulation 22' that provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union. Additionally, pitches of this nature can be tested to support rugby league activity. There are currently no World Rugby/RFL Community Standard compliant 3G pitches in Oldham.

RFU

The RFU generally support the development of 3G pitches which support rugby union where grass rugby pitches are over capacity and where a pitch would support the growth of the game at the host site and for the local rugby partnership, including local clubs and education establishments.

Locally, shortfalls are identified for rugby union pitches. These are, however, localised at heavily accessed club sites due to concentrated training demand.

Oldham does not provide a WR compliant 3G pitch. However, funding has recently been awarded to resurface and expand the existing 3G pitch located at The Hathershaw College to create a 11v11 3G pitch which will also be WR Reg 22 compliant. Both Oldham RUFC and Saddleworth ARLFC are known to currently use the site to alleviate some demand off their respective match pitches.

RFL

3G pitches for rugby league are classed as either RFL Community or RFL Stadium. RFL Community is suitable for Tiers 4-6 and training. If used for competitive games they should be tested every two years, and if it is used for training only then every three years. RFL Stadium pitches are considered suitable for match play use in Tiers 1-3 and should be retested annually if used for competitive games. More information can be found in Section five here Materials Science Consultants Ltd.

The WR22 test complies with the RFL Community element of this, but the frequency of retest is different should the 3G be used for competitive rugby league. The RFL Stadium criteria requires an additional test.

As previously mentioned, a planning application has recently been approved for the replacement of an existing grass training pitch known as Little Wembley (Oldham Athletic Football Club) with a new 11v11 3G pitch with sports lighting which would be both football and rugby league compliant. This would be established with the viewpoint of satisfying training demand from Oldham RLFC.

In Oldham, there is a current overall shortfall of 17.5 match equivalent sessions per week on rugby league pitches with specific shortfalls in the Central, East, North and South analysis areas due to poor quality pitches combined with heavy usage for both match and training demand. Only the West Analysis Area is played to capacity.

The East Analysis Area is identified as experiencing the most overplay amounting to nine match equivalent sessions per week. Both Saddleworth Rangers ARLFC and Waterhead Warriors are located in the East Analysis Area and highlight a need for additional training provision to cater for its demand.

Saddleworth Rangers ARLFC reports to be currently using multiple venues to access 3G pitch provision for training such as Saddleworth School, Saddleworth Leisure Centre, The Hathershaw College and Greenhill Academy. It should be noted that non-contact training activity takes place at these sites due to the pitches not being certified for contact rugby league.

Recommendations

- Protect current stock of 3G pitches, in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- Work with relevant partners to deliver additional 3G pitches in the Borough to cater for demand, including football training demand.
- Work with partners such as the FA, FF, RFL, RFU, Sport England and other NGBs as applicable to identify the most suitable locations to build new 3G pitches to alleviate known shortfalls.
- Ensure that any new 3G pitches have community use agreements in place.
- Ensure that all 11v11 and small size pitches of substantial area are on the FA register and are re-tested every three years to sustain certification.
- Ensure that all current and future providers have in place a pitch replacement fund to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Ensure that all new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA quality performance standards.
- Look to increase the number of 3G pitches within Oldham at suitable sites by using the findings from the PPOSS.
- Ensure that any new 3G pitches are in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.

- In line with the need to develop additional 3G pitches to meet training demand, maximise use of 3G pitches for match play, with focus to grow the central venue match play offer which is preferred amongst leagues in Greater Manchester, particularly at mini soccer formats
- Engage with 3G providers to replace halogen sports lighting to LED systems to improve energy efficiency, reduce costs and reduce light spill.
- Explore opportunities for multi-sport use and cross sport compliancy of 3G pitches where new are required to help meet shortfalls for rugby league, rugby union and other pitch sports where present.
- Work with relevant County FAs (Manchester FA, Lancashire FA, West Riding FA) and the Football Foundation to update the current LFFP.
- Ensure maintenance and sustainable replacement strategies are carried out for existing and future supply of 3G pitches.

4.3: Cricket pitches

Assessment Report summary

Supply and demand summary

- **Overall, there is currently insufficient capacity of natural turf cricket squares to meet current demand for club cricket at a Borough wide level on Saturdays, Sundays and midweek.**
- **When accounting for future demand for senior and junior cricket in Oldham shortfalls are exacerbated further.**

Supply summary

- In total, there are 17 grass wicket squares in Oldham, all of which, are available for community use.
- There are nine non turf pitches (NTPs) in Oldham. Four accompany existing squares at club sites and five are located as standalone facilities.
- Hollinwood Sports Club (South Analysis Area) previously had a grass cricket square maintained. The square consisted of 10 wickets and has not been maintained since *circa* 2018; however, the site is still actively used for rugby league activity.
- All community clubs playing within Oldham have secure tenure at their respective home sites.
- The audit of grass wicket cricket squares in Oldham found five (29%) to be good quality and 12 (71%) to be of standard quality. None are assessed as poor quality.
- The audit of ancillary facilities at community available grass pitch cricket sites in Oldham determines that six squares (35%) are accompanied by good quality provision, nine squares (53%) are accompanied by standard quality provision and two squares (12%) have poor quality supporting ancillary provision located at Greenfield Cricket Club and Royton Cricket Club.

Demand summary

- In Oldham, there are 17 clubs generating 63 senior men's teams, 13 senior women's teams and 51 junior boys' teams.
- Most teams in Oldham play in the East Analysis Area which accommodates 61 teams (48%), followed by the North Analysis Area with 39 teams (31%). The least number of teams is in the Central and West analysis areas with eight teams (6%) respectively.
- There are 10 additional teams expected to be generated by population growth alone for Oldham.
- Of the responding clubs in Oldham, four quantified its aspirations to increase levels of participation. This equates to a total predicted growth of one senior men's, three senior women's, one junior boys' and one junior girls' team.

Scenarios

Addressing overplay

Although a regular, sufficient maintenance regime can sustain sites with minimal levels of overplay a reduction in play is recommended to ensure there is no detrimental effect on quality of cricket squares over time.

In Oldham, overplay is identified at ten sites across ten squares. The scenario below looks at the impacts of quality improvements as a solution to reducing or alleviating overplay. As a reminder, for good quality squares, capacity is five matches per grass wicket per season, whilst for a standard quality square, capacity is four matches per wicket per season. For poor quality squares, no capacity is considered to exist as such provision is not deemed safe for play. No squares are rated as poor in Oldham.

PitchPower (a technical assessment of quality) for cricket began to be used in 2024 with the initial reports being produced towards the end of the season. In Oldham, 12 cricket sites have received a PitchPower assessment, of which all 12 are assessed standard quality. It should be noted that more assessments are planned to be carried out, therefore, there is a need to review quality as part of the Stage E process.

Of the overplayed squares, all ten are assessed as standard quality, which means the position will improve. The impact of improving quality to good, where each wicket has a theoretical capacity of five match equivalent sessions per season is considered in the table below.

Table 4.12: Impact on overplay if all overplayed squares were improved to good quality

Site ID	Site name	Club	No. of squares	Square quality	No. of wickets	Current overplay (matches per season)	Potential position (matches per season)
40	Greenfield Cricket Club	Greenfield CC	1	Standard	8	58	50
45	Heyside Cricket Club	Heyside CC	1	Standard	12	4	8
62	Moorside Cricket & Bowling Club	Moorside CC	1	Standard	10	9	1
73	Oldham Cricket Club	Oldham CC	1	Standard	12	28	16
85	Royton Cricket Club	Royton CC	1	Standard	10	59	49
88	Saddleworth Cricket Tennis and Bowling Club	Saddleworth CC	1	Standard	12	77	65
93	Shaw Cricket Club	Shaw CC	1	Standard	10	55	45
111	Uppermill Sports Club	Uppermill CC	1	Standard	10	64	54
119	Woodhouses Cricket Club	Woodhouses CC	1	Standard	13	4	9
137	Springhead Cricket Club	Springhead CC	1	Standard	7	10	3

As seen in the table above, seven squares across seven sites would continue to be overplayed if quality were to be improved. The overplay remains due to high levels of demand. Additionally, there are three sites which are used by nine nomadic clubs which has increased shortfalls at Oldham Cricket Club, Saddleworth Cricket Tennis and Bowling Club and Uppermill Cricket Club.

The squares located at Heyside Cricket Club, Moorside Cricket & Bowling Club and Woodhouses Cricket Club would see overplay alleviated and spare capacity of 18 match equivalent sessions per season collectively created.

Cricket squares can be accompanied by non-turf pitches (NTPs), made of a synthetic material that allows users to play on a usable wicket all year round whilst not contributing towards playing demand on natural turf wickets (grass wickets). By the nature of its design, an NTP can accommodate significantly more demand than a natural cricket wicket, meaning it can contribute towards addressing overplay issues on grass cricket squares.

The squares located at Oldham Cricket Club, Royton Cricket Club, Saddleworth Cricket Tennis and Bowling Club, Shaw Cricket Club and Springhead Cricket Club are not serviced by an NTP, and all could theoretically benefit from such provision as a way of reducing identified overplay. Greenfield CC and Uppermill CC has an accompanying NTP provided, meaning it should look to increase the use of its existing NTP for junior teams as to reduce overplay.

The ECB highlights that non-turf pitches which follow its TS6 guidance[4] on performance standards are suitable for high level, senior play and are considered able to take 60 matches per season, although this may include training sessions via the use of mobile nets. Typically, however, play would be more suited to junior teams as senior leagues typically stipulate the use of natural turf wickets.

Hybrid wickets

A hybrid wicket combines natural turf grass with less the 5% of uniquely engineered, soft polyethylene yarn, which has already been used to improve golf tees, tennis courts and pitch surrounds. These wickets are to offer a greater capacity in addition to reducing time on repair works with a faster recovery time. Reports found that hybrid wickets improve surface stability, reduced wear, reduced bowler foot holes and significantly extended hours of playing time.

Ideally, once these become more readily available for community cricket clubs and have gone through the required testing, they could act as a way to increase levels of playing capacity on overplayed squares. This would be particularly beneficial for those sites which are limited on space and cannot create additional wickets due to restrictions on things such as boundary length or ball strike.

Although it is difficult at this stage to understand what impact hybrid wickets could have on each site's capacity, it is suggested that it could potentially alleviate all the overplay at Greenfield Cricket Club and Oldham Cricket Club. This assumes that more senior demand can take place on the hybrid wickets allowing for the outer senior wickets to be used/converted for junior demand. It should also be noted that this approach is currently a rather expensive means of reducing overplay.

Accommodating future demand

In Oldham, five clubs expressed aspirations to increase teams at specific ages. As seen in the table below.

[4] http://www.cag.org.uk/docs/ecb-non-turf-pitches-ts6-final-328.pdf

Table 4.13: Future demand expressed by clubs

Club	Analysis area	Senior men's	Senior women's	Junior boys	Junior girls
Delph & Dobcross CC	East	-	-	1	-
Oldham CC	East	1	-	-	-
Royton CC	North	-	1	-	1
Werneth CC	West	-	1	-	-
Woodhouses CC	South	-	1	1	-
-	**Total**	**1**	**3**	**2**	**1**

A junior boys' or girls' team in Oldham is likely to have six matches per season at home and therefore six additional match equivalent sessions per season are required at Delph & Dobcross Cricket Club, Royton Cricket Club and Woodhouses Cricket Club in order to cater for this additional demand.

Additionally, for senior cricket a team is likely to have 12 matches per session at home and therefore 12 additional match equivalent sessions per season are required at Oldham Cricket Club, Royton Cricket Club, Werneth Cricket Club and Woodhouses Cricket Club. As referenced in the previous scenario Oldham Cricket Club, Royton Cricket Club and Woodhouses Cricket Club are currently overplayed and all but Woodhouses Cricket Club would remain overplayed even with an improvement in square quality. Therefore, at present these three squares could not theoretically cater for more demand as it is overplayed.

Accommodating girls' demand

The Assessment Report has accounted for future demand by using team generation rates applying population projections to 2041. It identifies that there shall be the growth of five senior men's teams and five junior boys' teams.

As demand figures are not currently as high for women's and girls, the team generation rate method of measuring future demand does not capture the anticipated growth that is expected to take place over the next five years.

The ECB has recently established a target of trebling the number of female teams across the Country by 2026/2027, with this likely to further increase in demand across the Authority. To quantify this, with six senior women's and one junior girls' team fielded in the Authority, with this coming from Greenfield, Moorside, Saddleworth, Shaw and Werneth cricket clubs. This will increase to 21 teams by 2026/2027.

As girls' demand commonly takes place either Sunday or midweek, the sites listed below showing spare capacity for Sunday demand should be prioritised for accommodating additional fixtures:

- Austerlands Cricket Club.
- Crompton Cricket Club

Alternatively, the below listed sites showing spare capacity for midweek demand can be used to accommodate anticipated girls' demand:

- Austerlands Cricket Club.
- Crompton Cricket Club.
- Failsworth Macedonia Cricket Club.
- Friarmere Cricket Club.
- Glodwick Cricket Club.

This will place further pressure on the shortfalls for Sunday and midweek cricket, as this is when girl's demand commonly takes place. Therefore, without improvements to existing provision or via the establishment of new provision this level of demand cannot currently be accommodated.

Recommendations

- Protect existing quantity of cricket squares, in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- Improve quality at sites assessed as standard quality and ensure quality is sustained at sites assessed as good through partnership working with LCF.
- Install additional NTPs and/or hybrid wickets to accompany grass wicket squares (where space allows), particularly where overplay is present and where it cannot be eradicated via quality improvements and to support the recreational and informal game such as the nine nomadic clubs.
- Pursue improved security of tenure for clubs without ownership or a long-term lease arrangement in place, particularly those engaging in lease renewals.
- Improve the changing and ancillary facilities where there is a need to do so, especially to cater for women & girls demand
- Consider options to increase and improve stock of suitable practice facilities to support the growth of demand especially women & girls.
- Continue to support ECB initiatives such as All Stars and Dynamos and ensure unaffiliated demand and recreational cricket is provided for.
- Ensure that any residential development considers potential increases in demand for the sport and that new provision or contributions are properly sought through utilisation of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator.

4.4: Rugby union - grass pitches

Assessment Report summary

Supply and demand summary

- **There is a current and future shortfall of 6.5 match equivalent sessions per week to meet rugby union demand in Oldham.**

Supply summary

- There are four grass rugby union pitches identified in Oldham across two sites. All four pitches are available for community use with only one pitch located in the North Analysis Area (Crompton House C of E School), available for community use but currently unused.
- Provision of rugby union pitches is split between North Analysis Area and South Analysis Area accommodating four pitches collectively. There is no rugby union provision located in the Central, East or West analysis areas.
- Oldham RUFC accesses one site which is located at Oldham Rugby Football Club. The Club has a freehold of its sites and therefore has secure tenure.
- All community available pitches in Oldham are poor quality located at Crompton House C of E School and Oldham Rugby Football Club.
- Oldham RUFC access ancillary facilities at Oldham Rugby Football Club which it reports are generally good quality. The clubhouse facilities are also considered to be of good quality and are available to hire for events. The Club is in the process of updating and painting the provision. Additionally, its installing wall partitions for separate female changing rooms with contained showers and toilets.

Demand summary

- There is one community rugby union club based in Oldham, providing a total of 14 teams. There are three senior teams, of which, one is women's. There are four age grade boys' teams, one dedicated age grade girls' teams and six mixed age grade teams.
- Oldham RUFC utilises a partially sports lit grass pitch accompanied by a fully sports lit pitch to accommodate its entire training demand. However, it should be noted that the six mini teams utilise the disused bowling green for their training demand.

- Currently, there are no WR compliant 3G pitches are identified in Oldham. Oldham RUFC has aspiration to convert the disused bowling green located at Oldham Rugby Football Club to a small sided 3G pitch for training.
- No additional teams are predicted to be generated via population growth alone.
- Oldham RUFC indicate plans to increase the number of senior teams by one team following a decrease in this section over last couple of seasons.
- There are two sites which display potential spare capacity to accommodate additional play totalling one match equivalent sessions. However, in practice there is no spare capacity on these pitches at any peak time due to neither site being considered secure.
- There are two pitches across one site which are overplayed totalling 6.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Scenarios

Improving pitch maintenance and drainage

Maintenance and drainage solutions are an integral method in improving pitch quality at rugby union sites, ensuring that pitches can accommodate demand throughout the season. Locally, there is one site (Oldham Rugby Football Club) which is identified as being overplayed and the following scenario explores what impact improving the level of maintenance and installation of drainage solutions would have on both this site and Crompton House C of E School which is has 0.5 MES per week spare capacity.

The table below illustrates the RFU pitch quality scoring methodology which ascertains the capacity of pitches based on the scoring criteria.

Table 4.14: Pitch capacity (matches per week) based on quality assessments

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

The table below looks at what capacity benefits would be ascertained through improvement of both maintenance and drainage solutions in one increment on the above technical criteria. It further looks at the benefit of maximum improvements to both drainage and maintenance to explore maximum benefits.

Table 4.15: Improving maintenance on all sites/pitches by one increment (based on RFU technical criteria)

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Current technical score	Quality*	Sports lighting?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical score	Improved quality score	Improved capacity rating
22	Crompton House C of E School	1	M0/D1	Poor	No	1	1.5	0.5	M1 / D1	Standard	1
76	Oldham Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D0	Poor	No	1	1.5	0.5	M2 / D0	Good	1
76	Oldham Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D0	Poor	Yes	5	1.5	3.5	M2 / D0	Good	3
76	Oldham Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D0	Poor	Yes (Partially)	4.5	1.5	3	M2 / D0	Good	2.5

In Oldham, improving the maintenance of pitches at all sites by one increment would reduce total overplay from 6.5 match equivalent sessions per week to 5.5.

Table 4.16: Improving drainage on all sites/pitches by 1 increment (based on RFU technical criteria)

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Current technical score	Quality*	Sports lighting?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical score	Improved quality score	Improved capacity rating
22	Crompton House C of E School	1	M0/D1	Poor	No	1	1.5	0.5	M0 / D2	Poor	0.75
76	Oldham Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D0	Poor	No	1	1.5	0.5	M1 / D1	Standard	1
76	Oldham Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D0	Poor	Yes	5	1.5	3.5	M1 / D1	Standard	3

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Current technical score	Quality*	Sports lighting?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical score	Improved quality score	Improved capacity rating
76	Oldham Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D0	Poor	Yes (Partially)	4.5	1.5	3	M1 / D1	Standard	2.5

A similar approach to improving maintenance has been undertaken in the table above for drainage installation (through improvement to pitches by one increment on the RFU technical criteria). Installing pipe drainage to pitches at all sites accessed by community clubs would have a theoretical capacity benefit by reducing total overplay from 6.5 to 5.5 match equivalent sessions per week. Oldham RUFC would continue to experience overplay.

Table 4.17: Improving both maintenance and drainage to M2/D3 at all sites/ pitches (based on RFU technical criteria)

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Current technical score	Quality*	Sports lighting?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical score	Improved quality score	Improved capacity rating
22	Crompton House C of E School	1	M0/D1	Poor	No	1	1.5	0.5	M2/D3	Good	2.5
76	Oldham Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D0	Poor	No	1	1.5	0.5	M2/D3	Good	2.5
76	Oldham Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D0	Poor	Yes	5	1.5	3.5	M2/D3	Good	1.5
76	Oldham Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D0	Poor	Yes (Partially)	4.5	1.5	3	M2/D3	Good	1

This table above illustrates the position if all overplayed pitches in Oldham, were improved to an M2/D3 quality. This is the highest threshold a pitch can score based on the RFU technical criteria. As can be seen, overplay would be noticeably reduced but would remain at Oldham Rugby Football Club on the sports lit pitches.

World Rugby (WR) 3G pitches in Oldham

There are currently no WR 3G pitches in Oldham. Due to current overplay at Oldham Rugby Football Club it is considered that the Club would benefit from access to a 3G pitch for training demand to further ensure that the remaining shortfalls can be reduced. Funding has recently been awarded to resurface and expand the existing 3G pitch located at The Hathershaw College to create a 11v11 3G pitch which will also be WR Reg 22 compliant. Oldham RUFC is known to currently use the site to alleviate some demand off its respective match pitches.

In addition, any new development within the South Analysis Area could be installed for WR compliance to ensure additional training demand could be used by Oldham RUFC.

If Oldham RUFC were to secure two hours of usage on a 3G pitch, current shortfalls would reduce from 6.5 match equivalent session per week to 4.5 match equivalent sessions per week. Additionally, if improvements were made to either the maintenance or drainage at Oldham Rugby Union Football Club shortfalls would reduce from 5.5 match equivalent sessions per week to 3.5 match equivalent sessions per week. This is also based on the Club secure access to 3G provision for two hours.

Recommendations

- Protect the existing quantity of rugby union pitches including those used for curricular and extra-curricular demand, in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- Support clubs in taking part in the GMA pitch advisory service to explore technical requirements to improve pitch quality to address overplay.
- Ensure that any residential development considers potential increases in demand for the sport and that new provision or contributions are properly sought through utilisation of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator.
- Any potential new development of a 3G in the South Analysis Area should be explored for WR compliance to support training demand for Oldham RUFC.

4.5: Hockey pitches (sand/water-based AGPs)

Assessment Report summary

Supply and demand summary

- **Although there is only one hockey club in Oldham (Oldham HC), which has full access to Newman RC College, it can't be said that the current provision is sufficient (in terms of quantity) to meet the demand and need for the Club.**
- **The pitch located at Newman RC College is poor quality and is a concern as this is affecting future growth potential for the Club. Further to this, the unsecure tenure and cost of access (even with a subsidy) is also affecting the future status of the Club in Oldham.**

Supply summary

- There is one full size hockey suitable artificial grass pitches (AGPs) located in Oldham in the West Analysis Area, which is sports lit and is available for community use.
- The pitch located at Newman RC College is rated as poor quality due to their relative age and limited maintenance.
- Newman RC College is operated by an external lettings company, EQUANS.
- Oldham HC access changing facilities at Newman RC College and states the changing rooms are in standard condition with no major issues.

Demand summary

- Oldham HC is the only affiliated hockey club in Oldham, providing four teams (three senior women's and one mixed team) and a junior section. All of its demand takes place on the AGP at Newman RC College.
- All matches and training take place at Newman RC College with matches played from 10:30 Saturdays and Sundays. Training takes place from 18:30 – 19:30 on Thursday for junior training, and 19:00 – 20:30 on Thursday for senior training (women's and mixed teams).
- There is currently no known exported or imported hockey demand in Oldham.
- Oldham HC aspires to continue to increase both the senior and junior section, but the pitch quality at Newman RC College is affecting growth.
- Oldham HC ran back to hockey sessions in the past, however, due to the pitch quality at Newman RC College sessions currently can't be held. It is an aspiration for the Club to bring these sessions back.
- There is spare capacity to accommodate additional use in the peak period on the full size hockey suitable AGPs at Newman RC College; however, this is limited due to the poor quality of the surface.
- There is one full size AGP available which can accommodate hockey matches in Oldham, this provides an opportunity to accommodate up to 16 hockey teams across the Borough. With just four teams plus juniors currently playing in Oldham, there is sufficient spare capacity to accommodate demand.

Scenarios

Meeting demand for hockey suitable AGPs

The PPS Guidance suggests that a pitch with sports lighting can accommodate four match equivalent sessions on a Saturday. With teams playing on a home and away format, this equates to one AGP being able to cater for eight 'home' teams (one team requires 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week on its 'home' AGP).

The table below outlines the position for usage across hockey sites in Oldham. The pitch at Newman RC College is operating with four senior teams plus juniors playing fixtures. Therefore, has sufficient capacity for its current teams and in the future up to a further four additional teams if required.

As the amount of demand requires at least one pitch for peak time access, it is essential for the Newman RC College to continue to accommodate demand to meet the current need for hockey and is protected for continued use as it is the only full size AGP in the Borough.

Table 4.18: Hockey usage and spare capacity

Site ID	Site name	Site user	Current use in peak period (MES)	Spare capacity?
64	Newman RC College	Oldham HC	2 MES	Yes

Table 4.19: Quality of existing hockey suitable artificial grass pitches

Site ID	Site name	Surface type	Site user	Quality rating	Built/ resurfaced
64	Newman RC College	Sand filled	Oldham HC	Poor	2011

Based on the above, it can be determined that the quantity of provision in Oldham is sufficient to accommodate existing demand. However, as the pitch at Newman RC College is already poor quality, there is a need to replace the existing surface to ensure the long term survival of hockey in Oldham for Oldham HC.

As there are no other suitable hockey facilities within Oldham, the Club would have to relocate outside of the Borough to neighbouring authorities and gain access for fixtures if the Newman RC College pitch were to come out of use due to quality concerns.

Recommendations

- Protect the AGP at Newman RC College for continued hockey use.
- Work with partners to provide a replacement surface to the AGP at Newman RC College to continue to safely accommodate hockey demand from Oldham HC.
- Once the surface at Newman RC College has been replaced, ensure an enhanced maintenance programme is carried out.
- Ensure all hockey suitable AGPs have a sinking fund in place for their eventual refurbishment.
- Pursue long-term security of tenure for Oldham HC through a community use agreement. In conjunction look to develop the management and accessibility of provision to ensure its accessibility based on club requirements to allow demand to grow.
- Ensure that any residential development considers potential increases in demand for the sport and that new provision or contributions are properly sought through utilisation of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator.

4.6: Rugby league – grass pitches

Assessment Report summary

Supply and demand summary

- **There is insufficient supply of rugby league pitches in Oldham to meet demand.**
- **Overall, in Oldham there is a current shortfall of 17.5 match equivalent sessions and a future shortfall of 18 match equivalent sessions per week.**

Supply summary

- There are 18 rugby league pitches identified in Oldham across 12 sites. Of these, 15 pitches across 10 sites are available for community use.
- The largest offering of rugby league pitches is identified in the East Analysis Area, with this containing six pitches available to the community.
- In total, one pitch is rated as good quality (7%), eight as standard quality (53%) and six are deemed to be poor quality (40%).
- In regard to ancillary facilities including changing provision used by rugby league clubs based in Oldham, three are assessed as good quality, three as standard quality and one as poor quality located at Hollinwood Sports Club.

Demand summary

- A total of 65 teams are identified as playing competitive rugby league in Oldham. This consists of 11 senior men's, 34 junior boy's teams, one junior girls' team and 19 primary teams.
- The East Analysis Area is where most teams have their match play pitch located (36 teams).
- There is currently only one junior girls' team provided in Oldham by Waterhead Warriors. It should be noted that Saddleworth Rangers is in the process of creating a girls' team with 20 girls' currently training. Furthermore, Higginshaw ARLFC aspires to create a junior girls' team by next season.
- Team generation rates applied to population growth (to 2041) predict an additional senior men's team, two junior boys and two additional mini mixed team to be generated, equating to an additional 2.5 match equivalent sessions per week.
- Of responding clubs, all three clubs highlight plans to increase membership amounting to five teams in total.
- There are two match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity during the peak period. However, eight pitches are overplayed by a combined 17.5 match equivalent sessions per week. The East Analysis Area has the highest level of overplay (nine match equivalent sessions).
- Pitches which are identified as being overplayed is largely due to high levels of demand combined with poor pitch quality.

Scenarios

Improving pitch quality

In Oldham, seven senior and four junior pitches are currently overplayed across eight sites. This translates to the sites accommodating more demand than is recommended based on quality. The scenario below looks at the impact of improvements to the pitches at each of the sites through enhancing pitch quality.

As a guide, the RFL has set a standard number of matches that each pitch should be able to accommodate, set out below.

Table 4.20: Pitch capacity (matches per week) based on quality assessments

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

Table 4.21: Improvements to existing maintenance regimes to reduce overplay

Site ID	Site name	No. of pitches	Pitch type	Quality	Match equivalent sessions of play (per week)	Recommended site capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Good quality rating (MES)	Theoretical capacity rating (MES per week)
16	Churchill Playing Fields	1	Senior	Poor	4	1	3	3	1
31	Fitton Hill Bulldogs Community Sports	1	Senior	Standard	4	2	2	3	1
51	Hollinwood Sports Club	1	Senior	Poor	2	1	1	3	1
51	Hollinwood Sports Club	1	Junior	Poor	3.5	1	2.5	3	0.5
74	Oldham Edge	1	Junior	Poor	1.5	1	0.5	3	1.5
79	Oldham St Annes Amateur Rugby League Football Club	1	Junior	Good	4.5	3	1.5	3	1.5
79	Oldham St Annes Amateur Rugby League Football Club	1	Junior	Good	4	3	1	3	1
90	Saddleworth Rangers ARLFC	1	Senior	Standard	3.5	2	1.5	3	0.5
113	Waterhead Academy (Counthill Road)	2	Senior	Standard	6.5	4	2.5	3	3.5
114	Waterhead Park	1	Senior	Standard	4	2	2	3	1

The impact of improving overplayed pitches to good quality is shown in the table above. In the main, overplay would be alleviated across two pitches, however, nine pitches across seven sites would still have overplay due to heavy usage. The overall impact of this results in shortfalls being reduced from 17.5 match equivalent sessions per week to ten.

Moving all training demand to 3G

This scenario looks at the impact of moving all training demand of match pitches to 3G pitches. It should be noted that Saddleworth Rangers ARLFC already utilise multiple venues with 3G pitch provision for its training demand.

Table 4.22: Moving all training demand to 3G

Site ID	Site name	No. of pitches	Pitch type	Quality	Match equivalent sessions of play (per week)	Recommended site capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Match demand only (MES)	Theoretical capacity rating (MES per week)
16	Churchill Playing Fields	1	Senior	Poor	4	1	3	4	3
31	Fitton Hill Bulldogs Community Sports	1	Senior	Standard	4	2	2	2	0
47	Higginshaw ARLFC (Sara Moor Pitch)	1	Senior	Standard	1.5	3	1.5	0.5	2.5
51	Hollinwood Sports Club	1	Senior	Poor	2	1	1	2	1
51	Hollinwood Sports Club	1	Junior	Poor	3.5	1	2.5	1.5	0.5
74	Oldham Edge	1	Junior	Poor	1.5	1	0.5	0.5	0.5
79	Oldham St Annes Amateur Rugby League Football Club	1	Senior	Good	2.5	3	0.5	1	2
79	Oldham St Annes Amateur Rugby League Football Club	1	Junior	Good	4.5	3	1.5	3.5	0.5
79	Oldham St Annes Amateur Rugby League Football Club	1	Junior	Good	4	3	1	3	0
90	Saddleworth Rangers ARLFC	1	Senior	Standard	3.5	2	1.5	3.5	1.5
113	Waterhead Academy (Counthill Road)	2	Senior	Standard	6.5	4	2.5	5	1
114	Waterhead Park	1	Senior	Standard	4	2	2	2	0

The impact of moving all training demand to 3G pitches is shown in the table above. In the main, overplay would be alleviated across six sites providing six pitches, however, seven pitches across six sites would still have overplay due to heavy usage. The overall impact of this results in shortfalls being reduced from 17.5 match equivalent sessions per week to 7.5.

World Rugby compliant/RFL Community Standard 3G pitches

World Rugby produced the 'performance specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby', more commonly known as 'Regulation 22' that provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union. Additionally, pitches of this nature are also can be tested to support rugby league activity. There are currently no World Rugby/RFL Community Standard compliant 3G pitches in Oldham.

There is currently a shortfall of 3G pitches within Oldham (for football training training) and more specifically a shortfall is identified in most analysis areas with each needing at least one pitch, apart from the Central Analysis Area. As seen above quality improvements alone will not address all the current shortfalls on rugby league pitches, as such there is a need for additional pitch provision to accommodate demand.

In meeting the shortfalls for football, it should also be explored to see whether the build of a new 11v11 size 3G pitch, could support rugby league through World Rugby/RFL Community Standard compliancy to enable contact rugby league training to take place on the pitch.

Both Saddleworth Rangers ARLFC (East Analysis Area) and Waterhead Warriors (East Analysis Area) are identified with the highest amount of overplay which is not going to be resolved via pitch improvements alone. Additionally, Waterhead Warriors would benefit from the relocation of its training demand to alleviate some overplay on its match pitches. On this basis, there is sufficient evidence of need for an increase of RFL Community Standard 3G pitches in Oldham.

Saddleworth Rangers ARLFC reports to be currently using multiple venues to access 3G pitch provision for training such as Saddleworth School, Saddleworth Leisure Centre, The Hathershaw College and Greenhill Academy. It should be noted that non-contact training activity takes place at these sites due to the pitches not being certified for contact rugby league. It highlights a need for additional pitch provision to cater for both match and training demand.

As previously mentioned, a planning application has recently been approved for the replacement of an existing grass training pitch known as Little Wembley (Oldham Athletic Football Club) with a new 11v11 3G pitch with sports lighting which would be both football and rugby league compliant.

Recommendations

- Protect existing quantity of rugby league pitches and areas used for rugby league activity, in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- Support Waterhead Warriors with the installation of a perimeter fence around its current facilities located at Waterhead Park.
- Work with Saddleworth Rangers ARLFC to find a solution to condense their training activity onto less sites and use a WR22 compliant facility (if this is the solution) to free up capacity on sites and reduce current travel time experience by players and parents.
- Look to improve pitch quality on all overplayed pitches to alleviate overplay.
- Explore the feasibility of any new 11v11 size 3G pitch within Oldham to provide World Rugby/RFL Community Standard compliancy to support RFL training demand.
- Given that Waterhead Warriors has unsecure tenure of its site located at Waterhead Academy (Counthill Road), where appropriate, help to formalise long term usage agreement to further secure long-term access of the site.
- Support clubs with improvements to ancillary facilities where the facilities are not currently meeting club requirements or are assessed as poor quality.

- Ensure that any residential development considers potential increases in demand for the sport and that new provision or contributions are properly sought through utilisation of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator.

4.7: Tennis courts

Assessment Report summary

Supply and demand summary

- **For club-based tennis, where known through consultation, Saddleworth Cricket, Bowling & tennis Club has sufficient capacity to facilitate club demand, however, Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club is operating over its perceived capacity. The Club gains access to good quality courts located at Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club and doesn't report any capacity issues. It should be noted further investigation needs to be done with the two outstanding club to understand any capacity issues.**
- **Away from clubs, although no courts are identified as having any capacity issues, precedence should be placed on improving the supply in ways that can meet unmet and latent demand identified.**

Supply summary

- There are 81 tennis courts identified in Oldham across 29 sites. Of these, 51 courts across 21 sites are available for community use.
- The largest offering of tennis courts is identified in the South Analysis Area, with 20 courts in total. In contrast, the Central Analysis Area offer the least amount of tennis courts with 11 courts.
- All tennis courts identified as being unavailable for community use are located at school sites.
- Most tennis courts are operated by education sites (39 or 48%); however, 30 are unavailable for community use. There are 12 (15%) tennis courts which are managed by sports clubs with the remaining courts (30 or 37%) being managed by the Local Authority.
- Most outdoor tennis courts in Oldham have a macadam surface, with 78 being of this type and 65 of these being available for community use.
- In Oldham, 13 of the community available tennis courts are serviced by sports lights, representing just 19% of the provision.
- Of the courts in Oldham, 38 are assessed as good quality, 19 as standard quality and 24 as poor quality. Of the good quality tennis courts, 27 are available for community use.
- Ancillary facilities servicing Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club and Clarksfield Tennis Club are assessed as standard quality, with the facilities servicing Royton Cricket, Bowling, Tennis & Running Club and Saddleworth Cricket, Bowling & tennis Club assessed as poor quality with a need to repair and update the facilities.

Demand summary

- There are four tennis clubs in Oldham.
- Of the two clubs in Oldham which responded to consultation, Saddleworth Cricket, Bowling & tennis Club and Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club there is a total of 427 members. As a breakdown, this equates to 354 senior and 73 junior members.
- Three clubs in Oldham; Royton Cricket, Bowling, Tennis & Running Club, Saddleworth Cricket, Bowling & tennis Club and Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club use ClubSpark.
- In Oldham, there is no Barclays Local Tennis League that takes place currently.

Scenarios

Improving the recreational tennis offer

Increasing recreational tennis demand is currently a priority for the LTA, with twice as many people playing casually rather than at clubs. To enable this, it secured a £22 million investment fund to be put into public tennis courts across Britain, together with an £8.5 million investment from the LTA. This has seen thousands of public park tennis courts that

are in poor or unplayable condition improved to a playable facility for the benefit of the local communities.

In Oldham, six local authority sites offering 19 tennis courts have recently been upgraded as part of the LTA Parks Investment Strategy.

This relates to the following sites:

- Lower Memorial Park (gates only, two courts).
- Werneth Park (two courts).
- Dunwood Park (three courts).
- High Crompton Park (two courts).
- Alexandra Park (Oldham) (seven courts).
- Chadderton Hall Park (three courts).

Although this will improve the overall number of good quality courts, there are still several Local Authority courts which need improving to accommodate recreational demand in Oldham. These courts are listed below.

- Churchill Playing Fields (one court).
- Coalshaw Green Park (one court).
- Copster Park (two courts).
- Foxdenton Park (two courts).
- Higher Memorial Park (one court).
- Limeside Park (one court).
- Royton Park (one court).
- Stoneleigh Park (one court).
- Waterhead Park (one court).

Accommodating current and future demand

The LTA suggests that a non-sport lit hard court can accommodate 40 members whereas a hard court with sports lighting can accommodate 60 members. A grass court has a capacity of 20 regardless of the lighting position and courts covered with an air dome can also accommodate 100 members.

On this basis, when reviewing club demand in Oldham, it is evident that Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club is operating well above the LTA recommended capacity guidelines both now and in the future. Conversely, Saddleworth Cricket, Bowling & Tennis Club is operating within the recommended capacity guidelines.

Table 4.23: Capacity analysis for tennis clubs at risk of capacity issues

Site ID	Site	Club users	Current demand (members)	Future demand (members)	No. of courts (sports lit)	Capacity (members)	Current capacity balance (members)	Future capacity balance (members)
85	Royton Cricket Club	Royton Tennis Club	*Unknown*	*Unknown*	3(0)	120	*Unknown*	*Unknown*
88	Saddleworth Cricket Tennis & Bowls Club	Saddleworth Cricket, Bowling & tennis Club	110	40	3(3)	180	70	30
123	Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club	Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club	317	0	3(1)	180	137	137
124	Clarksfield Tennis Club	Clarksfield Tennis Club	*Unknown*	*Unknown*	2(0)	80	*Unknown*	*Unknown*

Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club has a relatively high membership which should be monitored through the Stage E process as it is in a position where its current provision may become inadequate to meet demand. Furthermore, only one court is provided with sports lighting and increasing the number of sports lit courts will help reduce the overuse.

Additionally, given both Royton Tennis Club and Clarksfield Tennis Club were unresponsive to consultation requests further investigation needs to be carried out to understand any capacity issues at these clubs. As Royton Tennis Club currently access three poor quality courts located at Royton Cricket Club, there is a need to improve these courts to accommodate its current demand.

Padel

Padel tennis is relatively new to Great Britain and is growing in popularity, particularly since its recognition as a sport and integration within the LTA. It is played mainly in a doubles format on an enclosed court and can be played in groups of mixed ages and abilities. The rules are broadly the same as tennis, although you serve under-arm and the walls are used as part of the game with the ball allowed to bounce off them.

In order to grow the sport, the LTA is focused on improving the infrastructure and the coach education pathway. At the end of 2020, there were 87 courts, whereas there were 350 at the end of 2023 and 129,000 identified participants, with this illustrating significant growth. It is therefore envisaged that the infrastructure and participation in padel will continue to increase substantially in the next five years, with the LTA identifying an aim to grow the number of courts to 1,000 and the number of players to 400,000.

There are currently no padel tennis courts in Oldham, meaning no demand is being catered for within the Borough. However, Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club has recently had planning permission approved for two additional covered padel courts.

Recommendations

- Protect existing quantity of courts, in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- Improve court quality at sites assessed as poor or standard quality and sustain quality at sites assessed as good, especially at sites in use by clubs such as Royton Cricket Club or that are (or could be) well used for recreational demand.
- Monitor Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club membership position over the Stage E process (Part 8 of this Strategy).
- Understand membership information at both Royton Tennis Club and Clarksfield Tennis Club to identify any capacity issues.
- Support Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club with the installation of two covered padel courts. Additionally, consider future opportunities to develop Padel tennis to provide an improved recreational and informal experience for residents.
- Linked to the above, improve the park courts highlighted as part of the LTA Parks Investment Strategy as a priority to create a year-round recreational tennis option to meet local demand.
- Ensure sinking funds are put into place by providers for long-term sustainability.
- Ensure that any residential development considers potential increases in demand for the sport and that new provision or contributions are properly sought through utilisation of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator.

4.8: Bowls

Assessment Report summary

Supply and demand summary

- **Five clubs within Oldham (North Chadderton Social & Bowling Club, Nimble Nook BC, Moorside BC, Royton Cricket Club BC and St Georges Social & Bowling Club) are operating at or above recommended capacity levels and therefore need to be monitored to ensure that supply remains adequate.**
- **Overall, future demand expressed can be accommodated on existing greens.**

Supply summary

- There are 33 bowling greens across 26 sites in Oldham, all of which, are available for community use. Most of this provision is in the West Analysis Area (11 greens). It should be noted that since the previous study the bowling green located at Hollinwood Sports Club is now disused.
- In addition to the outdoor bowling greens listed below, there is also an indoor bowls hall at Oldham Leisure Centre, which offers four rinks and is available for community use.
- Most bowling greens are owned and managed by the Local Authority, private ownerships or the respective sports club.
- In Oldham, a total of 17 greens (52%) are assessed as good quality, 12 greens (36%) as standard quality with the remaining four being poor quality (12%).
- Furthermore, 13 sites are accompanied by good quality facilities, with nine sites having standard quality facilities and four sites having poor quality facilities.
- In Oldham, 10 greens are serviced by sports lighting.

Demand summary

- There are 31 bowling clubs identified as playing in Oldham although only eight have responded to consultation requests to date and given membership figures. Membership of the responsive clubs, where known, totals 575, resulting in an average of 72 members.
- The largest club according to known membership in Oldham is currently North Chadderton Conservative BC, with 152 members. The smallest club is Westwood Park Vets with only 12 members.
- Of responding clubs in Oldham, five clubs highlight plans to increase membership, however, don't quantify the amount.

Scenarios

Accommodating current and future demand

British Crown Green Bowling Association does not have any specific guidance on bowling green capacity, stating that it can vary from site-to-site and from club-to-club. However, as a guide, it states that any green operating with a membership of close to or over 60 may need additional resource to ensure that it is meeting its required level of demand. Of the responding clubs, five clubs are currently operating above this threshold in Oldham, as follows:

- Moorside BC (87 members).
- Nimble Nook BC (63 members).
- North Chadderton Social and Bowling Club (152 members).
- Royton Cricket Club BC (97 members).
- St Georges Social & Bowling Club (80 members).

Of the clubs listed above, currently no capacity issues are highlighted, with North Chadderton Conservative BC, Moorside BC, St George's Social Bowling Club and Royton Cricket Club BC expressing an aspiration to further increase their memberships.

Recommendations

- Protect existing quantity of currently used greens and, as a minimum, sustain quality.
- Ensure that any proposed development of currently used greens is in line with NPPF and local planning policy.
- Assist clubs, where possible, with any future ancillary provision improvements.
- Monitor capacity levels of highly supported clubs such as Moorside BC, Nimble Nook BC, North Chadderton Social and Bowling Club, Royton Cricket Club BC and St Georges Social & Bowling Club to ensure they have sufficient capacity.
- Support clubs with plans to increase membership so that growth can be maximised.
- Ensure that any residential development considers potential increases in demand for the sport and that new provision or contributions are properly sought through utilisation of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator.

4.9: Netball

Assessment Report summary

Supply and demand summary

- **There is enough netball provision in Oldham to accommodate demand.**
- **There is minor use on outdoor courts in Oldham with only The Hathershaw College being used mainly due to the difficulty of gaining access to indoor courts during the exam season.**

Supply summary

- There is a large supply of outdoor netball courts across Oldham, with 41 identified across 13 sites.
- Of these, 29 courts at 10 sites are available for community use.
- The South Analysis Area provides the largest number of courts, with 13. The Central Analysis Area provides the least number of courts with five.
- Most courts are operated by schools, with 40 of the 41 courts falling under this management type.
- All outdoor netball courts in Oldham have a macadam surface, with all 41 being of this type and 29 of these being available for community use.
- In Oldham, all but six of the netball courts are over marked. The only standalone courts are located at Coalshaw Green Park, Royton & Crompton E-Act Academy and Saddleworth School.
- Only nine netball courts (22%) are serviced by sports lighting with all nine being available for community use. Located at Oasis Academy North and The Hathershaw College.
- Of the courts in Oldham, 20 are assessed as good quality, 16 as standard quality and five as poor quality. Of the good quality courts, 12 are available for community use, compared to 16 of the standard quality courts and only one of the poor quality courts.

Demand summary

- There are three netball clubs based in Oldham; Chadderton NC, Oldham NC and Saddleworth NC.
- There is currently Back to Netball sessions running at Crompton House School and at Royton & Crompton E-Act Academy in Oldham. Furthermore, there is a Back to Netball League that takes place at The Waterhead Academy and The Oldham Academy North. All sessions are currently indoor but do often go outdoors in the summer.
- Walking Netball sessions run weekly at The Oldham Academy North on a Mondays 18:00 until 19:00 and are held indoors.
- There are no Bee Netball or Netball Now sessions currently taking place in the Borough.
- Oldham Sports for All is part of the Sport for All set-up (not affiliated), located indoors at Oldham Sports for All Centre. The centre accommodates both junior and senior netball leagues Monday – Thursday and weekends.

Scenarios

Securing tenure

The outdoor courts at the following sites are currently used by the community for netball:

- The Hathershaw College.
- Crompton House School.
- Royton & Crompton E-Act Academy.
- Waterhead Academy.
- The Oldham Academy North.

It should be noted that netball is mainly played indoor at these sites, however, the outdoor courts are often used in the Summer.

None of these sites currently have a long-term usage agreement in place for any of the netball users. Secured access should also be pursued to ensure that netball demand can continue to be provided for.

Increasing sports-lit provision

The presence of sports lighting is key for outdoor netball court access as it can provide additional capacity, especially during winter months. Of the sites currently used, the following are not serviced:

- Crompton House School.
- Royton & Crompton E-Act Academy.
- Waterhead Academy.
- The Oldham Academy North.

Providing sports lighting at these venues would better accommodate demand and potentially encourage more usage, particularly in terms of midweek training and commercial league activity.

Recommendations

- Protect existing courts in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- Secure community use at sites that are currently in use or that could be used in the future.
- Improve court quality at sites assessed as poor or standard quality and sustain quality at sites assessed as good, especially at sites in use by clubs and for England Netball initiatives.
- Consider establishing additional sports lighting at venues in use for netball or at venues that could attract netball demand following installation.
- Ensure that any residential development considers potential increases in demand for the sport and that new provision or contributions are properly sought through utilisation of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator.

4.10: Athletics

Assessment Report summary

Supply and demand summary

- **In Oldham, supply is considered sufficient to meet demand, as the one community track and field club currently based in the Borough (Oldham & Royton Harriers Athletics Club) totalling 243 members, is above the recommended membership figure. All other clubs are primarily road running clubs that do not access the track facilities.**

Supply summary

- There is one formal athletics track in Oldham located at The Radclyffe School, which is an eight lane, synthetic 400 metre track. The site also provides an indoor athletics hall which includes six running lanes, designated throws areas, high jump, long jump and pole vaulting.
- The track is fully sports lit and provides all accompanying field event facilities including a hammer cage, javelin, high jump, long jump and shot put area.
- Additionally, there is a five lane 100m synthetic track located at Oasis Academy Oldham which is not provided with sports lighting and unavailable for community use.
- The indoor and outdoor facilities at The Radclyffe School is owned by the Council and managed by Oldham Community Leisure who is also responsible for its maintenance. The track located at Oasis Academy Oldham is owned and managed by the Academy.
- The non-technical assessment undertaken in July 2024 by KKP identifies the track and accompanying track and field facilities as good quality with a standard quality accompanying ancillary facility. It should be noted that although the field facilities are assessed as good quality, the throws cage is currently awaiting repair. The indoor facilities are also assessed as good quality.
- The 100m track located at Oasis Academy Oldham is assessed as poor quality due to lack of maintenance and moss over the track.
- The athletics track onsite at The Radclyffe Schol is serviced by a purpose built clubhouse beside the track. It consists of changing rooms, toilets, showers and kitchen facilities and is standard quality.

Demand summary

- Four clubs have a current focus on athletics and/or running activity in Oldham.
- Oldham & Royton Harriers Athletics Club is the only track and field Club in Oldham using The Radclyffe School as a base.
- In Oldham, there are two ParkRuns located at Alexandra Park and Chadderton Hall Park. Furthermore, there are two junior ParkRuns located at Alexandra Park and Saddleworth Pool & Leisure Centre which are held every Sunday at 9am.
- Oldham & Royton Harriers Athletics Club report to be operating a waiting list which is currently includes nine potential new members.
- Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in athletics but 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies significant latent demand amounting to 4,521 people in Oldham, which represents approximately 1.8% of the Borough's population compared to a national average of 2%.

Scenarios

No suitable scenarios have been identified, with the following recommendations instead considered necessary based on the supply and demand findings.

Recommendations

- Protect existing indoor and outdoor facilities.
- Sustain track quality and maintain UKA TrackMark accreditation at the Radclyffe School.
- Protect the indoor training provision and maximise usage.
- Look to improve the 100m synthetic track located at Oasis Academy Oldham to accommodate curricular demand and potential future community use.

- Continue to increase participation both within affiliated clubs and the wider running market, building on the success of Parkrun and looking to increase other initiatives not currently operating in Oldham.
- Consider the need to include ActiveTracks (walk/jog/run/cycle loops) within parks and open spaces or as part of future housing developments.
- Ensure that any residential development considers potential increases in demand for the sport and that new provision or contributions are properly sought through utilisation of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator.

4.11: Golf courses

Assessment Report summary

Supply and demand summary

- **With seven golfing sites in Oldham and a mix of 18-hole courses, Par 3 courses and three driving ranges, the Authority is well placed to meet demand.**

Supply summary

- There are currently seven golf sites in Oldham, five 18-hole and one Par 3 course across six sites. additionally, there are three driving ranges of which two are located alongside either an 18-hole course or a Par 3 course.
- There are three driving ranges located in Oldham, Bishops Park Pitch & Putt and Driving Range, Crompton & Royton Golf Club and Bardsley Park Golf Club, collectively providing 40 dedicated driving range bays.
- Quality of the golf facilities in Oldham is relatively good across the five sites, with no significant issues identified.

Demand summary

- In Oldham, there are five golf clubs, Brookdale Golf Club, Saddleworth Golf Club, Werneth Golf Club, Crompton & Royton Golf Club and Oldham Golf Club.
- Of the six golfing sites in Oldham, four operate as members clubs, whilst two are proprietary sites.
- England Golf reports that the average cost of a full adult membership across the Country is currently £1,071. In Oldham, average membership fees, where known, are below this national average at £948.
- The most expensive membership offerings are identified at Crompton & Royton Golf Club, whereby full membership fee amounts to £1,086.15. In comparison, the lowest full membership fee is identified at Oldham Golf Club, amounting to just £780.
- Both Brookdale Golf Club and Oldham Golf Club are identified as having the cheapest green fees with midweek fees costing £17 and weekend fees costing £22.
- England Golf suggests that the average membership of a golf club nationally is 407, which is based on a central national handicap platform. In Oldham, the average across the clubs that operate a membership is currently 355 and therefore just below national average.
- There is a notable spike in membership from 2018 to 2022 which anecdotally can linked to the Covid 19 Pandemic, as the sport was one of the first to become accessible whilst in periods of social distancing. The figures have decreased by 1% since 2022 however they are still just below the national average.
- Sport England's Segmentation Tool identifies latent demand of 2,320 people within Oldham.
- In Oldham, each facility will have different aspirations in terms of future growth, with membership clubs such as Brookdale Golf Club, Werneth Golf Club, Crompton & Royton Golf Club and Oldham Gold Club to be more satisfied with current usage levels.

Scenarios

No suitable scenarios have been identified, with the following recommendations instead considered necessary based on the supply and demand findings.

Recommendations

- Protect all in-use sites for continued golf activity in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- Sustain course and ancillary facility quality and support improvements where necessary.
- Support clubs in membership retention and potential growth and encourage clubs and providers to work more collaboratively in terms of creating pathways for players.
- Ensure that any developments nearby to existing golf sites do not prejudice the use of the provision (e.g. through ball-strike issues).
- Explore options to improve the mix of facilities in the Borough and offer more entry level style facilities for those who are new to the game, placing particular focus on driving ranges and shorter length courses.
- Ensure that any residential development considers potential increases in demand for the sport and that new provision or contributions are properly sought through utilisation of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator.

4.12: Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)

Assessment Report summary

Supply and demand summary

- **There is adequate supply in all analysis areas with at least one MUGA being provided in each.**

Supply summary

- There are 26 MUGAs identified in Oldham across 24 sites. Of these 26 are available for community use, however, only two MUGAs are sports lit.
- All MUGAs across Oldham are owned by Oldham Council and available as open access meaning they do not need to be booked.
- In total across Oldham, there are two MUGAs assessed as good quality, 12 assessed as standard quality and 12 assessed as poor quality.

Demand summary

- Given the open access nature of the MUGAs provided within Oldham, no usage is recorded; meaning demand for access is therefore unknown.
- When looking at the locations of the current supply of MUGAs in Oldham it is evident that there is sufficient supply across the authority as a whole and across each of the analysis areas.

Scenarios

No suitable scenarios have been identified, with the following recommendations instead considered necessary based on the supply and demand findings.

Recommendations

- Protect existing quantity of MUGAs, in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- Improve MUGA quality at sites assessed as poor or standard quality and sustain quality at sites assessed as good.
- Work with relevant partners on the refurbishment of two MUGAs located at Werneth Park (West Analysis Area) and Bolton Street (Central Analysis Area).

PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategic recommendations for the Strategy have been developed via the combination of information gathered during consultation, site visits and analysis which culminated in the production of an assessment report, as well as key drivers identified for the Strategy. They reflect overarching and common areas to be addressed, which apply across playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities and may not be specific to just one sport.

AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities where it is needed for meeting current and future needs.

Recommendations:

a. Ensure, through the use of the PPOSS, that outdoor sport facilities are protected through the implementation of 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 education facilities where needed.

Recommendation (a) – Ensure, through the use of the PPOSS, that outdoor sport facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy.

The PPOSS shows that all existing playing field and outdoor sport sites cannot be deemed surplus to requirements because of shortfalls now and in the future. As such, all provision requires protection or replacement until all identified shortfalls have been overcome. This includes disused (including any which may not have been identified in this document) underused and poor quality sites as there is a requirement for such provision to help meet and alleviate the identified shortfalls.

When shortfalls are evident, provision can only be permanently lost when the current picture changes to the extent that the site in question is no longer needed as a result of no shortfalls existing, or unless replacement provision is provided and agreed upon by all stakeholders. NPPF paragraph 104 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, 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.

The PPOSS should be used to help inform development management decisions that affect existing or new playing pitch provision and accompanying 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 is a statutory consultee on planning applications that affect or prejudice the use of playing field used within the last five years. They will use the PPOSS to help assess the planning application against its Playing Fields Policy as set out below.

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 PPOSS cannot demonstrate that 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 the remaining Sport England policy exceptions.

Policy Exception E2

'The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity and quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use'.

Policy Exception E3

*'*The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- Reduce the size of any playing pitch;
- Result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- Reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain quality;
- Result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site;
- Prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site'.

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.

Policy Exception E5

*'*The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice of use, of the area of playing field'.

Disused sites should also be protected from development or replaced in accordance with Sport England's policy exceptions as they may provide a solution to reducing identified shortfalls. Any disused playing fields are included within this Action Plan together with a recommendation in relation to bringing the site back into use or to mitigate the loss on a replacement site to address the shortfalls identified.

It may be appropriate to consider rationalisation of certain low value playing pitch sites (i.e. one or two pitch sites with no changing provision) to generate investment and focus resources towards creating bigger and better quality venues (hub sites). Such sites could then be re-purposed to meet other recreational needs or, if appropriate and agreed, could be developed for other uses. It is vital, however, that there is no net loss of facilities and that replacement provision is in place and available for use prior to existing provision being lost.

Recommendation (b) – Secure tenure and access to sites through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.

Much like some authorities nationally, there is reliance on the education sector to provide for most of the demand for playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities in Oldham. However, where this is the case, it is imperative that future opportunities to secure tenue for clubs is explored and progressed where possible. The following schools provide community use to clubs.

Table 5.1: Known use of education sites

School	Club	Sport
Newman RC College	Oldham HC	Hockey Sand based AGP
Co-Op Academy Failsworth	Number of football clubs for training Manchester Tigers JFC	Football Football (3G) Football (Small 3G x2)
Crompton House C of E School	Number of football clubs for training Heyside FC Shawside Junior Football Club	Football (3G)
North Chadderton School	Number of football clubs for training Chadderton Park Sports Club	Football (3G)
Oasis Academy Oldham	Hollinwood FC Chadderton Park Sports Club Oldham Community FC Number of football clubs for training	Football Football (3G)
Royton and Crompton E-Act Academy	Royton Town Shawside Junior Football Club Number of football clubs for training	Football (3G)
The Oldham Academy North	Santos Chadderton FC Number of football clubs for training	Football Football (3G)
Saddleworth School	Number of football clubs for training	Football (Small 3G)
The Hathershaw College	Number of football clubs for training	Football Football (Small 3G)
Waterhead Academy	Number of football clubs for training	Football Football (Small 3G)

Not having fully formalised usage presents a risk for those clubs using these sites as community use could technically be terminated at any time.

For unsecure sites, NGBs, Sport England and other appropriate bodies such as England Hockey, Manchester FA, Lancashire FA and West Riding FA can often help to negotiate and engage with providers where the local authority may not have direct influence. This is particularly the case at sites that have received funding from these bodies or are going to receive funding in the future as community access can be a condition of any agreement.

The Council and private landlords (as relevant) should further explore opportunities where security of tenure could be granted via lease agreements (minimum 25 years as recommended by Sport England and NGBs) so that clubs are in a position to apply for external funding. This is particularly the case at poor quality sites, possibly with inadequate or no ancillary facilities, so that quality can be improved and sites developed.

Local sports clubs should be supported by partners including the Council (where relevant), parish and town councils and NGBs to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership work. For example, club development should be supported and clubs should be encouraged to develop evidence of business and sports development plans to generate income via their facilities.

All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC)[5]. They should also be encouraged to work with partners locally, such as volunteer support agencies or local businesses.

Each club interested in leasing a council site (including those with Shaw & Crompton Parish Council and Saddleworth Parish Council) should be required to meet service and/or strategic recommendations. An additional set of criteria should also be considered, which takes into account club quality, aligned to its long-term development objectives and sustainability, as seen in the table below.

Table 5.2: Recommended criteria for lease of sport sites to clubs/organisations

Club	Site
Clubs should have NGB accreditation award. Clubs commit to meeting demonstrable local demand and show pro-active commitment to developing school-club links. 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. Ideally, clubs should have already identified (and received an agreement in principle) any match funding required for initial capital investment identified. Clubs have processes in place to ensure capacity to maintain sites to the existing, or better, standards.	Sites should be those identified as 'Local Sites' (recommendation d) for new clubs (i.e. not those with a district-wide significance) but that offer development potential. For established clubs which have proven success in terms of self-management 'Key Centres' are also appropriate. Sites should acquire capital investment to improve or be leased with the intention that investment can be sourced to contribute towards improvement of the site.

The Council could establish core outcomes for clubs taking on lease arrangements to ensure that the most appropriate clubs are assigned sites. Outcomes may, for example, include:

- Increasing participation.
- Supporting the development of coaches and volunteers.
- Commitment to quality standards.
- Improvements (where required) to facilities, or at 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. It is important in these instances that the site, to some degree, remains available for other purposes or for other users.

[5] http://www.cascinfo.co.uk/cascbenefits

For clubs with lease arrangements already in place, these should be reviewed when fewer than 25 years remain to improve security of tenure and aid the attraction of funding; clubs with fewer than 25 years remaining on a lease agreement are unlikely to be eligible for external funding.

Recommendation (c) - Maximise community use of education facilities where needed

To maximise community use, a more coherent, structured relationship with schools and higher/further education establishments is recommended. 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 Oldham, pricing policies at facilities can be a barrier to access at some education sites but physical access, poor quality and resistance from providers 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 venues and local clubs, as well as helping to reduce identified shortfalls. It is, however, common for provision not to be fully maximised for community use, even on established community use sites.

In some instances, facilities are unavailable for community use due to poor quality and therefore remedial works will be required before it can be established. The low carrying capacity of these facilities sometimes leads to them being played to capacity or overplayed simply due to curricular and extra-curricular use, meaning they cannot accommodate any additional use by the community.

There are a growing number of academies over which the Council has little or no control, yet it is still important to understand the significance of such sites and to work with the providers where there are opportunities for community use. In addition, relevant NGBs have a role to play in supporting the Council to deliver upon this recommendation and communicating with schools where necessary to address shortfalls in provision.

As detailed earlier, NGBs and Sport England can often help to negotiate and engage with providers where the local education authority may have limited direct influence. This is particularly the case at sites that have received funding from the relevant bodies or are going to receive investment in the future as community access can be a condition of the funding agreement. Further to this, Active Partnerships play a crucial role alongside other community stakeholders with regards to working with education providers and opening its facilities with the goal to help people be more active in their local area.

Where new schools are provided, they should be designed to facilitate community access, with opportunities for meeting the community's outdoor sports needs explored at the outset to maximise the potential impact of the provision. An example of this is ensuring the provision of youth 11v11 grass football pitches, given current shortfalls and their suitability for the playing format of students, or multi-use provision such as courts that can accommodate for sports such as tennis.

AIM 2

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

Recommendations:

d. Maintain quality and seek improvements where necessary

e. Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites.

f. Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding

g. Secure developer contributions

Recommendation (d) – Improve quality

There are several ways in which it is possible to improve pitch quality and these are explored below.

Available support programmes

Ground Management Association (GMA) Pitch Advisory Service

With quality of grass pitches becoming one of the biggest influences on participation, the Pitch Advisory Service (PAS, formerly the Grounds and Natural Turf Improvement Programme) was launched in 2014 and is funded by the GMA and its partners; the Football Foundation, Sport England, FA, ECB, RFU and RFL.

Its aim is to raise the standards of sports surfaces as well as the understanding of sports turf management practices among grassroots clubs across England and Wales. The PAS provides an enhanced network of support and expertise available to those maintaining natural turf pitches, particularly at a local level.

The service can be utilised by grassroots clubs, organisations and local authorities with the simple aim of improving the quality of grass pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide members of the programme with advice/practical solutions via a report which will also identify the key enhanced maintenance works required along with machinery requirements.

Pitch providers are encouraged to complete a self-assessment of pitches using the Football Foundation PitchPower (PP) app. In August 2022, PitchPower was re-launched, with enhanced capability to support use beyond football pitches and is now accessible for the assessment of natural turf pitches for cricket, rugby league and rugby union. It should be noted that with cricket in particular, more PitchPower assessments are planned to be carried out, therefore, there is a need to review quality as part of the Stage E process of this PPOSS

In relation to cricket specifically, 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, in some instances, become dangerous. The ECB recommends full technical assessments of wickets and pitches available through a Performance Quality Standard (PQS) assessment. The PQS assessment assesses a cricket square to ascertain whether it meets the standards that are benchmarked by the Ground Management Association.

Football Foundation PitchPower Assessment

The Premier League, The FA and the Football Foundation are increasing efforts to improve the quality of grass pitches in England with the launch of the PitchPower app. Launched in 2020 alongside the Football Foundation Pitch Preparation Fund, the app is a new digital self-assessment tool to allow reports and recommendations to be made more quickly and easily once submitted for review by GMA regional pitch advisors.

The tool across web app and desktop is open to access by all providers, for example clubs, schools and local authorities. Following a PitchPower Assessment Report, organisations can work towards the recommended dedicated maintenance regime identified to improve the quality of their pitches.

In addition to non-technical assessments, clubs and education sites across Oldham continue to undertake PitchPower assessments as a means of improving the quality of provision. Consequently, it should be recommended through the PPOSS process for the local authority to support delivering any improvement to new sites that undertake PitchPower assessments.

Football Foundation Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (GPMF)

Eligible clubs and organisations can also utilise the report as an evidence base to acquire potential funding streams, for example, to obtain the required maintenance equipment. If a PitchPower assessment categorises pitches as 'poor' or 'basic' they are then eligible to apply for funding through the Football Foundation Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund[6], a fund offering six-year tapered grants to help clubs enhance or sustain the quality of their grass pitches. The fund is a key part of the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Improvement Programme - an ambition to deliver 20,000 good quality grass pitches by 2030. Clubs with good or standard quality pitches can also apply for a lower level of funding to improve and sustain quality.

All applicants must have, as a minimum, landowners permission to accept investment or ideally long term security of tenure and have received a PitchPower Pitch Assessment Report, with the fund currently open to football clubs, leagues, charities, community organisations, education providers and town and parish councils. Local authorities are not currently eligible applicants, however, eligible organisations using local authority sites can apply provided they have landowners permission as stated above.

The Council is not presently eligible to access the GPMF as an applicant, however, can undertake technical assessment of pitches using the PitchPower app. Opportunities to access the fund to support presently Council managed sites include establishment of a service level agreement with a resident club for maintenance responsibilities, or transfer of long-term management to the club/organisation through leasehold or Community Asset Transfer (CAT), both enabling the club/organisation to apply to the fund.

Furthermore, the Football Foundation also launched a new Groundskeeping Community online platform in 2019 which provides a resource of expert advice for grounds staff, enabling them to connect with peers, discover new tips and tricks and share advice on best industry practice. Users can seek guidance from the GMA regional pitch advisors, who are available to answer questions and update members on changes to industry standards.

[6] https://footballfoundation.org.uk/grant/grass-pitch-maintenance-fund

Addressing overplay

In order to improve the overall quality of the outdoor facility stock; it is necessary to ensure that provision is not overplayed beyond recommended carrying capacity. This is determined by assessing quality (via a non-technical site assessment) and allocating a match limit to each (daily for hockey, weekly for football, rugby league and rugby union and seasonal for cricket).

The FA, RFU, RFL, ECB and EH all recommend a number of matches that pitches should take based on quality, as seen in the table below. For other grass pitch sports, no guidelines are set by the NGBs although it can be assumed that a similar trend should be followed.

Table 5.3: Recommended capacity of pitches

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

It is imperative to engage with clubs to ensure that sites are not played beyond their capacity. Where overplay is identified, play should be encouraged to transfer to alternative venues that are not operating at capacity. Alternatively quality, should be improved to increase capacity to appropriate levels. Where play is transferred, this may include transferring play to 3G pitches or to sites not currently available for community use but which may be in the future.

For cricket, an increase in the usage of NTPs (or hybrid wickets when suitable) is key to alleviating overplay as this allows for the transfer of junior demand from grass wickets. It also does not require any additional playing pitch space as NTPs can be installed adjacent to existing squares.

For rugby union, overplay can be reduced but not resolved through improvements to pitch maintenance or via capital drainage solutions.

For rugby league, quality improvements alone will not address all the current shortfalls on rugby league pitches, as such there is a need for additional pitch provision to accommodate demand.

As mentioned earlier, there are also sites that are poor quality that are not overplayed. These should not be overlooked as often poor-quality sites have less demand than others but demand could increase if the quality were improved. It does, however, work both ways as potential improvements may make sites more attractive and therefore more popular, which in the long run can lead again to them becoming poor quality pitches if not properly maintained.

Improving changing provision

There is a need to address changing provision at some sites in Oldham (these are detailed further in the Action Plan), for example, the changing provision at Churchill Playing Fields is poor quality with users stating the need to redevelop the ancillary facilities as the current facilities are outdated. As previously mentioned, 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 should be given priority for improvement such as, multi-sport pitch sites, club managed sites and sites which are strategically important for adult and/or women and girls participation.

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

To allow for facility developments to be programmed on a phased basis the Council should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of outdoor sport sites and associated facilities. Please refer to Part 6: Action Plan (contained in a separate document) for the proposed hierarchy. Developer contributions, where relevant to the development and appropriate, could be informed by this hierarchy.

Recommendation (f) – Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding

Partners should ensure that appropriate funding secured for improved sports provision is directed to areas of need, underpinned by a robust strategy for improvement in outdoor sport provision and accompanying ancillary facilities.

To address community need a coordinated approach to strategic investment is required. In delivering this recommendation, the Council should maintain a regular dialogue with local partners through the PPOSS Steering Group.

Although some investment in new provision will not be made by the Council directly, it is important that the Steering Group directs and leads a co-ordinated approach to facility development whether made at/by education sites, NGBs, sports clubs and the commercial sector. This is to ensure that the extent to which it addresses community need is optimised and duplication is avoided.

One of sport's key contributions is its positive impact on public health. It is therefore important to lever investment from other sectors such as, for example, health and wellbeing. 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.

Recommendation (g) –Secure developer contributions

It is important that this strategy informs policies and supplementary planning documents by setting out the approach to securing outdoor sport and recreational facilities through development contributions.

For playing pitches, it is recommended the Council continue to use Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator as a tool for helping to determine the additional demand for pitches and to estimate the likely developer contribution required linking to sites within the locality. This should form part of the Council working with Sport England to develop a process and guidance for obtaining developer contributions.

The calculator uses the current number of teams by sports pitch type contained within the Assessment Report and calculates the percentage within each age group that play that sport. That percentage is then applied to the population growth. The Council should use this PPOSS data to update the Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator baseline data for future calculations.

The additional teams likely to be generated are then converted into match equivalent sessions and associated pitch requirements in the peak period, with the associated costs (both for providing the pitch/facility and for its life cycle) then given. The calculator splits the requirement into peak time demand for natural turf pitches, training demand for artificial grass pitches, and the number of new changing rooms required.

The PPOSS should be used to help determine the likely impact of a new development on demand and the capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity of existing provision or if new provision is required.

Where a development is located within access of existing high-quality provision, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further provision or improvement to existing provision, as additional demand arising from the development is likely to result in increased usage (which can result in overplay or quality deterioration).

Where it is determined that new provision is required to accompany a development, priority should be placed on providing facilities that contribute towards alleviating existing shortfalls within the locality. To determine what supply of provision is provided, it is imperative that the PPOSS findings are taken into consideration and that for particularly large developments consultation takes place with the relevant NGBs and Sport England.

This is due to the importance of ensuring that the stock of facilities provided is correct to avoid provision becoming unsustainable and unused. The preference is for multi-pitch and potentially multi-sport sites to be developed, supported by a clubhouse and adequate parking facilities which consider the potential for future AGP development. This is because single-pitch facilities are more likely to become under-used (or unused), unviable and unsustainable.

It is recognised that consultation cannot take place with NGBs for every development due to resource restrictions. Instead, it is recommended that such discussions take place within PPOSS Steering Group meetings, which should take place regularly following adoption of the Strategy as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation process. It is recommended that these take place every 6-12 months and inform the annual review/update (see Part 8 for further information).

The guidance should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to include provision and/or enhancement of appropriate provision and subsequent maintenance. S106 contributions could also be used to improve the condition and of the pitches in order to increase pitch capacity to accommodate more matches.

Sport England recommends that a number of objectives should be implemented to enable the above to be delivered:

- Planning permission should include appropriate conditions and/or be subject to specific planning obligations. Where developer contributions are applicable, a S106 agreement or equivalent must be completed that should specify, when applied, the amount that will be linked to Sport England's Building Cost Information Service from the date of the permission and timing of the contribution/s to be made.
- Contributions should also be secured towards the first ten years of maintenance on new pitches (lifecycle costs) as a minimum, the cost of which is indicated by the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator. NGBs and Sport England can provide further and up-to-date information on the associated costs.
- External funding should be sought/secured to achieve maximum benefit from the investment into appropriate facility enhancement, alongside other open space provision, and its subsequent maintenance.
- Where new provision is provided, appropriate changing rooms and associated car parking should be located on site, where possible and appropriate.
- All new or improved outdoor sports facilities on school sites should be subject to community use agreements.

AIM 3

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

Recommendations:

h. Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock.

i. Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.

Recommendation (h) - Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock

The Council and its partners should work to rectify identified inadequacies and meet identified shortfalls as outlined in the preceding Assessment Report and the sport-by-sport specific recommendations (Part 4) as well as the following Action Plan (Part 6).

It is important that the current levels of provision are protected, maintained and enhanced to secure provision both for now and in the future. Maximising use of existing provision through a combination of the following will help to reduce shortfalls and accommodate future demand:

- Improving quality in order to improve the capacity to accommodate more demand.
- Transferring demand from overplayed sites to sites with spare capacity.
- The re-designation of facilities e.g. converting an unused pitch (or pitch type) for one sport to instead cater for another sport (or another pitch type).
- Securing community use at school sites including those currently unavailable.
- Working with commercial and private providers to increase usage.

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.

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 redesignate 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 plan will seek to provide further clarification on where re-designation is suitable.

The PPOSS identifies priority sites that should be focused upon, including those that are presently overplayed and/or poor quality, or unused sites that are particularly large. It also advises how issues can be overcome.

Recommendation (i) - Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand

The Steering Group should use and regularly update the Action Plan within this Strategy. The Action Plan lists recommendations for each site, focused upon both qualitative and quantitative improvements, which if delivered will lessen the need for new provision. Linked to the above and as evidenced in Part 4, although there are identified shortfalls of match equivalent sessions, most current and future demand is currently being met and most shortfalls for football, cricket, hockey, tennis, netball and bowls can be addressed via quality improvements and/or improved access to sites that are presently used minimally or that are currently unavailable. Adding to the current stock, particularly in the short term, is therefore not recommended as a priority, except for 3G pitches and the shortfall for which cannot be reduced without new stock.

However, for rugby union Table 4.17 and for rugby league Table 4.21 it shows that given the amount of demand, if maximum level quality improvements were to take place, shortfalls would still be present. In this instance, other methods of addressing overplay should be explored such as the installation of additional provision, increased sports lighting or using dedicated sports lit training areas and potentially installing a World Rugby compliant/RFL Community Standard 3G pitches to better support training demand.

Notwithstanding the above, large scale housing developments and the establishment of new schools may also necessitate the need for new provision. Where new schools are developed, there is an opportunity to combine the building of the school to the development of a new multi-sport site that will be of a benefit to the school as well as the wider community.

For housing developments, as outlined in Recommendation (g), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator can be used as a guide to inform requirements. See Part 7 for further information.

PART 6: ACTION PLAN

Contained in a separate document.

PART 7: HOUSING GROWTH SCENARIOS

The PPOSS provides an estimate of demand for pitch sports based on population forecasts and club consultation to 2041 (in line with the anticipated Local Plan period). This future demand is translated into teams likely to be generated, rather than actual pitch provision required. The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) adds to this, updating the likely demand generated for pitch sports based on housing increases and converts the demand into match equivalent sessions and the number of pitches required. This is achieved via team generation rates in the Assessment Report to determine how many new teams would be generated from an increase in population derived from housing growth and gives the associated costs of supplying the increased pitch provision.

Experience shows that housing sites with 600 dwellings or more are likely to generate demand for new provision to be created. For such large scale developments, consideration should be given to providing multi-pitch sites with suitable ancillary provision, including appropriate clubhouse/changing facilities and car parking. Single pitch sites which have been provided traditionally by developers are not considered to provide long term sustainable provision for the relevant sports.

For tennis, Sport England has been working with the LTA to add outdoor tennis courts to its Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC)[7]. The SFC is a modelling tool designed to assist local planning authorities to quantify how much additional demand is generated by increasing populations and new housing areas. The model has no spatial qualities or dimension and can only be used to estimate the facility needs for whole area populations.

The SFC uses information that Sport England has gathered on who uses facilities and applies this to the population profile of the local area. This ensures that the calculations take on board the population profile (e.g. age, gender, etc) of the local area.

The SFC then turns this estimation of demand (visits per week) into the equivalent amount of facility which is needed to meet these visits.

As detailed above, the SFC includes tennis courts, however, it does not calculate a need for netball, athletics, and bowling greens which are also covered in the scope of the PPOSS. Recommendations on need for this type of provision is provided using the evidence base collated within the PPOSS.

Where demand does not warrant new pitch provision, or this is not possible, the Action Plan in this document should be consulted to determine whether the additional demand can be accommodated via existing provision (in which case no further action is required). If this is not the case, contributions should be sought to enhance existing provision in the locality to accommodate the increased demand. This can be through, for example, improving quality, or providing new or improved ancillary provision. Consultation with appropriate NGBs should also be used to assist in the selection of suitable sites and suitable enhancements.

The scenario below is provided as a guide to show the potential additional demand for pitch sports that could be generated from housing growth in Oldham, thus showing how the calculator works and what it provides. The scenario is based on a hypothetical housing development proposing 600 dwellings.

[7] https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/sports-facility-calculator

7.1: Scenario One – Testing the model for a housing development proposing 600 dwellings

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth from 600 dwellings with an occupancy rate of 2.4 people per household (based on a national average) is 1,440 people. The table below identifies what this equates to in terms of pitch demand.

This population increase equates to 1.81 match equivalent sessions of demand per week for grass pitch sports, 0.01 match equivalent sessions on a hockey suitable AGP's and 6.82 match equivalent sessions of demand per season for cricket. Training demand equates to 3.31 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and 0.04 hours on a hockey suitable AGP.

Table 7.1: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from an additional 1,440 people

Pitch sport	Match demand per week[8]	Training demand[9]
Adult football	0.29	3.31 hours
Youth football	0.79	As above
Mini soccer	0.57	As above
Rugby union	0.03	0.03 match equivalent sessions
Rugby league	0.13	0.14 match equivalent sessions
Adult hockey	0.01	0.04 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0.00	0.00 hours
Cricket	6.82	-

To quantify this, the table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifestyle costs.

Table 7.2: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost[10]	Lifecycle Cost (per annum)[11]	Number of changing rooms	Capital cost
Adult football	0.29	£32,521	£6,407	0.59	£119,735
Youth football	0.79	£75,819	£15,315	0.98	£199,753
Mini soccer	0.57	£17,277	£3,421	0.00	£0
Rugby union	0.03	£4,823	£892	0.06	£11,489
Rugby league	0.13	£19,602	£3,626	0.26	£52,926
Cricket	0.15	£54,146	£9,963	0.3	£61,772
Sand based AGPs	0	£2,911	£76	0.01	£1,209
3G	0.09	£103,253	£3,067	0.17	£35,589
Tennis Courts	0.02	£22,068	-	-	-
Total	**2.07**	**£332,420**	**£42,767**	**2.36**	**£482,473**

[8] As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.
[9] Hours equate to access to an 11v11 sports lit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP
[10] Link to Sport England cost guidance
[11] Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

Overall, an additional 2.07 pitches would be required to meet additional demand arising from an additional 1,440 people living in Oldham. This consist of 1.96 grass pitches, 0.09 of access to artificial pitches and 0.02 outdoor tennis courts. This would require an expected capital cost of £332,420 and a lifecycle cost per annum of £42,767. To facilitate the increased provision, 2.36 changing rooms would need to be provided at a capital cost of £482,473.

The above scenario is only to provide a broad indication of what sporting provision is required for the projected population increase from 600 dwellings. Please note that the PPC only includes the main pitch sports and tennis but there may also be a requirement to improve facilities for other pitch and non-pitch sports such as other sports, netball, bowls and athletics, for example. Therefore, securing developer contributions to deliver improvements/new provision should be guided by this Strategy and in particular the site by site Action Plan and in consultation with the relevant NGB through the PPOSS Steering Group.

PART 8: DELIVER THE STRATEGY AND KEEP IT ROBUST AND UP-TO-DATE

The section below sets out a generalised approach on how to deliver a PPOSS whilst also keeping it robust and up-to-date following Sport England's PPS Guidance. However, a more tailored approach should also be considered and designed for Oldham based on the requirements and priorities of the Steering Group.

Delivery

The PPOSS seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across Oldham. 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 the Borough can be satisfied. The Strategy identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and recommends how best to resolve this in the future. This document should be regarded as part of the planning process as a material consideration.

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

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 PPOSS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence.

To help ensure the PPOSS is well used, it should be regarded as the key document within the study area guiding the improvement and protection of playing pitch and outdoor sport provision. It needs to be the document people regularly turn to for information on the how the current demand is met and what actions are needed to improve the situation and meet future demand.

The process of preparing the PPOSS 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 PPOSS 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 monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should continue 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 PPOSS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery. It is possible that in the interim between reviews the Steering Group could also operate as a 'virtual' group; prepared to comment on suggestions and updates electronically when relevant.

The Council is responsible for keeping the database and background supply and demand information up-to-date in order that area-by-area action plans can be updated. This should be carried out in consultation with the NGBs, particularly around affiliation time when information is updated.

As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPOSS being signed off by the steering group, then Sport England and the NGBs would consider it and the information on which it is based to be out of date. The nature of the supply and in particular the demand for provision is likely to change year-on-year, meaning that without any form of review and update it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

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).
- 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.

Alongside regular steering group meetings a good way to keep the strategy up-to-date and maintain relationships is to hold sport specific meetings with the NGBs and other relevant parties. These meetings 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.

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 are also able to indicate any further performance quality assessments that have been undertaken within the study area.

Checklists

In order for this Strategy to be signed off by the steering group, a Stage D Checklist: Develop the Strategy has been prepared which indicates where a step has been completed or if further action may be required.

Stage D Checklist: Develop the Strategy	**Tick ✓**	
	Yes	Requires Attention
Step 7: Develop the recommendations and action plan 1. Have a number of study area specific scenarios been looked at to help explore key issues and findings along with possible recommendations and actions?	✓	
2. Have any recommendations and actions regarding AGP provision taken into account the guidance in the 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface' document and any NGB specific information?	✓	
3. Do the recommendations reflect the drivers, vision and objectives of the work?	✓	
4. Are the recommendations precise enough to enable the development of clear individual area, sport and site specific actions to help achieve them?	✓	
5. Have all relevant parties been engaged with the development of, and are signed up to the delivery of, the recommendations and actions?	✓	
6. Are the recommendations and actions clearly presented?	✓	
7. Has particular attention been paid to the situation at priority sites and those which are being significantly overplayed?	✓	
8. Have area, sport and site specific solutions been proposed to protect, enhance, and provide playing pitch provision to meet the current and future demand?	✓	
9. Has guidance on the future of any sites highlighted as being at risk been provided?	✓	
10. Do the recommendations and actions seek to make the best use of existing pitches?	✓	
11. Has the detriment and benefit of proposals to relocate provision been presented?	✓	
12. Has the level and type of any new playing pitch provision required been presented?	✓	
13. Has the importance of providing appropriate and fit for purpose ancillary facilities been highlighted in order to maximise the potential benefit to sport of any pitches?	✓	
14. Have the recommendations sought to ensure an adequate amount of spare capacity in the provision of accessible pitches with secured community use?	✓	
15. Does the PPS provide a steer as to the future of any spare capacity and any provision that may be genuinely surplus to requirements (paragraphs D12 to D15)?	✓	
16. Does the action plan cover the points listed in paragraph D17?	✓	
17. Does the action plan provide the most appropriate actions to improve provision in the study area rather than just those which the local authority can deliver?	✓	
18. Does the action plan represent an infrastructure plan for playing pitches with deliverable area, sport and site specific actions and projects?	✓	
Step 8: Write and Adopt the Strategy 1. Does the PPS document provide the reader with a clear understanding of the areas listed in paragraph D20?	✓	

2.	Is it clear from the PPS document why the recommendations and actions have been included, how they are to be delivered and what they will achieve?	✓	
3.	Does the PPS document indicate how it should be used and applied in different areas and circumstances along with the benefits of doing so?	✓	
4.	Has the PPS document been subject to appropriate consultation?	✓	
5.	Do all members of the steering group and other relevant parties endorse the PPS and recognise its lead role in guiding the improvement of pitches in the study area?		
6.	Has the PPS document been formally adopted by the local authority and is its status recognised across all relevant departments?		

To help ensure the PPOSS 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:

Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up-to-date	Tick ✓	
	Yes	Requires Attention
Step 9: Apply and 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 and 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: SPORTING CONTEXT

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

National context

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

Department of Media Culture and Sport Get Active: A Strategy for the Future of Sport and Physical Activity (2023)

The Government published its new strategy for sport in August 2023. The 2015 government sport strategy, Sporting Future: A New Strategy for a More Active Nation, was a fundamental re-framing of sport and physical activity in the UK. It set out five outcomes delivered by sport and physical activity:

- Physical wellbeing
- Mental wellbeing
- Individual development
- Social and community development
- Sustainable economic development

This new strategy builds on the foundations of Sporting Future and retains these five outcomes at its core. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of three core priorities, with seven indicators to achieve these priorities as follows:

- **Being unapologetically ambitious in making the nation more active**
  - Ensuring everyone is focused on increasing physical activity, meaning fewer inactive children, and narrowing the gap on inactivity where groups are not being reached, with visible progress across the country by 2030
  - Focusing on evidence, data and metrics
  - Setting the future direction for facilities and spaces where people can be active

- **Making sport and physical activity more inclusive and welcoming for all that everyone can have confidence that there is a place for them in sport**
  - Helping the sector to be welcoming to all
  - Improving how issues and concerns are dealt within the sector

- **Moving towards a more sustainable sector that is more financially resilient and robust**
  - Supporting the sector to access additional, alternative forms of investment
  - Working towards a more environmentally sustainable sector

Delivering against these priorities will help create a more active nation and a more sustainable sport sector. These aims are complementary; greater participation, stronger governance and confidence in the sector will help to drive investment, which in turn helps to attract new audiences. The vision is to make sport and physical activity accessible, resilient, fun and fair, for now and the years to come – for the benefit of individuals and the country.

Sport England Uniting the Movement: Our 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport (2021-2031)

Sport and physical activity makes people happier and healthier, and movement is the lens through which we can make that happen. It does the same thing for our communities, with life-changing, sustainable benefits that have huge economic and social value. That's why Sport England wants sport and physical activity to be recognised as essential to help overcome these national challenges.

The Strategy recognises the need to invest in sport and physical activity through NGBs, other sports bodies and local sports clubs, organisations and community groups to increase engagement for different groups as part of our core purpose. It states that there is now a need to go further in promoting movement in general as the means to unlock sport and activity for some people.

Tackling inequalities

There are deep-rooted inequalities in sport and physical activity, which means that there are people who feel excluded from being active because the right options and opportunities aren't there. These inequalities are at the very core of the Uniting the Movement.

Sport England plans on having a laser focus on tackling inequalities in all that it does, because providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity is vitally important.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

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.

Paragraph 104 sets three criterion that ensures existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, 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 Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)

The Football Association's (FA) National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a ten-year period.

The Strategy sets out shared aims and objectives it aims to deliver on in conjunction with The Premier League, Sport England and the Government, to be delivered with support of the Football Foundation.

These stakeholders have clearly identified the aspirations for football to contribute directly to nationally important social and health priorities. Alongside this, the strategy is clear that traditional, affiliated football remains an important priority and a core component of the game, whilst recognising and supporting the more informal environments used for the community and recreational game.

Its vision is: *"Within 10 years we aim to deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed"*

£1.3 billion has been spent by football and Government since 2000 to enhance existing football facilities and build new ones. However, more is needed if football and Government's shared objectives for participation, individual well-being and community cohesion are to be achieved. Nationally, direct investment will be increased – initially to £69 million per annum from football and Government (a 15% increase on recent years).

The NFFS investment priorities can be broadly grouped into six areas, recognising the need to grow the game, support existing players and better understand the different football environments:

- **Improve 20,000 Natural Turf pitches,** with a focus on addressing drop off due to a poor playing experience;
- **Deliver 1,000 3G AGP 'equivalents'** (mix of full size and small sided provision, including MUGAs - small sided facilities are likely to have a key role in smaller / rural communities and encouraging multi-sport offers), enhancing the quality of playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision;

- **Deliver 1,000 changing pavilions/clubhouses,** linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development;
- **Support access to flexible indoor spaces,** including equipment and court markings, to support growth in futsal, walking football and to support the education and skills outcomes, exploiting opportunities for football to positively impact on personal and social outcomes for young people in particular;
- **Refurbish existing stock to maintain current provision,** recognising the need to address historic under-investment and issues with refurbishment of existing facilities;
- **Support testing of technology and innovation,** building on customer insight to deliver hubs for innovation, testing and development of the game.

National Planning Policy Framework Consultation (July 2024)

A consultation on proposed changes to the NPPF ran from July to September 2024. As part of the proposed reforms, several changes were put forward to planning policy. However, in terms of sport and recreation policy no significant changes were proposed.

The FA: Survive. Revive. Thrive. (2020-24)

This new strategy aims to ensure the grassroots game in England will survive, revive, and thrive over the next four years.

The strategy outlines seven transformational objectives through to 2024:

- **Male Participation:** Modernised opportunities to retain and re-engage millions of male participants in the game.
- **Female Participation:** A sustainable model based on a world-class, modernised offer.
- **Club Network:** A vibrant national club network that delivers inclusive, safe local grassroots football and meets community needs.
- **Facilities:** Enhanced access to good quality pitches across grassroots football.
- **Grassroots Workforce:** A transformation in community football by inspiring, supporting and retaining volunteers in the game.
- **Digital Products and Services:** An efficient grassroots digital ecosystem to serve the administrative and development needs of players, parents, and the workforce.
- **Positive Environment:** A game that's representative of out diverse footballing communities, played in a safe and inclusive environment.

This strategy was launched as grassroots football was able to safely return after lockdown from Monday 29 March, it also identifies the immediate challenge, in light of COVID-19, to get grassroots football back on its feet.

The new strategy sets out a number of goals to revive the game by addressing the areas that require particular attention. This includes increasing opportunities to ensure girls have the same access as boys to football in schools and clubs, and improving quality of pitches, with the aim of seeing 5000 good quality pitches added to the current number by 2024.

The FA: Inspiring Positive Change Through Football (2024-28)[12]

The FA launched its new Strategy which aims to 'take English football forward, with clear focus on the biggest opportunities and challenges that need to be addressed'.

To achieve this, eight key strategic priorities are identified which include four 'Game Changer' objectives and four 'Drivers' objectives as detailed below. The strategy also outlines how The FA's plans to achieve these objectives.

Game Changers:

- Win tournaments
  - Develop pathways
  - Support elite players
  - Enhance environments
  - Collaborate and influence
- A game free from discrimination
  - Boost representation
  - Drive more inclusion

[12] FA Strategy 2024-2028: The Football Association

- Tackle discrimination
- Equal opportunities for women & girls
  - Increase school participation
  - Increase club participation
  - Enhance women's competitions
  - Support female coaches and referees
- Transform the pitch landscape
  - Sustain and grow high-quality grass pitches
  - Deliver new 3G pitches
  - Support inclusivity accessibility and environmental sustainability of facilities

Drivers:

- Thriving community clubs
  - Develop club opportunities
  - Support the current and future generation of club leaders
  - Equip clubs to add long-term value to local communities
- World-class FA cups
  - Broaden commercial appeal
  - Evolve the Adobe Women's FA Cup format
- Participant led
  - Place participants at the centre of decision making
  - Create flexible models to meet participants needs
  - Provide digital tools to improve experiences
- Progressive governance
  - Support integration of women's and girls' football
  - Support governance of the NLS
  - Support our County Football Associations (CFAs)

The FA: Reaching Higher (2024-28)[13]

The FA's 2020-2024 strategy, 'Inspiring Positive Change', coincided with record growth across the sport, with more women and girls playing, coaching, officiating and supporting the flourishing professional game than ever before.

This strategy aims to build on the success achieved to date and strives to continue working to unlock the full potential of the women's and girls' game. The strategy outlines four strategic priorities as seen below.

1. **Build and Protect the Uniqueness of the Women's Game**: Continue to honour the history of women's football and recognise those who have contributed towards making it so unique, whilst ensuring the distinct qualities and unique culture of the women's game are valued and protected.
2. **Win a Major Tournament**: Continue to be world-leaders both on and off the pitch, developing players and building an inclusive talent pathway system to make football more equal and accessible at every level of the game, ensuring the England pathway and teams represent society.
3. **Build Robust, High-Quality Competition**: Create compelling competition structures and support clubs to develop to the appropriate level within the game, while enabling people to grow and develop within The FA's competition structures.

[13] The FA Womens & Girls Football Strategy 2024-28

4. **Deliver Equal Opportunities for Women and Girls to Play**: Sustain growth in schools whilst tackling inequalities. Continue to grow the number of female teams and deliver vibrant league offers whilst extending and enhancing the sessional football offer. The ambition is for 90% of schools to deliver equal access for girls to play football in key stages two and three.

There are five golden threads which weave through each of the four strategic priorities and across all levels of the women's and girls' game, which will be instrumental for delivering the next phase of growth by 2028:

1. **Female Health and Wellbeing:** Develop the game to support women and girls with their health and wellbeing needs, providing them with environments in which they can thrive.
2. **Safeguarding:** Support the evolution of an ever-safer culture across the women's and girls' game.
3. **Refereeing:** Grow and nurture a new generation of referees who are representative of our society.
4. **Coaching:** Support and develop brilliant coaches capable of unleashing every player's potential in a safe and inclusive game.
5. **Diversity and Inclusion:** Ensure the game is more reflective of our society.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Inspiring Generations (2020-2024)

The England and Wales Cricket Board unveiled a new strategic plan in 2019. The strategic plan aims to connect communities and improve lives by inspiring people to discover and share their passion for cricket.

The plan sets out six important priorities and activities, these are:

- ***Grow and nurture the core***
  - Create an infrastructure investment fund for First Class County Clubs (FCCs)
  - Introduce a new Community Investment Funding for FCCs and County Cricket Boards (CCBs)
  - Invest in club facilities
  - Develop the role of National Counties Cricket
  - Further invest in County Competitions

- ***Inspire through elite teams***
  - Increase investment in the county talent pathway
  - Incentivise the counties to develop England Players
  - Drive the performance system through technology and innovation
  - Create heroes and connect them with a new generation of fans

- ***Make cricket accessible***
  - Broaden crickets appeal through the New Competition
  - Create a new digital community for cricket
  - Install non-traditional playing facilities in urban areas
  - Continue to deliver South Asian Action Plans
  - Launch a new participation product, linked to the New Competition

- ***Engage children and young people***
  - Double cricket participation in primary schools
  - Deliver a compelling and coordinated recreational playing offer from age five upwards
  - Develop our safeguarding to promote safe spaces for children and young people

- ***Transform women's and girls' cricket***
  - Grow the base through participation and facilities investment
  - Launch centres of excellence and a new elite domestic structure
  - Invest in girls' county age group cricket
  - Deliver a girls' secondary school programme

- ***Support our communities***
  - Double the number of volunteers in the game
  - Create a game-wide approach to Trust and Foundations through the cricket network
  - Develop a new wave of officials and community coaches
  - Increase participation in disability cricket

The Rugby Football Union Strategy 2021 Onwards

Through the strategy, the RFU aims to enrich lives, introduce more people to rugby union and develop the sport for future generations. The goal is to achieve this by strengthening and uniting rugby union in England and producing consistently winning England teams.

Eight key strategic priorities are identified with all investment decisions aligned to these. The strategy also outlines the RFU's core activities which form the backbone of its business operations and services to the game.

The priorities include four 'Game Objectives' and four 'Driving Objectives' as detailed below.

Game Objectives:

- Enjoyment – enable positive player experiences on and off the field
- Winning England – create the best possible high-performance system for England Rugby
- Welfare – enhance player welfare to protect and support the wellbeing of players
- Flourishing rugby communities – support clubs to sustain and grow themselves and to reflect society

Driving Objectives:

- Diversity & Inclusion – drive rugby union in England to reflect the diversity of society
- Understand – build a deep understanding of players, volunteers and fans to shape the future of the game
- Connect – connect with and grow the rugby community and create exceptional experiences
- Commercial and operational excellence – ensure a sustainable and efficient business model delivered by an inspired workforce

England Hockey Strategy (2023 – 2028)

England Hockey's Facilities Strategy can be found here[14].

Aiming to make hockey more noticeable, relevant, and accessible to all, England Hockey have launched their new strategy 'Creating a Future for Our Game Together' on 3rd October. The new strategy is a continued effort to re-engage with the current hockey community and to reach out to potential newcomers to introduce them to hockey.

[14] https://www.englandhockey.co.uk/governance/about-england-hockey/creating-a-future-for-our-game-together

Underpinning the strategy and of importance to the hockey community are four values, “collaborate inclusively, care for people and places, play with spirit win with grace and resilient in everything we do”.

The strategy is the culmination of two years consultation with various stakeholders across the sport and larger sporting sector. Hockey will be guided by five key objectives over the next five years.

1. Lead Positive Change: to create and champion positive change within the community by broadening and widening the engagement of the sport and making it more ethnically and culturally diverse.
2. Meaningful Growth: to make sure that our sport thrives and grows into the future, we want to nurture a love of hockey within a more diverse group of young players and communities to reflect society.
3. Drive Visible Impact: to produce and release high-quality, engaging content that shares the love of the game, captures the passion, builds a deep connection and amplifies the voices of the hockey community with new and existing participants.
4. Responsible Leadership: to provide forward thinking, compassionate and inclusive leadership. Leadership that fosters trust within physically and psychologically safe environments and which puts players, the community and sustainability at heart of every decision.
5. Inspirational International Success: inspirational club and national teams delivering podium success in Europe and on the world stage, underpinned by a thriving talent system and domestic game.

The strategy aligns with Sport England’s ‘Uniting the movement’ strategy and UK Sport’s Powering Success, Inspiring Impact’ strategic plan.

Rugby Football League – National Community Facilities Strategy (2024 – 2030)

The RFL has developed a new National Facilities Strategy which will guide investment into the game from 2024 through to 2030. The proposed investment package aligned to the Strategy will not only transform facilities, but also bolster the sport’s social impact, reinforcing its position as a vital part of the nation’s sporting and social fabric.

The four focus areas of the Strategy are:

- **Security of Tenure** – allowing clubs to plan for the long-term
- **Accessible and Inclusive Facilities** – providing suitable facilities for all and creating safe spaces for the wider community
- **Adequate and Appropriate Pitch Provision**– investment both in playing surfaces, and in upskilling a volunteer workforce to maintain them
- **Sustainability**– both environmental and financial

The Strategy will deliver on the four focus areas by delivering against a set of five recommendations which are set within the Strategy and are detailed below. These recommendations reflect the wider strategic aspirations across the sport and are for the RFL to work to deliver.

- **Focus Community Clubs**
  - Ensure the RFL has sufficient capacity and resource to deliver the recommendations identified within this Strategy to support its community clubs.
  - Ensure all community clubs have the knowledge and resource to provide good quality grass pitches.

- Supporting clubs to have good quality changing and social facilities which can support the scale of need at each club. These must be inclusive for all participants and benefit target user groups such as women and girls' participants.
- Ensure clubs can accommodate a sustainable operational programme for clubhouses to ensure the longevity of provision.
- Work with clubs and key partners to increase the number of clubs with secured tenure of their club facilities.
- Develop a dedicated funding programme which is specifically aimed at supporting clubs to gain security of tenure at their respective site.
- Highlight success stories and best practices from community clubs to inspire others and showcase the positive impact of these efforts.

- **Deliver positive social and environmental impact**
  - Support clubs through training and advice on how to promote facilities for non-rugby league purposes.
  - Work with Active Partnerships across England to enable higher usage and activation of rugby league assets for non-rugby league activity.
  - Prioritise clubs for wellbeing hubs which may offer the widest social benefit (relative to local need) – particularly those in high deprivation areas.
  - Use the activation of club facilities as a prerequisite to capital funding for club house improvements / new development.
  - Collaborative working with sports partners and key agencies
- **Collaborative working with sports partners and key agencies**
  - Ensure continued working with Sport England and National Governing Bodies of other sports to capitalise on shared investment opportunities.
  - Work with the Football Foundation to maximise Multi-Sport funding opportunities – utilising the framework provided in this Strategy as the baseline of shared investment.
  - Work closely with Active Partnerships in areas with high club densities to establish opportunities for pitch access via the Open School Facilities programme.
- **Technological solutions**
  - Ensure the RFL gathers greater levels of information from clubs via affiliation. To include (e.g.) security of tenure information and an integrated self-assessment audit of community facilities.
  - Continue expanding the use and application of PitchPower so all clubs can self-assess provision and support clubs to make positive contributions to improving the quality of grass pitches.
  - Promote technological solutions which progress clubs into being more sustainable, energy efficient and ensure their long-term viability as community assets.
  - Create a platform or resource hub where clubs can access information on funding opportunities, facility management, and sustainable operational practices.
- **Working with Charitable Community Organisations and Wheelchair Rugby League**
  - Develop an investment package to support the operational delivery of professional club foundation led wheelchair activity focusing on storage and logistical solutions.
  - Prioritise capital investment into community club sites which also accommodate professional club foundations as tenants for community Rugby League activity.
  - Begin work on the feasibility of developing a national wheelchair centre which includes exploring partnership opportunities with other sports to maximise multisport value and return on investment.
  - Consult with professional club foundations, where possible, to understand the need for 3G access and work to ascertain sufficient access hours during peak times of need.

England Netball

In November 2021 England Netball launched a 10-year 'Adventure Strategy' for the game with a new brand identity for the organisation.

England Netball's 'Adventure Strategy' shares a purpose-led ambition for the game, to build on the momentum the sport has seen in recent years and take it to new heights for the decade ahead.

The 'Adventure Strategy' outlines the intention to:-

- accelerate the development and growth of the game at every level, from grassroots to the elite,
- elevate the visibility of the sport, and
- lead a movement to impact lives on and beyond the court.

At the heart of its purpose, England Netball, with its proud and unique female foundations, will remain dedicated to increasing opportunities for women and girls to play the game as a priority, working tirelessly to address the gender participation gap in sport that has widened since the global pandemic.

Underpinned by years of engaging with and delivering netball for female communities, the organisation pledges to understand, support and nurture women and girls more deeply at every life stage, at every age.

The organisation is also committed to opening the sport to new audiences in every community, so netball better represents the rich diversity of the country it proudly represents, and ensures the sport continues to evolve and adapt to thrive in the future, helping to create a truly inclusive sport for all where everyone can belong, flourish and soar. A recent partnership announcement with England Men's and Mixed Netball Association (EMMNA) to help develop and grow male participation in the game, supports this commitment as England Netball pledges to promote difference and embrace the opportunity to make the sport a possibility within everyone's reach.

Transforming netball for children and young people is a strategic priority to protect the future of the sport. Working with schools and policy makers to extend physical literacy within, and after the school day with a focus on netball specific provision will pave the way for greater community participation. The organisation will accelerate the expansion of its Bee Netball programme for young children, whilst supporting teens and young women to stay in the game to keep them physically active and in the game for life.

The elite game is in focus too, with the ambition for the Vitality Roses to be the best female sports team in the world, supporting the national team to consistently win on the world stage, with an outstanding talent pathway in place to fuel sustainable successes on court, and setting new standards for netball. The professionalisation of the game over the next decade is a priority, focusing on growing world-leading international and domestic competitions and events, and creating more careers in the sport.

Grounded in feedback from the Netball Family, with over 3,000 members and stakeholders consulted as part of the strategic process to understand what they wanted netball to 'look like' in 2031, the plan is aspirational and ambitious and sees the organisation pledge to continue to be a trailblazer for women's sport as it embarks on its new adventure.

Facility Development

The facility development aspirations stated within the Strategy are to:-

- Take a fresh look at the spaces required to support the sport, creating accessible places in every community to allow netball to be incorporated into how and where women and girls live their lives;
- Protect, enhance, and extend the network of homes that house the sport at a local and regional level;
- Develop an elite domestic professional competition that supports full time athletes underpinned by a world class infrastructure and environments.
- For England Netball to achieve its ambitions to make the game accessible to wider audiences and in every community, it encourages Local Authorities to adopt policies within Playing Pitch Strategies and Built Facilities Strategies that:-
- Facilitates informal netball activity within neighbourhood multi use games areas for example by installing combined outdoor basketball and netball goals and art courts in Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs).
- Incorporates the cultural and health needs of women and girls within any designs for improved or new facilities.
- Protects and enhances netball facilities within all Primary and Secondary School environments so they offer a positive first experience of the sport for students and the wider community during out of school hours.
- Supports the installation of floodlights on outdoor courts to increase all year-round use.
- Facilitates the development of netball growth programmes, club training and competition within public leisure centres.
- Where appropriate, supports the development of netball homes and performance environments that enable local women and girls to pursue a career in netball as an elite athlete, official, coach or administrator.

Tennis in Britain - LTA Strategy

The LTA's vision for 2019 – 2023, Tennis Opened Up includes seven strategies relating to three objectives which are built around its mission 'to grow tennis by making it relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable'.

Objectives:

- Increase the number of fans on our database from [623,602] to [1,000,000] by 2023.
- More people playing more often;
  - Increase the number of adults playing tennis each year from [7.7% (4,018,600)] of the population to [8.5% (4,420,460)], and the frequency of adults playing tennis twice a month 2.5% 1,311,800 to 1.9% 1,500,000 by 2023.
  - The number of children playing tennis once a week from 550,000 to 700,000 (7.9% to 10% of the population) by 2023.
- Enable 5 new players to break into the top 100 by 2023 and inspire the tennis audience.

Strategies:

1. Visibility -Broaden relevance and increase visibility of tennis all year round to build engagement and participation with fans and players.
2. Innovation - Innovate in the delivery of tennis to widen its appeal.
3. Investment - Support community facilities and schools to increase the opportunities to play.
4. Accessibility - Make the customer journey to playing tennis easier and more accessible for anyone.

5. Engagement - Engage and collaborate with everyone involved in delivering tennis in Britain, particularly coaches and volunteers to attract and maintain more people in the game.
6. Performance - Create a pathway for British champions that nurtures a diverse team of players, people and leaders.
7. Leadership - Lead tennis in Britain to the highest standard so it is a safe, welcoming, well-run sport.

British Crown Green Bowling Association[15]

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

England athletics strategy plan 2021 – 2032: Athletics and runners at the heart – creating opportunities, enhancing experiences and powering potential.

This strategy ensures a robust and clearly defined future direction for the sport which places athletics and runners at the heart of everything we will do over the 12 year period to 2032.

England Athletics overarching purpose and visions are:

Purpose: 'To inspire more athletics and runners of all abilities and backgrounds to fulfil their potential and to have a lifelong love for the sport.'

Vision: 'For athletics to become an inclusive sport where everyone belongs and can flourish.'

At the heart of this plan, and the focal point for everything England Athletics do, are the people and communities involved in athletics across the following five areas:

1. Clubs, Club Leaders and facilities
2. Competition
3. Coaches and officials
4. Participation: young people and running
5. Talented athletes

Each has its own unique challenges and opportunities, yet also the opportunity to positively influence the success and growth of the other areas.

There are four key supporting activities that will be essential in enabling us to deliver the strategic priorities and ultimately achieve goals:

- Provide strong leadership that builds trust and respect by creating an open and positive culture.
- Embrace technology and reduce our environmental impact by putting digital first and encouraging innovation and creativity.
- Ensure greater engagement through sharing of high-quality insight, information and content.
- Develop commercial minds to maximise funding opportunities and diversify income.

[15] http://bcgba.org.uk/index.html

England Golf Course Planner – Strategic Direction (2021-2025)[16]

England Golf has always had a mission to lead, support, inspire and deliver for its community of golfers, golf clubs and counties. To help enable this, its Course Planner forms the core of its strategy, with 18 guiding principles established that are designed to best position growth in the game:

- Strengthen governance in all aspects of the sport
- Deliver safeguarding throughout the golfing community
- Utilise data and technology to enhance decision making
- Drive equality and equity in everything it does
- Support golf clubs with member recruitment and retention
- Connect and engage with all golfers
- Inspire and educate golf's network of volunteers
- Increase golf's influence
- Advocate and inform on all elements of sustainability
- Drive diversity at all levels of golf
- Create more opportunities for junior and young adults
- Promote the health and wellbeing of golf
- Inspire more women and girls to play golf
- Develop greater access for disabled people
- Enthuse all golfers through relatable role models
- Communicate a positive perception change for golf
- Deliver an excellent talent development pathway
- Host best-in-class competitions for all golfers

[16] https://www.englandgolf.org/englandgolfstrategy/

APPENDIX TWO: SUPPLY AND DEMAND SUMMARY

The table below highlights the quantitative headline findings identified for all pitch and outdoor sports included within the scope of the preceding Assessment Report. MES stands for match equivalent sessions and has been used as the comparable unit for natural grass pitches. Converting both the amount of play a site can accommodate (its carrying capacity) and how much play takes place there (its current use) into the same unit of demand enables a comparison to be undertaken.

Supply and demand summary (pitch sports)

Area	Pitch type	Current supply/demand balance (match equivalent sessions)	Future supply/demand balance (match equivalent sessions) (2041)[17]
Football (grass)	**-**	**-**	**-**
Central	Adult	Shortfall of 6.5 MES per week	-
Central	Youth 11v11	Played to capacity	-
Central	Youth 9v9	Played to capacity	-
Central	Mini 7v7	Played to capacity	-
Central	Mini 5v5	Played to capacity	-
East	Adult	Shortfall of 2.5 MES per week	-
East	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 0.5 MES per week	-
East	Youth 9v9	Played to capacity	-
East	Mini 7v7	Played to capacity	-
East	Mini 5v5	Played to capacity	-
North	Adult	Shortfall of 2.5 MES per week	-
North	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 3 MES per week	-
North	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 3.5 MES per week	-
North	Mini 7v7	Played to capacity	-
North	Mini 5v5	Played to capacity	-
South	Adult	Shortfall of 3 MES per week	-
South	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 7.5 MES per week	-
South	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 0.5 MES per week	-
South	Mini 7v7	Played to capacity	-
South	Mini 5v5	Played to capacity	-
West	Adult	Shortfall of 1 MES per week	-
West	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 1.5 MES per week	-
West	Youth 9v9	Actual spare capacity of 1 MES per week	-
West	Mini 7v7	Played to capacity	-
West	Mini 5v5	Played to capacity	-
Oldham	**Adult**	**Shortfall of 15.5**	**Shortfall of 19.5**
Oldham	**Youth 11v11**	**Shortfall of 12.5**	**Shortfall of 19**

[17] It should be noted that this future demand figure is at a Boroughwide level, and some analysis areas may have greater shortfalls than others.

Area	Pitch type	Current supply/demand balance (match equivalent sessions)	Future supply/demand balance (match equivalent sessions) (2041)[17]
Football (grass)	**-**	**-**	**-**
Oldham	**Youth 9v9**	**Shortfall of 3**	**Shortfall of 7**
Oldham	**Mini 7v7**	**Sufficient supply**	**Shortfall of 4.5**
Oldham	**Mini 5v5**	**Sufficient supply**	**Shortfall of 3.5**
Football (3G)	**-**	**-**	**-**
Central	11v11	Sufficient supply	-
East	11v11	Shortfall of 0.75 pitches	-
North	11v11	Shortfall of 1 pitch	-
South	11v11	Shortfall of 2.25 pitches	-
West	11v11	Shortfall of 1 pitch	-
Oldham	**3G 11v11**	**Shortfall of 3.5 pitches**	**Shortfall of 4.5 pitches**
Cricket	**-**	-	-
Central	Saturday	Played to capacity	-
Central	Sunday	Played to capacity	-
Central	Midweek	Actual spare capacity of 6 MES per season	-
East	Saturday	Shortfall of 74 MES per season	-
East	Sunday	Shortfall of 26 MES per season	-
East	Midweek	Actual spare capacity of 4 MES per season	-
North	Saturday	Shortfall of 114 MES per season	-
North	Sunday	Shortfall of 102 MES per season	-
North	Midweek	Shortfall of 96 MES per season	-
South	Saturday	Shortfall of 4 MES per season	-
South	Sunday	Shortfall of 4 MES per season	-
South	Midweek	Actual spare capacity of 2 MES per season	-
West	Saturday	Played to capacity	-
West	Sunday	Played to capacity	-
West	Midweek	Played to capacity	-
Oldham	**Senior (Saturday)**	**Shortfall of 192 MES per season**	**Shortfall of 252 MES per season**
Oldham	**Senior (Sunday)**	**Shortfall of 132 MES per season**	**Shortfall of 132 MES per season**
Oldham	**Junior (midweek)**	**Shortfall of 84 MES per season**	**Shortfall of 114 MES per season**
Rugby union	-	**-**	**-**
Central	Senior	Played to capacity	-
East	Senior	Played to capacity	-
North	Senior	Played to capacity	-
South	Senior	Shortfall of 6.5 MES per week	-
West	Senior	Played to capacity	-
Oldham	**Senior**	**Shortfall of 6.5** MES per week	**Shortfall of 6.5** MES per week
Rugby league	-	-	-
Central	Senior	Played to capacity	-
East	Senior	Shortfall of 8 MES per week	-
North	Senior	Shortfall of 3.5 MES per week	-
South	Senior	Shortfall of 5.5 MES per week	-

Area	Pitch type	Current supply/demand balance (match equivalent sessions)	Future supply/demand balance (match equivalent sessions) (2041)[17]
Football (grass)	**-**	**-**	**-**
West	Senior	Played to capacity	-
Oldham	**Senior**	**Shortfall of 17** MES per week	**Shortfall of 19.5** MES per week
Hockey	-	-	**-**
Oldham	**Full size, with sports lighting**	**Sufficient supply if quality improvements occur at Newman RC College**	**Sufficient supply if quality improvements occur at Newman RC College**

Headline findings (remaining sports)

Sport	Headline findings
Tennis	For club-based tennis, where known through consultation, Saddleworth Cricket, Bowling & Tennis Club has sufficient capacity to facilitate club demand, however, Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club is operating over its perceived capacity. Away from clubs, whilst no courts are identified as having any capacity issues, it cannot be said that supply is sufficient to meet demand due to the amount of unmet and latent demand evident both nationally and in Oldham. Additionally, there are no padel tennis courts in Oldham, however, Tame Valley Tennis & Squash Club has recently been approved planning permission for two covered padel courts.
Padel	There is an identified need based on population demand amounting to 19 padel courts with no courts currently provided. Therefore, the LTA is supportive of plans for new provision to be established, however, should not be detrimental to tennis and where possible have a positive impact on both sports.
Netball	There is enough netball provision in Oldham to meet current demand. There is only minor use on outdoor courts in Oldham with only The Hathershaw College being used mainly due to the difficulty of gaining access to indoor courts during the exam season.
Bowls	Supply is considered sufficient to meet both current and future demand, with no additional greens required. With the Borough being adequately catered for from a supply and demand analysis perspective, the focus is ensuring the long-term survival of Westwood Park Vets.
Athletics	In Oldham, supply (through The Radclyffe School) is considered sufficient to meet demand, with one club specialising in both track and field currently based in Oldham (Oldham & Royton Harriers Athletics Club) totalling 243 members.
Golf	With seven golfing sites in Oldham and a mix of 18-hole courses, Par 3 and three driving ranges, supply is well placed to meet demand. This is especially the case given the various operational structures in place, with some facilities offering a high price point and others offering a low price point, and with some prioritising membership and others focusing on pay and play usage. This suggests that all types of golfers can be collectively catered for.
MUGAs	Current supply of MUGAs is sufficient to cater for current demand with at least one MUGA being provided in each analysis area.