



WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

JULY 2021

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

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ABBREVIATIONS

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
BCGBA	Crown Green Bowling Association
BC	Bowls Club
CFA	County Football Association
DALP	Delivery and Allocations Local Plan
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FF	Football Foundation
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FPM	Facilities Planning Model
GMA	Grounds Management Association
HC	Hockey Club
JFC	Junior Football Club
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LFFP	Local Football Facilities Plan
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
NFFS	National Football Facilities Strategy
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPOSS	Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy
RDO	Rugby Development Officer
RFL	Rugby Football League
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RFC	Rugby Football Club
TC	Tennis Club
U	Under

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) has been commissioned by Wirral Borough Council (WBC) to undertake a Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS). This report (known as the Assessment Report) presents a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities within the Borough and 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" outdoor sports).

Sport England's PPS Guidance details a 13-stepped approach, separated into five distinct sections, as follows:

- ◀ Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach (1)
- ◀ Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision (2 & 3)
- ◀ Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views (4, 5 & 6)
- ◀ Stage D: Develop the strategy (7 & 8)
- ◀ Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (9 & 10)

Stages A to C are covered in this report, with stage D covered in the preceding strategy document and Stage E ongoing throughout the lifespan of the work.

The Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide is separated into two parts; undertaking an assessment and applying the assessment. This report focuses on the first of these, with the guidance splitting it into three stages:

- ◀ Stage 1 – Prepare and tailor the assessment
- ◀ Stage 2 – Gather information on supply and demand
- ◀ Stage 3 – Assessment, bring the information together

The PPOSS will replace Wirral's existing study, completed in 2016. A PPOSS is considered to be out of date if its baseline data has not been reviewed after five years of the study being undertaken. If the PPOSS is monitored annually then its lifespan will depend on the point at which an Annual Monitoring Report identifies changes that are significant enough to warrant a partial or full review. A bespoke process will be included within the subsequent Strategy.

Covid-19

The PPOSS has been undertaken during the Covid-19 global pandemic, which has resulted in England entering into unprecedented restrictions that have fluctuated over the course of the last 12-months. At various points in time, grassroots sport has been halted, leading to truncated seasons and changes to way leagues have been run and fixtures scheduled. This has had a direct consequence on the supply of and demand for playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities, which, if considered in isolation, would not present an accurate representation of levels of activity or provision.

Given the above, this study presents information based on what supply and demand would have been like had there not been any restrictions in place, although consideration is given to the impact of Covid-19 and the issues clubs, teams and users face as a consequence. The approach taken is further explained within each section of the report, where appropriate.

It is currently unknown what impact the pandemic and enforced restrictions will have on participation and provision moving forward. Therefore, this should form a key aspect of the Stage E process, with the review of the documents ensuring that any recommendations made remain accurate as the effect of Covid-19 becomes clearer.

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As part of Stage E, the PPOSS should be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the Steering Group. A review will not only help keep the work up to date but it will also assist in maintaining the momentum and commitment built up during its development.

1.1: Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach

Why the strategy is being developed

The Council has several overarching strategies relevant to the development and implementation of the PPOSS, such as its Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, the Wirral Sport and Recreation Strategy and the Council's Asset Management Plan. Furthermore, the Council has underpinning objectives which drive the study, including the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the development of improved open space in the Borough. Taking this into account, the agreed aims of the PPOSS are to:

- ◀ Provide an evidence base for the Council and partner services in parks and countryside as well as planning and delivery.
- ◀ Provide a clear understanding of the mix of provision in the Borough and the roles of different partners.
- ◀ Provide an evidence base to support potential future funding decisions/applications.
- ◀ Provide evidence for the Council's emerging Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan and to inform site allocations and the consideration of planning applications.
- ◀ Underpin the provision of an accessible and realistic network of weather-resilient facilities which are usable throughout the season.
- ◀ Inform and drive achievement of a high standard of maintenance at an affordable price for users and providers.
- ◀ Deliver the health and social cohesion benefits of sports against a backdrop of major financial austerity and public sector budget reductions.
- ◀ Reduce the level of Council subsidy of provision.
- ◀ Engage with stakeholders on new ways of working e.g. increasing self-management.

The 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 the Local Plan examination. It will also meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

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 8 of the NPPF deals specifically with the topic of healthy communities, with paragraph 96 discussing the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation that can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

Paragraph 97 discusses assessments and the protection of "existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields". Paragraphs 99 and 100 also promote the identification of important green spaces by local communities and the protection of these facilities. Such spaces may include playing fields and outdoor sport facilities.

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Wirral Borough Council's Local Plan

A new Local Plan is being developed by the Council to shape the future of the Borough for a 15-year period. This will set out the overall requirement for housing and other developments over the course of its lifespan and will be used to make decisions on planning applications. It will also make clear the Council's priorities and provide clear guidance on what will and will not be permitted. As such, the findings and recommendations of the PPOSS will feed into the process and help guide planning policy in relation to playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities.

Management arrangements

A project team from the Council has worked with KKP to ensure that all relevant information is readily available so that project stages and milestones are delivered on time. In addition, a strong and effective steering group has and will continue to lead the PPOSS during its development and will be responsible for the delivery of its recommendations and actions. The membership of this group is balanced and representative of the different parties and key drivers behind the work; it is made up of representatives from the Council, Sport England and relevant National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs).

The steering group is and has been responsible for the direction of the PPS from a strategic perspective and for supporting, checking and challenging the work of the project team. It will be important for the steering group to continue once the PPS has been finalised for several reasons, including a continuing responsibility to:

- ◀ Be a champion for provision in the area and promote the importance of the PPOSS.
- ◀ Support implementation of the recommendations and action plan.
- ◀ Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the study.
- ◀ Ensure that the work is kept up to date and refreshed when necessary.

Agreed scope

The following types of sport facilities are agreed by the steering group for inclusion in the PPOSS:

- ◀ Football pitches (including 3G pitches)
- ◀ Cricket pitches
- ◀ Rugby union pitches (including 3G pitches)
- ◀ Hockey/artificial grass pitches (sand/water based)
- ◀ Tennis courts
- ◀ Bowling greens

Rugby league also forms part of the scope of a PPOSS, however, no supply or demand has been identified in the Borough and it has therefore not been considered as part of this study. In addition, no other grass pitch sport activity has been identified, although it is noted that lacrosse and American football have previously been played in the Borough.

Study area

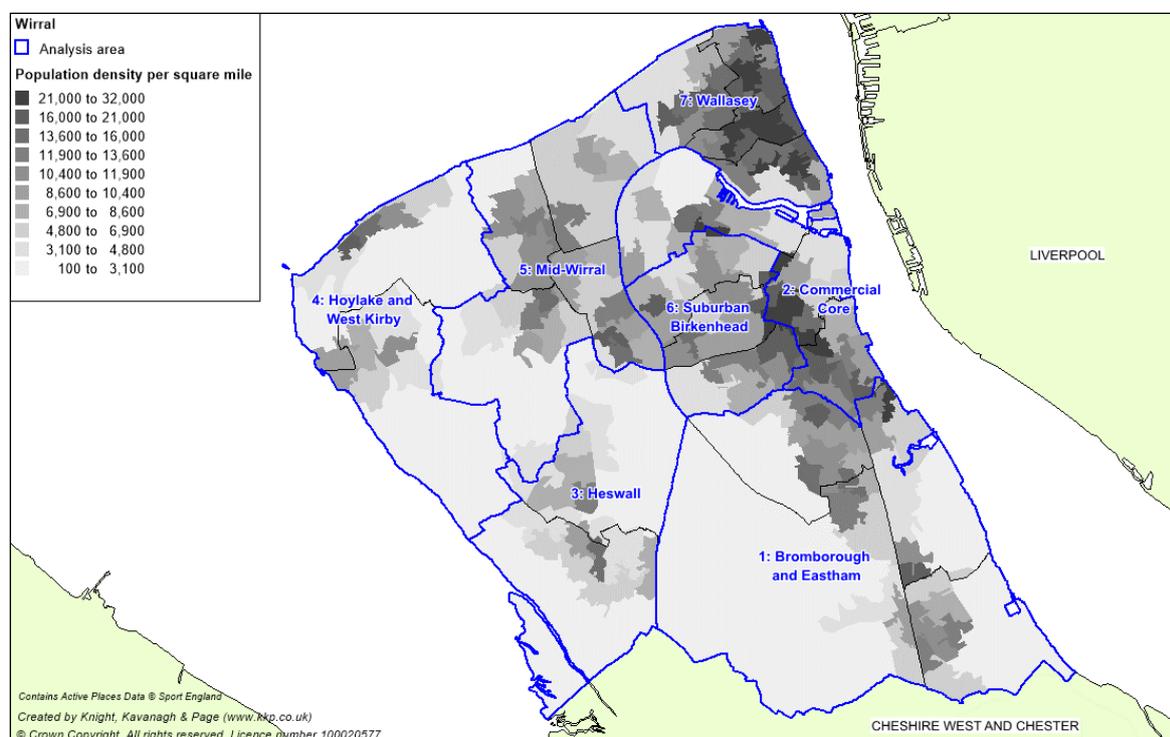
The study area is the Wirral Borough Council boundary area. Further to this, sub areas or analysis areas are used to allow for a more localised assessment of provision and examination of supply and demand at a local level. For this purpose, the Borough is split into seven sections, as shown in Table 1.1 below and Figure 1.1 overleaf.

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Table 1: Analysis areas

Analysis area	Description
1	Bebington; Bromborough; Clatterbridge; Eastham
2	Bidston and St James; Birkenhead and Tranmere; Rock Ferry
3	Pensby and Thingwall; Heswall
4	Hoylake and Meols; West Kirby and Thurstaston
5	Greasby; Frankby and Irby; Moreton West and Saughall Massie; Leasowe and Moreton East; Upton
6	Claughton; Oxtton; Prenton
7	Liscard; New Brighton; Seacombe; Wallasey

Figure 1.1: Analysis areas



Notwithstanding the above, it should be noted that sports catchment areas do not necessarily naturally fall within the administrative analysis areas and can either be larger or cross over. As such, the analysis areas used are solely for reporting purposes and should not be used to compare supply/demand between areas.

Cross-boundary migration is also be explored i.e. demand from neighbouring authorities that imports into the Borough and demand from the Borough which exports out. Predominately, such migration encompasses the authorities of Liverpool and Cheshire West and Chester.

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

A clear picture of the supply of and demand for playing pitches and outdoor sport facilities in the Borough needs to be provided to enable an accurate assessment of quantity, quality and usage. This is achieved through site assessments and consultation with key stakeholders.

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Gather supply information and views – an audit of provision

Sport England's guidance uses the following definitions of a playing pitch and playing field; these are set out by the Government in the 2015 'Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order'¹:

- ◀ ***Playing pitch*** – a delineated area of 0.2ha or more which is used for association football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, American football, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.
- ◀ ***Playing field*** – the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch.

Although the statutory definition of a playing field sets out a minimum size, this PPOSS takes account of smaller sized pitches that contribute to the supply side. For example, a site containing a mini 5v5 football pitch is included despite it potentially being smaller than 0.2ha. The study counts individual grass pitches (as a delineated area) as the basic unit of supply, with the definition of a playing pitch also including artificial grass pitches (AGPs).

As far as possible, all best endeavours have been made to identify all playing fields, pitches and outdoor sports facilities, irrespective of ownership and use, within the Borough. However, there may be instances that have led to omissions, such as at school or private sites where access was not possible (although facilities at sites not accessed are still included within the study where provision is known to exist from other sources e.g. affiliation data or club/league consultation). Where provision has not been recorded within the report, they are still considered to exist for planning purposes and will continue to do so. Furthermore, any exclusion does not mean that the provision is not required from a supply and demand point of view.

Quantity

Where known, all playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities are included within the PPOSS, irrespective of ownership, management and use. Sites were initially identified using the previous study and through Sport England's Active Places web-based database, with the Council and NGBs supporting the process by checking and updating this initial data as well as supplying their own. This was also verified against club and league information supplied through consultation and any affiliation processes.

For each site, the following details are recorded in the project database:

- ◀ Site name, address (including postcode) and location
- ◀ Ownership and management type
- ◀ Security of tenure
- ◀ Community availability
- ◀ Total number, type and quality of provision
- ◀ Usage levels

Accessibility

Not all facilities offer the same level of access to the community and the ownership and accessibility of provision also influences actual availability for demand. As such, each site is assigned a level of community use as follows:

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

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- ◀ **Community use** – facilities in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire and currently in use by teams/members/individuals (depending on the sport).
- ◀ **Available but unused** - facilities that are available for hire but are not currently used externally; this most often applies to school sites but can also apply to sites which are expensive to hire or particularly poor quality.
- ◀ **No community use** - facilities which are, as a matter of policy or practice, unavailable for external hire. This includes professional club pitches along with some semi-professional club pitches where play is restricted to the first or second team of the host club.
- ◀ **Disused** – sites that have previously been used for sport but that are not currently being used at all by any users and are not available for community hire either (often being unmarked). Once these sites are disused for five or more years they will then be categorised as lapsed sites.
- ◀ **Lapsed** - last known use for sport more than five years ago. These fall outside of Sport England's statutory remit but still have to be assessed using the criteria in paragraph 97 of the NPPF; Sport England would nonetheless challenge a proposed loss which fails to meet such criteria. It should be emphasised that the lawful planning use of a lapsed site is still that of a playing field until such time as its use is formally changed or it is developed for a non-sport use.

In addition, there should be a good degree of certainty as to whether a facility will be available to the community for at least the following three years. Facilities that are unlikely to remain available to the community for at least three years is considered to be insecure.

Quality

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

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

The quality of all provision identified in the audit and the ancillary facilities supporting them are assessed regardless of ownership, management or availability, with non-technical assessments carried out on every site that is accessible to understand the quality of each pitch and all ancillary facilities. Along with capturing any details specific to the individual facilities and sites, a quality rating is also recorded within the audit for each. These ratings are then used to help estimate the capacity (aligned to NGB guidance) to accommodate competitive and other play within the supply and demand assessment.

In addition to undertaking non-technical assessments to assess pitch/facility quality (using the templates provided within the guidance and as determined by NGBs), users and providers have also been consulted on the quality. In some instances, the quality rating has been adjusted to reflect this.

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Gather demand information and views

Presenting an accurate picture of current demand for playing pitches and outdoor sport facilities (i.e. recording how and when provision is used) is important when undertaking a supply and demand assessment. Demand for provision in the Borough tends to fall within the following categories:

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

Current and future demand for provision is presented on a sport-by-sport basis within the relevant sections of this report. In addition, unmet, latent, imported and exported demand for provision is also identified within each section.

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to pitches; it is usually expressed, for example, when a team is in training but is unable to access a match pitch, or when a league has a waiting list due to a lack of pitch provision, which in turn is hindering the growth of the league. In comparison, latent demand is defined as the number of additional teams that could be fielded if access to a sufficient number of outdoor sports facilities (and ancillary provision) was available. Exported and imported demand refers to those that are playing outside of their local authority area of choice.

A variety of consultation methods were used to collate demand information. Firstly, face-to-face consultation (normally via video call due to Covid-19 restrictions) was carried out with key clubs and leagues (as identified by the Council and NGBs) from each sport, thus allowing for the collection of detailed demand information and an exploration of key issues to be interrogated and more accurately assessed. For all remaining clubs, telephone consultation or an online survey (converted to postal if required) was utilised.

As key providers and users of the sports facilities, educational establishments were also consulted. This involved telephone/video call consultation with secondary schools and an online survey being sent to primary schools, special schools and independent schools.

Future demand

Alongside current demand, it is important for a PPOSS to assess whether the future demand for provision can be met. Using Office of National Statistics (ONS) population projections and proposed housing growth, as well as likely participation growth informed through consultation, an estimate can be made of the likely future demand for the relevant facilities. Assumptions can then be made as to whether existing provision can cater for such growth.

Team generation rates are used to provide an indication of how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group). This ratio is then applied to population growth to help estimate the change in demand for each sport that may arise in the future. For the purposes of this study, this has been run until 2037, in line with Wirral's Local Plan.

Other information sources that were used to help identify future demand include:

- ◀ Recent trends in participation.
- ◀ The nature of the current and likely future population and their propensity to participate.
- ◀ Feedback from clubs on plans to develop additional teams / attract additional members.
- ◀ Any local and NGB specific sports development targets.

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1.3: Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views

Supply and demand information gathered is used to assess the adequacy of playing pitch and outdoor sport provision in Wirral and to identify key issues, challenges and aspirations. This forms the basis of this report.

Understand the situation at individual sites

Qualitative ratings are linked to a capacity rating derived from NGB guidance and tailored to suit a local area. For playing pitch sports, the quality and use of each pitch is assessed against recommended capacity to indicate how many match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket) a pitch could accommodate. This is then compared to the number of matches actually taking place and categorised as follows, to identify:

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

As a guide, the FA, RFU and ECB have set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its quality.

Table 1.2: Capacity of playing pitches

Sport	Pitch type	No. of match equivalent sessions		
		Good	Standard	Poor
Football	Adult pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Youth pitches	4 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Mini pitches	6 per week	4 per week	2 per week
Rugby union	Natural Inadequate (D0)	2 per week	1.5 per week	0.5 per week
	Natural Adequate (D1)	3 per week	2 per week	1.5 per week
	Pipe Drained (D2)	3.25 per week	2.5 per week	1.75 per week
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	3.5 per week	3 per week	2 per week
Cricket	One grass wicket	5 per season	4 per season	0 per season
	One synthetic wicket	60 per season	60 per season	60 per season

For non-pitch sports (tennis and bowls), capacity is not linked to the number of matches taking place but rather the number of members (and other users) attracted to a site. For tennis, a floodlit hard court is said to have capacity for 60 members, whereas a non-floodlit court has capacity for 40 members (capacity varies for grass courts but none are provided in the Borough). For bowls, the capacity of a green is thought to be 60 members, although this can vary depending on how active the membership is and how many teams are fielded.

Develop the current picture of provision

Once capacity is determined on a site-by-site basis, actual spare capacity is calculated on a Borough wide and an area-by-area basis via further interrogation of peak period demand. This then identifies whether there is overall spare capacity of provision or whether there is a shortfall.

Although spare capacity may be identified at some sites and in some areas, it does not necessarily mean that there is surplus provision. For example, spare capacity may not be available when it is needed (actual spare capacity), or a site may be retained in a 'strategic reserve' to enable rotation and to reduce wear and tear.

Identify the key findings and issues

By completing the aforementioned steps, it is possible to identify several findings and issues relating to the supply, demand and adequacy of playing pitch and outdoor sport provision. This report therefore seeks to identify and present such key information on a sport-by-sport basis prior to the development of the Strategy and Action Plan for the Borough.

Develop the future picture of provision (scenario testing)

Modelling scenarios to assess whether existing provision can cater for unmet, latent, exported and future demand is made after the capacity analysis. As such, most of the scenario testing generally occurs in the Strategy report that proceeds from this document and therefore does not form part of the Assessment Report.

PART 2: FOOTBALL

2.1: Introduction

Football is a key sport in Wirral at both competitive and recreational level. The organisation primarily responsible for the development of football in Wirral is Cheshire FA. It is responsible for growing participation, promoting diversity and regulating the sport for everyone to enjoy. Its mission is to work with the whole local football community to support, develop and strengthen the game based on their motivations, expectations and needs.

This section of the report focuses on the supply and demand for grass football pitches. Part 3 captures supply and demand for third generation pitches (3G pitches); the preferred AGP (artificial grass pitch) surface type for football. Whilst primarily being used for training, there is a growing demand for the use of 3G pitches for competitive football fixtures, especially to accommodate mini and youth football.

Local Football Facility Plans

To support in delivery of both the current and superseding FA National Games Strategy (NGS), the FA commissioned a nationwide consultancy project which has now been completed. As part of this, a Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) has been produced for every local authority across England, with each plan being unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation.

The LFFP is strategically aligned to the National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS); a 10-year plan to change the landscape of football facilities in England. The NFFS represents a major funding commitment from the national funding partners (the FA, Premier League and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)) and is delivered through the Football Foundation to inform and direct an estimated one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next ten years.

Each LFFP is based upon PPS findings (where present and current) regarding the formal and affiliated game as well as including strategic priorities for investment across small-sided football (including recreational and indoor activity). The LFFP also incorporates consultation with groups outside of formal football, as well as under-represented communities. This includes those which may be key partners with regards to using football for behavioural change, plus groups which may be key drivers of FA priorities around participation in the likes of women and girls' football, disability football and futsal.

The LFFP is a 'live' document that can be updated following the completion of a PPS, if required, as an up-to-date supply and demand assessment may present findings and recommendations that need to be incorporated for investment purposes. LFFPs identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all national football investment through the funding partners will be identified via LFFPs.

Notwithstanding the above, it is important to recognise that the LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment; it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a PPS and is not an accepted evidence base for site change of use or disposal. A LFFP does, however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

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The LFFP for Wirral was produced in 2018 and identifies 32 priority projects for investment. These will be assessed as scenarios in the proceeding Strategy document to ensure that they are supported by the evidence presented in this report and whether alterations or additions are required.

Consultation

In addition to telephone consultation with key football clubs, an electronic survey was sent to all clubs playing within Wirral. Contact details were provided by Cheshire FA and the invitation to complete the survey was distributed via email.

Through both face-to-face meetings and survey responses, 33 of 96 clubs playing in Wirral responded to consultation requests, equating to a 67% team response rate (469 out of 698). Newton FC indicated that they did not wish to take part, whilst the remaining clubs have been unresponsive. It should be noted that most clubs which did not respond only have a solitary team.

Online/telephone consultation was carried out with the following clubs that were identified as key:

- ◀ AC Hoylake FC
- ◀ Ashville FC
- ◀ Bromborough & Eastham FC
- ◀ Cheshire Vikings FC
- ◀ Eastham Rangers FC
- ◀ Glenavon FC
- ◀ Heswall FC
- ◀ Heswall Juniors FC
- ◀ JFC Greasby
- ◀ Manor Club JFC
- ◀ New Ferry Rangers FC
- ◀ Oxton Ladies FC
- ◀ Poulton Vics FC
- ◀ Rakers FC
- ◀ Shaftesbury Youth Club FC
- ◀ Upton FC
- ◀ West Kirby FC
- ◀ West Kirby United FC

Further consultation was also undertaken with the Eastham Junior Football League and West Cheshire Football League (Wirral Division).

2.2: Supply

The audit identifies a total of 215 grass football pitches within Wirral across 77 sites. Of these, 204 pitches are available, at some level, for community use across 73 sites. Four unavailable pitches are located at education sites whilst the remaining seven are utilised by Tranmere Rovers FC.

As can be seen in the table below, Analysis Area 1 hosts the most provision with 57 community available pitches, whilst Analysis Area 2 has the least with just two pitches.

Table 2.1: Summary of grass football pitches available to the community

Analysis area ²	No. of pitches available for community use					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
1	26	1	14	10	6	57
2	-	2	-	-	-	2
3	11	-	11	3	3	28
4	5	3	6	6	1	21
5	12	7	8	8	7	42

² [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Analysis area ²	No. of pitches available for community use					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
6	8	4	6	5	2	25
7	11	2	8	5	3	29
Wirral	73	19	55	37	22	204

The majority of available pitches across Wirral (73) are adult size, despite youth 11v11 football being a more common format of play. This leads to many youth 11v11 teams playing on adult pitches, which, whilst sometimes preferable for clubs, is not ideal for players at U13-U16 level and is not in line with the FA Youth Review.

In accordance with the FA Youth Review, U17 and U18 teams can play on adult pitches. The FA's recommended pitch size for adult football is 100x64 metres, whilst it is 91x55 metres for U15 and U16 teams and 82x50 metres for U13 and U14 teams. Please refer to the table below for more detail relating to pitch sizes for each format of play.

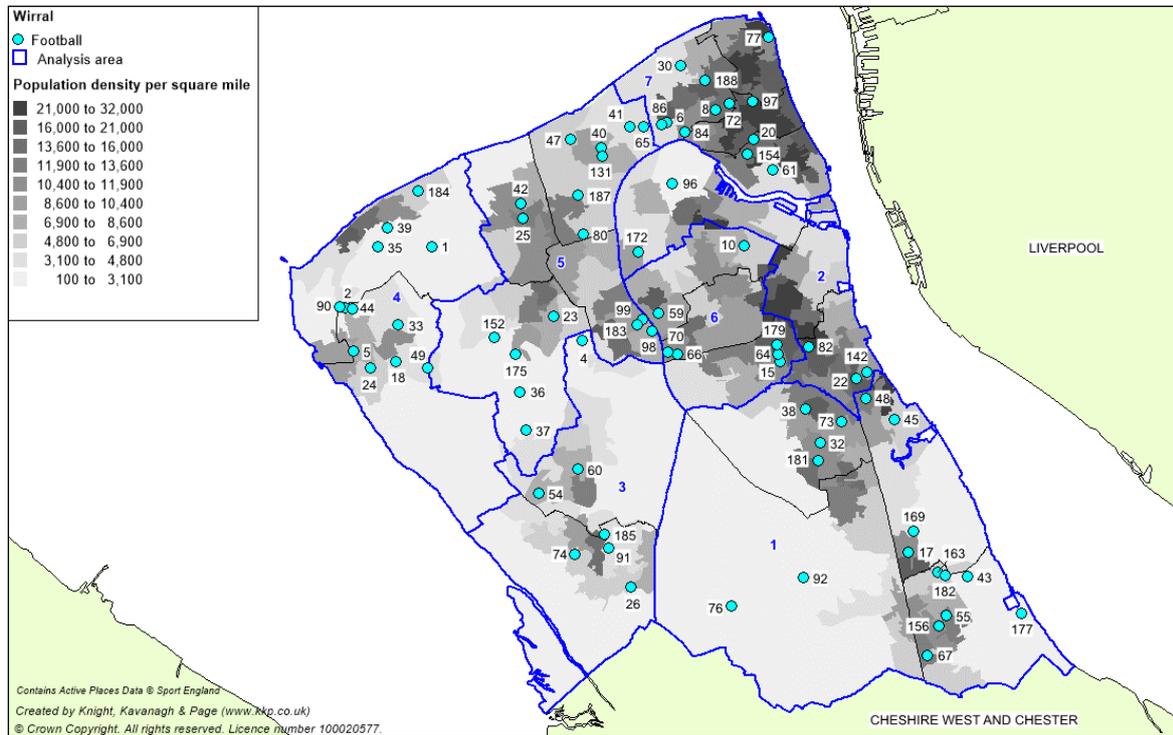
Table 2.2: Recommended pitch sizes

Format	Age group	Recommended pitch size (metres)
Adult	U17s+	100 x 64
Youth 11v11	U15s-U16s	91 x 55
	U13s-U14s	82 x 50
Youth 9v9	U11s-U12s	73 x 46
Mini 7v7	U9s-U10s	55 x 37
Mini 5v5	U7s-U8s	37 x 27

Figure 2.1 below identifies the location of all football pitches in Wirral, regardless of community use. For a key to the map, please see Table 2.13.

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Figure 2.1: Location of all football pitches in Wirral



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Future provision

Bromborough & Eastham FC has lost access to its previous home ground, The Octel Sports & Social Club (see disused provision, below). The Club is now hoping to reinstate pitches at Bromborough Pool Playing Fields although it reports that it is yet to discuss this with the Council. The Council indicates that Bromborough Pool Playing Fields is owned and managed by a local Housing Association. The site has been proposed for the relocation of MSC Eastham from Riverside Football Ground (Eastham).

Lapsed/disused provision

Playing fields which have previously accommodated formal pitch provision are categorised as being either disused or lapsed. A disused site is a playing field which is not being used at all by any users and is not available for community hire either. Once these sites are disused for five or more years, they will then be categorised as lapsed sites.

As mentioned, a lapsed site was last used as a playing field more than five years ago. These fall outside of Sport England's statutory remit but still have to be assessed using the criteria in paragraph 97 of the NPPF and Sport England would nonetheless challenge a proposed loss of playing pitches/playing field which fails to meet such criteria.

Disused provision

The Octel Sports & Social Club previously accommodated two adult football pitches and a cricket square, although in recent years the cricket square has been removed, with this area being marked for mini football instead. There is a current planning application for the construction of 106 houses on site with all sports facilities set to be lost. A Sports Needs Assessment has been conducted and proposes a range of mitigation options, none of which have been agreed at the time of writing.

Raby Vale Training Ground (Tranmere Rovers) has been disused since Tranmere Rovers FC relocated its training ground to Solar Campus Playing Field. The site previously accommodated two adult pitches and had space for additional youth and mini pitches which were marked when necessary.

A youth pitch was previously marked out at Chester Road Playing Field; however, this has not been marked out or used for a number of years following quality issues. Heswall JFC expresses an interest in bringing the provision back into use although the Club report that the Council has instead suggesting utilising an adjacent piece of land instead.

Lapsed provision

The former playing field at The Mosslands School is now lapsed, with aerial imagery indicating that the site was last in use around 2007. The site accommodated two youth 11v11 football pitches and a non turf cricket pitch, although the School report that poor drainage meant that the fields were unusable.

Alongside the above site is School Lane Playing Fields, with aerial imagery also showing that the site was last in use around 2007. This site previously accommodated three adult and two mini 7v7 pitches, with significant drainage issues and a lack of ancillary and parking facilities restricting usage. Ashville FC has registered an interest in taking on the maintenance and management of some or all of the pitches that were previously provided.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Bromborough Pool Playing Fields previously accommodated an adult and a youth 11v11 pitch. Aerial imagery indicates the site was last used circa 2012. As mentioned previously, Bromborough & Eastham FC has an interest in reinstating these pitches although the Council indicates the site has been proposed for the relocation of MSC Eastham.

Green Lane Playing Fields hosted three adult pitches which, aerial imagery indicates, were last utilised in 2012. The site neighbours Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields.

Sandringham Avenue Playing Fields consisted of an adult pitch and a youth 11v11 pitch which was last maintained in late 2009, according to aerial imagery. West Kirby & Wasps FC (no longer in existence) previously had a five-year licence for these pitches but reported that poor drainage on site prevent any usage.

Similarly, an adult pitch was previously marked out at Elm Grove; however, this also suffered from significant waterlogging issues. It was used for the AFC West Cheshire League.

The former site of Rock Ferry High School previously hosted a youth 9v9 pitch before the closure of the School in 2010.

Security of tenure

Tenure of sites in Wirral 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. This relates to most pitches operated by the Council, with such provision protected as part of an ongoing commitment to providing a leisure offering.

A common exception to providing security of tenure is found at schools and academies as each has its own lettings policy which is more likely to restrict levels of community use. Where known, four educational providers in Wirral do not allow community use of some or all of their pitches. The reasons for not allowing community use varies; the most common example is that the schools want to protect pitches for curricular and extra-curricular purposes due to existing quality issues. Other reasons include staffing issues, health and safety issues and a perceived lack of profitability.

Moreover, some schools that do provide community access do so without providing security of tenure, meaning that they can stop the external use at any point devoid of any warning. An example of this is found at Kingsway Academy, which is heavily used by Poulton Vics FC. Due to the School being operated under a PFI contract, the Club is unable to agree anything other than an annual lease agreement.

Glenavon JFC indicates that it accesses The Glen and Solly Recreation Ground. For The Glen, the Club has a two year lease agreement from the Council but would like to extend this in order to provide ancillary facilities on site. Nevertheless, the Council notes that this may not be currently feasible as the site is reserved for a railway station and car park and is located in the Green Belt.

At Solly Recreation Ground, the Club has 15 years remaining on its agreement although it has struggled to attract funding at the site as the agreement is reported as not being completely secure. However, the site is on a trust deed which stipulates that it must remain in use for children's recreation. Generally, funding providers require clubs to have security of tenure in order to provide funds, although the length of a lease agreement required will vary depending on the fund being applied for.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

West Kirby United FC has a lease agreement for Anglesey Road Playing Fields which is said to be in need of renewal soon. The Club is hoping for at least a 25-year lease in order to facilitate future funding bids.

Pitch quality

The quality of football pitches across Wirral have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the FA³) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

Pitch quality primarily influences the carrying capacity of a site; often pitches lack the drainage and maintenance necessary to sustain levels of use. Pitches that receive little to no ongoing repair or post-season remedial work are likely to be assessed as poor, therefore limiting the number of games they are able to accommodate each week without it having a detrimental effect on quality. Conversely, well maintained pitches that are tended to regularly are likely to be of a higher standard and capable of taking a greater number of matches without a significant reduction in surface quality. However, even pitches that receive ongoing repair could still be assessed as poor where they have not previously been purposely constructed and/or drained.

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

For the full assessment criteria, please see Appendix 2.

The table below summarises the quality of pitches that are available for community use in Wirral. In total, no pitches are assessed as good quality, with 125 assessed as standard quality and 79 as poor quality.

Table 2.3: Pitch quality assessments (community use pitches)

Analysis area ⁴	Adult pitches			Youth pitches			Mini pitches		
	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor
1	-	15	11	-	7	8	-	12	4
2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
3	-	2	9	-	-	11	-	4	2
4	-	4	1	-	7	2	-	7	-
5	-	5	7	-	12	3	-	14	1
6	-	3	4	-	6	5	-	7	-
7	-	10	1	-	4	6	-	4	4
Wirral	0	39	33	0	38	35	0	48	11

Most of the poor quality pitches are either located at educational or local authority sites. Budgetary restraints and the limited down-time of these sites, as they are heavily used for community, curricular and extracurricular activities, means that extensive maintenance work can rarely be undertaken.

³ See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for football pitches

⁴ [Click for analysis areas](#)

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

The following sites accommodate at least one poor quality pitch:

- ◀ Arrowe Park
- ◀ Ashton Park
- ◀ Belvidere Recreation Ground
- ◀ Birkenhead Park
- ◀ Bromborough Recreation Ground
- ◀ Central Park
- ◀ Conway Playing Fields
- ◀ Coronation Park (Greasby)
- ◀ Devonshire Road Playing Field
- ◀ Higher Bebington Recreation Ground
- ◀ Irby Cricket Club
- ◀ Irby Recreation Ground
- ◀ Kings Lane Playing Fields
- ◀ Leasowe Leisure Centre (Wallasey)
- ◀ Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields
- ◀ Mayfields Playing Fields
- ◀ New Ferry Park
- ◀ Newton Park
- ◀ Pensby Sports Complex
- ◀ Plymyard Playing Fields
- ◀ Ridgewood Park
- ◀ Shaftesbury Youth Club
- ◀ Solly Recreation Ground
- ◀ The Glen
- ◀ The Puddydale
- ◀ Tower Grounds
- ◀ Upton Park
- ◀ Wallace Recreation Ground
- ◀ Wirral Cricket Club
- ◀ Woodchurch Leisure Centre
- ◀ Oxton Park (Liscard)

Specific comments relating to the pitch conditions at individual sites can be seen in the table below, taken from club consultation. For a full breakdown of quality ratings at each site, see Table 2.14.

Table 2.4: Summary of pitch quality comments

Site ID	Site name	Stakeholder(s)	Comments
1	Acres Road Playing Fields	AC Hoylake FC	Well maintained pitches, £150,000 raised for drainage to be installed on site.
2	Anglesey Road Playing Fields	West Kirby United FC	Well maintained pitches although have issues with dog walkers and unofficial use.
4	Arrowe Park	West Kirby United FC, Cheshire Girls Football League (Wirral Division), Oxton Ladies FC, JFC Greasby	Pitch quality could be improved and the site suffers from poor drainage. Pitches towards the bottom end of the field are unplayable for much of the winter. Motorbikes and quad bikes regularly damage the pitches.
8	Belvidere Recreation Ground	Liscard Panthers FC, Manor Club JFC	Pitch quality could be improved and site drains poorly. One goal on site is reported to be larger than the other. Also suffers from vandalism from quad bikes and motorbikes as well as pitches have been set on fire.
15	Borough Road Playing Fields	Shaftesbury Youth Club FC	Pitch quality has improved since the Club has taken over the site although it still drains poorly. The Club are trying to find and clear drains beneath the pitches to resolve this.
20	Central Park	Cheshire Vikings FC	Pitches drain poorly.
26	Gayton Park (Heswall FC)	Heswall FC	Pitch is well maintained by the Club but drains poorly.
33	Hilbre High School Sports Centre	West Kirby United FC	Pitches drain poorly.
37	Irby Recreation Ground	AC Hoylake FC	Site suffers from very poor drainage.

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Site ID	Site name	Stakeholder(s)	Comments
40	Leasowe Leisure Centre (Wallasey)	Cheshire Girls Football League (Wirral Division), The Rakers JFC	Pitch quality could be improved and the site suffers from poor drainage. Pitches have been damaged by motor bikes.
41	Leasowe Road Playing Field	Ashville FC	Pitch drainage is insufficient.
42	Lingham Park	Poulton Vics FC	Pitches only maintained to a basic level, Club undertakes additional maintenance on the pitches.
43	Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields	Lancelly Glenavon FC, Unitor AFC, Rangers Breaks FC, Higher Bebington Kelma FC, Allport Hawks JFC	Pitches of adequate quality but drain poorly. Site has suffered from unauthorised access from motorbikes and travellers. Goal posts are reported to be badly rusted.
45	Mayfields Playing Fields	Park Royal JFC, New Ferry Rangers FC	Site drains poorly but this is reportedly due to the pitch being undulated. The Club believes drainage would be improved if the pitch was to be levelled.
49	Newton Park	AC Hoylake FC	Pitches drain poorly and maintenance is reported as being inadequate.
55	Plymyard Playing Fields	AFC Raeburn, Eastham Rangers FC	Maintenance is reported to be irregular and insufficient. The goal posts are in poor condition and wobbling. The Club has hammered in wedges to prevent the posts from wobbling but are still deemed to be unsafe.
60	Ridgewood Park	Heswall JFC	Previously used by the Club but have stopped as the pitches are unusable for the majority of the season.
64	Shaftesbury Youth Club	Shaftesbury YC, Lions FC	Good pitch quality and pitches drain well generally although specific problems areas in the centre-circle and near the 18 yard box.
66	Solly Recreation Ground	Glenavon JFC	Site sits on a slight gradient, the Club has recently received a grant to level one of the pitches.
70	The Glen	Glenavon JFC	Site drains poorly.
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	St Annes Veterans FC	Pitches are said to be in need of drainage works although the Club indicates that the Council cannot currently afford this.
74	The Puddydale	Heswall JFC	Site drains well.
76	Thornton Hough	Heswall JFC, AFC Tima	Site drains poorly and pitch has undulations.
77	Tower Grounds	New Brighton Saints JFC	Pitch is adequate quality and drains well but have issues with glass and motorbikes on the pitch.
80	Upton Park	Upton FC	Pitches suffer from unofficial use, tyre tracks, bonfires, dog fouling and litter. The main pitch on site is reported to drain poorly at one end.
84	Wallacre Recreation Ground	Ashville FC	Pitch quality and drainage is poor.

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Site ID	Site name	Stakeholder(s)	Comments
91	Whitfield Common	Heswall JFC	Site is damaged by quad bikes 2/3 times a season, doesn't drain well and has issues with mole damage.
96	Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre	Bidston Rovers JFC, Mallaby FC	Pitches drain poorly and receive limited annual maintenance.
131	Kingsway Academy	Poulton Vics FC	Maintenance is basic and sporadic. The site floods in bad weather and has issues with motorbikes tearing up the pitches. The Club reports the cost of repairing this damage is high.
156	Heygarth Primary School	Allport Hawks JFC	Club pays school for use of pitches and for a groundsman to maintain the pitch but quality is still poor and suffers from drainage issues.
169	Woodslee Primary School	Bromborough & Eastham FC	Pitches are reported to drain very poorly.
175	Greasby Junior School	AC Hoylake FC	Pitch suffers from poor drainage.

The FA's Pitch Improvement Strategy

The FA has a general pitch improvement strategy which has been developed in partnership with Grounds Management Association (GMA) to develop a grass pitch maintenance service that can be utilised by grassroots clubs with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and therefore the quality of pitches.

The key principles behind the service are to provide clubs with advice/practical solutions in a range of areas, with the simple aim of improving playing surfaces. The programme is designed to help clubs on sites that they themselves manage and maintain but can also be used to advise council-maintained sites.

In addition, the FA's Strategy also aims to focus on developing improved maintenance with local authorities that can be utilised at local authority-maintained sites.

Further to the above, the Football Foundation and the FA have recently developed a new pitch maintenance grant fund that allows clubs and sports organisations to apply for funding for maintenance assistance, consumables and/or equipment. Local authorities are currently ineligible applicants through this fund; however, clubs, leagues and or charitable organisations using local authority sites can apply provided they have security of tenure and/or a proforma is in place.

Ancillary facilities

The quality of ancillary facilities across Wirral has been assessed via a combination of site visits and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

Ancillary facility ratings are primarily influenced by the type and quality of amenities which are available on a site, such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, showering provision, car parking, dedicated official and spectator facilities and boundary fencing. The table below identifies the findings for sites that are actively utilised for football across Wirral.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 2.5: Summary of community available ancillary facility quality at active football sites

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁵	Ancillary facility quality
1	Acres Road Playing Fields	4	Good
4	Arrowe Park	3	Standard
6	Ashville Sports and Social Club	7	Good
8	Belvidere Recreation Ground	7	Standard
15	Borough Road Playing Fields	6	Poor
20	Central Park	7	Standard
26	Gayton Park (Heswall FC)	3	Good
35	Hoylake Rugby Football Club	4	Standard
40	Leasowe Leisure Centre	5	Good
42	Lingham Park	5	Poor
43	Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields	1	Standard
45	Mayfields Playing Fields	1	Standard
55	Plymyards Playing Fields	1	Standard
61	Rycroft Playing Fields	7	Poor
64	Shaftesbury Youth Club	6	Standard
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	Poor
76	Thornton Hough	1	Standard
77	Tower Grounds	7	Standard
80	Upton Park	5	Standard
91	Whitfield Common	3	Poor
96	Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre	2	Standard
99	Woodchurch Leisure Centre	5	Standard
142	Cammell Laird Football Club	6	Standard

Despite being currently serviced by standard quality ancillary facilities at Mayfields Playing Fields, New Ferry Rangers FC has received funding from various stakeholders to provide an improved clubhouse at Bebington Youth Club which will include a community café and gym, as well as a small size 3G pitch.

Shaftesbury Youth Club has an aspiration to install a full size 3G pitch on site and as part of this development, it reports that it would need the ancillary facilities to be improved. The facility currently has four changing rooms although these are not FA compliant and have communal showers.

As part of Bromborough & Eastham FC's aspirations to operate Bromborough Pool Playing Fields, the Club hopes to provide a clubhouse on site.

Glenavon JFC is without facilities at both of its venues; The Glen and Solly Recreation Ground. The Club would like to provide changing and toilet facilities at The Glen but has been unable to attract funding for this on its current two-year lease agreement. At Solly Recreation Ground, Scottish Power owns a disused building alongside the site which it is reportedly prepared to gift to Glenavon JFC if the Club can change its use to a sporting facility.

Ashville FC has recently received a Sport England grant and has raised funds internally for changing and shower facilities at Ashville Sports and Social Club to be improved. The Club is now also fundraising further to improve the kitchen on site.

⁵ [Click for analysis areas](#)

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Ancillary provision at Acres Road Playing Fields has recently been upgraded although parking facilities on site are said to be insufficient.

2.3: Demand

Through the audit and assessment, 698 teams from within 96 clubs are identified as playing within Wirral. This consists of 94 adult men's, four adult women's, 286 youth boys', 41 youth girls' and 273 mini teams. Youth 11v11 football is the most prominent format of play, whilst adult football is the least common.

Table 2.6: Summary of competitive teams currently playing in Wirral

Analysis area ⁶	No. of teams					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
1	27	50	26	29	29	161
2	2	-	1	4	6	13
3	8	39	20	16	15	98
4	6	14	16	23	12	71
5	22	38	30	28	40	158
6	14	28	19	21	17	99
7	19	29	17	18	15	98
Total	98	198	129	139	134	698

Analysis Area 1 hosts the largest number of teams with 161. Analysis Area 2 has the least with just 13 teams, although is simply due to limited pitch supply.

Football pyramid demand

The National League System is a series of interconnected leagues for adult men's football clubs in England. It begins below the football league (the National League) and comprises of seven steps, with various leagues at each level and more leagues lower down the pyramid than at the top. The system has a hierarchical format with promotion and relegation between the levels, allowing even the smallest club the theoretical possibility of rising to the top of the system.

Clubs within the step system must adhere to ground requirements set out by the FA; the higher the level of football being played the higher the ground grading requirements. Clubs cannot progress into the league above if the ground requirements do not meet the correct specifications. Ground grading assesses grounds from A to H, with 'A' being the requirements for Step 1 clubs.

Tranmere Rovers FC is the only club in Wirral that plays above the football pyramid, currently competing in League Two of the English Football League. Cammell Laird 1907 FC is the only Wirral-based club playing within the football pyramid, as seen in following table.

Table 2.7: Summary of teams playing within the football pyramid structure

Team	League	Level
Cammell Laird 1907 FC	North West Counties – First Division South	Step 6

⁶ [Click for analysis areas](#)

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

In addition to Cammell Laird 1907 FC, Ashville FC, Newton (Wirral) FC and Upton FC all play in the West Cheshire Association Football League. This previously sat at Step 7 in the football pyramid although following a restructuring of the league system, no longer does so. However, it is now considered to be a Regional Feeder League and still adheres to ground grading requirements as if it was a Step 7 league.

A common issue for clubs entering the pyramid is changing facilities. For Step 7 football (ground grading H), changing rooms must be a minimum size of 12 square metres, exclusive of shower and toilet areas, with this increasing to 16 square metres for Step 6 football.

The general principle for clubs in the football pyramid is that they must achieve the appropriate grade by March 31st of their first season after promotion, which therefore allows a short grace period for facilities to be brought up to standard. This, however, does not apply to clubs being promoted to Step 7 (as they must meet requirements immediately).

As part of wider ancillary developments set out above, Ashville FC is looking to make ground improvements, particularly in relation to floodlighting, in order to meet Step 6 requirements. In contrast, none of the remaining three clubs are known to have issues with ground grading requirements.

Women's National League System

There is also a Women's National League System similar to the adult men's football pyramid, providing structure to the women's game. As seen in the table overleaf, this ranges from Step 1 to Step 6 with each step requiring differing ground grading requirements. The system is also hierarchical in format with promotion and relegation between the levels.

Table 2.8: Summary of ground grading for women's football

Level	League	Grading category
Step 3 and 4	Women's Super League 1	Grade A
Step 3 and 4	Women's Super League 2	Grade B
Step 5	Northern and Southern Women's Premier League	Grade A
Step 6	Women's Combination Leagues	Grade B
Step 7	Women's Regional Leagues – Premier Divisions	Grade C

In Wirral, Tranmere Ladies FC and West Kirby Ladies FC both field teams which play in the Women's National League System. Neither are considered to have any ground grading issues.

Although women's clubs are still required to meet ground requirements set out by the FA, these differ from the men's National League System. Ratings range from grade A to C, each with differing minimum requirements. Steps 1 and 2 in the Women's National League System is akin to steps 3 and 4 of the men's National League System, although not exactly the same.

Imported demand

Imported demand refers to any demand from neighbouring local authorities that access facilities within Wirral due to a lack of available facilities in other local authorities where such team or club is based. There is no identified imported demand into Wirral.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Exported demand

Exported demand refers to teams that are currently accessing pitches for home fixtures outside of Wirral, despite being registered to the Authority. Only AC Hoylake FC was identified as exporting match demand outside of Wirral, with the Club's first team competing in a midweek Flexi-League at Vauxhall Sports and Social Club (Cheshire West & Chester). As the team uses a central venue, it reports no requirement to return this demand to Wirral.

Previously, numerous additional teams were imported into Cheshire West & Chester in order to participate in the Cheshire Girls Football League via a central venue. However, this has recently changed as the League now has a Wirral Division.

In addition to match play demand, numerous teams export their training demand outside of the Borough. For example, Bromborough & Eastham JFC now utilise Vauxhall Sports & Social Club in Cheshire West & Chester following the closure of Octel Sports Ground. Such exporting demand is further explored within Part 3 of this report.

Latent demand

Latent demand refers to potential demand; individuals who would like to participate within the sport but do not do so. This can be for a variety of reasons including a lack of pitches or appropriate facilities. Clubs that report latent demand in Wirral and the reasons provided for this latent demand can be seen in the table below. In total, it applies to 23 clubs.

Table 2.9: Clubs that report latent demand and the reasons provided

Club	Need for more match pitches	Need for more/better training facilities	Need for better/more appropriate changing provision
AC Hoylake FC	Yes	Yes	-
AFC Raeburn	-	Yes	-
AFC Tima	-	Yes	Yes
Allport Hawks JFC	-	Yes	Yes
Bidston Rovers JFC	Yes	Yes	-
Bromborough & Eastham FC	Yes	Yes	-
Cheshire Vikings FC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eastham Rangers FC	-	Yes	Yes
Glenavon Juniors FC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Heswall JFC	Yes	Yes	-
Higher Bebington Kelma FC	-	Yes	Yes
JFC Greasby	-	Yes	-
Lancely Glenavon FC	-	Yes	-
Lions FC	-	Yes	-
Liscard Panthers FC	-	Yes	-
Manor Club JFC	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Brighton Saints JFC	Yes	Yes	-
New Ferry Rangers FC	-	Yes	Yes
Oxton Ladies FC	Yes	Yes	-
Park Royal JFC	-	Yes	Yes
Poulton Vics FC	Yes	Yes	-
The Harbour FC	-	Yes	-
West Kirby United FC	Yes	-	-

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Most clubs which express latent demand indicate that they would be able to increase the number of teams if they had access to more or better training provision, including the use of floodlit 3G pitches. This is followed by a need for more match pitches across the area. A further nine clubs indicate that they could increase playing numbers if better or more appropriate changing facilities were available.

In addition to the table above, Ashville FC also reports that it could easily grow the number of teams that it fields but this is limited by a lack of available coaches at the Club.

Many of the clubs expressing latent demand quantify what potential increases they could accommodate if their issues were resolved. This is captured within the future demand section below.

Unmet demand

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to pitches. It is usually expressed, for example, when a team is already training but is unable to access a match pitch, or when a league has a waiting list due to a lack of pitch provision, which in turn is hindering the growth of the league. No unmet demand is expressed by responsive clubs in Wirral.

Future demand

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and by using population forecasts. In addition, the Strategy & Action Plan that follows this report will contain housing growth scenarios that will estimate the additional demand for football arising from housing development plans within Wirral.

Participation increases

A total of 18 clubs report aspirations to increase the number of teams they provide in the future. Through the clubs that quantified *potential* increase, this equates to a predicted growth of 82 teams, as seen in the table below.

Table 2.10: Potential team increases identified by clubs

Club	Analysis area ⁷	Future demand (teams)	Pitch size	Match equivalent sessions ⁸
AC Hoylake FC	4	4 x mini	Mini 5v5	2
Allport Hawks JFC	1	2 x youth 11v11	Youth 11v11	1
		2 x mini	Mini 5v5	1
Bidston Rovers JFC	2	4 x youth 11v11	Youth 11v11	2
		2 x youth 9v9	Youth 9v9	1
		3 x mini	Mini 5v5	1.5
Bromborough & Eastham FC	1	4 x mini	Mini 5v5	2
Eastham Rangers FC	1	2 x youth 11v11	Youth 11v11	1
		1 x youth 9v9	Youth 9v9	0.5
		3 x mini	Mini 5v5	1.5
Glenavon Juniors FC	6	1 x adult	Adult	0.5
		3 x mini	Mini 5v5	1.5
Heswall JFC	3	5 x mini	Mini 5v5	2.5

⁷ [Click for analysis areas](#)

⁸ Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, 0.5 pitches can therefore be seen in the table where there is latent demand for one team.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Club	Analysis area ⁷	Future demand (teams)	Pitch size	Match equivalent sessions ⁸
Liscard Panthers FC	7	2 x adult	Adult	1
		4 x youth 11v11	Youth 11v11	2
		5 x youth 9v9	Youth 9v9	2.5
		3 x mini	Mini 5v5	1.5
Manor Club JFC	7	2 x mini	Mini 5v5	1
New Brighton Saints JFC	7	2 x youth 11v11	Youth 11v11	1
		2 x youth 9v9	Youth 9v9	1
		2 x mini	Mini 5v5	1
New Ferry Rangers FC	1	3 x mini	Mini 5v5	1.5
Oxton Ladies FC	3	1 x youth 11v11	Youth 11v11	0.5
		1 x youth 9v9	Youth 9v9	0.5
		2 x mini	Mini 5v5	1
Poulton Vics FC	5	7 x mini	Mini 5v5	3.5
Shaftesbury Youth Club FC	6	1 x mini	Mini 5v5	0.5
Rakers FC	7	1 x mini	Mini 5v5	0.5
Unitor AFC	1	1 x adult	Adult	0.5
Upton FC	5	1 x mini	Mini 5v5	0.5
West Kirby United FC	4	6 x mini	Mini 5v5	3
Total				41

The total future demand expressed by clubs amounts to 41 match equivalent sessions (two teams equates to one match equivalent sessions to account for matches being played on a home and away basis). Most demand is expected to be generated in Analysis Area 7, with a total of 11.5 match equivalent sessions, whilst the least is expected to be generated in Analysis Area 6, with 2.5 match equivalent sessions.

Broken down by pitch type, two match equivalent sessions are identified on adult pitches, 7.5 match equivalent sessions on youth 11v11 pitches, 5.5 match equivalent sessions on youth 9v9 pitches and 26 match equivalent sessions on mini 5v5 pitches. No future demand is identified for mini 7v7 pitches, although such provision is likely to be required as future mini 5v5 teams progress.

Population increases

Team generation rates are used to calculate the number of teams likely to be generated in the future (2037) based on population growth. As seen in the table below, no additional teams are expected to be generated through this alone due to a decreasing population within the relevant age bands.

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Table 2.11: Wirral-wide team generation rates

Age group	Current population within age group ⁹	Current no. of teams ¹⁰	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group (2037)	Predicted future number of teams (2037)	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Adult Men's (18-45)	49,319	94	1:525	39,422	75	0
Adult Women's (18-45)	51,186	4	1:12,797	39,627	3	0
Youth Boys (12-17)	11,222	174	1:64	8,718	135	0
Youth Girls (12-17)	10,740	24	1:448	8,537	19	0
Youth Boys (10-11)	4,046	112	1:36	2,841	79	0
Youth Girls (10-11)	3,795	17	1:223	2,803	13	0
Mini Mixed (8-9)	7,731	139	1:56	5,572	100	0
Mini Mixed (6-7)	8,144	134	1:61	5,659	93	0

Notwithstanding the above, it is important to note that team generation rates are based on population figures across the whole Borough and do not reflect the position more locally. Bespoke population forecasts would need to be undertaken to assess the likely change on a local level using Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator. In addition, team generation rates cannot account for specific targeted development work within certain areas or focused towards certain groups, such as NGB initiatives or coaching within schools. For example, Weetabix Wildcats (see below).

Overall future demand is summarised in the table below.

Table 2.12: Total future demand aspirations

Analysis area ¹¹	Future demand aspirations (match equivalent sessions)					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
1	0.5	2	0.5	-	6	9
2	-	2	1	-	1.5	4.5
3	-	0.5	0.5	-	3.5	4.5
4	-	-	-	-	5	5
5	-	-	-	-	4	4
6	0.5	-	-	-	2	2.5
7	1	3	3.5	-	4	11.5
Total	2	7.5	5.5	0	26	41

Weetabix Wildcats

Weetabix Wildcats centres work with County FA qualified coaches to deliver local weekly sessions, providing opportunities for girls aged five to 11 to develop fundamental skills and experience football in a safe and fun environment. All organisations delivering Wildcats centres receive a £900 start-up grant and 30 branded footballs in their first year of running the programme to help develop and increase girl's participation.

⁹ Current population information is based upon Mid 2018 ONS data.

¹⁰ Age group team numbers differ from Table 2.6 as forecasts are based on age rather than playing format. U17 and U18 teams affiliate to their respective County FA as juniors, however, are generally considered to play on and require adult pitches and are considered by age boundaries to be in the adult age group

¹¹ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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In light of both FA aspirations to double female participation in football through its Inspiring Positive Change strategy and the establishment and foreseen future effect of the Weetabix Wildcats programme, it is likely that the growth in affiliated women's and girl teams will exceed that shown through club aspirations and team generation rates. However, to what extent is not currently quantifiable.

2.4: Capacity analysis

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

As a guide, the FA has set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without it adversely affecting its quality. Taking into consideration the guidelines on capacity, the following ratings were used in Wirral:

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

Table 2.14 applies the above pitch ratings against the actual level of weekly play recorded to determine a capacity rating as follows:

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

Match equivalent sessions

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

Education sites

To account for curricular/extra-curricular use of education pitches it is likely that the carrying capacity at such sites will need to be adjusted. The only time this would not happen is when a school does not use its pitches at all and the sole use is community use. The adjustment is typically dependent on the amount of play carried out, the number of pitches on site and whether there is access to an on-site AGP.

In some cases, where there is no identified community use, there is little capacity to accommodate further play. Internal usage often exceeds recommended pitch capacity, which is further exacerbated by basic maintenance regimes that may not extend beyond grass cutting and line marking. As such, where not overplayed as a result of community use, school sites are considered to have no spare capacity to accommodate further usage based on assumed curricular and extracurricular activity.

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For school sites which are available for community use but that currently do not have any external hirers, current play has been increased on a site-by-site basis following consultation with the providers. Generally, capacity reduces by one match equivalent session per pitch; however, in some cases, further use is added when it is known that a particular provider uses a particular pitch heavily.

Informal use

A number of football pitches in the area are on open access sites. As such, these pitches are subject to informal use in the form of dog walkers, unorganised games of football and exercise groups. It must be noted, however, that informal use of these sites is not recorded and it is therefore difficult to quantify on a site-by-site basis. Instead, it is recommended that open access sites be protected through an improved maintenance regime.

Peak time

Spare capacity can only be considered as actual spare capacity if pitches are available at peak time. In Wirral, peak time is Saturday AM for all pitch formats.

In Table 2.14, please note that, on occasion, spare capacity in the peak period is identified despite the pitch being played to capacity or overplayed. This is because most of the use on those particular pitches occurs outside of the peak period. In these circumstances, the identified spare capacity at peak time should not be utilised over and above overall capacity unless quality improvements are made that increases overall capacity.

Actual spare capacity

To determine 'actual spare capacity', each site with 'potential capacity' has been reviewed. A pitch is only said to have 'actual spare capacity' if it is available for community use and available at the peak time for that format of the game without being used to capacity or overplayed through use at another time. Any pitch not meeting this criterion has had any spare capacity consequently been discounted.

Linked to the above, only capacity that can be utilised at peak time is considered to be actual spare capacity. This will often be less than the overall spare capacity of a pitch as only one match equivalent session can be assigned to one pitch at peak time.

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

Pitches that are of a poor quality are not deemed to have actual spare capacity due to the already low carrying capacity of the pitches. Any identified spare capacity should be retained in order to relieve the pitches of use, which in turn will aid the improvement of pitch quality. Furthermore, any pitches with unsecured tenure are not considered to offer actual spare capacity until future access can be guaranteed as no further play should be encouraged on such sites. The way this will be represented in the Table 2.14 is as follows:

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Table 2.13: Spare capacity examples

Spare capacity in peak period (examples)	Explanation of spare capacity
1	If the cell is highlighted in green with a number, it means that the pitches have actual spare capacity at peak time.
-	If the cell has a dash in it, this means that the pitch is unavailable in the peak period. If it was to be made available, actual spare capacity could exist.
0	If the cell has a 0 in it, this means that the pitch is played to capacity, either overall or during the peak period (it is highlighted amber if overall).
1	If the cell has a number in it but is not highlighted, it means the pitch has spare capacity in the peak period; however, this is discounted. This is most commonly due to unsecure tenure and/or poor pitch quality.
1	If a site is highlighted red, it is overplayed.

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Table 2.14: Football pitch capacity analysis

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ¹²	Community use availability	Management	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play ¹³	Site capacity ¹⁴	Capacity balance ¹⁵	Spare capacity in peak period	Comments
1	Acres Road Playing Fields	4	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	2	5	4	1	0	Pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent session.
1	Acres Road Playing Fields	4	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	0	8	8	2	Pitches are fully available at peak time.
2	Anglesey Road Playing Fields	4	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	0	2	2	1	Pitch is fully available at peak time.
2	Anglesey Road Playing Fields	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	4	4	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
2	Anglesey Road Playing Fields	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	0	4	4	1	Pitch is fully available at peak time.
2	Anglesey Road Playing Fields	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	0	Pitch is played to capacity at peak time.
4	Arrowe Park	3	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	6	10.5	6	4.5	0	Pitches are overplayed by a total of 4.5 match equivalent sessions.
4	Arrowe Park	3	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	3.5	8	4.5	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
4	Arrowe Park	3	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	8	6	8	2	2	Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
5	Ashton Park	4	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1.5	1	0.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
6	Ashville Sports and Social Club	7	Yes	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
8	Belvidere Recreation Ground	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	5	1	4	0	Pitch is overplayed by four match equivalent sessions.
10	Birkenhead Park	6	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	1.5	1	0.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
10	Birkenhead Park	6	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
15	Borough Road Playing Fields	6	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	5	2	3	0	Pitch is overplayed by three match equivalent sessions.
15	Borough Road Playing Fields	6	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
15	Borough Road Playing Fields	6	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	1	8	7	1	Actual spare capacity of one match equivalent session.
17	Bromborough Recreation Ground	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
17	Bromborough Recreation Ground	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	0	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
17	Bromborough Recreation Ground	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
18	Calday Grange Grammar School	4	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	1	3.5	2	1.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions.
20	Central Park	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	3	6	6	0	0	Pitches are played to capacity.
20	Central Park	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	0	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
20	Central Park	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	0	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
20	Central Park	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	3	1.5	3	1.5	1.5	Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
22	Conway Playing Fields	6	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.

¹² [Click for analysis areas](#)

¹³ Match equivalent sessions

¹⁴ Match equivalent sessions; based on pitch quality - the FA recommends a maximum number of match equivalent sessions to be accommodate per pitch type. Please refer to Section 2.4 for the full breakdown.

¹⁵ Red indicates overplay, green indicates potential spare capacity and amber indicates at capacity.

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ¹²	Community use availability	Management	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play ¹³	Site capacity ¹⁴	Capacity balance ¹⁵	Spare capacity in peak period	Comments
23	Coronation Park (Greasby)	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	3	7	3	4	0	Pitches are overplayed by four match equivalent sessions.
24	Devonshire Road Playing Field	4	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1.5	1	0.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
26	Gayton Park (Heswall FC)	3	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
30	Harrison Park	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	2	4	4	0	0	Pitches are played to capacity.
32	Higher Bebington Recreation Ground	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	5.5	1	4.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 4.5 match equivalent sessions.
33	Hilbre High School Sports Centre	4	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	1	4.5	2	2.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 2.5 match equivalent sessions.
33	Hilbre High School Sports Centre	4	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	3.5	4	0.5	0	Pitch is played to capacity at peak time and suffers from unsecure tenure.
33	Hilbre High School Sports Centre	4	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2.5	2	0.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
35	Hoylake Rugby Football Club	4	Yes	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity and Overmarked on a rugby union pitch.
36	Irby Cricket Club	5	Yes	Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	1.5	1	0.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions and overmarked on a cricket outfield.
37	Irby Recreation Ground	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	0	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
37	Irby Recreation Ground	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	1	1	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
38	Kings Lane Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	4	1	3	0	Pitch is overplayed by three match equivalent sessions.
38	Kings Lane Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	2	3	2	1	0	Pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent session.
38	Kings Lane Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	2	8	6	0	Pitches are played to capacity at peak time.
38	Kings Lane Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	3.5	8	4.5	0	Pitches are played to capacity at peak time.
39	Kingsmead School	4	No	Education	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	2	1	4	3	-	Pitches are unavailable for community use and suffer from unsecure tenure.
40	Leasowe Leisure Centre (Wallasey)	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	5	4	1	0	Pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent sessions.
40	Leasowe Leisure Centre (Wallasey)	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	3	1	2	0	Pitch is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions.
41	Leasowe Road Playing Field	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	3	3.5	12	8.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
41	Leasowe Road Playing Field	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	2.5	4	1.5	0	Pitch is played to capacity at peak time.
41	Leasowe Road Playing Field	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	2	2	4	2	1	Actual spare capacity of one match equivalent sessions.
41	Leasowe Road Playing Field	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	3	3	6	3	0.5	Actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
42	Lingham Park	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	3	5	6	1	1	Actual spare capacity of one match equivalent sessions.
42	Lingham Park	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
43	Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	6	12	6	6	0	Pitches are overplayed by six match equivalent sessions.
44	Marine Park	4	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
45	Mayfields Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1.5	1	0.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
45	Mayfields Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	2	0.5	4	3.5	1.5	Actual spare capacity is discounted due to poor pitch quality.
45	Mayfields Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	3.5	2	1.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions.
45	Mayfields Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	3	1	2	0	Pitch is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions.

**WIRRAL COUNCIL
PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ¹²	Community use availability	Management	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play ¹³	Site capacity ¹⁴	Capacity balance ¹⁵	Spare capacity in peak period	Comments
47	New Brighton Rugby Club	5	Yes	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	0	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity is discounted to preserve pitch quality for rugby union use.
47	New Brighton Rugby Club	5	Yes	Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	0	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity is discounted to preserve pitch quality for rugby union use.
47	New Brighton Rugby Club	5	Yes	Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2.5	2	0.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions and overmarked on a rugby union pitch.
48	New Ferry Park	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	1	1	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
49	Newton Park	4	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	4	1	3	0	Pitch is overplayed by three match equivalent sessions.
54	Pensby Sports Complex	3	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Adult		Poor	1	3	1	2	0	Pitch is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions.
54	Pensby Sports Complex	3	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	5	2	3	0	Pitch is overplayed by three match equivalent sessions.
54	Pensby Sports Complex	3	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	2.5	2	0.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
54	Pensby Sports Complex	3	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	2	1	1	0	Pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent session.
55	Plymyard Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	8	6	16	10	3.5	Actual spare capacity of 3.5 match equivalent sessions.
55	Plymyard Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	1	4	3	0	Pitch is played to capacity at peak time.
55	Plymyard Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	3	8	5	0	Pitches are played to capacity at peak time.
55	Plymyard Playing Fields	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	3	3	3	0	0	Pitches are played to capacity.
59	Ridgeway High School	6	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
59	Ridgeway High School	6	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Adult		Poor	2	2	2	0	0	Pitches are played to capacity.
59	Ridgeway High School	6	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1	2	1	0	Pitch is played to capacity at peak time and suffers from unsecure tenure.
60	Ridgewood Park	3	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	2	8.5	2	6.5	0	Pitches are overplayed by 6.5 match equivalent sessions.
60	Ridgewood Park	3	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
61	Rycroft Playing Fields	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	2	4.5	4	0.5	0	Pitches are overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
61	Rycroft Playing Fields	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	0	4	4	1	Actual spare capacity of one match equivalent session.
64	Shaftesbury Youth Club	6	Yes	Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	8	2	6	0	Pitch is overplayed by six match equivalent sessions.
64	Shaftesbury Youth Club	6	Yes	Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	8	1	7	0	Pitch is overplayed by seven match equivalent sessions.
65	Solar Campus Playing Field	5	No	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		Good	3	3	9	6	-	Usage restricted for Tranmere Rovers FC training and academy teams.
65	Solar Campus Playing Field	5	No	Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Good	1	1.5	4	2.5	-	Usage restricted for Tranmere Rovers FC training and academy teams.
65	Solar Campus Playing Field	5	No	Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Good	2	0	8	8	-	Usage restricted for Tranmere Rovers FC training and academy teams.
66	Solly Recreation Ground	6	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	6.5	1	5.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 5.5 match equivalent sessions.
66	Solly Recreation Ground	6	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	2.5	1	1.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions.
67	South Wirral High School	1	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	1	7	2	5	0	Pitch is overplayed by five match equivalent sessions.
67	South Wirral High School	1	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	4	2	2	0	Pitch is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions.
70	The Glen	6	Yes	Council	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	1	3	2	1	0	Pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent sessions.

**WIRRAL COUNCIL
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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ¹²	Community use availability	Management	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play ¹³	Site capacity ¹⁴	Capacity balance ¹⁵	Spare capacity in peak period	Comments
70	The Glen	6	Yes	Council	Unsecure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	1.5	1	0.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
72	The Oldershaw School	7	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	2	1	4	3	2	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	4	5	8	3	1.5	Actual spare capacity of 1.5 match equivalent sessions.
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	0	4	4	1	Actual spare capacity of one match equivalent session.
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	0.5	4	3.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	3	2	6	4	1	Actual spare capacity of one match equivalent session.
74	The Puddydale	3	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	2.5	1	1.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions.
76	Thornton Hough	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	3	2	1	0	Pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent session.
77	Tower Grounds	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	3.5	1	2.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 2.5 match equivalent sessions.
80	Upton Park	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	2	4	2	2	0	Pitch is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions.
82	Victoria Park	6	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	7	8	1	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
82	Victoria Park	6	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	3	2	1	0	Pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent session.
84	Wallacre Recreation Ground	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	3.5	2	1.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions.
84	Wallacre Recreation Ground	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	1	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
84	Wallacre Recreation Ground	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	0	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity is discounted due to poor pitch quality,
84	Wallacre Recreation Ground	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	0	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity is discounted due to poor pitch quality,
90	West Kirby Grammar School	4	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
90	West Kirby Grammar School	4	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	0	8	8	2	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
91	Whitfield Common	3	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	3	2	1	0	Pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent session.
92	Wirral Cricket Club	1	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
96	Wirral Tennis and Leisure Centre	2	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	1	2	1	0.5	Actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
96	Wirral Tennis and Leisure Centre	2	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	1	2	1	0.5	Actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
97	Withensfield Playing Field (The Delph)	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	6	4	2	0	Pitch is overplayed by two match equivalent sessions.
97	Withensfield Playing Field (The Delph)	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	2	4.5	4	0.5	0	Pitch is overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
98	Woodchurch High School Sports Complex (Sport For The Community)	5	No	Education	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	2	1	4	3	-	Pitch is unavailable for community use and suffers from unsecure tenure.
99	Woodchurch Leisure Centre	5	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Poor	2	6	2	4	0	Pith is overplayed by four match equivalent sessions.
142	Cammell Laird F.C.	6	Yes	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	0	Played to capacity at peak time.
152	Millcroft Ground	6	Yes	Council	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	1	2	1	0.5	Actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions.
154	Oxton Park (Liscard)	7	Yes	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	2	1	1	0	Pitch is overplayed by one match equivalent session.

**WIRRAL COUNCIL
PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY**

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ¹²	Community use availability	Management	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play ¹³	Site capacity ¹⁴	Capacity balance ¹⁵	Spare capacity in peak period	Comments
177	Riverside Football Ground (Eastham)	1	Yes	Sports Club	Unsecure	Adult		Standard	1	1	2	1	0.5	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure
179	Prenton Park (Tranmere Rovers FC)	6	No	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		Good	1	0.5	3	2.5	0	Actual spare capacity reserved for professional play from Tranmere Rovers FC.
175	Greasby Junior School	5	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
184	Great Meols Primary School	4	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
156	Heygarth Primary School	1	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
156	Heygarth Primary School	1	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	0	4	4	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
182	Christ the King Catholic Primary School	1	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1.5	4	2.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
25	Foxfield School	5	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
169	Woodslee Primary School	1	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
183	Fender Primary School	6	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	0.5	2	1.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
183	Fender Primary School	6	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	1.5	8	6.5	2	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
185	Heswall Primary School	3	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	1.5	8	6.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
181	Brackenwood Junior School	1	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	2	4	2	0	Pitch is played to capacity at peak time.
163	Mendell Primary School	1	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	2	0	0	Pitch is played to capacity.
131	Kingsway Academy	5	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	3	5.5	12	6.5	0	Pitch is played to capacity at peak time.
131	Kingsway Academy	5	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	3	8	12	4	0	Pitch is played to capacity at peak time.
131	Kingsway Academy	5	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	4	2	2	0	Overplayed by two match equivalent sessions.
131	Kingsway Academy	5	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
187	Sacred Heart RC Aided Primary School	5	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	3	1	12	11	3	Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
172	Manor Primary School	6	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	2	4	2	0	Pitch is played to capacity at peak time.
86	Wallasey Rugby Union Football Club	7	Yes	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		Standard	1	0.75	2	1.25	0.5	Actual spare capacity is discounted to preserve pitch quality for rugby union use.
188	St Georges Primary School	7	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	2	4	2	0	Pitch is played to capacity at peak time.
188	St Georges Primary School	7	Yes	Education	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	3	4	1	0	Pitch is played to capacity at peak time.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

2.5: Supply and demand analysis

Having considered supply and demand, the tables below identify current demand (i.e. spare capacity taking away overplay and any exported demand) in each of the analysis areas for each pitch type, based on match equivalent sessions.

Adult pitch analysis

Table 2.15: Supply and demand balance of adult pitches

Analysis area ¹⁶	Actual spare capacity ¹⁷	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
1	5	21.5	16.5	0.5	17
2	-	-	0	-	0
3	-	14	14	-	14
4	-	7	7	-	7
5	1.5	10	8.5	-	8.5
6	-	10	10	0.5	10.5
7	-	6	6	1	7
Wirral	6.5	68.5	62	2	64

Currently, there is a shortfall of adult pitches across Wirral equating to 62 match equivalent sessions, which is substantial. All analysis areas are overplayed except the Commercial Core Analysis Area, which is played to capacity.

When considering future demand, shortfalls are exacerbated in analysis areas 1, 6 and 7 and the total shortfall increases to 64 match equivalent sessions.

Youth 11v11 pitch analysis

Table 2.16: Supply and demand balance of youth 11v11 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹⁸	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
1	-	-	0	2	2
2	1	-	1	2	1
3	-	-	0	0.5	0.5
4	1	1	0	-	0
5	1.5	0.5	1	-	1
6	-	15	15	-	15
7	-	3.5	3.5	3	6.5
Wirral	3.5	20	16.5	7.5	24

There is currently a shortfall of 16.5 match equivalent sessions across Wirral, with shortfalls evident in analysis areas 6 and 7. Analysis areas 1, 3 and 4 are played to capacity, whilst analysis areas 2 and 5 have minimal levels of actual spare capacity.

After considering future demand, analysis areas 1, 2 and 3 are all expected to become overplayed whilst Analysis Area 7 is exacerbated. The overall shortfall is 24 match equivalent sessions.

¹⁶ [Click for analysis areas](#)

¹⁷ In match equivalent sessions

¹⁸ In match equivalent sessions

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

It must also be noted that several youth 11v11 teams are playing on adult pitches, meaning shortfalls would greatly increase should these sides transfer to the correct pitch type. In total, this applies to 76 teams, meaning an increased shortfall of 38 match equivalent sessions would be identified.

Youth 9v9 pitch analysis

Table 2.17: Supply and demand balance of youth 9v9 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹⁹	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
1	1	3.5	2.5	0.5	3
2	-	-	0	1	1
3	-	2.5	2.5	0.5	3
4	-	1.5	1.5	-	1.5
5	0.5	4.5	4	-	4
6	-	1	1	-	1
7	-	0.5	0.5	3.5	4
Wirral	1.5	13.5	12	5.5	17.5

Overall, there is current shortfall on youth 9v9 pitches totalling 12 match equivalent sessions across Wirral, with all analysis areas overplayed except for Analysis Area 2. This is played to capacity.

After considering future demand, Analysis Area 2 becomes overplayed, whilst shortfalls in analysis areas 1, 3 and 7 worsen. The total shortfall amounts to 17.5 match equivalent sessions.

Mini 7v7 pitch analysis

Table 2.18: Supply and demand balance of mini 7v7 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ²⁰	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
1	0.5	-	0.5	-	0.5
2	-	-	0	-	0
3	-	3	3	-	3
4	2	-	2	-	2
5	0.5	1	0.5	-	0.5
6	1	-	1	-	1
7	1	2	1	-	1
Wirral	5	6	1	0	1

Across Wirral, there is minimal overplay currently accommodated on mini 7v7 pitches equating to one match equivalent session. This is due to a shortfall in analysis areas 3, 5 and 7, whilst analysis areas 1, 4 and 6 have minimal actual spare capacity.

As there is no identified future demand from clubs for mini 7v7 pitches, the level of overplay is projected to remain at one match equivalent session per week.

¹⁹ In match equivalent sessions

²⁰ In match equivalent sessions

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Mini 5v5 pitch analysis

Table 2.19: Supply and demand balance of mini 5v5 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ²¹	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
1	1	1.5	0.5	6	6.5
2	-	-	0	1.5	1.5
3	-	0.5	0.5	3.5	4
4	1	-	1	5	4
5	-	-	0	4	4
6	-	-	0	2	2
7	-	-	0	4	4
Wirral	2	2	0	26	26

Currently, mini 5v5 pitches across Wirral are played to capacity, despite shortfalls in the analysis areas 1 and 3. Minimal actual spare capacity exists in Analysis Area 4 amounting to one match equivalent session.

After accounting for significant future demand, shortfalls are evident in each analysis area, with the total shortfall equating to 26 match equivalent sessions.

Overall pitch supply and demand capacity

Using the supply and demand analysis tables above, it is determined that mini 5v5 pitches are currently played to capacity whilst all remaining pitch formats have shortfalls. After factoring in future demand, shortfalls are present for each pitch type and substantially so in most cases.

Table 2.20: Summary of supply and demand

Pitch type	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)				
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Adult	6.5	68.5	62	2	64
Youth 11v11	3.5	20	16.5	7.5	24
Youth 9v9	1.5	13.5	12	5.5	17.5
Mini 7v7	5	6	1	-	1
Mini 5v5	2	2	0	26	26

Most current overplay across the various pitch types is generated from high levels of demand accessing poor quality pitches.

Spare capacity

The table below identifies actual spare capacity by site and pitch type across Wirral. It should be noted that a total of 15.5 match equivalent sessions of spare capacity has been discounted due to poor pitch quality, whereas, 15 match equivalent sessions has been discounted due to unsecure tenure.

²¹ In match equivalent sessions

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 2.21: Summary of actual spare capacity

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ²²	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match sessions)
1	Acres Road Playing Fields	4	Mini 7v7	2	2
2	Anglesey Road Playing Fields	4	Youth 11v11	1	1
2	Anglesey Road Playing Fields	4	Mini 5v5	1	1
15	Borough Road Playing Fields	6	Mini 7v7	2	1
41	Leasowe Road Playing Field	5	Mini 7v7	3	0.5
41	Leasowe Road Playing Field	5	Youth 11v11	1	1
41	Leasowe Road Playing Field	5	Youth 9v9	1	0.5
42	Lingham Park	5	Adult	3	1
42	Lingham Park	5	Youth 11v11	1	0.5
55	Plymyard Playing Fields	1	Adult	8	3.5
61	Rycroft Playing Fields	7	Mini 7v7	1	1
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	Adult	4	1.5
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	Mini 5v5	1	1
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	Mini 7v7	1	0.5
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	Youth 9v9	3	1
96	Wirral Tennis and Leisure Centre	2	Youth 11v11	1	1
152	Millcroft Ground	5	Adult	1	0.5
Total					18.5

Actual spare capacity totals 18.5 match equivalent sessions per week on 35 pitches across 10 sites. This has been aggregated up by area and by pitch type below.

Table 2.22: Summary of actual spare capacity by Analysis Area

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions)					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
1	5	-	1	0.5	1	7.5
2	-	1	-	-	-	1
3	-	-	-	-	-	0
4	-	1	-	2	1	4
5	1.5	1.5	0.5	0.5	-	4
6	-	-	-	1	-	1
7	-	-	-	1	-	1
Wirral	6.5	3.5	1.5	5	2	18.5

²² [Click for analysis areas](#)

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Most actual spare capacity is identified on adult pitches, although some is identified on each pitch type. Most of the spare capacity is in Analysis Area 1 with eight match equivalent sessions, whereas Analysis Area 3 contributes no actual spare capacity.

Overlay

Overlay occurs when there is more play accommodated on a site than it is able to sustain, which can often be due to the low carrying capacity of pitches. In Wirral, 68 pitches across 36 sites are overplayed by a combined total of 110 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 2.23: Summary of overlay

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ²³	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match sessions)
1	Acres Road Playing Fields	4	Youth 11v11	2	1
4	Arrowe Park	3	Adult	6	4.5
5	Ashton Park	4	Youth 9v9	1	0.5
8	Belvidere Recreation Ground	7	Adult	1	4
10	Birkenhead Park	6	Adult	1	0.5
15	Borough Road Playing Fields	6	Adult	1	3
18	Calday Grange Grammar School	4	Adult	1	1.5
23	Coronation Park (Greasby)	5	Adult	3	4
24	Devonshire Road Playing Field	4	Youth 9v9	1	0.5
32	Higher Bebington Recreation Ground	1	Adult	1	4.5
33	Hilbre High School Sports Centre	4	Adult	1	2.5
33	Hilbre High School Sports Centre	4	Youth 9v9	1	0.5
36	Irby Cricket Club	5	Youth 11v11	1	0.5
38	Kings Lane Playing Fields	1	Adult	1	3
38	Kings Lane Playing Fields	1	Youth 9v9	2	1
40	Leasowe Leisure Centre (Wallasey)	5	Mini 7v7	1	1
40	Leasowe Leisure Centre (Wallasey)	5	Youth 9v9	1	2
43	Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields	1	Adult	6	6
45	Mayfields Playing Fields	1	Youth 9v9	1	0.5
45	Mayfields Playing Fields	1	Mini 5v5	1	1.5
45	Mayfields Playing Fields	1	Adult	1	2
47	New Brighton Rugby Club	5	Youth 9v9	1	0.5
49	Newton Park	4	Adult	1	3
54	Pensby Sports Complex	3	Adult	1	2
54	Pensby Sports Complex	3	Mini 7v7	1	3
54	Pensby Sports Complex	3	Mini 5v5	1	0.5
54	Pensby Sports Complex	3	Youth 9v9	1	1
60	Ridgewood Park	3	Adult	2	6.5

²³ [Click for analysis areas](#)

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ²³	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match sessions)
61	Rycroft Playing Fields	7	Adult	2	0.5
64	Shaftesbury Youth Club	6	Youth 11v11	1	6
64	Shaftesbury Youth Club	6	Youth 11v11	1	7
66	Solly Recreation Ground	6	Adult	1	5.5
66	Solly Recreation Ground	6	Youth 11v11	1	1.5
67	South Wirral High School	1	Adult	1	5
67	South Wirral High School	1	Youth 9v9	1	2
70	The Glen	6	Adult	1	1
70	The Glen	6	Youth 11v11	1	0.5
74	The Puddydale	3	Youth 9v9	1	1.5
76	Thornton Hough	1	Adult	1	1
77	Tower Grounds	7	Youth 11v11	1	2.5
80	Upton Park	5	Adult	2	2
82	Victoria Park	6	Youth 9v9	1	1
84	Wallacre Recreation Ground	7	Adult	1	1.5
91	Whitfield Common	3	Adult	1	1
97	Withensfield Playing Field (The Delph)	7	Mini 7v7	1	2
97	Withensfield Playing Field (The Delph)	7	Youth 9v9	2	0.5
99	Woodchurch Leisure Centre	5	Adult	2	4
154	Oxton Park (Liscard)	7	Youth 11v11	1	1
131	Kingsway Academy	5	Youth 9v9	1	2
Total					110

Most overplay is generated from demand accessing poor quality pitches. In total, 76.5 match equivalent sessions of overplay is on poor quality pitches.

Table 2.24: Summary of overplay by Analysis Area

Analysis area	Overplay (match equivalent sessions)					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
1	21.5	-	3.5	-	1.5	26.5
2	-	-	-	-	-	0
3	14	-	2.5	3	0.5	20
4	7	1	1.5	-	-	9.5
5	10	0.5	4.5	1	-	16
6	10	15	1	-	-	26
7	6	3.5	0.5	2	-	12
Wirral	68.5	20	13.5	6	2	110

In addition to overplayed pitches, it should be noted that there are 25 community available pitches across 18 sites that are played to capacity. Any additional play on these pitches would result in overplay, without quality improvements.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 2.25: Summary of pitches at capacity

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ²⁴	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (match sessions)
2	Anglesey Road Playing Field	4	Mini 7v7	1	0
6	Ashville Sports And Social Club	6	Adult	1	0
15	Borough Road Playing Fields	6	Youth 9v9	1	0
20	Central Park	7	Adult	3	0
25	Foxfield School	5	Youth 9v9	1	0
26	Gayton Park (Heswall FC)	3	Adult	1	0
30	Harrison Park	7	Adult	2	0
35	Hoyle Rugby Football Club	4	Adult	1	0
37	Irby Recreation Ground	5	Youth 11v11	1	0
44	Marine Park	4	Adult	1	0
48	New Ferry Park	1	Adult	1	0
55	Plymyard Playing Fields	1	Youth 9v9	3	0
59	Ridgeway High School	6	Adult	1	0
59	Ridgeway High School	6	Adult	2	0
84	Wallacre Recreation Ground	7	Youth 9v9	1	0
163	Mendell Primary School	1	Youth 9v9	1	0
169	Woodslee Primary School	1	Youth 9v9	1	0
175	Greasby Junior School	5	Youth 9v9	1	0
184	Great Meols Primary School	4	Youth 9v9	1	0

Furthermore, 49 match equivalent sessions of demand is currently played at sites considered to be unsecure. As such, if these sites were to be lost, shortfalls would significantly increase across each pitch type.

²⁴ [Click for analysis areas](#)

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Football – grass pitch supply and demand summary

- ◀ It is determined that mini 5v5 pitches are currently played to capacity whilst all remaining pitch formats have shortfalls.
- ◀ After factoring in future demand, shortfalls are present for each pitch type and substantially so in most cases.
- ◀ Actual spare capacity totals 18.5 match equivalent sessions per week on 35 pitches across 10 sites.
- ◀ In Wirral, 68 pitches across 36 sites are overplayed by a combined total of 110 match equivalent sessions per week.

Football – supply summary

- ◀ The audit identifies a total of 215 grass football pitches within Wirral across 77 sites, with 204 pitches available for community use across 73 sites.
- ◀ Bromborough and Eastham FC has lost access to its previous home ground, The Octel Sports and Social Club.
- ◀ Tenure of sites in Wirral is generally secure; Glenavon JFC and West Kirby United FC both indicate aspirations to extend their current lease agreements although this is unlikely for the former given its sites designation.
- ◀ New Ferry Rangers has received funding to provide an improved clubhouse at Bebington Youth Club which will include a community café and gym, as well as a small size 3G pitch.
- ◀ Glenavon JFC is without ancillary facilities at both of its venues; The Glen and Solly Recreation Ground. At Solly Recreation Ground, Scottish Power own a disused building alongside the site which they are prepared to gift to Glenavon JFC if the Club can change its use to a sporting facility.
- ◀ Of pitches that are available for community use, only seven are assessed as good quality, 125 as standard quality and 79 as poor quality.
- ◀ Most ancillary facilities accompanying grass football pitches across Wirral is standard or good quality.

Football – demand summary

- ◀ Through the audit and assessment, 698 teams from within 96 clubs are identified as playing within Wirral. This consists of 94 adult men's, four adult women's, 286 youth boys', 41 youth girls' and 273 mini teams.
- ◀ Most clubs which express latent demand indicate they would be able to increase the number of teams if they have access to more or better training provision including the use of floodlit 3G pitches. This is followed by a need for more and better quality match pitches across the authority.
- ◀ Through the clubs that quantified potential future demand, there is a predicted potential growth of 82 additional teams.
- ◀ Broken down by pitch type, two match equivalent sessions of future demand are identified on adult pitches, 7.5 match equivalent sessions on youth 11v11 pitches, 5.5 match equivalent session on youth 9v9 pitches and 26 match equivalent sessions on mini 5v5 pitches.
- ◀ No future demand is identified for mini 7v7 pitches, although such provision is likely to be required as future mini 5v5 teams progress.

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

3.1: Introduction

Competitive football can take place on 3G surfaces that have been FIFA or International Matchball Standard tested and approved by the FA for inclusion on its Pitch Register. As such, in addition to training demand, a growing number of 3G pitches are now used for competitive match play, providing that the performance standard meets FIFA quality requirements.

World Rugby produced the ‘Performance Specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby’, more commonly known as ‘Regulation 22’, which provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union. The artificial surface standards identified in Regulation 22 allows matches to be played on surfaces that meet the required standard, meaning full contact activity, including tackling, rucking, mauling and lineouts, can take place.

Competitive rugby league play and contact practice is permitted to take place on 3G pitches which are deemed by the Rugby Football League (RFL) to meet its Performance Standard. Pitches fall under two categories; community club pitches which require retesting every two years and elite stadia pitches which require an annual retest. Much of the criteria within the RFL performance standard test also forms part of the World Rugby test, meaning World Rugby certified 3G pitches are considered by the RFL to be able to meet rugby league requirements, subject to passing an additional RFL performance standard test.

Other sports that are known to use 3G pitches for training and match play include American football and lacrosse. Many test contractors are able to offer reduced rates through efficiency savings to carry out multiple performance tests in the same session, therefore providers seeking 3G pitch compliancy for a number of sports would be recommended to consider this opportunity.

England Hockey’s Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy (June 2016) advises that 3G pitches should not be used for hockey matches or training and that they can only be used for lower level hockey (introductory level) as a last resort when no sand-based or water-based AGPs are available.

3.2: Current provision

A full size 3G pitch is considered by the FA to measure at least 100 x 64 metres (106 x 70 metres including run offs); however, for the purposes of this report, all pitches measuring over 94 x 55 metres (exclusive of run offs) are considered to be full size due to the amount of demand that they can accommodate. Nationally, many 3G pitches are slightly undersized due to previously being converted from sand-based provision (dimensions for hockey are generally smaller than for football).

Based on the above specification, there are five full size 3G pitches in Wirral, four of which are available for community use and floodlit. Analysis Area 5 contains two pitches, whilst the analysis areas 1, 2 and 3 each contain one pitch.

Table 3.1: Full size 3G pitches in Wirral

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ²⁵	Community use?	Floodlit?	Size (metres)
7	Bebington High Sports College	1	Yes	Yes	95 x 60
40	Leasowe Leisure Centre	5	Yes	Yes	100 x 64

²⁵ [Click for analysis areas](#)

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ²⁵	Community use?	Floodlit?	Size (metres)
54	Pensby Sports Complex	3	No	Yes	106 x 70
96	Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre	2	Yes	Yes	97 x 63
98	Woodchurch High School	5	Yes	Yes	105 x 70

In addition to the full size pitches, there are also eight smaller size 3G pitches in Wirral across seven sites (Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre provides two that can split into four). Whilst not large enough to accommodate adult match play, such provision can be used to accommodate youth and mini matches, in addition to training demand, providing that they are FA approved, of an adequate size and with appropriate run-off areas. The FA's recommended pitch size for youth football varies from 91 x 55 metres to 73 x 46 metres depending on age, whilst it is 55 x 37 metres for mini 7v7 play and 37 x 27 metres for mini 5v5 play.

All of the smaller size pitches in Wirral are available to the community, although the pitches at Birkenhead Youth Club and the Hive are both without floodlighting which can significantly limit usage.

Table 3.2: Additional supply of 3G provision (outdoor)

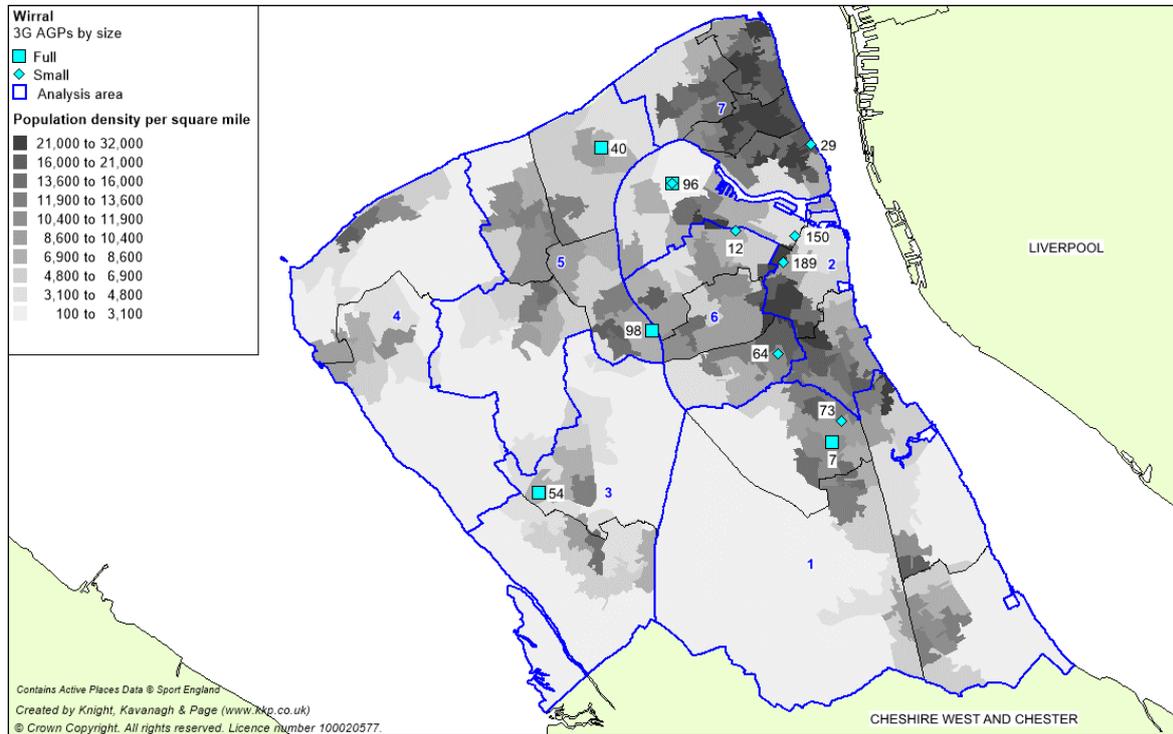
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Floodlit?	Size (metres)
12	Birkenhead Park Rugby Club	6	Yes	Yes	55 x 36
29	Guinea Gap Leisure Centre	7	Yes	Yes	32 x 20
64	Shaftesbury Youth Club	6	Yes	Yes	40 x 30
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	Yes	Yes	30 x 20
96	Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre	2	Yes	Yes	30 x 20
					30 x 20
150	Birkenhead Youth Club	2	Yes	No	45 x 30
189	The Hive (Wirral Youth Zone)	6	Yes	No	32 x 18

In addition, there are also two smaller sized indoor 3G pitches in Wirral, with one provided at North Wirral Soccer Dome (28 x 15 metres) and one at Activity for All (37 x 24 metres). The latter has only recently been installed following Football Foundation funding and will be open once Covid-19 restrictions allow.

Figure 3.1 overleaf identifies the location of all 3G pitches in Wirral, regardless of size.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Figure 3.1: Location of 3G AGPs in Wirral



WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Future provision

The Council is currently working on delivering pitches at four sites; Arrowe Park, Lord Leverhulme Playing Field, Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre and Woodchurch Leisure Centre. In addition, a pitch to be developed at Solar Campus has planning permission, albeit the level of community use this will offer is likely to be limited due to it primarily being established to service a professional club (Tranmere Rovers FC).

Cheshire FA and the Football Foundation are in discussions with Shaftesbury Youth Club in regards to establishing an additional 3G pitch together with refurbishing its existing pavilion. The current proposal is for a super-size 3G pitch, with such provision measuring 120 x 84 metres (enabling eight mini 5v5 matches to be accommodated at any one time, rather than the usual four, or four mini 7v7 matches, rather than the usual two). A funding application could be submitted for this in January 2022.

Proposals were previously in place for a 3G pitch to potentially be developed at Prenton Rugby Club as part of a mitigation package for the loss of land at Birkenhead School (Nocturum Field). However, it has now been agreed that this will not form part of the measures, although the Club could explore the option further down the line.

Early aspirations are known to exist to potentially convert the sand-based AGP at The Oval Leisure Centre to 3G (which will need approval from EH), whilst numerous schools such as Wirral Grammar School (for boys) also express an interest in developing full size provision.

A smaller sized 3G pitch is to be installed at Bebington Youth Club and managed by New Ferry Rangers FC.

Anselmians RFC has aspirations to establish two World Rugby compliant 3G pitches on site. One would replace the existing floodlit training pitch on site whilst the second would replace the secondary senior pitch.

Local Football Facility Plan

The Wirral LFFP identifies ten priority projects for potential investment into 3G pitches, with these equating to 14 new full size pitch proposals and one smaller sized proposal. These will be assessed as scenarios in the proceeding Strategy document to ensure that they are supported by the evidence presented in this report and whether alterations or additions are required.

FA pitch register

In order for competitive matches to be played on 3G pitches, the pitch should be FIFA or IMS tested and approved and added to the FA pitch register, which can be found at: <http://3g.thefa.me.uk/>.

Pitches undergo testing to become a FIFA Quality pitch or a FIFA Quality Pro pitch, with provision commonly constructed, installed and tested in situ to achieve either accreditation. The differences between the accreditations are that FIFA quality pitches are designed to accommodate substantial levels of regular usage, whereas FIFA Quality Pro pitches are more for high level performance, with usage levels therefore more limited to protect the standard. Generally, FIFA Quality pitches can be typically used for 60-85 hours per week, whereas FIFA Quality Pro pitches are able to accommodate 20-30 hours.

To remain accredited, pitches must be re-assessed every three years to ensure that quality has not deteriorated beyond acceptable levels, although this is required annually for clubs using 3G pitches within the football pyramid (steps 1-6).

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In Wirral, only the pitch at Pensby Sports Complex is approved for competitive matches, which means no match play should be taking place on the remaining stock. This will be significantly limiting to match usage of 3G pitches and will consequently mean that grass pitches are being more heavily used than they would ordinarily need to be.

World Rugby compliant pitches

To enable 3G pitches to host competitive rugby union matches, World Rugby has developed the Rugby Turf Performance Specification. This is to ensure that the surfaces can replicate the playing qualities of good quality grass pitches, provide a playing environment that will not increase the risk of injury and are of an adequate durability.

The specification includes a rigorous test programme that assesses ball/surface interaction and player/surface interaction and has been modified to align the standard with that of FIFA. Any 3G pitch used for any form of competitive rugby must comply with this specification and must be tested every two years to retain compliance.

No existing 3G provision is World Rugby compliant in Wirral.

Management

The full size pitches at Bebington High Sports College and Woodchurch High School are managed by schools, whereas the pitches at Leasowe Leisure Centre and Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre are managed by Wirral Leisure Services. The pitch at Pensby Sports Complex had been managed by an external lettings company until the Covid-19 pandemic. This company has since folded and so community use has stopped since the School resumed management of the pitch.

All smaller sized pitches are either managed by Wirral Leisure Services or by sports/youth clubs.

Availability

As seen in the table below, four of the full size pitches in Wirral are readily available to the community throughout weekday evenings and weekends, with each being accessible during peak time for training and match activity.

Please note that the table only refers to availability (opening hours), for current usage/capacity see Table 3.5.

Table 3.3: Summary of 3G pitch availability

Site ID	Site	Availability
7	Bebington High Sports College	Reserved for school use on weekdays until 18:00, then available to the community from 18:00-22:00 Monday to Friday and from 09:00-16:00 Saturday to Sunday.
40	Leasowe Leisure Centre	Available to the community 09:00 until 22:00 Monday-Thursday and 09:00 until 21:00 on Fridays. On Saturdays and Sundays, availability is 09:00 until 20:00.
54	Pensby Sports Complex	Was previously reserved for school use on weekdays until 18:00, then available to the community from 18:00-22:00 Monday to Friday and from 10:00-15:00 Saturday to Sunday. Since Covid-19, the lettings company that managed bookings has gone bust and community use has stopped indefinitely.

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Site ID	Site	Availability
96	Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre	Available Monday to Friday from 09:00 until 22:00 and from Saturday to Sunday from 09:00 until 18:00
98	Woodchurch High School	Reserved for school use on weekdays until 17:00, then available to the community from 17:00-22:00 Monday to Friday and from 09:00-13:00 Saturday to Sunday.

The same can also be said of the smaller sized provision, although as mentioned the lack of floodlighting limits availability at Birkenhead Youth Club and the Hive.

Please note that the availability of 3G pitches has been significantly impacted upon by the Covid-19 pandemic, as has been the case with all sports facilities. They have generally been closed during lockdown periods, with the above table referring to availability when the provision is operational rather than when restrictions do not allow for usage.

Quality

It is considered that the carpet of a 3G pitch usually lasts for approximately 10 years and it is the age of the surface, combined with maintenance levels, which most commonly affects quality. It is therefore recommended that sinking funds be put into place by providers to enable long-term sustainability, ongoing repairs and future refurbishment beyond this period.

For the full assessment criteria, please see Appendix 2.

In Wirral, all of the full size 3G pitches are within their recommended lifespan. As such, the pitches at Bebington High Sports College, Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre and Woodchurch High School are assessed as standard quality, whilst the pitches at Leasowe Leisure Centre and Pensby Sports Complex are assessed as good. The former was installed in 2020; the latter was refurbished in 2019.

Table 3.4: Age and quality of full size 3G pitches

Site ID	Site name	Year installed/resurfaced	Quality
7	Bebington High Sports College	2012	Standard
40	Leasowe Leisure Centre	2020	Good
54	Pensby Sports Complex	2019	Good
96	Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre	2016	Standard
98	Woodchurch High School	2012	Standard

Of the smaller sized provision, pitches at Birkenhead Park Rugby Club (2007), Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre (2009) and The Oval Leisure Centre (2010) have all exceeded their recommended lifespans, with imminent resurfacing recommended. The remaining pitches have no significant issues, with pitches at Birkenhead Youth Club, Guinea Gap Leisure Centre, Shaftesbury Youth Club and North Wirral Soccer Dome assessed as standard and pitches at Activity for All and the Hive assessed as good.

Ancillary facilities

All full size 3G provision in Wirral is accompanied by ancillary facilities that are considered at least adequate and no major issues were raised during consultation or via site assessments.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

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3.3: Demand

Outside of periods of lockdown, the 3G provision currently servicing Wirral is reported to be operating at or close to capacity at peak times, especially during winter months when grass pitches cannot be used for training or recreational demand (due to a lack of floodlighting). This applies not only to midweek capacity but also to weekend capacity, especially as Pensby Sports Complex given that it is FA approved for competitive matches.

In addition to capacity being taken up by football clubs for training and match play purposes, there is also a strong presence of small-sided football being played. In this regard, Powerplay is a key commercial operator, running leagues at Pensby Sports Complex and Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre. Leisure Leagues is also in operation.

Other activity taking place on 3G provision comes in the form of walking football, particularly on the smaller sized indoor pitch at North Wirral Soccer Dome. Furthermore, various coaching sessions are held across the pitches, such as at Woodchurch High School during school holidays. That being said, all identified activity across the 3G pitches is football-based, with no other sporting activity currently taking place.

The table below summarises usage levels of the full size 3G provision in Wirral based on booking sheets supplied by the operators, which accounts for demand prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (2019/2020 season). This is compared against availability at peak time, using Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM). This applies an overall peak period for AGPs of 34 hours per week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00).

Table 3.5: Current usage of 3G pitches across Wirral

Site ID	Site name	Midweek availability (hours)	Midweek usage (hours)	Weekend availability (hours)	Weekend usage (hours)
7	Bebington High Sports College	14	14	14	6
40	Leasowe Leisure Centre	18	18	16	9
54	Pensby Sports Complex	13	13	10	10
96	Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre	18	18	16	8
98	Woodchurch High School	18	18	8	7

As seen, all midweek availability is currently taken up, with only spare capacity existing at weekends. This data should be used to establish a baseline that can be reviewed annually to see if the position changes, taking into account any new pitches that are established and the impact these have. There may also be opportunities to establish further capacity on the existing supply of pitches, through, for example, extending opening hours (such as at Bebington High Sports College and Pensby Sports Complex where peak time availability is not current maximised).

Football

The FA considers high quality 3G pitches as an essential tool in promoting coach and player development, with the pitches considered to be great assets on account of being able to support intensive use and use during inclement weather. Primarily, such facilities have been installed for social use and training, however, they are increasingly being used for competition, which the FA wholly supports.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Training demand

Getting access to good quality, affordable training facilities is a problem for many clubs throughout the country. In the winter months, midweek training is only possible at floodlit facilities, with 3G provision preferred by the FA and the large majority of clubs.

Of clubs responding to consultation, 73% report that they require additional training facilities, or increased access to existing training facilities, with 84% of these specifically mentioning demand for 3G pitches. Whilst some form of unmet demand is common across most local authorities, these figures are particularly high. Most clubs expressing such needs currently access sand-based pitches or indoor sports halls for training despite these not being their preferred form of provision, whilst others do access 3G facilities but do so at undesirable times and/or at undesirable locations (including outside of Wirral).

The FA's long-term ambition is to provide every affiliated team in England the opportunity to train once per week on a floodlit 3G surface, together with priority access for every Charter Standard Community Club through a partnership agreement. As such, it has established a model to calculate the required number of full size pitches to meet demand, with one pitch being required to service every 38 teams within a local authority. This is based on peak time access being Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings and on account of full size 3G pitches being divided into thirds or quarters (Mondays and Fridays are discounted as it is considered that teams do not want to train in such close proximity to a weekend match, and it also allows for other forms of access such as for commercial leagues and recreational play).

Using the above calculation, with 698 teams currently playing in Wirral, there is a calculated theoretical need for 18 full size 3G pitches (rounded down from 18.4) to meet all training demand. As such, with only four pitches currently provided, a potential shortfall of 14 pitches is identified. This aligns to the number of full size pitch projects identified in Wirral's LFFP.

It should be noted that the existing smaller sized 3G pitches in Wirral are not considered to contribute to the supply for the training demand model. This is because the provision generally equates to mini 5v5 size or under and so could not adequately accommodate purposeful training activity and would not be encouraged by the FA. The only exception to this is Birkenhead Park Rugby Club, which is mini 7v7 size but predominantly used for rugby union training demand.

Table 3.6: Current demand for 3G pitches in Wirral (based on 38 teams per pitch)

Local authority	Current number of teams	3G requirement ²⁶	Current number of 3G pitches	Current shortfall
Wirral	698	18	4	14

When considering future demand for an additional 82 teams (based on latent and future demand expressed by clubs), there is demand for 21 full size pitches (rounded up from 20.5), which means a future potential shortfall of 17 pitches. However, it must be noted that this is dependent on clubs realising their growth ambitions to the extent that they want to.

Table 3.8: Potential demand for 3G pitches in Wirral (based on 38 teams per pitch)

Local authority	Potential future number of teams	3G requirement ²⁷	Current number of 3G pitches	Future shortfall
Wirral	780	21	4	17

²⁶ Rounded to the nearest whole number

²⁷ Rounded to the nearest whole number

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Alternatively, the table below considers the number of full size 3G pitches required if every team was to remain training within the respective analysis area that they play in. This not only identifies where the needs exist across Wirral, but it can also be used to guide which areas should be targeted for new provision.

Table 3.9: Current demand for 3G pitches in Wirral by analysis area

Analysis area ²⁸	Current number of teams	3G requirement ²⁹	Current number of 3G pitches	Potential shortfall
1	161	4	1	3
2	13	0	1	-
3	98	3	-	3
4	71	2	-	2
5	158	4	2	2
6	99	3	-	3
7	98	3	-	3
Wirral	698	19	4	16

As seen, the current shortfall increases to 16 full size 3G pitches due to the 3G requirement increasing by one and the full size 3G pitch in Analysis Area 2 only accounting for 13 teams. This equates to a shortfall of three pitches in analysis areas 1, 3, 6 and 7 and two pitches analysis areas 4 and 5. Only Analysis Area 2 is without a shortfall.

Whilst only 13 teams are assigned to Analysis Area 2, it is not the case that this equates to an oversupply of 3G pitches. The low number of teams affiliated to the area is because of a lack of grass pitches rather than demand. In fact, the 3G pitch at Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre is said to be one of the most accessible and centrally located in the Borough, catering for a wide range of demand from teams across Wirral.

When accounting for future demand, the shortfall in Analysis Area 1 is exacerbated by a single 3G pitch. The total shortfall, as per the analysis for Wirral as a whole, is considered to be 17 pitches.

Table 3.10: Potential demand for 3G pitches in Wirral by analysis area

Analysis area ³⁰	Potential future number of teams	3G requirement ³¹	Current number of 3G pitches	Potential shortfall
1	179	5	1	4
2	22	0	1	-
3	107	3	-	3
4	81	2	-	2
5	166	4	2	2
6	104	3	-	3
7	121	3	-	3
Wirral	780	20	4	17

²⁸ [Click for analysis areas](#)

²⁹ Rounded to the nearest whole number

³⁰ [Click for analysis areas](#)

³¹ Rounded to the nearest whole number

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Match play demand

Improving grass pitch quality is one way to increase the capacity at sites but given the cost of doing such work and the continued maintenance required, alternatives need to be considered that can offer a more sustainable model for the future of football. The substitute to grass pitches is the use of 3G pitches for competitive matches, providing that the pitch is appropriately accredited, floodlit and available for community use during the peak period.

As only one full size 3G pitch in Wirral is FA approved to host competitive fixtures, there is relatively low demand for the provision, with only 11 teams currently accessing a 3G facility as their home pitch. However, this includes demand utilising pitches at Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre and Bebington High Sports College, as well as the small-sided pitch at Birkenhead Youth Club, which should not be allowed due to a lack of accreditation. Nevertheless, this is 11 teams that would otherwise be using grass pitches, adding to capacity and quality issues, or alternatively they would not exist at all due to having nowhere suitable to play.

As the number of 3G pitches increases in line with meeting training demand shortfalls, so should the number of teams utilising the provision for matches, which in turn should relieve grass pitches of use. As such, whilst the number of 3G pitches needed for matches will never outweigh the number of 3G pitches needed for training (as they would not be sustainable without midweek usage), maximising the pitches that are in place and that are proposed should be fully supported.

The use of 3G provision for matches also emphasises the importance of maintaining good quality pitches. Should pitches not be resurfaced when necessary, they will likely lose their accreditation to accommodate fixtures when testing is required. This will then result in all of the teams using the provision needing to transfer to grass pitches, adding to their usage, reducing their capacity and further diminishing their quality.

Other sports

The smaller size 3G pitch at Birkenhead Rugby Club is utilised by the Club for some low-level, non-contact training activity. Other than that, no other clubs/users from other sports are presently identified as accessing 3G provision in Wirral (outside of some school activity), although that is not to say that there is no demand, particularly in relation to rugby union.

Given the significant grass pitch shortfalls identified in Part 5: Rugby Union of this report, the creation of World Rugby compliant 3G provision would certainly be of benefit to Wirral, especially in an area that could accommodate numerous clubs (rather than just a host club). Currently, no rugby clubs can gain meaningful access to the existing 3G pitches as none are World Rugby compliant (only non-contact activity would be allowed).

As there is no identified rugby league, lacrosse or American football activity in Wirral, no other 3G pitch demand has been discovered, with no other sports commonly utilising the provision.

3.4: Supply and demand analysis

For football, there is limited spare capacity on the present supply of 3G pitches, particularly when teams require access for training purposes, leading to a number of clubs reporting a need for increased provision. With the FA model suggesting that there is a theoretical current shortfall of at least 14 full size 3G pitches and a potential theoretical future shortfall of at least 17, priority should be placed on the creation of new full size 3G pitches. To that end, precedence should be given to areas with identified current shortfalls. This will be further explored within the proceeding Strategy document.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

In addition, it is important to sustain the current pitch stock to ensure that the existing shortfalls are not exacerbated. In that regard, providers should be encouraged to put sinking funds in place and it is also recommended that all new and existing pitches undergo FA testing every three years to remain or become FA approved. This should especially be pursued at the four existing sites with full size pitches that cannot currently be used for competitive matches (Bebington High Sports College, Leasowe Leisure Centre, Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre and Woodchurch High School).

For rugby union, the creation of World Rugby compliant 3G pitches may provide one of a number of solutions to the identified overplay of grass pitches at sites such as Anselmians Rugby Football Club, Birkenhead Park Rugby Club, New Brighton Rugby Club and Wirral Rugby Club (see Part 5: Rugby Union). This could be achieved in collaboration with reducing shortfalls for football, or exclusively if it is adjudged that the provision would receive enough usage and be sustainable.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

3G summary – supply and demand summary

- ◀ Priority should be placed on the creation of new 3G pitches.
- ◀ In addition, it is important to sustain the current pitch stock to ensure that the existing shortfalls are not exacerbated, with FA testing required at numerous sites.
- ◀ Given the grass pitch shortfalls identified for rugby union, it is considered that World Rugby compliant provision would be of benefit to the District.

3G summary – supply summary

- ◀ There are five full size 3G pitches in Wirral, four of which are floodlit and available to the community.
- ◀ The pitch at Pensby Sports Complex had been managed externally until the Covid-19 pandemic. This lettings management company has since folded and so community use has stopped since the School resumed management of the pitch.
- ◀ In addition to the full size pitches, there are also eight smaller sized 3G pitches provided in the Borough.
- ◀ The Council is currently working on delivering pitches at four sites; Arrowe Park, Leverhulme Playing Field, Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre and Woodchurch Leisure Centre.
- ◀ Of the existing pitches, only the provision at Pensby Sports Complex is approved for competitive football matches, which means no match play should be taking place on the remaining stock.
- ◀ None of the pitches are World Rugby compliant.
- ◀ All of the full size 3G pitches are within their recommended lifespan, with three assessed as standard quality and two as good.

3G summary – demand summary

- ◀ The existing 3G provision is operating at capacity during peak times for midweek training, with only spare capacity existing at weekends.
- ◀ With 698 football teams currently playing in Wirral, there is a calculated theoretical need for 18 full size 3G pitches in the Borough, meaning a potential shortfall of 14 pitches is identified.
- ◀ When accounting for future demand for an additional 82 teams (based on latent/future demand expressed by clubs), the shortfall increases by three to 17 pitches.
- ◀ When assessing 3G pitch need by analysis area, the current shortfall increases to 15 pitches (three pitches analysis areas 1, 3, 6 and 7 and two pitches in analysis areas 4 and 5).
- ◀ Taking future demand into consideration, the shortfall in Analysis Area 1 is exacerbated by a single 3G pitch.
- ◀ Although no other sports are presently identified as accessing the existing stock of 3G pitches, that it is not to say that there is no demand from clubs e.g. rugby union clubs.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

PART 4: CRICKET

4.1: Introduction

Cheshire Cricket Board is the main governing and representative body for cricket across Wirral. Its aim is to promote the game at all levels through partnerships with professional and recreational cricket clubs, and other appropriate agencies. The ECB's refreshed strategy called 'Inspiring Generations' was announced in January 2019 and is further detailed within Appendix One: Sporting Context.

Consultation

There are 15 clubs currently playing in Wirral, all of which responded to requests for consultation resulting in a response rate of 100%.

4.2: Supply

There are 25 grass wicket squares in Wirral located across 19 sites. Of these, 24 squares across 18 sites are available for community use. Analysis Area 6 accommodates the most provision, with nine grass squares each, whilst analysis areas 2 and 3 have no cricket provision.

The square unavailable for community use is located at Wirral Grammar School for Boys. The site previously hosted two squares but now provides just one.

Table 4.1: Summary of community available grass wicket squares

Analysis area ³²	No. of grass wicket squares
1	6
2	0
3	0
4	2
5	4
6	9
7	3
Wirral	24

Non-turf pitches (NTPs)

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

In Wirral, five NTPs accompany grass wicket squares, with all of these being available for community use. In addition, eight standalone NTPs are identified. Of these, three are disused, three are unavailable for community use and two are available for community use. A summary of NTPs across the Wirral can be seen in the table below.

³² [Click for analysis areas](#)

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

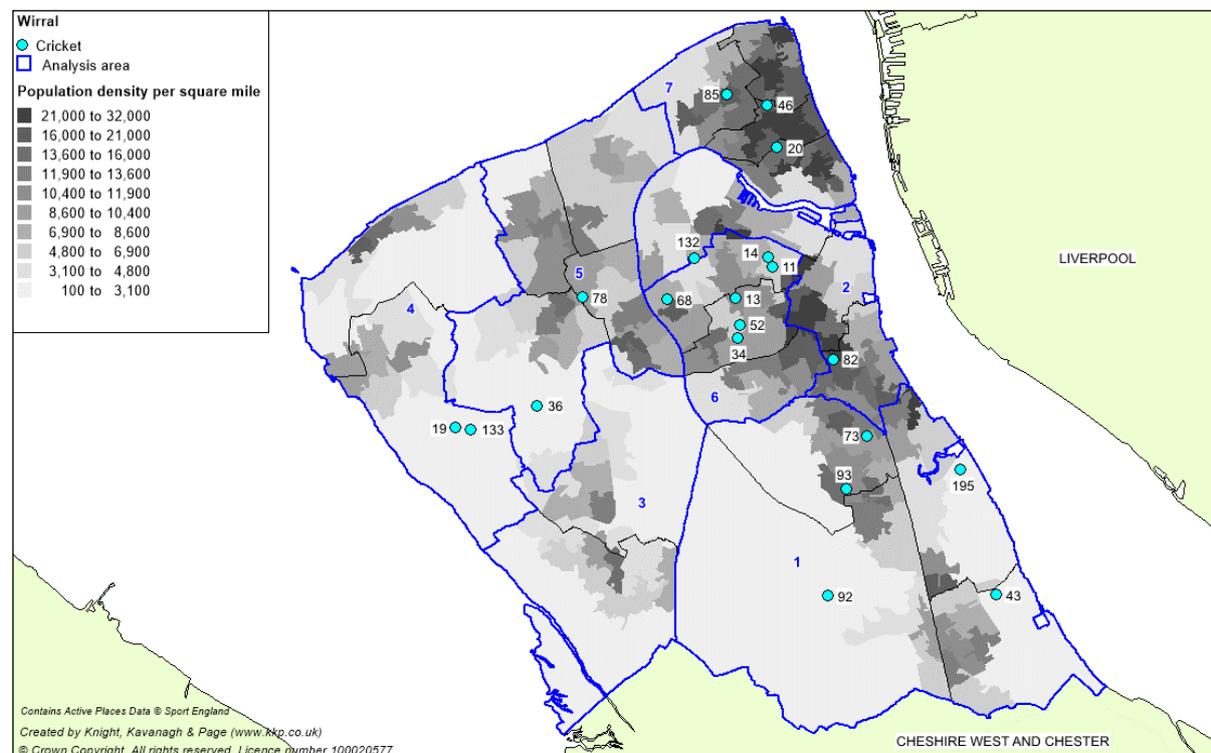
Table 4.2: Summary of NTPs

Site ID	Site	Analysis area ³³	Community use?	No. of NTPs	Position
19	Calday Grange Grammar School STP	4	No-disused	1	Standalone
36	Irby Cricket Club	5	Yes	2	Square
39	Kingsmead School	4	No	1	Standalone
59	Ridgeway High School	6	No	1	Standalone
67	South Wirral High School	1	No-disused	2	Standalone
72	The Oldershaw School	7	No	1	Standalone
76	Thornton Hough	1	Yes	1	Standalone
78	Upton Cricket Club	5	Yes	1	Square
92	Wirral Cricket Club	1	Yes	1	Square
133	Caldy Sports Club	4	Yes	1	Square
147	Birkenhead School (McAllister Memorial Field)	6	Yes	1	Standalone

In addition, Oxton Cricket Club also previously hosted an NTP, however, this has recently been removed and replaced by an additional grass wicket.

For the location of all cricket squares, see Figure 4.1 below. For a key to the map, see Table 4.9.

Figure 4.1: Location of cricket provision in Wirral



³³ [Click for analysis areas](#)

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Lapsed/disused provision

Playing fields which have previously accommodated formal pitch provision are categorised as either disused or lapsed. A disused site is a playing field which is not being used at all by any users and is not available for community hire either. Once these sites are disused for five or more years they will then be categorised as 'lapsed sites'.

A lapsed site is a playing field last used more than five years ago. These fall outside of Sport England's statutory remit but still have to be assessed using the criteria in paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Sport England would nonetheless challenge a proposed loss of playing pitches/playing field which fails to meet such criteria.

The playing field site at The Mosslands School is now lapsed, with aerial imagery indicating that the site was last in use up to around 2007. The site accommodated two youth 11v11 football pitches and a non-turf cricket wicket.

The Octel Sports & Social Club previously accommodated two adult football pitches and a cricket square, although in recent years the cricket square has been removed, with this area being marked for mini football instead. There is a current planning application for the construction of 106 houses on site with all sports facilities set to be lost. A Sports Needs Assessment has been conducted and proposes a range of mitigation measures, none of which have been agreed at the time of writing. The cricket partner's response was to highlight the need for improved practice facilities at clubs within the catchment area of the site, with provision currently presenting barriers to participation and growth.

Noctorum Road Playing Fields is subject to a pre-application enquiry by Birkenhead School. The detached playing field site currently accommodates a senior rugby pitch and a grass cricket square as well as ancillary and car parking facilities. Discussions regarding potential mitigation are on-going between Sport England, the Council and the School and their agents.

Torr Park, Eastham previously accommodated a grass cricket square. It is not known to have been utilised in over 10 years and so is now a lapsed site.

ECB Ball Strike

Where there is either new cricket provision being put in place, or more commonly where there is a development which may prejudice the use of an existing cricket facility, there is a requirement for a full ball strike risk assessment to be undertaken and appropriate mitigation put in place as part of the development. As such, the ECB recommends that the clubs and organisations seek to have a ball strike risk assessment undertaken; further information can be provided by the ECB.

A recent ball strike risk assessment at Oxton Cricket Club's second square has identified mitigation is required to protect users and adjacent properties and their inhabitants from ball strike and potential risk of damage to property and injury to person. Without this identified mitigation the site is not suitable for adult cricket and should not be considered as appropriate for match equivalent adult sessions. Planning permission has been granted for mitigation and as such the ground should only be used for adult cricket once this agreed mitigation is in place.

Security of tenure

Most clubs are considered to have secure tenure arrangements at their respective home venues. Tranmere Vics, Port Sunlight, Birkenhead St Marys, Parkfield Liscard, Birkenhead Park, Merseyside and Cultural Club and Wallasey cricket clubs all access Council owned provision and as such, these agreements are considered to be secure as it is unlikely that access to these sites will be lost.

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Wirral CC has a long-term lease agreement from a private owner, whilst Caldy CC has a long-term lease agreement from the National Trust. Irby, Oxton, New Brighton and Old Parkonians cricket clubs own their respective home sites, whereas Maritime CC has a lease agreement from a private owner for its home venue at The Green, Brombrough Pool. As such, all of these clubs are considered to have security of tenure.

Only Upton CC is deemed to have an unsecure agreement. The Club had a lease agreement from a private owner for its site; however, this expired in September 2020. It is currently negotiating a new arrangement.

Pitch quality

The quality of cricket pitches has been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the ECB) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>80%), Standard (50-79%), Poor (<49%). Maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of cricket; if the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous. As an example, if a square is poor quality, a ball can bounce erratically on a wicket and become a danger to nearby players.

For the full assessment criteria, please see Appendix 2.

The non-technical assessment of community available grass wicket squares in Wirral found 15 squares to be good quality and nine to be standard quality.

Table 4.3: Quality ratings for community available grass wicket squares (site by site)

Site ID	Site	Analysis area ³⁴	No. of squares	Square quality
11	Birkenhead Park Cricket Club	6	2	Good
13	Birkenhead School	6	1	Good
14	Birkenhead St Mary's Cricket Club	4	1	Good
19	Caldy Grange Grammar School STP	4	1	Standard
20	Central Park	7	1	Standard
34	HM Curphey Memorial Ground	6	1	Good
36	Irby Cricket Club	5	2	Good
43	Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields	1	3	Good
46	New Brighton Cricket Club	7	1	Good
52	Oxton Cricket Club	6	1	Good
			1	Standard
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	1	Standard
78	Upton Cricket Club	5	1	Good
			1	Standard
82	Victoria Park	2	1	Standard
85	Wallasey Cricket Club	7	1	Good

³⁴ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Site ID	Site	Analysis area ³⁴	No. of squares	Square quality
92	Wirral Cricket Club	1	1	Standard
132	New Brighton Cricket Club (Wayfarers Ground)	6	1	Standard
133	Caldy Sports Club	4	1	Good
195	Maritime Cricket Club	1	1	Standard

Whilst no community available squares are considered to be poor quality, the square at Wirral Grammar School for Boys is assessed as poor. This has led to the School playing its own fixtures off-site.

Pitches located at Caldly Sports Club and Birkenhead St Mary's Cricket Club are subject to dog fouling, unofficial use and damage to the playing surfaces, although this is not perceived to negatively impact square quality. Rabbit holes are also known to cause issues to the outfield at Caldly Sports Club and the outfield reportedly needs levelling, whilst the outfield at Birkenhead St Mary's Cricket Club is reported to drain poorly.

Similarly, dog fouling, litter and glass is reported to be prevalent at Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields and Maritime Cricket Club (The Green, Bromborough Pool). The latter has also suffered from vandalism.

Birkenhead Park is also prone to dog fouling and unofficial use. Pitch quality at this site is reported as being slightly poorer when compared to previous years due to football training and matches taking place on the outfield.

Tranmere Vics CC indicates that the outfield at Victoria Park has become rutted due to a lack of maintenance throughout recent lockdown periods. Furthermore, the outfield is said to be cut inadequately, leaving the grass too long.

Wirral CC reports that the square at Wirral Cricket Club is worsening due to poor maintenance undertaken by the Club and the outfield and wickets being uneven. In contrast, Old Parkonians CC reports that square quality has improved recently due to increased maintenance, although the outfield still suffers from poor drainage.

Parkfield Liscard CC also highlights poor drainage as an issue at Central Park and reports that pitch quality has deteriorated since last season due to more rainfall. In addition to this, the site is subject to vandalism, dog fouling, unofficial use and litter.

Merseyside and Cultural Club CC reports that the squares and outfields are uneven at The Oval Leisure Centre.

To obtain a full technical assessment of wicket and pitches, the ECB recommends a Performance Quality Standard (PQS) assessment. The PQS looks at a cricket square to ascertain whether the pitch meets the Performance Quality Standards, which are benchmarked by the GMA.

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Table 4.4: Performance Quality Standard ratings

Quality rating	Details
Premier (High)	Where the surface is intended for Premier League play, with those within the top quartile capable of holding minor county and 1st class one day matches. May include some of the better schools and university pitches
Club (Standard)	A Club pitch suitable for league, school and junior cricket
Basic	An acceptable level suitable for recreational cricket and where the surface is designed and maintained within tight financial limitations such as local authorities
Unsuitable	This is where the surface is deemed unfit or unsafe for play

Three different reports can be produced following an assessment (comprehensive/mini/verbal), with these varying in cost. A fully comprehensive report includes soil testing and guidance on machinery and corrective procedures, a mini report includes guidance on machinery and corrective procedures and a verbal report is a spoken version of a mini report. Clubs in Wirral can arrange an assessment via an enquiry form on Cheshire Cricket Board's website. Cheshire Cricket Board employs three ECB County pitch advisors.

Ancillary facilities

The audit of ancillary facilities determines that, where known, 11 sites are serviced by good quality changing facilities, four by standard quality and one by a poor quality facility (The Oval Leisure Centre).

Table 4.5: Ancillary facility quality (where known)

Site ID	Site	Analysis area ³⁵	No. of squares	Ancillary facility quality
11	Birkenhead Park Cricket Club	6	2	Good
14	Birkenhead St Mary's Cricket Club	6	1	Good
19	Calday Grange Grammar School STP	4	1	Standard
20	Central Park	7	1	Good
34	HM Curphey Memorial Ground	6	1	Good
36	Irby Cricket Club	5	1	Good
43	Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields	1	3	Good
46	New Brighton Cricket Club	7	1	Good
52	Oxton Cricket Club	6	2	Good
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	2	Poor
78	Upton Cricket Club	5	2	Good
82	Victoria Park	2	1	Standard
85	Wallasey Cricket Club	7	1	Good
92	Wirral Cricket Club	1	1	Good
133	Caldy Sports Club	4	1	Standard
195	Maritime Cricket Club	1	1	Standard

Port Sunlight CC reports that it has recently constructed a new pavilion at Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields with funding support from the ECB and Sport England. Wirral Council has agreed a 25-year lease agreement with the Club for use of the pavilion.

³⁵ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Consultation reveals car parking facilities are insufficient at Victoria Park, Central Park, The Oval Leisure Centre, Birkenhead Park Cricket Club and Birkenhead St Mary's Cricket Club. Furthermore, vandalism is reported to have occurred in the recent past at Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields, Caldy Sports Club, Birkenhead Park, Birkenhead St Mary's Cricket Club and Maritime Cricket Club. This includes damage to pavilions, portable covers, break-ins, damage to external lighting and fittings, graffiti and broken sight screens.

Training facilities

Access to cricket nets is important, particularly for pre-season/winter training. Of the responding clubs, six indicate demand for additional training net facilities at their respective home sites. Tranmere Vics, Birkenhead Park and Wirral cricket clubs report an ambition for more practice nets whilst Irby and New Brighton cricket clubs have demand for mobile net cages.

Old Parkonians CC aspires to install an NTP on the square and off field practice areas at HM Curphey Memorial Ground. Similarly, Port Sunlight CC reports demand for an NTP and updated practice net facilities, whilst Parkfield Liscard and Maritime cricket clubs have ambitions for NTPs to be installed at their home venues.

Caldy CC reports demand to replace the NTP at its second site, Calday Grange Grammar School, as well as a mobile training net to facilitate training sessions at this site.

4.3: Demand

Please note that the demand figures in this section are based on club demand for the 2020 season from consultation data. However, due to Covid-19 and subsequent restrictions limiting play during the season, the data considers what play would have taken place had there not been a pandemic (based on a normal set of fixtures), rather than what actually took place. Therefore, consultation data has been adjusted (where necessary and with the advice of the Cheshire Cricket Board) to provide an accurate picture of demand in what are unprecedented times, with play being halted at various points over the last 12 months.

There are 15 cricket clubs playing in Wirral, fielding a total of 115 teams. As a breakdown, this equates to 65 senior men's, two senior women's, 46 junior boys' and two junior girls' teams.

Table 4.6: Summary of teams

Club name	Analysis area ³⁶	No. of competitive teams			
		Senior men's	Senior women's	Junior boys'	Junior girls'
Birkenhead Park CC	6	5	-	4	-
Birkenhead St Marys CC	6	2	-	-	-
Caldy CC	4	7	-	6	-
Irby CC	5	5	-	5	-
Maritime CC	1	2	-	-	-
Merseyside and Cultural Club CC	1	1	-	-	-
New Brighton CC	7	7	-	5	-
Old Parkonians CC	6	3	-	1	-
Oxton CC	6	7	1	6	-
Parkfield Liscard CC	7	2	-	1	-
Port Sunlight CC	1	5	-	6	-
Tranmere Vics CC	2	3	-	-	-

³⁶ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Club name	Analysis area ³⁶	No. of competitive teams			
		Senior men's	Senior women's	Junior boys'	Junior girls'
Upton CC	5	8	1	5	2
Wallasey CC	7	5	-	5	-
Wirral CC	1	3	-	2	-
Total		65	2	46	2

Exported demand

Displaced or exported demand refers to Wirral based teams that are currently accessing facilities outside of the local authority for their home fixtures, normally because their pitch requirements cannot be met. This is usually because of a lack of access to squares, in some cases quality issues, or stipulated league requirements for access to a certain standard of provision.

No demand is identified as being exported outside of Wirral.

Imported demand

Imported demand refers to any demand from neighbouring local authorities that accesses facilities within Wirral due to a lack of available facilities in other local authorities where such team or club is based.

There is no known imported demand into Wirral.

Future demand

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts. In addition, the Strategy & Action Plan that follows this report will contain housing growth scenarios that will estimate the additional demand for cricket arising from housing development plans within Wirral.

Notwithstanding the above, the ECB's five-year media rights deals, from 2020-2024 includes a continuation of the ECB relationship with Sky Sports, now extending beyond broadcasting as a genuine partnership to secure significant investment and commitment to increase participation and drive engagement. Together, significant investment in participation and increased free to air media coverage could see future demand increase to levels in excess of those anticipated through the PPS and the impact should therefore be reviewed over coming years. This being said, it is unknown if the Covid-19 pandemic will affect this.

Population forecasts

Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future (2037) based on population growth. As seen, no additional cricket teams are expected to be generated through population growth alone due to decreasing population numbers within the relevant age bands.

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Table 4.8: Team generation rates

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate ³⁷	Future population within age group	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Mens (18-55)	71,220	58	1:1,228	56,645	46	0
Senior Womens (18-55)	74,917	2	1:37,459	58,202	1	0
Junior Boys (7-18)	23,381	46	1:508	17,156	33	0
Junior Girls (7-18)	22,299	2	1:11,150	16,925	1	0

Although no women and girls' teams are predicted to be created via population growth alone, consultation with the ECB suggests that further development of female cricket in Wirral is likely as it is currently a national priority to increase women and girl's participation. It is therefore important to acknowledge that there are plans and strategies to increase the number of teams and some formats beyond what current trends and population changes would ordinarily suggest.

Participation increases

Of the responding clubs, nine indicate aspirations to increase levels of participation. This includes Tranmere Vics, Oxton, Maritime and Birkenhead St Marys cricket clubs, which all report ambitions to add a single junior team, whilst Old Parkonians CC is looking to establish two junior teams.

Birkenhead Park CC, Caldy CC and Irby CC all aspire to add a women's team, whilst the latter also plans to field an additional junior team. Port Sunlight CC has ambitions of providing an additional men's and an additional junior team, whereas Merseyside and Cultural Club CC hopes to establish a further two men's teams.

Table 4.7: Team participation increases

Club name	Analysis area ³⁸	Senior men's	Senior women's	Junior boys'	Junior girls'
Birkenhead Park CC	6	-	1	-	-
Birkenhead St Marys CC	6	2	-	1	-
Caldy CC	4	-	1	-	-
Irby CC	5	-	1	1	-
Maritime CC	1	-	-	1	-
Merseyside and Cultural Club CC	1	2	-	-	-
Old Parkonians CC	6	-	-	2	-
Oxton CC	6	-	-	1	-
Port Sunlight CC	1	1	-	1	-
Tranmere Vics CC	2	-	-	1	-
	Total	5	3	8	0

³⁷ Please note TGR figures are rounded to the lowest whole number.

³⁸ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Last Man Stands

Last Man Stands (LMS) was founded in 2005. The social outdoor eight-a-side T20 cricket game is played midweek, lasts approximately two hours and is generally played on non-turf wickets. All eight wickets are required to bowl a team out so when the seventh wicket falls, the 'Last Man Stands' on his own. This shorter format of the game has encouraged more people to participate in the sport and is increasing in popularity.

There is a single LMS league in operation in Wirral which is based at Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields. Whilst the teams competing in the league have not been considered in the figures above, demand has been added to the squares on site in the supply and demand analysis below.

All Stars Cricket

In partnership with the ECB and Chance to Shine cricket clubs in Wirral can register to become an ECB All Stars Cricket Centre. Once registered, a club can deliver the programme which aims to introduce cricket to children aged from five to eight. Subsequently, this may lead to increased interest and demand for junior cricket at clubs. The programme seeks to achieve the following aims:

- ◀ Increase cricket activity for five to eight year olds in the school and club environment
- ◀ Develop consistency of message in both settings to aid transition
- ◀ Improve generic movement skills for children, using cricket as the vehicle
- ◀ Make it easier for new volunteers to support and deliver in the club environment
- ◀ Use fun small sided games to enthuse new children and volunteers to follow and play the game

In 2019, Birkenhead Park, Caldy, Irby, New Brighton, Old Parkonians, Oxton, Port Sunlight and Wirral cricket clubs all operated All Stars Cricket sessions. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, none of these clubs ran All Stars Cricket sessions through 2020 but they are all expected to bring these back in 2021, if regulations permit.

In addition, Wallasey CC are to run All Stars in 2021 for the first time.

Dynamos cricket

A key development area for the ECB in delivering on the outcomes of 'Inspiring Generations' will be the Dynamos Cricket programme for 8-11 year olds which originally aimed to launch in 2020. It plans on building on the significant growth of the All Stars Cricket programme for 5-8 year olds established in 2017 and will develop the pathway to retain juniors progressing from All Stars Cricket into Dynamos Cricket.

Where All Stars Cricket seeks to engage children in cricket activity and learning the skills, Dynamos Cricket seeks to engage children in learning how to play, introducing a modified soft ball format as competitive progression with a view to eventual transition through to hardball cricket. The programme will be strongly linked to The Hundred, a new short format competition which also aimed to launch in 2020 (pre-Covid-19).

Dynamos cricket activity will generally take place midweek to coincide with junior training sessions. The ECB are now hoping to begin Dynamos cricket for the 2021 cricket season, with Birkenhead Park, Irby, Maritime, Old Parkonians, Oxton, Parkfield Liscard, Tranmere Vics and Wirral cricket clubs signing up to deliver the programme.

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Softball cricket

Softball cricket is an ECB initiative aimed at women and girls to increase participation in cricket as a sport. The aim of softball cricket sections is enjoyment and participation, without pads, a hardball, a heavy bat and limited rules. Sessions are played on the outfield and follow a festival format with each session running for a maximum of two and half hours, shorter than traditional formats.

No known softball cricket teams currently operate in Wirral, although the future demand expressed above by Birkenhead Park CC is for this form of the game. The Club is due to launch the team in 2021.

In addition, Irby CC has recently launched a successful women's section and hopes to feature softball matches and festivals from 2021 onwards.

It should be noted that All Stars, Dynamos and Softball cricket generally takes place on the cricket outfields rather than the actual squares. Although this does not impact the carrying capacity of the square it does influence the accessibility of the squares as whilst the outfield is in use the main square cannot be used to accommodate fixtures. Therefore, this may limit the potential spare capacity whilst these activities are taking place, generally on midweek evenings or Sunday mornings.

Future demand summary

Five senior men's, three senior women's and eight junior boys' teams are likely to be created through team participation increases alone. In addition, due to anticipated demand growth in women's and girls' cricket through ECB initiatives, one senior women's and one junior girls team are also projected in each of analysis areas 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7, although aspirations from Birkenhead Park, Irby and Caldy cricket clubs absorb some of this demand.

Accounting for the above, future demand to be carried through to the supply and demand analysis equates to five senior men's, five senior women's, eight junior boys and five junior girls' teams.

Peak time demand

An analysis of match play identifies peak time demand for cricket in Wirral as Saturday for senior men's, Sunday for senior women and Midweek for junior teams.

For junior cricket, peak time demand varies between Sundays and midweek, with clubs generally arranging the fixtures to best suit their needs. As a result, squares have greater capacity to carry junior demand as play can be spread across numerous days (providing the squares are not overplayed).

4.4: Capacity analysis

Capacity analysis for cricket is measured on a seasonal rather than a weekly basis. This is due to playability (as only one match is generally played per pitch per day at weekends or weekday evening) and because wickets are rotated throughout the season to reduce wear and tear and to allow for repair.

The capacity of a square to accommodate matches is driven by the number and quality of wickets. This section of the report presents the current pitch stock available for cricket and illustrates the number of competitive matches per season per square.

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For good quality squares, capacity is considered to be five matches per wicket per season, whilst for a standard quality square, capacity is four matches per wicket per season. For poor quality squares, no capacity is considered to exist as such provision is not safe for play.

The number of matches played by each team has been derived from consultation with the clubs. Where consultation was not possible, the assumption has been made that all senior teams play between ten and 12 home matches per year and all junior teams play between four and eight matches per year depending on their age and level of competition.

The above is used to allocate capacity ratings as follows:

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

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

The capacity analysis assumes that all clubs rotate their wickets evenly. However, this may not be the case at all sites, with central wickets potentially used more commonly than outer wickets that are closer to a boundary, especially for senior matches. The idea is to showcase what the capacity is or could be if best practice is followed for the whole square, rather than doing it on a wicket-by-wicket basis.

Where wickets are provided at school sites, use by the schools themselves has been added to current play. Where possible, this has been informed via consultation, although where information is not known, play is considered to equate to ten match equivalents sessions per season.

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Table 4.9: Capacity of grass cricket squares

Site ID	Site name	Community use?	Analysis area ³⁹	Security of tenure	Club name	No. of squares	Pitch quality	No. of grass wickets	Capacity (sessions per season)	Actual play (sessions per season)	Capacity rating (sessions per season)	Potential spare capacity for senior cricket? (Saturday)	Potential spare capacity for senior cricket? (Sunday)	Potential spare capacity for junior cricket?
11	Birkenhead Park Cricket Club	Yes	6	Secure	Birkenhead Park CC	2	Good	11	55	48	7	No	No	Yes
								6	30	32	2	No	No	No
13	Birkenhead School	Yes-unused	6	Secure	-	1	Good	10	50	10	40	Yes	Yes	Yes
14	Birkenhead St Mary's Cricket Club	Yes	6	Secure	Birkenhead St Marys CC	1	Good	9	45	30	15	No	Yes	Yes
19	Caldy Grange Grammar School STP	Yes	4	Unsecure	Caldy CC	1	Standard	8	32	37	5	No	No	No
20	Central Park	Yes	7	Secure	Parkfield Liscard CC	1	Standard	10	40	40	0	No	No	No
34	HM Curphey Memorial Ground	Yes	6	Secure	Old Parkonians CC	1	Good	14	70	35	35	No	Yes	Yes
36	Irby Cricket Club	Yes	5	Secure	Irby CC	2	Good	12	60	30	30	No	Yes	Yes
								10	50	23	27	Yes	Yes	Yes
43	Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields	Yes	1	Secure	Port Sunlight CC	3	Good	11	55	64	9	No	No	No
								10	50	32	18	Yes	Yes	Yes
								9	45	11	34	Yes	Yes	Yes
46	New Brighton Cricket Club	Yes	7	Secure	New Brighton CC	1	Good	9	45	93	48	No	No	No
52	Oxton Cricket Club	Yes	6	Secure	Oxton CC	2	Good	9	45	53	8	No	No	No
							Standard	6	24	43 ⁴⁰	19	No	No	No
68	St Anselms College Playing Fields	No	6	Secure	-	1	Good	6	30	10	-	No	No	No
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	Yes	1	Secure	Merseyside and Cultural Club CC	2	Standard	12	48	37	11	No	Yes	Yes
78	Upton Cricket Club	Yes	5	Unsecure	Upton CC	2	Good	13	65	47	18	No	No	Yes
							Standard	12	48	71	23	No	No	No
82	Victoria Park	Yes	2	Secure	Tranmere Vics CC	1	Standard	11	44	28	16	No	Yes	Yes
85	Wallasey Cricket Club	Yes	7	Secure	Wallasey CC	1	Good	10	50	80	30	No	No	No
92	Wirral Cricket Club	Yes	1	Secure	Wirral CC	1	Standard	14	56	41	15	No	No	Yes
93	Wirral Grammar School for Boys	No	1	Secure	-	1	Poor	16	0	0	-	No	No	No
133	Caldy Sports Club	Yes	4	Secure	Caldy CC	1	Good	10	50	53	3	No	No	No
132	New Brighton Cricket Club (Wayfarers Ground)	Yes	6	Secure	New Brighton CC	1	Standard	4	16	22	6	No	No	No
195	Maritime Cricket Club	Yes	1	Secure	Maritime CC	1	Standard	12	48	30	18	No	Yes	Yes

Spare capacity is shown in the Capacity ratings (sessions per season) column as this is overall spare capacity on the square across the entire season. This, however, does not mean there is spare capacity at certain peak times. For example, there is no spare capacity on Saturday although there is spare capacity on Sunday. This is explained in greater detail below.

³⁹ [Click for analysis areas](#)

⁴⁰ This includes 22 senior match equivalent sessions that were played on the square last season which is not recommended by the ECB due to the aforementioned ball strike issues on site.

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4.5: Supply and demand analysis

Consideration must be given to the extent to which provision can accommodate current and future demand. As discussed above, future demand equates to five senior men's, five senior women's, eight junior boys and five junior girls' teams. This is a mixture between club aspirational demand and the anticipated demand growth in women's and girls' cricket through ECB initiatives.

Match equivalent sessions for future demand are based on the estimated average number of matches played per season in Wirral by the respective team type.

Senior cricket capacity balance (Saturday)

The below looks at actual spare capacity during the peak period (Saturday) for senior cricket against overplay.

For actual spare capacity, please note that this is converted from the number of squares to match equivalent sessions. This is calculated by using the average number of matches played per season by senior teams (ten) multiplied by the number of additional teams that can be fielded at peak time (one team per 0.5 squares that are available). The entirety of spare capacity available at each site is not used as this number of matches may not be able to be accommodated at peak time (the maximum amount of spare capacity that can be accommodated on one square at peak time is 20 match equivalent sessions per season).

Table 4.10: Capacity balance of grass cricket squares for senior cricket

Analysis area ⁴¹	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Demand (match sessions per season)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Future total
1	30	9	21	30	9
2	-	-		-	-
3	-	-		-	-
4	-	8	8	-	8
5	10	23	13	-	13
6	20	35	15	20	35
7	-	78	78	-	78
Wirral	60	153	93	50	143

Analysis suggests that grass cricket squares across Wirral are currently overplayed, despite levels of actual spare capacity in Analysis Area 1. This is due to significant overplay in Analysis Area 7, although analysis areas 4, 5 and 6 are also overplayed.

When considering future demand, Analysis Area 1 also becomes overplayed whilst overplay in Analysis Area 6 worsens. The overall shortfall amounts to 143 match equivalent sessions.

Senior cricket capacity balance (Sunday)

The table overleaf looks at actual spare capacity on Sunday for cricket against overplay and identified future demand. For this, actual spare capacity is considered in multiples of eight based on the average number of matches played by existing Sunday teams.

⁴¹ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Table 4.11: Capacity balance of grass cricket squares for Sunday

Analysis area ⁴²	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Demand (match sessions per season)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Future total
1	40	9	31	8	23
2	8	-	8	-	8
3	16	-	16	-	16
4	-	8	8	8	16
5	24	23	1	8	7
6	24	35	11	8	19
7	-	78	78	8	86
Wirral	112	153	41	40	81

Currently, grass cricket squares in Wirral are overplayed on Sundays by a total of 41 match equivalent sessions per season. This is caused by significant overplay in Analysis Area 7 although analysis areas 4 and 6 are also overplayed.

After future demand is considered, Analysis Area 5 also becomes overplayed whilst existing overplay is exacerbated in analysis areas 4, 6 and 7. Actual spare capacity is reduced in Analysis Area 1. Overall, overplay increases to 81 match equivalent sessions per season.

Junior cricket capacity balance

For junior cricket, most squares with spare capacity have actual spare capacity for an increase in demand. This is because junior matches are generally played during midweek, where matches can be spread across numerous days, meaning capacity is not limited to two teams. Moreover, the presence of junior wickets at certain sites, as well as NTPs, provide further capacity that is generally not available to senior demand.

For a square to have actual spare capacity for junior cricket, it must not be poor quality or have unsecure tenure and it must not be overplayed; at least five match equivalent sessions of spare capacity are required for an additional junior team to be accommodated (the average number of matches junior teams play per season). Furthermore, a square is not considered to have capacity for an increase in demand if it is already used by six midweek teams or more as availability is then assumed to be limited (on average, clubs are able to play junior fixtures on three nights per week, with other nights reserved for other activity such as All Stars).

Table 4.12: Capacity balance of grass cricket squares for junior cricket

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Spare capacity (match equivalent sessions)	Number of additional teams that could be accommodated
11	Birkenhead Park Cricket Club	6	7	1
13	Birkenhead School	6	50	6
14	Birkenhead St Mary's Cricket Club	6	15	3
34	HM Curphey Memorial Ground	6	35	4
36	Irby Cricket Club	5	30	4
			27	3

⁴² [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Spare capacity (match equivalent sessions)	Number of additional teams that could be accommodated
43	Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields	1	18	3
			34	4
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	11	2
82	Victoria Park	2	16	3
92	Wirral Cricket Club	1	15	3
195	Martime Cricket Club	1	18	3

In total, there is current, actual spare capacity to accommodate a further 39 midweek junior teams across Wirral, with capacity existing in analysis areas 1, 2, 5 and 6.

Future demand estimates that a further 13 midweek junior teams are likely to be generated, suggesting that existing provision is sufficient. However, analysis areas 4 and 7 cannot accommodate an increase in demand without current levels of overplay being exacerbated. One junior girls' team is expected to be generated in Analysis Area 7, whilst one junior boys' and one junior girls' is likely to be created in Analysis Area 4.

Spare capacity

Although a large amount of spare capacity is identified, it is not as simple as to aggregate this into a general oversupply of cricket squares. Of the 17 squares identified with spare capacity, only four are available for further senior cricket activity on a Saturday, amounting to 60 match equivalent sessions. All remaining squares are used to capacity on a Saturday with at least two teams assigned to them as a home venue.

The actual spare capacity is split across analysis areas 1, 5 and 6, with no actual spare capacity for senior cricket existing in the remaining analysis areas.

Table 4.13: Actual spare capacity for senior cricket (Saturday) by analysis area

Analysis area ⁴³	Actual spare capacity (sessions per season)
1	30
2	-
3	-
4	-
5	10
6	20
7	-
Wirral	60

It is worth noting, however, that more squares have spare capacity on a Sunday, meaning additional senior demand could be accommodated outside of the peak period whilst still playing within a competitive league format. The breakdown for Sunday cricket is shown overleaf.

⁴³ [Click for analysis areas](#)

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 4.14: Actual spare capacity for senior cricket (Sunday) by analysis area

Analysis area ⁴⁴	Actual spare capacity (sessions per season)
1	40
2	8
3	16
4	-
5	24
6	24
7	-
Wirral	112

As seen in the table above, actual spare capacity on Sunday equates to 112 match sessions per season, with analysis areas 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 able to accommodate an increase in Sunday cricket.

For junior cricket, 12 of the squares have actual spare capacity during midweek, totalling 276 match equivalent sessions. The reason for this being substantially higher than the capacity for senior cricket is because fixtures can be split across numerous days, meaning more than two home teams can be assigned to a square. It is therefore only clubs with a significant junior membership base that struggle for capacity, such as Oxtou and Caldý cricket clubs.

As seen below, analysis areas 1 and 6 have the most actual spare capacity for junior cricket, with 96 and 107 sessions per season, respectively. Analysis areas 3, 4 and 7 have no actual spare capacity for junior cricket.

Table 4.15: Actual spare capacity for junior cricket by analysis area

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (sessions per season)
1	96
2	16
3	-
4	-
5	57
6	107
7	-
Wirral	276

Overplay

Overplay translates to a site accommodating more demand than it can sustain. While it is possible to sustain certain minimal levels of overplay providing that a regular, sufficient maintenance regime is in place, a resolution is recommended to ensure that there is no detrimental effect on quality over time.

⁴⁴ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Table 4.16: Overplay summary

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁴⁵	Quality	No. of squares	Overplay (match equivalent sessions)
11	Birkenhead Park Cricket Club	6	Good	1	2
19	Caldy Grange Grammar School STP	4	Standard	1	5
43	Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields	1	Good	1	9
46	New Brighton Cricket Club	7	Good	1	48
52	Oxton Cricket Club	6	Good	1	8
			Standard	1	19
78	Upton Cricket Club	2	Standard	1	23
85	Wallasey Cricket Club	7	Good	1	30
133	Caldy Sports Club	4	Good	1	3
132	New Brighton Cricket Club (Wayfarers)	6	Standard	1	6

In Wirral, overplay is identified at nine sites and cumulatively totals 153 match equivalent sessions per season. Analysis Area 7 accommodates the most overplay with 78 match equivalent sessions, followed by Analysis Area 6 with 35 match equivalent sessions. The only analysis areas that do not accommodate any overplay are 2 and 3.

Table 4.17: Overplay by analysis area

Analysis area	Overplay (sessions per season)
1	9
2	-
3	-
4	8
5	23
6	35
7	78
Wirral	153

⁴⁵ [Click for analysis areas](#)

Cricket – supply and demand summary

- ◀ Overall, there is a current shortfall of 93 match equivalent sessions on Saturdays and 41 match equivalent sessions on Sundays, however, there is actual spare capacity midweek.
- ◀ When considering future demand, the shortfall on Saturdays increases to 143 match equivalent sessions per season and to 81 match equivalent sessions per season on Sundays whilst actual spare capacity for Sunday and midweek cricket reduces.
- ◀ Of the 14 squares identified with spare capacity, only four are available for further senior cricket activity on a Saturday, amounting to 60 match equivalent sessions (actual spare capacity).
- ◀ Overplay is identified at nine sites and cumulatively totals 153 match equivalent sessions per season.

Cricket – supply summary

- ◀ There are 25 grass wicket squares in Wirral located across 19 sites. Of these, 24 squares across 18 sites are available for community use.
- ◀ In Wirral, five NTPs accompany grass wicket squares which are all available for community use. In addition, nine standalone NTPs are identified, of which, three are disused, three are unavailable for community use and three are available for community use.
- ◀ The second square at Oxton Cricket Club is not considered able to accommodate adult cricket until agreed mitigation is in place to alleviate ball strike issues on site.
- ◀ Only Upton CC is deemed to have an unsecure tenure agreement at its home site, Upton Cricket Club. The Club's lease agreement expired in September 2020 and it is currently negotiating a new lease agreement.
- ◀ The non-technical assessment of community available grass wicket squares in Wirral found 15 squares to be good quality and nine of standard quality.
- ◀ Although no community available poor quality squares are identified, the square unavailable for community use at Wirral Grammar School for Boys is assessed as poor.
- ◀ The audit of ancillary facilities determines that, where known, 11 sites are serviced by good quality facilities, four by standard quality and one by a poor-quality facility.
- ◀ Of the responding clubs, six indicated demand for additional training net facilities and three reported demand for NTPs at their respective home sites whilst Caldy CC reports to demand to replace the NTP at its second site and provide a mobile training net to facilitate training sessions here.

Cricket – demand summary

- ◀ There are 15 cricket clubs playing in Wirral, fielding a total of 115 teams.
- ◀ Of the responding clubs, nine indicate aspirations to increase levels of participation. In total, this equates to five senior men's, two senior women's and eight junior boys'.
- ◀ However, due to anticipated growth in women's and girls' cricket through ECB initiatives, total future demand increases to five senior men's, five senior women's, eight junior boys and five junior girls' teams.

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PART 5: RUGBY UNION

5.1: Introduction

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is split into four areas across the country with a workforce team that covers development, coaching, governance and competitions. Club Developers and community rugby coaches deliver core programmes in schools and clubs across the Wirral.

Its variety of programmes, which include 15 aside, 10 aside, 7 aside, Tag and the O2 Touch programme, all aim to increase and retain participation within the game. In order to sustain and increase participation, facilities need to be appropriate, affordable and accessible.

Consultation

There are 11 community clubs currently based in Wirral. Of these, 10 responded to requests for consultation resulting in a response rate of 91%. The only unresponsive club is Wallasey RFC. A full breakdown can be seen in the table below.

Table 5.1: Rugby club response rate

Club name	Responded?
Anselmians RFC	Yes
Birkenhead Park RFC	Yes
Caldy RFC	Yes
Hoylake RFC	Yes
New Brighton RFC	Yes
Oldershaw RFC	Yes
Oxton Parkonians RFC	Yes
Port Sunlight RFC	Yes
Prenton RFC	Yes
Wallasey RFC	No
Wirral RFC	Yes

5.2: Supply

Within Wirral there are 68 rugby union pitches across 23 sites. Of these, 55 pitches across 17 sites are available for community use, which as a breakdown consists of 38 senior, one junior and 16 mini pitches.

Table 5.2: Summary of grass rugby union pitches available for community use

Analysis area ⁴⁶	No. of senior pitches	No. of junior pitches	No. of mini pitches
1	12	-	1
2	-	-	-
3	-	-	-
4	8	-	15
5	3	-	-
6	10	1	-
7	5	-	-
Wirral	38	1	16

⁴⁶ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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It should be noted that 14 of the 16 mini rugby union pitches across the Borough are located at Caldy Sports Club.

The audit only identifies dedicated, line marked pitches. However, it is common for junior and mini matches to be played on senior pitches via the use of cones and this is the case across Wirral. For rugby union pitch dimension sizes please see the table below.

Table 5.3: Pitch dimensions

Age	Pitch type	Maximum pitch dimensions (metres) ⁴⁷
U7	Mini	20 x 12
U8	Mini	45 x 22
U9	Mini	60 x 30
U10	Mini	60 x 35
U11	Mini	60 x 43
U12	Mini	60 x 43
U13	Junior	90 x 60 (60 x 43 for girls)
U14 +	Senior	100 x 70 ⁴⁸

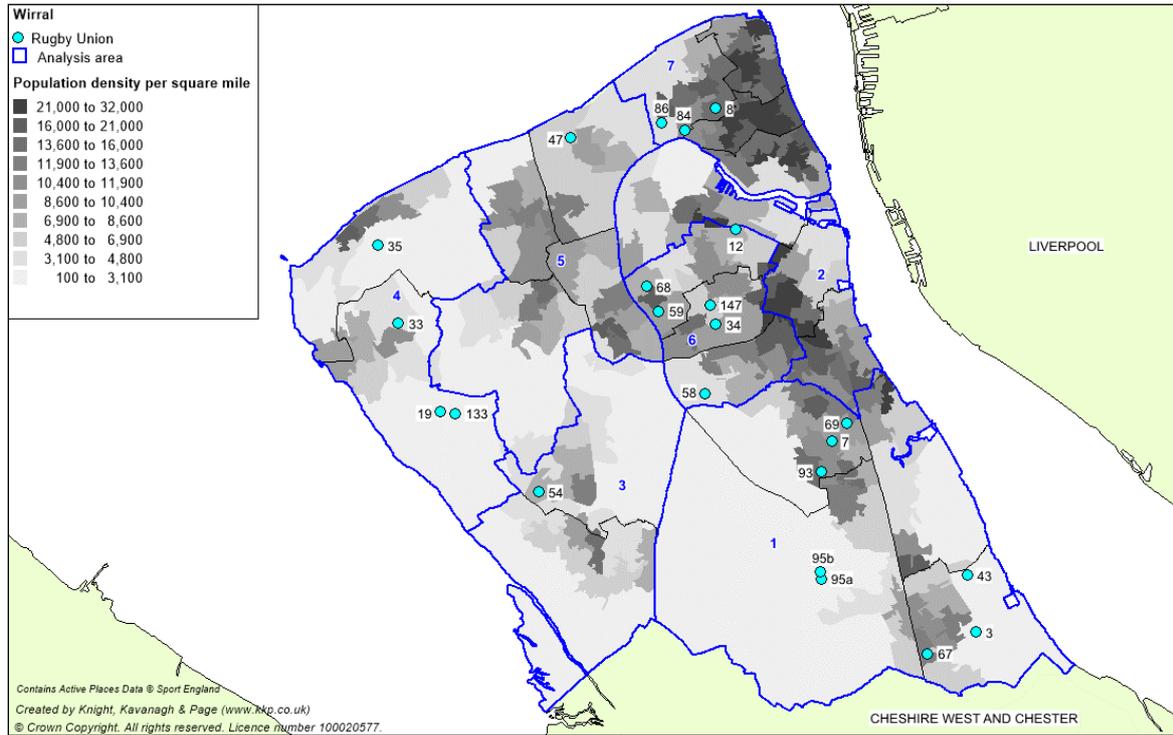
Figure 5.1 identifies the location of the rugby union pitches. For a key to the map, see Table 5.6.

⁴⁷ Recommended run off area for all pitch types requires five-metres each way and a minimum in-goal length of six metres.

⁴⁸ Minimum dimensions of 94 x 68 metres are accepted.

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Figure 5.1: Location of rugby union pitches within Wirral



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Lapsed/disused sites

Noctorum Road Playing Fields is subject to a pre-application enquiry by Birkenhead School. The detached playing field site currently accommodates a senior rugby pitch and a grass cricket square as well as ancillary and car parking facilities. Discussions regarding potential mitigation are on-going between Sport England, the Council and the School and their agents.

The playing field site at The Mosslands School is now lapsed, with aerial imagery indicating that the site was last in use up to around 2007. The site accommodated a senior rugby pitch

In addition, whilst still operational as playing field sites, a third pitch was previously provided at Hoylake Rugby Football Club.

Future supply

Prenton RFC is working to convert its training area into a full-size, floodlit senior pitch.

Security of tenure

Of the responding clubs, only Wirral RFC highlights concerns regarding security of tenure. Whilst the front field at its site is on a long-term lease agreement, the back field is only on a ten-year lease and this is up for renewal. The Club reports that this is at a high cost although it is keen to extend the agreement due to the number of pitches accommodated.

Port Sunlight RFC is in the process of agreeing new terms with the Council and Port Sunlight Cricket Club following the completion of the clubhouse development at Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields.

New Brighton, Hoylake, Anselmians, Oxtan Parkonians and Prenton rugby clubs all own their respective home venues. Oldershaw RFC rents pitches at Belvidere Recreation Ground from the Council whilst Caldy RFC has a long-term lease agreement from the National Trust.

Pitch quality

The quality of rugby pitches across Wirral has been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by RFU) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

The methodology for assessing rugby pitch quality looks at two key elements: the maintenance programme and the level of drainage on each pitch. An overall quality based on both drainage and maintenance can then be generated. The agreed rating for each pitch type also represents actions required to improve pitch quality. A breakdown of actions required based on the ratings can be seen below:

For the full assessment criteria, please see Appendix 2.

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Table 5.4: Definition of maintenance categories

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

Table 5.5: Definition of drainage categories

Category	Definition
D0	Action is pipe drainage system is needed on pitch
D1	Action is pipe drainage is needed on pitch
D2	Action is slit drainage is needed on pitch
D3	No action is needed on pitch drainage

Table 5.6: Quality ratings based on maintenance and drainage scores

		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	Poor	Poor	Standard
	Natural Adequate (D1)	Poor	Standard	Good
	Pipe Drained (D2)	Standard	Standard	Good
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	Standard	Good	Good

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

Of the community available pitches in Wirral, two are assessed as good quality, 37 as standard quality and 16 as poor quality.

The three senior pitches at New Brighton Rugby Club are assessed as poor quality. Linked to this, the Club aspires to install drainage on the back two pitches and is currently looking for funding options to support this.

Similarly, Oxtan Parkonians RFC is saving and fundraising to replace the drainage on the playing pitches at HM Curphey Memorial Ground. The Club indicates that the existing drainage system has degraded in recent years and was originally installed in the 1990s. The three pitches at the site are currently assessed as standard quality.

Oldershaw RFC reports the pitches at Belvidere Recreation Ground have pot holes and that they are uneven. Rubbish, litter and broken glass is also said to be an issue on site, with the pitches consequently being assessed as poor.

Despite having new pitches developed at Anselmians Rugby Football Club, the Club states that pitch quality has actually deteriorated as the surface now holds more water than it did previously. These are, however, still assessed as standard quality due to the sophisticated maintenance regime that is in place.

The first team pitch at Prenton Rugby Club cannot generally be used to accommodate midweek demand as it is used as a driving range during the week.

For quality scores at each site, please refer to the table overleaf.

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Table 5.6: Site quality ratings

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁴⁹	Community use?	Number of pitches	Pitch type	Floodlit?	Non-technical assessment score	Quality rating
3	Anselmians Rugby Football Club	1	Yes	4	Senior	Y	M2 / D0	Standard
					Senior	Y	M2 / D0	Standard
					Senior	Y	M2 / D0	Standard
					Mini	N	M2 / D0	Standard
7	Bebington High Sports College	1	No	1	Mini	N	M0 / D0	Poor
8	Belvidere Recreation Ground	7	Yes	2	Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor
					Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor
12	Birkenhead Park Rugby Club	6	Yes	2	Senior	Y	M1 / D1	Standard
					Senior	Y	M1 / D1	Standard
19	Calday Grange Grammar School	4	Yes	3	Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
					Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
					Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
33	Hilbre High School Sports Centre	4	Yes-unused	1	Mini	N	M0 / D1	Poor
34	HM Curphey Memorial Ground	6	Yes	3	Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
					Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
					Junior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
35	Hoylake Rugby Football Club	4	Yes	2	Senior	Y	M1 / D1	Standard
					Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor
43	Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields	1	Yes	2	Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor
					Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor
47	New Brighton Rugby Club	5	Yes	3	Senior	Y	M1 / D0	Poor
					Senior	Y	M1 / D0	Poor
					Senior	Y	M1 / D0	Poor
54	Pensby Sports Complex	3	No	1	Senior	N	M0 / D0	Poor
58	Prenton Rugby Club	6	Yes	2	Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard

⁴⁹ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁴⁹	Community use?	Number of pitches	Pitch type	Floodlit?	Non-technical assessment score	Quality rating
					Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
59	Ridgeway High School	6	No	1	Senior	N	M0 / D0	Poor
67	South Wirral High School	1	Yes-unused	1	Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor
68	St Anselms College Playing Fields	6	No	4	Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor
					Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor
					Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor
					Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor
69	St John Plessington Catholic College	1	No	1	Senior	N	M0 / D0	Poor
84	Wallacre Recreation Ground	7	Yes	1	Senior	N	M0 / D0	Poor
86	Wallasey Rugby Union Football Club	7	Yes	2	Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
					Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
93	Wirral Grammar School for Boys	1	No	5	Senior	N	M0 / D0	Poor
					Senior	N	M0 / D0	Poor
					Senior	N	M0 / D0	Poor
					Senior	N	M0 / D0	Poor
					Senior	N	M0 / D0	Poor
95a	Wirral Rugby Club	1	Yes	2	Senior	N	M2 / D2	Good
					Senior	N	M2 / D2	Good
95b	Wirral Rugby Club (Back Field)	1	Yes	4	Senior	Y	M1 / D0	Poor
					Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
					Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
					Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
133	Caldy Sports Club	4	Yes	3	Senior	Y	M1 / D1	Standard
					Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
					Senior	N	M1 / D1	Standard
								14
147	Birkenhead School (McAllister Memorial Field)	6	Yes	4	Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor
					Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁴⁹	Community use?	Number of pitches	Pitch type	Floodlit?	Non-technical assessment score	Quality rating
					Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor
					Senior	N	M0 / D1	Poor

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Ancillary facilities

A number of the rugby clubs in Wirral report issues with their ancillary facilities. For example, the provision at New Brighton RFC is said to be dated and in need of general maintenance as well as a new heating system.

Hoyle RFC suggests that it could field more teams if Hoyle Rugby Football Club was supported by improved changing facilities and additional car parking. The site is subject to unauthorised access, vandalism, glass and litter. The Club also has concerns regarding pedestrian access from the town centre, indicating that this is currently via an unmanned level crossing and an unsafe pathway.

Oldershaw RFC is seeking Sport England funding, via crowdfunding, to convert the baths in the clubhouse at Belvidere Recreation Ground into shower facilities. The lack of showers at the Club is a concern for attracting new members.

Caldy RFC also has no showers in the changing rooms at Cald Sports Club. It should also be noted that with the land being owned by the National Trust, developments at Cald Sports Club are restricted. Ideally, the Club would like to replace the entire clubhouse but reports that it would only be able to rebuild the existing building within the same footprint. Overall, ancillary facilities on site are in poor condition and this is considered to be a barrier to increasing participation, especially for women's and girls' rugby.

Prenton RFC has ambitions to develop the clubhouse at its site into a community hub. To facilitate this, it aspires to improve and extend the changing facilities (including dedicated women and girls changing), expand the social space and create a kitchen within the clubhouse.

Wirral RFC also has aspirations to add additional changing rooms on site to adequately accommodate the Club's female demand which is not suitably supported currently.

In contrast, both Anselmians and Port Sunlight rugby clubs have recently provided brand new clubhouse facilities at their respective home sites. At Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields, Port Sunlight RFC would like to use this new facility to establish a sports and social club.

5.3: Demand

Competitive play

There are 11 community rugby union clubs based in Wirral, providing a total of 110 teams. Broken down, this equates to 29 senior men's, two senior women's, 30 junior boys, three junior girls' and 46 mini teams. The largest club in Wirral is Wirral RFC which fields 17 teams, whereas Wallasey RFC fields a single senior team.

Table 5.7: Summary of club demand

Club	Analysis area ⁵⁰	No. of rugby union teams				
		Senior male (19+)	Senior female (19+)	Junior boys (13-18)	Junior girls (13-18)	Mini mixed (6-12)
Anselmians RFC	1	3	-	3	-	6
Birkenhead Park RFC	6	5	1	3	-	6

⁵⁰ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Club	Analysis area ⁵⁰	No. of rugby union teams				
		Senior male (19+)	Senior female (19+)	Junior boys (13-18)	Junior girls (13-18)	Mini mixed (6-12)
Caldy RFC	4	3	-	6	-	6
Hoylake RFC	4	2	-	4	-	6
New Brighton RFC	5	3	-	5	-	6
Oldershaw RFC	7	2	-	1	1	4
Oxton Parkonians RFC	6	2	-	3	-	6
Port Sunlight RFC	1	2	-	-	1	-
Prenton RFC	6	2	-	-	-	-
Wallasey RFC	7	1	-	-	-	-
Wirral RFC	1	4	1	5	1	6
Total		29	2	30	3	46

Training

Throughout the Country, many rugby teams train at their home ground on match pitches. As a result, usage is concentrated which reduces the capacity for match play on these pitches and means they are more likely to be overplayed. A key factor in determining the extent of training on match pitches is the presence of floodlighting.

In Wirral, as mentioned previously, Prenton RFC has access to a dedicated training area although this is only usable in the summer months due to poor drainage and the floodlights no longer working. During the winter, the Club trained indoors at the Army TA Centre.

Port Sunlight RFC also has a floodlit training area although no concerns are raised with this, with training taking place on site year round. Similarly, a pitch at Oxton Parkonians RFC is partially lit on one side and can therefore accommodate its evening training, although this is concentrated in a specific area.

Caldy RFC has a dedicated floodlit training pitch at Caldys Sports Club although its junior section has recently purchased two mobile training floodlights for the third team pitch. It is now hoping to purchase two additional mobile training floodlights to make the entire third pitch floodlit, thus allowing for training activity to be spread around.

Wirral RFC also has a dedicated floodlit training pitch at Wirral RFC (Back Field) although the floodlights need renewing and pitch quality is poor.

New Brighton, Hoylake, Oldershaw, Anselmians and Wallasey rugby clubs train on their respective match pitches whilst Birkenhead Park RFC splits its training demand across its floodlit match pitches and its smaller size 3G pitch.

Use of artificial pitches

The alternative to training on grass pitches is the use of 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. A World Rugby compliant pitch also enables the transfer of match demand from grass pitches onto 3G pitches, which alleviates overplay of grass pitches and as a result protects quality.

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Nationally, clubs identify the use of 3G pitches for training as a method of protecting the match pitches and providing a high quality surface for full contact practice. Competitive play continues to take place on grass pitches for the most part, with ad hoc use of 3G pitches for fixtures in the case of unsuitable pitches due to waterlogging or frost.

In Wirral, only Birkenhead Park RFC utilises a 3G pitch and none of the existing stock is WR compliant. Further detail on use of 3G pitches can be found in Part 3 of this report.

Exported demand

Displaced or exported demand refers to Wirral based teams that are currently accessing pitches outside of the local authority for their home fixtures, normally because their pitch requirements cannot be met, which is usually because of pitch supply, in some cases quality issues or stipulated league requirements for access to certain facilities.

There is some known exported demand outside of Wirral specifically to the World Rugby compliant AGP at Chester Rugby Club. The pitch has been used by Wirral based clubs, such as Caldy, Wirral and Port Sunlight, in the recent past.

Imported demand

Imported demand refers to any demand from neighbouring local authorities that accesses facilities within the Wirral study area due to a lack of available facilities in other local authorities where such team or club is based.

Chester Centurions RFC is based at Chester Rugby Club in Cheshire West & Chester although it has played a number of home games at Prenton Rugby Club. Prenton RFC would like the Club to relocate to Prenton permanently although Chester Centurions RFC would prefer to remain in Cheshire West & Chester.

Future demand

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts. In addition, the proceeding Strategy & Action Plan document will contain housing growth scenarios that will estimate the additional demand for rugby union arising from planned housing developments.

Population increases

Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth (2037).

Table 5.8: Team generation rates

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Men's (19-45)	47,464	30	1:1,582	38,003	24	0
Senior Women's (19-45)	49,377	2	1:24,689	38,249	1	0
Junior Boys (13-18)	11,111	30	1:370	8,721	23	0
Junior Girls (13-18)	10,677	3	1:3,559	8,497	2	0
Mini Mixed (7-12)	23,330	46	1:507	16,693	32	0

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As seen in the table above, no additional rugby union teams are expected to be generated in Wirral through population growth alone due to decreasing population within the relevant age bands.

Participation increases

In terms of team aspirations, Hoylake RFC indicates that it is looking to add more teams although it did not quantify this aspiration.

Prenton RFC previously fielded a women's team and hopes to reinstate it, whilst Port Sunlight RFC is looking to establish a mini section.

Caldy RFC is hoping to add U13 and U14 girls' teams in the near future, whereas Oldershaw RFC also aspires to add a youth girls' team as well as a youth boys' side and two mini teams.

Oxton Parkonians RFC aspires to increase participation at all age groups, indicating a desire to add one men's, one colt boys', one youth boys and one mini team.

Table 5.9: Team aspirational increases

Club	Analysis area ⁵¹	No. of rugby union teams				
		Senior male (19+)	Senior female (19+)	Junior boys (13-18)	Junior girls (13-18)	Mini mixed (6-12)
Caldy RFC	4	-	-	-	2	-
Hoylake RFC	4	<i>Unquantified</i>				
Oldershaw RFC	7	-	-	1	1	2
Oxton Parkonians RFC	6	2	-	1	-	1
Port Sunlight RFC	1	-	-	-	-	1
Prenton RFC	6	-	1	-	-	-
Total		2	1	2	3	4

The peak period

In order to fully establish actual spare capacity, the peak period needs to be established for all types of rugby. For senior teams, it is considered to be Saturday PM as all senior men's teams play at this time. Peak time for mini and junior rugby is Sunday AM.

5.4: Capacity analysis

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

To enable an accurate supply and demand assessment of rugby pitches, the following assumptions are applied to site by site analysis:

- ◀ All sites that are used for competitive rugby matches (regardless of whether this is secured community use) are included on the supply side.
- ◀ All competitive play is on senior sized pitches (except for where mini pitches are provided).
- ◀ From U13 upwards, teams play 15 v 15 and use a full pitch.

⁵¹ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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- ◀ Mini teams (U6-U12) play on half of a senior pitch i.e. two teams per senior pitch or a dedicated mini pitch.
- ◀ For senior and junior teams the current level of play per week is set at 0.5 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis (assumes half of matches will be played away).
- ◀ For mini teams playing on a senior pitch, play per week is set at 0.25 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis and playing across half of one senior pitch.
- ◀ Senior men's rugby generally takes place on Saturday afternoons.
- ◀ Senior women's rugby generally takes place on Sunday afternoons.
- ◀ Junior rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings.
- ◀ Mini rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings.
- ◀ Training that takes place on club pitches is reflected by the addition of match equivalent sessions to current usage levels.
- ◀ At education sites, up to one match equivalent session has been added to the usage of each pitch to account for curricular demand.

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

Table 5.10: Pitch capacity (matches per week) based on quality assessments

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

Capacity is based upon a basic assessment of the drainage system and maintenance programme ascertained through a combination of the quality assessment and consultation. This guide, however, is only a very general measure of potential pitch capacity. It does not account for specific circumstances at time of use and it assumes average rainfall and an appropriate end of season rest and renovation programme.

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Table 5.11: Capacity table for rugby pitches in Wirral

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁵²	Community use?	Security of tenure	Number of pitches	Pitch type	Quality rating	Floodlit ?	Non-tech score	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Training equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Comments
3	Anselmians Rugby Football Club	1	Yes	Secure	4	Senior	Standard	Y	M2 / D0	1.5	-	2	0.5	Two standard quality pitches which are used for match demand by Anselmians RFC.
						Senior	Standard	Y	M2 / D0	1.5	-	2	0.5	
						Senior	Standard	Y	M2 / D0	0	5	2	3	One standard quality dedicated training pitch which is overplayed due to Anselmians RFC's training demand.
						Mini	Standard	N	M2 / D0	3	-	2	1	
7	Bebington High Sports College	1	No	Unsecure	1	Mini	Poor	N	M0 / D0	0.5	-	0.5	0	One poor quality mini pitch played to capacity through curricular use.
8	Belvidere Recreation Ground	7	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	2	-	1.5	0.5	One poor quality pitch which is overplayed due to match demand from Oldershaw RFC.
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	1	3	1.5	2.5	One poor quality senior pitch which is overplayed due to training demand from Oldershaw RFC.
12	Birkenhead Park Rugby Club	6	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	Standard	Y	M1 / D1	3	2	2	3	Two standard quality senior pitches which are overplayed due to match and training demand from Birkenhead Park RFC. Training is considered to be split equality across the floodlit grass pitches and the half-size, floodlit 3G pitch on site.
						Senior	Standard	Y	M1 / D1	3	1.5	2	2.5	
19	Caldy Grange Grammar School	4	Yes-unused	Secure	3	Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	1	-	2	1	Three standard quality senior pitches which are currently only used for curricular demand.
						Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	1	-	2	1	
						Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	1	-	2	1	
33	Hilbre High School Sports Centre	4	Yes-unused	Secure	1	Mini	Poor	N	M0 / D1	1	-	1.5	0.5	One poor quality mini pitch used for curricular demand.
34	HM Curphey Memorial Ground	6	Yes	Secure	3	Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	2	-	2	0	Two standard quality pitches played to capacity through match demand from Oxton Parkonians RFC.
						Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	2	-	2	0	
						Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	0	3	2	1	One standard quality pitch which is overplayed due to training demand from Oxton Parkonians RFC.

⁵² [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁵²	Community use?	Security of tenure	Number of pitches	Pitch type	Quality rating	Floodlit ?	Non-tech score	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Training equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Comments
35	Hoylake Rugby Football Club	4	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	Standard	Y	M1 / D1	1	3.5	2	2.5	One standard quality, floodlit senior pitch which is overplayed due to training demand from Hoylake RFC.
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	3.5	-	1.5	2	One poor quality senior pitch which is overplayed due to match demand from Hoylake RFC.
43	Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields	1	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	0.75	-	1.5	0.75	Two poor quality senior pitches which have spare capacity.
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	0.75	-	1.5	0.75	
47	New Brighton Rugby Club	5	Yes	Secure	3	Senior	Poor	Y	M1 / D0	2	2.5	1.5	3	Two poor quality senior pitches that are overplayed due to match and training demand from New Brighton RFC.
						Senior	Poor	Y	M1 / D0	2	2.5	1.5	3	
						Senior	Poor	Y	M1 / D0	4	2.5	1.5	5	
54	Pensby Sports Complex	3	No	Unsecure	1	Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D0	0.5	-	0.5	0	One poor quality senior pitch which is played to capacity through curricular demand.
58	Prenton Rugby Club	6	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	0.5	-	2	1.5	Two standard quality senior pitches used for match demand from Prenton RFC.
						Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	0.5	-	2	1.5	
59	Ridgeway High School	6	No	Unsecure	1	Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D0	0.5	-	0.5	0	One poor quality senior pitch which is played to capacity through curricular demand.
67	South Wirral High School	1	Yes-unused	Unsecure	1	Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	1	-	1.5	0.5	One poor quality senior pitch which has spare capacity.
68	St Anselms College Playing Fields	6	No	Unsecure	4	Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	1	-	1.5	0.5	Four poor quality senior pitches that are used for curricular demand and unavailable for community use.
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	1	-	1.5	0.5	
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	1	-	1.5	0.5	
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	1	-	1.5	0.5	
69	St John Plessington Catholic College	1	No	Unsecure	1	Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D0	0.5	-	0.5	0	One poor quality senior pitch which is played to capacity through curricular demand.
84	Wallace Recreation Ground	7	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D0	0.5	-	0.5	0	One poor quality senior pitch which is played to capacity through curricular demand.
86	Wallasey Rugby Union Football Club	7	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	0.5	1	2	0.5	One standard quality senior pitch used for training and match demand by Wallasey RFC.
						Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	0	1.5	2	0.5	One standard quality senior pitch used for training by Wallasey RFC.

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁵²	Community use?	Security of tenure	Number of pitches	Pitch type	Quality rating	Floodlit ?	Non-tech score	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Training equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Comments
93	Wirral Grammar School For Boys	1	No	Unsecure	5	Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D0	0.5	-	0.5	0	Five poor quality senior pitches that are played to capacity through curricular demand.
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D0	0.5	-	0.5	0	
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D0	0.5	-	0.5	0	
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D0	0.5	-	0.5	0	
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D0	0.5	-	0.5	0	
95a	Wirral Rugby Club	1	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	Good	N	M2 / D2	2	-	3.25	2.5	Two good quality senior pitches used for match demand by Wirral RFC.
						Senior	Good	N	M2 / D2	2	-	3.25		
95b	Wirral Rugby Club (Back Field)	1	Yes	Unsecure	4	Senior	Poor	Y	M1 / D0	0	7	1.5	5.5	One poor quality floodlit senior pitch used solely for training demand by Wirral RFC.
						Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	1	-	2	1	Three standard quality senior pitches used for match demand by Wirral RFC.
						Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	1	-	2	1	
						Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	1	-	2	1	
133	Caldy Sports Club	4	Yes	Secure	3	Senior	Standard	Y	M1 / D1	1	5	2	4	One standard quality senior floodlit pitch which is overplayed due to training demand from Caldy RFC.
						Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	2	-	2	0	Two standard quality senior pitches which are used for match demand by Caldy RFC.
						Senior	Standard	N	M1 / D1	2	-	2	0	
					14	Mini	Standard	N	M1 / D1	3	-	28	25	14 standard quality mini pitches which are used for match demand by Caldy RFC.
147	Birkenhead School (McAllister Memorial Field)	6	Yes-unused	Unsecure	4	Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	1	-	1.5	0.5	Four senior pitches that are currently used only for curricular demand by Birkenhead School.
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	1	-	1.5	0.5	
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	1	-	1.5	0.5	
						Senior	Poor	N	M0 / D1	1	-	1.5	0.5	

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5.4: Supply and demand analysis

Having considered supply and demand, the table below identifies the overall spare capacity in each of the analysis areas for rugby union pitches based on match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 5.12: Summary of supply and demand balance on senior rugby union pitches

Analysis area ⁵³	Actual spare capacity ⁵⁴	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand ⁵⁵	Future total
1	8.5	9.5	1	0.25	1.25
2	-	-		-	
3	-	-		-	
4	5	8.5	3.5	1	4.5
5	-	11	11	-	11
6	5	6.5	1.5	2.25	3.75
7	1	3	2	1.5	3.5
Wirral	19.5	38.5	19	5	24

Overall, there is a current shortfall of 19 match equivalent sessions per week on senior rugby union pitches across Wirral. This is further exacerbated when considering future demand, resulting in a shortfall of 24 match equivalent sessions. There are current and future shortfalls within each analysis area that accommodated competitive rugby demand.

Spare capacity

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

Furthermore, any pitches that are used to capacity at peak time, that are poor quality or that provide unsecure tenure are not considered to have actual spare capacity. As such, the table below ascertains whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be used to accommodate an increase in senior play.

Table 5.13: Summary of actual spare capacity on senior pitches

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Number of pitches	Potential capacity	Actual spare capacity	Comments
3	Anselmians Rugby Football Club	1	2	1	0.5	Actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions at peak time.

⁵³ [Click for analysis areas](#)

⁵⁴ In match equivalent sessions per week

⁵⁵ Anticipated future junior demand is represented as 0.5 MES on a senior pitch whereas anticipated mini future demand is represented as 0.25 MES on a senior pitch.

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Number of pitches	Potential capacity	Actual spare capacity	Comments
19	Calday Grange Grammar School	4	1	5	3	Unused for affiliated rugby and therefore could accommodate three match equivalent sessions at peak time.
43	Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields	1	2	1.5	-	Spare capacity is discounted due to poor pitch quality.
58	Prenton Rugby Club	6	2	3	1	Actual spare capacity of one match equivalent session at peak time.
67	South Wirral High School	1	1	0.5	-	Spare capacity is discounted due to poor pitch quality.
86	Wallasey Rugby Union Football Club	7	2	1	1	Actual spare capacity of one match equivalent sessions at peak time.
95a	Wirral Rugby Club	1	2	2.5	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
95b	Wirral Rugby Club (Back Field)	1	3	3	3	Actual spare capacity of three match equivalent sessions at peak time.
147	Birkenhead School (McAllister Memorial Field)	6	4	2	-	Spare capacity is discounted due to unsecure tenure.

There are nine sites which display potential spare capacity to accommodate additional play in Wirral totalling 19.5 match equivalent sessions. However, actual spare capacity only equates to 8.5 match equivalent sessions per week, across five sites and 10 pitches.

For mini and junior rugby, the programming of matches can be unclear with regards to ascertaining spare capacity, especially at peak time as it varies from week to week. Junior rugby sections tend to play regular matches as part of a league format, whereas minis play organised friendly fixtures. Clubs organise their mini age groups to play those from another club at the same time either at home or away. Teams will generally hold training sessions instead on the weeks that mini/junior sections do not have a fixture event arranged. This means that mini/junior sections require use of all home pitches for two or three mornings a month but may play an away fixture one week meaning none of the pitches are used that particular morning.

Overlay

There are 16 pitches across eight sites in Wirral which are overplayed by a total of 38.5 match equivalent sessions per week. This is broken down below.

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Table 5.14: Summary of overplay on senior rugby union pitches

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁵⁶	Pitch type	Number of pitches	Overplay (match equivalent sessions per week)
3	Anselmians Rugby Football Club	1	Senior	2	4
8	Belvidere Recreation Ground	7	Senior	2	3
12	Birkenhead Park Rugby Club	6	Senior	2	5.5
34	HM Curphey Memorial Ground	6	Senior	3	1
35	Hoylake Rugby Football Club	4	Senior	2	4.5
47	New Brighton Rugby Club	5	Senior	3	11
95b	Wirral Rugby Club (Back Field)	1	Senior	1	5.5
133	Caldy Sports Club	4	Senior	1	4
Total				16	38.5

Only overplay at Birkenhead Park Rugby Club is not as a direct result of training on match pitches as match play on site exceeds site capacity. However, training does still take place on these pitches, further exacerbating this overplay.

⁵⁶ [Click for analysis areas](#)

Rugby union – supply and demand summary

- ◀ Overall, there is a current shortfall of 19 match equivalent sessions per week on senior rugby union pitches to meet current demand.
- ◀ When considering future demand, the shortfall increases to 24 match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ There are nine sites which display potential spare capacity to accommodate additional play; however, only five sites could accommodate an actual increase in use, equating to 8.5 match equivalent sessions across 10 pitches.
- ◀ There are 16 pitches across eight sites in Wirral which are overplayed by a total of 38.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Rugby union – supply summary

- ◀ Within Wirral there are 68 rugby union pitches across 23 sites. Of these, 55 pitches across 17 sites are available for community use.
- ◀ Wirral RFC indicates that the lease agreement for the back field on site is up for renewal. The Club reports this is at a high cost although is keen to extend the agreement due to the number of pitches the secondary field accommodates.
- ◀ Of the community available pitches in Wirral, two are assessed as good quality, 37 as standard quality and 16 as poor quality.
- ◀ New Brighton and Oxtton Parkonians rugby clubs aspire to improve drainage at their respective home venues whilst Anselmians RFC reports that pitch quality has deteriorated since having new pitches developed. Oldershaw RFC indicates that pitches at Belvidere Recreation Ground have pot holes, sinking ground and are uneven.
- ◀ New Brighton, Prenton and Wirral rugby clubs all have ambitions of improving ancillary provision at their respective home venues whilst both Caldy and Oldershaw rugby clubs aspire to install showers in their clubhouses. Anselmians and Port Sunlight rugby clubs have both recently provided brand new ancillary facilities.

Rugby union – demand summary

- ◀ There are 11 community rugby union clubs based in Wirral, providing a total of 110 teams. Broken down, this equates to 29 senior men's, two senior women's, 30 junior boys, three junior girls' and 46 mini teams.
- ◀ Prenton RFC has a dedicated training area on site although the floodlights no longer work and the surface suffers from poor drainage. This restricts its use to the summer months, with the Club training indoors over the winter.
- ◀ Future demand, derived solely from team aspirational increases, equates to one senior men's, one senior women's, one colt boys, two youth boys, three youth girls' and four mini teams.

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PART 6: HOCKEY

6.1: Introduction

Competitive league hockey matches and training can only be played on sand filled, sand dressed or water based artificial grass pitches (AGPs). Although competitive, adult and junior club training cannot take place on 3G pitches, 40mm pitches may be suitable at introductory level, such as school curriculum low level hockey. England Hockey's (EH) Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy details suitability of surface type for varying levels of hockey, as seen below.

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

Category	Surface	Playing Level	Playing Level
England Hockey Category 1	Water surface approved within the FIH Global/National Parameters	Essential International Hockey - Training and matches	Desirable Domestic National Premier competition Higher levels of EH Player Pathway Performance Centres and upwards England
England Hockey Category 2	Sand dressed surfaces within the FIH National Parameter	Essential Domestic National Premier competition Higher levels of player pathway: Academy Centres and Upwards	Desirable All adult and junior League Hockey Intermediate or advanced School Hockey
England Hockey Category 3	Sand based surfaces within the FIH National Parameter	Essential All adult and junior club training and league Hockey EH competitions for clubs and schools Intermediate or advanced schools hockey	EH competitions for clubs and schools (excluding domestic national league)
England Hockey Category 4	All 3G surfaces	Essential None	Desirable Lower level hockey (Introductory level) when no category 1-3 surface is available.

In addition to the above pitch types, EH reports that it is currently trialling a different multi-sport surface in order to better accommodate lower levels of hockey demand on a pitch that is also suitable for other sports such as netball and tennis. The surface type, known as Gen 2⁵⁷, is a versatile surface that will ensure that the sports do not need to compromise on the playing experience; it will be a sand dressed synthetic turf with a compatible shock pad. The concept is designed to provide facilities, including schools, with a dynamic surface which reduces the amount of space required and enables the provision to be utilised to its full potential.

⁵⁷ <http://www.englishockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=2596§ionTitle=Gen+2+Playing+Surface>

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For senior teams, a full-size pitch for competitive matches must measure at least 91.4 x 55 metres excluding surrounding run-off areas, which must be a minimum of two metres at the sides and three metres at the ends. EH's preference is for four-metre side and five-metre end run offs, with a preferred overall area of 101.4 x 63 metres, though a minimum overall area of 97.4 x 59 metres is accepted.

It is considered that a hockey pitch can accommodate a maximum of four matches on one day (peak time) provided the pitch has floodlighting. Training is generally midweek and also requires access to a pitch with floodlights.

Consultation

Three clubs are identified as playing within Wirral; Bebington, Birkenhead and Oxtton hockey clubs. Both Bebington HC and Birkenhead HC were responsive to consultation requests, whilst Oxtton HC were not. This equates to a response rate of 67%.

6.2: Supply

The audit identifies five full size hockey suitable AGPs in Wirral, all of which are available for community use although only three are floodlit (the pitches at Birkenhead High School and West Kirby Grammar School are not). Both analysis areas 4 and 6 contain two pitches, whilst the remaining pitch is in the Analysis Area 1.

Table 6.2: Summary of full size hockey suitable AGPs in Wirral

Site ID	Site	Analysis area ⁵⁸	Community use?	Floodlit?	Size (metres)
9	Birkenhead High School	6	Yes	No	100 x 60
19	Calday Grange Grammar School (Glasspool Field)	4	Yes	Yes	98 x 61
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	Yes	Yes	98 x 55
90	West Kirby Grammar School	4	Yes	No	98 x 57
147	Birkenhead School (McAllister Memorial Field)	6	Yes	Yes	98 x 60

Smaller size provision

In addition to the full size AGPs, there are also six smaller size pitches provided in Wirral, as summarised below. Five of these are floodlit and three are available to the community.

Table 6.3: Smaller size AGPs in Wirral

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Floodlit?	Size (metres)
71	The Mosslands School	7	Yes	Yes	35 x 35
72	The Oldershaw School	7	Yes	Yes	85 x 38
79	Upton Hall School	6	No	No	55 x 30
88	Weatherhead High School	7	Yes	Yes	90 x 54
145	Wirral Hospitals School	6	No	Yes	60 x 40
175	Greasby Junior School	5	No	No	27 X 15

⁵⁸ [Click for analysis areas](#)

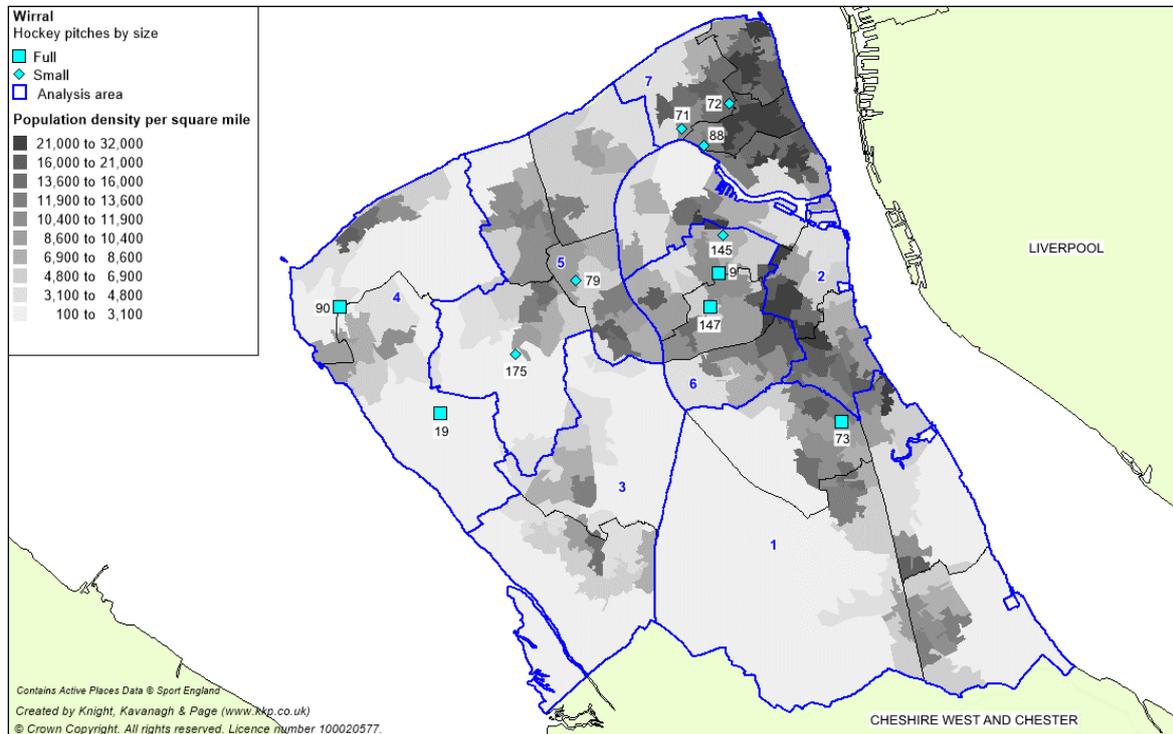
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Most of the smaller size pitches are considered too small to accommodate any purposeful hockey demand, although some could be utilised for training demand and junior play. In particular, this applies to the pitch at Weatherhead High School, which is only slightly too small to be used for adult match play.

For the location of the AGPs, regardless of size, please see Figure 6.1.

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Figure 6.1: Location of full-size hockey suitable AGPs in Wirral



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Future supply

Wirral Grammar School (for boys) has an aspiration to develop a full size AGP that it will make available for community use, if delivered. The School currently utilises a grass hockey pitch for its curricular-based demand.

In relation to the current stock of pitches, early aspirations exist for the pitch at The Oval Leisure Centre to be converted to a 3G surface. Should this be pursued, it is imperative that the hockey demand currently accessing the provision is adequately provided for elsewhere, with the proposal needing support from EH. This could potentially be achieved via the abovementioned plans at Wirral Grammar School, but it needs to take into consideration the needs of Bebington HC as well as any wider hockey-based activity. If hockey demand cannot be re-provided for, protecting the pitch for hockey use is required.

Aspirations also exist to convert the existing smaller size pitch at Wirral Hospitals School to a 3G surface. This is because of 3G shortfalls in the area and due to its current dilapidated state. As with the pitch at The Oval Leisure Centre, the conversion must be approved by EH to ensure that there is no negative impact on hockey.

Management and ownership

The pitch at The Oval Leisure Centre is managed by Wirral Leisure Services, whilst all remaining pitches are managed in-house by schools.

Security of tenure

Birkenhead HC utilises the pitch at Birkenhead School via a rental arrangement. This is considered unsecure usage as no long-term agreement or community use agreement is in place, meaning the School could stop access at any time.

Similarly, Oxtan HC has unsecure access to all three sites that it uses. It rents the pitches at Calday Grange Grammar School, Birkenhead High School and West Kirby Grammar School, with Calday Grange Grammar School being its primary site and the remaining two being secondary venues.

Bebington HC also rents its pitch, at The Oval Leisure Centre. However, this is considered secure access as the site forms part of the Council's commitment to provide a leisure offering (all council sites are generally judged to be secure).

Availability

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) applies an overall peak period for AGPs of 34 hours per week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00).

Of the full size AGPs in Wirral, availability is mixed. The four floodlit pitches are all readily available during the peak period, whilst the two non-floodlit pitches are only available at weekends as the lack of lighting means that they cannot be used during midweek evenings outside of summer months.

Please note that the table below only refers to availability (opening hours), rather than available capacity (i.e. it does not account for current usage). For this, see Table 6.7.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 6.4: Availability of full size hockey suitable AGPs

Site ID	Site	Availability in the peak period (hours)	Comments
9	Birkenhead High School	12	Unavailable during weekdays due to a lack of floodlighting; available on Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 until 16:00.
19	Calday Grange Grammar School (Glasspool Field)	34	Reserved for school use during the week until 17:00, then available to the community from 17:00 until 21:00 on Mondays to Fridays and from 09:00 until 21:00 on Saturdays and Sundays.
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	34	Available for use until 22:00 Monday-Thursday and until 21:00 on Fridays as well as from 09:00 until 17:00 on Saturdays and Sundays.
90	West Kirby Grammar School	12	Unavailable during weekdays due to a lack of floodlighting; available on Saturdays and Sundays from 09:00 until 15:00.
147	Birkenhead School (McAllister Memorial Field)	30	Reserved for school use during the week until 18:00, then available to the community from 18:00 until 21:00 on Mondays to Fridays and from 09:00 until 21:00 on Saturdays and Sundays.

Of the smaller size pitches available for community use, the provision at Weatherhead School is fully available during the peak period, as is the pitch at the Oldershaw School. Conversely, the pitch at the Mosslands School is only available during weekdays as the site is not staffed at weekends.

Please note that the availability of AGPs has been significantly impacted upon by the Covid-19 pandemic, as has been the case with all sports facilities. They have generally been closed during lockdown periods, with many schools also not allowing for community use even when restrictions allow in order to limit risk. As such, the above table refers to availability when the provision is fully operational, rather than what may have been the case over the last 12 months.

Quality

Taking the above into account, the quality of hockey suitable artificial grass pitches across Wirral have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by EH⁵⁹) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

⁵⁹ See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for artificial grass pitches

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The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>80%), Standard (60-79%), Poor (<60%). The quality ratings assigned to the sites also consider the user quality ratings gathered from consultation.

In addition, depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of an artificial grass pitch usually lasts for approximately ten years and it is the age of the surface, combined with maintenance levels, which most commonly affects quality.

The following table indicates when each of the full size AGPs within Wirral was installed or last resurfaced, together with an agreed quality rating.

For the full assessment criteria, please see Appendix 2.

Table 6.5: Summary of full-size AGP quality

Site ID	Site	Year installed/ resurfaced	Quality
9	Birkenhead High School	2006	Poor
19	Calday Grange Grammar School (Glasspool Field)	2006	Standard
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	2010	Standard
90	West Kirby Grammar School	2001	Poor
147	Birkenhead School (McAllister Memorial Field)	2019	Good

The pitches at Birkenhead High School and West Kirby Grammar School are both considered poor quality having not been resurfaced since being installed in 2006 and 2001, respectively. There are significant signs of wear and tear at both sites, with imminent resurfacing required.

Similarly, the pitch at Calday Grange Grammar School has not been resurfaced since 2006, although this is rated as standard quality despite its age. The pitch is showing less signs of deterioration and has been maintained to a high level, although refurbishment will still be needed in the near future to ensure that the provision remains useable in the long-term. Oxton HC are currently in discussions with the School to formalise a working arrangement between both parties that would include resurfacing the AGP and providing the Club with a long-term tenure agreement.

The same also applies to the pitch at The Oval Leisure Centre, which is now ten years old, although Bebington HC notes that quality at the site has improved recently following remedial work carried out over the last 12 months. Nevertheless, the Club also reports that the floodlights are becoming problematic. Numerous bulbs are out, making the provision unsuitable for competitive hockey.

The pitch at Birkenhead School is assessed as good quality, with no issues identified. It has recently been resurfaced.

All of the smaller-size pitches are assessed as poor quality, with each pitch comfortably over ten years old.

Ancillary provision

Bebington HC reports that it would benefit from better quality changing facilities at The Oval Leisure Centre.

No other ancillary issues are identified.

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6.3: Demand

The three hockey clubs in Wirral consist of 24 teams, which as a breakdown equates to 11 senior men's, six senior women's and six junior teams as well as one other team variety (a mixed team hosted by Oxton HC). Across the clubs there are 423 members, consisting of 118 seniors and 305 juniors.

Oxton HC is by far the largest club, catering for numerous senior and junior teams. Bebington HC fields six senior teams and also runs a variety of junior sessions, whilst Birkenhead HC fields just two senior teams.

Table 6.6: Summary of club demand

Name of club	No. of competitive teams				No. of members	
	Senior Men	Senior Women	Junior	Other	Senior	Junior
Bebington HC	4	2	-	-	60	49
Birkenhead HC	2	-	-	-	31	3
Oxton HC	5	4	6	1	27	253
Wirral	11	6	6	1	118	305

Please note that the above is based on 19/20 affiliation data and is therefore captured before the Covid-19 pandemic. The effects that restrictions have had on membership should be regularly assessed, with the clubs supported to ensure that they remain sustainable.

Participation trends

All three clubs have increased their demand over the last three years. Oxton HC has increased its number of junior teams, whilst Birkenhead HC and Bebington HC now both field one additional senior team. The latter also now caters for more junior members.

Imported/exported demand

No imported or exported demand is identified by any of the clubs, although it must be noted that Neston HC, based in Cheshire West and Chester, is likely to attract some of its membership base from Wirral. Previously, the Club has used some provision in Wirral whilst its secondary pitch at Neston Recreation Centre was temporarily lost.

Latent/unmet demand

Bebington HC reports that it could expand its junior section on Saturdays if it had better access to pitch provision. It states that the pitch at The Oval Leisure Centre is currently at capacity due to its own demand and demand from various football clubs/groups.

Future demand

Both Bebington HC and Birkenhead HC have plans to increase their membership, with the former hoping to create an additional senior men's team and a junior boys' team and the latter planning on establishing an additional senior men's and an additional senior women's team. This equates to the potential growth of four teams.

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In addition to the above, growing participation is a key aim within EH's Strategic Plan and key drivers include working with clubs and schools, working with regional and local leagues, developing opportunities for over 40s and delivering a quality programme of competition. Overall, it has an aim to double participation over the next ten years.

Please note that team generation rates are not used for hockey, as per EH's recommendations. This is because, especially at junior level, clubs often have a significant membership base without necessarily having a large number of teams. As such, using the current number of teams to predict future demand is not considered to be appropriate.

Hockey Heroes

Hockey Heroes is a six-week hockey programme aimed at beginners (children aged five to eight) that not only focuses on helping children develop some physical hockey skills such as dribbling, passing and goal scoring, but also places as much emphasis on character development including teamwork, communication, perseverance and respect.

There is currently one Hockey Heroes course operating in Wirral, which is located at Calday Grange Grammar School (Glasspool Field) and run by Oxton HC.

Back to Hockey

Back to Hockey sessions are fun, social and informal and are aimed at people who either have not played for a number of years or that are looking to play for the first time. They are generally hosted by clubs, with EH providing guidance on how to deliver the programme. Benefits of clubs being involved include:

- ◀ More members
- ◀ More casual players
- ◀ Additional income
- ◀ Extra publicity
- ◀ New volunteers

There is currently one Back to Hockey sessions operating in Wirral, which is located at Calday Grange Grammar School (Glasspool Field) and run by Oxton HC.

Walking Hockey

Increasing in popularity, Walking Hockey is perfect for players who are looking for a less physically demanding version of the game but still enjoy showing their skills and being involved in the team and social aspect.

There are currently no Walking Hockey sessions operating in or around Wirral.

Peak time demand

For matches, senior hockey activity in Wirral typically takes place on a Saturday, whereas junior activity occurs equally across both Saturdays and Sundays. For training, peak time is midweek evenings, although preference is generally given for Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (Mondays and Fridays are in too close proximity to weekend matches).

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Usage

There is significant use of the full size hockey suitable AGPs in Wirral, with each of them used for some form of demand by the clubs. In addition, they are also commonly used for other activities, most notably in terms of football, whether that be through formal training or via informal social use. This is especially the case at The Oval Leisure Centre and Birkenhead School.

There is less alternative use of the pitches at Calday Grange Grammar School, Birkenhead High School and West Kirby Grammar School, although at Birkenhead High School and West Kirby Grammar School this is likely due to them not being available on weekdays. At Calday Grange Grammar School, little additional capacity exists outside of use by Oxtun HC and the School itself.

The table below summarises usage levels of the full size AGPs in Wirral based on booking sheets supplied by the operators, which accounts for demand prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (2019/2020 season). This is compared against availability at peak time, using Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM). This applies an overall peak period for AGPs of 34 hours per week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00).

Table 6.7: Usage of full size hockey suitable AGPs

Site ID	Site	Availability in the peak period (hours)	Hockey usage in the peak period (hours)	Football usage in the peak period (hours)
9	Birkenhead High School	Weekend: 12	Weekend: 0	Weekend: 0
19	Calday Grange Grammar School (Glasspool Field)	Midweek: 18 Weekend: 16	Midweek: 5 Weekend: 16	Midweek: 1 Weekend: 0
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	Midweek: 18 Weekend: 16	Midweek: 2.5 Weekend: 15	Midweek: 12 Weekend: 0
90	West Kirby Grammar School	Weekend: 16	Weekend: 0	Weekend: 0
147	Birkenhead School (McAllister Memorial Field)	Midweek: 14 Weekend: 16	Midweek: 0 Weekend: 4	Midweek: 0 Weekend: 0

As seen in the table above, both Birkenhead High School and West Kirby Grammar School are not currently formally used for hockey or football demand. The Oval Leisure Centre is operating close to capacity during the week and at weekends whilst Calday Grange Grammar School is at capacity at weekends but has capacity during the week. Birkenhead School (McAllister Memorial Field) is unused during the week and also has further capacity for weekend use.

None of the smaller size pitches are in current use for hockey purposes and those that are available for community use are reported as having available capacity. The pitch at Weatherhead High School has previously been accessed by Birkenhead HC for some training demand, although this is not currently the case.

6.4: Supply and demand analysis

The PPS Guidance suggests that a floodlit pitch is able to accommodate four match equivalent sessions on one day. With teams playing on a home and away format, this equates to one AGP being able to cater for eight 'home' teams at peak time (one team requires 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week on its 'home' AGP). Based on this, with 21 senior teams identified in Wirral (including future demand), there is a need for three full size pitches (rounded up from 2.25).

For junior hockey matches, the need for pitches is generally less than it is for senior hockey. This is because younger age groups can play on smaller size pitches or on half of a full size pitch (meaning two fixtures can take place at one time). There are also significantly fewer junior teams in Wirral than there are senior teams.

With five community available full size pitches currently provided, it could be suggested that there is an oversupply of provision to cater for demand. However, two of the pitches are not floodlit, meaning that they are not fully accessible for clubs. Discounting these, there are only three pitches provided, which meets the match play requirements.

The picture is also different when considering training demand, where again the two non-floodlit pitches cannot be considered within the calculations. The remaining three pitches are generally used to capacity during midweek, with football usage often limiting hockey usage at The Oval Leisure Centre and Birkenhead School.

Conclusion

As all five full size community available pitches are currently in use by hockey clubs, all five require protection as each is serving a specific purpose whether that be primarily as a hockey venue or as a secondary venue. As such, it is considered imperative that the current stock of full size pitches is retained for continued hockey use. Furthermore, to ensure that supply remains sufficient, quality improvements are required at many of the sites due to the age of the current surfaces.

It must also be a priority to maximise hockey use of the pitches that are provided to reduce capacity issues. To that end, it should be a priority for the football partners to transfer football usage of sand-based pitches to 3G provision, especially when new pitches are built, to allow for greater hockey utilisation.

There is also a need to ensure appropriate access to provision, especially at school sites, in light of the impact of Covid-19 on accessibility.

Hockey – supply and demand summary

- ◀ As all five community available full size pitches are currently in use by hockey clubs, all five require protection for hockey use as each is serving a specific purpose.
- ◀ It is considered imperative that the current stock of full size pitches are retained for continued hockey use.
- ◀ It must also be a priority to maximise hockey use of the pitches that are provided to reduce capacity issues.
- ◀ To ensure that supply remains sufficient, quality improvements are required at many of the sites due to the age of the current surfaces.

Hockey – supply summary

- ◀ The audit identifies five full size hockey suitable AGPs in Wirral, all of which are available for community use although only four are floodlit (the pitch at Birkenhead High School is not).
- ◀ There are also six smaller sized pitches provided; five of these are floodlit and three are available to the community.
- ◀ Wirral Grammar School (for boys) has an aspiration to develop a full size AGP that it will make available for community use, if delivered.
- ◀ Of the full size AGPs, the four floodlit pitches are all readily available during the peak period, whilst the two non-floodlit pitches are only available at weekends due to the lack of lighting.
- ◀ The pitches at Birkenhead High School and West Kirby Grammar School are both considered poor quality having not been resurfaced since being installed in 2006 and 2001, respectively.
- ◀ Similarly, the pitches at Calday Grange Grammar School and The Oval Leisure Centre are over ten years old albeit they are assessed as standard quality.

Hockey – demand summary

- ◀ The three hockey clubs in Wirral consist of 24 teams and there are 423 members across the clubs.
- ◀ All three clubs have increased their demand over the last three years.
- ◀ Bebington HC reports that it could expand its junior section on Saturdays if it had better access to pitch provision.
- ◀ Future demand across the clubs equates to the potential growth of four teams.
- ◀ No hockey initiatives are identified as taking place in Wirral (e.g. Back to Hockey and Walking Hockey).

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

PART 7: BOWLS

7.1: Introduction

Outdoor bowls in Wirral is played on crown greens. The British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA) is the NGB with overall responsibility for ensuring effective governance of the sport.

Consultation

There are 43 bowling clubs identified within Wirral. Of these, 27 clubs were responsive to consultation requests, representing a response rate of 64%.

Table 7.1: Summary of consultation

Club name	Responded?
Albany BC	Yes
Arno Tixall BC	No
Bebington Park BC	Yes
Birkenhead Park BC	No
Bromborough Pool BC	Yes
Bromborough Recs BC	Yes
Cammell Laird BC	Yes
Gladstone BC	No
Grange BC	No
Greasby BC	No
Great Meols BC	Yes
Harrison Park BC	Yes
Heswall RBL BC	Yes
Higher Tranmere Vets BC	Yes
Holylake Central & Melrose BC	Yes
Holylake Marine Gardens BC	Yes
Kendal BC	Yes
Lever Club BC	No
Lever Club Pensioners BC	Yes
Liscard BC	Yes
Lord Napier BC	No
Magazine BC	Yes
Manor Road Conservatives BC	No
Marine Park BC	Yes
Naval BC	Yes
New Brighton Quarry Vikings BC	Yes
New Brighton Queens Royal BC	No
Newton Park Vets	Yes
Oxton Argyle BC	No
Oxton Conservative Club BC	Yes
Parkfield BC	Yes
Pensby BC	Yes
Port Sunlight Village and Works BC	Yes
Poulton BC	No
Royden Hall BC	No

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Club name	Responded?
Sacred Heart BC	No
Sandridge BC	No
RNA BC	Yes
Telegraph BC	No
Thingwall BC	Yes
Tixall BC	Yes
Upton Victory Hall BC	No
West Kirkby Victoria BC	Yes

7.2: Supply

There are 60 bowling greens identified in Wirral across 40 sites. As seen in the table below, Analysis Area 7 accommodates the largest number of greens (15), with just one green located in Analysis Area 2.

Table 7.2: Summary of community available greens by analysis area

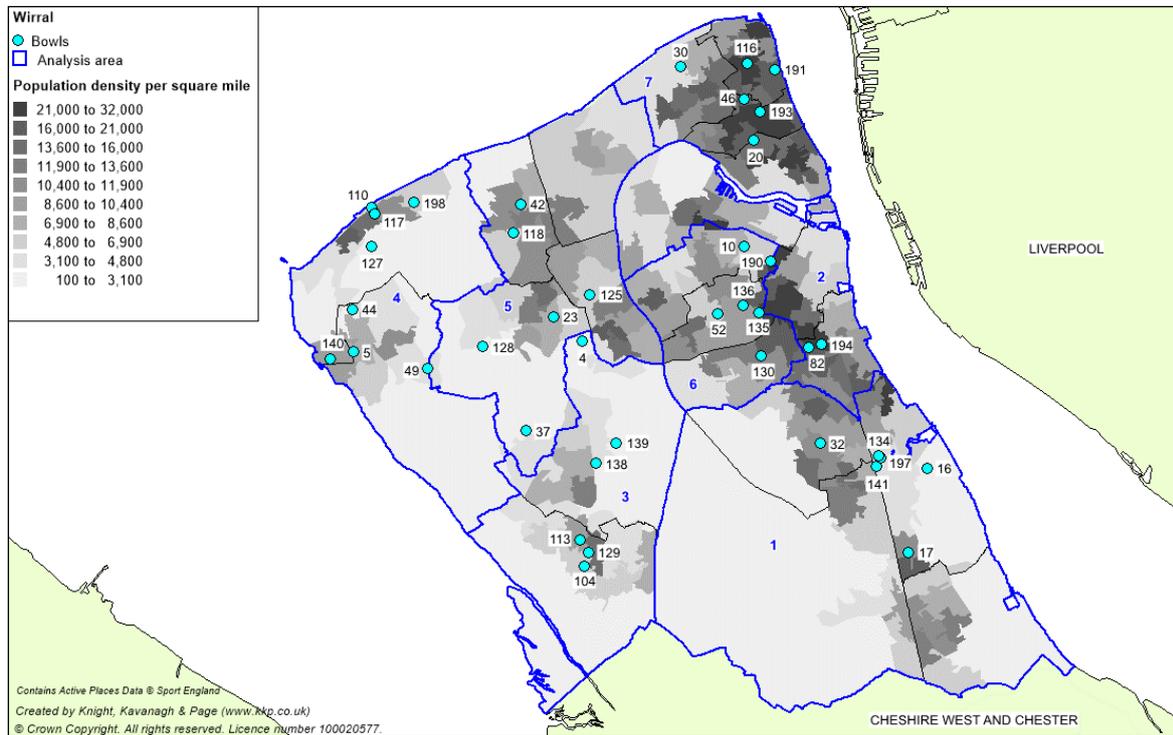
Analysis area ⁶⁰	Number of greens
1	8
2	1
3	8
4	9
5	7
6	12
7	15
Wirral	60

Figure 7.1 overleaf highlights the location of all outdoor greens in Wirral. Table 7.2 provides a key to the map.

⁶⁰ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Figure 7.1: Bowling greens in Wirral



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Table 7.3: Summary of bowling greens in Wirral

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁶¹	Management	Number of greens
4	Arrowe Park	3	Council	2
5	Ashton Park	4	Council	2
10	Birkenhead Park	6	Council	4
16	Bromborough Pool Price Sports & Social Club	1	Private	1
17	Bromborough Recreation Ground	1	Council	1
20	Central Park	7	Council	5
23	Coronation Park (Greasby)	5	Council	2
30	Harrison Park	7	Council	3
32	Higher Bebington Recreation Ground	1	Council	1
37	Irby Recreation Ground	5	Council	1
42	Lingham Park	5	Council	1
46	New Brighton Cricket Club	7	Sports Club	2
49	Newton Park	4	Council	1
52	Oxton Cricket Club	6	Sports Club	1
82	Victoria Park	6	Council	3
104	Heswall Hall	3	Community	1
109	Meols Lower Green	4	Council	1
110	Meols Parade Gardens	4	Council	2
113	Poll Hill	3	Council	1
116	Quarry Rec	7	Council	1
117	Queens Park, Meols	4	Council	1
118	Saughall Grange	5	Council	1
125	Upton Victory Hall	5	Community	1
127	Hoyle Central & Melrose Bowls Club	4	Sports Club	1
128	Royden Hall Bowls Club	5	Sports Club	1
129	Heswall RBL Bowling Club	3	Sports Club	1
130	Prenton Bowls Club	6	Sports Club	1
134	Port Sunlight Village Bowling Club	1	Community	2
135	Tixall Bowling & Social Club	6	Sports Club	1
136	Oxton Conservatives Bowling Club	6	Sports Club	1
138	Pensby Bowling Club	3	Sports Club	1
139	Thingwall Bowling Club	3	Sports Club	2
140	Victoria Gardens (West Kirby)	4	Council	1
141	Lever Club	1	Community	1
190	RNA Naval Club	6	Community	1
191	The Magazine Public House	7	Private	1
193	Wallasey Central Conservative Club	7	Community	1
194	Albany Bowling Club	2	Sports Club	1
197	The Lyceum Club	1	Community	2
200	Marine Park, New Brighton	7	Council	2

⁶¹ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Lapsed and disused greens

Across Wirral, two sites are known to accommodate lapsed/disused bowling provision; Desmesne Street Recreation Ground and Octel Sports & Social Club. The former previously accommodated two bowling greens although aerial imagery reveals that the greens were last maintained as such circa 2012.

The Octel Sports & Social Club accommodated one green. There is a current planning application for the construction of 106 houses on site with all sports facilities set to be lost. A Sports Needs Assessment has been conducted and proposes a range of mitigation measures, none of which have been agreed at the time of writing.

Ownership/management

Of the 60 bowling greens identified, 37 are owned by the Council. A further 12 greens are owned by their respective sports club and nine by a community organisation. Two greens are operated privately.

Quality

The quality of bowling greens across Wirral have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows: Good (>80%), Standard (70-80%), Poor (<70%). For bowling greens, the non-technical assessment considers several attributes of the site including the surrounding hard surfaces to the green, disability access, evenness, grass coverage and signs off unofficial use.

For further detail regarding the site assessment criteria, see Appendix 2.

Following a non-technical assessment of greens in Wirral and consultation with clubs, 19 greens are assessed as good quality, 18 as standard quality and 23 as poor quality. The table below summarises the quality on a site-by-site basis and identifies which clubs use each site.

Table 7.4: Summary of community available bowling green quality

Site ID	Site name	Clubs using the site	Green quality	Number of greens
4	Arrowe Park	-	Poor	2
5	Ashton Park	West Kirby Victoria BC	Good	1
			Poor	1
10	Birkenhead Park	Kendal BC, RNA BC, Birkenhead Park BC	Good	4
16	Bromborough Pool Price Sports & Social Club (Closed)	-	Poor	1
17	Bromborough Recreation Ground	Bromborough Recs BC	Good	1
20	Central Park	Liscard BC, Poulton BC, Telegraph BC	Poor	5

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Site ID	Site name	Clubs using the site	Green quality	Number of greens
23	Coronation Park (Greasby)	Greasby BC	Standard	2
30	Harrison Park	Parkfield BC, Harrison Park BC	Standard	3
32	Higher Bebington Recreation Ground	Bebington Park BC, Cammell Laird BC	Poor	1
37	Irby Recreation Ground	-	Poor	1
42	Lingham Park	Sacred Heart BC	Poor	1
46	New Brighton Cricket Club	New Brighton Quarry Vikings BC, New Brighton Queens Royal BC	Standard	2
49	Newton Park	Newton Park Vets BC	Poor	1
52	Oxton Cricket Club	Oxton Argyle BC	Good	1
82	Victoria Park	Higher Tranmere Vets BC, Gladstone BC, Lord Napier BC	Poor	3
104	Heswall Hall	-	Standard	1
109	Meols Lower Green	-	Standard	1
110	Meols Parade Gardens	Hoylake Marine BC	Standard	2
113	Poll Hill	-	Standard	1
116	Quarry Rec	Sandridge BC	Poor	1
117	Queens Park, Meols	-	Poor	1
118	Saughall Grange	Grange BC	Good	1
125	Upton Victory Hall	Upton Victory Hall BC	Good	1
127	Hoylake Central & Melrose Bowls Club	Hoylake Central & Melrose BC	Good	1
128	Royden Hall Bowls Club	Royden Hall BC	Poor	1
129	Heswall RBL Bowling Club	Heswall RBL BC	Good	1
130	Prenton BC	-	Good	1
134	Port Sunlight Village Bowling Club	Port Sunlight Village & Works BC	Poor	2
135	Tixall Bowling & Social Club	Tixall BC, Arno Tixall BC	Standard	1
136	Oxton Conservatives Bowling Club	Oxton Conservatives BC	Good	1
138	Pensby Bowling Club	Pensby BC	Good	1
139	Thingwall Bowling Club	Thingwall BC	Good	2
140	Victoria Gardens (West Kirby)	-	Standard	1
141	Lever Club	Lever Club BC, Lever Club Pensioners BC	Poor	1
190	RNA H Club	Naval BC	Poor	1
191	The Magazine Public House	Magazine BC	Standard	1
193	Wallasey Central Conservative Club	-	Good	1
194	Albany Bowling Club	Albany BC	Standard	1
197	The Lyceum Club	Bromborough Pool BC	Good	2
200	Marine Park, New Brighton	Marine Park BC	Standard	2

Liscard and Cammell Laird bowls clubs report that green quality has improved over the previous year thanks to improved Council maintenance at Central Park and Higher Bebington

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Recreation Ground whilst Magazine, Naval, New Brighton Quarry Vikings, Albany, Hoylake Central & Melrose and Great Meols bowls clubs all report that they improved their own maintenance regimes at their respective home venues.

Hoylake Marine BC indicates that one of the greens at Meols Parade Gardens was resurfaced at the end of 2019 but, due to Covid-19, this has not been maintained sufficiently since with no scarifying or top dressing reported to have taken place.

Tixall, Port Sunlight Village & Works and Lever Club bowls clubs all report that green quality at their respective home venues has deteriorated due to reduced maintenance because of the cancelled bowls season and lockdown restrictions. This applies to greens at Tixall Bowling & Social Club, Port Sunlight Village Bowling Club and Lever Club.

Conversely, Oxton Conservatives and Bebington Park bowls clubs state that they were able to undertake more maintenance than usual due to the cancelled season. As such, green quality is expected to improve at Oxton Conservatives Bowling Club and Higher Bebington Recreation Ground.

Bromborough Recs BC reports that green quality at Bromborough Recreation Ground has improved as Council maintenance continued despite no activity taking place. Conversely, Higher Tranmere Vets BC states that Council maintenance at Victoria Park has been poor over the past season.

At Ashton Park, West Kirby Victoria BC states that one of the greens has had the top taken off and was then re-seeded which has improved surface quality. However, the Club believes that green quality could have been better if the Club had been permitted to water the green.

Ancillary facilities

All clubs which responded to consultation have access to a clubhouse/pavilion on site although quality varies.

Good quality ancillary provision is located at Tixall Bowling & Social Club, The Magazine Public House, Lever Club, Hoylake Central & Melrose Bowls Club, Heswall RBL Bowls Club, Thingwall Bowling Club and Meols Lower Green.

Standard quality facilities can be found at Marine Park, Central Park, Oxton Conservatives Bowling Club, Bromborough Recreation Ground, Higher Bebington Recreation Ground, Ashton Park, The Lyceum Club and Birkenhead Park.

Meols Parade Gardens, Port Sunlight Village Bowling Club, Harrison Park and RNA Naval Club are all supported by poor quality facilities. The facility at Harrison Park is reported to have a leaking roof whilst RNA Naval Club is without water, toilets or electricity.

As reported by club users, insufficient parking facilities are located at Tixall Bowling & Social Club, The Magazine Public House, Thingwall Bowling Club, Marine Park and Port Sunlight Village Bowling Club.

Vandalism is reported to have occurred at The Magazine Public House, Hoylake Central & Melrose Bowling Club, Marine Park, Birkenhead Park, Newton Park and RNA Naval Club. The greens at Birkenhead Park are also reported to suffer heavily from unofficial use of the greens.

BCGBA grants

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Provided a club is subscribed to the BCGBA it can apply for a grant a range of ancillary issues, providing it has not already received one in the previous five years. Grants available to clubs include the following:

- ◀ New bowling green
- ◀ New floodlights
- ◀ New Pavilion
- ◀ Irrigation for the bowling green
- ◀ Toilets
- ◀ New Shelter
- ◀ Fencing and paths
- ◀ Extending a bowling green
- ◀ Legal fees to fight a green closure

Floodlighting

In Wirral, no greens are serviced by floodlighting. Floodlit bowling greens are relatively rare across the country and therefore opportunities to access greens for training and matches during evenings outside of the summer months are comparable with national trends.

7.3: Demand

Please note that, due to Covid-19 and subsequent restrictions limiting the amount of bowls demand that can take place, this section primarily considers what was taking place before the pandemic (and/or what would have been happening had there not been a pandemic). This is because, during periods of lockdown, all bowls activity has had to be cancelled/postponed.

Current demand

Where known, membership across Wirral currently equates to 1,190 people including 987 senior males, 190 senior females and 13 juniors.

Table 7.4: Current club membership for bowls clubs in Wirral

Club name	Analysis area ⁶²	Senior males	Senior females	Juniors	Total
Marine Park BC	4	14	-	-	14
Liscard BC	7	18	4	-	22
Kendal BC	6	30	1	1	32
Hoylake Marine BC	4	25	-	-	25
Tixall BC	6	71	24	-	95
Port Sunlight Village & Works BC	1	34	12	-	46
Oxton Conservatives BC	6	50	5	-	55
Magazine BC	7	60	20	1	81
Parkfield BC	7	27	3	-	30
Lever Club Pensioners BC	1	55	-	-	55
Harrison Park BC	6	54	2	-	56
Bromborough Recs BC	1	40	11	1	52
Bebington Park BC	1	29	2	-	31
Naval BC	6	22	-	-	22
New Brighton Quarry Vikings BC	7	43	13	3	59
Albany BC	2	32	4	1	37
Pensby BC	3	51	25	1	77
Hoylake Central & Melrose BC	4	28	31	4	63
Newton Park Vets BC	4	15	5	-	20
Heswall RBL BC	3	47	9	-	56

⁶² [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Club name	Analysis area ⁶²	Senior males	Senior females	Juniors	Total
Higher Tranmere Vets BC	6	30	-	-	30
Cammell Laird BC	1	24	1	1	26
West Kirby Victoria BC	4	47	2	-	49
Bromborough Pool BC	1	44	-	-	44
Thingwall BC	3	48	10	-	58
Great Meols BC	4	24	6	-	30
RNA BC	6	25	-	-	25
	Total	987	190	13	1,190

Analysis Area 6 accommodates the most demand with 259 members, whilst Analysis Area 5 has no known demand for bowls.

Table 7.5: Current club membership for bowls clubs in Wirral by Analysis Area

Analysis area ⁶³	Senior male	Senior female	Juniors	Total
1	226	26	2	254
2	32	4	1	37
3	146	44	1	191
4	153	44	4	201
5	-	-	-	0
6	228	30	1	259
7	202	42	4	248
Wirral	987	190	13	1,190

Future demand

Using ONS projections (2018 based)⁶⁴, the number of persons aged 65 and over living in Wirral is likely to increase continuously from 69,811 in 2018 to 93,081 in 2043, representing an increase of 33.3%. Due to this age band being the most likely to play bowls, demand for bowling greens could increase significantly in the future.

In addition, 20 of the 27 responding clubs state plans to increase their membership bases. These aspirations equate to 185 seniors and 48 juniors. This is summarised in the table below, although it must be noted that whilst both Pensby and West Kirby Victoria bowls clubs report future demand, they do not quantify their potential increase.

Table 7.6: Future demand aspirations for bowls clubs in Wirral

Club name	Senior	Junior	Total
Marine Park BC	5	-	5
Kendal BC	5	5	10
Hoylelake Marine BC	15	-	15
Tixall BC	10	5	15
Port Sunlight Village & Works BC	10	10	20
Oxton Conservatives BC	10	-	10
Magazine BC	20	10	30

⁶³ [Click for analysis areas](#)

⁶⁴ ONS projections do not take into account housing growth and as a result, projections may result in an under-estimate of future demand.

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Club name	Senior	Junior	Total
Lever Club Pensioners BC	14	-	14
Bromborough Recs BC	5	4	9
Bebington Park BC	5	-	5
Naval BC	12	2	14
Pensby BC	Not quantified		0
Hoylake Central & Melrose BC	12	-	12
Newton Park Vets BC	8	2	10
Heswall RBL BC	10	-	10
Higher Tranmere Vets BC	10	-	10
Cammell Laird BC	5	5	10
West Kirby Victoria BC	Not quantified		0
Thingwall BC	20	5	25
Great Meols BC	9	-	9
Total	185	48	233

Latent demand

Sport England's Market Segmentation Tool⁶⁵ enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in bowls but are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies latent demand of 614 people who would like to participate in the sport within Wirral, with the most dominant segment being 'Elsie & Arnold – Retirement Home Singles' with 135 people.

Notwithstanding the above, none of bowling clubs in Wirral are reported as operating at capacity, with all clubs willing to accept new members. As such, it is considered that anyone within Wirral that would like to start participating could do so at the clubs and greens already in existence.

⁶⁵ See Appendix 2

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

7.4: Capacity analysis

Capacity at each green is very much dependent on what league activity is taking place and the day that they operate. A green may have no spare capacity on an afternoon or evening when a popular league operates but may be unused for the rest of the week. However, in many cases, greens are also used during morning and afternoons by club members who bowl socially.

The BCGBA suggests that a crown green accommodating less than 60 playing members is considered to have spare capacity for further play. Consideration should also be given to the sustainability of greens which operate with a playing membership of less than 20. Using these figures, the table below considers the capacity of each site containing bowling greens in Wirral.

Table 7.7: Current and future capacity analysis of bowling greens now and with future demand (where known)

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁶⁶	Number of greens	Clubs	Recommended capacity (members)	Current number of members	Future demand (members)	Future number of members
4	Arrowe Park	3	2	-	120	0	0	0
5	Ashton Park	4	2	West Kirby Victoria BC	120	49	0	49
10	Birkenhead Park	6	4	Kendal BC, RNA BC, Birkenhead Park BC	240	57	10	67
16	Bromborough Pool Price Sports & Social Club	1	1	-	60	0	0	0
17	Bromborough Recreation Ground	1	1	Bromborough Recs BC	60	52	9	61
20	Central Park	7	5	Liscard BC, Poulton BC, Telegraph BC	300	22	0	22
23	Coronation Park (Greasby)	5	2	Greasby BC	120	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
30	Harrison Park	7	3	Parkfield BC, Harrison Park BC	180	86	0	86
32	Higher Bebington Recreation Ground	1	1	Bebington Park BC, Cammell Laird BC	60	57	15	72

⁶⁶ [Click for analysis areas](#)

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁶⁶	Number of greens	Clubs	Recommended capacity (members)	Current number of members	Future demand (members)	Future number of members
37	Irby Recreation Ground	5	1	-	60	0	0	0
42	Lingham Park	5	1	<i>Sacred Heart BC</i>	60	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
46	New Brighton Cricket Club	7	2	New Brighton Quarry Vikings BC, <i>New Brighton Queens Royal BC</i>	120	59	0	59
49	Newton Park	4	1	Newton Park Vets BC	60	20	10	30
52	Oxton Cricket Club	6	1	<i>Oxton Argyle BC</i>	60	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
82	Victoria Park	6	3	Higher Tranmere Vets BC, <i>Gladstone BC, Lord Napier BC</i>	180	30	10	40
104	Heswall Hall	3	1	-	60	0	0	0
109	Meols Lower Green	4	1	Great Meols BC	60	30	9	39
110	Meols Parade Gardens	4	2	Hoylake Marine BC	120	25	15	40
113	Poll Hill	3	1	-	60	0	0	0
116	Quarry Rec	7	1	<i>Sandridge BC</i>	60	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
117	Queens Park, Meols	4	1	-	60	0	0	0
118	Saughall Grange	5	1	<i>Grange BC</i>	60	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
125	Upton Victory Hall	5	1	<i>Upton Victory Hall BC</i>	60	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
127	Hoylake Central & Melrose Bowls Club	4	1	Hoylake Central & Melrose BC	60	63	12	75
128	Royden Hall Bowls Club	5	1	<i>Royden Hall BC</i>	60	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
129	Heswall RBL Bowling Club	3	1	Heswall RBL BC	60	56	10	66
130	Prenton Bowls Club	6	1	-	60	0	0	0
134	Port Sunlight Village Bowling Club	1	2	Port Sunlight Village & Works BC	120	46	20	66
135	Tixall Bowling & Social Club	6	1	Tixall BC, <i>Arno Tixall BC</i>	60	95	15	110

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁶⁶	Number of greens	Clubs	Recommended capacity (members)	Current number of members	Future demand (members)	Future number of members
136	Oxton Conservatives Bowling Club	6	1	Oxton Conservatives BC	60	55	10	65
138	Pensby Bowling Club	3	1	Pensby BC	60	77	0	77
139	Thingwall Bowling Club	3	2	Thingwall BC	120	58	25	83
140	Victoria Gardens (West Kirby)	4	1	-	60	0	0	0
141	Lever Club	1	1	<i>Lever Club BC</i> , Lever Club Pensioners BC	60	55	14	69
190	RNA Naval Club	6	1	Naval BC	60	22	14	36
191	The Magazine Public House	7	1	Magazine BC	60	81	30	111
193	Wallasey Central Conservative Club	7	1	-	60	0	0	0
194	Albany Bowling Club	2	1	Albany BC	60	37	0	37
197	The Lyceum Club	1	2	Bromborough Pool BC	120	44	0	0
200	Marine Park, New Brighton	7	2	Marine Park BC	120	14	5	19

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7.5: Supply and demand analysis

Where membership is known, the greens at the following sites are operating above recommended capacity levels:

- ◀ Hoylake Central & Melrose Club
- ◀ Pensby Bowling Club
- ◀ Tixall Bowling & Social Club
- ◀ The Magazine Public House

In addition, future demand expressed by Cammell Laird and Bebington Park BC is likely to result in the green at Higher Bebington Recreation Ground becoming over capacity. However, all of the clubs using these greens report that existing and projected demand can be accommodated on the provision, suggesting that supply is sufficient across Wirral. No clubs report demand for additional green space.

In contrast, only Marine Park BC is operating below 20 members, although membership levels at Newton Park Vets BC should also be monitored (20 members). Nevertheless, especially due to the level of unresponsive clubs, it is considered that all existing greens that are in use require protection.

Bowls – supply and demand summary

- ◀ Greens at Hoylake Central & Melrose Bowls Club, Tixall Bowling and Social Club, Pensby Bowling Club and The Magazine Public House are all operating with over 60 members.
- ◀ Marine Park BC is operating below 20 members, whilst membership levels at Newton Park Vets BC should also be monitored.
- ◀ As no clubs report demand for additional green space, current supply is considered sufficient across Wirral.
- ◀ It is also considered that all existing greens that are in use require protection.

Bowls – supply summary

- ◀ There are 60 bowling greens identified in Wirral located across 40 sites.
- ◀ Only Desmesne Street Recreation Ground and Octel Sports & Social Club are known to accommodate lapsed/disused greens.
- ◀ Of the 60 bowling greens identified, 37 are owned by the Council, with 12 greens owned by sports clubs, nine by community organisations and two privately.
- ◀ A total of 19 greens are assessed as good quality, 18 as standard quality and 23 as poor quality.
- ◀ Ancillary facilities at Meols Parade Gardens, Port Sunlight Village Bowling Club, Harrison Park and RNA Naval Club are said to be of poor quality.

Bowls – demand summary

- ◀ Where known, membership across Wirral equates to 1,190 people including 987 senior males, 190 senior females and 13 juniors.
- ◀ 20 of the 27 responding clubs state plans to increase their membership bases, equating to the potential growth of 185 seniors and 48 juniors.

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PART 8: TENNIS

8.1: Introduction

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is the NGB for tennis and covers Wirral in its administration. Its vision is “Tennis Opened Up” and its mission is to “grow tennis by making it relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable”. A key part of this is to optimise the park and community offer and provide a quality and seamless journey to court.

Consultation

There are 14 tennis clubs identified in Wirral, with 10 responding to consultation requests, resulting in a 71% response rate.

Table 8.1: Summary of consultation

Club name	Responded?
Alderley TC	Yes
Bertram TC	Yes
Birkenhead TC	No
Heswall TC	Yes
Hoylake TC	Yes
North Cheshire TC	Yes
Oxton TC	Yes
Pinewood TC	Yes
Port Sunlight TC	No
Prenton TC	No
Thorndale TC	No
Thornton Hough TC	Yes
Upton Victory Hall TC	Yes
Wallasey Manor TC	Yes

8.2: Supply

There are 165 outdoor tennis courts identified in Wirral across 38 sites, with 149 courts available for community use. The courts unavailable for community use are all located at education sites; Kingsmead School, South Wirral High School, Upton Hall School, West Kirby Grammar School and Kingsway Academy.

It should be noted that there are also three grass tennis courts located at Arrowe Park. However, these courts have not been considered in the total supply as they are only usable for a few months a year.

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Table 8.2: Summary of tennis courts across Wirral

Analysis area ⁶⁷	Number of courts available for community use	Number of courts unavailable for community use	Total
1	32	3	35
2	3	-	3
3	22	-	22
4	22	6	28
5	16	7	23
6	25	-	25
7	29	-	29
Wirral	151	16	165

As seen in the table above, the largest number of courts are found in Analysis Area 1 (35), whilst the fewest number are found in Analysis Area 2 (three).

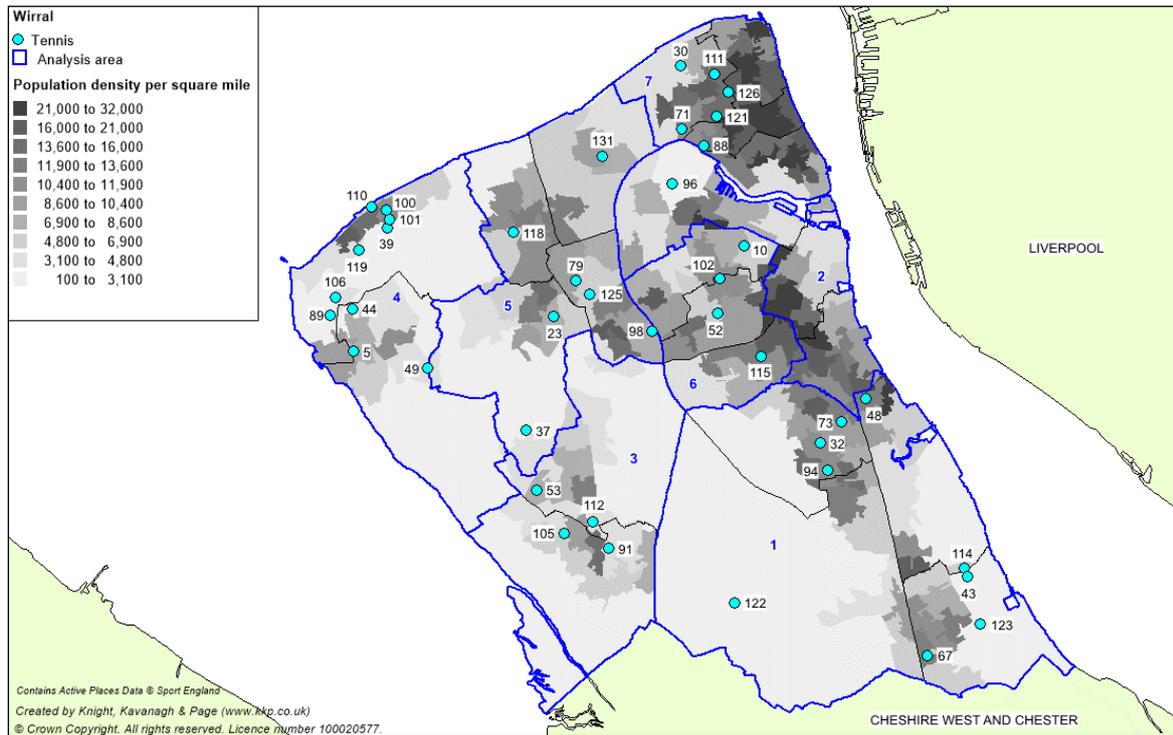
For the purposes of this report, availability for community use refers to courts in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management recorded as being available for hire by individuals, teams or clubs. This also includes availability for social use and pay and play.

Please see Figure 8.1 overleaf for the location of the courts, followed by a key.

⁶⁷ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Figure 8.1: Location of tennis courts in Wirral



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Table 8.3: Summary of provision site by site

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁶⁸	Management	Community use?	No. of courts	Floodlit?	Court type
5	Ashton Park	4	Council	Yes	2	No	Macadam
10	Birkenhead Park	6	Council	Yes	6	No	Macadam
23	Coronation Park (Greasby)	5	Council	Yes	1	No	Macadam
30	Harrison Park	7	Council	Yes	6	No	Macadam
32	Higher Bebington Recreation Ground	1	Council	Yes	3	No	Macadam
37	Irby Recreation Ground	5	Council	Yes	2	No	Macadam
39	Kingsmead School	4	Education	No	1	No	Macadam
43	Port Sunlight Tennis Club (Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields)	1	Sports Club	Yes	4	Yes	Macadam
					4	No	Macadam
48	New Ferry Park	1	Council	Yes	4	No	Macadam
49	Newton Park	4	Council	Yes	1	No	Macadam
52	Oxton Cricket Club	6	Sports Club	Yes	2	Temporarily	Macadam
					2	No	Macadam
53	Pensby High School for Girls	3	Education	Yes	4	Yes	Macadam
					4	No	Macadam
67	South Wirral High School	1	Education	No	3	No	Macadam
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	Council	Yes	6	Yes	Macadam
79	Upton Hall School	5	Education	No	3	No	Macadam
88	Weatherhead High School	7	Education	Yes	4	No	Macadam
90	West Kirby Grammar School	4	Education	No	5	No	Macadam
91	Whitfield Common	3	Council	Yes	2	No	Macadam
94	Wirral Grammar School for Girls	1	Education	Yes	7	No	Macadam
96	Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre	2	Council	Yes	3	No	Macadam
98	Woodchurch High School	5	Education	Yes	4	Yes	Macadam
100	Alderley Tennis Club	4	Sports Club	Yes	4	No	Macadam
101	Bertram Tennis Club	4	Sports Club	Yes	5	No	Macadam
102	Birkenhead Lawn Tennis Club	6	Sports Club	Yes	3	Yes	Macadam

⁶⁸ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁶⁸	Management	Community use?	No. of courts	Floodlit?	Court type
					5	No	Macadam
105	Heswall Lawn Tennis Club	3	Sports Club	Yes	4	Yes	Artificial
					4	No	Artificial
106	Hoylake Lawn Tennis Club	4	Sports Club	Yes	2	No	Macadam
					3	Yes	Macadam
					3	Yes	Artificial
110	Meols Parade Gardens	4	Council	Yes	2	No	Macadam
111	North Cheshire Tennis Club	7	Sports Club	Yes	4	No	Shale
112	Pinewood Tennis Club	3	Sports Club	Yes	4	No	Macadam
115	Prenton Lawn Tennis Club	6	Sports Club	Yes	3	Yes	Artificial
					4	No	Macadam
118	Saughall Grange	5	Council	Yes	2	No	Macadam
121	Thorndale Tennis Club	7	Sports Club	Yes	3	Yes	Macadam
					2	No	Macadam
122	Thornton Hough Tennis Club	1	Sports Club	Yes	2	No	Macadam
123	Torr Park	1	Council	Yes	2	No	Macadam
125	Upton Victory Hall	5	Community	Yes	3	No	Artificial
					1	No	Macadam
					3	No	Grass
126	Wallasey Manor Tennis Club	7	Sports Club	Yes	3	Yes	Macadam
					3	No	Macadam
131	Kingsway Academy	5	Education	No	4	No	Macadam
200	Marine Park, New Brighton	7	Council	Yes	4	No	Macadam

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Disused provision

The Octel Sports & Social Club has four disused tennis courts. There is a current planning application for the construction of 106 houses on site with all sports facilities set to be lost. A Sports Needs Assessment has been conducted and proposes a range of mitigation options, none of which have been agreed at the time of writing. The LTA reports that it would expect there to be an enhancement to other tennis facilities in the area as part of the mitigation in order to increase capacity.

Disused tennis courts are also identified at Ashton Park. Three grass courts were previously provided.

Ownership and management

None of the responding clubs' express concerns with regards to security of tenure. In principle, all clubs are happy with the agreements currently in place, whether that is through ownership, an annual rental agreement or a long-term lease arrangement.

North Cheshire, Heswall, Hoylake, Wallasey Manor and Thornton Hough tennis clubs all own their respective home facilities, whilst the courts at Upton Victory Hall are owned by the Upton Victory Hall Charity.

The remaining courts are predominately managed either through the Council, schools or wider sports clubs.

Table 8.4: Courts available for community use by ownership

Council	Sports Club	Community	Education
54	68	4	23

Floodlighting

Floodlit courts enable use throughout the year and are identified by the LTA as being particularly key priority for growing participation nationally. The LTA reports that floodlights allow for a 35% increase in available court time on an annual basis and it seeks to have all of its registered clubs access floodlit courts.

There are currently 40 floodlit courts across the Borough. These are located across the following sites:

- ◀ Birkenhead Lawn Tennis Club
- ◀ Hoylake Lawn Tennis Club
- ◀ Pensby High School for Girls
- ◀ The Oval Leisure Centre
- ◀ Wallasey Manor Tennis Club
- ◀ Heswall Lawn Tennis Club
- ◀ Port Sunlight Tennis Club
- ◀ Prenton Lawn Tennis Club
- ◀ Thorndale Tennis Club
- ◀ Woodchurch High School

In addition, two of the courts at Oxtun Cricket Club are also currently floodlit; however, this is only a temporary solution. The Club reports that it is looking to into developing permanent provision.

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Upton Victory Hall TC has plans to install floodlights on three of the four courts at Upton Victory Hall. Funding has already been secured for this development through internal fundraising and a loan from Cheshire LTA.

Hoylake TC also aspires to install floodlights on the remaining non-floodlit courts at Hoylake Lawn Tennis Club, whilst Pinewood TC states that the provision of floodlit courts would significantly benefit the Club and its demand.

Floodlit provision at community accessible non-club courts is fairly limited, with only The Oval Leisure Centre, Woodchurch High School and Pensby High School for Girls offering provision. Currently, no park sites in Wirral are floodlit, with the LTA therefore looking to develop such provision at key locations as part of a sustainable parks strategy. This is to enable all players to access floodlit courts on a casual participant basis across all places to play.

Increasing the number of floodlit local authority courts is a strategic aim for the NGB due to the additional recreational demand and tennis programmes such provision can help accommodate.

Court type

Most courts in Wirral have a macadam surface (84%). The estimated lifespan of a macadam court is ten years, depending on levels of use and maintenance levels. To ensure courts can continue to be used beyond this time frame, it is recommended that a sinking fund is put into place for eventual refurbishment. The LTA reports that this should cost £1,200 a year per macadam court (which includes on-going maintenance costs). In comparison, it indicates an approximate sinking fund of £1,500 is needed to refurbish an artificial court surface, whilst the presence of floodlighting on any court type requires an additional sinking fund of £600 per court.

The remaining courts have either an artificial turf surface (sand-based) or are shale-based. Such provision generally allows for greater levels of access, especially during inclement weather spells. Nevertheless, the cost of resurfacing the courts is generally more expensive, despite the lifespan being similar, and more regular maintenance is required.

Table 8.5: Summary of court type at community available sites

Analysis area ⁶⁹	Macadam	Artificial turf	Shale	Grass
1	32	0	0	-
2	3	0	0	-
3	14	8	0	-
4	19	3	0	-
5	9	4	0	3
6	22	3	0	-
7	25	0	4	-
Wirral	124	18	4	3

⁶⁹ [Click for analysis areas](#)

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Quality

The quality of tennis courts has been informed through non-technical site assessments and consultation with providers to assign each court a rating of good, standard or poor. Key aspects informing the findings include surface quality, grip underfoot, line marking quality, evenness and evidence of inappropriate use (e.g. vandalism and/or littering). For further detail regarding the site assessment criteria, please see Appendix 2.

Following a non-technical assessment, of the 149 community available courts, 60 are assessed as good quality, 65 as standard quality and 24 as poor quality. Generally, the LTA indicates that the need to refurbish a court is based typically on its current quality. Good quality courts will need resurfacing in eight to ten years (or more), standard quality courts between four and seven years and poor quality courts within the next three years.

Table 8.6: Summary of community available court quality

Good	Standard	Poor
60	65	24

Typically, courts unavailable for community use are also poor quality, with schools reporting they are often unsafe and only used as recreational spaces for curricular and extracurricular purposes. The quality of the courts in turn gives schools a perceived notion they will have no external demand and therefore any potential community access is limited. This is further compounded as most educational stakeholders indicate they cannot improve court quality or explore growing community accessibility due to financial constraints.

Most tennis clubs in Wirral are serviced by standard or good quality courts, with only Port Sunlight and Thorndale tennis clubs using poor quality courts albeit the former also has access to standard quality courts at its site. Four are assessed as poor and four as standard.

Table 8.7: Site by site quality ratings of community available courts

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁷⁰	No. of courts	Court type	Floodlit?	Court quality
5	Ashton Park	4	2	Macadam	No	Poor
10	Birkenhead Park	6	6	Macadam	No	Standard
23	Coronation Park (Greasby)	5	1	Macadam	No	Poor
30	Harrison Park	7	6	Macadam	No	Poor
32	Higher Bebington Recreation Ground	1	3	Macadam	No	Standard
37	Irby Recreation Ground	5	2	Macadam	No	Poor
43	Port Sunlight Tennis Club (Lord Leverhulme Playing Fields)	1	4	Macadam	Yes	Standard
			4	Macadam	No	Poor
48	New Ferry Park	1	2	Macadam	No	Good
			2	Macadam	No	Poor
49	Newton Park	4	1	Macadam	No	Poor
52	Oxton Cricket Club	6	2	Macadam	Yes	Standard
			2	Macadam	No	Standard
53	Pensby High School for Girls	3	4	Macadam	Yes	Good
			4	Macadam	No	Standard

⁷⁰ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁷⁰	No. of courts	Court type	Floodlit?	Court quality
73	The Oval Leisure Centre	1	6	Macadam	Yes	Standard
88	Weatherhead High School	7	4	Macadam	No	Good
91	Whitfield Common	3	2	Macadam	No	Poor
94	Wirral Grammar School for Girls	6	7	Macadam	No	Good
96	Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre	2	3	Macadam	No	Good
98	Woodchurch High School	5	4	Macadam	Yes	Good
100	Alderley Tennis Club	4	4	Macadam	No	Good
101	Bertram Tennis Club	4	5	Macadam	No	Standard
102	Birkenhead Lawn Tennis Club	6	3	Macadam	Yes	Good
			5	Macadam	No	Standard
105	Heswall Lawn Tennis Club	3	4	Artificial	Yes	Good
			4	Artificial	No	Standard
106	Hoylake Lawn Tennis Club	4	2	Macadam	No	Good
			3	Macadam	Yes	Good
106	Hoylake Lawn Tennis Club	4	3	Artificial	Yes	Good
110	Meols Parade Gardens	4	2	Macadam	No	Good
111	North Cheshire Tennis Club	7	4	Shale	No	Standard
112	Pinewood Tennis Club	3	4	Macadam	No	Standard
115	Prenton Lawn Tennis Club	6	3	Artificial	Yes	Good
			4	Macadam	No	Standard
118	Saughall Grange	5	2	Macadam	No	Standard
121	Thorndale Tennis Club	7	3	Macadam	Yes	Standard
			2	Macadam	No	Poor
122	Thornton Hough Tennis Club	1	2	Macadam	No	Good
123	Torr Park	1	2	Macadam	No	Poor
125	Upton Victory Hall	5	4	Artificial	No	Good
			3	Grass	No	Standard
126	Wallasey Manor Tennis Club	7	3	Macadam	Yes	Good
			3	Macadam	No	Good
131	Kingsway Academy	5	4	Macadam	No	Standard
200	Marine Park, New Brighton	7	4	Macadam	No	Standard

Wallasey Manor TC reports three of the courts at Wallasey Manor Tennis Club will need resurfacing within the next three years, with fencing improvements around the courts are also said to be required. Hoylake TC also has plans to resurface three of the courts at Hoylake Lawn Tennis Club.

Both Bertram TC and Alderley TC also report aspirations to resurface their courts, with both stating that this will be required within the next two years.

A potential solution for alleviating quality issues, particularly at open access local authority sites, is to explore using Clubspark, elements of which are already implemented at numerous sites across Wirral. This is further explored later on within this section of the report.

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Ancillary provision

Generally, ancillary provision servicing club courts across Wirral is adequate, with most responding clubs reporting ancillary facilities to be either standard or good quality at their respective home sites. Despite this, both Alderley TC and North Cheshire TC state that their changing facilities are in poor condition, whereas Hoylake TC reports that it is looking to improve its changing facilities through modernisation.

For non-club courts, ancillary provision is generally considered to be problematic. Most sites either do not provide changing facilities or provide them too far away from courts to be realistically used. Often, the facilities predominately service football and cricket pitch users and therefore are not readily available or suited to tennis court users.

Insight from the LTA indicates good quality ancillary facilities such as toilets, changing rooms and cafes, encourage players to visit community available provision and stay for extended periods of time. Therefore, a potential way to increase usage of such provision would be to invest and sustain suitable ancillary amenities, which has previously been discussed in Wirral at sites such as Birkenhead Park and Harrison Park.

8.3: Demand

There are 14 tennis clubs in Wirral, of which 10 responded to consultation requests. From these clubs, combined membership equates to 1,631 members, which is derived from 1,217 senior members and 414 junior members. The largest club is Hoylake TC with 500 total members, followed by Heswall TC with 450 members. The smallest club is North Cheshire TC, catering for 25 members.

Table 8.8: Summary of club membership

Name of club	Number of members		
	Seniors	Juniors	Total
Alderley TC	86	30	116
Bertram TC	68	16	84
Heswall TC	350	100	450
Hoylake TC	350	150	500
North Cheshire TC	25	-	25
Oxton TC	30	10	40
Pinewood TC	55	15	70
Thornton Hough TC	77	8	85
Upton Victory Hall TC	96	45	141
Wallasey Manor TC	80	40	120
Total	1,217	414	1,631

Participation trends

Both North Cheshire TC and Bertram TC report that senior membership has decreased in recent years as older members have not been replaced. Covid-19 is also noted to have had a negative impact on member retention.

Four clubs report a decrease in junior membership, with Hoylake TC and Alderley TC attributing this to Covid-19 and Bertram TC and Upton Victory Hall TC attributing it to the loss of coaches. The latter also states that many of its members leave the area for University.

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Conversely, Hoylake, Wallasey Manor, and Pinewood TC reports that their senior membership has increased over the same time period, with Pinewood TC also stating that its number of junior members has risen.

Oxton, Heswall and Thornton Hough tennis clubs state that membership levels have remained static for both seniors and juniors.

Latent demand

Sport England's Market Segmentation Tool enables an analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in tennis within Wirral but are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies latent demand of 5,496 people, 517 (9.4%) of which are within the segment 'Tim – settling down males'.

Notwithstanding the above, none of the tennis clubs in Wirral that responded to consultation requests report that they are at capacity, with all clubs willing to accept new members. As such, it is considered that anyone within Wirral that would like to start participating could do so at the clubs already in existence, although clubs do not necessarily wholly cater for those wanting casual, pay and play access.

Future demand

Of the clubs which responded to consultation, six indicate plans to increase membership, equating to an additional 108 senior members and 110 junior members. The largest potential increase is expressed by Pinewood TC (80 members).

Table 8.9: Potential future demand identified by clubs

Club	Senior future demand	Junior future demand	Total future demand
Alderley TC	8	10	18
Bertram TC	10	10	20
Oxton TC	20	20	40
Pinewood TC	40	40	80
Upton Victory Hall TC	10	10	20
Wallasey Manor TC	20	20	40
Total	108	110	218

Parks tennis

Parks tennis leagues are less formal in comparison to established club play, offering greater flexibility and an opportunity for all abilities to engage in competition at local venues. Local Tennis Leagues, which is now owned, managed and operated by the LTA, are available to all aged 18 years and above, with administration and support based online. Players are organised into mixed sex leagues of eight based on similar ability levels, with matches arranged between the two players at whatever time and court is agreed. The flexibility of play is conducive to the use of park sites which are typically more easily accessible.

The LTA reports that it has capacity to explore the opportunity of launching park tennis leagues with each individual local authority. Whilst not essential, park tennis leagues has been found to work well alongside an online booking system, enabling players to reserve their courts to ensure fixtures can regularly occur.

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There is currently one Parks tennis league operating in Wirral, primarily based at Birkenhead Park and Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre. The LTA reports that the plan is to increase the number of players participating.

LTA Youth Start⁷¹

LTA Youth Start is a six week coaching offer for children that have never played tennis before and is identified as a priority by the LTA. For £25, children get six weeks coaching by an LTA Accredited coach, along with a free racket, pack of balls and personalised t-shirt so that they can continue playing.

Courses are currently being uploaded for when Covid-19 restrictions come to an end and will continue to be added throughout 2021. There will be an offer in Wirral at both club and park courts.

Tennis for Free⁷²

Tennis for Free is a community sports charity that work in partnership with the LTA. The charity delivers free, fully inclusive weekly coaching sessions for all ages and abilities in local communities across the UK, especially those in low income areas. Tennis For Free offer a package for local authorities and court operators that includes financial support for local LTA Accredited coaches to deliver the sessions, tennis equipment for attendees and coaches and promotional support. Sessions are typically delivered across three courts, although the charity have recently launched 'Tennis for Free Lite', to unlock the large number of two court community venues that could benefit from the offer. Through its offer it aims to:

- ◀ Reinvigorate under-used public facilities
- ◀ Make tennis a sport for all
- ◀ Make tennis more financially accessible in the UK
- ◀ Improve the physical and mental wellbeing of local communities through tennis.

There are two Tennis for Free sessions currently operating in Wirral, based at Birkenhead Park and Marine Park. The LTA has also identified New Ferry Park as a priority site to deliver the programme in 2021 and it reports that there will be opportunities to increase the number of sites involved through a 'lite' offer at two court sites.

Great British Tennis Weekend⁷³

The Great British Tennis Weekend is an LTA initiative which all registered venues can access. Clubs have the ability to sign up to host open days, which are free of charge, and create a relaxed and welcoming environment for those new to tennis to participate. This in turn can potentially lead to the clubs attracting new members.

The LTA usually hosts three dedicated weekends a year (in May, July and September) which are the UK's biggest public tennis events. Furthermore, venues are able to run additional events outside these dates from April until September and benefit from their events being promoted on the national LTA campaign website. All clubs running an open day are asked to promote a follow-on offer to all attendees, such as a reduced rate introductory membership or a number of free coaching sessions, to encourage people to continue playing after the event.

⁷¹ Previously called Tennis for Kids

⁷² <https://www.tennisforfree.com/index.php>

⁷³ www.lta.org.uk/gbtw.

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Notwithstanding the above, due to Covid-19, the LTA suggests that it will likely not be able to deliver events in the typical format in 2021.

Informal tennis

Through Clubspark, a booking system is in place across all Wirral park sites that allows for usage to be monitored. However, it must be noted that, due to the sites being open access, not all users will be making online bookings. It is generally considered that courts are at their busiest during summer months, with less activity taking place outside of this.

The booking system implement in Wirral forms part of the LTA developing a package of support for local authorities to grow the use of park tennis courts by removing key barriers to participation. The three products are ClubSpark, Rally and Gate Access and can be used individually or in combination. Elements of these products are already implemented at some sites across Wirral, in partnership with the Council.

ClubSpark

ClubSpark is a flexible and simple venue management platform with multiple products and applications to help venues, local authorities and coaches manage their sport. ClubSpark is a tool that is offered for free as part of LTA venue registration and allows administrators to manage all functions of their venue(s) including;

- ◀ Managed website - create and manage a mobile friendly website tailored to LA/club requirements to promote events and activities.
- ◀ Managed coaching – set up coaching lessons and courses online.
- ◀ Membership management - improve membership engagement by making it easier for the venue and for members to pay, renew and keep in touch (includes online payments, direct debits and the monitoring of revenue streams; membership modules can also be used to take season ticket payments for venues operating a non-traditional annual facility fee).
- ◀ Organise payments - set the way payments are taken, whether it's immediate pay and play, or bookable as part of a membership package
- ◀ Court bookings – reduced administration for managing bookings; give staff, coaches, members and the general public access to book and pay for courts, classes or other resources online.
- ◀ Scheduling - set unique booking and price rules to suit the venue and enable lights to switch on/off automatically when linked to the LTA Premium Gate Access system.
- ◀ Book and pay remotely - customers can make bookings and payments for a venue anytime, anywhere via the real-time booking app.
- ◀ Reporting - ClubSpark allows administrators to view reports highlighting income, court usage, revenue and number of members and season ticket holders; this allows for identification of trends and patterns and evidence to demonstrate participation levels and impact.

In Wirral, the non-club courts at the following sites are part of the ClubSpark programme:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ◀ Arrowe Park | ◀ Ashton Park |
| ◀ Birkenhead Park | ◀ Harrison Park |
| ◀ Coronation Park (Greasby) | ◀ Irby Recreation Ground |
| ◀ Higher Bebington Recreation Ground | ◀ Meols Parade Gardens |
| ◀ Marine Park | ◀ New Ferry Park |
| ◀ Saughall Grange | ◀ Thornton Hough Tennis Club |

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In addition, most Wirral clubs are also using Clubspark to manage membership, programming and website activity.

Rally

Rally is an aggregator that collects all booking and coaching information via partner venues ClubSpark pages and displays it for participants in one easy to view page. Rally allows players to search for venues close to them, and provides booking options, removing the barriers of not knowing where courts are or how to book. Rally provides a helpful customer journey, with a personal profile to review and manage bookings, and helpful reminders. Courts can be set to book for free of charge or at a fee agreed by the LA.

All Wirral park sites involved in Clubspark are also on the Rally platform. Wallasey Manor, Prenton and Port Sunlight tennis clubs are also signed up in order to allow for pay and play access for non-members.

Gate Access

The LTA has developed two Gate Access systems that work in association with ClubSpark, to secure your courts and to allow access to booked customers only. Members of the public can book a court online (making payment if required) and will receive a four digit access code via email, to enter using the courtside keypad. The gate access system will allow entry for the time booked if a correct code is entered.

There are two gate options available SmartAccess Premium & SmartAccess Lite. The demands and needs of users plus the setup of the venue will determine the most appropriate system for each site.

Nationally the LTA has reported that in the last three years sites with gate access installed have attracted 64,841 unique players to make bookings, leading to 609,671 courts being booked, and has generated £1.1m of income.

Following a detailed demographic analysis of all park tennis locations across the UK, the LTA has identified locations where they believe they can support the growth of participation through the implementation of gate access technology.

In Wirral, no sites currently have the system installed; however, the LTA reports that it has had a business case agreement to support the installation at all park sites. As part of its strategy, there is a penetration threshold of 1,000 for prioritisation of the system and all but four of the park sites in the Borough meet this. However, a business case has been made for these to also be included.

8.4: Supply and demand analysis

The LTA suggests that a non-floodlit hard court can accommodate 40 members whereas a floodlit hard court can accommodate 60 members. The same also applies where courts are seasonal (e.g. grass and shale), although capacity issues may exist in the winter using this broad method. For air domed courts, membership of 100 is considered applicable and permanent indoor courts can accommodate 200 members.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Using these figures, the table overleaf analyses whether or not courts currently in use by clubs in Wirral are sufficient to meet both current and future demand, where membership levels are known. However, it should be noted that the analysis relates to LTA viability guidelines for clubs does not necessarily constitute actual capacity. The figures are based on what most clubs, based on the level of provision they have, would find sustainable.

Moving forward, the LTA reports that, as more clubs utilise a court booking system, each club should be able to form a more accurate picture of demand as playing habits and usage becomes more defined. Typically, clubs will have increased demand for courts between 16:00-20:00 and it is at these times where capacity is likely to be the biggest issue.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 8.10: Summary of supply and demand

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area ⁷⁴	Community club	Current demand	Site capacity	Capacity rating	Future demand	Future capacity rating
52	Oxton Cricket Club	6	Oxton TC	40	160	120	40	80
100	Alderley Tennis Club	4	Alderley TC	116	160	34	18	16
101	Bertram Tennis Club	4	Bertram TC	84	200	116	20	96
105	Heswall Lawn Tennis Club	3	Heswall TC	450	400	50	-	50
106	Hoylake Lawn Tennis Club	4	Hoylake TC	500	440	60	-	60
111	North Cheshire Tennis Club	7	North Cheshire TC	25	160	135	-	135
112	Pinewood Tennis Club	3	Pinewood TC	70	160	90	80	10
126	Wallasey Manor Tennis Club	7	Wallasey Manor TC	120	360	240	40	200
122	Thornton Hough Tennis Club	1	Thornton Hough TC	85	80	5	-	5
125	Upton Victory Hall	5	Upton Victory Hall TC	141	280	139	20	119

⁷⁴ [Click for analysis areas](#)

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As seen in the table above, at clubs sites, Heswall Lawn Tennis Club, Hoylake Lawn Tennis Club and Thornton Hough Tennis Club are all operating above recommended capacity. This suggests that the current provision available to these clubs is insufficient.

Away from clubs, where usage is recorded, it is possible to assess capacity by comparing the total court hours booked against the number of court hours available. Using this, it is considered that all publicly available courts in Wirral are deemed to have spare capacity, with focus therefore needing to be on actualising further usage of the provision. As such, the priority should be on improving quality, both in terms of the courts and the accompanying ancillary facilities, as well as continuing the implementation of a smoother booking and access system via ClubSpark, Rally and Gate Access.

Tennis – supply and demand summary

- ◀ Heswall Lawn Tennis Club, Hoylake Lawn Tennis Club and Thornton Hough Tennis Club are all operating above recommended capacity, suggesting that the current provision available to the clubs is insufficient.
- ◀ As there is considered to be spare capacity existing on all non-club courts, the focus should be on improving quality and encouraging further usage.

Tennis – supply summary

- ◀ There are 165 tennis courts identified in Wirral across 38 sites, with 149 courts available for community use.
- ◀ Of the courts, 40 are serviced by floodlighting, with Pinewood, Oxton, Upton Victory Hall and Hoylake tennis clubs aspiring to install floodlighting at their respective home venues.
- ◀ Over 50% of clubs are without access to floodlit courts, which is a significant number.
- ◀ No park courts are serviced by floodlights which can impact on recreational use.
- ◀ The majority of courts in Wirral have a macadam surface (84%), whilst the remaining courts have either an artificial turf surface or are clay based.
- ◀ Of the community available courts, 60 are assessed as good quality, 65 as standard quality and 24 as poor quality.
- ◀ Ancillary provision servicing club courts across Wirral is adequate although Alderley, North Cheshire, Hoylake and Thornton Hough tennis clubs state changing facilities at their respective home venues are in poor condition.
- ◀ Changing facilities are also a key issue in relation to non-club courts, with provision often of a poor quality or situated too far away from the courts to be used.

Tennis – demand summary

- ◀ There are 14 tennis clubs in Wirral; of the ten that responded to consultation requests, combined membership equates to 1,631 members, which is derived from 1,217 senior members and 414 junior members.
- ◀ Six clubs indicate plans to increase membership, equating to an additional 108 senior members and 110 junior members.
- ◀ Clubspark is implemented at all park sites in Wirral, allowing for recreational usage to be monitored.
- ◀ A growing number of clubs also allow access to non-members on a pay and play basis.

APPENDIX 1: 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 Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation (2015)

The Government published its strategy for sport in December 2015. This strategy confirms the recognition and understanding that sport makes a positive difference through broader means and that it will help the sector to deliver five simple but fundamental outcomes: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of 23 performance indicators under nine key headings, as follows:

- ◀ More people taking part in sport and physical activity.
- ◀ More people volunteering in sport.
- ◀ More people experiencing live sport.
- ◀ Maximising international sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ A more productive sport sector.
- ◀ A more financially and organisationally sustainable sport sector.
- ◀ A more responsible sport sector.

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.

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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 (2019)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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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.

Time for Change: The FA Strategy (2020-2024)

The new FA strategy aims to take the FA and English football forward with bold leadership and ambitious targets to build on the progress of the last four years. It identifies six Game Changer objectives and eight Serve the Game objectives which demonstrate its determination to substantially change the fabric of the game and address key societal issues.

The Game Changer objectives are:

- ◀ Win a major tournament
- ◀ Serve two million + through a transformed digital platform
- ◀ Equal opportunities for every girl
- ◀ Deliver 5,000 quality pitches
- ◀ A game free from discrimination
- ◀ Maximise the appeal and revenue of the FA cups and Women’s Super League

These are underpinned by its eight Serve the Game objectives, which are:

- ◀ Trusted, progressive regulation and administration
- ◀ Safe and inclusive football pathways and environment
- ◀ Personalised and connected learning experiences
- ◀ Maximum investment into the game

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- ◀ Diverse, high performance workforce and inclusive culture
- ◀ World class venues and events
- ◀ Strong reputation and clear brand identity
- ◀ Technology enabled and insight driven

The FA: National Game Strategy (2018-2021)

The FA launched its National Game Strategy in July 2018 which aims to inspire a life-long journey in football for all. To achieve this, the strategy will focus on five key aspects of the game:

- ◀ A high quality introduction to football
- ◀ Developing clubs and leagues
- ◀ Embrace all formats of football and engage all participants
- ◀ Recruit, develop and support the workforce
- ◀ Develop sustainable facilities

Through these five pillars, The FA's objectives are to:

- ◀ Increase the number of male affiliated and recreational players by 10%.
- ◀ Double the number of female affiliated and recreational players via a growth of 75%.
- ◀ Increase the number of disability affiliated and recreational players by 30%.
- ◀ Ensure affiliated Futsal is available across the country in order to increase the number of Futsal affiliated and recreational players.

The sustainable football facilities should provide support to an agreed portfolio of priority projects that meet National Football Facility Strategy (NFFS) investment priorities.

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

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- ◀ **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 Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

The RFU has released its new strategic vision for rugby in England. The strategy is based on four main elements which are; Protect, Engage, Grow and Win. It covers all elements of rugby union ranging from elite rugby to grassroots, although the general relevancy to the PPS is centred around growing the game.

The RFU exists to promote and develop rugby union in England and ensure the long-term sustainability of clubs by growing player numbers and retaining them across all age groups. Responding to wider market influences, work will continue on developing new ways to take part in all forms of the game, without comprising the sports traditions. This will ensure a lasting legacy from elite success by attracting new players and encouraging current male and female adult players to play.

The four key aims to ensure long term sustainability are to:

- ◀ Improve player transition from age grade to adult 15-a-side rugby
- ◀ Expand places to play through Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)
- ◀ Engage new communities in rugby
- ◀ Create a community 7's offering

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

The vision is for England to be a 'Nation Where Hockey Matters'.

We know that delivering success on the international stage stimulates the nation's pride in their hockey team and, with the right events in place, we will attract interest from spectators, sponsors and broadcasters alike. The visibility that comes from our success and our occasions will inspire young people and adults to follow in the footsteps of their heroes and, if the right opportunities are there to meet their needs, they will play hockey and enjoy wonderful experiences.

Underpinning all this is the infrastructure which makes our sport function. We know the importance of our volunteers, coaches, officials, clubs and facilities. The more inspirational our people can be, the more progressive we can be and the more befitting our facilities can be, the more we will achieve for our sport. England Hockey will enable this to happen and we are passionate about our role within the sport. We will lead, support, counsel, focus and motivate the Hockey Nation and work tirelessly towards our vision.

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As a governing body, we want to have a recognisable presence to participants of the game, be that through club or association website or their communications, or through the work of the many outstanding coaches in our game, so that players understand that their club is part of a wider team working together to a common goal.

The core objectives are as follows:

1. Grow our Participation
2. Deliver International Success
3. Increase our Visibility
4. Enhance our Infrastructure
5. For England Hockey to be proud and respected custodians of the sport

Club participation

Our club market is well structured and clubs are required to affiliate to England Hockey to play in community leagues. As a result only relatively few occasional teams lie outside our affiliation structure. Schools and Universities are the other two areas where significant hockey is played.

Hockey is clearly benefiting from a double Olympic legacy. After Great Britain's women won bronze in front of a home crowd in London in 2012 the numbers of young girls playing the sport doubled and a historic gold in Rio 2016 saw more than 10,000 players promptly joining clubs. These triumphs have inspired the nation to get active and play hockey. Thanks to the outstanding work of the network of clubs across the country, England Hockey has seen unprecedented growth at both ends of the age range. There has been an 80% increase in the number of boys and girls in clubs, as well as a 54% increase in players over the age of 46.

Hockey clubs have reaped the rewards of the improved profile of the sport, focussing on a link with schools to provide excellent opportunities for young players. Programmes such as Quick sticks – a small-sided version of hockey for 7-11 year olds – in Primary Schools have been hugely successful in allowing new players to take part in the sport from an early age. The growth in the sport since the eve of London 2012 has been seen across the country, examples being a 110% increase in under 16s club participation in London, and a 111% growth in the North West in the same age bracket.

England Hockey Strategy

England Hockey's Facilities Strategy can be found [here](#).

Vision: For every hockey club in England to have appropriate and sustainable facilities that provide excellent experiences for players.

Mission: More, Better, Happier Players with access to appropriate and sustainable facilities

The 3 main objectives of the facilities strategy are:

- ◀ **PROTECT: To conserve the existing hockey provision**
 - There are currently over 800 pitches that are used by hockey clubs (club, school, universities) across the country. It is important to retain the current provision where appropriate to ensure that hockey is maintained across the country.
- ◀ **IMPROVE: To improve the existing facilities stock (physically and administratively)**
 - The current facilities stock is ageing and there needs to be strategic investment into refurbishing the pitches and ancillary facilities. England Hockey works to provide more support for clubs to obtain better agreements with facilities providers & education around owning an asset.

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- ◀ **DEVELOP: To strategically build new hockey facilities where there is an identified need and ability to deliver and maintain. This might include consolidating hockey provision in a local area where appropriate.**

England Hockey has identified key areas across the country where there is a lack of suitable hockey provision and there is a need for additional pitches, suitable for hockey. There is an identified demand for multi pitches in the right places to consolidate hockey and allow clubs to have all of their provision catered for at one site.

LTA Facilities Investment Strategy – Vision for the 2020 and beyond

The LTA has developed a programme of action based on seven core strategies. These are:

- ◀ Visibility – Broaden relevance and increase visibility of tennis all year round to build engagement and participation with fans and players.
- ◀ Innovation – Innovate in the delivery of tennis to widen its appeal.
- ◀ Investment – Support community facilities and schools to increase the opportunities to play.
- ◀ Accessibility – Make the customer journey to playing tennis easier and more accessible for anyone.
- ◀ 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.
- ◀ Performance – Create a pathway for British champions that nurtures a diverse team of players, people and leaders.
- ◀ Leadership – Create a pathway for British champions that nurtures a diverse team of players, people and leaders.

The LTA Facilities Investment Framework sets out how it intends to deliver the investment to support community accessible tennis facilities. The focus will be on:

- ◀ New and existing indoor tennis centres
- ◀ Park tennis
- ◀ Tennis clubs
- ◀ Schools and other educational establishments

The key principles of the framework are to:

- ◀ Help fund projects through interest free loans.
- ◀ Invest in venues that have a proven record of increasing participation.
- ◀ Invest where there is thorough community engagement.
- ◀ Support venues that encourage participation growth.
- ◀ Targeted investment that is demand-led.
- ◀ Support venues that have successfully sourced partnership funding.

WIRRAL COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

APPENDIX 2: NON TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT SHEETS

Grass football pitch non-technical assessment sheet

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Football						
Please complete one form per pitch						
Site reference:			Site Name:			
6 figure grid reference			Pitch ID(s):			
Number of football pitches on site:			Pitch size:	(Adult 11v11, Youth 11v11, 9v9, 7v7 Mini, 5v5, 7v7)		
Availability			Are any other pitches marked out over this pitch?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Weather at time of visit & date of visit			If yes, please indicate what pitches are overmarked? (i.e. one youth pitch is overmarked on a adult pitch) in Pitch Issues			
Pitch Issues:						
Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)						
Element (Gathered via a non technical site assessment)	Rating			Guidance notes	Comments	
Playing surface						
Grass Cover	Good >80%		Adequate 60-80%		Poor <60%	Advice is to walk through the middle of the pitch
Does the pitch meet The FA minimum size?	Yes - as per the FA recommended size		Within FA recommended guidelines		No	See size chart below for recommended dimensions
Slope of pitch (gradient and cross fall)	Flat		Moderate		Severe	
Length of grass	Good		Too long		Too short	Good 30mm-50mm, Too long 51mm plus, Too short 29mm less
Evenness of pitch	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Problem Areas: Evidence of dog fouling/glass/litter/vehicle tracks	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots	
Problem Areas: Evidence of unofficial use/damage to the surface	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots	
Problem Areas: Evidence of poor drainage	No evidence of standing water or poor drainage		Some evidence of poor drainage		Yes, poor drainage	
Maintenance programme (information from maintenance schedule/grounds team/club survey)						Section total
Grass cutting	Yes, as required		Yes, but not frequent enough		No	
Seeded	Yes, as required		Not known		No	
Aerated (per year)	Three or more times		Once/ twice		No	
Sand dressed	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No	
Fertilised	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No	
Weed killed	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No	
						Section total
NB If none of this information is provided you should assume that only the grass is being cut and the rest of the maintenance items should be marked with the lowest score option.						
PITCH SCORE			0.0%	RATING	Poor	

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Rugby pitch non-technical assessment sheet

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Rugby Union									
Please complete one form per pitch									
Site reference						Site Name			
6 figure grid reference						Pitch ID(s)			
Date of assessment						Pitch size	(Senior, Mini/Midi)		
Number of pitches on site						Are any other pitches marked out over this pitch?			
Availability	Community Use - used, Community Use - unused, No Community Use, Available but Unused					If yes, please indicate what pitches are overmarked? (i.e. one mini/ midi pitch is overmarked on a senior pitch) in Pitch Issues			
Weather at time of visit									
General comments/observations									
Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)									
Qualitative information (gathered on site)	Rating					Guidance notes	Comments		
Grass Coverage	Good		Adequate		Poor	>90% = good. <80% = poor			
Size of pitch	Acceptable (between recommended minimum and maximum sizes)		Flag for further investigation (below recommended minimum size)		Unacceptable (above maximum size)	Maximum size = width 70m, goal line to goal line 100m, in goal area 22m, run offs 5m where practical. Recommended minimum size = width 68m, goal line to goal line 94m, in goal area 6m, run offs 5m where practical.			
Length of grass	Too Long		Good		Too short	Too long = >75mm. Too short = <50mm			
Problem Areas: Evidence of glass/litter/vehicle tracks/dog fouling	None		Yes - some		Yes lots				
GOALPOSTS									
Are goalposts installed?	Yes		No						
Is there any obvious danger on posts?	Yes		No						
Are the posts stable in the ground?	Yes		No						
Is the crossbar fixed securely?	Yes		No						
Is there evidence of rust on the posts?	Yes		No						
ANCILLARY									
Is the pitch floodlit?	Yes		No						
Is there changing accommodation for the pitch?	Yes		No						
Is an appropriate level of car parking available?	Yes		No						
Pitch maintenance (information gathered via club survey/ pitch provider consultation) - refer to the guidance notes below									
Aerated (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never		
Sand dressed (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never		
Fertilised (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never		
Weed killed (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never		
Chain harrowed	every week		fortnightly		monthly		never		
Drainage	Natural (inadequate) SCORE D0		Natural (adequate) SCORE D1		Pipe drained SCORE D2		Pipe and slit drained SCORE D3		Unknown SCORE D0
									Pitch Maintenance Score
									Natural (adequate) = 3 or less training/match cancellations per season Natural (inadequate) = 4 or more training match cancellations per season *Based on a pipe drained system at 5m centres that has been installed in the previous eight years **Based on a slit drained system at 1m centres completed in the previous five years.

Crickets non-technical assessment

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Element	Rating			Guidance notes	Comments (use the guidance notes to help complete)
About the cricket outfield					
Grass coverage	Good	Acceptable	Poor	<80% Falls below the ECP basic standard	
Length of grass	Good	Acceptable	Poor	Ideally 42mm - 25mm	
Evenness	Even	Uneven		Ball should run without deviation or ramp	
Evidence of Dog fouling/glass/stones/litter?	None	Yes	Immediate action required	Flag also with to refer to area manager. If area, refer to asset/care/site manager	
Evidence of Unofficial use?	None	Yes	Immediate action required	eg informal, casual use, unhooked use, kids kickabout etc. Flag also with to refer to area manager. If area, refer to asset/care/site manager	
Evidence of Damage to surface?	None	Yes	Immediate action required	eg from animals/vehicles - rabbit, gulls and faeces etc may also with to refer to area manager	
Artificial wickets					
Is the wicket and surrounds married in	Yes	No		There should be no trip points	
Evenness of wicket	Even	Uneven		There should be no contours in surface levels	
Stump holes	Yes	No		Should be no wider than a standard cricket ball	
Moss or materials in the surface	Yes	No		There should be none	
Rips or surface lifting	Yes	No		If "area" needed site manager	
Surface worn in high traffic areas - creases	Yes	No		If "area" needed site manager	
Hardness - does the ball rebound when thrown straight down?	Yes	No			
Grass wickets					
Presence of line markings	Yes	No			
Evidence of rolling - is wicket smooth and uniform	Yes	No			
Evidence of straight cut and height	Yes	No		3mm or less wicket/12mm rest of square	
Evidence of repair work on old wickets	Yes	No			
Grass coverage (square and wickets)	Yes	No		<80% Falls below the ECP basic standard	
Hardness - does a cricket ball thrown straight down into the surface rebound?	Yes	No			
Changing/ Pavilion					
Umpires provision	Yes	No			
Toilets	Yes	No			
Hot/cold water	Yes	No			
Heating	Yes	No			
Condition of building	Good	Acceptable	Requires attention		
NTP					
Is the wicket and surrounds married in (no trip points)	Yes	No			
Evenness of wicket (no contours in surface levels)	Even	Uneven			
Stump holes (no wider than a standard cricket ball)	Yes	No			
Moss or materials in the surface (should be none)	Yes	No			
No rips or surface lifting	Yes	No			
Surface worn in high traffic areas - crease	Yes	No			
Hardness - does the ball rebound when thrown straight down	Yes	No			
Is the steel frame/posts upright?	Yes	No			
Are steel cross members detached?	Yes	No			
Are all posts and net fixings in place?	Yes	No			
Can a ball pass through any part of the netting?	Yes	No			
Is appropriate safety/supervisory signage present?	Yes	No			

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Artificial grass pitches non-technical assessment (including third generation turf pitches)

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Artificial grass pitches									
Site reference			Site Name						
6 figure grid reference			Pitch ID						
Number of AGPs on site			Pitch size	Full (i.e., 100m x 60m)			Half (i.e., 60m x 40m)		
Availability			Community Use - used, Community Use - unused, No Community Use, Available but Unused						
Type of pitch	Long Pile 3G (65mm with shock pad)		Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)		Short Pile 3G (40mm)				
		Sand Dressed				Sand Filled		Water based	
Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)									
Element	Rating						Guidance notes	Site comments	
Age of Surface	less than 2 years		2-5 years		5-10 years		over 10 years		
Evidence of moss/lichen (all surfaces)	None		Yes - some				Yes - lots		
Loose gravel (macadam surface)	None		Yes - some				Yes - lots		
Holes or rips in surface (macadam, art. grass or polymeric surfaces)	None		Yes - some				Yes - lots		
Grip underfoot	Good		Adequate				Poor		
Line markings - quality	Good		Adequate				Poor		
Problem Areas: Evidence of Glass/ stones/ litter	None		Yes - some				Yes - lots		
Problem Areas: Evidence of inappropriate use	None		Yes - some				Yes - lots		
Problem Areas: Evidence of damage to surface	None		Yes - some				Yes - lots	If no evidence, assume none.	
Access for disabled players. i.e.: ramps onto courts, width of gates	Good		Adequate				Poor		
Condition of posts/ nets/ goals	Good		Adequate				Poor		
Surrounding fencing	Good		Adequate				Poor		
Adequate safety margins (w here appropriate)	Yes - fully		No- but adequate				No - not adequate		
Is the AGP floodlit?	Yes						No		
Is the AGP left open at all times?	Yes						No		
Are there dug outs?	Yes						No		
Are there youth shelters/spectator seating around AGP?	Yes						No		
Is there changing accommodation for the AGP?	Yes						No		
Maximum score	93		Scoring:	Poor <=50		Total Score	0		
				Standard 51-79		Potential Rating	Poor		
				Good 80+					

