



WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

ASSESSMENT REPORT SEPTEMBER 2022

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd
Company No: 9145032 (England)

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Registered Office: 1 -2 Frecheville Court, off Knowsley Street, Bury BL9 0UF
T: 0161 764 7040 E: mail@kcp.co.uk www.kcp.co.uk



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ABBREVIATIONS

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
BARLA	British Amateur Rugby League Association
CC	Cricket Club
CCB	Cheshire Cricket Board
CFA	Cheshire Football Association
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FF	Football Foundation
FE	Further Education
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FIT	Fields in Trust
FPM	Facilities Planning Model
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GMA	Grounds Management Association
HC	Hockey Club
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LCFA	Liverpool County Football Association
LFA	Lancashire County Football Association
LMS	Last Man Stands
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPOSS	Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
RFL	Rugby Football League
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RLFC	Rugby League Football Club
RUFC	Rugby Union Football Club
SE	Sport England
TGR	Team Generation Rates
U	Under
WBC	Warrington Borough Council
WR	World Rugby

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) has been commissioned by Warrington Borough Council (WBC) to undertake a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS). This report (known as the Assessment Report) presents a supply and demand assessment of playing pitches and outdoor sport across the area and is delivered in accordance with Sport England's PPS Guidance and 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' Guidance.

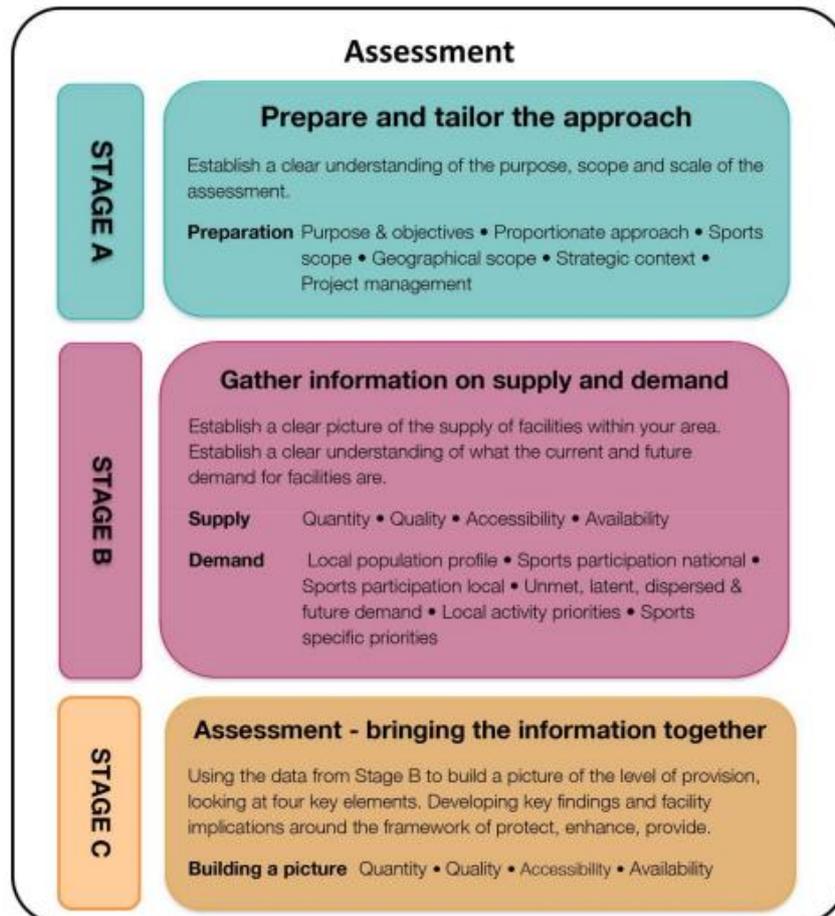
Sport England's PPS Guidance details a 13-stepped approach, separated into five distinct sections, as follows:

- ◀ 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 proceeding strategy document with Stage E undertaken by the PPOSS Steering Group to implement the recommendations and actions of the PPOSS.

Sport England's 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' Guidance details the following approach shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Sport England's 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' Guidance approach



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Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach

Why the PPOSS is being delivered

The primary purpose of a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of outdoor playing pitches meet the local needs of existing and future residents across Warrington.

The PPOSS has been prepared in accordance with Sport England Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) Guidance (October 2013 as updated in March 2014) and provides a robust and objective justification for future playing pitch and outdoor sport provision throughout the Borough. The 2018 Warrington PPS was formally adopted by the Council in June 2019. However, the original supply and demand data was predominately collated in 2016/17 and as such it was recognised that there was a need to carry out a desk-based refresh of the Study in 2019 which identified the need for a new PPS to be developed. That desk-based exercise also identified the need to broaden the scope to other outdoor sports not included in the original PPS.

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 98 requiring “Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.”

Paragraph 99 sets three criterion that ensures “existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

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

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Wider Warrington context

The Local Plan

The new Local Plan will set out the legal planning framework for Warrington's development for the period 2021 to 2038. This covers housing, business space, transport infrastructure and community facilities like schools and GPs. The new Local Plan will replace the existing adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

In 2017, the Council undertook a consultation around our Preferred Development Option (PDO) which looked at Warrington's development needs for the future. This fed into preparing the Draft Local Plan. The Draft Local Plan (Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan) was submitted for examination in public on 22nd April 2022.

The Local Plan sets out a vision and objectives for the Borough's future and will be used to guide decisions on planning applications and identify areas where investment and growth should be prioritised and those areas that need to be protected from development. The Local plan aims to deliver 14,688 new homes (or 816 a year, up to 2038) and will also support Warrington's ongoing economic growth by providing 316.26 hectares of employment land.

The Plan sets out and prioritises using urban capacity to create varied, vibrant neighbourhoods that are shared places to live, work and enjoy. Government guidelines determine the need to build at least 14,688 homes over the course of the plan, which exceeds the urban land available. Therefore, there is a need to consider other areas of land to develop on, including Green Belt, in order to meet the Council's development obligations.

The projected housing figures aim to match Warrington's expected growth and ensure enough homes are provided to support the number of jobs that will be created from Warrington's future economic growth. The areas of Green Belt proposed for development would need to be released to meet Government figures and while the Council's priority is to protect as much Green Belt as possible.

Therefore, WBC needs to keep its PPOSS up to date in order to comply with national and local plan policy and the guidance from Sport England and take account of the higher level of growth now envisaged. The revised PPOSS will continue to provide a robust evidence base to inform statutory land use planning decisions and funding bids, which will involve the following:

- ◀ To provide updated information on Warrington's existing and future needs for playing pitches and outdoor sport facilities and its current ability to meet those needs in terms of quality, quantity, accessibility and location.
- ◀ To provide evidence to inform wider Green Infrastructure Planning across the Borough.
- ◀ To provide background evidence to support Local Plan policies to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- ◀ To review the information to enable the Council to justify collecting developer contributions and inform the Council on the distribution of developer contributions to sports in line with Section 106 regulations.

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Warrington Borough Council Corporate Strategy 2020-2024

Through the Council's strategy, it will work in partnership with local politicians to provide support for communities, businesses and partners to ensure that Warrington continues to thrive.

Through the strategy the Council makes four pledges and priorities to its residents that will be used as a basis for making future decisions:

1. Residents living healthy, happy and independent lives
2. Benefitting from a thriving economy
3. Safe and strong communities and ensuring the most vulnerable are protected
4. Creating a clean, green and vibrant town

To meet these pledges, the Council presents six values for the Strategy:

- ◀ **Open, honest and accountable** – listen to and learn from our communities, do what we said we would
- ◀ **Treating people fairly & equally** – respect our customers and each other, challenge discrimination and inequality
- ◀ **Spending money wisely** – be financially sustainable, looking for different and better ways of delivering key services
- ◀ **Working in partnership** – build relationships and work collaboratively with others to maximise our strengths and resources
- ◀ **Forward thinking** – open to change, new challenges and innovative ways of doing things
- ◀ **Working with and engaging communities** – encourage and empower people to build their own strengths and abilities, encouraging residents to take pride in their area

Well Warrington: Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Warrington 2019 – 2023

The Warrington Health and Wellbeing Strategy identifies the priority areas where resources and services should be targeted in order to promote, maintain and increase the overall health and wellbeing of people, communities and the borough as a whole during the next three years and into the future.

It sets out a vision for the Borough and identifies challenges, opportunities and priorities to be addressed by partners and outlines the outcomes for the strategy. The vision for the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is:

'Warrington is a place where we work together to create a borough with stronger neighbourhoods, healthier people and greater equality across all our communities.'

The strategy identifies core ambitions that will help clearly focus how partners will work together to shape an approach to transforming health and wellbeing in the Borough. The four ambitions are:

1. People will live in healthy, safe and sustainable communities.
2. People will have the skills and resources needed to improve their life chances.
3. People will value being and feeling well and will live active, independent and fulfilled lives.
4. People's quality of life will be improved by the ability to access appropriate, quality care when and where they need it.

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Active Cheshire Connected

This Autumn Active Cheshire will be launching its new strategy '**Active Cheshire Connected**'. This sets out a new direction for Active Cheshire, where it will play a system leader role and focus heavily on partnership working to drive systemic change, with sport and physical activity as one solution to tackling inequalities. The vision of the strategy is **more people to be more active, more often, living longer, happier, and healthier lives**. Impact will be measured based on:

- ◀ More Healthy, More Active people
- ◀ Greater Health Equity
- ◀ Increased participation in Physical Activity, Sport and Movement
- ◀ High-Quality Partnerships with key stakeholders
- ◀ A coordinated, functioning physical activity system

Synergy will be seen between Active Cheshire Connect and Sport England's Uniting the Movement. This is intentional, with a shared purpose around tackling inequalities, removing barriers to physical activity, and embedding sustainability, to allow our communities to thrive through improved health and wellbeing and equal opportunities.

The strategy demonstrates Active Cheshire's commitment to being driven by data and insight. Data and insight will sit at the heart of everything it does, driving direction, resource deployment and investment based on where there is most need within local communities. It will look to create shared ownership of this across the local sport and physical activity system and embed a learning culture through its '**Listen, Learn, Create, Innovate, Share, Reflect**' cycle.

Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP)

WDP is an internationally acclaimed user led charity. With over 26 years' experience of developing and delivering mobility and independent living services, its aim is to support disabled people and people living with long term health conditions.

It actively promotes independent living by providing information on peer counselling, housing, equipment, personal assistance, transport, access, employment, education, training and is often approached in relation to supporting and signposting disability sports activity across Warrington. One of its main aims in this respect, is encouraging all sports clubs to be accessible and encouraging inclusivity. WDP works closely, for example, with Warrington Wolves RLFC and helped with development of its new disability teams.

WDP reports that demand for disability sports in Warrington is high and there are some good examples in place in sports such as swimming, martial arts, tennis and now rugby league. However, barriers to participation are often higher and more acute. It is often not the playing facilities themselves which cause the biggest barriers but wider issues such as availability of transport, which can often be linked to timing of sessions, for example.

Accessibility in relation to ancillary facilities is also a common issue, including changing rooms, size of doors and car parking. The other key element relates to the availability of volunteers to support sports clubs to offer disability sports.

It has generally become standard that all new sports facilities have DDA compliance, however, this should also extend to the upgrading of sports facilities and in this context, for playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities this should include changing rooms. One of the ways to help ensure new and refurbished facilities are accessible is to involve WDP in the early planning stages of projects.

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What makes the study area different

The Borough of Warrington is bordered by Halton, Cheshire West & Chester, and Cheshire East boroughs in the Ceremonial County of Cheshire and by the metropolitan boroughs of Trafford, Salford and Wigan in Greater Manchester and St. Helens in Merseyside.

The age structure of the population affects a range of service needs. Some wards have a much older population than the Warrington average, and some a much younger population. Overall Warrington is similar to 15 and under, 16 to 64, 65 and over national figures. Looking at specific younger age groups, in Warrington approximately 6% of the population were aged 0-4. In Warrington approximately 23% of the population were aged 0-19. The proportion of those aged 80 and older in Warrington is approximately 5%.

Warrington is considered the 148th most deprived of 317 local authorities in England. Warrington is ranked less deprived than Halton (23rd) but more deprived than Cheshire West & Chester (161st) and Cheshire East (216th).

The Borough is more ethnically diverse than its neighbouring authorities (7.1%) in Cheshire and the Liverpool City Region, with 92.9% of the population identifying themselves as white. However, this is high compared to 79.8% nationally and 87.1% in the North West.

WBC operates through a neighbourhood agenda with a commitment to build stronger, safer communities, strengthen public life and increase health and wellbeing across the Borough. This is reflected in Warrington's vision to "inspire and support residents to be the healthiest, most active and happiest in the North West".

LiveWire also plays a key role in the provision of sports facilities across the Borough. LiveWire is a Community Interest Company (CIC) based in Warrington that delivers a range of services to help the physical and mental wellbeing of local people. It is the largest provider of leisure facilities in Warrington, managing all Council owned leisure centres in the Borough.

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 the steering 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). It is and has been responsible for the direction of the PPOSS from a strategic perspective and for supporting and checking and challenging the work of the project team.

It will be important for the steering group to continue once the PPOSS 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 through an Annual Monitoring Report.

Study area

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As a Borough wide assessment, the study area reflects the Warrington Borough boundaries. Further to this sub areas or analysis areas have been created to allow a more localised assessment of provision and examination of playing pitch supply and demand at a local level. It should be noted that sports catchment areas do not naturally fall within administrative analysis areas and can be either larger or cross over analysis areas. The analysis areas are for reporting purposes only and should not be used to compare provision between areas.

Warrington is surrounded by Wigan to the North, Trafford and Salford to the East, Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East to the South and Halton and St Helens to the West. The PPOSS will examine any cross boundary issues relating to these authorities. PPS' for Wigan (October 2017), Trafford (June 2017), Salford (April 2018), Cheshire West and Chester (October 2021), Cheshire East (March 2017), Halton (May 2021) and St Helens (April 2022) have all been completed by KKP so information relating to these issues is already held internally.

It should also be noted that KKP completed a review of the Trafford PPS in June 2019 and has completed updates of the Cheshire East PPS every year since its completion in 2017.

Warrington is currently split into four neighbourhood areas as shown below and these neighbourhood areas have been used as the analysis areas in the assessment.

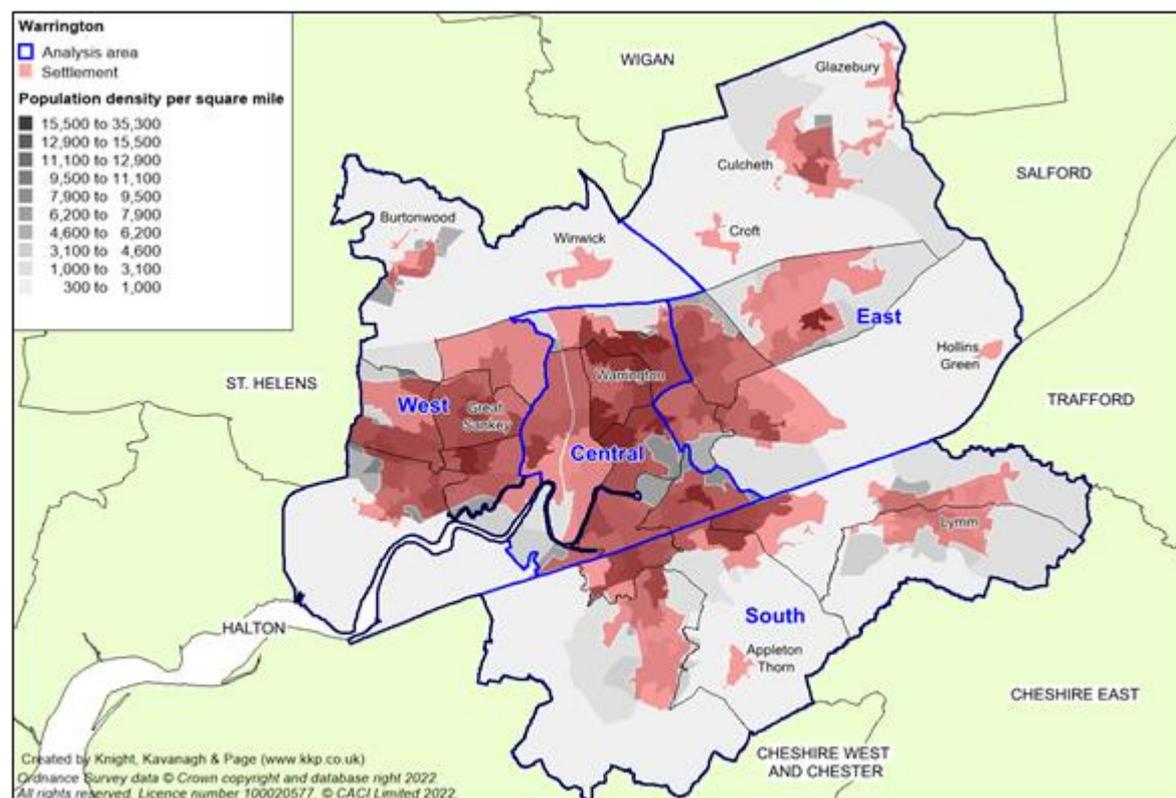
Table 1.1: Warrington analysis areas broken down by ward

Analysis area	Ward
West	Burtonwood & Winwick
	Chapelford & Old Hall
	Great Sankey North & Whittle Hall
	Great Sankey South
	Penketh & Cuerdley
	Westbrook
Central	Bewsey & Whitecross
	Fairfield & Howley
	Latchford East
	Latchford West
	Orford
	Poplars & Hulme
East	Birchwood
	Culcheth, Glazebury & Croft
	Poulton North
	Poulton South
	Rixton & Woolston
South	Appleton
	Grappenhall
	Lymm North & Thelwall
	Lymm South
	Stockton Heath

Please see Figure 1.2. below for the analysis area boundaries.

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Figure 1.2: Warrington analysis areas



Agreed scope

The following types of playing pitches and outdoor sports are agreed for inclusion:

- ▶ Football pitches
- ▶ Third Generation artificial turf pitches (3G AGPs)
- ▶ Cricket pitches
- ▶ Rugby union pitches
- ▶ Rugby league pitches
- ▶ Hockey pitches (sand/water based AGPs)
- ▶ Athletics track
- ▶ Outdoor tennis courts
- ▶ Outdoor bowling greens
- ▶ Cycling
- ▶ Golf courses
- ▶ Other grass pitch sports (Gaelic football, American football, lacrosse and polo)

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

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

Gather supply information and views – an audit of playing pitches

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:

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

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- ◀ **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.

It should be noted that the reference to five years within the Order is purely in relation to whether Sport England should be consulted in a statutory capacity. The fact that a playing field may not have been marked out for pitch sport for more than five years does not mean that it is no longer a playing field. That remains its lawful planning use whether marked out or not. There is no positive obligation (under planning law) for any playing field to be actively used as such.

Although the statutory definition of a playing field sets out a minimum size, this PPOSS takes account of smaller size pitches that contribute to the supply side. For example, a site containing a mini 5v5 football pitch is included despite it 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 and pitches irrespective of ownership and use. The Assessment Report aims to capture all of the playing pitch facilities within Warrington; however, there may be instances that have led to omissions, such as 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 pitches are included irrespective of ownership and use. Playing pitch sites were initially identified using existing PPS data as well as 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 pitches offer the same level of access to the community. The ownership and accessibility of playing pitches also influences their actual availability for community use. Each site is assigned a level of community use as follows:

- ◀ **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).

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- ◀ **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.
- ◀ **Not available as disused** - Any sites where pitches were once, but are no longer, marked out and remain undeveloped

Disused sites provide the opportunity to help address deficiencies in pitch sport if brought back into use or replaced in a more sustainable location to meet need. The sites below in Table 1.1 will be assessed to establish whether they are surplus to meet an identified need in this PPOSS, should be retained and protected for future use or should be replaced in accordance with paragraph 99 of the NPPF.

The lawful use of a disused playing field is still that of a playing field until such time as it is developed for a non-pitch sport use or its use is formally changed through the planning system. There is no positive obligation, under planning law, for a playing field to be actively used as such.

Table 1.2: Disused playing field and outdoor sport sites in Warrington

Site name	Postcode	Sport(s)	Last known use	Comments
Blackbrook Avenue	WA2 0QJ	Rugby League	c2013	A single rugby league pitch was previously located on site.
Fiddlers Ferry	WA5 2UT	Football	c2016	Pitch is no longer in use and the power station is said to have plans to build over it.
Grappenhall Hall School	WA4 3ES	Football	2015	School closed in 2015. No community use has ever been recorded for this site.
Hood Lane Recreation Ground	WA5 1ET	Football	2021	Uneven site with drainage issues. No markings on site or signs of recent use.
Lymm May Queen Field	WA13 0JA	Football	c2009	Could be brought back into use subject to improvements being made.
Poplars Park	WA2 0JF	Football	c2013	Uneven site with drainage issues.
Radley Common	WA2 0NA	Football	c2005	Could be brought back into use subject to improvements being made.
St Elphins	WA1 3AS	Football	2020	Could be brought back into use subject to improvements being made.
St Werbergh's CofE Primary School	WA4 6BB	Football	c2001	School closed.
Tim Parry Community Centre	WA5 3EF	Football	2021	No pitches currently marked on site.

There are some existing playing field sites which may be able to or have previously accommodated more pitches than are presently marked. Where known, these will be identified through the PPOSS. There may also be sites which are no longer prepared and used for formal sport but serve another function, such as a public open space or park. These sites should not be considered disused as they continue to operate to meet other services.

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Sites in Warrington can also be protected for community use through additional status, such as through Community Right to Bid as Assets of Community Value (ACV).

An Asset of Community Value (ACV) is land or buildings nominated by a local voluntary or community group and which the Council decides meets the requirements to be listed as an asset of community value. The statutory rules about assets of community value can be found in sections 87 – 103 of the Localism Act².

If the owner of land or buildings that are listed as assets of community value wants to sell them, they must contact the Council which will notify the community group that nominated the asset. The community group then has the opportunity to register its interest as a potential bidder, triggering a six month moratorium period during which, subject to certain exceptions, the owner can only sell the asset if it is to a community interest group. After the six month moratorium period the owner can sell to whomever they choose.

Only one playing field and outdoor sport sites is designated as an ACV in Warrington. This is Bridge Lane, which currently hosts two senior rugby union pitches.

Furthermore, playing field sites can be protected through Fields in Trust (FIT) King George V (KGV) or Queen Elizabeth II (QE2) programmes. Protection is a legal agreement between FIT and the landowner of a space that they will retain it for use as a green space, usually a public park, playing field or recreation ground, in perpetuity. In Warrington, only Alexandra Park (site 185) is currently protected by the FIT and is a designated KGV Playing Field.

Quality

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

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

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

In addition to undertaking non-technical assessments to assess the quality of pitches and ancillary facilities (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 i.e. an "agreed quality rating". Additionally, the Council has undertaken a portfolio of PitchPower³ assessments which will inform quality ratings once these assessments have been processed.

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/section/88/enacted>

³ <https://pitchpower.org.uk/>

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Gather demand information and views

Presenting an accurate picture of current demand for playing pitches (i.e. recording how and when pitches are used) is important when undertaking a supply and demand assessment. Demand for playing pitches in Warrington 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 teams that are playing outside of their local authority area of choice.

A variety of consultation methods have been used to collate demand information. Firstly, face-to-face consultation (normally via video call due client preference following 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/zoom 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 PPS to assess whether the future demand for playing pitches can be met. Using Office of National Statistics (ONS) population projections, likely participation growth and proposed housing growth, an estimate can be made of the likely future demand for playing pitches. Assumptions can then be made as to whether existing provision can cater for such growth.

Population growth

The total current population in 2022 (according to Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator which uses ONS 2018 Based Projections) is 211,590. By 2038 (in line with Warrington's Local Plan), the Borough's population is forecast to increase by 4,679 to 216,269 (based on ONS 2018 Based Projections).

Team generation rates are used to provide an indication as to how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group). This ratio is then applied to predicted population growth to help estimate the change in demand for each sport that may arise in the future.

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

- ◀ Recent trends in the 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 e.g., women's and girls.

All future demand projections across the PPOSS for Warrington cover the period up until 2038, in line with the Council's current Local Plan and to enable the provision of robust evidence base for a future Local Plan review.

Participation growth

Each club that responded to consultation requests has been asked whether they are likely to field more teams over the lifespan of the PPOSS and, if so, what level of growth is likely to be achieved. Each sport-by- sport section within this report highlights the level of future demand based on this as well as determining the impact that this will have on provision.

Other information sources that were used to help related to participation growth include:

- ◀ Recent trends in the participation in playing pitch sports.
- ◀ The nature of the current and likely future population and their propensity to participate.
- ◀ Any local and NGB specific sports development targets.

In addition to the above, Housing Growth Scenarios will be included in the Strategy Report to estimate the additional demand for pitches by sport generated by housing numbers, cumulatively over the Local Plan period, and by individual strategic housing sites.

Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views

Supply and demand information gathered is used to assess the adequacy of playing pitch provision in Warrington and to identify key issues, challenges and aspirations. This forms the basis of this report. Non-technical assessments for winter sports were undertaken in February 2022 with summer sport assessments following in July 2022. Consultation to inform the study began in February 2022 and ended in August 2022.

Understand the situation at individual sites

Qualitative pitch ratings are linked to a pitch capacity rating derived from NGB guidance and tailored to suit a local area. The quality and use of each pitch is assessed against the recommended pitch capacity to indicate how many match equivalent sessions a pitch could accommodate. This is 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.

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Table 1.3: 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 league	Senior pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Junior pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Mini pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 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	0 per season
Hockey	One AGP	4 matches per day	4 matches per day	0 matches per day

For non-pitch sports, 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 example, for tennis, a hard court with sports lighting is said to have capacity for 60 members, whereas a court without sports lighting has capacity for 40 members (this varies for grass courts). Other sport specific capacity guidance is detailed within the relevant sections of this report.

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 on 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 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 this document and therefore does not form part of the Assessment Report.

PART 2: FOOTBALL

2.1: Introduction

This section of the report focuses on the supply and demand for grass football pitches. Part 3 captures supply and demand for artificial grass pitches (AGPs). In the future it is anticipated that there will be a growing demand for the use of AGPs for competitive football fixtures, especially to accommodate mini and youth football.

Administration and governance

Cheshire and Liverpool County FAs are the primary organisations responsible for the development (and some elements of administration) of football in Warrington although some clubs also affiliate to Lancashire FA. They are also responsible for the administration, in terms of discipline, rules and regulations, cup competitions and representative matches, development of clubs and facilities, volunteers, referees, coaching courses and delivering national football schemes.

Local Football Facility Plans (LFFPs)

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.

The LFFP for Warrington was produced in May 2019 and identifies 33 priority projects for investment. It is expected to be updated before June 2023.

Each LFFP builds upon Playing Pitch Strategy findings (where present and current) regarding the formal and affiliated game, to also include strategic priorities for investment across small sided football (recreational and informal including indoors). The LFFP also incorporates consultation with groups outside of formal football, as well as underrepresented communities. This includes those which may be key partners with regards to football for behavioural change and groups which may be key drivers of FA National Games Strategy priorities around participation in the likes of women and girls' football, disability football and futsal.

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. It is important to recognise that a 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.

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Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a Playing Pitch Strategy and is not an accepted evidence base for site change of use or disposal, or strategic need for a new football facility. A LFFP will, however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a Playing Pitch Strategy and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

This PPOSS will assess each LFFP priority project to see if individual projects are supported by the evidence of the PPOSS, if projects need to be removed or new ones added. The findings will help inform a review of the LFFP to bring both documents into alignment.

Consultation

Consultation with football clubs took place through telephone/video consultation or an electronic survey. Contact details were provided by the respective County FAs, and the invitation to complete the survey was distributed via email. All three County FA's supported this process and encouraged their representative clubs to participate in the study. A total of 29 clubs responded to consultation requests, with the responsive clubs covering 419 of the 544 teams in the Borough. Three of the clubs responded to indicate they have folded in recent years; Austins FC, Chapelford FC and FC Hawthorne. This equates to a team response rate of 77%. Key clubs identified by County FAs that were responsive to consultation requests are as follows:

- ▶ Appleton AFC
- ▶ Cromwell Athletic Junior FC
- ▶ Crosfield Junior FC
- ▶ Culcheth Athletic FC
- ▶ Grappenhall Sports (Juniors) FC
- ▶ Lymm Piranhas JFC
- ▶ Lymm Rovers Junior FC
- ▶ Moore United FC
- ▶ Orford FC Juniors
- ▶ Warrington Rylands FC
- ▶ Warrington Town FC
- ▶ Whittle Hall FC
- ▶ Winwick Athletic FC
- ▶ Woolston Rovers FC

2.2: Supply

The audit identifies a current total of 216 grass football pitches within Warrington across 86 sites. Of these, 181 pitches across 59 sites are available, at some level, for community use (presented in Table 2.1).

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

Analysis area	Available for community use					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Central	24	2	6	9	6	47
East	16	3	9	5	7	40
South	18	3	6	7	12	46
West	16	3	6	13	11	48
Warrington	73	11	27	34	36	181

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Table 2.1 shows that there is a total of 181 grass football pitches that are available for community use, a decrease of 50 pitches from 2019. Although there is an increase of youth 11v11 and mini 5v5 pitches, all remaining pitch formats have seen a fall in provision. The reduction in pitch numbers is mainly due to a number of primary schools no longer formally marking their pitches. These sites are identified in Table 2.2 overleaf.

In total, 30 pitches across 27 sites were identified in the previous PPS that are no longer formally marked. Of these sites, only Woolston Community Primary accommodated regular community use. It previously hosted one youth 9v9 pitch. Additionally, some sites have become disused since the previous PPS, such as Tim Parry Community Centre and Hood Lane Recreation Ground.

As can be seen in the table above, football pitches are fairly evenly distributed across Warrington, with the West Analysis Area containing the most pitches (48) and the East Analysis Area containing the least (40). There are significantly more adult pitches when compared to the other pitch sizes.

Table 2.2: Previous formally marked out playing pitch sites

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Pitch types	Comments
9	Bewsey Lodge Primary School	WA5 0AG	Central	1 x Mini 7v7	A poor quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked on site, with the School now utilising portable goals and cones.
10	Birchwood C of E Primary School	WA3 6QG	East	1 x Mini 7v7	A poor quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked on site, with the School now utilising portable goals and cones.
16	Broomfields Junior School	WA4 3AH	South	1 x Mini 7v7	A poor quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked on site.
18	Bruche Primary School	WA1 3TT	East	1 x Mini 7v7	A poor quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked on site.
19	Burtonwood Primary School	WA5 4AQ	West	1 x Mini 7v7	A poor quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked on site.
34	Culcheth Primary School	WA3 5HH	East	1 x Mini 7v7	A poor quality pitch which was unavailable to the community. The pitch is no longer marked on site and goalposts have been removed.
44	Glazebury C of E Primary School	WA3 5LZ	East	1 x Mini 7v7	A poor quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked on site.
79	Oughtrington Primary School	WA13 9EH	South	1 x Mini 7v7	A standard quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked on site.

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Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Pitch types	Comments
81	Park Road Primary	WA5 3EF	West	1 x Mini 7v7	A standard quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked on site, with the School now utilising portable goals and cones.
89	Ravenbank Primary	WA13 0JT	South	1 x Mini 7v7	A standard quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked on site.
99	St Andrews Primary School	WA2 9HF	Central	1 x Mini 7v7	A poor quality pitch which was unavailable to the community. The pitch is no longer marked on site.
100	St Ann's Primary School	WA2 8AL	Central	1 x Mini 7v7	A poor quality pitch which was unavailable to the community. The pitch is no longer marked on site, with the School now utilising portable goals and cones.
107	Hollins Green St Helen's C of E Primary School	WA3 6JS	East	1 x Mini 7v7	A standard quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked and a MUGA has been built within the previous pitch boundary.
108	St Joseph's Primary School	WA5 2AU	West	1 x Mini 7v7	A poor quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked on site, with the School now utilising portable goals and cones.
110	St Margaret's Primary School	WA2 9AD	Central	1 x Mini 7v7	A standard quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked.
113	St Paul of the Cross Primary School	WA5 4PN	West	1 x Mini 7v7	A standard quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked on site, with the School now utilising portable goals and cones.
117	St Thomas Primary School	WA4 2AP	South	1 x Mini 7v7	A standard quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked.
119	St Wilfred's Primary School	WA4 3EP	South	1 x Mini 7v7	A standard quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked.
128	Twiss Green Primary School	WA3 4DQ	East	1 x Mini 7v7	A standard quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked.

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Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Pitch types	Comments
134	Westbrook Old Hall Primary School	WA5 9QA	West	1 x Mini 7v7	A standard quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked.
140	Woolston Community Primary	WA1 4PA	East	1 x Youth 9v9	A standard quality pitch which was previously played to capacity. The pitch is no longer marked.
141	Woolston Learning Village	WA1 4LS	East	1 x Mini 7v7	A standard quality pitch which was unavailable to the community. The pitch is no longer marked.
147	Bradshaw Primary School	WA4 2QN	South	1 x Mini 7v7	A standard quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked.
149	St Monica's Catholic Primary School	WA4 3AG	South	1 x Mini 5v5	A standard quality pitch which was available to the community but unused. The pitch is no longer marked.

The large number of adult pitches is reflective of most teams using adult pitches. However, it should be noted that this includes many youth 11v11 teams playing on adult pitches, which may in part be due to a lack of dedicated youth 11v11 pitches rather than a preference for adult pitches. In total, 103 youth 11v11 teams (U13-U16) currently use adult pitches for home matches in Warrington, which is not ideal for youth players 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, with the FA's recommended pitch size being 100 x 64 metres compared to 91 x 55 metres for U15 and U16 teams and 82 x 50 metres for U13 and U14 teams. Please refer to the table overleaf for more detail relating to pitch sizes for each format of play.

Table 2.3: 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 identifies all grass football pitches currently within Warrington regardless of community use. For more detailed maps, please see Appendix 2. For a key to these maps, see Table 2.16.

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Disused sites

The following table identifies all disused sites in Warrington that previously provided football pitches.

Table 2.4: Summary of disused football provision

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch types	Comments
13	Bridgewater High School (Lower)	South	1 x adult pitch	Unusable throughout winter due to drainage issues so no longer marked.
23	Poplars Park	Central	1 x youth pitch	Uneven site with drainage issues.
38	Dallam Recreation Ground	Central	4 x mini pitches	Only used for rugby league although potential to reintroduce football on site.
47	Gorsey Recreation Ground	West	1 x adult pitch	Only has a single set of goalposts and no evidence of recent use.
50	Grappenhall Hall School	South	1 x youth pitch	School closed in 2015. No community use has ever been recorded for this site.
61	Hood Lane Recreation Ground	West	1 x adult pitch	Uneven site with drainage issues. No markings on site or signs of recent use.
67	Lymm May Queen Field	South	1 x adult pitch 1 x mini pitch	Closed for more than 5 years. Could be brought back into use subject to improvements being made.
88	Radley Common	Central	1 x adult pitch	Closed for more than 5 years. Could be brought back into use subject to improvements being made. Currently proposed to be improved and reinstated as part of the proposed development at Peel Hall.
105	St Elphins	Central	1 x adult pitch 1 x mini pitch	Closed for more than 5 years. Could be brought back into use subject to improvements being made although could now only accommodate a single pitch.
130	University of Chester (Warrington Campus)	East	1 x adult pitch	Closed to the community since the pandemic, the University will begin decommissioning the site from Summer 2022.
146	Tim Parry Community Centre	West	1 x youth pitch 1 x mini pitch	No pitches currently marked on site.
148	Fiddlers Ferry	West	1 x adult pitch	Pitch is no longer in use and the power station is said to have plans to build over it.
153	St Werbergh's CofE Primary School	South	2 x mini pitches	School closed in 2001. Could be brought back into use subject to improvements being made.

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Future supply

Grappenhall Sports FC reports it is working with Warrington RUFC to acquire additional land surrounding Grappenhall Village Sports Club (where both clubs are based) to increase the number of playing pitches and expand car parking on site.

A planning application is in place (Ref: 2016/28492) for Peel Hall Park (Mill Lane) which will see its development for housing with replacement playing field within the housing site and improvements made to Radley Common (Windermere Ave) to bring it back into use as playing field land. Whilst one adult pitch was previously located on site, illustrative plans for the improved site include three adult and two youth football pitches. No confirmed timescales are currently known although replacement playing field provisional will be operational before the existing pitches are lost.

The Western Link Road development is proposed to go through part of Morley Common Recreation Ground which currently contains four adult football pitches. The Council is in the process of considering where and how best these could be mitigated. Previous plans suggest an adult football pitch would be lost together with the changing rooms and car park although the Council is exploring options to reconfigure the site to retain ancillary provision on site, with the only loss in playing field being one adult pitch being reduced to a youth pitch.

Management

Of the community available pitches, 54 (30%) are managed by the Council, 51 (28%) by schools/colleges/universities, 28 (15%) by clubs and 16 (8%) by community interest companies. The remaining 35 (19%) pitches are managed privately/commercially, by Trusts or Parish/Town Councils.

Pitch quality

The quality of football pitches in Warrington has been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the FA, undertaken in February 2022) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments are as follows: Good (>80%), Standard (50-80%), Poor (<50%). However, it must be noted that 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 refer to Appendix 2.

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Pitch quality primarily influences the carrying capacity of a site; often pitches lack the drainage and maintenance necessary to sustain levels of use. It is likely that pitches which receive little to no ongoing repair or post-season remedial work will be assessed as poor, therefore limiting the number of games able to take place each week without it having a detrimental effect on quality. Conversely, well maintained pitches which 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.

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

The table below summarises the quality of pitches that are available for community use in Warrington. In total, 15 pitches are assessed as good quality, 91 as standard quality and 75 as poor quality.

Table 2.5: Pitch quality assessments (community use pitches)

Analysis area	Adult pitches			Youth pitches			Mini pitches		
	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor
Central	1	13	10	-	4	4	-	6	9
East	-	3	13	-	6	6	-	7	5
South	8	4	6	2	6	1	3	8	8
West	-	10	5	-	7	2	1	17	6
Total	9	30	34	2	23	13	4	38	28

For a full breakdown of the quality ratings at each site, see Table 2.17.

The non-technical pitch quality audit shows that most pitches are poor or standard quality, particularly at local authority sites. All sites managed by the Council receive a basic level of maintenance that is restricted to grass cutting and seeding, with budgets not allowing for any further level of upkeep. Most pitches within schools also receive basic maintenance. Maintenance of pitches at club sites varies; some clubs hire dedicated ground staff whilst others depend on remedial work by volunteers that is often limited by cost and a lack of specialised equipment.

Overall, 12% of the adult pitches are good quality, 41% are standard quality and 47% are poor quality. Similarly, 34% of youth pitches are poor quality, whilst 61% are standard quality and 5% are good quality. For mini pitches, 6% are good quality, 57% are standard quality and 37% are poor quality.

In the previous PPS, 22% of adult pitches were of good quality, 40% standard quality and 38% poor quality. Of youth pitches, 44% were of poor quality whilst 28% were assessed as standard quality and 28% as good quality. For mini pitches, 12% were assessed as good quality, 35% as standard quality and 53% as poor quality. This suggests that overall, that pitch quality across Warrington has generally declined, resulting in fewer good quality pitches.

In general, club consultation aligns to the finding of the audit, with 18% of clubs stating that their home pitch/es is good quality, 42% rating theirs as standard and 40% rating theirs as poor. A total of 10% of responding clubs report an improvement in quality over the last three years, whilst 50% report no difference and 40% report worsening quality.

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The most common factors attributed to pitch improvements are an investment in drainage work and more frequent maintenance, whilst the opposite is true for pitches that are worsening in quality. Specific comments relating to pitch conditions at individual sites can be seen in the table below. The comments are a combination of club feedback and site assessment information.

Table 2.6: Site specific comments

Site	Comments
Barrow Hall Lane	Received pitch improvement work last season but said to have made little impact of pitch quality.
Beamont Collegiate Academy	Resides in a flood area although there is a flood control system on site.
Birchwood Academy Trust	Drainage on site is poor and pitches are unusable for most of winter.
Birchwood Forest Park	Pitches on site suffer from poor drainage.
Cardinal Newman High School	Pitches suffer from poor drainage and are unusable throughout winter so are not let to the community. The site sits on a floodplain although the School has recently secured funding to install drainage beneath both pitches on site which will enable community use once the work is complete.
Carlsberg Tetley Sports and Social Club	Maintenance is reported to be basic.
Chaigley School	Received investment to improve drainage on site a few years ago. The pitch now drains well and is of standard quality. Only one youth 9v9 pitch on site but space for two youth 11v11 pitches.
Chapelford Primary School	Whittle Hall JFC previously had a community use agreement in place for the pitches on site although this was withdrawn as building rubble came through the pitch surface, making the site unsafe for use.
Cherry Tree Primary School	Pitches drain poorly and receive basic maintenance.
Culcheth Community Campus	Drainage installed beneath the pitches which enables the pitches to drain well. Maintained to an adequate level although Croft FC states this is irregular.
Culcheth Sports Club	Lancashire FA has been supporting Daten FC to secure investment for maintenance equipment to improve pitch quality and enhance the maintenance regime on site.
Dakota Park	Pitches drain well but suffer with dog fouling and dog damage to the playing surface.
Elizabeth Park	The site floods from early November through to late April.
Grange Sports & Social Club	Site suffers from poor drainage.
Grappenhall Village Sports Club	Pitches are very well maintained and of good quality although the site resides in a flood plain.
Great Sankey Parish Playing Fields	Pitches drain poorly, out of action all winter.
Hillock Lane Playing Fields	Pitches drain poorly, unplayable for a large portion of winter.
Loushers Lane Recreation Ground	Had drainage improvement works although has made little impact. Pitches still get waterlogged and dog fouling is also an issue on site.
Lymm High School	The School employs a groundsman that maintains the pitches on site to a high level although the site sits on a high water table, meaning the site floods regularly.

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Site	Comments
Mary Ann Meadows	Quality of maintenance is said to have declined in recent years and drainage issues have worsened.
Morley Common	As part of the potential developments on site, proposals are in place for pitch quality to be improved as well as drainage being installed.
Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub	Some pitches, especially those located furthest from the leisure centre, are said to drain very poorly and suffer from littering and damage to the playing surface.
Pewterspear Sports Pavilion	Pitches are well maintained and said to be in good condition.
Ridgeway Grundy Park	Lower half of the site on which a mini pitch resides drains poorly and is uneven. It is no longer said to be safe for use.
Rylands Recreation Club	Maintenance is reported to be basic.
Shaw St Recreation Ground	Maintenance on site is said to be irregular and insufficient in addition to poor drainage. Village Club FC reports it spikes the pitches before matches and sands them post match to support the drainage.
Sir Thomas Boteler High School	Pitches said to be heavily used by the School leading to poor quality although the site drains adequately.
Sow Brook Playing Fields	Surrounded by a brook leading to flooding from October onwards. Only usable through Spring and Summer. Additional pitch space on site.
St Gregorys High School	Pitches drain poorly and maintenance is said to be irregular.
The Oaks Playing Fields	Leased by Culcheth Athletic FC, the Club received plant machinery grant funding from the FA and is now able to better maintain its pitches.
Thornton Road Recreation Centre	Suffers from litter, dog fouling and vandalism.
Westy Park	Pitches are said to be in poor condition and maintenance is irregular.
Winwick Recreation Ground	The site sits on a gradient and suffers from poor drainage in areas. Damage from rabbits is also reported on site.
Woolston Neighbourhood Hub	Pitch is uneven and maintenance is irregular. Drainage is said to be adequate.

Local Football Facility Plan

The LFFP for Warrington identifies key sites considered a priority to improve, with these selected based on the rationale of identifying sites that are the poorest in quality and that are the best utilised, or that have the greatest potential for increased utilisation following quality enhancements. Emphasis is on sites with three or more pitches, although scope exists for the inclusion of smaller sites if they are deemed to be strategically important.

The following ten sites are identified:

- ◀ Appleton Thorn Playing Fields
- ◀ Birchwood Forest Park
- ◀ Crab Lane Playing Field
- ◀ Hood Lane Recreation Ground
- ◀ Mary Ann Meadows
- ◀ Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub
- ◀ St Gregorys High School
- ◀ Thornton Road Recreation Centre
- ◀ Victoria Park
- ◀ Woolston Park

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In the PPS, all pitches at these sites have been assessed as poor or standard quality. Whilst most of these sites will still require improvement, given that the LFFP is a live document, there may be a need to amend and/or add to this list based on the findings of this study. For example, Lancashire FA indicates none of its affiliated clubs would be impacted by improvements to the sites listed above, meaning there may be gaps in the local geography for further development opportunities. Recommendations on whether this current list of sites should be amended will be made in the accompanying Strategy document.

PitchPower Assessment App

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

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

Eligible clubs and organisations can also utilise the report as an evidence base to acquire potential funding streams, for example, to obtain the required maintenance equipment, such as through the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund.

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

As part of a pilot programme for PitchPower, Warrington Borough Council is currently working with the Football Foundation to undertake PitchPower inspections on all Council managed sites within Warrington.

Football Foundation Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund⁴

With quality of grass pitches becoming one of the biggest influences on participation in football, the FA has made it a priority to work towards improving quality of grass pitches across the country. This has resulted in the creation of the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund. As part of this, grass pitches identified as having quality issues undergo a pitch inspection from a member of the Grounds Management Association (GMA, formerly Institute of Groundsmanship).

The FA in partnership with the Grounds Management Association (GMA) has developed a Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund that can be utilised by grassroots football clubs, organisations and local authorities with the simple aim of improving the quality of grass pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide members of the programme with advice/practical solutions via a Grass Pitch Assessment Report which will also identify the key enhanced maintenance works required along with machinery requirements.

⁴ <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/grant/grass-pitch-maintenance-fund>

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Following a Grass Pitch Assessment Report, clubs can work towards the recommended dedicated maintenance regime identified to improve the quality of their pitches. Clubs can also utilise the report as an evidence base to acquire potential funding streams to obtain the relevant maintenance equipment.

Once a Grass Pitch Assessment Report has been produced for the site, clubs are then eligible to apply for Grass Pitch Funding through the Football Foundation through the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund, a fund offering six-year tapered grants to help clubs enhance or sustain the quality of their grass pitches. The fund is a key part of the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Improvement Programme - an ambition to deliver 20,000 quality grass pitches by 2030. If a site is categorised as 'poor' or 'basic' then clubs can apply for funding to enhance pitch quality, whilst clubs with good or standard quality pitches can also apply for a lower level of funding to sustain quality.

All applicants must have the required security of tenure and have received a PitchPower Pitch Assessment Report, with the fund currently open to football clubs, leagues and charities. Local authorities are not currently eligible applicants, however, clubs, leagues and charitable organisations using local authority sites can apply provided they have security of tenure.

Although local authorities are not presently eligible for the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund, the Football Foundation is currently exploring other options and ways in which it can support local authorities to improve Council managed provision. It is presently inviting expressions of interest from local authorities across the Country to be part of a pilot programme for investment into pitches currently owned and managed in-house by local authorities. The first stage of this is currently taking place with PitchPower Assessment's taking place within a number of authorities, including Warrington as mentioned previously.

Over marked pitches

Over marking of pitches can cause notable damage to the surface quality and lead to overuse beyond recommended capacity. In some cases, mini pitches may be marked onto senior pitches or mini matches may be played widthways across adult or youth pitches. This can lead to targeted areas of surface damage due to a large amount of play focused on high traffic areas, particularly the middle third of the pitch.

Over marking of pitches not only influences available capacity, it may also cause logistical issues regarding kick off times; for example, when two teams of differing age formats are due to play at the same site at the same time.

There are a number of football pitches in Warrington which are marked onto or overlapping cricket outfield, which can create availability issues at multi-sport sites as the cricket season begins in April when the football season is still ongoing and the football season begins in August as cricket fixtures are still being played.

The table below highlights all sites containing over marked pitches.

Table 2.7: Sites containing over marked pitches

Site	Comments
Beamont Collegiate Academy	Both pitches on site (a youth 11v11 and a youth 9v9 pitch) are overmarked for rugby league.
Birchwood Academy Trust	The youth 9v9 pitch is overmarked for rugby league.
Cardinal Newman High School	One youth 11v11 pitch is overmarked for rugby league.

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Site	Comments
Culcheth Community Campus	One adult pitch is overmarked with a senior rugby league pitch.
Grange Sports & Social Club	All pitches on site overlap a cricket outfield.
Grappenhall Village Sports Club	Two adult pitches are overmarked with youth 9v9 pitches.
Great Sankey High School	A youth 11v11 pitch overmarked on a cricket outfield. An adult football pitch is also overmarked with a senior rugby league pitch and a youth 9v9 pitch.
Great Sankey Parish Playing Fields	Youth 9v9 pitches on site are overmarked. One on the adult football pitch and the second on a senior rugby league pitch.
Lymm High School	The adult football pitches are overmarked with senior rugby union pitches.
Penketh High School	One adult pitch is overmarked with a mini 5v5 pitch.
Pewterspear Sports Pavilion	The youth 9v9 pitch is overmarked with two mini 7v7 pitches.
Priestley College	An adult football pitch which is overmarked with a senior rugby league.
Warrington Sports Club	Three adult pitches on site overlap a cricket outfield.

Ancillary facilities

The quality of ancillary facilities across Warrington 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. Where known, 40% of sites are identified as being supported by good quality facilities, 33% by standard quality and 27% by poor quality facilities. A total of 30 sites are identified as being without ancillary provision. The previous PPS identified 28% of sites as having good quality facilities, 23% with standard facilities and 49% with poor facilities showing that the quality of ancillary facilities has improved since the previous PPS.

Of clubs responding to consultation that have access to ancillary provision at their respective home venues, 33% state they access good quality facilities, 34% rate their facilities as standard quality and 33% rate their facilities as poor.

Most facilities rated as good or standard quality by users are located at multi-sport venues, such as Pewterspear Sports Pavilion, or private sites, such as Grappenhall Village Sports Club and Warrington Sports Club.

In contrast, facilities described as poor by users have dated facilities that are small and do not provide enough rooms in relation to the number of pitches on site. Facilities receiving a poor rating from clubs include The Oaks Playing Fields and Monks Sports & Social Club.

Whittle Hall JFC indicates it does not access changing facilities at any of its match venues and has no requirement to do so although notes that there is a lack of available toilet facilities across Warrington, particularly at School sites.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Warrington Town FC aspires to redevelop ancillary provision at Cantilever Park. Plans include flattening the existing building on site and replacing it with a two or three storey facility which would include a bar and changing rooms on the first floor, rented office space on the second floor and an NHS facility on the third floor as well as providing new stands on all sides of the pitch. The Club sees this as vital to increasing its revenue and support its drive to reach the National League.

Woolston Rovers FC reports ancillary facilities at Monks Sports & Social Club are of poor quality, dated and without functioning shower facilities.

Lymm Rovers Juniors FC reports two additional changing rooms were due to be provided at Lymm High School with the provision of the 3G pitch on site although these are yet to be installed. There are currently two changing rooms on site which the Club has access to although this is insufficient for the level of demand. It states it is simpler to avoid using facilities instead of selecting which teams are able to access changing provision.

Appleton AFC currently has issues with the availability of ancillary provision at Pewterspear Sports Pavilion. A pilates company has agreed a lease agreement with the site's management trust for the pavilion on site, meaning Appleton AFC relies on the good will of other users to allow them to access facilities. There is a secondary pavilion which Appleton AFC has access to although this is said to be in an unusable condition. It is dated and without segregated toilets. The Club aspires to install its own dedicated toilet facility on site.

Lymm AFC indicates it purchased and installed the existing changing rooms at Sandy Lane Recreation Ground but it is now outdated and approaching the end of its useful life. The Club is now looking to secure funding to replace the existing facility and has planning permission in place to do so.

Eagle Sports FC reports there is an insufficient number of changing rooms at Thornton Road Recreation Centre and the existing facility is without ventilation or windows, has had a leaking roof for several years and contains asbestos. It plans to improve the facilities on site.

Culcheth Athletic FC states existing ancillary provision at The Oaks Playing Fields has collapsed and is no longer safe for use. Whilst the Club plans to remove the existing facilities from the site, it is still not in a position to replace these facilities.

Moore United FC states ancillary provision at Grange Sports & Social Club is dated and in need of refurbishment, especially for female players.

FC Burtonwood states the Parish Council has closed the changing facilities at Gorsey Recreation Ground, leaving the Club to utilise Burtonwood Catholic Club as ancillary provision. It aspires to renovate changing facilities at Gorsey Recreation Ground but does not have support from the Parish Council to do so.

Lymm Piranhas JFC states ancillary facilities are provided at Ridgeway Grundy Park although they have been closed since the pandemic and water for the toilets has been turned off. Whilst the Club does not raise major concerns with this, it indicates it is still paying for this access which it no longer receives.

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In addition to the above, the following sites are reported (via site assessments and consultation) to be without/have insufficient parking facilities:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ◀ Birchwood Academy Trust | ◀ Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub |
| ◀ Chaigley School | ◀ Rylands Recreation Club |
| ◀ Elizabeth Park | ◀ St Gregorys High School |
| ◀ Grange Sports & Social Club | ◀ The Oaks Playing Fields |
| ◀ Grappenhall Village Sports Club | ◀ Thornton Road Recreation Centre |
| ◀ Mary Ann Meadows | ◀ Westy Park |

Plus, the following sites have suffered from vandalism in the last year:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ◀ Carlsberg Tetley Sports and Social Club | ◀ Rylands Recreation Club |
| ◀ Culcheth Community Campus | ◀ Shaw St Recreation Ground |
| ◀ Gorsey Recreation Ground | ◀ St Gregorys High School |
| ◀ Grappenhall Village Sports Club | ◀ The Oaks Playing Fields |
| ◀ Mary Ann Meadows | ◀ Thornton Road Recreation Centre |
| ◀ Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub | ◀ Westy Park |

Whilst Orford Juniors FC indicates it has experienced extensive vandalism at Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub, it reports there have been ‘too many’ specific instances to list.

Local Football Facility Plan

As with grass pitch improvements, the LFFP for Warrington identifies sites considered as priority sites for clubhouse and changing facility improvements, although there may again be a need to amend and/or add to this list based on the findings of this study. It recommends projects at the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ◀ Appleton Thorn Playing Field | ◀ Mary Ann Meadows |
| ◀ Birchwood Forest Park | ◀ Thornton Road Recreation Centre |
| ◀ Crab Lane Playing Field | ◀ Victoria Park |
| ◀ Hood Lane Recreation Ground | ◀ Woolston Park |

The evidence contained within this Assessment Report will be used to establish whether the current LFFP priority projects remain valid, should be removed or new projects added, with recommendations contained in the Strategy and Action Plan Report to update the LFFP. As mentioned previously, there may be a requirement to add additional projects to support Lancashire FA clubs.

It should also be noted that any improvements at Victoria Park may be able to tie in with Levelling Up Fund opportunities awarded to the Borough and discussions have taken place regarding the site becoming a hub for disability sport in Warrington.

Security of tenure

Tenure of sites in Warrington is generally secure i.e. through a long-term lease or a guarantee that the pitch will continue to be provided over the next three years, with most sites ensuring community use is available.

There are a number of sites owned or leased by clubs or wider multi-sport clubs, such as Cantilever Park (Warrington Town FC), Grappenhall Village Sports Club (Grappenhall Sports (Juniors) FC) and The Oaks Playing Fields (Culcheth Athletic FC).

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

In contrast, tenure of some sites does remain unsecure, notably at schools and academies which state their own policies and are more likely to restrict levels of community use. An example of this is Lymm High School, which is heavily used by Lymm Rovers Juniors FC and Lymm Piranhas JFC. As no formal community use agreement is in place, tenure is deemed to be unsecure despite Lymm Rovers Juniors FC playing on site since 2007. However, a community use agreement has recently been provided by the School which both clubs have signed. Following this, both clubs are set to sign a service level agreement which will come into place from the beginning of the 2022/23 season.

As mentioned previously, Whittle Hall JFC previously had a community use agreement in place with Chapelford Primary School but withdrew this as the pitches became unsafe for use.

Away from schools, whilst most clubs are happy with their current tenure agreement, some are looking to extend their existing arrangements or take on the management of their respective home sites. For example, Winwick Athletic FC aspires to take on the management and maintenance of the pitches at Winwick Recreation Ground.

National League System

The NLS 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 six 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 playing within the National League must adhere to ground requirements set out by the FA. The higher the level of football being played the higher the requirements. Clubs cannot progress into the league above if the ground requirements do not meet the correct specifications. Ground grading assesses grounds from A to G, with 'A' being the requirement for Step 1 clubs and G being the requirement for Step 6 clubs. Please refer to the FA website for the full specifications for each.

There are two clubs in Warrington that play within the National League System, as shown in the table.

Table 2.8: National League System clubs/teams in Warrington

Team	League	Level
Warrington Town FC	Northern Premier League – Premier Division	Step 3
Warrington Rylands FC	Northern Premier League – Premier Division	Step 3

As detailed previously, Warrington Town FC aspires to redevelop ancillary provision at Cantilever Park in attempt to increase its revenue to push for promotion to the National League North.

The general principle for clubs in the NLS is that they must achieve the appropriate ground 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.

It is important to note that from a ground grading perspective, the jump from a Regional Feeder League to Step 6 is significant and that as a minimum, sites require a floodlit pitch with hardstanding areas for fans and turnstiles for fan entry.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

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 below, this ranges from Step 1 to Step 6 with each step requiring differing ground grading requirements. The system is also hierarchical format with promotion and relegation between the levels.

Table 2.9: 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 Warrington, three clubs field teams which play in the Women's National League System. This is broken down in the table below.

Table 2.10: Women's National League System clubs/teams in Warrington

Team	League	Level
Brookvale United JFC	Cheshire Women's & Youth Football League - Premier	Step 7
Crosfield Junior FC	Cheshire Women's & Youth Football League – West	Step 7
Warrington Wolves	Liverpool Women's & Youth Football League – Division 2	Step 7

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.

2.3: Demand

A total of 544 teams are identified as playing within Warrington. This consists of 76 men's teams, six women's teams, 230 youth boys' teams, 33 youth girls' teams and 199 mini soccer teams (17 of which are dedicated girls' teams rather than mixed). These figures are based on affiliation data for the 2021/22 season. The previous PPS identified 456 teams playing within Warrington which equates to a 19% growth in team numbers. The largest growth has been seen in youth 11v11 teams although there has been an increase in all team formats.

Table 2.11: Summary of competitive teams currently playing in Warrington

Analysis area	No. of teams playing					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Central	41	35	13	25	15	129
East	17	37	21	17	19	111
South	16	60	27	27	29	159
West	8	44	25	36	32	145
Warrington	82	176	86	105	95	544

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Most teams play in the South Analysis Area (159), closely followed by the West Analysis Area (145) whilst the fewest teams play in the East Analysis Area (111). In the previous PPS, the Central Analysis Area hosted the least teams (86) whilst the West Analysis Area hosted the most (132). The East and South analysis areas had 110 and 128 teams respectively. This represents an increase in the number of teams in each analysis area, except the East, since the previous PPS.

The most prevalent playing format is the youth 11v11 category (176 teams); however, each format is relatively well represented.

The six women's, 33 girls' and 17 girls' only mini teams make up 10% of the total number of teams which is a high proportion when compared nationally. However, there are also 12 girls' teams exported by Appleton AFC and Moore United FC from Warrington to Cheshire West and Chester due to the prevalence of the Cheshire Girls Football League which runs out of a central venue at Moss Farm Leisure Complex.

Participation trends

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

Table 2.12: Change in the number of teams over the previous three years

Team type	Clubs' response		
	Increased	Decreased	Stayed the same
Adult	37%	10%	53%
Youth	38%	23%	39%
Mini	46%	8%	46%

The highest increase in teams is seen in mini football, with 46% of clubs reporting an increase over the last three years and only 8% reporting a decrease.

Unmet demand

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to pitches. It is usually expressed 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.

Appleton AFC reports it has an adult men's team which is training but not currently playing. The Club predominantly plays and trains at Broomfields Leisure Centre. The players are currently happy to not play matches although in the long-term, the Club would like to formalise this side to provide a pathway through to adult football. However, it does not currently have the pitch capacity to accommodate this team.

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 Warrington and the reasons provided for this latent demand can be seen in the table below. In total, it applies to 22 clubs.

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Table 2.13: Summary of latent demand expressed by clubs

Club	Need for more match pitches	Need for more/better training facilities	Need for better/more appropriate changing provision
Appleton AFC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Birchwood JFC	-	Yes	-
Cheshire Cheese FC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cromwell Athletic Junior FC	Yes	Yes	-
Crosfields JFC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Culcheth Athletic FC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eagle Sports FC	Yes	Yes	Yes
FC Burtonwood	-	Yes	Yes
FC Sankey	-	Yes	-
Grappenhall Sports FC	Yes	Yes	-
Greenalls Padgate St Oswalds FC	-	Yes	-
Lymm AFC	Yes	-	Yes
Lymm Piranhas JFC	Yes	Yes	-
Lymm Rovers Juniors FC	Yes	Yes	-
Moore United FC	-	Yes	Yes
Oakwood United FC	-	Yes	-
Orford Juniors FC	-	Yes	-
The Village Club, Culcheth FC	-	Yes	-
Warrington Rylands FC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Whittle Hall JFC	Yes	Yes	-
Winwick Athletic FC	-	Yes	-
Woolston Rovers FC	Yes	Yes	-

In total, 13 of the 22 clubs that indicate latent demand attribute this to a lack of match pitches, whilst 21 report a need for more/better training facilities (all related to 3G provision). Nine clubs state that they could increase playing numbers if better or more appropriate changing facilities were available.

In addition to the latent demand shown above, Appleton AFC also notes that it is restricted by coaching numbers. It indicates it pitch and training facility constraints were alleviated, it could form five U7 and two U9 teams per year although these U9 teams would be girls' teams fielded in the Cheshire Girls Football League.

Similarly, Lymm Rovers Juniors FC states it could field an additional 12 girls' and five boys' teams if there was greater availability of match and training facilities.

Exported demand

Exported demand refers to teams that are currently accessing pitches for their home fixtures outside of the area in which they are registered, normally because their pitch requirements cannot be met.

As stated previously, 12 girls' teams are exported by Appleton AFC and Moore United FC to Cheshire West and Chester due to the prevalence of the Cheshire Girls Football League which runs out of a central venue at Moss Farm Leisure Complex. However, this has not been considered in the later supply and demand analysis as it is considered this demand will remain exported as long as the league continues to operate in a central venue format.

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Lymm Rovers Juniors FC exports a total of ten teams to Partington Sports Village (Trafford) and Flixton Football Club (Trafford) due to a lack of available playing pitches in Warrington. However, Flixton Football Club is said to have been sold and so the site is soon to be lost. Lymm Rovers Juniors FC have yet to identify an alternative venue to accommodate their existing demand on site so are concerned these teams will be lost if other pitches cannot be located.

Lymm Piranhas JFC exports a portion of its mini 7v7 and youth 9v9 demand to Cheshire East at Mere Cricket Club due to being unable to locate any closer, available pitches. The Club has also previously utilised provision at Partington Sports Village (Trafford) but states this has now been taken on almost exclusively by Salford City FC.

Warrington Rylands FC also exports some of its Junior Premier League teams to Wigan due to a lack of available pitches in Warrington.

Imported demand

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

No demand is identified as being imported into Warrington.

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 Warrington.

Population increases

Based on population projections to 2038 (the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) can estimate the likely additional demand for grass football pitches that will arise from any growth.

Using the current and future populations in each of the relevant age groups together with the current team numbers, team generation rates (TGRs) have been established to understand how much growth is required to establish one new team.

For reference the total current population in 2022 of 211,590 will increase to 216,269 by 2038. The table below shows the number of new teams generated by the new population and the requisite match equivalent sessions.

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Table 2.14: Authority wide team generation rates

Age group	Team generation rate	Number of new teams generated by the new population	Number of new teams generated by the new population - rounded figure	Match equivalent session ⁵
Adult Mens (18-45)	1:497	1.72	2	1
Adult Womens (18-45)	1:6,151	0.14	0	0
Youth Boys (12-17)	1:34	3.50	4	2
Youth Girls (12-17)	1:226	0.50	1	0.5
Youth Boys (10-11)	1:36	1.69	2	1
Youth Girls (10-11)	1:239	0.25	0	0
Mini Mixed (8-9)	1:51	2.35	2	1
Mini Mixed (6-7)	1:54	2.14	2	1

In total, the PPC expects an additional 13 teams to be generated in Warrington through population growth alone.

As these figures are Authority wide and not accredited to any one analysis area, they will be added onto the overall supply and demand total for each pitch type within the 'Supply and Demand' section later. Figures surrounding the extra demand generated for football training provision (hours per week on a full size 3G pitch with sports lighting) from future population will be referenced within Part 3: Third Generation Artificial Grass Pitches (3G Pitches).

Participation increases

A total of ten clubs report aspirations to increase the number of teams they provide. Of the clubs which quantify their *potential* increase, there is a predicted growth of 33 teams.

As there has been an increase of five clubs and 88 teams since the previous PPS update conducted in September 2019, a future growth of 33 teams is deemed to be feasible.

Table 2.15: Potential team increases identified by clubs

Club	Analysis area	Future demand	Pitch type	Match equivalent sessions ⁶
Birchwood Juniors FC	East	3 x Youth	Youth 11v11 Youth 9v9	0.5 1
Cheshire Cheese FC	Central	1 x Adult	Adult	0.5
Culcheth Athletic FC	East	3 x Mini	Mini 5v5	1.5
FC Sankey	South	1 x Adult	Adult	0.5
Lymm Piranhas JFC	South	4 x Mini	Mini 5v5	2
Moore United FC	Central	2 x Mini	Mini 5v5	1
Warrington Rylands FC	Central	2 x Adult 4 x Youth 1 x Mini	Adult Youth 11v11 Youth 9v9 Mini 5v5	1 1 1 0.5

⁵ Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, one team accounts to 0.5 match equivalent sessions on their relevant pitch type.

⁶ 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.

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Club	Analysis area	Future demand	Pitch type	Match equivalent sessions ⁶
Warrington Town FC	Central	1 x Youth 2 x Mini	Youth 11v11 Mini 5v5	0.5 1
Whittle Hall JFC	West	3 x Mini	Mini 5v5	1.5
Woolston Rovers FC	East	6 x Mini	Mini 7v7 Mini 5v5	0.5 2.5
Totals			Adult	2
			Youth	4
			Mini	10.5

The total future demand expressed by clubs amounts to 16.5 match equivalent sessions. The majority of this is identified in the Central Analysis Area (6.5 match equivalent sessions), whilst the least is identified in the West Analysis Area (1.5 match equivalent sessions).

Each pitch type has some degree of future demand expressed for it. The most is found on mini 5v5 pitches (10 match equivalent sessions), whilst the least is identified on mini 7v7 pitches (0.5 match equivalent sessions).

Table 2.16: Summary of future demand expressed by clubs

Analysis area	Future demand (match equivalent sessions)					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Central	1.5	1.5	1	-	2.5	6.5
East	-	0.5	1	0.5	4	6
South	0.5	-	-	-	2	2.5
West	-	-	-	-	1.5	1.5
Warrington	2	2	2	0.5	10	16.5

The Strategy Report will contain a scenario that will consider the impact on the existing pitch stock if these aspirations are realised, in addition to a Housing Growth Scenario that will estimate the additional demand for football arising from housing development.

2.4: Capacity analysis

The capacity for pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment. 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 are used in Warrington:

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

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Table 2.18 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, the usage at such sites needs 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 (as this can result in less grass pitch use).

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, many school sites are considered to have no spare capacity to accommodate further usage based on assumed curricular and extracurricular activity.

For school sites which are available for community use, current play has been enlarged on a site-by-site basis following consultation with the providers. Generally, usage is increased 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

Peak time for most pitch formats has been found to be Saturday AM, with more matches being scheduled at this time on each pitch type except for youth 11v11 pitches, for which peak time is Sunday AM.

On occasion, spare capacity in the peak period is identified despite the pitch being played to capacity or overplayed, or more spare capacity is identified in the peak period than the overall spare capacity that exists. This is because most or all of the use on those particular pitches occurs outside of the peak period. Where this is the case, given that peak time usage should not be utilised over and above overall capacity, adjustments have been made.

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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 play. Any pitch not meeting this criterion is therefore not considered to have additional capacity, although it may have capacity outside of 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 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 have actual spare capacity as no further play should be encouraged on such sites given that future access cannot be guaranteed.

The table overleaf identifies the way capacity and overplay is represented in Table 2.17.

Table 2.17: Pitch 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 pitch(es) have actual spare capacity at peak time.
0	If the cell has a 0 in it, this means that the pitch(es) is/are played to capacity, either overall or during the peak period.
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 but can also be due to the site being unavailable to the community.
1	If the cell is highlighted in red with a number, it means that the pitch(es) are overplayed.

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Table 2.18: Football pitch capacity analysis

Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Type of tenure ⁷	Management	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match equivalent sessions)	Site capacity ⁸ (match equivalent sessions)	Capacity balance (match equivalent sessions)	Pitches available in peak period ⁹	Comments
2	Appleton Thorn Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Council	South	Adult		Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	Poor pitch quality.
						Mini	(5v5)	Poor	5	0	10	10	5	Poor pitch quality.
3	Appleton Thorn Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	South	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	2	8	6	2	Unavailable for community use.
6	Barrowhall Community Primary School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	West	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unsecure tenure.
						Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unsecure tenure.
						Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1.5	2	2.5	1	Unsecure tenure.
7	Beamont Collegiate Academy	Yes	Unsecure	Education	Central	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Unsecure tenure.
						Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Unsecure tenure.
11	Birchwood Academy Trust	Yes	Unsecure	Education	East	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	3.5	2	1.5	-	Overplayed.
						Youth	(11v11)	Poor	2	5	2	3	-	Overplayed.
						Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	5	1	4	-	Overplayed.
12	Birchwood Forest Park	Yes	Secure	Council	East	Adult		Poor	2	0	2	2	Poor pitch quality.	
13	Bridgewater High School (Lower)	Yes	Unsecure	Education	South	Adult		Standard	2	2	4	2	2	Unsecure tenure.
						Youth	(11v11)	Poor	1	1	1	0	-	Played to capacity.
						Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Unsecure tenure.
		No-disused				Adult		Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Unavailable for community use.
15	Brook Acre Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	Central	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
20	Callands Primary School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	West	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	2	4	2	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
21	Cantilever Park	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Central	Adult		Good	1	2	3	1	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
24	Cardinal Newman High School	No	Unsecure	Education	Central	Youth	(11v11)	Poor	2	2	2	0	-	Played to capacity.
25	Carlsberg Tetley Sports and Social Club	Yes	Unsecure	Commercial	Central	Adult		Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	0.5	Unsecure tenure.
26	Chaigley School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	South	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	4.5	2	2.5	-	Overplayed.
28	Cherry Tree Primary School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	South	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	2	4	4	0	-	Played to capacity.
29	Christ Church Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	East	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	2	4	2	2	Unavailable for community use.
31	Crab Lane Playing Field	No-disused	Secure	Council	East	Adult		Poor	1	0 ¹⁰	1	1	1	Unavailable for community use.
32	Croft Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	East	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
33	Culcheth Community Campus	Yes	Unsecure	Education	East	Adult		Standard	2	4.5	4	0.5	-	Overplayed.
						Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Unsecure tenure.
						Youth	(9v9)	Standard	2	2	4	2	2	2
35	Culcheth Sports Club	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	East	Adult		Poor	2	4.5	2	2.5	-	Overplayed.

⁷ Unless local information suggests otherwise it can be assumed that the availability of all pitches in Council, town and parish council and sports club ownership will be secure.

⁸ 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.

⁹ It is possible for 0.5 pitches to be available as this indicates a pitch is available every other week based on teams playing on a home and away format.

¹⁰ Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is unofficial demand on site from Rylands FC.

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Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Type of tenure ⁷	Management	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match equivalent sessions)	Site capacity ⁸ (match equivalent sessions)	Capacity balance (match equivalent sessions)	Pitches available in peak period ⁹	Comments
36	Dakota Park	Yes	Secure	Council	West	Adult		Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	Poor pitch quality.
						Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	0	2	2	1	Poor pitch quality.
37	Dallam Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	Central	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
39	Doe Green Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Council	West	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	2.5	2	0.5	-	Overplayed.
						Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	0	2	2	1	Poor pitch quality.
40	Elizabeth Park	Yes	Secure	Council	South	Adult		Poor	2	3	2	1	-	Overplayed.
42	Evelyn St Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	West	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	1	2	1	1	Unavailable for community use.
46	Gorse Covert Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	East	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
47	Gorse Recreation Ground	No-disused	Secure	Parish Council	West	Adult		Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Unavailable for community use.
47	Gorse Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	West	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	0	4	4	1	Actual spare capacity.
						Adult		Standard	1	2	2	0	-	Played to capacity.
48	Grange Sports & Social Club	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Central	Adult		Standard	1	3	2	1	-	Overplayed.
						Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	1.5	4	2.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity.
						Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	3	4	1	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
52	Grappenhall Village Sports Club	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	South	Adult		Good	2	6	6	0	-	Played to capacity.
						Adult		Standard	1	2	2	0	-	Played to capacity.
						Mini	(5v5)	Standard	5	2	20	18	3	Actual spare capacity.
						Youth	(11v11)	Good	1	2	4	2	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
53	Great Sankey High School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	West	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	2	9	6	3	-	Overplayed
55	Great Sankey Parish Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	West	Adult		Poor	1	1	1	0	-	Played to capacity
						Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Poor pitch quality.
						Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	3.5	2	1.5	-	Overplayed.
59	Hillock Lane Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Council	East	Adult		Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Poor pitch quality.
						Mini	(5v5)	Poor	2	0	4	4	2	Poor pitch quality.
						Youth	(9v9)	Poor	2	0	2	2	2	Poor pitch quality.
60	HM Prison (Thorn Cross)	No	Unsecure	HMP	South	Adult		Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Unavailable for community use.
						Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	2	8	6	2	Unavailable for community use.
61	Hood Lane Recreation Ground	No-disused	Secure	Council	West	Adult		Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Unavailable for community use.
62	Latchford St James Primary	No	Unsecure	Education	Central	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
64	Locking Stumps Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	East	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	2	8	6	2	Unavailable for community use.
65	Loushers Lane Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Council	Central	Adult		Poor	2	3	2	1	-	Overplayed.
						Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	1	2	1	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
						Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	Played to capacity at peak time.

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Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Type of tenure ⁷	Management	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match equivalent sessions)	Site capacity ⁸ (match equivalent sessions)	Capacity balance (match equivalent sessions)	Pitches available in peak period ⁹	Comments
						Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	Poor pitch quality.
66	Lymm High School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	South	Adult		Good	3	15.5	9	6.5	-	Overplayed.
						Mini	(7v7)	Good	3	8	18	10	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
						Youth	(9v9)	Good	1	6	4	2	-	Overplayed.
70	Mary Ann Meadows	Yes	Secure	Council	West	Adult		Poor	2	6	2	4	-	Overplayed.
						Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	0	2	2	1	Poor pitch quality.
						Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	0	2	2	1	Poor pitch quality.
						Youth	(9v9)	Poor	3	2.5	3	0.5	0.5	Poor pitch quality.
71	Meadowside Primary	Yes	Unsecure	Education	Central	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unsecure tenure.
72	Monks Sports & Social Club	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	East	Adult		Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Poor pitch quality.
74	Morley Common	Yes	Secure	Council	Central	Adult		Standard	4	2.5	8	5.5	4	Actual spare capacity ¹¹ .
75	Newchurch Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	East	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
76	Oakwood Avenue Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	Central	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
77	Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub	Yes	Secure	Community	Central	Adult		Poor	2	2.5	2	0.5	-	Overplayed.
						Adult		Standard	2	4	4	0	-	Played to capacity.
						Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
						Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	2	4	2	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
						Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1	2	1	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
						Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	Poor pitch quality.
78	Our Lady's Primary	Yes	Unsecure	Education	Central	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	2	4	2	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
80	Padgate Hall	Yes	Secure	Council	East	Adult		Poor	2	1.5	2	0.5	0.5	Poor pitch quality.
82	Peel Hall Park	Yes	Secure	Council	Central	Adult		Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Poor pitch quality.
						Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	0	1	1	1	Poor pitch quality.
83	Penketh Community Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	West	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
						Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
84	Penketh High School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	West	Adult		Poor	2	6	2	4	-	Overplayed.
85	Penketh South Primary	Yes	Unsecure	Education	West	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1.5	4	2.5	0.5	Unsecure tenure.
86	Pewterspear Sports Pavilion	Yes	Secure	Trust	South	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	0	4	4	1	Actual spare capacity.
						Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	0	8	8	2	Actual spare capacity.
						Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	7.5	2	5.5	-	Overplayed.
						Youth	(9v9)	Standard	3	1.5	6	4.5	1.5	Actual spare capacity.

¹¹ Insufficient car parking facilities on site may limit this actual spare capacity in practice.

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Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Type of tenure ⁷	Management	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match equivalent sessions)	Site capacity ⁸ (match equivalent sessions)	Capacity balance (match equivalent sessions)	Pitches available in peak period ⁹	Comments
87	Priestley College	Yes	Unsecure	Education	Central	Adult		Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Unsecure tenure.
90	Ridgeway Grundy Park	Yes	Secure	Council	South	Adult		Poor	1	1.5	1	0.5	-	Overplayed.
						Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	0	2	2	1	Poor pitch quality.
91	Rylands Recreation Club	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Central	Adult		Standard	1	4	2	2	-	Overplayed.
						Adult		Poor	2	6	2	4	-	Overplayed.
						Mini	(5v5)	Poor	2	1.5	4	2.5	0.5	Poor pitch quality.
						Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	3.5	4	0.5	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
						Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	3	1	2	-	Overplayed.
93	Sandy Lane Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Council	South	Adult		Standard	1	3	2	1	-	Overplayed.
94	Sankey Valley St James Primary School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	West	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	1	4	2	1	Unsecure tenure.
						Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	2.5	4	1.5	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
95	Shaw St Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Council	East	Adult		Poor	1	1	1	0	-	Played to capacity.
96	Sir Thomas Boteler High School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	Central	Adult		Poor	2	1.5	2	0.5	0.5	Poor pitch quality.
						Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	2	2	0	-	Played to capacity.
						Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	2	1	1	-	Overplayed.
97	Sow Brook Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Council	South	Adult		Poor	2	0	2	2	2	Unavailable for the majority of the season due to waterlogging and so unattractive for community use.
98	St Albans Primary School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	Central	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1.5	4	2.5	0.5	Unsecure tenure.
						Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	3.5	2	1.5	-	Overplayed.
101	St Barnabas Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	Central	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
102	St Benedicts Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	Central	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
103	St Bridgets Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	Central	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
105	St Elphins Primary	No	Unsecure	Education	Central	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	2	8	6	2	Unavailable for community use.
106	St Gregorys High School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	West	Adult		Standard	4	8	8	0	-	Played to capacity.
						Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	4.5	8	3.5	0.5	Unsecure tenure.
						Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	5	8	3	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
						Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	5.5	2	3.5	-	Overplayed.
109	St Lewis Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	East	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
112	St Oswalds Primary	No	Unsecure	Education	East	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
114	St Peter's Primary School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	East	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1.5	2	0.5	0.5	Poor pitch quality.
115	St Philip Westbrook Church of England Primary School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	West	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	2	8	6	1.5	Unsecure tenure.

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Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Type of tenure ⁷	Management	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match equivalent sessions)	Site capacity ⁸ (match equivalent sessions)	Capacity balance (match equivalent sessions)	Pitches available in peak period ⁹	Comments
116	St Stephens Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	Central	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
118	St Vincents	Yes	Unsecure	Education	West	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	2	8	6	2	Unsecure tenure.
120	Statham Primary School	No	Unsecure	Education	South	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
121	Stocks Lane Playing Field	Yes	Secure	Council	West	Adult		Poor	1	3.5	1	2.5	-	Overplayed.
123	Stretton St Matthews	No	Unsecure	Education	South	Adult		Standard	1	1	2	1	1	Unavailable for community use.
						Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
126	Thelwall Junior School	No	Unsecure	Education	South	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	2	8	6	2	Unavailable for community use.
127	Thornton Road Recreation Centre	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	West	Adult		Standard	2	3.5	4	0.5	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
129	University Academy Warrington (Padgate)	Yes	Unsecure	Education	East	Adult		Poor	2	2.5	2	0.5	-	Overplayed.
131	Victoria Park	Yes	Secure	Council	Central	Adult		Poor	3	1.5	3	1.5	1.5	Poor pitch quality.
133	Warrington Sports Club	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	South	Adult		Good	3	2	9	7	3	Actual spare capacity.
135	Westy Park	Yes	Secure	Council	Central	Adult		Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity.
						Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	0	4	4	1	Actual spare capacity.
138	Winwick Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	West	Adult		Poor	1	1.5	1	0.5	-	Overplayed.
						Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
						Mini	(7v7)	Poor	2	1.5	4	2.5	0.5	Poor pitch quality.
						Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	Poor pitch quality.
139	Woolston C of E Primary School	Yes	Unsecure	Education	East	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	3.5	4	0.5	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
141	Woolston Learning Village	No	Unsecure	Education	East	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Unavailable for community use.
142	Woolston Neighbourhood Hub	Yes	Secure	Council	East	Adult		Poor	1	2	1	1	-	Overplayed.
143	Woolston Park	Yes	Secure	Council	East	Adult		Poor	1	9.5	1	8.5	-	Overplayed.
						Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	2.5	2	0.5	-	Overplayed.
						Mini	(7v7)	Poor	2	4	4	0	-	Played to capacity.
						Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	6.5	1	5.5	-	Overplayed.
145	The Oaks Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	East	Adult		Standard	1	4.5	2	2.5	-	Overplayed.
						Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	2	8	6	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
						Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	2	8	6	-	Played to capacity at peak time.
						Youth	(9v9)	Standard	3	2.5	6	3.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity.

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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 latent/unmet/exported demand) in each of the analysis areas for the different pitch types, based on match equivalent sessions. Future demand is based on team generation rates which are driven by population increases as well as club development plans to increase the number of teams. A detailed analysis of spare capacity and overplay is set out later in this section.

Table 2.19: Supply and demand position for adult pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹²	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Current total	Exported demand	Latent & unmet demand	Total
Central	4.5	8.5	4	-	-	4
East	-	15.5	15.5	-	-	15.5
South	3	9	6	0.5	0.5	7
West	-	11	11	-	-	11
Warrington	7.5	44	36.5	0.5	0.5	37.5

Overall, in Warrington there is a current substantial shortfall of 36.5 adult match equivalent sessions per week. Overplay is identified on 30 adult pitches across 19 sites. This is primarily located on single and double pitch sites although larger sites such as Lymm High School and Rylands Recreation Club. When accounting for exported, latent and unmet demand, the shortfall is exacerbated to 37.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 2.20: Future supply and demand position for adult pitches

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)		
	Current total	Future demand	Future total
Warrington	37.5	1	38.5

When accounting for future demand expected by Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator, two additional teams is expected to be generated, leading to a future shortfall of 38.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 2.21: Supply and demand position for youth 11v11 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹³	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Current total	Exported demand	Latent & unmet demand	Total
Central	-	1.5	1.5	-	-	1.5
East	-	3	3	-	-	3
South	-	5.5	5.5	3.5	3	12
West	-	6.5	6.5	-	-	6.5
Warrington	0	16.5	16.5	3.5	3	23

¹² In match equivalent sessions

¹³ In match equivalent sessions

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The table above shows that for youth 11v11 pitches overall in Warrington there is a shortfall of 16.5 match equivalent sessions per week to accommodate current demand and 23 match equivalent sessions to accommodate exported, latent and unmet demand. All analysis areas have a shortfall. For youth 11v11 overplay, this is concentrated on five pitches across four sites, with only Birchwood Academy Trust hosting more than one overplayed youth 11v11 pitch on site with two.

Table 2.22: Future supply and demand position for youth 11v11 pitches

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)		
	Current total	Future demand	Future total
Warrington	23	2.5	25.5

When accounting for future demand expected by Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator, five additional teams are expected to be generated, leading to a future shortfall of 25.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

In addition to the above, please note that a further 51.5 youth 11v11 match equivalent sessions per week are recorded as playing on adult pitches in Warrington and, as such, this further exacerbates the shortfall of youth pitches. That being said, the transfer of demand to dedicated youth 11v11 pitches would enable greater capacity and reduce shortfalls on adult pitches.

Table 2.23: Supply and demand position for youth 9v9 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹⁴	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Current total	Exported demand	Latent & unmet demand	Total
Central	-	3	3	-	-	3
East	0.5	9.5	9	-	-	9
South	1.5	4.5	3	1	1.5	5.5
West	-	-	0	-	-	0
Warrington	2	17	15	1	1.5	17.5

There is a current shortfall of youth 9v9 pitches equating to 15 match equivalent sessions per week which increases to 19.5 match equivalent sessions per week when considering exported, latent and unmet demand. Shortfalls are identified in all analysis areas except for the West Analysis Area, which is played to capacity when considering current and future demand. There are six overplayed youth 9v9 pitches located across six sites.

Table 2.24: Future supply and demand position for youth 9v9 pitches

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)		
	Current total	Future demand	Future total
Warrington	17.5	1	18.5

When accounting for future demand expected by Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator, two additional teams are expected to be generated, leading to a future shortfall of 18.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

¹⁴ In match equivalent sessions

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Table 2.25: Supply and demand position for mini 7v7 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹⁵	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Current total	Exported demand	Latent & unmet demand	Total
Central	-	-	0	-	-	0
East	-	-	0	-	-	0
South	2	-	2	0.5	1.5	0
West	1	1.5	0.5	-	-	0.5
Warrington	3	1.5	1.5	0.5	1.5	0.5

As seen in the table above, mini 7v7 pitches have actual spare capacity in the South Analysis Area, overplayed in the West Analysis Area and are played to capacity in the Central and East analysis areas. Spare capacity currently equates to 1.5 match equivalent sessions per week and is located on two sites, Gorseley Recreation Ground and Pewterspear Sports Pavilion. Overplay is identified at Great Sankey Parish Playing Fields. After considering exported, latent and unmet demand, the South Analysis Area will be played to capacity, resulting in an overall shortfall of 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 2.26: Future supply and demand position for mini 7v7 pitches

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)		
	Current total	Future demand	Future total
Warrington	0.5	1	1.5

When accounting for future demand expected by Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator, two additional teams are expected to be generated, leading to a future shortfall of 1.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

As seen in the table below, there is current overall actual spare capacity of three match equivalent sessions on mini 5v5 pitches although the East and West analysis areas are overplayed by two and 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week respectively. Overplay is identified on three pitches across the same number of sites. After considering exported, latent and unmet demand, the South Analysis Areas will also become overplayed by one match equivalent session per week, leading to an overall shortfall of two match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 2.27: Supply and demand position for mini 5v5 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹⁶	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
		Overplay	Current total	Exported demand	Latent & unmet demand	Total
Central	1.5	-	1.5	-	-	1.5
East	-	2	2	-	-	2
South	4	-	4	-	5	1
West	-	0.5	0.5	-	-	0.5
Warrington	5.5	2.5	3	0	5	2

¹⁵ In match equivalent sessions

¹⁶ In match equivalent sessions

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Table 2.28: Future supply and demand position for mini 5v5 pitches

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)		
	Current total	Future demand	Future total
Warrington	2	1	3

When accounting for future demand expected by Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator, two additional teams are expected to be generated, leading to a future shortfall of three match equivalent sessions per week.

Spare capacity

The table below identifies actual spare capacity by site and pitch type across Warrington. In total, 25 pitches are identified as having spare capacity across eight sites. This totals 18 match equivalent sessions. Pewterspear Sports Pavilion hosts the largest amount of actual spare capacity with a total of 4.5 match equivalent sessions across six pitches and three pitch types, youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5.

Across Warrington, an additional 32.5 match equivalent sessions have been discounted due to poor quality, whilst 19.5 match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity have been discounted due to unsecure tenure. 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 pitches with unsecured tenure are not considered to have actual spare capacity as no further play should be encouraged on such sites given that future access cannot be guaranteed.

Table 2.29: Summary of actual spare capacity

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Actual spare capacity
47	Gorseley Recreation Ground	West	(7v7)	1	1
48	Grange Sports & Social Club	Central	(5v5)	1	0.5
52	Grappenhall Village Sports Club	South	(5v5)	5	3
74	Morley Common	Central	Adult	4	4
86	Pewterspear Sports Pavilion	South	(5v5)	1	1
			(7v7)	2	2
			(9v9)	3	1.5
133	Warrington Sports Club	South	Adult	3	3
135	Westy Park	Central	Adult	1	0.5
			(5v5)	1	1
145	The Oaks Playing Fields	East	(9v9)	3	0.5
Total					18

Actual spare capacity has been aggregated up by area and by pitch type in the table below. As seen, the majority is identified on adult pitches and in the Central and South analysis areas. The least actual spare capacity is identified in the East Analysis Area whilst none is identified on youth 11v11 pitches.

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Table 2.30: Actual spare capacity summary

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions per week)				
	Adult	Youth (11v11)	Youth (9v9)	Mini (7v7)	Mini (5v5)
Central	4.5	-	-	-	1.5
East	-	-	0.5	-	-
South	3	-	1.5	2	4
West	-	-	-	1	-
Warrington	7.5	0	2	3	5.5

Overplay

Overplay occurs when there is more play accommodated on a site than it is able to sustain (which can often be due to the low carrying capacity of the pitches). In Warrington, 47 pitches are overplayed across 26 sites by a total of 81.5 match equivalent sessions. The previous PPS identified 44 pitches as overplayed across 18 sites by a total of 43.5 match equivalent sessions per week. Several of these pitches are at schools, where the main reason for overplay is a culmination of curriculum PE use, extra-curricular use including school fixtures and any additional overuse by the community.

Of the overplayed pitches, 31 are assessed as poor quality across 15 sites, accounting for 50 match equivalent sessions of overplay.

Table 2.31: Site by site overplay

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Overplay
11	Birchwood Academy Trust	East	(5v5)	1	1.5
			(11v11)	2	3
			(9v9)	1	4
26	Chaigley School	South	(9v9)	1	2.5
33	Culcheth Community Campus	East	Adult	2	0.5
35	Culcheth Sports Club	East	Adult	2	2.5
39	Doe Green Recreation Ground	West	(5v5)	1	0.5
40	Elizabeth Park	South	Adult	2	1
48	Grange Sports & Social Club	Central	Adult	1	1
53	Great Sankey High School	West	(11v11)	2	3
55	Great Sankey Parish Playing Fields	West	(7v7)	1	1.5
65	Loushers Lane Recreation Ground	Central	Adult	2	1
66	Lymm High School	South	Adult	3	6.5
			(9v9)	1	2
70	Mary Ann Meadows	West	Adult	2	4
77	Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub	Central	Adult	2	0.5
84	Penketh High School	West	Adult	2	4
86	Pewterspear Sports Pavilion	South	(11v11)	1	5.5
90	Ridgeway Grundy Park	South	Adult	1	0.5
91	Rylands Recreation Club	Central	Adult	1	2
			Adult	2	4
			(9v9)	1	2
93	Sandy Lane Recreation Ground	South	Adult	1	1
96	Sir Thomas Boteler High School	Central	(9v9)	1	1
98	St Albans Primary School	Central	(11v11)	1	1.5

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Overplay
106	St Gregorys High School	West	(11v11)	1	3.5
121	Stocks Lane Playing Field	West	Adult	1	2.5
129	University Academy Warrington (Padgate)	East	Adult	2	0.5
138	Winwick Recreation Ground	West	Adult	1	0.5
142	Woolston Neighbourhood Hub	East	Adult	1	1
143	Woolston Park	East	Adult	1	8.5
			(5v5)	1	0.5
			(9v9)	1	5.5
145	The Oaks Playing Fields	East	Adult	1	2.5
Total					81.5

The majority of overplay occurs on adult pitches, whilst more overplay occurs in the East Analysis Area than any other analysis area. This is primarily due to Birchwood Academy Trust and Woolston Park being significantly overplayed by 8.5 and 14.5 match equivalent sessions per week respectively. No overplay is identified on mini 7v7 pitches.

Table 2.32: Overplay summary

Analysis area	Overplay (match equivalent sessions per week)				
	Adult	Youth (11v11)	Youth (9v9)	Mini (7v7)	Mini (5v5)
Central	8.5	1.5	3	-	-
East	15.5	3	9.5	-	2
South	9	5.5	4.5	-	-
West	11	6.5	-	1.5	0.5
Warrington	44	16.5	17	1.5	2.5

2.5: Conclusion

Using the supply and demand tables above, Table 2.32 below summarises the overall Warrington supply and demand balance by pitch type. Overall, it is determined that there is currently a shortfall of adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 match equivalent sessions and spare capacity on mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches. After factoring in exported, latent & unmet and future demand, shortfalls worsen on the adult and youth 11v11 and 9v9 pitches and is also created on mini 7v7 and 5v5 pitches.

Table 2.33: Summary of supply and demand

Pitch type	Actual spare capacity ¹⁷	Demand (match equivalent sessions)					Total
		Overplay	Current total	Exported demand	Latent & unmet demand	Future demand	
Adult	7.5	44	36.5	0.5	0.5	1	38.5
Youth 11v11	0	16.5	16.5	3.5	3	2.5	25.5
Youth 9v9	2	17	15	1	1.5	1	18.5
Mini 7v7	3	1.5	1.5	0.5	1.5	1	1.5
Mini 5v5	5.5	2.5	3	0	5	1	3

¹⁷ In match equivalent sessions

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Football – grass pitch supply and demand summary

- ◀ **Overall, there are current capacity shortfalls evidenced for adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches whilst mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches show minimal amounts of actual spare capacity.**
- ◀ **After considering future, exported, latent and unmet demand, existing capacity shortfalls are expected to worsen whilst a shortfall of mini 7v7 and 5v5 pitches would be created.**
- ◀ There is a total of 18 match equivalent sessions per week of actual spare capacity across 25 pitches on eight sites in Warrington with most expressed on adult pitches and in the Central and South analysis areas.
- ◀ There are 47 pitches overplayed across 26 sites by a total of 81.5 match equivalent sessions per week; overplay is most prevalent on adult pitches and in the East Analysis Area.

Football – supply summary

- ◀ The audit identifies a total of 216 football pitches across 86 sites in Warrington; of these, 181 are available, at some level, for community use.
- ◀ In addition, 12 sites have been identified that previously accommodated football provision but where formal pitches are no longer marked.
- ◀ Of the community available pitches, 54 (29%) are managed by the Council, 51 (29%) by schools/colleges/universities, 28 (15%) by clubs and 16 (8%) by community interest companies. The remaining 35 (19%) pitches are managed privately/commercially, by Trusts or parish councils.
- ◀ In total, 15 pitches are assessed as good quality, 91 as standard quality and 75 as poor quality.
- ◀ Tenure is unsecure at many school sites such as Lymm High School, which is well used for community football, whilst Winwick Athletic FC aspires to take on the management and maintenance of the pitches at Winwick Recreation Ground.
- ◀ Whittle Hall JFC previously had a community use agreement in place with Chapelford Primary School but the Club withdrew this as the pitches became unsafe for use.
- ◀ Where available, changing facilities are generally viewed as being adequate by clubs, with 33% rating provision as good, 34% rating facilities as standard and 33% rating facilities as poor.

Football – demand summary

- ◀ A total of 544 teams are identified as playing within Warrington. This consists of 76 men's teams, six women's teams, 230 youth boys' teams, 33 youth girls' teams and 199 mini soccer teams (17 of which are dedicated girls' teams rather than mixed).
- ◀ There is a general trend of increasing team numbers, with more clubs reporting a growth in demand compared to those that report a reduction.
- ◀ There are two clubs in Warrington competing within the National League System and three competing in the Women's National League System.
- ◀ A total of 22 clubs express latent demand linked to a lack of access to adequate grass pitch, training and/or ancillary facility provision.
- ◀ The nature of the Cheshire Girls Football League means 12 Warrington-based youth and mini girls' teams are exported to play central venue format matches held in Cheshire West and Chester.
- ◀ Lymm Rovers Juniors, Lymm Piranhas and Warrington Rylands football clubs all export demand outside of Warrington due to a lack of available pitches in the Borough.
- ◀ Of the clubs which quantify their potential future demand, there is a predicted growth of 33 teams equating to two adult, four youth and 10.5 mini match equivalent sessions per week.
- ◀ Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator expects an additional 13 teams to be generated in Warrington through population growth alone.

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

3.1: Introduction

Competitive football can take place on 3G artificial surfaces that have been FIFA tested and approved by the FA for inclusion on the FA 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.

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

3.2: Supply

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 90 x 45 metres (inclusive of run offs) are considered to be full size due to the amount of demand they can accommodate. It is common for such pitches to be slightly undersized, especially when sand-based pitches have been converted as the size requirement for hockey is generally smaller than for football.

As seen in the table below, there are currently eight full size 3G pitches within Warrington across eight sites, all of which, are available for community use and have sports lighting. Three pitches are located in the South Analysis Area, two in each of the Central and East analysis areas and a single pitch is located in the West Analysis Area.

In the previous PPS, four full size 3G pitches were identified. Since the previous study, additional full size 3G pitches have been constructed at Broomfields Leisure Centre, Lymm High School, Lymm Rugby Club and Victoria Park.

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Table 3.1: Full size 3G pitches in Warrington

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Sports lighting?	Size (metres)	Certification	Certification Expiry
11	Birchwood Academy Trust	East	Yes	Yes	101 x 63	FIFA	2025
17	Broomfields Leisure Centre	South	Yes	Yes	106 x 70	FIFA	2024
54	Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub	West	Yes	Yes	112 x 76	FA	2024
66	Lymm High School	South	Yes	Yes	100 x 63	FIFA	2024
69	Lymm Rugby Club	South	Yes	Yes	115 x 75	WR FA	2024 2024
77	Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub	Central	Yes	Yes	110 x 70	FA	2023
129	University Academy Warrington (Padgate)	East	Yes	Yes	102 x 63	FA	2025
131	Victoria Park	Central	Yes	Yes	125 x 72	RFL FA	2024

In addition to the full size 3G pitches in Warrington, there are also eight sites containing smaller size pitches that could theoretically help to accommodate some demand. Despite this, none are identified as regularly accommodating football training demand. Nationally, 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. However, most of the smaller size pitches in Warrington are not large enough to accommodate any form of match play, with a minimum area of 37 x 27 metres being required for mini 5v5 football (plus appropriate run-offs).

Table 3.2: Supply of small size 3G pitches in Warrington

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Sports lighting?	Size (metres)
5	Bank Quay Sports Club	Central	Yes	Yes	30 x 20
7	Beamont Collegiate Academy	Central	Yes	Yes	30 x 20
					30 x 20
					30 x 20
					30 x 20
					30 x 20
					30 x 20
					30 x 20
					30 x 20
					30 x 20
					30 x 20
21	Cantilever Park	Central	Yes	Yes	34 x 26
48	Grange Sports & Social Club	Central	Yes	Yes	34 x 20
84	Penketh High School	West	Yes	No	37 x 20
136	Whitecross Community Centre	Central	Yes	Yes	54 x 29
150	Kings Leadership Academy	East	Yes	Yes	45 x 32
151	Warrington Wolves Training Dome	East	Yes	Yes	42 x 31

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It should be noted that there is a current planning application in place for nine storage units to be installed at Bank Quay Sports Club that would lead to the removal of the small size 3G pitch on site (Ref:2022/41171).

Management

The full size pitches at Birchwood Academy Trust, Lymm High School and University Academy Warrington (Padgate) are managed by the respective education providers whilst Broomfields Leisure Centre, Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub and Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub are operated by LiveWire on behalf of the Council.

The full size 3G pitch at Lymm Rugby Club is managed by the RFU whilst provision at Victoria Park is managed by the Council.

For small-size pitches, the majority are managed by LiveWire as it manages the ten pitches at Beamont Collegiate Academy outside of School hours. Cantilever Park, Grange Sports & Social Club and Warrington Wolves Training Dome are all managed by their respective sports clubs whilst pitches at Penketh High School and Kings Leadership Academy are managed by their respective education providers. The pitch at Whitecross Community Centre is managed by a community group.

FA Pitch Register

In order for competitive matches to be played on 3G pitches, the pitch should be FIFA tested and approved and added to the FA Pitch Register, which can be found at: <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/3g-pitch-register>.

Pitches undergo testing to become a FIFA Quality pitch (previously FIFA One Star) or a FIFA Quality Pro pitch (previously FIFA Two Star), with pitches commonly constructed, installed and tested in situ to achieve either accreditation. This comes after FIFA announced changes to 3G performance in October 2015 following consultation with member associations and licenced laboratories. The changes are part of FIFA's continued ambition to drive up performance standard in the industry and the implications are that all 3G pitches built through the FA framework will be constructed to meet the new criteria.

The changes from FIFA One Star to FIFA Quality will have minimal impact on the current hours of use guidelines, which suggests that One Star pitches place more emphasis on the product's ability to sustain acceptable performance and can typically be used for 60-85 hours per week with a lifespan of 20,000 cycles. In contrast, pitches built to FIFA Quality Pro performance standards are unlikely to provide the hours of use that some FIFA Two Star products have guaranteed in the past (previously 30-40 hours per week with a lifespan of 5,000 cycles). Typically, a FIFA Quality Pro pitch will be able to accommodate only 20-30 hours per week with appropriate maintenance due to strict performance measurements.

In Warrington, seven of the eight full size 3G pitches are currently FA/FIFA approved and can therefore host competitive matches. Re-testing is required every three years to ensure that this remains the case. Should quality drop below a certain level, the pitches will not pass accreditation. Despite being assessed as poor quality, the 3G pitch at University Academy Warrington (Padgate) was recently re-certified for FA affiliated football until 2025.

The only full size pitch that does not currently feature on the 3G pitch register is located at Victoria Park as it predominantly caters for rugby league demand and is not marked for football. Despite this, the pitch is reported to have recently passed testing and will therefore be added to the FA Pitch Register shortly.

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RFL compliant pitches¹⁸

The RFL in 2020 updated its rules to allow the use of 3G pitches in all of its competitions providing a pitch holds a Fields Test Certificate showing it fully complies with the relevant field test requirements of the RFL Performance and Construction Standards for Pitches. These can be seen in table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3: RFL 3G pitch certification

Level of competition		Category of field certification
Club Tiers One and Two (Super League and Championship)		Stadium
Club Tiers Three and Four (Community and training)	New provision	Community
	Existing provision	Community or World Rugby Turf Performance Specification

The 3G pitch at Victoria Park has a RFL Community certification.

World Rugby compliant pitches

To enable 3G pitches to accommodate 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.

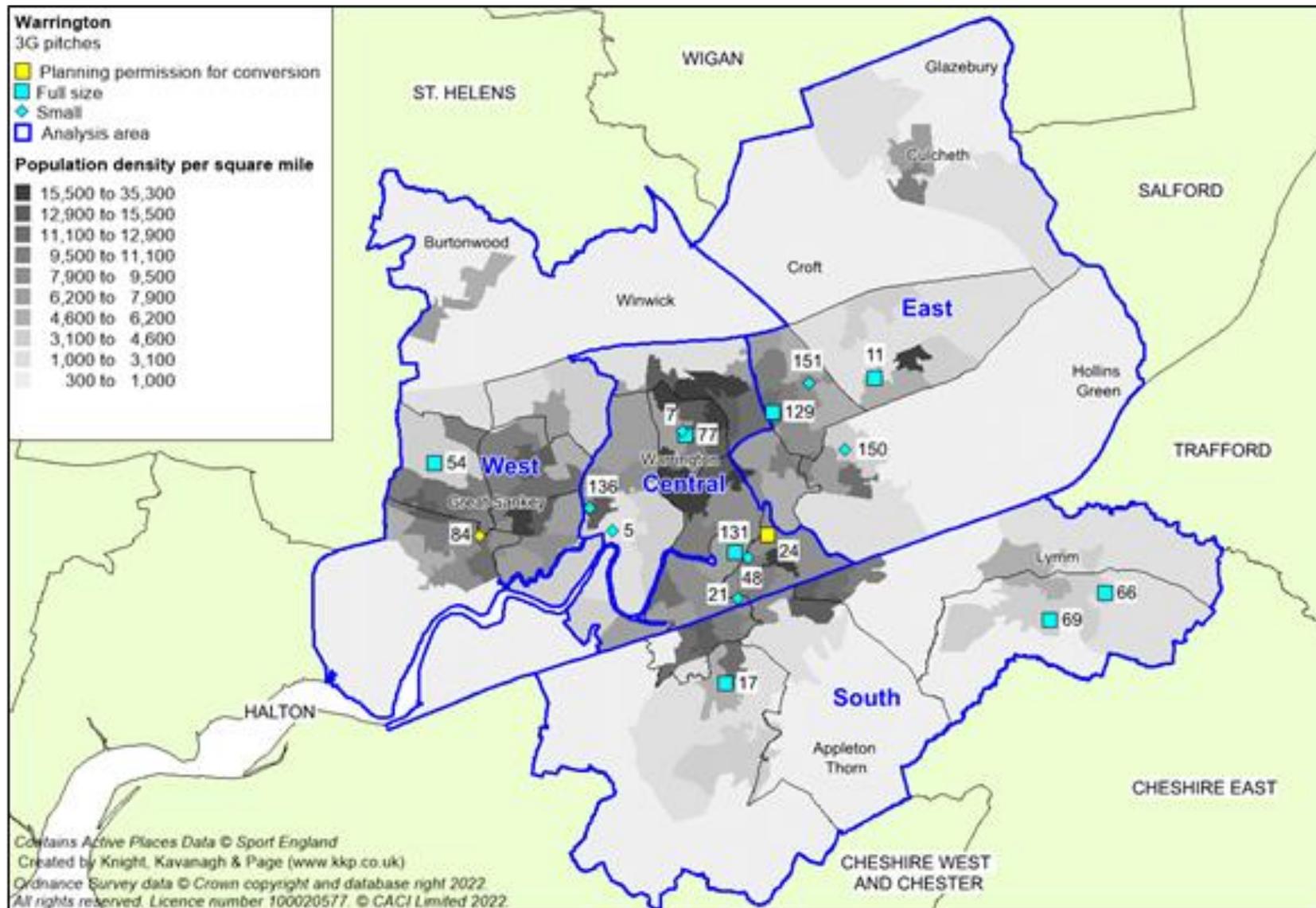
The specification includes a rigorous test programme that assesses ball/surface interaction and player/surface interaction and has been modified to align the standard with that of FIFA. Any 3G pitch used for any form of competitive rugby union matches must comply with this specification and must be tested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

There is one full size World Rugby compliant 3G pitch in Warrington, located at Lymm Rugby Club which can therefore be used to accommodate rugby training activity and match play.

¹⁸ [Guide to the use of Synthetic Turf Pitches for Competition and Training](#)

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Figure 3.1: Location of all 3G pitches in Warrington, regardless of size.



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Future supply

Though full size 3G pitches are considered to be those which meet FA minimum pitch dimensions, it is recommended that any new 3G pitches built in future should meet FA recommended pitch dimensions to ensure suitability for all formats of football and maximise opportunities for use.

Table 3.4: FA recommended 3G pitch sizes

Age group	Playing format	Recommended pitch dimensions (metres excluding run offs)	Recommended pitch dimensions (metres including run offs)
Mini-Soccer U7/U8	5v5	37x27	43x33
Mini-Soccer U9/U10	7v7	55x37	61x43
Youth U11/U12	9v9	73x46	79x52
Youth U13/U14	11v11	82x50	88x56
Youth U15/U16	11v11	91x55	97x61
Youth U17/U18	11v11	100x64	106x70
Over 18/Adult	11v11	100x64	106x70

Warrington Local Football Facility Plan (2019)

The Warrington Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) published in 2019, identifies proposed projects for the development of new full size 3G pitches at Woolston Park and Grappenhall Village Sports Club as well as at locations to be determined in the Central Analysis Area, West Analysis Area and the Culcheth Area. Refurbishment of the full size 3G pitch at University Academy Warrington (Padgate) is also listed in addition to full size 3G projects at Lymm High School and Broomfields Leisure Centre which have now been delivered.

The Warrington LFFP also identifies opportunity for the refurbishment of changing room pavilion provision alongside the proposed 3G at Woolston Park.

The LFFP proposed projects 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 to the Warrington LFFP.

New opportunities identified

Cardinal Newman High School, Culcheth Community Campus, Penketh High School and Priestley College all aspire to convert their existing sand based AGPs to full size 3G pitches. The existing pitches are assessed as poor quality or now lie disused. More information on this provision can be found in Part 7: Hockey.

The developments at Cardinal Newman High School and Penketh High School are supported by the Football Foundation.

At Cardinal Newman High School this includes the provision of sports lighting (the existing pitch is without sports lighting), a soundproof barrier due to nearby housing and improvements to the sports hall on site to create a futsal centre. The pitch was identified in the previous PPS as having no community use. Football Foundation funding for this development has now been agreed and planning permission has been granted. The pitch will also be constructed to be RFL compliant although without rugby league line markings.

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The potential pitch conversion at Penketh High School was agreed prior to the pandemic and the School is now looking to progress this whilst it has also had discussions with the Football Foundation regarding the provision of a second full size 3G pitch on site which it would like to make World Rugby compliant. This pitch is not used for hockey demand and is not known to have ever been accessed for community hockey. The application for this is still in development and so funding support is yet to be confirmed.

Neither of the pitches at Cardinal Newman High School and Penketh High School were listed as needing to be protected for hockey usage within the previous PPS.

It is identified that Culcheth Community Campus already has the internal funding in place to convert its hockey suitable, sand based AGP to a 3G pitch and to provide it as an FA approved pitch to accommodate weekend football demand. However, as identified in the hockey section of this report (Part 7) there is some use of the pitch by Lymm Hockey Club when it is unable to access its pitch due to drainage issues or cannot access sufficient match slots at Lymm High School to fulfil all of its home fixtures due to sports lighting constraints. The AGP was also identified in the previous PPS as needing to be protected for hockey use.

During consultation, Priestley College also identifies an aspiration to convert its hockey suitable, sand based AGP to a 3G surface and to install a second full size 3G pitch on site. However, again the AGP is currently used by Warrington Hockey Club as its home base and as such was also identified in the previous PPS as needing to be protected for hockey use.

In addition to the above, both Warrington Rylands and Moore United football clubs are looking to acquire funding to provide 3G pitches at Rylands Recreation Club and Grange Sports & Social Club respectively. Both developments would lead to a loss of grass playing field provision.

Lymm Piranhas JFC also expresses an interest in working with the Council to provide a full-size 3G pitch at Sow Brook Playing Fields although flooding is also identified as an issue at the site. This development would also lead to a loss of grass pitches on site.

Culcheth Eagles are pursuing the conversion of the sports lit training area at Shaw Street Recreation Ground to a small size, RFL compliant, 3G pitch that would be used for the Club's training demand as well as being available to hire for football training.

Converting sand-based AGPs to 3G

Since the introduction of 3G pitches and given their popularity for football, providers have seen this as a way of replacing their tired sand-based carpet and generating money from hiring out a 3G pitch to football clubs and commercial football providers. This has come at the expense of hockey, with players now travelling further distances to gain access to a suitable pitch and many teams being displaced from their preferred local authority.

Due to its impact on hockey, it is appropriate to ensure that sufficient sand-based AGPs are retained for the playing development of hockey. To that end, a change of surface will require planning permission given the works required constitute development and, as part of that, the applicants will have to show that there is sufficient provision available for hockey in the locality. Advice from Sport England and England Hockey should also be sought prior to any planning application being submitted.

It should also be noted that, if a surface is changed, it could require the existing floodlighting to be changed and, in some instances, noise attenuation measures may need to be put in place.

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The 3G surface is limited in the range of sport that can be played or taught on it. Those proposing a conversion should take advice from the appropriate sports' governing bodies or refer to Sport England guidance 'Selecting the Right Artificial Grass Surface which can be found on Sport England's website: [Link to Guidance](#)

A scenario will be included within the Strategy Report to assess the impact of conversion of sand based AGPs to 3G and what actions need to be put in place to ensure sufficient provision for hockey use.

Availability

The table below summarises the availability for community use at sites in Warrington providing 3G pitches. An analysis of whether there are sufficient hours available to meet demand is provided in Section 3.4 of this Report.

Table 3.5: Summary of availability of full size 3G pitches

Site ID	Site	Availability
11	Birchwood Academy Trust	Available to the community from 18:00 – 22:00 during the week and from 08:00 – 20:00 at weekends.
17	Broomfields Leisure Centre	Available to the community from 17:00 – 22:00 during the week and from 08:00 – 20:15 at weekends.
54	Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub	Available to the community from 07:00 – 22:00 during the week and from 08:00 – 22:00 at weekends.
66	Lymm High School	Available to the community from 17:00 – 22:00 during the week, from 08:00 – 18:00 on Saturdays and from 09:00 – 17:00 on Sundays.
69	Lymm Rugby Club	Available to the community from 09:00 – 22:00 every day.
77	Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub	Available to the community from 07:00 – 22:00 during the week, from 07:30 – 20:00 on Saturdays and from 07:30 – 21:00 on Sundays.
129	University Academy Warrington (Padgate)	Available to the community from 18:00 – 22:00 during the week and from 09:00 – 16:00 on Saturdays.
131	Victoria Park	Available to the community from 09:00 – 21:00 and from 09:00 – 17:00 at weekends.

3.3: Pitch quality

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

The following table indicates when each full size 3G pitch was installed or last resurfaced together with an agreed quality rating following non-technical assessments (undertaken in February 2022) and user and provider consultation.

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Table 3.6: Summary of quality of full size 3G pitches

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Year installed/resurfaced	Quality
11	Birchwood Academy Trust	East	2019	Good
17	Broomfields Leisure Centre	South	2020	Good
54	Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub	West	2018	Standard
66	Lymm High School	South	2020	Good
69	Lymm Rugby Club	South	2020	Good
77	Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub	Central	2012	Standard
129	University Academy Warrington (Padgate)	East	2009	Poor
131	Victoria Park	Central	2021	Good

As seen, all but one of the eight 3G pitches in Warrington is within its recommended lifespan and assessed as either good or standard quality. The only exception to this is the pitch at University Academy Warrington (Padgate), which now exceeds the ten year recommended lifespan and is of poor quality. To ensure the pitch remains in a usable condition, it should be resurfaced as soon as feasibly possible.

It should be noted that to pitches at Broomfields Leisure Centre, Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub, Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub and Birchwood Academy Trust were all Football Foundation funded and therefore are bound by the terms and conditions of the funding agreement to collect a sinking fund for future resurfacing. As the pitch at Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub will exceed its recommended lifespan during the PPS period, it is expected that the pitch will be resurfaced within the next few years despite currently being of standard quality.

Ancillary facilities

All full size 3G pitches in Warrington are accompanied by ancillary facilities that are considered to be adequate.

However, Appleton AFC states, despite four mini matches being able to take place on the 3G pitch at Broomfields Leisure Centre an hour, it limits this to three matches per hour due to inadequate parking facilities.

In addition, Lymm Rovers Juniors FC reports two additional changing rooms were due to be provided at Lymm High School with the provision of the 3G pitch on site although these are yet to be installed. There are currently two changing rooms on site which the Club has access to although as this is insufficient for the level of demand, states it is simpler to avoid using facilities instead of selecting which teams are able to access changing provision.

3.4: Demand

Outside of periods of lockdown, the 3G pitches currently servicing Warrington are 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 sports lighting). This applies not only to midweek capacity but also to weekend capacity on account of seven of the full size pitches being FA approved to host competitive matches, one of the pitches being World Rugby compliant and one being RFL compliant.

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In addition to capacity being taken up by clubs for training and match play purposes, there is also a strong presence of small-sided football being played across the area. In this regard, Soccer Sixes is a key commercial operator, running leagues at Bank Quay Sports Club, Beamont Collegiate Academy, University Academy Warrington (Padgate), Broomfields Leisure Centre and Lymm Rugby Club. Soccerzone also runs leagues at Broomfields Leisure Centre and Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub whilst PowerPlay operates leagues at University Academy Warrington (Padgate) and Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub (although this is outside of peak hours).

This is summarised in the table below.

Table 3.7: Summary of small sided league use

Venue	Operator	Day	Time	Total usage per week
Bank Quay Sports Club	Soccer Sixes	Monday	18:20 – 21:00	2.66 hours
Beamont Collegiate Academy	Soccer Sixes	Wednesday	19:00 – 21:00	2 hours
Broomfields Leisure Centre	Soccer Sixes	Sunday	17:30 – 20:30	8.66 hours
	Soccerzone	Monday	20:00 – 22:00	
		Tuesday	20:30 – 22:20	
		Thursday	20:30 – 22:20	
Lymm Rugby Club	Soccer Sixes	Monday	20:00 – 22:00	2 hours
Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub	Soccerzone	Sunday	19:00 – 22:00	4.33 hours
	PowerPlay	Thursday	19:00 – 20:20	
University Academy Warrington (Padgate)	Soccer Sixes	Wednesday	19:30 – 22:00	4.5 hours
	PowerPlay	Monday	19:00 – 21:00	

The following table summarises the availability of full size AGPs for community use in Warrington. In addition, it records the availability of provision within the peak period. In order to accomplish this analysis a peak period needs to be determined. Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) applies a generic overall peak period for AGPs based the following hours for AGPs 34 hours a week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00). However, in Warrington, due to peak time usage across the Borough being slightly different to that of the FPM model, it has been agreed with the Council and football partners to adjust the peak period to 29 hours a week (Monday to Thursday 18:00-21:00; Friday 18:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 10:00-16:00).

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Table 3.8: Current usage of full size 3G pitches across Warrington

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Sports lighting?	Quality ¹⁹	Total number of hours available for community use during peak period	Midweek						Weekend					
						Affiliated Football usage	Affiliated Rugby League usage	Affiliated Rugby Union usage	Other sports club usage	Informal / Recreational / Curricular ²⁰	Spare capacity	Affiliated Football usage	Affiliated Rugby League usage	Affiliated Rugby Union usage	Other sports club usage	Informal / Recreational / Curricular	Spare capacity
11	Birchwood Academy Trust	East	Yes	Good	Weekdays: 13 hours Weekends: 16 hours Total: 29 hours	92%	-	-	-	-	8%	25%	-	-	13%	13%	49%
17	Broomfields Leisure Centre	South	Yes	Good	Weekdays: 13 hours Weekends: 16 hours Total: 29 hours	70%	2%	-	-	14%	14%	100%	-	-	-	-	-
54	Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub	West	Yes	Standard	Weekdays: 13 hours Weekends: 16 hours Total: 29 hours	66%	-	-	-	12%	22%	75%	-	-	-	25%	-
66	Lymm High School	South	Yes	Good	Weekdays: 13 hours Weekends: 16 hours Total: 29 hours	100%	-	-	-	-	-	69%	-	-	-	-	31%
69	Lymm Rugby Club	South	Yes	Good	Weekdays: 13 hours Weekends: 16 hours Total: 29 hours	9%	8%	65%	9%	9%	-	10%	-	53%	12%	7%	17%
77	Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub	Central	Yes	Standard	Weekdays: 13 hours Weekends: 16 hours Total: 29 hours	41%	-	-	-	31%	28%	15%	-	-	-	60%	25%
129	University Academy Warrington (Padgate)	East	Yes	Poor	Weekdays: 13 hours Weekends: 7 hours Total: 20 hours	31%	-	-	15%	27%	27% ²¹	-	-	-	29%	14%	57%
131	Victoria Park	Central	Yes	Good	Weekdays: 13 hours Weekends: 16 hours Total: 29 hours	-	100%	-	-	-	-	-	44%	-	-	-	56% ²²

¹⁹ Quality is assessed via a combination of non-technical assessments carried out by KKP but also take account of user views and opinions.

²⁰ Recreation usage includes demand from leisure football leagues, Active Communities and other similar organisations.

²¹ The Academy reports that the pitch has not been heavily used since re-opening following the pandemic due to its poor condition.

²² Whilst spare capacity current exists on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, these times are reserved for rugby league fixtures which are yet to be arranged.

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As seen in the table above, Birchwood Academy Trust, Broomfields Leisure Centre, Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub, Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub and University Academy Warrington (Padgate) all have some level of spare capacity, albeit minimal. There is typically less demand for training on Monday and Friday evenings as they are considered to be too close to weekend matches and this is where the majority of spare capacity lies. Capacity exists at University Academy Warrington (Padgate) mainly due to the pitch having limited demand due to its poor condition.

At weekends, pitches at Birchwood Academy Trust, Lymm High School, Lymm Rugby Club, Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub and University Academy Warrington (Padgate) have some level of spare capacity. This is predominantly due to Warrington JFL league restrictions that prevent matches kicking off before 09:30 or after 15:00. If these restrictions were lifted, it is expected that existing capacity would be further utilised. The majority of spare capacity exists on Sunday afternoons although ad-hoc spare capacity exists on Saturday afternoons.

As stated above, whilst the 3G pitch at Victoria Park currently has spare capacity throughout Saturday and Sunday afternoons, although the pitch reserved from 1pm on Saturdays and noon on Sundays for rugby league fixtures that are still due to be arranged. Therefore, the pitch will soon be played to capacity.

Unmet demand

Significant unmet demand for 3G provision is expressed in Warrington, with 22 out of 26 active, responding football clubs stating that additional pitches are required to meet training requirements. The clubs in full are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ◀ Appleton AFC | ◀ Greenwood Padgate St Oswalds FC |
| ◀ Birchwood Juniors FC | ◀ Lymm Piranhas JFC |
| ◀ Cheshire Cheese FC | ◀ Lymm Rovers FC |
| ◀ Cromwell Athletic Junior FC | ◀ Moore United FC |
| ◀ Crosfields JFC | ◀ Oakwood United FC |
| ◀ Culcheth Athletic FC | ◀ Orford Juniors FC |
| ◀ Eagle Sports FC | ◀ Warrington Rylands FC |
| ◀ FC Burtonwood | ◀ The Village Club, Culcheth FC |
| ◀ FC Sankey | ◀ Whittle Hall JFC |
| ◀ Grappenhall Sports FC | ◀ Winwick Athletic FC |
| ◀ Greenalls St Oswalds FC | ◀ Woolston Rovers FC |

Of these, Orford Juniors FC, Culcheth Athletic FC, The Village Club, Warrington Rylands FC, Moore United FC, FC Sankey, Greenwood Padgate St Oswalds FC, Birchwood Juniors FC, and FC Burtonwood are unable to access 3G provision within Warrington. This equates to 67 teams that are not being provided for at present. Culcheth Athletic FC and The Village Club, Culcheth both train on sand-based provision at Culcheth Community Campus.

In addition to the above, Woolston Rovers FC indicates it is unable to access sufficient training slots for its demand. Due to the lack of availability, the club's youth teams train on quarter of a pitch and mini teams train on an eighth of a pitch which suggests the Club requires access to double the number of its existing training slots. This equates to 19 teams having a shortage of training provision. It also spreads this training demand across three sites, Birchwood Academy Trust, Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub and University Academy Warrington (Padgate).

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Lymm Rovers Juniors FC and Lymm Piranhas JFC have similar constraints. Lymm Rovers Juniors FC currently has as many as 190 girls training in a single one hour slot at Lymm High School as it has been unable to secure any additional training slots. Lymm Piranhas JFC has also been unable to locate any further training slots within Warrington and so packs all its players into the slots it already has. This leads to as many as 21 U14 players training on quarter of a pitch. In total, the two clubs have a shortage of training facilities for 39 teams.

FC Sankey and Croft FC are able to access 3G provision although only outside of Warrington, leading to three teams being exported outside of the Borough.

In addition to having access to the outdoor 3G pitch at Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub for three and a half hours a week for training, Whittle Hall JFC also trains indoors on site for four hours a week as it is unable to access additional training slots outdoors. In total, the Club has 18 teams that are unable to train on 3G provision in the Authority.

The remaining clubs train on their match pitches or elsewhere at their home grounds.

No unmet demand is expressed for matches, with a total of 94 teams (out of 544) in Warrington registered as using 3G pitches to accommodate competitive demand on a weekly basis. However, competitive demand for 3G pitches increases drastically after heavy rain as a large proportion of grass pitches in Warrington are susceptible to flooding and/or drain poorly.

Latent demand

As per the football section (Part 2) of the report, 22 clubs express latent demand in Warrington. Of these, 21 indicated they could field more teams if they had access or better access to 3G provision. This includes Cromwell Athletic Junior FC which currently has no access to 3G pitch facilities and so training currently takes place on the Club's match pitches. This currently equates to an extra 30 hours of demand on these pitches across the Club per week.

No latent demand relating to 3G provision is reported by the rugby union clubs.

Exported/imported demand

Whittle Hall JFC exports the remainder of its training demand to Runcorn and St Helens due to a lack availability within Warrington. This equates to ten teams training outside of the Borough.

Despite being a partner club for the 3G pitch at Broomfields Leisure Centre, Appleton AFC has filled all slots for which it was able to take. The Club now exports two hours of training to Sandymoor Ormiston Academy (Runcorn) per week as it has been unable to access training facilities within Warrington.

No 3G demand is identified as being imported.

Rugby union

As mentioned previously, there is one full size World Rugby compliant 3G pitch in Warrington, located at Lymm Rugby Club. The pitch is heavily used for rugby union demand throughout the peak period during winter. This is predominantly from Lymm RUFC as the host club although Bowdon RUFC, Cheshire RFU, Eagle RUFC, Knutsford RUFC, Sale Sharks DPP and Warrington RUFC also utilise the pitch.

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Rugby league

The new RFL certified 3G pitch at Victoria Park is used exclusively for rugby league and is used by Warrington Wolves, Rylands RLFC, Crofields RLFC, Woolston Rovers RLFC, Latchford Giants RLFC and Latchford Albion RLFC. During the week, there is a single hour of spare capacity whilst weekends will be fully utilised once fixtures for the season are arranged.

Future demand

Based on population projections to 2038, Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator is able to estimate the likely additional demand for 3G provision for football that will arise from any growth (it does not calculate the need for rugby union as it presumed that training takes place on grass pitches/areas). This is worked out by converting existing demand to team generation rates (as set out in Part 2 of this report) and match sessions to calculate requirements.

Based on a population increase of 4,762 people, the Calculator indicates additional demand for 12.28 hours on a 3G pitch for football training demand, which equates to 0.32 full size 3G pitches with sports lighting.

As set out in Part 2 of this report, ten responding football clubs report future demand to grow by a collective total of 33 teams. If this growth was realised, and if all additional teams wanted to train on 3G provision, it will increase the number of 3G pitches required.

For rugby union and rugby league, the identified grass pitch shortfalls could lessen through use of 3G provision for partial amounts of training/competitive demand, although there is limited midweek capacity to accommodate rugby training demand. As identified in each sport's respective section later in this report, there is also 0.30 match equivalent sessions per week and 0.76 match equivalent sessions per week of training demand for rugby union and rugby league respectively which will arise from population increases which also could be accommodated on 3G provision or floodlit senior grass rugby union or rugby league pitches. Details on potential options on alleviating grass pitch shortfalls and accommodating future training demand will be examined in the Strategy & Action Plan.

3.4: Supply and demand analysis

Based on the location of the current full size community available 3G pitch stock in Warrington, it is anticipated that there is a current shortfall to accommodate football training demand across all analysis areas within the Borough.

Only University Academy Warrington (Padgate) has spare capacity within the peak period (27% during the week, 57% at weekends) although the pitch is in poor condition and in need of resurfacing. It should also be noted that peak period defined by Sport England's FPM has been amended within this document, as agreed with the Council and football partners, to adjust the peak period to 29 hours a week (Monday to Thursday 18:00-21:00; Friday 18:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 10:00-16:00).

At weekends, most pitches have spare capacity within the peak period although this is predominantly due to Warrington JFL league restrictions that prevent matches kicking off before 09:30 or after 15:00. However, spare capacity of 3G pitches at weekends in Warrington is required to accommodate the significant increase in demand for artificial pitches following heavy rain as a large proportion of grass pitches in Warrington are susceptible to flooding and/or drain poorly.

3.5: Conclusion

As described above, there is an insufficient supply of 3G pitches across Warrington. The need for more 3G pitches in Warrington is highlighted by 156 teams being identified as unable to access 3G training facilities within the Borough. Additionally, larger partner clubs, such as Appleton AFC, Culcheth Athletic FC, Lymm Rovers Juniors FC, Lymm Piranhas JFC and Winwick Athletic FC are unable to be fully accommodated on a single pitch.

Scenarios to further test the need and location for 3G pitch provision will be explored in the proceeding Strategy & Action Plan.

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3G supply and demand summary

- ◀ **In conclusion, there is deemed to be a shortfall of eight full size 3G pitches in Warrington to meet the current level of training demand.**
- ◀ **When considering future demand, this is expected to increase to nine full size 3G pitches.**

3G supply summary

- ◀ There are currently eight full size 3G pitches within Warrington across eight sites, all of which are available to the community and have sports lighting.
- ◀ There are also 18 small-size 3G pitches identified in Warrington across eight sites. All of these are available for community use and all but one is supported by sports lighting (at Penketh High School).
- ◀ There are seven FA/FIFA approved 3G pitches in Warrington which accommodate competitive matches.
- ◀ In addition, there is one RFL compliant and one World Rugby compliant 3G pitch in Warrington.
- ◀ An additional pitch is due to be provided at Cardinal Newman High School, replacing the disused AGP on site. Football Foundation funding has been agreed for the conversion but the pitch will also be constructed to be RFL compliant.
- ◀ Of the full size 3G pitches, three are managed by their respective education providers and three by LiveWire on behalf of the Council. The 3G pitch at Lymm Rugby Club is managed by the RFU whilst provision at Victoria Park is managed by the Council.
- ◀ There are five good quality full size 3G pitches in Warrington, two standard quality pitches and one poor quality pitch (University Academy Warrington (Padgate)).
- ◀ Appleton AFC indicates capacity at Broomfields Leisure Centre is limited on matchdays by car parking provision.
- ◀ Lymm Rovers Juniors FC reports two additional changing rooms were due to be provided at Lymm High School with the provision of the 3G pitch on site although these are yet to be installed.

3G demand summary

- ◀ During the week, minimal spare capacity exists although this is typically on Monday and Friday evenings which is considered to be too close to weekend matches.
- ◀ At weekends, the majority of spare capacity exists before 9:30 and after 15:00, when Warrington JFL matches are preventing from kicking off. Despite this, demand for 3G pitches increases significantly following heavy rain as a large proportion of grass pitches in Warrington are susceptible to flooding and/or drain poorly.
- ◀ Most full size 3G pitches currently available for community use in Warrington are all 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).
- ◀ The only exception to this is University Academy Warrington (Padgate), which has quality issues.
- ◀ Of the clubs that reported latent demand during consultation, 21 (95%) indicate a demand for additional training facilities. All these explicitly report that they require additional access to 3G provision although the number of clubs/teams that state they require access to 3G pitches but do not currently do so has not been quantified.
- ◀ A total of 156 teams are identified as being unable to access 3G training facilities within Warrington.
- ◀ Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator expects additional demand for 12.57 hours per week on 3G pitches for football and rugby union training demand through population growth. This equates to 0.33 full size 3G pitches with sports lighting.
- ◀ For rugby union and rugby league, there is also 0.30 match equivalent sessions per week and 0.76 match equivalent sessions per week of training demand respectively which will arise from population increases which also could be accommodated on 3G provision or floodlit senior grass rugby union or rugby league pitches.

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PART 4: CRICKET

4.1: Introduction

The Cheshire Cricket Board (CCB) is the main governing and representative body for cricket within Warrington. Working closely with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), it is responsible for the management and development of every form of recreational cricket for men, women and children within the Borough. It is currently working with the ECB on delivering its five-year plan Cricket Unleashed and laying the foundations for its Strategy, “Inspiring Generations”, which has been live since 2020.

For adult cricket in Warrington there are three main offerings; Saturday, Sunday and midweek cricket. The youth league structure tends to be club based matches which are played mid-week and on Sunday mornings.

County Facilities Strategy (CFS)

In 2022, to build upon the ECB’s Inspiring Generations Strategy, the ECB has started the process of producing County Facilities Strategies (CFS). A CFS will be produced by each individual county cricket board and will be unique to its geographical area as well as being diverse in its representation.

The CFS will be a ‘long-term’ plan with county boards ensuring the Strategy provides a ten-year view of facility needs. Like a PPS, the county cricket boards will establish key stakeholders (clubs, leagues, county sports partnerships, county pitch advisors & Sport England etc) within its locality to consult during the development of the Strategy.

Each county cricket board will utilise up to date PPS within its locality to support the development of the CFS, utilising the PPS findings as a ‘high-quality’ evidence base. The CFS will look at a range of facilities which support cricket across its region, with the ECB setting out guidelines to ensure that the following facilities are considered throughout the development of the CFS:

Types of facility

- ◀ “Traditional” outdoor facilities
 - ◀ Pitches and Outfields
 - ◀ Pavilions
 - ◀ Practice
- ◀ “Non-traditional” facilities
 - ◀ Multi Use Games Areas
 - ◀ Tapeball/softball spaces
 - ◀ Courts or cages
- ◀ Indoor facilities
 - ◀ Practice (multi use halls)
 - ◀ Performance (cricket specific)
 - ◀ Matchplay (6 or 8 a side)

Each CFS will be used to shape investment decisions and priorities, particularly how each county cricket board will use the devolved budget within the County Grants Fund and prioritise larger scale strategic projects.

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Notwithstanding the above, it is important to recognise that the CFS 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 development proposals that need to be judged against the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Field Policy.

Consultation

In total, five cricket clubs are identified as playing within Warrington. All of these, responded to consultation requests resulting in a response rate of 100%. Stretton and Rylands cricket clubs both previously played in Warrington but have folded in recent years. A full breakdown of the responsive clubs can be seen in the table below.

Table 4.1: Cricket club response rate

Club name	Club response
Appleton CC	Yes
Glazebury CC	Yes
Grappenhall CC	Yes
Lymm Oughtrington Park CC	Yes
Warrington CC	Yes

4.2: Supply

In total, there are seven grass wicket squares in Warrington, all of which, are available for community use. The previous 2019 PPS identified ten grass cricket squares, of which, nine were available for community use. Further detail on the squares that have fallen out of use is provided overleaf.

There are five community available squares located in the South Analysis Area and one square in the Central and East analysis areas. There is no grass cricket provision in the West Analysis Area.

Table 4.2: Summary of grass wicket squares available for community use

Analysis area	Squares available for community use
Central	1
East	1
South	5
West	-
Warrington	7

Table 4.3: List of disused sites

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Comments
13	Bridgewater High School (Lower)	South	The playing field has become unusable due to drainage issues so is no longer marked or maintained for cricket by the community.
50	Grappenhall Hall School	South	The school closed in July 2015 and the site is currently vacant with consultation currently being undertaken to inform whether or not the land will be sold off. No community use has been recorded for this site previously.

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In addition to the above, grass wicket squares were previously provided at Lymm High School, Pewterspear Sports Pavilion and Rylands Recreation Club. The grass square at Lymm High School was lost when the 3G pitch was installed on site although the NTP that previously accompanied the square has been reprovided on site with a community use agreement in place. Rylands Recreation Club was taken over by Warrington Rylands FC following Rylands CC folding in 2016. It has now been converted into a football site.

Stretton CC previously utilised Pewterspear Sports Pavilion as its home venue but the team folded following the 2019 season. Since then, Appleton CC have registered interest in using the ground but could not reach an agreement over rental costs. Whilst the square now lies disused, the CCB notes that ensuring the site is retained for cricket is key for the sport within Warrington and there is a covenant in place stipulating that the site must remain for sporting use.

Non-turf pitches

A total of six non-turf pitches (NTPs) are identified in Warrington. None of these support existing grass wicket squares, with all being standalone NTPs. Three are available to the community; located at Dakota Park, Lymm High School and University Academy Warrington. The remaining NTPs are all disused. These are located at:

- ◀ Birchwood Academy Trust
- ◀ Cardinal Newman High School
- ◀ St Gregorys High School

Since the previous PPS in 2019, the NTP at Culcheth Sports Club has also been removed. The cricket provision has not been formally maintained since circa 2009 due to a lack of demand. The area which previously accommodated the NTP is now within the barrier of the Step compliant football pitch and is considered unusable in its current condition.

With Lymm High School and University Academy Warrington the only education sites accommodating NTPs in usable condition, it is considered that the further provision of NTPs at education sites could help to support future growth of the game. At present, many children in Warrington must sign up to cricket clubs to access hard-ball suitable facilities. The CCB aims to develop more softball opportunities within Warrington schools before moving onto hardball cricket in order to drive increased participation.

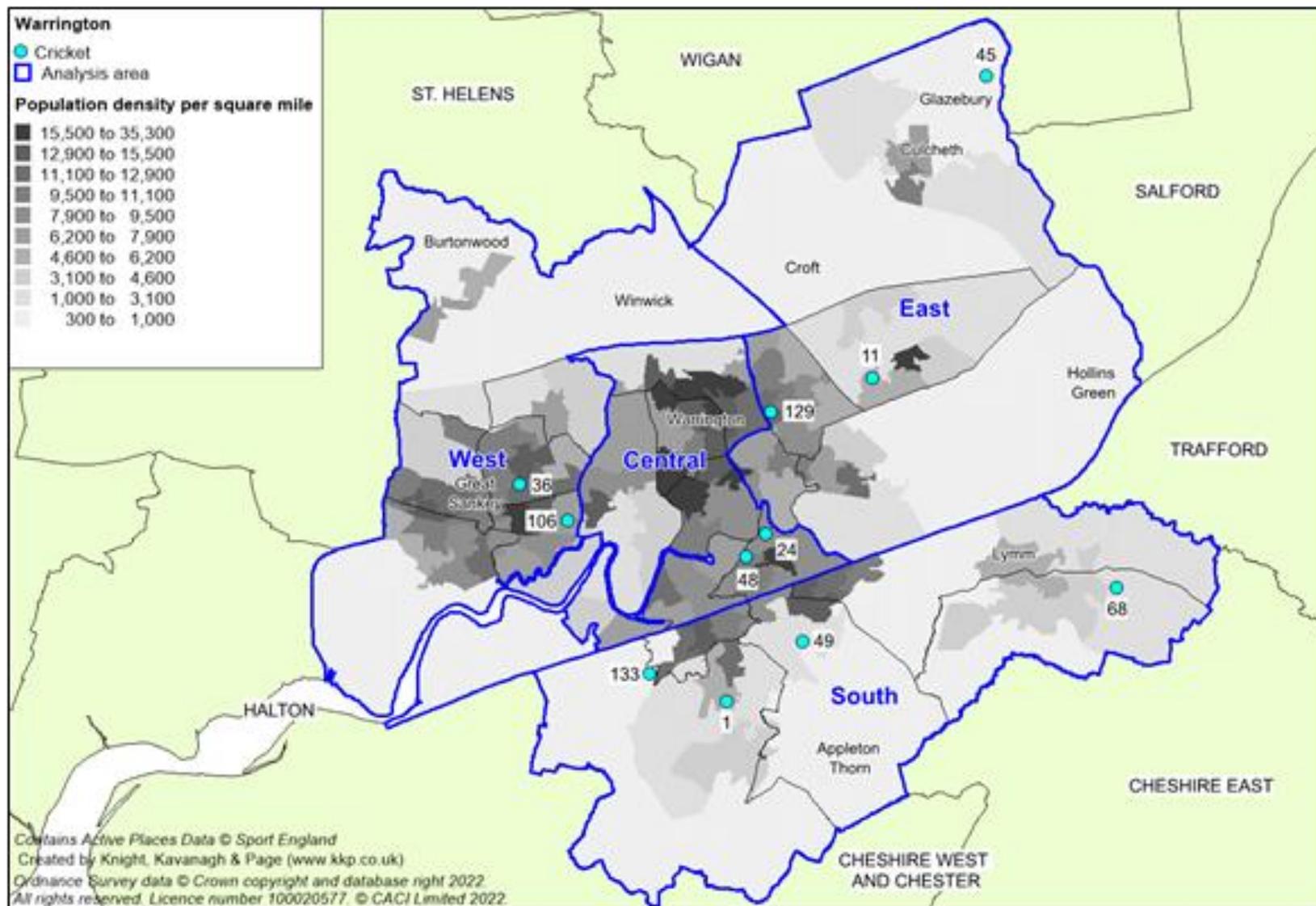
The ECB highlights that NTPs which follow its TS6 guidance on performance standards are suitable for high level, senior play. Additionally, NTPs are also frequently used for junior matches, which in turn can help reduce excessive use of grass wickets.

The map overleaf shows the location of all cricket squares currently servicing Warrington.

For a key to the map see Table 4.2.

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Figure 4.1: Location of cricket pitches in Warrington



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Table 4.4: Key to map of cricket squares

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	No. of squares	No. of wickets	
					Grass	Non-turf
1	Appleton Cricket Club	South	Yes	1	16	-
11	Birchwood Academy Trust	East	No-disused	1	-	1
24	Cardinal Newman High School	Central	No-disused	1	-	1
36	Dakota Park	West	Yes	1	-	1
45	Glazebury Cricket Club	East	Yes	1	10	-
48	Grange Sports & Social Club	Central	Yes	1	8	-
49	Grappenhall Cricket Club	South	Yes	1	18	-
66	Lymm High School	South	Yes	1	-	1
68	Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club	South	Yes	1	12	-
106	St Gregorys High School	West	No-disused	1	-	1
129	University Academy Warrington	East	Yes	1	-	1
133	Warrington Sports Club	South	Yes	2	14	-
					10	-

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Management and security of tenure

All clubs within Warrington own or lease their home grounds, with three clubs owning their sites and two clubs leasing their grounds.

Glazebury CC notes it has a rolling lease agreement in place for Glazebury Cricket Club and whilst it has had discussions with the landowner regarding a longer-term extension, notes it is happy with the current agreement as it can utilise the land on a peppercorn rent.

Table 4.5: Summary of security of tenure for clubs

Club	Home ground	Analysis area	Tenure
Appleton CC	Appleton Cricket Club	South	Freehold
	Grange Sports & Social Club	Central	Rental
Glazebury CC	Glazebury Cricket Club	East	Lease
Grappenhall CC	Grappenhall Cricket Club	South	Freehold
Lymm Oughtrington Park CC	Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club	South	Lease
Warrington CC	Warrington Sports Club	South	Freehold

As shown above, Appleton CC also rents Grange Sports & Social Club as a secondary venue for its 3rd and 4th senior mens teams as it cannot accommodate all its demand at Appleton Cricket Club. The Club raises no concerns with this arrangement.

Additionally, Lymm Oughtrington Park CC has a preferential user agreement for the NTP at Lymm High School although it does not currently utilise this.

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, undertaken in July 2022) 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%).

For the full assessment criteria, please see Appendix 2.

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.

The audit of grass wicket cricket squares in Warrington found six to be good quality and one to be of standard quality. None are assessed as poor. Further detail on the capacity provided by each square can be found in Table 4.16.

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Table 4.6: Quality ratings for community available grass wicket squares (site by site)

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	No. of squares	Square quality
1	Appleton Cricket Club	South	1	Good
45	Glazebury Cricket Club	East	1	Good
48	Grange Sports & Social Club	Central	1	Standard
49	Grappenhall Cricket Club	South	1	Good
68	Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club	South	1	Good
133	Warrington Sports Club	South	2	Good
				Good

Of the standalone NTPs still in use, both are assessed as standard quality with no major issues raised.

Despite the square at Appleton Cricket Club being of good quality, the outfield is undulated and drains poorly. It was previously used as a cow field and has a large amount of thatch in the ground which causes drainage issues. The Club has been regularly aerating and scarifying the outfield in order to improve drainage and believes issues will be rectified if this work continues regularly for five years. It should also be noted that trees round the edge of the ground are causing the playing area to become increasingly shaded, meaning the ground dries progressively slower. Tree preservation orders are in place on most of these trees, however.

The square at Grange Sports & Social Club is reported to have had a lack of investment in recent years, leading to a deterioration in quality. The Sports & Social Club undertakes all maintenance on site which is said to be basic and the outfield is also used for football in the winter although the square remains safe and playable whilst the outfield is flat. Appleton CC is exploring options to fund improved maintenance of the site. It is the only club to access a second ground in Warrington and therefore the only club that uses Grange Sports & Social Club.

The square at Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club is also assessed as good quality although a tree on site that was previously within the outfield boundary recently came down in a storm. This has left the outfield in need of refurbishment and the Club is putting money aside for its repair.

Glazebury CC indicates it completed improvement works to the square at Glazebury Cricket Club at the end of the 2021 season whilst drainage improvement works to the outfield are ongoing.

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 Grounds Management Association (GMA).

Table 4.7: 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

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Quality rating	Details
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

Clubs can contact the ECB to arrange for a pitch advisor to complete three different reports (comprehensive/mini/verbal) that vary 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.

PitchPower Assessment - Cricket

As mentioned in Part 2: Football, The Premier League, The FA and the Football Foundation are increasing efforts to improve the quality of grass pitches in England with the launch of the PitchPower app. Launched in 2020 for football and re-launched in 2022 with functionality for cricket, rugby league and rugby union pitches, the app is a new digital self-assessment tool to allow reports and recommendations to be made more quickly and easily once submitted for review by GMA regional pitch advisors.

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

The functionality of the app for cricket is set to be trialled in early 2023 and has therefore not been factored into the aforementioned quality scores. It is also unknown how the PitchPower assessments will be implemented into the PPOSS process moving forward, however, it is likely they will supersede non-technical assessments as they are more comprehensive and can provide detailed strategic recommendations on how facilities can be improved.

As a result, quality scores for cricket and recommendations within the PPOSS Strategy & Action Plan should be reviewed and updated as part of the Stage E process to reflect new technical assessments evidence and information when available.

Ancillary facilities

All clubs in Warrington have access to changing room facilities at their home ground. The quality of these facilities are summarised in the table below.

Table 4.8: Quality ratings for ancillary provision servicing community available grass squares

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Ancillary facility quality
1	Appleton Cricket Club	South	Good
45	Glazebury Cricket Club	East	Poor
48	Grange Sports & Social Club	Central	Good
49	Grappenhall Cricket Club	South	Good
68	Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club	South	Standard
133	Warrington Sports Club	South	Good

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The CCB indicates Grappenhall CC has plans to modernise and extend their current pavilion to cater for the growing membership (including new female teams) and also to provide a bigger space for the local community to use. It should also be noted that the Club has been promoted to the ECB Premier League in the Cheshire County Cricket League for the 2023 season. This represents the highest level of club cricket in England and therefore, the Club may have stricter facility requirements than other clubs within the Borough.

Glazebury CC states ancillary provision at Glazebury Cricket Club is in poor condition. The clubhouse on site was a temporary structure which has been in place for over 30 years. The Club indicates it needs refurbishment or complete replacement and may have asbestos although it does not have the funds to repair the provision itself and it cannot access external funding due to its short-term lease agreement on site.

At Appleton Cricket Club, a new pavilion was constructed in 2006 with grant funding. The facility remains in good condition although is said to need general maintenance and upkeep work to ensure quality is sustained. In addition, it is looking to rework its second, older pavilion on site into a social and function space for the Club. Similarly, Warrington CC accesses a good quality facility at Warrington Sports Club although the Club states that the facility needs general maintenance and upkeep to retain its condition. The Club has recently received funding to upgrade the male toilet facilities and is now looking to attract further investment to improve toilet facilities for female members and club guests.

Lymm Oughtrington Park CC reports the clubhouse at Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club is of standard quality although the Club invests in upgrading and maintaining its ancillary provision annually. The Club aspires to provide disabled access and toilets to enable it to promote disability cricket. It also plans to provide dedicated women and girls changing facilities, as despite fielding women's and girls' teams, it currently utilises the same facilities as the men's teams.

Training facilities

Access to cricket nets is important, particularly for pre-season/winter training. All cricket clubs in Warrington are deemed to have an adequate supply of training net facilities at their respective home grounds. The quality of these facilities are summarised in the table below.

Table 4.9: Quality ratings for training facilities

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Training facility quality
1	Appleton Cricket Club	South	Poor
45	Glazebury Cricket Club	East	Poor
49	Grappenhall Cricket Club	South	Standard
68	Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club	South	Standard
133	Warrington Sports Club	South	Poor

Warrington CC indicates it has a four-lane training net facility at Warrington Sports Club although it was installed 12 years ago and is now in poor condition but still usable. The Club is looking to refurbish the facility to ensure it can continue to be used and retains safety standards. It is also considering installing a structure above the nets to provide cover so they can be used throughout the year in any weather.

Lymm Oughtrington CC has a three-lane net facility which was constructed with the support of ECB funding ten years ago. It also has a mobile net on site which is occasionally utilised. No issues with either facility was raised through consultation.

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Appleton CC also has a three-lane net facility which the netting was replaced on four years ago. The playing surface has a few holes in the batting area although this cannot be patch repaired and the remaining surface still plays adequately and so the Club is waiting until a complete resurface is required before replacement. It also has a mobile net on site.

Glazebury CC has two static nets at Glazebury Cricket Club which it notes are in poor condition. The Club has set funds aside in order to refurbish the nets in the near future.

4.3: Demand

Traditionally, the English cricket season runs between late March and early/mid-September each year.

Most clubs in Warrington are large clubs consisting of several senior teams and junior teams at various age groups. The only exception to this is Glazebury CC, which has two senior men's teams. In total, there are five clubs generating 22 senior men's, three senior women's and 25 junior teams. Since the previous PPS, there has been a decline in both men's and women's cricket by one and two teams respectively, whilst two additional junior boys' teams have been added. There are still no dedicated junior girls' teams in Warrington.

Table 4.10: Summary of teams by club

Club	Analysis area	No. of teams			
		Senior male	Senior female	Junior boys	Junior girls
Appleton CC	South	5	2	4	-
Glazebury CC	East	2	-	-	-
Grappenhall CC	South	4	-	7	-
Lymm Oughtrington Park CC	South	5	1	9	-
Warrington CC	South	6	-	5	-
Total		22	3	25	0

As seen in the table below, almost all teams are based in the South Analysis Area (46) with only Glazebury CC based elsewhere (in the East Analysis Area). Appleton CC uses Grange Sports & Social Club as a secondary venue which is located in the Central Analysis Area. No teams play in the West Analysis Area.

Table 4.11: Summary of teams by analysis area

Analysis area	No. of competitive teams			
	Senior men	Senior women	Junior boys	Junior girls
Central	2	-	-	-
East	2	-	-	-
South	18	3	25	-
West	-	-	-	-
Warrington	22	3	25	0

The majority of responding clubs indicate that demand for senior cricket has remained consistent over recent years, although Grappenhall CC indicates it has seen an increase in both men's and women's membership recently whilst Appleton CC formed its second women's team in recent years. No clubs report a decrease in senior team numbers.

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Junior cricket has also seemingly remained fairly balanced; Lymm CC reports junior membership has increased threefold in recent years whilst Grappenhall CC indicates junior membership has declined. All remaining clubs state team numbers have remained consistent in recent years.

Latent demand

No latent demand was expressed during consultation. That is, no clubs report that teams are unable to play due to a lack of facilities.

Imported/exported demand

Through consultation, no demand was identified as being exported outside of Warrington and no demand from outside of Warrington was expressed as being imported into the area.

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 football arising from housing development plans within Warrington.

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.

Population forecasts

Based on population projections to 2038 (the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) can estimate the likely additional demand for grass cricket pitches that will arise from any growth.

Using the current and future populations in each of the relevant age groups together with the current team numbers, team generation rates (TGRs) have been established to understand how much growth is required to establish one new team.

For reference the total current population in 2022 of 211,590 will increase to 216,269 by 2038. The table below shows the number of new teams generated by the new population and the requisite match equivalent sessions.

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Table 4.12: Authority wide team generation rates

Age group	Team generation rate	Number of new teams generated by the new population	Number of new teams generated by the new population - rounded figure	Peak time for population	Average games for age group	Match equivalent session per season ²³
Men (18-55yrs)	1:2,406	0.47	0	Saturday	12	0
Women (18-55yrs)	1:16,595	0.07	0	Sunday	10	0
Boys (7-18yrs)	1:824	0.43	0	Midweek	6	0
Girls (7-18yrs)	0	0.00	0	Midweek	6	0

As seen in the above, no additional teams are expected to be generated through population growth alone. The increased demand equates to a need to create an additional 0.20 cricket pitches which is based on a cricket square accommodating eight wickets.

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 Warrington 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 at some formats beyond what current trends and population changes would ordinarily suggest.

Participation increases

Of the responding clubs, three quantified their aspirations to increase levels of participation. This equates to a total predicted growth of three teams, equating to one senior women's and two junior girls' teams.

Table 4.13: Future demand expressed by clubs

Club	Analysis area	Senior men's	Senior women's	Junior boys	Junior girls
Appleton CC	South	-	-	-	1
Grappenhall CC	South	-	1	-	-
Warrington CC	South	-	-	-	1
Total		0	1	0	2

Both Appleton and Warrington cricket clubs indicate they are likely to field the additional girls' teams listed above for the 2023 season.

In addition to the above, Glazebury CC states it is looking to take advantage of the All Stars Cricket programme to create formalised junior teams in the next few years whilst Lymm Oughtrington Park CC is actively looking to grow its women's and girls' section.

²³ Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, one team accounts to 0.5 match equivalent sessions on their relevant pitch type.

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All Stars cricket

In partnership with the ECB and Chance to Shine, cricket clubs in Warrington 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

Currently, all five cricket clubs within Warrington are signed up to operate All Stars sessions. In addition, the CCB has attracted funding in 2022 to deliver ECB National Programmes (All Stars and Dynamos) in community settings, including at Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub. In its Communities Action Plan. It also aims to increase the number of accessible facilities in urban areas and will continue to explore potential venues throughout Warrington, in particular in areas with limited or no access to grass wickets.

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 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).

Currently, Appleton and Glazebury cricket clubs have signed up to operate Dynamos sessions whilst the CCB also operates Dynamos as stated above.

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.

There are currently two softball cricket teams operating in Warrington, fielded by Grappenhall and Warrington cricket clubs. A softball group known as Warrington Blasters also plays softball in Warrington. It is based at Dakota Park and has approximately 50 members, playing on Thursdays and Sundays.

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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.

The table below summarises sites and clubs which are involved in All Stars and Dynamos and the participation figures for 2022.

Table 4.14: Summary of Warrington All Stars and Dynamos participation

Site ID	Site	Club/organisation	All Stars	2022 sign ups	Dynamos	2022 sign ups
1	Appleton Cricket Club	Appleton CC	✓	34	✓	23
45	Glazebury Cricket Club	Glazebury CC	✓	5	✓	13
49	Grappenhall Cricket Club	Grappenhall CC	✓	12	-	-
68	Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club	Lymm Oughtrington Park CC	✓	14	-	-
77	Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub	Cheshire Cricket Board	✓	16	✓	14
133	Warrington Sports Club	Warrington CC	✓	57	✓	27
Total			All Stars	138	Dynamos	77

Peak time demand

An analysis of match play identifies that peak time demand for cricket squares in Warrington is Saturday for senior cricket and midweek for junior cricket, All Stars, Dynamos and Softball sessions as well as club training.

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.

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 deemed safe for play.

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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.

To help calculate spare capacity, the ECB suggests that a good quality grass wicket should be able to take five (senior) matches per season.

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, whereby non-turf wickets are more commonly used and matches can be played on a variety of days.

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

Spare capacity

The table below explains the difference between the potential spare capacity referenced in Table 4.16 in the final three columns (Saturday, Sunday and Midweek).

Table 4.15: Spare capacity examples

Potential spare capacity in peak period (examples)	Explanation of spare capacity
No	Means the pitch is played to capacity within this peak period and therefore cannot accommodate any further demand.
Yes	Not highlighted, it means there is spare capacity to accommodate further demand within this designated peak period however this is discounted due to the pitch already being in full use at the time, played to capacity or being overplayed so it cannot accommodate any additional demand.
Yes	Highlighted in green, it means there is actual available spare capacity within this peak period which can be utilised.

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Table 4.16: Capacity analysis of community available grass cricket squares

Site ID	Site name	User(s)	Analysis area	No. of pitches	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?
1	Appleton Cricket Club	Appleton CC	South	1	Good	16	80	36	44	No	No	Yes
45	Glazebury Cricket Club	Glazebury CC	East	1	Good	10	50	24	26	No	Yes	Yes
48	Grange Sports & Social Club	Appleton CC	Central	1	Standard	8	32	17	15	No	Yes	Yes
49	Grappenhall Cricket Club	Grappenhall CC	South	1	Good	18	90	62	28	No	No	No
68	Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club	Lymm Oughtrington Park CC	South	1	Good	12	60	114	54	No	No	No
133	Warrington Sports Club	Warrington CC	South	2	Good	14	70	33	47	No	Yes	Yes
					Good	10	50	33	17	No	Yes	Yes

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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, no future demand is expected to be generated from population growth alone. Whilst responding clubs aspire to add one senior women's and two junior girls' teams, the impact of the addition of these teams will be considered in the accompanying strategy document. Match equivalent sessions for future demand are based on the estimated average number of matches played per season in Warrington 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 (12) 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 24 match equivalent sessions per season).

Table 4.17: Capacity balance of grass cricket squares for senior cricket

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Demand (match sessions per season)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Future total
Central	-	-	0	-	0
East	-	-	0	-	0
South	-	54	54	-	54
West	-	-	0	-	0
Warrington	0	54	54	0	54

As seen in the table above, no grass wicket squares in Warrington have capacity for an increase in demand on Saturdays. As the square at Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club is overplayed, this causes the South Analysis Area and subsequently the Borough to be overplayed by 54 matches per season. No increase in Saturday teams is expected.

Senior cricket capacity balance (Sunday)

The table below 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 ten based on the average number of matches played by existing Sunday teams.

Table 4.18: Capacity balance of grass cricket squares for Sunday

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Demand (match sessions per season)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Future total
Central	10	-	10	-	10
East	20	-	20	-	20
South	30	54	24	-	24
West	-	-	0	-	0

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Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match sessions per season)	Demand (match sessions per season)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Future total
Warrington	60	54	6	0	6

Whilst the West Analysis Area is played to capacity, the South Analysis Area is overplayed by 24 matches per season. The Central and East analysis areas have actual spare capacity equating to ten and 20 match sessions per season respectively.

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 six 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 4.19: 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
1	Appleton Cricket Club	South	12	2
45	Glazebury Cricket Club	East	24	4
48	Grange Sports & Social Club	Central	12	2
133	Warrington Sports Club	South	30	5
			12	2

In total, there is actual spare capacity to accommodate a further 15 midweek junior teams across Warrington, with all analysis areas (except the West Analysis Area) able to accommodate some level of increase in demand.

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 six squares identified with spare capacity, none are available for further senior cricket activity on a Saturday.

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 below.

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Table 4.20: Actual spare capacity for senior cricket (Sunday) by analysis area

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (sessions per season)
Central	10
East	20
South	30
West	-
Warrington	60

As seen in the table above, actual spare capacity on Sunday equates to 60 match sessions per season, with all analysis areas able to accommodate an increase in Sunday cricket with the exception of the West Analysis Area.

For junior cricket, five of the squares have actual spare capacity during midweek, totalling 90 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 only therefore only clubs with a significant junior membership base that struggle for capacity, such as Grappenhall CC.

As seen below, the South Analysis Area has the most actual spare capacity for junior cricket, with 54 match sessions per season. The Central Analysis Area has the least with 12 match sessions per season whilst the West Analysis Area has no actual spare capacity.

Table 4.21: Actual spare capacity for junior cricket by analysis area

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (sessions per season)
Central	12
East	24
South	54
West	-
Warrington	90

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. However, overplay identified at Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club detailed below is significant.

Since the previous PPS, overplay at Grappenhall Cricket Club has been alleviated due to the Club playing fewer fixtures despite having the same number of teams whilst overplay of Warrington Cricket Club has also been alleviated following the loss of two senior women's and four junior boys' teams from Warrington CC. Lymm Oughtrington Park CC has seen an increase of one senior men's and six junior boy's teams since the previous PPS, leading to a considerable increase in overplay on site.

Table 4.22: Overplay summary

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Quality	No. of squares	Overplay (match equivalent sessions)
68	Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club	South	Good	1	54

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In Warrington, overplay is identified at one site in South Analysis Area (Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club) and cumulatively totals 54 match sessions per season. This is primarily due to the high volume of games played by the Club's friendly side, almost matching the number played by the men's first team, as well as its extensive junior section. Potential solutions to alleviate this overplay will be explored in the accompanying Strategy document.

Table 4.23: Overplay by analysis area

Analysis area	Overplay (sessions per season)
Central	-
East	-
South	54
West	-
Warrington	54

4.6: Conclusion

Overall, in Warrington, there is a shortfall for senior cricket totalling 54 match equivalent sessions on Saturdays although spare capacity equating to six match equivalent sessions on Sunday is identified. Spare capacity is considered to exist for junior matches both now and in the future. These figures are comparable to the previous PPS although Warrington and Lymm Oughtrington Park cricket clubs have seen experienced large changes in demand.

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Cricket supply and demand summary

- ▶ **Taking into consideration current demand only, there is an overall shortfall in Warrington for senior cricket totalling 54 match equivalent sessions on Saturdays although spare capacity equating to six match equivalent sessions on Sunday is identified.**
- ▶ **Spare capacity is considered to exist for junior matches both now and in the future.**
- ▶ Actual spare capacity for Sunday cricket totals 60 match equivalent sessions, whilst for junior cricket actual spare capacity of 90 match equivalent sessions is identified.
- ▶ Overplay is evident at one site (Lymm Oughtrington Park Cricket Club) and amounts to 54 match equivalent sessions of overplay across Warrington.

Cricket supply summary

- ▶ In total, there are seven grass cricket squares identified in Warrington, all of which, are available for community use.
- ▶ Six standalone NTPs are identified in Warrington, of which, three are available for community use. The remaining NTPs are disused.
- ▶ All clubs within Warrington own or lease their home grounds, with three clubs owning their sites and two clubs leasing their grounds.
- ▶ The audit of grass wicket cricket squares identified six pitches as good quality, whilst the remaining square is assessed as standard (none are assessed as poor).
- ▶ All clubs in Warrington are considered to have access to changing room facilities at their home ground. However, Glazebury CC is supported by a poor quality facility which is in need of refurbishment/replacement and may have asbestos within the structure.
- ▶ Grappenhall CC has plans to modernise and extend their current pavilion to cater for the growing membership (including new female teams) and also to provide a bigger space for the local community to use.
- ▶ Warrington, Appleton and Glazebury cricket clubs aspire to improve training facilities at their respective home venues.

Cricket demand summary

- ▶ In total, there are five clubs generating 22 men's, three women's and 25 junior teams.
- ▶ A total of three clubs have plans to increase the number of teams that they field, totalling one senior women's and two junior girls' teams.
- ▶ No additional teams are expected to be generated through population growth alone.
- ▶ Of the six squares identified with spare capacity, none are available for further senior cricket activity on a Saturday.

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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, club volunteers and teachers deliver programmes in schools and clubs across Warrington.

The RFU governs a variety of formats and programmes, including 15-aside, 10-aside, 7-aside and Tag rugby as well as the O2 Touch programme. Its aim is to increase and retain participation within the game, with facilities needing to be appropriate, affordable and accessible in order to enable this.

The rugby union playing season operates from September to May.

Consultation

The following three community clubs are based in Warrington:

- ◀ Eagle RUFC
- ◀ Lymm RUFC
- ◀ Warrington RUFC

All three clubs responded to consultation requests, resulting in a response rate of 100%.

5.2: Supply

Within Warrington there are seven sites containing a total of 13 senior and four junior rugby union pitches. No mini pitches are identified. All these pitches are available for community use.

Table 5.1: Summary of grass rugby union pitches available for community use.

Analysis area	No. of senior pitches	No of junior pitches
Central	-	-
East	-	-
South	11	4
West	2	-
Warrington	13	4

As seen in the table above, the South Analysis Area accommodates the majority of senior pitches and all junior pitches in Warrington. This is likely due to rugby union being the predominant rugby code across Cheshire whilst rugby league is more prominent across the remainder of Warrington. The West Analysis Area has two senior pitches whilst the Central and East analysis areas are without provision. The main difference from the previous PPS (2019) is that Warrington RUFC has relocated from Warrington Sports Club to Grappenhall Village Sports Club due to a breakdown in relations between the Sports Club and the Rugby Club, meaning rugby union pitches are no longer marked on site. Additionally, rugby union pitches are no longer marked at Bridgewater High School (Upper), Bridgewater High School (Lower), Sow Brook Playing Fields and University of Chester (Warrington Campus).

The audit only identifies dedicated, line marked pitches, with recommended dimensions shown in the table overleaf. However, it is common for junior and mini matches to be played on senior pitches via the use of cones, particularly at sites used by clubs, and this is the case across Warrington.

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Table 5.2: Pitch dimensions

Age	Pitch type	Maximum pitch dimensions (metres) ²⁴
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 ²⁵

Future supply

Warrington RUFC is working with Grappenhall Sports FC to acquire additional land surrounding Grappenhall Village Sports Club (where both clubs are based) to increase the number of playing pitches and expand car parking on site.

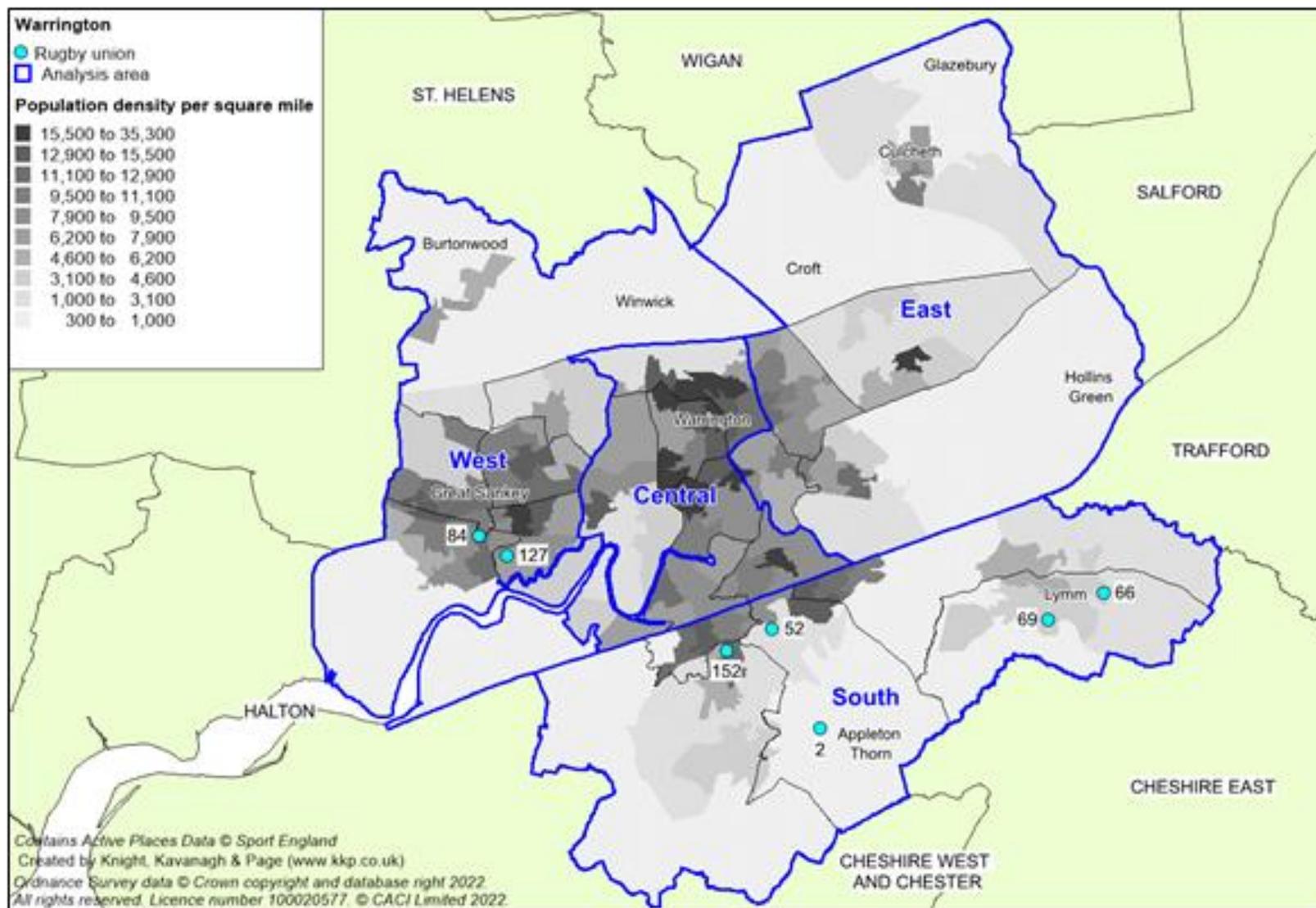
Figure 5.1 highlights all rugby union pitches currently within Warrington, regardless of community use. For a key to the map, see Table 5.7.

²⁴ Recommended run off area for all pitch types requires five-metres each way and a minimum in-goal length of six metres.

²⁵ Minimum dimensions of 94 x 68 metres are accepted.

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Figure 5.1: Location of rugby union pitches within Warrington



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Pitch quality

The quality of rugby union pitches across Warrington has been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by RFU, undertaken in February 2022) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

The methodology for assessing rugby union 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.

Table 5.3: Definition of maintenance categories

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

Table 5.4: Definition of drainage categories

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

Table 5.5: Quality ratings based on maintenance and drainage scores

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

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

For the full site assessment criteria, please refer to Appendix 2.

Overall, in Warrington there are two senior pitches available for community use assessed as good quality, five assessed as standard quality and the remaining six assessed as poor quality. Three junior pitches are assessed as standard quality and one is assessed as good quality.

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Table 5.6: Quality of pitches available for community use

Senior pitches			Junior pitches		
Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor
2	5	6	1	3	-

The pitches at Grappenhall Village Sports Club are assessed as standard quality as they are maintained to a good level and have pipe drainage installed. However, Warrington RUFC states that the pitches drain into a canal which runs along the edge of the site. When the water level in the canal is too high or overflows, the drainage system stops functioning which often leads to fixtures being cancelled. The site is also prone to flooding.

Conversely, the Club indicates that pitches at Bridge Lane naturally drain adequately although are only maintained to a basic level. The RFU reports this is due to site security and public rights of way through the site resulting in unofficial use.

Eagle RUFC reports that the pitch at Thornton Road Recreation Centre drains poorly at one end. Despite investment from the Club and Council to rectify this, the issue persists. Maintenance on site is also said to be basic with only grass cutting and line marking taking place.

The RFU states Lymm RUFC is utilising RFU winter survival loan funding to invest in pitch improvement works at Lymm Rugby Club. The pitches are generally considered to be well maintained and in good condition.

Table 5.7 overleaf shows the agreed quality ratings for each of the pitches.

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Table 5.7: Site quality ratings

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Tenure	No. of pitches	Pitch type	Sports lighting?	Non tech score	Quality rating
2	Appleton Thorn Playing Fields	South	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	No	M0 / D0	Poor
52	Grappenhall Village Sports Club	South	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	Yes	M1 / D2	Standard
					3	Junior	No	M1 / D2	Standard
66	Lymm High School	South	Yes	Unsecure	4	Senior	No	M2 / D0	Standard
69	Lymm Rugby Club	South	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	No	M2 / D1	Good
					1	Junior	No	M2 / D1	Good
84	Penketh High School	West	Yes	Unsecure	1	Senior	No	M0 / D1	Poor
127	Thornton Road Recreation Centre	West	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	No	M0 / D0	Poor
152	Bridge Lane	South	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	No	M0 / D1	Poor

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Ancillary facilities

All clubs in Warrington have access to changing room provision for matches at their home ground. However, Eagle RUFC indicates ancillary provision at Thornton Road Recreation Centre is in poor condition. The pavilion on site has a leak in the roof which falls onto electrics. Provision is also shared with football clubs based on site but is not of sufficient size to adequately accommodate all the site's users.

No issues are raised with the quality of ancillary provision at Grappenhall Village Sports Club although parking provision is insufficient to accommodate the demand on site. Site access is problematic and parking constraints have occasionally been so restrictive that the police have attended. The lack of car parking space is a major concern for Warrington RUFC, although the Club also states that if further pitches can be created on site, this may lead to additional parking and changing rooms also being required. At Bridge Lane, the previous ancillary provision burnt down and there are now only porta loos on site. The club has plans to install basic changing facilities on site and replace the existing sports lighting.

Lymm RUFC has planning permission to construct a new clubhouse at Lymm Rugby Club. It plans to sell the existing clubhouse, a section of the car park and the caravan storage area for housing in order to fund the new clubhouse. Current plans include a large bar and clubhouse area which would overlook the main pitch as well as enhanced changing and ancillary provision. The squash courts on site will also be replaced within the new facility. Lymm Hockey Club also uses the current clubhouse on site as a post-match social space. It reports that if both Lymm RUFC and Lymm HC are playing at home, the clubhouse is not large enough to accommodate both clubs. Therefore, support may also be offered by England Hockey and England Squash.

Security of tenure

Eagle RUFC has an annual rental agreement in place with the Council for the use of Thornton Road Recreation Centre. Warrington RUFC is a member of the overarching sports club at Grappenhall Village Sports Club and Lymm RUFC owns the freehold of Lymm Rugby Club. Therefore, all rugby clubs in Warrington are deemed to have secure tenure agreements over the short term, albeit Eagle RUFC's agreement is annual which prohibits the club from accessing funding to improve facilities.

In addition to the above, the AGP at Lymm Rugby Club is owned by the RFU, with the land leased from Lymm RUFC.

Despite being available for community use, there is no known community rugby union use of the pitches at Lymm High School and Penketh High School.

5.3: Demand

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

Competitive play

Three community rugby union clubs play within Warrington, consisting of six senior men's, 14 junior boys' and 12 mini teams.

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The clubs vary in size, with large clubs such as Lymm RUFC and Warrington RUFC catering for numerous teams within each format compared to Eagle RUFC which provides just one team.

Table 5.8: Summary of demand

Club	Analysis area	No. of rugby union teams				
		Senior male	Senior female	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini mixed
Eagle RUFC	West	1	-	-	-	-
Lymm RUFC	South	3	-	6	-	6
Warrington RUFC	South	2	-	8	-	6
Total		6	0	14	-	12

All demand from Lymm and Warrington rugby clubs is based in the South Analysis Area, totalling 31 teams. The remaining team from Eagle RUFC is based in the West Analysis Area. Since the previous PPS, Warrington RUFC has added two junior boy's teams whilst Eagle RUFC has lost a senior men's team.

Table 5.9: Summary of club demand by analysis area

Analysis area	No. of teams			
	Senior (19+)	Junior (13-18)	Mini (6-12)	Total
Central	-	-	-	0
East	-	-	-	0
South	5	14	12	31
West	1	-	-	1
Warrington	6	14	12	32

Participation trends

Eagle RUFC indicates demand has remained consistent in recent years although the Club is happy fielding a single team and has no ambitions to grow.

Whilst demand at Warrington RUFC is increasing, the Club is said to be at a saturation point and oversubscribed for the number of pitches and changing rooms available at Grappenhall Village Sports Club.

There has been no change in team numbers fielded by Lymm RUFC since the previous PPS update in September 2019, meaning demand has remained consistent. The Club does not expect to field a junior colts' side for next season.

Additionally, there are still no women's or girls' rugby union teams in Warrington.

Training

Eagle RUFC utilises portable sports lights in order to train along the side of the rugby union pitch at Thornton Road Recreation Centre although this area is not large enough to accommodate all the Club's training demand. Therefore, some training activity has to take place on the marked pitch.

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Warrington RUFC also utilises portable sports lights for its training demand which takes place at Bridge Lane. The Club has submitted a planning application (Ref: 2021/40497) for permanent sports lights, the installation of fencing including gates and the siting of shipping containers to be utilised as changing facilities on site. Through the winter, Warrington RUFC also hires the World Rugby compliant AGP at Lymm Rugby Club although this not ideal for the Club due to its distance from Grappenhall Village Sports Club.

All Lymm RUFC's training demand takes place on the World Rugby compliant AGP at Lymm Rugby Club.

Additional usage

Warrington RUFC also fields an occasional social team that plays six to eight fixtures per season during the week. Additionally, both Eagle and Lymm rugby clubs also have Touch Rugby sections. This demand has not been considered in the supply and demand analysis later in this section as these informal teams do not play regular fixtures.

Imported demand

No demand is identified as being imported onto grass rugby union pitches in Warrington.

Unmet/latent demand

Warrington RUFC indicates it could field additional teams if it was not restricted by pitch space and parking facilities. The Club is attempting to create more pitches at Grappenhall Village Sports Club and is exploring the feasibility of expanding the site. It believes it could double mini and junior membership if capacity restrictions were alleviated.

No unmet demand for rugby union provision has been identified in Warrington.

Future demand

Based on population projections to 2038 (the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) can estimate the likely additional demand for grass rugby pitches that will arise from any growth.

Using the current and future populations in each of the relevant age groups together with the current team numbers, team generation rates (TGRs) have been established to understand how much growth is required to establish one new team.

For reference the total current population in 2022 of 211,590 will increase to 216,269 by 2038. The table below shows the number of new teams generated by the new population and the requisite match equivalent sessions.

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Table 5.10: Authority wide team generation rates

Age group	Team generation rate	Number of new teams generated by the new population	Number of new teams generated by the new population - rounded figure	Match equivalent session ²⁶
Men (19-45yrs)	1:5,688	0.14	0	0
Women (19-45yrs)	0	0.00	0	0
Boys (13-18yrs)	1:537	0.32	0	0
Girls (13-18yrs)	0	0.00	0	0
Mixed (7-12yrs)	1:1,318	0.27	0	0

As seen in the table above, no additional teams are expected to be generated through population growth alone.

Future training demand

Similar to competitive demand referenced above, future levels of training demand can also be calculated via using Sport England's PPC. This demand is based upon access to a floodlit grass pitch equated into match equivalent sessions.

Table 5.11: Future training demand

Age group	Training demand generated per week by population growth (match equivalent sessions)	Training demand generated per week by population growth (match equivalent sessions) - rounded figure ²⁷	Hour/s equivalent
Men (19-45yrs)	0.07	-	0
Women (19-45yrs)	0.00	-	0
Boys (13-18yrs)	0.16	-	0
Girls (13-18yrs)	0.00	-	0
Mixed (7-12yrs)	0.07	-	0

As seen above, no substantial increase in training demand is expected to be generated via population growth alone in Warrington.

Participation increases

No future demand is expressed any of the clubs although the RFU expects female rugby participation at Warrington and Lymm rugby clubs to commence within the lifetime of the PPS. The quantity of this and at which club this will affiliate to is currently unknown although it will be located in the South Analysis Area.

Eagle RUFC is content with continuing to field a single men's team.

Warrington RUFC has growth aspirations but as mentioned previously, is unable to field additional teams due to a lack of peak time capacity and parking facilities.

²⁶ Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, one team accounts to 0.5 match equivalent sessions on their relevant pitch type.

²⁷ Rounded to the nearest 0.5 match equivalent session.

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The peak period

In order to fully establish actual spare capacity, the peak period needs to be established. The peak time for demand of senior rugby pitches is Saturday PM. The peak time for junior and mini teams is Sunday AM, although junior teams also play on senior pitches.

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 union. 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 union pitches, the following assumptions are applied to the site-by-site and pitch-by-pitch analysis:

- ◀ All sites that are or could be used for competitive rugby union 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 and known to be used as standard practice).
- ◀ From U13 upwards, teams play 15 v 15 and use a full pitch.
- ◀ Mini teams (U6-U12) play on half of a senior pitch, meaning two matches and four teams can be accommodated at any one time; this means that play per week is set at 0.25 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis.
- ◀ For senior and youth teams, the current level of play per week is set at 0.5 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis (assumes half of matches will be played away).
- ◀ Senior men's rugby generally takes place on Saturday afternoons.
- ◀ Junior rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings.
- ◀ Mini rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings.
- ◀ Unless known otherwise, capacity on school pitches is limited due to internal usage.
- ◀ Training that takes place on marked pitches is reflected by the addition of match equivalent sessions to current usage levels.

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

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

Table 5.12: 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

The table below identifies the way capacity and overplay is represented in Table 5.14.

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Table 5.13: 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 pitch(es) have actual spare capacity at peak time.
0	If the cell has a 0 in it, this means that the pitch(es) is/are played to capacity, either overall or during the peak period.
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 but can also be due to the site being unavailable to the community.
1	If the cell is highlighted in red with a number, it means that the pitch(es) are overplayed.

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Table 5.14: Capacity table for rugby union pitches in Warrington

Site ID	Site name	Management	Analysis area	Community use?	No. of pitches	Pitch type	Quality rating	Sports lighting?	Pitch capacity	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Training equivalent sessions (per week)	Capacity rating	Comments
2	Appleton Thorn Playing Fields	Council	South	Yes	2	Senior	M0 / D0	No	1	0	0	1	Pitches are currently unused and so have spare capacity.
52	Grappenhall Village Sports Club ²⁸	Sports Club	South	Yes	1	Senior	M1 / D2	Yes	1.5	1	0	0.5	Used by Warrington RUFC for match demand, the pitch has 0.5 MES per week of spare capacity.
					3	Junior	M1 / D2	No	4.5	5.5	0	1	Used by Warrington RUFC for junior and mini match demand, the pitches are overplayed by one MES per week.
66	Lymm High School	Education	South	Yes	4	Senior	M2 / D0	No	8	8	0	0	Played to capacity through curricular demand and a strong rugby union programme within the School.
69	Lymm Rugby Club	Sports Club	South	Yes	2	Senior	M2 / D1	No	6	3	0	3	Used by Lymm RUFC for match demand, the pitches have three MES per week of spare capacity.
					1	Junior	M2 / D1	No	3	1	0	2	Used by Lymm RUFC for match demand, the pitch has two MES per week of spare capacity.
84	Penketh High School	Education	West	Yes	1	Senior	M0 / D1	No	1.5	1	0	0.5	Used for curricular demand, the pitch has 0.5 MES per week of spare capacity.
127	Thornton Road Recreation Centre	Sports Club	West	Yes	1	Senior	M0 / D0	No	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	Used by Eagle RUFC for match and training demand, the pitch is overplayed by 0.5 MES per week.
152	Bridge Lane	Sports Club	South	Yes	2	Senior	M0 / D1	No	3	1.5	2.75	1.25	Used by Warrington RUFC for match and training demand, the pitches are overplayed by 1.25 MES per week.

²⁸ As stated previously, whilst a drainage system is installed on site, if the water level in the neighbouring canal becomes too high the drainage system cannot work leading to fixtures being cancelled and the site occasionally flooding. Therefore, despite being assessed as M1/D2 quality, capacity figures for a rating of M1/D0 has been applied to all pitches on site.

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5.5: Supply and demand analysis

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

Table 5.15: Supply and demand balance of rugby union pitches in Warrington

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions)				
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Central	-	-		-	
East	-	-		-	
South	0.5	2.25	1.75	-	1.75
West	-	0.5	0.5	-	0.5
Warrington	0.5	2.75	2.25	0	2.25

There is a current shortfall of 1.75 match equivalent sessions per week in the South Analysis Area and 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week in the West Analysis Area. All remaining analysis areas are currently played to capacity. As there is no future demand expected, the current shortfall is likely to remain. Overplay has reduced from the previous PPS due to both Lymm and Warrington rugby clubs moving training demand away from their primary match pitches.

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.

In addition, 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 pitches with unsecured tenure are not considered to have actual spare capacity as no further play should be encouraged on such sites given that future access cannot be guaranteed. As such, the table below ascertains whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be used to accommodate an increase in play, firstly for senior play, on a site-by-site and pitch-by-pitch basis.

Table 5.16: Actual spare capacity for senior rugby by site/pitch

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Potential capacity	Actual spare capacity	Comments
2	Appleton Thorn Playing Fields	South	Senior	2	1	-	Spare capacity is discounted due to poor pitch quality.
52	Grappenhall Village Sports Club	South	Senior	1	0.5	-	The pitch is played to capacity at peak time.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Potential capacity	Actual spare capacity	Comments
			Junior	3	2	-	The pitches are played to capacity at peak time.
69	Lymm Rugby Club	South	Senior	2	3	0.5	Actual spare capacity.
84	Penketh High School	West	Senior	1	0.5	-	Spare capacity is discounted due to poor pitch quality and unsecure tenure.

Despite nine pitches across four sites displaying potential spare capacity in Warrington, only one pitch is considered to have actual spare capacity for increase in senior rugby demand. This amounts to 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

The actual spare capacity exists at Lymm Rugby Club, where there is capacity for a fourth senior team to be accommodated. All actual spare capacity is identified in the South Analysis Area.

Table 5.17: Summary of actual spare capacity for senior rugby

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity
Central	-
East	-
South	0.5
West	-
Warrington	0.5

For mini and junior rugby, ascertaining actual spare capacity can be unclear with regards to the programming of matches as it can vary weekly. This is because junior and mini sections tend to enter cup competitions or play organised friendlies, with clubs arranging for a number of their age groups to play those from another club all at once, home or away. Then when fixtures are not scheduled, clubs will generally hold training sessions, which means that clubs may require use of home pitches for consecutive weeks, or not at all for the same time period.

Given the above, it is generally assumed that no pitches used by mini or junior teams have significant actual spare capacity for an increase in demand (over and above what actual spare capacity has been identified for senior play). However, it is acknowledged that some capacity does exist when the pitches are not in use.

Overplay

The table below highlights the level of overplay on senior rugby pitches within Warrington. This totals 2.75 match equivalent sessions and is identified across six pitches at three sites, Grappenhall Village Sports Club, Thornton Road Recreation Centre and Bridge Lane.

The pitch at Thornton Road Recreation Centre being used for match and training demand by Eagle RUFC whilst Warrington RUFC utilises Bridge Lane for match and training demand. All three pitches are assessed as poor quality.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

As mentioned above, whilst pitches at Grappenhall Village Sports Club are assessed as standard (M1/D2) quality, capacity figures for poor (M1/D0) rating have been applied due to the drainage issues on site. Therefore, the three junior pitches on site are overplayed by one match equivalent session per week.

Table 5.18: Summary of overplay

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Capacity rating
52	Grappenhall Village Sports Club	South	3	1
127	Thornton Road Recreation Centre	West	1	0.5
152	Bridge Lane	South	2	1.25
			Total	2.75

The majority of overplay is identified in the South Analysis Area although 0.5 match equivalent sessions of overplay per week are identified in the West Analysis Area.

Table 5.19: Summary of overplay by analysis area

Analysis area	Overplay
Central	-
East	-
South	2.25
West	0.5
Warrington	2.75

5.6: Conclusion

There is currently an overall shortfall of rugby union pitches amounting to 2.25 match equivalent sessions, which can be attributed to the South and West analysis areas. As no future demand is expected, the current shortfall is likely to remain. This represents a reduction of 3.5 match equivalent sessions of overplay since the previous PPS.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Rugby union supply and demand summary

- ◀ **There is currently an overall shortfall of rugby union pitches amounting to 2.25 match equivalent sessions, which can be attributed to the South and West analysis areas.**
- ◀ **As no future demand is expected, the current shortfall is likely to remain.**
- ◀ One pitch is considered to have actual spare capacity for increase in senior rugby demand, amounting to 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week.
- ◀ Overplay totals 2.75 match equivalent sessions and is identified across six pitches at three sites.

Rugby union supply summary

- ◀ Within Warrington there are seven sites containing a total of 13 senior and four junior rugby union pitches. No mini pitches are identified although the junior pitches at Grappenhall Village Sports Club are used for mini demand. All these pitches are available for community use.
- ◀ Warrington RUFC is working with Grappenhall Sports FC to acquire additional land surrounding Grappenhall Village Sports Club (where both clubs are based) to increase the number of playing pitches and expand car parking on site.
- ◀ Two senior pitches available for community use assessed as good quality, five assessed as standard quality and the remaining six assessed as poor quality. Three junior pitches are assessed as standard quality and one is assessed as good quality.
- ◀ Pitches at Grappenhall Village Sports Club drain into a neighbouring canal, meaning it stops functioning if the water level rises too high. The site is also prone to flooding.
- ◀ Pitches at Thornton Road Recreation Centre drain poorly at one end.
- ◀ The RFU states Lymm RUFC is utilising RFU winter survival loan funding to invest in pitch improvement works at Lymm Rugby Club.
- ◀ Eagle RUFC indicates ancillary provision at Thornton Road Recreation Centre is in very poor condition. The pavilion on site has a leak in the roof which falls onto electrics and is of insufficient size to accommodate all the site's users.
- ◀ Site access and parking facilities are major issues at Grappenhall Village Sports Club.
- ◀ At Bridge Lane, the previous ancillary provision burnt down and there are now only porta loos on site. Warrington RUFC has plans to install basic changing facilities on site and replace the existing sports lighting.
- ◀ The RFU reports Lymm RUFC has plans to improve storage and catering facilities at Lymm Rugby Club, as well as improving the existing clubhouse (with support from England Hockey and England Squash) and car park on site. A fence is also due to be installed to protect cars from the pitch.
- ◀ All rugby clubs in Warrington are deemed to have secure tenure agreements over the short term, albeit Eagle RUFC's agreement is annual which prohibits the club from accessing funding to improve facilities.

Rugby union demand summary

- ◀ Three community rugby union clubs play within Warrington, consisting of six senior men's, 14 junior boys' and 12 mini teams.
- ◀ Eagle RUFC utilises portable sports lights in order to train along the side of the rugby pitch at Thornton Road Recreation Centre although this isn't large enough to accommodate all of the Club's training demand. Therefore, some training activity has to take place on the marked pitch. Warrington RUFC uses portable sports lights to train on the pitches at Bridge Lane. It has submitted a planning application for permanent sports lights. Lymm RUFC trains on the World Rugby compliant AGP at Lymm Rugby Club.
- ◀ Warrington RUFC believes it could double mini and junior membership if its lack of pitch space and parking facilities were rectified.
- ◀ No future demand is expected through team generation rates or club aspirations.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

PART 6: RUGBY LEAGUE

6.1: Introduction

The Rugby Football League (RFL) is the governing body for rugby league in Britain and Ireland. It administers the England national rugby league team, the Challenge Cup, Super League, and the Championships which form the professional and semi-professional structure of the game structure in the UK. The RFL also administers the amateur and junior game across the country in association with the British Amateur Rugby League Association (BARLA).

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

Rugby league is considered as a winter season sport within schools, colleges and universities and therefore pitch provision for matches and training is required throughout the winter months.

Warrington Wolves RLFC official charity Warrington Community Foundation has been created to provide opportunities through sport, education, health and the arts which enrich, inspire and celebrate the Warrington community. This is achieved through delivering a range of programmes including rugby league coaching sessions through to improving health, wellbeing and career prospects for both young people and adults. The Foundation delivers a huge variety of community projects covering the areas of Dance, Disability, Education, Health and Heritage.

Consultation

There are ten amateur rugby clubs located in Warrington, which represents an increase of one club since the previous PPS' (2019 and 2016). Additionally, since the previous study, Burtonwood Bridge has tied into Burtonwood Bulldogs, becoming a single entity. Of the ten clubs, nine responded to consultation requests via an online survey, resulting in a 90% response rate. Support to achieve this response rate was provided by Warrington Wolves Charitable Foundation.

Table 6.1: Summary of consultation

Club	Response?
Bank Quay Bulls	Yes
Burtonwood Bulldogs	Yes
Burtonwood Chargers	No
Crosfields	Yes
Culcheth Eagles	Yes
Latchford Albion & Giants	Yes
Rylands Sharks	Yes
Warrington Wolves PDRL & LDRL	Yes
Warrington Wolves Women & Girls	Yes
Woolston Rovers	Yes

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

6.2: Supply

There are 33 rugby league pitches identified in Warrington across 20 sites. Of these, 28 pitches across 15 sites are available for community use, with pitches at Bruche Primary School, Cardinal Newman Catholic High School, University of Chester (Warrington Campus), Warrington Wolves (Halliwell Jones Stadium) and St Benedicts Primary School unavailable for community use. The latter of these sites is the home venue of Warrington Wolves, the professional club which competes in the Betfred Super League.

The largest offering of rugby league pitches is identified in the Central Analysis Area, with this containing 11 pitches available to the community. In contrast, the South Analysis Area offers just one senior rugby league pitch at Bridgewater High School (Upper).

Table 6.2: Summary of grass rugby league pitches available to the community

Analysis area	No. of senior pitches	No of junior pitches
Central	11	-
East	9	-
South	1	-
West	6	1
Warrington	27	1

The community use pitches are generally well spread across the analysis areas, although junior rugby league pitches are only available for community use in the West Analysis Area.

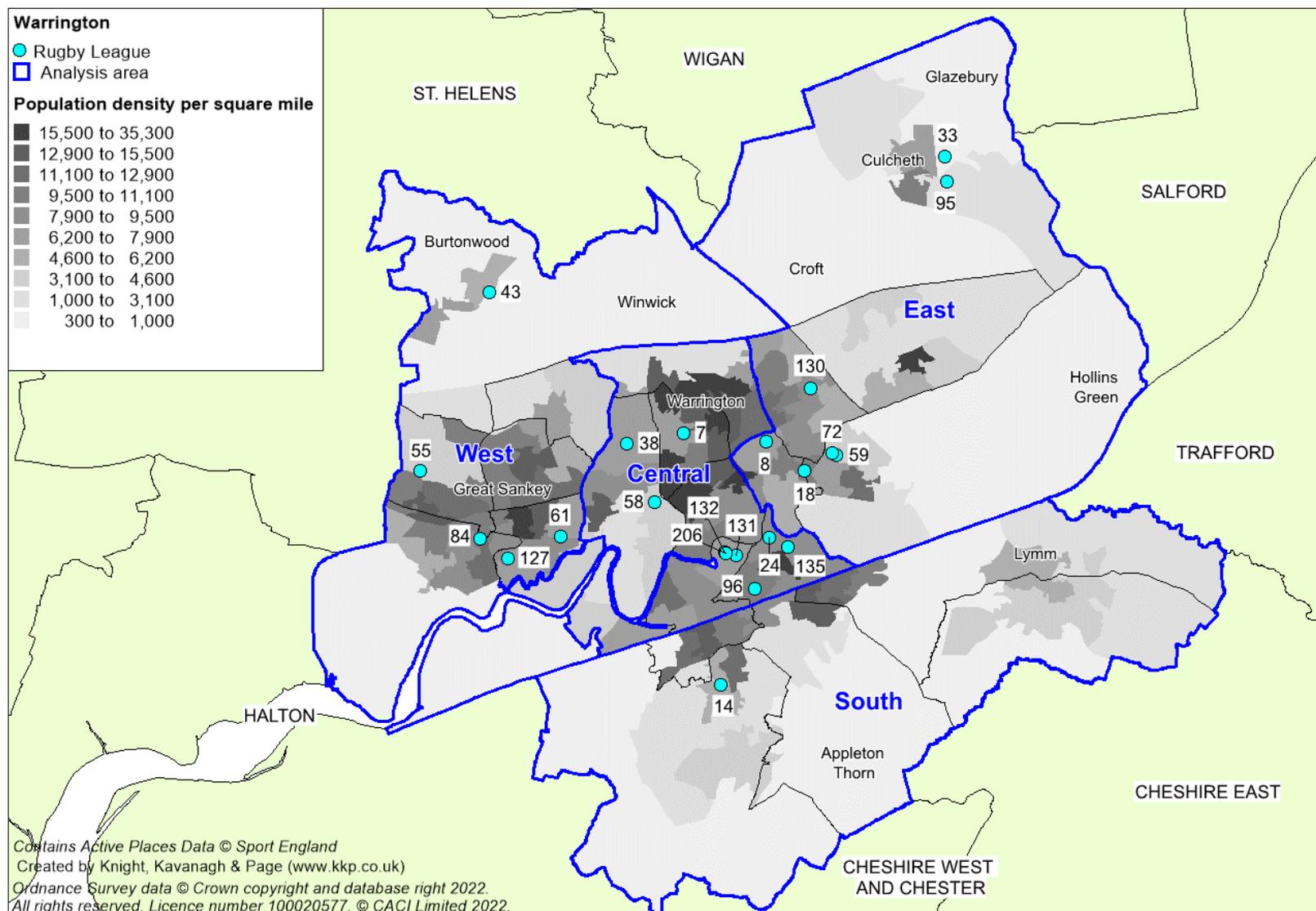
Most rugby league pitches are classified as being senior size, with cones used to mark pitches for under 11s and below. However, there are instances where designated junior pitches are provided.

In addition to grass pitches, there is also one full size 3G pitch located at Victoria Park Arena which has RFL Community certification.

Figure 6.1 highlights all rugby league pitches currently within Warrington, regardless of community use. For a key to the map, see Table 6.5.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Figure 6.1: Location of rugby league pitches within Warrington



WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Disused pitches

Since the previous PPS, Bridgewater High School (Lower), Rylands Recreation Ground and Blackbrook Avenue Recreation Ground have also become disused.

Table 6.3: Disused rugby league pitches in Warrington

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Comments
4	Bank Park	Central	A junior pitch. Due to its location and lack of ancillary facilities, it became disused during late 2000 and has not been used as a playing pitch site since.
13	Bridgewater High School (Lower)	South	The playing field has become unusable due to drainage issues so is no longer marked or maintained for rugby league. It previously hosted a junior rugby league pitch.
63	Lockers Playing Field	East	Two senior pitches. Privately owned and closed when associated business closed in early 2000.
70	Mary Ann Meadows	West	A senior rugby league pitch that was disused but is now marked for football.
91	Rylands Recreation Ground	Central	The pitches are no longer in place, having been converted to football pitches by the site owner (resulting in the displacement of the Club).
137	Wilderspool Stadium	Central	A senior rugby league pitch. It was used by Warrington RLFC's until 2003 when they moved to the Halliwell Jones Stadium in 2003.
181	Blackbrook Avenue Recreation Ground	West	A senior rugby league pitch previously located on site.

In addition to these grass pitches, there is also small size indoor 3G pitch located at the University of Chester (Warrington Campus) that was built by Warrington Wolves RFC in 2015 to support its academy and professional training requirements. This is no longer available for wider community use, although Warrington Wolves have been given another 12 months of access to the pitch. However, an increasing portion of the Club's training demand is moving elsewhere, primarily to Victoria Park although the Halliwell Jones Stadium has also been used for occasional training demand.

Furthermore, pitches are no longer marked at Birchwood Community High School, Loushers Lane Recreation Ground and Christ Church Playing Field.

Future supply

Penketh High School state it had agreed with the Football Foundation, pre-pandemic, plans to convert the current hockey suitable AGP on site to 3G. The School is now looking to progress this whilst it has also had discussions with the Football Foundation regarding the provision of a second full size 3G pitch on site which it would like to make World Rugby compliant.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

The RFL reports Latchford Albion & Giants aspires to build additional facilities on the training area located at Victoria Park to improve the training offer on site. There is potential for this to alter this existing provision on site, with the installation of a MUGA being discussed as one option.

Ownership and management

Of the community available sites, seven are managed by WBC, two are managed by parish councils, four are managed in house by schools/colleges/universities, one is managed privately and one site by LiveWire.

Table 6.4: Rugby league sites in Warrington

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Clubs playing at pitches	Notes of ownership/management
7	Beamont Collegiate Academy	Central	-	Owned by school but managed by LiveWire.
8	Bennetts Recreation Ground	East	Rylands Sharks	Rented from WBC.
14	Bridgewater High School (Upper)	South	-	Owned and managed by school.
18	Bruche Primary School	East	Not available for community use.	Owned and managed by school.
24	Cardinal Newman Catholic High School	Central	Not available for community use.	Owned and managed by school.
33	Culcheth Community Campus	East	-	Owned and managed by school.
38	Dallam Recreation Ground	Central	Bank Quay Bulls	Rented from WBC.
43	Fir Tree Lane	West	Burtonwood Bulldogs, Burtonwood Chargers	Rented from Burtonwood Parish Council.
55	Great Sankey Parish Council Playing Fields	West	-	Owned and managed by Great Sankey Parish Council
58	Warrington Wolves (Halliwell Jones Stadium)	Central	Warrington Wolves Super League	Privately owned and managed.
59	Hillock Lane Playing Fields	East	Woolston Rovers	Site jointly owned by Warrington Borough Council (80%) and by Woolston & Fearnhead Parish Council. Managed by WBC. Rented from WBC on annual seasonal fee.
61	Hood Lane Recreation Ground	West	Crosfields and Warrington Wolves Women & Girls	Rented from WBC.
72	Monk Sports and Social Club	East	Woolston Rovers	Privately managed with club linked to sports club.
84	Penketh High School	West	-	Owned and managed by school.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Clubs playing at pitches	Notes of ownership/management
95	Shaw Street Recreation Ground	East	Culcheth Eagles	Rented from WBC.
96	Sir Thomas Boteler Chrucl of England High School	Central	-	Owned and managed by school.
130	University of Chester (Warrington Campus)	East	Warrington Wolves 1 st team and reserves for training.	Owned and managed by the University. Club given 12 months' notice to relocate as site is now closed.
131	Victoria Park	Central	Latchford Albion & Giants	Rented from WBC.
132	Victoria Park Arena	Central	Warrington Wolves PDRL & LDRL	Rented from WBC.
135	Westy Park	Central	-	Rented from WBC.
206	Victoria Park Stadium	Central	Latchford Albion & Giants	Rented from WBC.

Security of tenure

Tenure of sites in Warrington is generally secure i.e. through a long-term lease or a guarantee that the pitch will continue to be provided over the next three years, with most sites ensuring community use is available.

In contrast, tenure of some sites does remain unsecure, notably at schools and academies which state their own policies and are more likely to restrict levels of community use. Currently there is no known community rugby league use on school pitches.

Pitch quality

The quality of rugby league pitches in Warrington have been assessed via a combination of site visits, carrying out non-technical assessments as determined by the RFL (undertaken in July 2022), and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

Pitch quality influences the carrying capacity of a site; often pitches lack the drainage and maintenance necessary to sustain high levels of use. It is likely that pitches that receive little or no ongoing repair or off season remedial work will be assessed as poor, therefore limiting the number of games able to take place each week without it having a detrimental effect on quality. Conversely, well maintained pitches which are tended to regularly are likely to be a higher standard and capable of taking a number of matches without a significant reduction in surface quality.

Private sites (e.g. sports clubs) can often offer better quality facilities than Council and school playing pitches as such sports clubs tend to have dedicated ground staff or volunteers working on pitches regularly during the week. Also, private sites are often secured by fencing which prevents unofficial use whilst council pitches are generally located within parks and open spaces, regularly used by the public.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Carrying capacity of a pitch is dependent upon the quality of a pitch which is outlined below:

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

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 6.5: Site quality ratings

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Tenure	No. of pitches	Pitch type	Sports lighting?	Quality rating
7	Beamont Collegiate Academy	Central	Yes	Unsecure	2	Senior	No	Poor
8	Bennetts Recreation Ground	East	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	No	Standard
14	Bridgewater High School (Upper)	South	Yes	Unsecure	1	Senior	No	Poor
18	Bruche Primary School	East	No	Unsecure	1	Mini	No	Poor
24	Cardinal Newman Catholic High School	Central	No	Unsecure	1	Senior	No	Poor
33	Culcheth Community Campus	East	Yes	Unsecure	1	Senior	No	Standard
38	Dallam Recreation Ground	Central	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	No	Poor
43	Fir Tree Lane	West	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	No	Poor
					1	Junior		
55	Great Sankey Parish Council Playing Fields	West	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	No	Poor
58	Warrington Wolves (Halliwell Jones Stadium)	Central	No	Secure	1	Senior	Yes	Good
59	Hillock Lane Playing Fields	East	Yes	Secure	3	Senior	No	Poor
61	Hood Lane Recreation Ground	West	Yes	Secure	3	Senior	No	Standard
72	Monk Sports and Social Club	East	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	No	Standard
84	Penketh High School	West	Yes	Unsecure	1	Senior	No	Poor
95	Shaw Street Recreation Ground	East	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	No	Standard
96	Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School	Central	Yes	Unsecure	2	Senior	No	Standard
102	St Benedicts Primary School	Central	No	Unsecure	1	Junior	No	Standard
130	University of Chester (Warrington Campus)	East	No	Unsecure	1	Senior	No	Standard
131	Victoria Park	Central	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	No	Poor
132	Victoria Park Arena	Central	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	Yes	Good
135	Westy Park	Central	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	No	Poor
206	Victoria Park Stadium	Central	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	Yes	Good

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

The nine teams that engaged in the consultation all provided feedback with regards to their views on pitch quality. This feedback was considered alongside pitch quality ratings obtained from non-technical assessments.

Culcheth Eagles indicates it has issues with dog fouling and the pitch nearest to the car park drains poorly in one section at Shaw St Recreation Ground. Bank Quay Bulls also suffers from dog fouling, litter and broken glass on the pitches at Dallam Recreation Ground.

Woolston Rovers notes heavy usage of the pitches at Hillock Lane Playing Fields has caused the ground to become compacted and hold water. It is unable to access grant funding to improve pitch quality as the overarching Sports Club only has a six month lease in place for the use of the site.

Victoria Park accommodates four senior pitches in total, two which are located in the wider park and are poor quality, one good quality pitch located in the middle of an athletics track (Victoria Park Arena) and one good quality pitch enclosed by perimeter fencing (Victoria Park Stadium) which is home to Latchford Albion & Giants. Additionally, there is one unmarked floodlit training area which is used by Ryland Masters. Despite not being formally marked, this area is used heavily for both formal and informal rugby league and so, for the purposes of this report, is considered to be a pitch due to the amount of demand it accommodates.

The Victoria Park pitches are said to suffer from dog fouling, animal damage, an uneven surface and potholes and the posts of the pitch closest to the changing rooms are no longer straight and said to be unsafe. The second pitch on site drains poorly.

The table below, summarises the quality of pitches that are available for community use for rugby league. In total, two pitches are rated as good quality (7%), 14 as standard quality (48%) and 12 are deemed to be poor quality (45%). This represents a general decline in pitch quality since the previous PPS, considered to be due to a general decline in investment in pitch maintenance.

Table 6.6: Pitch quality ratings for community use rugby league pitches

Senior pitches			Junior pitches		
Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor
2	14	11	0	0	1
7%	50%	43%	0%	0%	100%

The feedback from the club survey gives a mixed response in terms of whether clubs feel the quality of pitches has changed during the last 12 months. Of respondents, 33% state pitch quality has got slightly poorer with 12% suggesting pitch quality has become much poorer. Further, 33% of respondents feel there is no difference in pitch quality that has occurred with only the remaining 22% stating they feel pitch quality has become slightly better.

Warrington Wolves Women & Girls' state grass cutting appears to be getting less regular at Victoria Park Arena although access to the Victoria Park 3G pitch and a dry summer has helped to improve quality.

Bank Quay Bulls notes damage from travellers has deteriorated pitch quality at Dallam Recreation Ground. Latchford Albion & Giants indicates that the pitch nearest to the changing rooms at Victoria Park was damaged by Neighbourhood Weekender concert being held on site and so has not been able to be used since.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

At Hillock Lane Playing Fields, the pitches have historically suffered from poor drainage and flooded every year due to the ground being very compacted and not absorbing water. However, Woolston Rovers states drainage has been improved which has improved pitch quality although the Club has challenges with vandalism of rugby posts on site.

Culcheth Eagles states that the Shaw Street Recreation Ground suffers from dog fouling and litter due to public access.

All sites managed and/or maintained by WBC (many of the school sites are also maintained by WBC) receive a basic level of maintenance that is restricted to grass cutting and seeding, with no further budgets available for any further level of upkeep or for improvement works.

Over marked pitches

As already mentioned, most rugby league pitches are classified as being senior size, with cones used to mark pitches for U11 and below. Over marking of pitches can however cause notable damage to the surface quality and lead to overuse beyond recommended capacity. Over marking of pitches not only influences available capacity, it may also cause logistical issues regarding kick off times; for example, when two teams of differing age formats are due to play at the same site at the same time.

There are no known pitches in Warrington which are marked onto or overlapping cricket outfield. Whilst having rugby league pitches marked out on cricket pitches can create availability issues as both cricket and rugby league are summer sports, it can sometimes be an option for creating additional capacity if required.

Ancillary facilities

Ancillary facilities including the condition of the clubhouse, changing accommodation, toilets, showers, medical room, car parking and boundary fencing.

Through consultation, Woolston Rovers state on going issues with changing facilities at Monks Sports and Social Club as being inadequate. There is one portacabin block and some temporary container changing rooms which have no showers. Furthermore, Latchford Albion and Giants state the changing rooms at Victoria Park have reached the end of their lifespan and are in need of updating.

There are also some key sites which have no onsite changing rooms available, for example, at Fir Tree Lane (Burtonwood) where clubs currently utilise the nearby Community Centre for changing provision.

Table 6.7: Rugby league changing rooms summary

Site ID	Site name	Quality rating	Comments on changing rooms/clubhouses
7	Beamont Collegiate Academy	Good	Community use of pitches managed by LiveWire and changing rooms are those in Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub.
8	Bennetts Recreation Ground	Good	New changing facility on site.
13	Bridgewater High School (Lower)	Standard	-
14	Bridgewater High School (Upper)	Standard	-

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Site ID	Site name	Quality rating	Comments on changing rooms/clubhouses
18	Bruche Primary School	Poor	No changing provision on site. School is not available for community use.
24	Cardinal Newman Catholic High School	Poor	No changing rooms available. School is not available for community use.
33	Culcheth Community Campus	Standard	-
38	Dallam Recreation Ground	Good	Clubhouse has been recently updated and is well used and adequate for club requirements.
43	Fir Tree Lane	Poor	No changing rooms available.
55	Great Sankey Parish Council Playing Fields	Good	-
58	Warrington Wolves (Halliwell Jones Stadium)	Good	-
59	Hillock Lane Playing Fields	Poor	No changing rooms available.
61	Hood Lane Recreation Ground	Poor	No women's toilets are provided in changing rooms and no divides within these. Changing rooms are one open space, and open showers which causes safeguarding issues.
72	Monk Sports and Social Club	Poor	Changing rooms have reached the end of their lifespan. Need updating. Lack of clubhouse for after matches. Woolston Rovers currently only has access to converted shipping containers owned by the Sports and Social Club with no shower facilities.
84	Penketh High School	Poor	Outdated changing rooms and showers have no hot water.
95	Shaw Street Recreation Ground	Standard	Small rooms but tiled and serve their purpose, with decent showers. Carpark holds water which in return causing issues on match days.
96	Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School	Standard	-
130	University of Chester (Warrington Campus)	Poor	Closed to the community since the pandemic, the University will begin decommissioning the site from Summer 2022.
131	Victoria Park	Poor	Changing rooms have reached the end of their lifespan.
132	Victoria Park Arena	Poor	Changing rooms have reached the end of their lifespan.
135	Westy Park	Poor	No changing rooms available.
206	Victoria Park Stadium	Poor	Changing rooms have reached the end of their lifespan.

6.3: Demand

Demand for rugby league in Warrington tends to fall within the categories of organised competitive play and organised training. As the majority of rugby league play takes place during the summer period, when the nights are lighter, a significant amount of training takes place on pitches in addition to the competitive match play.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Competitive play

A total of 90 teams are identified as playing competitive rugby league in Warrington. This consists of nine senior mens, two senior women's (19 years+), 26 junior boys', 10 junior girls' (12-18 years), 41 primary teams (7-11 years) and two disability teams. This represents an increase of six teams from the previous PPS that identified 12 senior men teams, one senior women's team (19 years +), 25 junior boys' teams, two junior girls' teams (12 – 18 years), 42 primary teams (7 – 11 years) and two disability teams competing in Warrington.

The table below shows that the East Analysis Area is where the most teams have their competitive pitch located (35 teams), whilst the Central and West Analysis Areas have 23 and 32 teams based within them respectively. There are no teams currently based in the South Analysis Area, with the South instead accommodating the majority of rugby union demand within the Borough.

Table 6.8: Summary of where competitive teams play in Warrington by analysis area

Analysis area	No. of competitive rugby league teams				
	Senior	Junior	Primary	Disability	Total
Central	2	8	11	2	23
East	3	13	19	-	35
South	-	-	-	-	-
West	6	15	11	-	32
Warrington	11	36	41	2	90

Peak time for senior teams to play is Saturday PM and junior and primary teams are Sunday AM.

Table 6.9: Club by club summary of teams

Club	Senior men	Senior women	Junior boys	Junior girls	Primary (mixed)	Disability
Bank Quay Bulls	1	-	3	1	5	-
Burtonwood Bulldogs	1	-	3	-	3	-
Burtonwood Chargers	1	-	-	-	-	-
Crosfields	2	-	6	2	7	-
Culcheth Eagles	-	-	3	3	6*	-
Latchford Albion & Giants	1	-	4	-	6	-
Rylands Sharks	1	-	1	-	5	-
Warrington Wolves Women & Girls	-	2	-	4	1**	-
Warrington Wolves PDRL & LDRL	-	-	-	-	-	2
Woolston Rovers	2	-	6	-	8	-
Total	9	2	26	10	41	2

* = One of the primary teams is a dedicated U11 girls' team.

** = This is a dedicated U11 girls' team.

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Women and girls' rugby league

Following a successful campaign to increase women's participation in rugby league, Warrington Wolves has now introduced a women's team which first competed during the 2019 season, playing its fixtures at Victoria Park Arena within the Championship. Enough demand was generated and there are now two women's teams.

In August 2018, Warrington Wolves Foundation launched its first girls' rugby league taster session. Following the success of that taster session there are now (2022) five girls' teams at U16, U14, U12, U11 and U10.

Due to capacity issues encountered at Victoria Park, all Warrington Wolves women's and girls' teams play at Crosfields RFC (Sundays). Although this also creates additional pitch quality/maintenance issues, capacity wise this is considered a better option.

There are also now girls' teams playing at Bank Quay Bulls, Crosfields and Culcheth Eagles.

Disability rugby league

In 2017, Warrington Wolves launched the country's first Physical Disability Rugby League (PDRL) team. PDRL is a running format of rugby league which involves both full contact and touch tackle options, for all players who have physical disabilities. It consists of nine-a-side teams, consisting of seven players with a physical disability and two able-bodied players who do not have physical disabilities. A PDRL League is now in place, with a total of six teams competing and matches played in festival formats. There is potential for this to increase to eight teams from next season.

The 2019 season saw the launch of the Warrington Wolves Learning Disability Rugby League (LDRL) team. Super League and the RFL partnered with the national social care charity Community Integrated Care to create a ground-breaking adapted form of rugby league for people with learning disabilities and autism. Backed by 12 major rugby league clubs and integrated into the Super League calendar. This is the first ever example of a professional sports league sharing its brand with a learning disability sports programme. Currently, the team plays one festival per year at Victoria Park.

Education rugby league

There is high demand for rugby league at education sites with all secondary schools in Warrington playing competitive rugby league. Further, there is a partnership (started in 2018) in place with Priestley College which established a Rugby Academy with youth teams playing September through to March. Opportunities to progress into Warrington Wolves' U19s or reserve grade teams are also available.

Masters rugby league

Masters rugby league is a derivative version of the sport aimed at players over the age of 35. It has a social emphasis and focus on providing playing opportunities for older players and as such remains non-competitive with no score kept. Masters rugby league is typically played as part of a festival format. Masters rugby league is growing in Warrington and is generally included within club delivery by Crosfields, Rylands and Bank Quay rugby clubs.

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Touch Rugby

To actively encourage participation in rugby (either code), clubs may provide alternative offers to traditional club competition. Touch is one possible format which clubs can use; Touch is non-contact rugby sessions, during which participants compete in teams to score tries, following similar laws to traditional rugby league/union formats. Victoria Park Touch (playing at Victoria Park) is just an example of a specific Touch Rugby League club in Warrington.

LiveWire also run Touch Rugby sessions weekly on a Thursday evening at Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub. Additionally, Warrington Wolves Foundation operates a Walking Touch Rugby League on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at Whitecross Community Centre and Victoria Park. The League currently has 63 registered players.

Walking rugby

Walking rugby is a slower game of touch rugby that is accessible for disability groups and older participants, generally aged 44 years and above. The game is less physical than traditional rugby, but the general aim remains the same, with passing and scoring laws applying; and tackling involves a two-handed touch to the waist or below. Sessions for over 44s are an opportunity for participants to become physically active and for others to re-engage with rugby at a less strenuous pace.

Walking rugby sessions are run by LiveWire at Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub. Additionally, Warrington Wolves Foundation operates a Walking Touch Rugby League on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at Whitecross Community Centre and Victoria Park. The League currently has 63 registered players.

Training

Most clubs (56%) access the 3G pitch at Victoria Park for training. Clubs also utilise the floodlit grass training area located at Victoria Park, however, clubs state that only four out of eight floodlights work. From consultation, Bank Quay Bulls and Burtonwood Bulldogs don't access the 3G at Victoria Park, this is due to either distance or availability. Culcheth Eagles has access to a sportslit training area that hosts the Club's training demand.

Warrington Wolves is currently looking for a new training base, as its current facility (University of Chester Warrington Campus) has ceased community use as it has relocated to the Town Centre. The University has begun decommissioning the site and has given Warrington Wolves notice to relocate elsewhere.

Displaced demand

Displaced demand is existing demand that is being met by provision outside of the Warrington boundary. There are a number of reasons why displacement may occur such as a central venue league, where one location/site is used as the venue for all competitive fixtures with no teams having home or away fixtures or because teams choose to hire pitches outside of the boundary due to pitch quality or hire costs.

Currently, no Warrington based teams travelling outside of Warrington to access pitches.

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Future demand

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

Population increase

Future competitive growth

Based on population projections to 2038 (the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) can estimate the likely additional demand for grass rugby pitches that will arise from any growth.

Using the current and future populations in each of the relevant age groups together with the current team numbers, team generation rates (TGRs) have been established to understand how much growth is required to establish one new team.

For reference the total current population in 2022 of 211,590 will increase to 216,269 by 2038. The table below shows the number of new teams generated by the new population and the requisite match equivalent sessions.

Table 6.10: Authority wide team generation rates

Age group	Team generation rate	Number of new teams generated by the new population	Number of new teams generated by the new population - rounded figure	Match equivalent session ²⁹
Men (19-45yrs)	1:3,413	0.23	0	0
Women (19-45yrs)	1:16,711	0.05	0	0
Boys (13-18yrs)	1:342	0.59	1	0.5
Girls (13-18yrs)	1:845	0.23	0	0
Mixed (7-12yrs)	1:321	0.93	1	0.5

As these figures cannot be accredited to any one analysis area, as they are Authority wide, they will be added onto the overall supply and demand total for each pitch type.

Future training demand

Similar to competitive demand referenced above, future levels of training demand can also be calculated via using Sport England's PPC. This demand is based upon access to a floodlit grass pitch equated into match equivalent sessions.

²⁹ Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, one team accounts to 0.5 match equivalent sessions on their relevant pitch type.

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Table 6.11: Future training demand

Age group	Training demand generated per week by population growth (match equivalent sessions)	Training demand generated per week by population growth (match equivalent sessions) - rounded figure ³⁰	Hour/s equivalent
Men (19-45yrs)	0.11	-	-
Women (19-45yrs)	0.02	-	-
Boys (13-18yrs)	0.29	0.5	1 hour
Girls (13-18yrs)	0.11	-	-
Mixed (7-12yrs)	0.23	-	-

As these figures cannot be accredited to any one analysis area, as they are Authority wide, they will be added onto the overall supply and demand total for each pitch type.

Participation increase

Of responding clubs, seven clubs highlight plans to increase membership amounting to 20 teams in total. The amount to which each club want to increase is listed in the table below.

Table 6.12: Future demand aspirations

Club	Future demand				
	Senior	Junior	Primary	Disability	Total
Burtonwood Bulldogs	1	2	1	-	4
Crosfields	-	1	1	-	2
Culcheth Eagles	1	2	1	-	4
Latchford Albion & Giants	2	1	-	-	3
Warrington Wolves Women & Girls	-	2	1	-	3
Warrington Wolves PDRL & LDRL	-	-	-	1	1
Woolston Rovers	-	3	-	-	3
Total	4	11	4	1	20

The impact of this potential growth will be run as a scenario in the Strategy and Action Plan to follow.

6.4: Capacity analysis

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

³⁰ Rounded to the nearest 0.5 match equivalent session.

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As previously indicated the carrying capacity of a pitch is dependent upon the quality of a pitch which is outlined below:

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

The next step is to ascertain whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be deemed 'actual capacity'. There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that takes place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis. Where actual spare capacity exists it is highlighted in Table 6.15.

The peak period

In order to fully establish actual spare capacity, the peak period needs to be established. As the majority of competitive rugby league takes place on senior rugby league pitches the peak period is considered to be Saturday PM and Sunday AM.

Education sites

To account for curricular/extra-curricular use of education pitches it is deemed that usage should be adjusted and increased by one match equivalent session per week, per pitch. The only time this does not apply is when a school does not use its pitches at all and the sole use is that made by the community.

The table below identifies the way capacity and overplay is represented in Table 6.15.

Table 6.13: 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 pitch(es) have actual spare capacity at peak time.
0	If the cell has a 0 in it, this means that the pitch(es) is/are played to capacity, either overall or during the peak period.
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 but can also be due to the site being unavailable to the community.
1	If the cell is highlighted in red with a number, it means that the pitch(es) are overplayed.

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Table 6.14: Rugby league capacity table

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Available for community use?	Type of Tenure	Management	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Quality rating	Match equivalent sessions of play (per week)	Recommended site capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Comments
7	Beamont Collegiate Academy	Central	Yes	Unsecure	Education	Senior	2	Poor	2	2	-	Curricular/extra-curricular use only recorded on this pitch.
8	Bennetts Recreation Ground	East	Yes	Secure	Council	Senior	2	Standard	1.25	4	2.75	Currently used by Rylands Sharks for matches. It has 2.75 MES of potential capacity. Club use Victoria Park 3G for training.
13	Bridgewater High School (Lower)	South	Yes	Unsecure	Education	Junior	1	Poor	1	1	-	Curricular/extra-curricular use only recorded on this pitch.
14	Bridgewater High School (Upper)	South	Yes	Unsecure	Education	Senior	1	Poor	1	1	-	Curricular/extra-curricular use only recorded on this pitch.
18	Bruche Primary School	East	No	Unsecure	Education	Mini	1	Poor	1	1	-	Unavailable for community use.
24	Cardinal Newman Catholic High School	Central	No	Unsecure	Education	Senior	1	Poor	1	1	-	Unavailable for community use.
33	Culcheth Community Campus	East	Yes	Unsecure	Education	Senior	1	Standard	1	2	1	Unsecure tenure.
38	Dallam Recreation Ground	Central	Yes	Secure	Council	Senior	2	Poor	4.25	2	2.25	Currently used by Bank Quay Bulls for both training and matches for senior and junior teams. The site is overplayed by 2.25 match equivalent sessions per week.
43	Fir Tree Lane	West	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Senior	1	Poor	2.25	1	1.25	Currently used by Burtonwood Bulldogs for both training and matches by senior team as well as for match demand from Burtonwood Chargers. Pitch is also used for training for primary teams. The site is overplayed by 0.75 match equivalent sessions per week.
						Junior	1	Poor	1	1	-	Currently used to capacity by Burtonwood Bulldogs junior teams for both training and matches
55	Great Sankey Parish Council Playing Fields	West	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Senior	1	Poor	0	1	1	No current community use on site. It has one MES of potential capacity.
58	Warrington Wolves (Halliwell Jones Stadium)	Central	No	Secure	Private	Senior	1	Good	3	3	-	Unavailable for community use. Any spare capacity retained to protect professional use.
59	Hillock Lane Playing Fields	East	Yes	Secure	Council	Senior	3	Poor	3.25	3	0.25	Currently used by Woolston Rovers for matches by junior teams. Pitch is also used for training for primary teams. The site is overplayed by 0.25 MES per week. Senior and junior teams train on 3G at Victoria Park Arena.
61	Hood Lane Recreation Ground	West	Yes	Secure	Council	Senior	3	Standard	8.5	6	2.5	Used by Crosfields and Warrington Wolves women & girls matches. Pitch is also used for training for primary teams. The site is overplayed by 2.5 MES per week. Senior and junior teams train on 3G at Victoria Park Arena.
72	Monk Sports and Social Club	East	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Senior	1	Standard	1	2	1	Currently used by Woolston Rovers for matches by the senior teams. The site has 1 MES per week of potential capacity.

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Available for community use?	Type of Tenure	Management	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Quality rating	Match equivalent sessions of play (per week)	Recommended site capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Comments
84	Penketh High School	West	Yes	Unsecure	Education	Senior	1	Poor	1	1	-	Curricular/extra-curricular use only recorded on this pitch.
95	Shaw Street Recreation Ground	East	Yes	Secure	Council	Senior	2	Standard	3.75	4	0.25	Currently used by Culcheth Eagles for both training and matches. Site has 0.25 MES of potential capacity.
96	Sir Thomas Boteler Chrch of England High School	Central	Yes	Unsecure	Education	Senior	2	Standard	2	4	2	Unsecure tenure.
102	St Benedicts Primary School	Central	No	Unsecure	Education	Junior	1	Standard	1	2	1	Unsecure tenure.
127	Thornton Road Recreation Centre	West	Yes	Secure	Council	Senior	1	Poor	0	1	1	No current community use on site. Site has one MES of potential capacity. Hosts rugby union demand throughout the Winter.
130	University of Chester (Warrington Campus)	East	No	Unsecure	Education	Senior	1	Standard	2	2	-	No community use. Used by Warrington Wolves for training but given notice to relocate.
131	Victoria Park	Central	Yes	Secure	Council	Senior	2	Poor	0.75	2	1.25	Currently used by Latchford Giants for training. Site has 1.25 MES of potential capacity.
132	Victoria Park Arena	Central	Yes	Secure	Council	Senior	1	Good	2	3	1	Currently used by Warrington Wolves PDRL & LDRL. Site has 1 MES of potential capacity.
206	Victoria Park Stadium	Central	Yes	Secure	Council	Senior	1	Good	0.5	3	2.5	Currently used by Latchford Albion & Giants senior team for matches. Site has 2.5 MES of potential capacity.
135	Westy Park	Central	Yes	Secure	Council	Senior	1	Poor	0	1	1	No current community use on site. Site has one MES of potential capacity.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

6.5: Supply and demand analysis

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

As no future demand was identified through population growth, there is no future demand factored in below. Participation growth expressed by clubs will be run as a scenario in the Strategy & Action Plan.

Table 6.15: Supply and demand balance of rugby league pitches in Warrington

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions)		
	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total
Central	2	2.25	0.25
East	1	0.25	0.75
South	-	-	0
West	2	3.75	1.75
Warrington	5	6.25	1.25

There is a current, overall shortfall of 1.25 match equivalent sessions per week with specific shortfalls in the Central and West analysis areas and some spare capacity in East Analysis Area. Since the previous PPS, actual spare capacity in the Central Analysis Area has increased by 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week whilst overplay in the Central, East and West analysis areas has declined.

Table 6.16: Future supply and demand balance of rugby league pitches in Warrington

Analysis area	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)			
	Current total	Future competitive demand	Future training demand	Future total
Warrington	1.25	1	0.5	2.75

After considering future demand from population growth, existing shortfalls are expected to be exacerbated to 2.75 match equivalent sessions per week.

Although there is no specific shortfall identified on junior and primary pitches in Warrington, a significant amount of this demand is currently, and will continue to be, accommodated on senior pitches.

Actual spare capacity

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

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 6.17: Actual spare capacity

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Spare capacity (match equivalent sessions)	MES available in the peak period	Comments
8	Bennetts Recreation Ground	East	Senior	2	2.75	1	One MES of actual spare capacity.
33	Culcheth Community Campus	East	Senior	1	1	1	Actual spare capacity discounted due to the unsecure tenure of the site.
55	Great Sankey Parish Council Playing Fields	West	Senior	1	1	1	1 MES of actual spare capacity.
72	Monk Sports and Social Club	East	Senior	1	1	-	No actual spare capacity during the peak period.
95	Shaw Street Recreation Ground	East	Senior	2	0.25	-	No actual spare capacity during peak period.
96	Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School	Central	Senior	2	2	2	Actual spare capacity discounted due to the unsecure tenure of the site.
127	Thornton Road Recreation Centre	West	Senior	1	1	1	1 MES of actual spare capacity.
131	Victoria Park	Central	Senior	2	1.25	-	No actual spare capacity during peak period.
132	Victoria Park Arena	Central	Senior	1	1	-	No actual spare capacity during peak period.
135	Westy Park	Central	Senior	1	1	1	One MES of actual spare capacity.

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Spare capacity (match equivalent sessions)	MES available in the peak period	Comments
206	Victoria Park Stadium	Central	Senior	1	2.5	1	One MES of actual spare capacity.
Total						5	

Despite 15 pitches across 11 sites displaying a total of 14.75 match equivalent session of potential capacity, only five sites are considered to have capacity for additional demand during the peak period. There are five match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity during the peak period.

Table 6.18: Summary of actual spare capacity for senior rugby league

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity
Central	2
East	1
South	-
West	2
Warrington	5

Overplay

A total of nine pitches across four sites are overplayed by a combined 6.25 match equivalent sessions per week. This is a decrease from 25 match equivalent sessions in 2019.

The introduction of the 3G pitch at Victoria Park which is now used for training by most community clubs in Warrington, has significantly reduced the amount of overplay on senior pitches across the Borough.

The pitches that continue to be overplayed; all relate to quality with all except one pitch being of poor quality.

Table 6.19: Overplay

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Capacity rating
38	Dallam Recreation Ground	Central	2 senior	2.25
43	Fir Tree Lane	West	1 senior	1.25
59	Hillock Lane Playing Fields	East	3 senior	0.25
61	Hood Lane Recreation Ground	West	3 senior	2.5
Total				6.25

Most overplay is identified in the West Analysis Area (3.75 match equivalent sessions per week) although there is also 2.25 match equivalent sessions per week in Central Analysis Area.

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Table 6.20: Summary of overplay by analysis area

Analysis area	Overplay
Central	2.25
East	0.25
South	-
West	3.75
Warrington	6.25

6.6: Conclusion

Overall, there is an insufficient supply of rugby league pitches in Warrington to meet current demand. Both the Central and West analysis areas are overplayed whilst the South Analysis Area is played to capacity. Limited actual spare capacity is available in the East Analysis Area. When considering future demand, shortfalls are expected to be exacerbated.

The introduction of the 3G pitch at Victoria Park which is now used for training by most community clubs in Warrington, has significantly reduced the amount of overplay on senior pitches across the Borough since the previous PPS.

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PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Rugby league supply and demand summary

- ◀ **There is insufficient supply of rugby league pitches in Warrington to meet demand.**
- ◀ **Overall, in Warrington there is a current shortfall of 1.25 match equivalent sessions and a future shortfall of 2.75 match equivalent sessions per week.**

Rugby league supply summary

- ◀ There are 33 rugby league pitches identified in Warrington across 20 sites. Of these, 28 pitches across 15 sites are available for community use.
- ◀ Of the community available sites, seven are managed by WBC, two are managed by parish councils, four are managed in house by schools/colleges/universities, one is managed privately and one by LiveWire
- ◀ In total, two pitches are rated as good quality (7%), 14 as standard quality (48%) and 12 are deemed to be poor quality (45%).

Rugby league demand summary

- ◀ A total of 90 teams are identified as playing competitive rugby league in Warrington. This consists of nine senior mens, two senior women's (19 years+), 26 junior boys', 10 junior girls' (12-18 years), 41 primary teams (7-11 years) and two disability teams.
- ◀ The East Analysis Area is where most teams have their match play pitch located (35 teams).
- ◀ There are also a range of rugby league initiatives and formats being played in Warrington including Masters rugby league, Touch Rugby and walking rugby.
- ◀ Rylands Sharks has been displaced from Rylands Sports and Social Club site which has now become a football only site (cricket was also previously displaced from the site). The Club currently play at Bennetts Recreation Ground.
- ◀ Team generation rates applied to population growth (to 2038) predict an additional junior boys and an additional mini mixed team to be generated, in addition to an extra hour of training demand per week.
- ◀ Of responding clubs, seven clubs highlight plans to increase membership amounting to 20 teams in total.
- ◀ There are five match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity during the peak period. However, four sites are overplayed by a combined 6.25 match equivalent sessions per week. The West Analysis Area has the highest level of overplay (3.75 match equivalent sessions).
- ◀ One of the main reasons for overplay is training on match pitches couple with poor quality pitches. In addition, primary and junior teams playing on senior pitches also contributes to the overplay.

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PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

PART 7: HOCKEY

7.1: Introduction

Hockey in England is governed by England Hockey (EH) and is administered locally by the Cheshire Hockey Association.

Following a 2017 resolution, England Hockey has over recent year undertaken a review of the way the sport is structured locally. In September 2020, the membership of England Hockey took the decision to support the proposed structural changes set out in A Structure Fit for the Future³¹, which proposes a new structure of eight areas (increased from five currently) to divide the balance of clubs and players more equally in England.

Competitive league hockey matches, and training can only be played on artificial grass pitches (AGPs). Although competitive, adult, and junior club training cannot take place on third generation artificial grass pitches, some may be suitable for introductory level hockey, such as school curriculum low level hockey.

A typical artificial grass pitches pitch is constructed from a free draining, frost free sub-base, one or two tarmac layers, a 15mm shock pad and an artificial grass carpet, either sand filled, sand dressed, or water based³². Below is a brief summary of each type.

Sand filled artificial grass

On sand filled artificial grass the artificial grass fibres are infilled with sand. This is a low-density durable carpet with sand infill to just below the pile for stability, these pitches are recommended for lower league hockey and more of a multi sports use rather than higher competitive hockey use.

Sand dressed artificial grass

The fibres on sand dressed artificial grass are much denser and therefore requires less sand to support the pile of the carpet and create stability. It is the most commonly used surface for hockey up to and including at a national level.

Water-based artificial grass

A very high-density carpet with no sand infill which requires irrigation via a sprinkler system to maintain a layer of water on the pitch. The water provides low slide resistance and reduces the risk of abrasions caused by coarse sand.

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

³¹<https://www.englandhockey.co.uk/governance/about-england-hockey/agm-resolution/governance-review>

³² For more detail, please refer to: [EH artificial pitch guidance.pdf](#)

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Gen 2 artificial surfaces³³

England Hockey, the International Hockey Federation, European Hockey Federation, England Netball, the International Tennis Association and the Lawn Tennis Association partnered with Notts Sport to create a true multi-sport surface known as Gen 2. This pitch type offers a compromise on design specification as to suitably accommodate various sports such as tennis, netball, futsal and lacrosse in turn, allowing multi-sport use leading to greater sustainability.

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 7.1: 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.

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.

³³ <http://www.englishockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=2596§ionTitle=Gen+2+Playing+Surface>

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

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

Consultation

Two hockey clubs are identified as playing within Warrington: Lymm and Warrington hockey clubs. Both clubs responded to consultation requests, resulting in a 100% response rate.

In the previous PPS, University of Chester fielded hockey teams within the Borough but this demand has all now returned to Cheshire West and Chester at the University's main campus (Parkgate Road).

7.2: Supply

The audit identifies six hockey suitable AGPs in Warrington, of which, four are available for community use. The full size AGP that was previously located at Cardinal Newman High School has now been converted to a 3G pitch whilst the pitch at University of Chester (Warrington Campus) is no longer available to the community. The site is not said to have been accessed by the community since the pandemic and will be progressively decommissioned from Summer 2022.

The East Analysis Area contains two AGPs although one is unavailable for community use. The Central, South and West analysis areas have a single community available full size AGP each.

Table 7.2: Summary of full size hockey suitable AGPs

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Community use?	Sports lighting?	Size (metres)
33	Culcheth Community Campus	East	Yes	Yes	105 x 70
66	Lymm High School	South	Yes	Yes	100 x 60
84	Penketh High School	West	Yes	Yes	92 x 55
87	Priestley College	Central	Yes	Yes	111 x 66
130	University Of Chester (Warrington Campus)	East	No	Yes	98 x 60

Smaller size provision

In addition to the full size AGPs, there are also two smaller size pitches provided in Warrington, as summarised in Table 7.3. The pitch at Priestley College is disused, meaning only the small AGP at Rylands Recreation Club is available for community use as the pitch at Stockton Heath Primary School is unavailable for community use. The AGPs at Priestley College and Rylands Recreation Club have sports lighting.

Table 7.3: Smaller size AGPs in Warrington

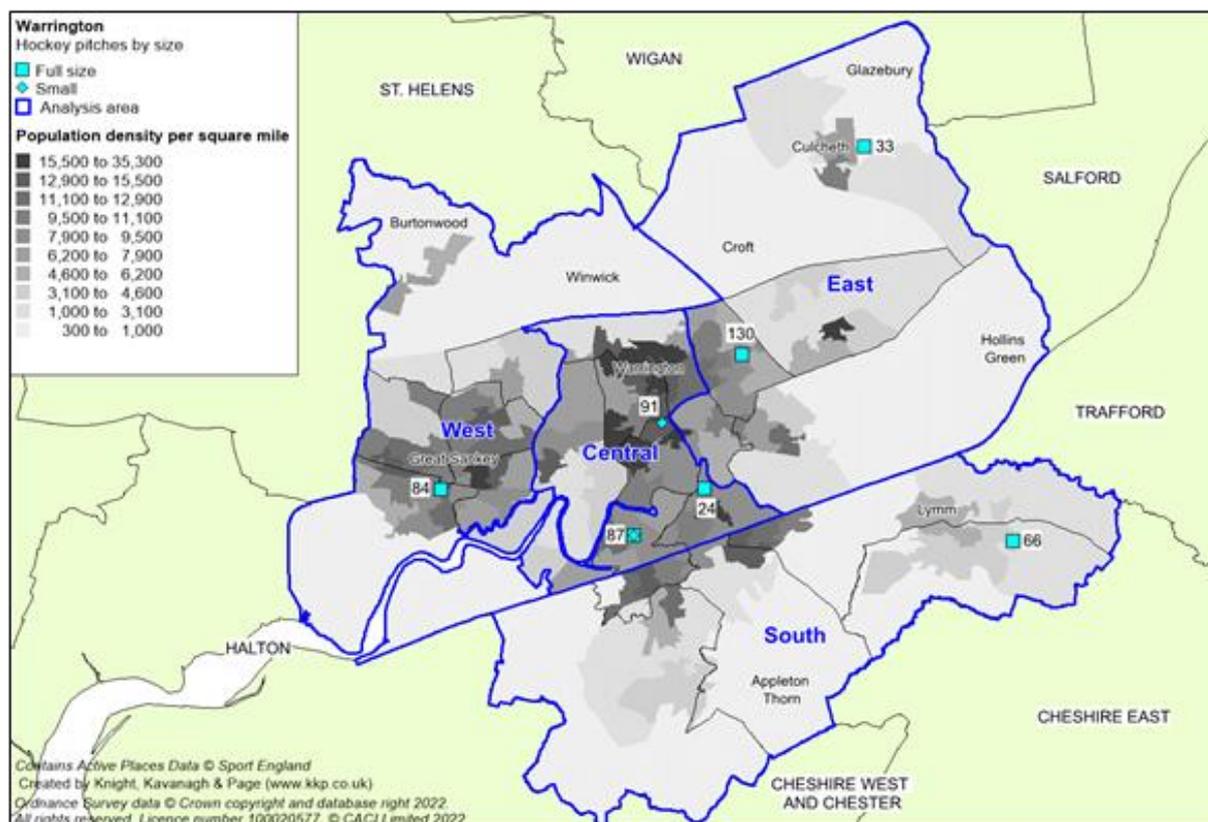
Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Sports lighting?	Size (metres)
87	Priestley College	Central	No-disused	Yes	36 x 24
91	Rylands Recreation Club	Central	Yes	Yes	40 x 33
122	Stockton Heath Primary School	South	No	No	30 x 15

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All of the smaller size pitches are considered too small to accommodate any purposeful hockey demand, although they could be utilised for junior training demand.

For the location of the AGPs, regardless of size, please see Figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1: Location of full-size hockey suitable AGPs in Warrington



Future supply

Following the tennis club folding at Warrington Sports Club, discussions have taken place regarding how the now four disused tennis courts on site should be utilised. One option for this is to create a small size AGP to accommodate Warrington HC's training demand.

Culcheth Community Campus, Penketh High School and Priestley College all report during consultation that they interested in converting their existing sand based AGPs to full size 3G pitches.

The development at Penketh High School is supported by the Football Foundation and progressing on the basis that the previous PPS did not identify the pitch as needing to be protected for hockey use.

It is identified that Culcheth Community Campus already has the internal funding in place to convert its hockey suitable, sand based AGP to a 3G pitch and to provide it as an FA approved pitch to accommodate weekend football demand. However, as identified later in this section, there is some use of the pitch by Lymm Hockey Club when it is unable to access its pitch due to drainage issues or cannot access sufficient match slots at Lymm High School to fulfil all of its home fixtures due to sports lighting constraints. The AGP was also identified in the previous PPS as needing to be protected for hockey use.

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During consultation, Priestley College also identifies an aspiration to convert its hockey suitable, sand based AGP to a 3G surface and to install a second full size 3G pitch on site. However, again the AGP is currently used by Warrington Hockey Club as its home base and as such was also identified in the previous PPS as needing to be protected for hockey use.

Through consultation, Priestley College, Culcheth Community Campus and Penketh High School all indicated that despite aspirations to convert their existing AGPs to 3G, they would be open to discussions regarding utilising partnership funding to convert additional playing field land into artificial surfaces. For these potential future development, all three establishments are open to providing hockey-suitable provision. Any proposal to either convert an existing sand based AGP to 3G or construct a new AGP on natural turf playing field must be discussed with Sport England to ensure compliance with their Playing Fields Policy.

The Strategy Report will include a scenario to assess the impact of sand based AGP conversions to 3G with recommended actions to ensure hockey can be sustained in Warrington.

Management and ownership

All full size hockey suitable AGPs in Warrington are managed and maintained by their respective education establishments.

Security of tenure

Lymm HC has an annual usage agreement with Lymm High School for the use of the AGP on site but states this is a priority access agreement (which is said to be unsecure by England Hockey) and that the Club has been based on site since 2005. Therefore, it has no concerns regarding security on site.

Warrington HC also has an annual usage agreement for its home venue, Priestley College although the Club has access issues on site, particularly outside of term time.

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 AGPs available for community use in Warrington, the pitches at Lymm High School and Penketh High School are fully available during the peak period. The pitches at Culcheth Community Campus and Priestley College are available for the least amount of time, with the former available for 27 hours and the latter available for 28 hours. Despite these hours of access, Warrington HC is reliant on a member of staff at Priestley College to allow them into the facilities each day for them and turning on the sports lights as the Club has not been granted permission by the College to have a key to the site. On occasions, College staff have not turned up to open the site, leaving the Club without access to provision.

Table 7.4: Availability of full size hockey suitable AGPs

Site ID	Site	Availability in the peak period (hours)	Comments
33	Culcheth Community Campus	27	Available from 18:00 – 22:00 during the week, from 09:00 – 15:00 on Saturdays and from 13:00 – 16:00 on Sundays.

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Site ID	Site	Availability in the peak period (hours)	Comments
66	Lymm High School	34	Available from 17:00 – 22:00 during the week, from 08:00 – 18:00 on Saturdays and from 09:00 – 17:00 on Sundays.
84	Penketh High School	34	Available from 17:00 – 21:00 during the week and from 09:00 – 20:00 at weekends.
87	Priestley College	28	Available from 17:00 – 21:00 during the week and from 09:00 – 14:00 at weekends. However, access outside of term time is limited.

Quality

Taking the above into account, the quality of hockey suitable artificial grass pitches has been rated via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by EH in February 2022) 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 (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.

An issue for hockey nationally is that many providers did not financially plan to replace the carpet when first installed.

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

Table 7.5: Summary of community available, full-size AGP quality

Site ID	Site	Year installed/ resurfaced	Quality
33	Culcheth Community Campus	2004	Poor
66	Lymm High School	2009	Poor
84	Penketh High School	2012	Poor
87	Priestley College	2010	Poor

As seen in the table above, all community available hockey suitable AGPs in Warrington are in poor condition and exceed their recommended lifespans. Generally, it is considered that AGPs installed within the last five years are of good quality whilst those installed within the last eight years are considered to be standard quality if they are regularly maintained. AGPs become poor quality when they are approaching or exceed the end of their recommended lifespan (ten years) although this lifespan can be extended through dedicated maintenance.

The pitch at Culcheth Community Campus floods and needs drainage improvements. The surface also freezes over in Winter.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Similarly, the pitch at Priestley College no longer drains sufficiently and has moss growing around the edges. This leads to the pitch being unusable following rainfall and there is little grip underfoot. Users of the site have previously stated the pitch is becoming unplayable.

At Lymm High School, the AGP is due to be rejuvenated this month and remove the kinks from the outskirts of the surface. The pitch also suffers from poor drainage, freezes over in the Winter and leaves silt on top of the playing surface. Despite this, the School currently has no plans to resurface the pitch due to a lack of funding. The School wants to retain the AGP on site but requires support to ensure the pitch remains in usable condition.

No major quality issues are identified at Penketh High School despite the AGP now exceeding its recommended lifespan.

Of the small size pitches, only the AGP at Rylands Recreation Club is in adequate condition. The small size pitch at Priestley College now lies disused. It is currently out of action as the quality has deteriorated and it is now a safety concern. The College has had interest in using the pitch by casual 5-a-side players although has been quoted £80,000 to bring the surface back into use. There are also only two sports lights left servicing the right side of the pitch.

Ancillary provision

Of the eight changing rooms at Culcheth Community Campus, four have recently been refurbished and the remaining four are scheduled for refurbishment in the near future. Therefore, ancillary provision on site is considered to be good quality.

At Penketh High School, the AGP is currently supported by two poor quality changing rooms and the showers have no hot water.

No issues are raised with the quality of ancillary facilities at Priestley College or Lymm High School although the changing rooms at the latter are said to be basic and dated, plus there is only two rooms available to cater for all the site's users. At the former, Warrington Hockey Club is unable to access changing facilities on matchdays, meaning it can only offer toilet facilities.

7.3: Demand

The two hockey clubs in Warrington consist of 15 teams, which as a breakdown consists of six senior men's, six senior women's and three junior teams. A summary of this, by club, is shown in the table below. No educational hockey demand has been identified within Warrington.

In the previous PPS, 16 teams competed within Warrington although as stated previously, University of Chester HC has now relocated all of its demand to Cheshire West and Chester. It previously fielded a single men's team in the Borough. The only other change from the previous PPS is that Lymm HC has gained a senior men's team but lost a senior women's team since the previous study.

Table 7.6: Summary of demand

Name of club	No. of competitive teams			Members	
	Senior Men	Senior Women	Junior	Senior	Junior
Lymm HC	4	4	3	136	114
Warrington HC	2	2	-	60	20
Warrington	6	6	3	196	134

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

As seen in the table above, Lymm HC is the larger of the two clubs with eight senior and three junior teams whilst Warrington HC has four senior teams. In addition to above, it should be noted that Lymm HC also fields an ad-hoc veterans' team.

Lymm Hockey Club

Lymm HC currently fields a total of 11 teams, consisting of four men's, four women's, three junior teams. The Club also fields a veterans' team on an ad-hoc basis. It notes that it has enough members to create a fifth women's team although player availability means that this would not be able to be fielded regularly.

The Club is based at Lymm High School, with all training taking place on site as well as most matches. The Club is unable to play all its fixtures on site as sports lights are currently turned off at 5:10pm on weekends despite the facility being open until 6pm on Saturdays. This is said to be a site management issue. The pitch also holds water and is only usable in good weather conditions, meaning it is unplayable after a period of even slight downpour. Therefore, it must play at least two matches per week at Culcheth Community Campus even though the pitch there is also in poor condition. The Club hires both pitches on an annual basis although it has a priority access agreement for Lymm High School which it has had in place since 2005.

Both pitches are in poor condition, drain poorly and freeze over although the pitch at Culcheth Community Campus is said to drain slightly better.

In addition to the pitch quality issues at Lymm High School, the Club also supports the School to repair dugouts and goals on site as neither can currently afford to replace the equipment.

For clubhouse facilities, Lymm HC accesses Lymm Rugby Club. Whilst this is reported to be of standard quality and is sufficient for the Club's use, it would prefer this to be closer to Lymm High School to further encourage the social aspect of the game. There have also been issues where Lymm RUFC and Lymm HC have both had their first teams playing at home, for which the clubhouse is not large enough and has led to the hockey club utilising the squash courts as a social space.

The Club's pitch and ancillary facility constraints makes it question how long it can continue operating at its current level and its future viability. Lymm HC hopes that resolving pitch quality issues at Lymm High School would be a considerable step forward to ensure its sustainability. However, given the sports lighting restrictions, it cannot accommodate all its teams on one pitch, so also requires access to a second pitch.

Warrington Hockey Club

Warrington HC has two men's and two women's teams. The Club also has a junior section and hopes to formalise a Badgers team from next season. It is also said to be close to fielding a third men's team.

The Club plays home matches at Priestley College and has a one hour slot for training on a Thursday evening although this is insufficient to accommodate all teams. It indicates that it is unable to access any further slots as the pitch is for football training. Therefore, it exports the remainder of its training demand (totalling two hours per week) to The Grange School in Cheshire West and Chester due to a lack of local availability.

Warrington HC indicates that work has been undertaken at Priestley College to ensure the pitch does not flood as often and it is now better maintained although the surface is said to have been torn with blades and supporting equipment such as nets are tired and dated.

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The Club's access to Priestley College also provides issues for usage. Firstly, it is unable to access changing rooms on matchdays as these are closed by the College over weekends. Only toilet facilities are accessible to the Club. Further, at times sports lights have not been turned on for evening fixtures and the College has not permitted the Club to have a key to access the site or the sports lights, meaning a member of College staff as to provide access and set the site up for the Club's usage each weekend.

For clubhouse provision, Warrington HC is a member of Warrington Sports Club (two miles from its home venue at Priestley College) and so accesses facilities on site. If necessary, changing facilities are used here as well as post-match refreshments. The facility is in good condition and includes four new changing rooms and a large bar area which was refurbished during the pandemic.

Following the tennis club folding at Warrington Sports Club, discussions have taken place regarding how the now disused tennis courts on site should be utilised. One option for this is to create a small size AGP to accommodate Warrington HC's training demand although equally the Club states it would prefer to see this money be directed to improving pitch quality at Priestley College AGP. This should be considered as part of the wider potential developments at Priestley College.

Imported/exported demand

No imported demand is identified. For exported demand, whilst no Warrington-based hockey clubs play matches outside of Warrington, Warrington HC exports most of its training demand to Cheshire West and Chester due to a lack of availability at Priestley College.

Latent/unmet demand

Latent demand is current demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the existing population should clubs/teams have access to more or better provision.

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to pitches, 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.

Whilst no latent demand is identified, Lymm HC indicates many hockey players in Warrington play for clubs outside of the Borough due to the poor condition of facilities within Warrington. Therefore, it believes it could easily attract new members to the Club if it had access to an improved facility offering. This suggests there is unmet demand for hockey within Warrington.

Future demand

Population growth

Based on population projections to 2038 (the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) can estimate the likely additional demand for AGP provision that will arise from any growth. This is worked out by converting existing senior demand to team generation rates, in addition to including levels of participation to include those which do not formally categorise themselves as within a time such as mini and junior demand and match equivalent sessions to calculate future requirements.

The calculator identifies a growth in training demand of 0.41 hours for seniors and 0.09 additional hours for juniors and match play demand of 0.03 pitches (0.17 match equivalent sessions for adults and 0.03 match equivalent sessions for juniors).

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PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Club aspirations

Only Warrington HC has formal future demand aspirations, with the Club expecting to add a development team next year which will eventually become a third men's team and formalise a Badger's team from its existing junior section.

As mentioned previously, Lymm HC has enough members for a fifth women's team although doesn't currently have sufficient player availability to field this permanently. It hopes to formalise this team and increase the Club's junior membership although doesn't expect any increase in team numbers in the near future.

In addition to the above, growing participation is a key aim within EH's Strategic Plan and key drivers include working with clubs, universities 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.

Hockey Heroes

Hockey Heroes is an eight-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 are currently no Hockey Heroes courses operating in Warrington. The closest option is currently run by The Northern Club in Liverpool although Lymm HC is known to have previously hosted sessions. It is believed that if quality and capacity restraints were lifted, Lymm HC would operate a course.

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 are currently no Back to Hockey sessions operating in Warrington, with the closest session operated by Alderley Edge HC in Macclesfield. It is believed that if quality and capacity restraints were lifted, Lymm HC would operate a course.

Peak time demand

For matches, senior hockey activity in Warrington typically takes place on a Saturday, whereas junior activity occurs on a Sunday. For training, peak time is midweek evenings, although preference is generally given for Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Usage

The table overleaf summarises the usage of full size hockey suitable pitches within Warrington, comparing availability against hockey use and other activity as well as taking into consideration any remaining spare capacity.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 7.7: Usage of full size hockey suitable AGPs

Site ID	Site name	Availability in the peak period (hours) ³⁴	% of hockey usage	% of other usage (e.g. football)	Comments	Capacity for hockey
33	Culcheth Community Campus	27	11%	63%	Used predominantly for training demand from Culcheth Athletic and Culcheth Eagles football clubs, additional football club training and walking football also takes place on site. Also used by Lymm HC for two matches per week. The only spare capacity between Monday - Thursday exists from 5-6pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with most of the availability on Fridays and through the weekend.	Spare capacity for six matches. Limited spare capacity for training equating to five hours.
66	Lymm High School	34	28%	15%	Used predominantly by Lymm HC for match and training demand although league and sports lighting restrictions prevent the Club fully utilising the pitch on Saturdays, meaning it also has to use Culcheth Community Campus. Limited football training demand also takes place on site.	Played to capacity due to access and lighting restrictions removing the final match slot. Spare capacity for 9.5 hours of training midweek.
84	Penketh High School	34	0%	26%	Used by solely for football demand, primarily as a training venue for Eagle JFC but also usage from Penketh Seniors FC and The Football Fun Factory. Spare capacity exists from 5-6pm and 8-9pm most weekdays and there is currently no Friday or weekend usage.	Spare capacity for eight matches and nine hours of training midweek.
87	Priestley College	28	14%	45%	Used primarily for training demand from Grappenhall Sports (Juniors) FC although also used for match and some training demand from Warrington HC. Warrington HC reports it is unable to access any additional training slots during the peak period, causing the Club to export training demand to Cheshire West and Chester.	Spare capacity for four matches. Limited spare capacity for training equating to 4.5 hours.

³⁴ Based on data from Sport England's Active Places

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There is significant use of hockey suitable AGPs in Warrington for other activities. This is most notable in terms of football, whether that be through formal training or via informal social use. Only the pitch at Lymm High School caters for more hockey use than non-hockey use, predominately due to there now also being a full size 3G pitch on site. Despite this, historical football bookings remain on the 3G pitch which can continue to stunt the growth of hockey. Therefore, County FA's and the Football Foundation should work with England Hockey to ensure these bookings are migrated to 3G provision where possible.

All but one of the available pitches (Penketh High School) are in current use for hockey purposes, although the level varies from site to site. The most heavily used pitch for hockey demand is at Lymm High School with just 28% of usage through the peak period whilst this is as low as 11% at Culcheth Community Campus. Despite accommodating the most hockey demand, capacity at Lymm High School is restricted due to league and sports lighting restrictions, causing Lymm HC to need access to a second pitch.

Whilst most pitches do have capacity for an increase in hockey demand, this is primarily at unfavourable hours or on Sundays, when junior matches are played. In reality, there is little capacity for a growth in senior hockey due to the poor quality of pitches across the Borough as well as the prevalence of football training demand on hockey pitches.

Conversion of sand based AGPs to 3G surfaces

Since the introduction of 3G pitches and given their popularity for football, providers have seen this as a way of replacing their tired sand-based carpet and generating money from hiring out a 3G pitch to football clubs and commercial football providers. This has often come at the expense of hockey, with players now travelling further distances to gain access to a suitable pitch and many teams being displaced from their preferred geographical area.

Due to its impact on hockey, it is appropriate to ensure that sufficient sand based AGPs are retained for the playing development of hockey. To that end, a change of surface should require a planning application and, as part of that, the applicants will have to show that there is sufficient provision available for hockey in the locality. Advice from Sport England and EH should therefore be sought prior to any surface conversion being submitted.

It should also be noted that, if a surface is changed, it could require the existing sports lighting and drainage to be changed and, in some instances, noise attenuation measures may need to be put in place.

7.4: Supply and demand analysis

The PPS Guidance suggests that a pitch with sports lighting can accommodate four match equivalent sessions on a Saturday (peak time). With teams playing on a home and away format, this equates to one AGP being able to cater for eight 'home' teams (one team requires 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week on its 'home' AGP). Based on this, with 12 senior teams currently playing in Warrington on a Saturday and the potential demand for 13 senior teams (after considering future demand), there is a need for two full size pitches (rounded up from 1.5) if programmed accordingly and with sports lighting fully available.

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 half a pitch (meaning two fixtures can take place at one time) and because there are also significantly fewer junior teams in Warrington than there are senior teams.

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With four community available pitches currently being provided, it could be suggested that there is a sufficient supply of provision to cater for demand. However, this is not currently the case. All pitches in the Borough have exceeded their recommended lifespans and are regularly out of action throughout the Winter. Therefore, overspill sites are currently required to ensure that fixtures can continue to be fulfilled. Furthermore, some of the pitches with potential spare capacity are not actually fully available due to sports lighting and access issues and/or because of football demand.

The picture is also different when considering training demand as many pitches are used to capacity during midweek, whilst those that have capacity are generally only available on Mondays and Fridays, which are undesirable times given their close proximity to weekend matches.

7.5: Conclusion

Taking the above into account, it is considered that neither Lymm HC nor Warrington HC is sufficiently provided for with the current level of provision within the Borough. Lymm HC is unable to fulfil all its fixtures at Lymm High School due to pitch quality and sports lighting issues whilst Warrington HC has access and sports lighting issues at Priestley College and is unable to accommodate all its training demand on site, causing it to export demand outside of the Borough.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Hockey supply and demand summary

- ◀ Three of the community available full size AGPs currently utilised for hockey demand (Culcheth Community Campus, Lymm High School and Priestley College) require protection for continued hockey use as, due to the current state of hockey provision in the Borough, it is not considered feasible for Lymm HC and Warrington to amalgamate onto a lesser number of pitches.
- ◀ There is no known demand for community hockey to be played at Penketh High School due to its location and where clubs are based. The previous PPS also confirmed that this pitch is no longer required to meet hockey demand.

Hockey supply summary

- ◀ The audit identifies six hockey suitable AGPs in Warrington of which four are available for community use.
- ◀ The full size AGP at University of Chester (Warrington Campus) is no longer available to the community. The AGP at Cardinal Newman High School has now been converted to a 3G pitch.
- ◀ Culcheth Community Campus, Penketh High School and Priestley College all aspire to convert their existing sand based AGPs to full size 3G pitches.
- ◀ All community available hockey suitable AGPs in Warrington are in poor condition and exceed their recommended lifespans.

Hockey demand summary

- ◀ The two hockey clubs in Warrington consist of 15 teams, which as a breakdown consists of six senior men's, six senior women's and three junior teams.
- ◀ Warrington HC exports most of its training demand to Cheshire West and Chester due to a lack of availability within Warrington.
- ◀ Lymm HC suggests that many hockey players in Warrington play for clubs outside of the Borough due to the poor condition of facilities within the Borough. Therefore, it believes it could easily attract new members to the Club if it had access to an improved facility offering.
- ◀ Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator estimates a growth in training demand of 0.50 hours per week and match play demand of 0.20 match equivalent sessions per week from population growth.
- ◀ Warrington HC expects to add a development team next year which will eventually become a third men's team.
- ◀ No Hockey Heroes or Back to Hockey sessions are held in the Borough.
- ◀ There is significant use of hockey suitable AGPs in Warrington for other activities, most notably in terms of football whether that be through formal training or via informal social use. This is as high as 63% of total availability at Culcheth Community Campus.
- ◀ Whilst most pitches do have capacity for an increase in hockey demand, this is primarily at unfavourable hours or on Sundays, when junior matches are played. In reality, there is little capacity for a growth in senior hockey due to the poor quality of pitches across the Borough.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

PART 8: ATHLETICS

8.1: Introduction

As a Governing Body, UK Athletics is responsible for developing and implementing the rules and regulations of athletics, including everything from anti-doping, health and safety, facilities and welfare, to training and education for coaches and officials as well as permitting and licensing.

Locally, the sport is governed through England Athletics, which is the development and membership body for athletics and running clubs in England.

Consultation

One athletics club has been identified in Warrington; Warrington Athletics Club. The Club responded to consultation resulting in a 100% response rate. Additionally, four running clubs have also been identified; Warrington Running Club, Warrington Road Runners, Spectrum Striders and Lymm Runners. Of these, only Spectrum Striders responded to consultation requests.

8.2: Supply

There are two formal athletics tracks in Warrington located at Victoria Park Arena and University of Chester (Warrington Campus). The former is an eight lane, synthetic 400 metre track which is fully sports lit and provides all accompanying field event facilities including a hammer cage, javelin, high jump, long jump and shot put area. The latter is a two lane, 350m synthetic track which is without sports lighting. It should be noted that the track at University of Chester (Warrington Campus) is expected to be lost as the University has ceased community use and is now decommissioning the site. Any proposed future development of the site would need to meet Sport England's Playing Field Policy and paragraph 99 of the NPPF.

Table 8.1: Summary of athletics tracks in Warrington

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Length	Surface type	Sports lit?
130	University of Chester (Warrington Campus)	East	350m	Synthetic	No
132	Victoria Park Arena	Central	400m	Synthetic	Yes

Management

The track at Victoria Park Arena is owned and managed by the Warrington Borough Council whilst the track at University of Chester (Warrington Campus) is owned and managed by Chester University.

Future developments

England Athletics is currently exploring three alternative approaches in designing new athletics provision across the Country. Traditional 400m athletic tracks are becoming increasingly problematic to sustain and refurbish with any new facilities generally considered impractical due to cost and the amount of land required for such a development.

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These three designs, outlined below, present alternative approaches to athletics provision as to offer more affordable and feasible means of creating athletics tracks. It should be noted England Athletics has development each of these with the German manufacturer 'Polytan' which help design each type of facility. Any proposed future developments of these tracks would need to meet Sport England's Playing Field Policy and Guidance.

Compact track

The first of the three alternative designs is a 'compact track' featuring a 60m sprint straight with an accompanying jump lane and shot put space. This provision is the smallest of the three and is installed at sites with limited available land.

Mini track

A 'mini track' features a 140m four lane oval track with a six lane 60m sprint, as well as accompanying shot put and jumping provision. An advantage to a mini track design is it leaves a large space in the centre of the oval track to be used for either various field events such as long jump/ triple jump, or alternatively it can be used for other sports such as football pitches or an outdoor gym. Mini track sites also feature a new design of shot put practice areas in which it flattens a natural slope and athletes throw into a hill allowing for the put to roll back to the participant thus reducing time spent retrieving the put after each throw.

Active track

Finally, an 'active track' is a synthetic loop with no fixed shape or distance (similar to a formula one circuit), in which a track is drawn to fit its natural surroundings such as an existing park or school field. This is installed at sites where a 400m oval would not be feasible as it allows for adaptations to the shape in order to suit land in its current state.

Although noted considered to be an affordable solution, Polytan has also developed a smart track in which magnetic integrated timing gates are built into the surface intermittently as to enable sports and exercise analysis to take place with much greater ease and precision. The athlete downloads an accompanying 'smart run' app which is then tracked by the magnetic sensors built into the track allowing for split speed analysis to take place without the need for cameras or wires. This allows for the removal of any set up time for analysts whilst also enabling several athletes to be examined simultaneously. As the magnets are embedded within the track it is also vandalism safe and will outlast the lifespan of a brand new athletics track. The installation of such provision reportedly increases the price to roughly £1.35m for a brand new 400m 'smart track.'

Quality

Key factors impacting upon the quality ratings of athletics facilities include the condition and age of the track surface, the prominence of the line markings and any signs of wear and tear or unofficial use. For the full site assessment criteria, please see Appendix 2.

The non-technical assessment undertaken by KKP in July 2022 identifies Victoria Park Arena's track and field facilities as good quality, with maintenance carried out to a high standard. Despite this, Warrington AC and England Athletics report the hammer cage on site is in need of modification to bring it up to standard and states the track is in need of moss removal to retain a good quality surface. Further detail is contained in the TrackMark section overleaf. The track at University of Chester (Warrington Campus) is of adequate condition, with no issues with track quality raised.

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In terms of ancillary provision on site, this is also assessed as good quality with facilities said to be clean and well maintained and providing changing rooms, covered spectator seating, fencing, showers, toilets, a kitchen, disabled access and an equipment store.

TrackMark³⁵

TrackMark is UK Athletics' quality assurance scheme for outdoor track and field athletics facilities. A venue that achieves TrackMark is recognised by UK Athletics as having well managed, compliant facilities that are accessible to participants of all abilities. From 2021, venues that actively choose not to pursue accreditation are not eligible to apply for a competition licence at any level.

Victoria Park Arena is currently working towards its TrackMark accreditation. As a key training and competition venue in the North West hosting an average of seven licensed competitions per year, it is key for England Athletics that the facility achieves and maintains TrackMark accreditation. Whilst the facility at Victoria Park Arena has passed Unit 1 (Track), a professional track clean is recommended as soon as possible to maintain accreditation and it has failed Unit 2 (Field) due to the throwing cage no longer being compliant. To meet compliancy, the cage is in need of modification or replacement.

8.3: Demand

For the purposes of this study, athletics demand is considered to come in various forms, rather than just traditional track and field activity. As such, running clubs are also considered, as are organised running events and various running initiatives, some of which are governed by England Athletics. It is also acknowledged that recreational running forms a large part of demand, although this is difficult to measure.

Table 8.2: Summary of track and field club membership (where known)

Name of club	Home site	Number of members			
		Male	Female	Junior	Total
Warrington AC	Victoria Park Arena	87	121	142	350
Spectrum Striders	Victoria Park Arena	74	36	-	110

Warrington Athletics Club

Warrington Athletics Club is a large athletics club based at Victoria Park Arena. It accommodates both male and female members at both senior and junior level and whilst it specialises in track and field, it also operates road running and cross-country running sections.

The Club reports senior membership has remained static in recent years whilst junior membership has declined since the pandemic by approximately 30 members.

Warrington Running Club

Warrington Running Club is a road running club that caters for runners of all abilities and has circa 185 members. It meets twice a week. The Club uses The Seven Wood Pub on Westbrook Crescent as a meeting base.

³⁵ <https://www.uka.org.uk/about/what-we-do/facilities/>

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Warrington Road Runners

Warrington Road Runners is a cross-country and road running club with approximately 65 members. Its meets and trains twice a week, on Tuesday evenings at Broomfield Leisure Centre, and Thursday evenings at Victoria Park Arena on the athletics track. All sessions must be pre booked through the Run Together website.

Spectrum Striders

Spectrum Striders is a cross-country and road running club that caters for runners of all abilities. The Club uses Warrington Victoria Park Arena as a base once a week on a Tuesday evening. It currently has 74 male and 36 female members. The Club has no junior members. Membership has remained static in recent years.

Lymm Runners

Lymm Runners is a road running club that caters for runners of all abilities and has circa 166 members. The Club has numerous sessions throughout the week to accommodate different abilities, which meet at either Victoria Park Arena or Lymm High School.

Run Together³⁶

Run Together is an official England Athletics recreational running project which aims to get the whole nation running. Its aim is to provide fun, friendly, supportive and inclusive running opportunities for everyone, regardless of ability and availability. It believes that running is more fun and easier to become part of a lifestyle when shared with others. In Warrington, there are the following Run Together groups:

- ◀ Warrington Road Runners (Thursday 19:30) Victoria Park Arena WA4 1DG
- ◀ Warrington Plodders (Wednesday 18:45) Orford Jubilee Hub Entrance
- ◀ Warrington Plodders (Monday 18:45) Orford Jubilee Hub Entrance – Monday Fun Run
- ◀ Eagle Runners (Wednesday 18:00) Shaw Street Car Park WA3 5EX

A key focus for England Athletics is increasing demand for participation in initiatives such as Run Together, meaning this could be targeted moving forward, especially given the number of other clubs that could be involved.

Park Run

Park Run is a series of 5k runs held on Saturday mornings in areas of open space around the UK, with 1,063 events now operating across the Country. They are open to all, free, and are safe and easy to take part in. Runners must first register online in order to access a printed barcode which gives them access to all Park Run events.

Victoria Park is the only location where a Park Run takes place in the Borough as seen below.

Table 8.3: Summary of Park Run in Warrington

Location	Post code	Event	Number of events	Average attendance
Victoria Park	WA4 1DG	Park Run	383	340

³⁶ <https://runtogether.co.uk/>

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Other running events

The Warrington Running Festival takes place on 25th September 2022. The festival is a brand new event for Warrington being organised by RunThrough Events. The run consists of 10k and 5k runs to enable all levels of fitness to take part. The event will start and finish at the Town Hall's iconic Golden Gates.

Couch to 5k

Couch to 5k is a national health initiative promoted by the National Health Service (NHS) to encourage absolute beginners get into running as part of establishing and maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle including regular exercise.

The plan consists of three runs per week and a day of rest in between, with a different schedule for each of the nine weeks to completion. It starts with a mix of running and walking, to gradually build up fitness and stamina, in order to create realistic expectations and a sense of achievability to encourage participants to stick with it. The end goal of the plan is for the participant to be able to run 5k.

Through the Couch to 5k plan the NHS particularly promotes the health benefits of running and regular exercise which underpin the initiative, such as improved heart and lung health, weight loss and possible increases in bone density which can help protect against bone diseases such as osteoporosis. This also includes mental benefits of running through goal setting and challenge setting, which can help boost confidence and self-belief. Furthermore, running regularly has been linked to combating depression.

It is believed that an increase in people running through the Couch to 5k plan may increase interest and possibly have a knock-on effect of leading to increased demand at running groups and clubs as people may wish to continue develop their running further.

Latent/unmet demand

Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in athletics but 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies significant latent demand amounting to 4,232 people in Warrington. This equates to just over 2% of the current population, which aligns with the national average.

Warrington AC currently has a waiting list of five members although it has much larger future demand aspirations, suggesting that there will soon be capacity to accommodate these members.

No other clubs have a waiting list in place, and they are all actively looking for new members, on social media and club websites.

Future demand

Both Warrington AC and Spectrum Striders have plans to increase membership with both clubs looking to add 20 male and 20 female members although Warrington AC also plans to add 40 junior members.

England Athletics also believes that demand is likely to increase in the future, particularly for initiatives such as Park Run, although again to what extent is difficult to quantify.

8.4: Supply and demand analysis

It is considered that for an athletics track to be sustainable, a club membership of 200 is required. This is based on figures and consultation provided by England Athletics. In Warrington, supply is considered sufficient to meet demand, with one track and field club currently based in the Borough, (Warrington Athletics Club) totalling 350 members in addition to Spectrum Striders also being based at the track with 110 members. Ad hoc usage of the track is also derived from pay & play, Run Together groups and Lymm Runners.

No clubs report capacity issues at Victoria Park Arena, suggesting the track is suitably able to cater for current demand.

8.5: Conclusion

Priority should be placed on protecting the facility at Victoria Park Arena and ensuring that it achieves and maintains TrackMark accreditation through quality improvements to the track and throwing cage on site. If the track at University of Chester (Warrington Campus) is to be lost, suitable mitigation, in line with Sport England's Playing Field Policy, should be secured. Future demand should also be monitored to ensure that a single track remains suitable to cater for athletics demand in Warrington or if alternative track designs need to be considered to accommodate this demand.

Away from track and field, emphasis should also be placed on supporting the other activities taking place in Warrington, with focus on retaining and increasing participation and growing the various initiatives that are in place.

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Athletics supply and demand summary

- ◀ **In Warrington, supply is considered sufficient to meet demand, with only one track and field club (Warrington Athletics Club) and one running club (Spectrum Striders) regularly accessing the track at Victoria Park Arena. All other clubs are primarily road running clubs.**
- ◀ Priority should be placed on protecting the facility at Victoria Park Arena and ensuring that it achieves and maintains TrackMark accreditation through quality improvements to the track and throwing cage on site.
- ◀ If the track at University of Chester (Warrington Campus) is to be lost, suitable mitigation, in line with Sport England's Playing Field Policy and NPPF paragraph 99, should be secured.
- ◀ Emphasis should also be placed on supporting the other activities taking place in Warrington, with a focus on retaining and increasing participation and growing the various initiatives that are in place.

Athletics supply summary

- ◀ There are two formal athletics track in Warrington located at Victoria Park Arena and University of Chester (Warrington Campus).
- ◀ The track at Victoria Park Arena is fully sports lit and provides all accompanying field event facilities including a hammer cage, javelin, high jump, long jump and shot put area. The hammer cage is said to be in need of modification to bring it up to current standards.
- ◀ The non-technical assessment undertaken by KKP identifies Victoria Park Arena's track and field facilities as good quality, with maintenance carried out to a high standard. Warrington AC and England Athletics report the track is in need of moss removal to retain a good quality surface.
- ◀ The track at University of Chester (Warrington Campus) is without sports lights. No quality issues have been raised although the track is expected to be lost with the University now actively decommissioning the site.
- ◀ The track at Victoria Park Arena is owned and managed by the Council whilst the track at the University of Chester (Warrington Campus) is owned and managed by Chester University.

Athletics demand summary

- ◀ Five clubs have a current focus on athletics and/or running activity in Warrington.
- ◀ Victoria Park is the only location where a Park Run takes place in Warrington.
- ◀ All clubs are seen actively looking to grow membership, whilst England Athletics also believes that demand is likely to increase in the future, particularly for initiatives such as Park Run.
- ◀ Sport England's Segmentation Tool identifies significant latent demand amounting to 4,232 people in Warrington.
- ◀ Warrington AC currently has a waiting list in place of five members although it has much larger future demand aspirations, suggesting that there will soon be capacity to accommodate these members. No other clubs have waiting lists in place.
- ◀ Both Warrington AC and Spectrum Striders have plans to increase membership with both clubs looking to add 20 male and 20 female members although Warrington AC also plans to add 40 junior members.

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PART 9: TENNIS

9.1: Introduction

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is the organisation responsible for the governance of tennis and administers the sport locally across Warrington. It has recently restructured its strategic approach to target several national focus areas, with a priority on developing the sport at park sites.

Consultation

Seven tennis clubs are identified in Warrington. Of these, only three responded to consultation; Penketh, Manor Road and Stockton Heath tennis clubs, resulting in a 43% response rate. All clubs have been contacted multiple times seeking a response to an electronic survey. Consultation with the LTS has also taken place to help inform any gaps in information. It should be noted that Rixton LTC is not affiliated with the LTA.

Table 9.1: Summary of consultation

Club	Response?
Culcheth TC	No
Grappenhall Village LTC	No
Lymm TC	No
Manor Road TC	Yes
Penketh TC	Yes
Rixton LTC	No
Stockton Heath LTC	Yes

In addition to the clubs listed above, it should also be noted that there is a David Lloyd Club also in Warrington which provides a tennis club.

9.2: Supply

There are 59 tennis courts identified in Warrington across 14 sites. Of these, 55 courts across 12 sites are available for community use, with courts at Chaigley School and David Lloyd Warrington unavailable for community use.

The largest offering of tennis courts is identified in the South Analysis Area, with this containing 35 courts and 34 that are available for community use. In contrast, the Central Analysis Area offers just two tennis courts available for community use.

Table 9.2: Summary of the number of courts by analysis area

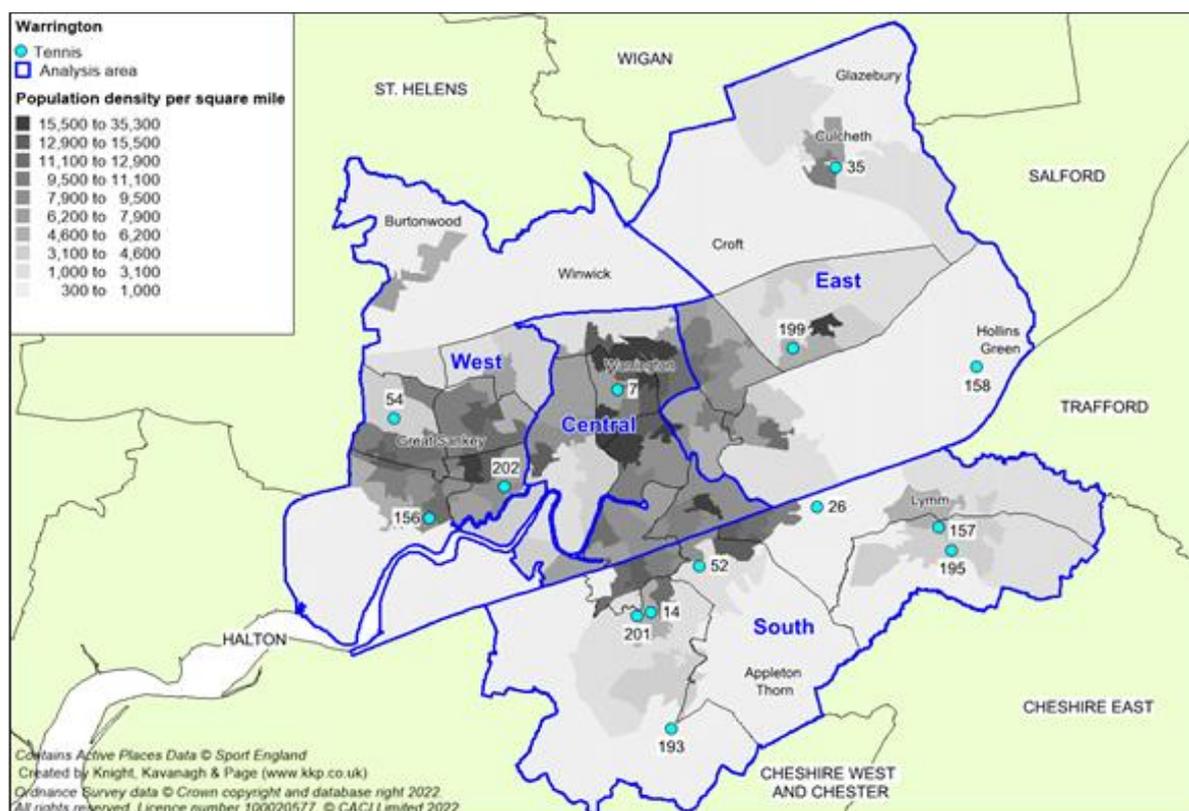
Analysis area	Courts available for community use	Courts unavailable for community use
Central	2	-
East	11	-
South	34	1
West	7	4
Warrington	54	5

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Please note that courts are classified as being available for community use provided that they are deemed to be easily accessible to the general population, either via pay and play or through a membership at a club (or a mixture of both). However, this is not applicable when the price of membership is significant enough to prevent inclusive access, as is considered to be the case at David Lloyd Club (Warrington).

Figure 9.1 shows the location of the courts servicing Warrington, regardless of community use. For a key to the map, see Table 9.2.

Figure 9.1: Location of tennis courts in Warrington



Disused provision

Courts at Padgate Tennis and Bowling Club have been disused since the Club folded in 2017. The site accommodates six tennis courts, and its future remains unknown. The LTA reports it would like to see the site reinstated to provide an informal and recreational tennis offer in the East Analysis Area. It states there is a lack of open access tennis facilities across Warrington and Padgate Tennis and Bowling Club is in a great location to actualise latent tennis demand in the Borough.

Following the tennis club folding at Warrington Sports Club, discussions have taken place regarding how the now four disused tennis courts on site should be utilised. One option for this is to create a small size AGP to accommodate Warrington HC's training demand.

New provision

Manor Road TC has been working with Lymm RFC to provide four new tennis courts at Lymm Rugby Club for which planning permission has been granted. To fund this development, Manor Road TC will sell its existing home site (Manor Road Tennis Club) which has two courts. An LTA loan has also been granted to help cover the costs of the additional courts, which will be supported by sports lighting. Ring beams will also be installed in the foundation of the courts to allow temporary domes to cover the courts throughout the winter, supporting year-round play. These domes will be provided in a future development phase. Manor Road TC expects the development to be complete by March 2023.

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Table 9.3: Tennis courts in Warrington

Site ID	Site name	Postcode	Analysis area	Ownership	Community use?	No. of courts	Sports lighting?	Court type	Court quality
7	Beamont Collegiate Academy	WA2 8PX	Central	Education	Yes	2	No	Macadam	Poor
14	Bridgewater High School (Upper)	WA4 3AE	South	Education	Yes	5	Yes	Macadam	Standard
26	Chaigley School	WA4 2TE	South	Education	No	1	No	Macadam	Poor
35	Culcheth Sports Club	WA3 5SH	East	Sports Club	Yes	4	Yes	Artificial	Standard
52	Grappenhall Village Sports Club	WA4 3HQ	South	Sports Club	Yes	5	Yes	Macadam	Good
						3	No	Macadam	Good
54	Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub	WA5 3AA	West	Council	Yes	4	Yes	Macadam	Good
156	Penketh Tennis Club	WA5 2HR	West	Sports Club	Yes	3	Yes	Artificial	Good
157	Lymm Lawn Tennis Club ³⁷	WA13 0PX	South	Sports Club	Yes	6	Yes	Macadam	Good
						3		Artificial	Good
158	Rixton Tennis Club	WA3 6HE	East	Sports Club	Yes	3	Yes	Macadam	Standard
193	The Park Royal	WA4 4NS	South	Private	Yes	3	Yes	Macadam	Good
195	Manor Road Tennis Club	WA13 0AY	South	Sports Club	Yes	2	Yes	Macadam	Poor
199	Birchwood Leisure & Tennis Complex	WA3 7PQ	East	Council	Yes	4	No	Macadam	Good
201	Stockton Heath Lawn Tennis Club	WA4 5BY	South	Sports Club	Yes	7	Yes	Artificial	Good
202	David Lloyd Club (Warrington)	WA5 1HH	West	Commercial	No	4	Yes	Artificial	Good

³⁷ The site also has four grass tennis courts on site.

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Management and security of tenure

The table below highlights the management of tennis courts within Warrington. The majority are operated by sports clubs, although education, commercial and private owners also manage tennis courts in Warrington. Whilst the courts at Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub and Birchwood Leisure & Tennis Complex are owned by the Council and managed by LiveWire.

Table 9.4: Tennis courts by management type

Community use?	Number of courts				
	Club	LiveWire	Education	Commercial	Private
Available	36	8	7	-	3
Unavailable	-	-	1	4	-
Total	36	8	8	4	3

A total of 36 courts are managed by sports clubs, with these provided across Culcheth Sports Club, Grappenhall Village Sports Club, Penketh Tennis Club, Lymm Lawn Tennis Club, Rixton Tennis Club, Manor Road Tennis Club and Stockton Heath Lawn Tennis Club.

The only commercially managed courts in Warrington are located at David Lloyd Club (Warrington), which, as stated previously, is not deemed to be a community available facility.

Court type

Most outdoor tennis courts in Warrington have a macadam surface, with 38 being of this type and 37 of these being available for community use. 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 remaining 21 courts have an artificial surface, with four of these provided at Culcheth Sports Club, three at Penketh Tennis Club, seven at Stockton Heath Lawn Tennis Club, three at Lymm Lawn Tennis Club and four at David Lloyd Club (Warrington). The estimated lifespan of such provision is similar to that of a macadam surface, although it generally allows for greater levels of access, especially during inclement weather spells. Nevertheless, the cost of resurfacing the courts is usually more expensive and more regular maintenance is required.

Sports lighting

Courts with sports lighting enable use throughout the year and are identified by the LTA as being a key priority for growing participation nationally. The LTA reports that floodlights allow for a 35% increase in available court time on an annual basis.

In Warrington, 49 of the tennis courts are serviced by sports lights, representing 83% of the provision. Of these, 45 are considered to be available for community use (the courts at David Lloyd Club (Warrington) are not considered to be available).

Without sports lighting, many of the providers state that making them available for lettings would not be financially viable as usage would be limited, although the LTA does offer solutions to help overcome this including initiatives such as Clubspark and Gate Access (detailed further on). In total, 88% of non-sports lit courts are accessible to the community compared to 92% of sports lit courts.

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Access to courts with sports lighting is considered particularly key for clubs as it allows for more usage of provision, which in turn can help accommodate more members. To that end, it must be noted that all clubs in Warrington have access to sports lit courts.

LTA Quick Access Loan Scheme

The LTA's facility loan scheme provides interest free loans from £25,000 up to £250,000. The funding stream will prioritise investment into low-cost indoor structures and sports lights to enable communities to grow participation by accessing all year-round facilities. The objectives of the fund are:

- ◀ To provide indoor or sports lit and year-round playing facilities to encourage community accessible play all year
- ◀ To enhance facilities to create better playing environments to encourage play all year (link to 'what we will fund')
- ◀ To retain and increase the number of participants at the venue
- ◀ To offer and increase both non-member pay and play usage and coaching opportunities
- ◀ To grow the numbers of adults and juniors on the coaching programme
- ◀ To provide online booking through ClubSpark with courts available through LTA Rally.

Over markings

Tennis courts, particularly within schools, are often over marked by netball, basketball and/or football courts. Courts which are over marked tend to receive higher levels of use which can be detrimental to quality over time, as well as creating capacity issues if there is community demand from more than one sport.

In Warrington, seven courts are overmarked by netball provision (located at Beumont Collegiate Academy and Bridgewater High School (Upper)) and one court is overmarked for basketball (located at Chaigley School), with all of these located at school sites where curriculum activity makes this necessary.

Quality

The quality of tennis courts has been informed through non-technical site assessments, undertaken in July 2022, 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 the full assessment criteria, please refer to Appendix 2.

Of the courts in Warrington, 42 are assessed as good quality, 12 as standard quality and five as poor quality. A total of 38 of the good quality courts are available for community use, whilst all of the standard and four of the poor quality courts are.

Table 9.5: Quality of tennis courts in Warrington

Community use?	Quality		
	Good	Standard	Poor
Available	38	12	4
Unavailable	4	-	1
Total	42	12	5

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The courts assessed as poor quality are located at the following sites:

- ◀ Beamont Collegiate Academy
- ◀ Manor Road Tennis Club
- ◀ Chaigley School

Issues recorded at these sites during assessments include poor grip underfoot, the presence of moss, worn line markings and loose gravel, with maintenance also considered to be basic and infrequent at most of these sites. This leads to further deterioration in quality.

Manor Road TC reports that court quality is poor at Manor Road Tennis Club as the Club has not been maintaining the courts on site as it is soon to relocate to Lymm Rugby Club, as detailed earlier.

Penketh TC has a sinking fund in place to ensure the artificial courts at Penketh Tennis Club are replaced every 15 years. Courts on site are currently deemed to be of good quality.

All remaining tennis clubs are serviced by good or standard quality courts so any quality issues at their respective home sites are likely to be minimal.

No open access courts in Warrington are currently assessed as poor quality. Improving such courts is currently a national priority for the LTA, with a focus on suitable sites that cater for high levels of recreational demand or that have the potential to do so. This is especially the case if the provision is serviced (or could be serviced) by changing facilities and sports lighting, whereby a sustainable tennis programme could be supported.

Renovation fund⁶⁸

The LTA has secured a £22 million investment fund to be put into public tennis courts across Britain, together with an £8.5 million investment from the LTA. This will see thousands of public park tennis courts that are in poor or unplayable condition improved for the benefit of the local communities.

The LTA's ambition is to drive participation across park tennis sites, as well as ensuring the future sustainability of these facilities. As well as paying for the refurbishment of public park courts, the new investment will also pay for the implementation of sustainable operating models for the facilities, with specialist programmes and support to ensure courts are both affordable and utilised. Despite this, there are no playable tennis courts in parks across Warrington.

Ancillary provision

Penketh TC recently improved its clubhouse at Penketh Tennis Club, including using a County LTA grant to re-roof the clubhouse with insulated cladding. The facility is now considered to be in good condition.

Manor Road TC currently accesses a wooden clubhouse which has been in place since the 1950s at Manor Road Tennis Club. Whilst no issues are raised with the facility, it is very dated and basic and therefore considered to be in poor condition. At Lymm Rugby Club, a temporary clubhouse will initially be provided for Manor Road TC following its relocation. Once the new clubhouse is provided at Lymm Rugby Club (detailed in Part 5 of this document), the tennis club will also be given access to this facility.

³⁸<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/30-million-package-to-refurbish-4500-public-tennis-courts-in-deprived-parts-of-uk-announced>

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For non-club courts, ancillary provision is generally considered to be problematic, although good quality ancillary facilities are provided at The Park Royal. Whilst most of the other sites do provide changing facilities and/or toilets, they are not specific for tennis and are generally too far away from the courts to be realistically used. Often, the facilities predominately service football/cricket pitch users and therefore are not readily available or suited to tennis court users. In some instances, quality is also poor.

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 in suitable ancillary amenities, which can then also provide a source of income.

9.3: Demand

It is reported that demand for tennis provision during and since the Covid-19 pandemic has increased substantially compared to prior levels when court restrictions have not been in place (potentially linked to tennis being one of the first sports to be allowed to resume). This should therefore be monitored moving forward to ensure that any growth can be accommodated for if the increases are sustained.

Competitive tennis

Whilst seven tennis clubs are identified in Warrington, only three responded to consultation requests. Of these clubs, Stockton Heath LTC is the largest with 324 members whilst Manor Road TC is the smallest with 61 members.

All seven clubs within Warrington have an internal programme of competition including social club nights and internal ladders as well as competing in the Warrington and District Tennis League. Outside of club tennis, Birchwood Leisure and Tennis Complex also offers competitive tennis opportunities.

Informal and parks tennis

No court providers report high levels of community access, including the various education providers. Whilst this usage can be difficult to quantify, it is generally at its highest during summer months, especially following events such as Wimbledon where demand is likely to increase for recreational play and pay. In Warrington, no park tennis courts are provided although casual play and pay options are available at Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub, Birchwood Leisure & Tennis Complex, Stockton Heath Lawn Tennis Club and Grappenhall Village Sports Club whilst the new courts at Lymm Rugby Club will also be available once they are online.

ClubSpark – Improving the booking process

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 at 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.

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- ◀ 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.

LTA Play

LTA Play is an aggregator that collects all booking and coaching information via ClubSpark pages and displays it for participants in one easy to view page. It 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.

LTA Play 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 provider.

Smart Access

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

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

Nationally, the LTA report that in the last three years, sites with a gate access system installed have attracted 64,841 unique players, leading to 609,671 courts being booked. This has generated income of over £1 million.

There is a Smart Access gate installed at Stockton Heath Lawn Tennis Club whilst Grappenhall Village Sports Club is available for pay and play and therefore should consider the feasibility of installing a Smart Access gate on site. A Smart Access gate will also be installed at Lymm Rugby Club when Manor Road TC relocates to the site.

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Additional demand

The LTA operates various tennis initiatives across the Country which results in some courts receiving additional demand. Furthermore, there are other formats away from traditional tennis that can result in increased usage. These are all detailed below.

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. The leagues are run by Local Tennis Leagues and 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.

In Warrington, a league is in operation with seven current participants³⁹.

LTA Youth Start

This is the fun starter course for children who have never played the sport before or may have played very little. Packed full of fun games and training drills, it also gives parents the chance to join in too. For £34.99, kids 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.

LTA Youth Start sessions tend to be delivered seasonally and when coaches or venues have capacity for these sessions.

Tennis for Free

Tennis for Free is a community sports charity that works 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 offers 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', available to clubs that wish to open their doors to non-members.

Through its offer, Tennis for Free 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

No Tennis for Free sessions currently operate in Warrington as this is primarily a park initiative targeting lower IMD areas.

³⁹ [Warrington Singles Tennis League \(localtennisleagues.com\)](http://warringtonsingles.com)

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LTA Big Tennis Weekend

The LTA Big Tennis Weekend is an LTA initiative which all registered venues can access. Clubs and venues 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 hosts three dedicated weekends a year (in May, July and September) that are the UK's biggest public tennis events. Furthermore, venues are able to run additional events outside these dates and will 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.

LTA Youth Programme

The LTA coordinate courses for children aged 4 – 18, consisting of fun games and dynamic training. Specialist coaches make sure every child has the best start to their tennis journey in a safe and inclusive environment. Sessions cater to all abilities.

Youth stages:

- ◀ Blue Stage (Age 4-6)
- ◀ Red Stage (Age 6-8)
- ◀ Orange Stage (Age 8-9)
- ◀ Green Stage (Age 9-10)
- ◀ Yellow Stage (Age 10+)

Key points:

- ◀ There are assigned ages to each stage, but this only serves as a guide.
- ◀ Young people want to play in groups and with their friends, and so whatever stage they start at, all kids will see progression.
- ◀ In every LTA Youth stage, young people will be active, having fun and developing skills.

Two dedicated mini tennis courts have been identified in Warrington, both located at Stockton Heath Lawn Tennis Club. The Club reports that these courts are in need of resurfacing although it is also considering converting them into pickleball courts in order to attract different types of members to the Club.

Padel

One of the LTAs key strategies is to find new ways to grow participation and padel is an innovative format of tennis that is fun, flexible, easy to play and extremely sociable. Padel is played mainly in a doubles format on an enclosed court about a third of the size of a tennis court and can be played in groups of mixed ages and abilities, as it is not power dominant. The rules are broadly the same as tennis, although you serve under-arm and the walls are used as part of the game with the ball allowed to bounce off them.

One of the fastest growing sports across Europe, it has also been integrated into the LTA and is now recognised as a format of tennis. This has provided a platform to facilitate the growth of the sport, with tennis venues throughout Great Britain exploring the potential opportunities it can bring to a facility.

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There are currently no padel tennis courts in Warrington although the LTA reports two courts are under construction at Grappenhall Village Sports Club.

Latent/unmet demand

Latent demand for tennis nationally is reported to be high by the LTA, which has an insight tool that suggests that 18% of the five million players that pick up a racket each year would play more often if key barriers such as poor promotion of opportunities to get on court, unclear booking journeys (especially those that are 'offline') and low quality facilities were addressed.

Furthermore, the LTA conducted some research to understand how the public feels about tennis and the main barriers to accessing the sport. The research was split into club, community and education sectors, the headline findings of which are below:

- ◀ Around five million people play once per year with the majority of this in parks.
- ◀ 46% of tennis played by those 14 years is on park courts.
- ◀ 80% of those that do not play tennis but would like to see parks as their first option.
- ◀ Barriers preventing use of courts located in parks include the quality of the courts, ease of booking and the number of courts available to play.
- ◀ Demand for tennis amongst those who stopped playing in the last five years is from 14 upwards.
- ◀ Although there is demand for tennis amongst working class individuals, the highest latent demand is from upper middle, middle and lower middle classes.

Further research carried out by the LTA suggests that many more people would play tennis if they knew where courts were located, particularly local authority courts. Its assertion is that better promotion would increase demand.

In addition, Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of the percentage of adults that would like to participate in tennis but that 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies latent demand of 3,624 people within Warrington. This equates to approximately 1.7% of the Borough's population which matches the national average.

Future demand

Of the responding clubs, all three responding clubs have plans to grow membership. Penketh TC has plans to add a further 12 senior and 12 junior members whilst Stockton Heath LTC plans to add 100 senior and 100 junior members. Manor Road TC states it would like to grow its junior membership through partnerships with local schools. It also expects membership to increase naturally following its relocation but did not quantify any of these aspirations.

Away from club-based demand, it is considered that all remaining future demand will be picked up via the latent/unmet demand noted above and attracted to non-club and particularly local authority courts.

9.4: Supply and demand analysis

For club-based tennis, the LTA suggests that a non-sports lit court can accommodate a maximum of 40 members, whereas court with sports lighting can accommodate 60 members. Using this, the table below identifies the capacity balance at all sites currently used by clubs, taking into account current demand.

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Table 9.6: Capacity analysis (club courts)

Site ID	Site	Club users	Current demand (members)	Capacity (members)	Current capacity balance	Future demand	Future capacity balance
35	Culcheth Sports Club	Culcheth TC	<i>Unknown</i>				
52	Grappenhall Village Sports Club	Grappenhall Village LTC	<i>Unknown</i>				
156	Penketh Tennis Club	Penketh TC	81	180	99	24	75
157	Lymm Lawn Tennis Club	Lymm TC	<i>Unknown</i>				
158	Rixton Tennis Club	Rixton LTC	<i>Unknown</i>				
195	Manor Road Tennis Club	Manor Road TC	61	120	59	-	59
201	Stockton Heath Lawn Tennis Club	Stockton Heath LTC	324	420	96	200	104

As shown, supply (where known) is sufficient to meet club-based current demand, although if Stockton Heath LTC's significant future demand aspirations are realised, the Club will be operating considerably above the recommended capacity. Further investigation is required into the unresponsive clubs to determine whether they have capacity issues.

9.5: Conclusion

In general, there is deemed to be sufficient supply of tennis courts across Warrington to meet club-based demand (where known), although constraints may emerge if future demand aspirations are realised. Additionally, further investigation is required into the unresponsive clubs to determine whether they have capacity issues at their respective home venues.

Away from clubs, as no courts are identified as having any capacity issues, it could be suggested that supply is sufficient to meet demand. However, in reality, this is unlikely to be case given the amount of unmet and latent demand that is evidenced both nationally and in Warrington. Precedence should therefore be placed on improving the supply in ways that can attract and better accommodate more users, with particular focus on publicly available sites that accommodate or can accommodate multiple courts and adequate ancillary facilities.

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Tennis – supply and demand summary

- ◀ Where known, supply is sufficient to meet current club-based demand, although further investigation is required into the unresponsive clubs to determine whether they have capacity issues.
- ◀ If Stockton Heath LTC's significant future demand aspirations are realised, the Club will be operating considerably above the recommended capacity.
- ◀ Away from clubs, although no courts are identified as having any capacity issues, precedence should be placed on improving the supply in ways that can meet unmet and latent demand identified.

Tennis – supply summary

- ◀ There are a total of 59 tennis courts identified in Warrington across 14 sites, with 55 courts categorised as being available for community use at 12 sites.
- ◀ Disused courts are identified at Padgate Tennis and Bowling Club and Warrington Sports Club.
- ◀ Four new courts are due to be constructed at Lymm Rugby Club, which Manor Road TC will then relocate to. The development will be funded partially through the sale of Manor Road Tennis Club for a housing development.
- ◀ The majority are operated by sports clubs, although education, commercial and private owners also manage tennis courts in Warrington, as well as LiveWire.
- ◀ Most courts have a macadam surface, with 38 being of this type compared to the remaining 21 having an artificial surface.
- ◀ In total, 49 of the courts are serviced by sports lights, representing 83% of the provision and including all courts servicing clubs.
- ◀ Of the courts, 42 are assessed as good quality, 12 as standard quality and five as poor quality.
- ◀ The ancillary facilities servicing Penketh TC are assessed as good quality, whilst Manor Road TC is serviced by poor quality facilities at Manor Road Tennis Club although it expects to be provided with good quality facilities at Lymm Rugby Club following its relocation. Provision is generally considered to be problematic at non-club sites with the exception of The Park Royal.

Tennis – demand summary

- ◀ There are seven tennis clubs in Warrington.
- ◀ Of the responding clubs, Stockton Heath LTC is the largest with 324 members whilst Manor Road TC is the smallest with 61 members.
- ◀ No court providers report high levels of community access, including the various education providers.
- ◀ A Local Tennis League is in operation in Warrington with seven current participants.

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PART 10: BOWLS

10.1: Introduction

Outdoor bowls in Warrington is played on crown greens, with a typical season running in the Summer from May until September. The British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA) is the NGB with overall responsibility for ensuring effective governance of the sport.

Flat green bowls is another version of bowls played in England, governed separately by Bowls England. However, this format of the sport is played predominately in the South of England.

Consultation

There are 25 bowling clubs playing in Warrington. Through online survey and telephone consultation, a total club response rate of 20% (five of 25 clubs) was achieved. Those that responded can be seen below. A low response rate can be common when it comes to bowls clubs due to nature of participation.

Table 10.1: Summary of consultation

Club name	Analysis area	Response
Alford Hall BC	East	No
Bank Park Bluesky BC	Central	No
Bulls Head BC	Central	No
Burtonwood BC	West	Yes
Croft BC	East	No
Crosfields BC	West	No
Eagle Sports BC	West	No
Grange BC	Central	No
Grappenhall BC	South	No
Irish Club BC	Central	Yes
King & Queen BC	East	No
Longbarn BC	East	No
Monk Sports BC	East	No
Orford WM BC	Central	Yes
Padgate Tennis & BC	East	No
Penketh BC	West	Yes
Penketh Tavern BC	West	No
St Albans BC	Central	No
St Elphins BC	Central	No
St Oswalds BC	East	No
Stag Inn BC	South	No
Tetley BC	Central	No
Victoria New Town BC	Central	No
Victoria Park BC	Central	Yes
Woolston BC	East	No

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10.2: Supply

There are 39 bowling greens in Warrington located across 29 sites, of which, eight sites are accommodating more than one green. All greens are available for community use and used for a range of training, league match play and pay as you play.

Table 10.2: Summary of community available greens by analysis area

Analysis area	Number of greens
Central	20
East	8
South	6
West	5
Total	39

As seen in the table above half the available greens are located in the Central Analysis Area, this is followed by the East and South analysis area with eight and six greens respectively and the West Analysis Area with five greens.

Disused provision

A further four greens across four sites are identified as being disused, located at Culcheth Sports Club (WA3 5SH), Farmers Arms Pub (WA2 0BE), The Red Lion (WA4 6HN) and Pierpoints Club (WA4 1NG). The first two greens are in the East Analysis Area whilst the final two are located in the Central Analysis Area. All disused greens are overgrown and are therefore unable to currently be used for bowls. The green at The Red Lion has since been converted into a beer garden. It should be noted that all disused greens are privately owned or owned by sports clubs and are not local authority owned.

Ownership/management

As seen in the table below most bowling greens are owned and managed by the Local Authority or the respective sports club, operating 17 and 18 greens respectively. The remaining are operated privately (Bulls Head Public House, King & Queen Public House, The Stag Public House and Grappenhall Ex-Servicemens Club).

Table 10.3: Breakdown of bowling greens in Warrington

Site ID	Site name	Post code	Analysis area	User(s)	Number of greens	Management
4	Bank Park	WA1 1UH	Central	Bank Park Bluesky BC, Victoria New Town BC	2	Local Authority
48	Grange Sports & Social Club	WA4 1QH	Central	Grange BC	2	Sports Club
61	Hood Lane Recreation Ground	WA5 1ET	West	Crosfields BC, Penketh Tavern BC	2	Local Authority
72	Monks Sports & Social Club	WA1 4NS	East	Monk Sports BC	1	Sports Club
104	St Elphin's Park	WA1 3AS	Central	St Elphins BC	2	Local Authority

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Site ID	Site name	Post code	Analysis area	User(s)	Number of greens	Management
127	Thornton Road Recreation Centre	WA5 2TH	West	Eagle Sports BC	1	Sports Club
131	Victoria Park	WA4 1DG	Central	Victoria Park BC	2	Local Authority
136	Whitecross Community Centre	WA5 1PT	Central	St Albans BC	1	Local Authority
163	Bewsey Park	WA5 0AN	Central	-	3	Local Authority
164	Brooklands Hotel Bowling Green	WA5 1PQ	Central	-	1	Sports Club
165	Workingmen's Mission Recreation Club	WA5 1TY	Central	-	1	Sports Club
167	Bulls Head Public House	WA1 2SX	Central	Bulls Head BC	1	Private
168	King & Queen Public House	WA1 3SP	East	King & Queen BC	1	Private
169	Alford Hall Social Club	WA1 3NJ	East	Alford Hall BC	1	Sports Club
170	St Oswalds Club	WA1 3LB	East	St Oswalds BC	1	Sports Club
171	Padgate Tennis & Bowls Club	WA1 4HU	East	Padgate Tennis & Bowls Club	1	Sports Club
173	Woolston Social Club	WA1 4AD	East	Woolston BC	1	Sports Club
174	The Irish Club Bowling Green	WA2 7AL	Central	Irish Club BC	1	Sports Club
175	Orford Park	WA2 8DN	Central	Orford WM BC	2	Local Authority
177	Walkers Sports and Social Club	WA2 8PU	Central	Tetley BC	2	Sports Club
182	Penketh Bowling Club	WA5 2SG	West	Penketh BC	1	Sports Club
183	The Stag Public House	WA4 6EG	South	Stag Inn BC	1	Private
184	Walton Gardens	WA4 6SN	South	-	1	Local Authority
185	Alexander Park	WA4 2UT	South	-	2	Local Authority
186	Grappenhall Ex-Servicemens Club	WA4 2QG	South	Grappenhall BC	1	Private
188	Oughtrington Bowling Green	WA13 9JG	South	-	1	Sports Club
189	Croft Bowling Association	WA3 7JE	East	Croft BC	1	Sports Club
191	Burtonwood Bowling Green	WA5 4LH	West	Burtonwood BC	1	Sports Club
205	Longbarn Bowling Green	WA2 0QX	East	Longbarn BC	1	Sports Club

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Bank Park accommodates two all weather, championship standard artificial greens as part of a £1 million investment in 2015. Bank Park is said to be the first location in the world to have two artificial crown bowling greens, allowing year round play on site. As artificial greens are relatively new across the Country, it is not yet known how long the surface will last before it requires replacement.

Figure 10.1 below highlights the location of all outdoor bowling greens in Warrington. For a key to the map, see Table 10.3.

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Quality

Following a non-technical assessment of greens in Warrington (undertaken in July 2022) and cross referencing the findings against club consultation, most greens (27 or 70%) are rated as good quality, with 12 greens (30%) rated as standard quality. No greens are rated as poor quality.

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows: Good (>80%), Standard (50-70%), Poor (<70%) and include, but are not limited to, the examination of; evenness of playing surface, condition of ditches/boardings, quality of surrounding hard areas, disability access, evidence of litter/leaf fall/fouling/inappropriate use and quality of ancillary provision (clubhouse/pavilion/car parking /floodlights/fencing).

Table 10.4: Summary of bowling green quality

Site ID	Site name	Post code	Number of greens	Quality of green
4	Bank Park	WA1 1UH	2	Good
48	Grange Sports & Social Club	WA4 1QH	2	Good
61	Hood Lane Recreation Ground	WA5 1ET	2	Good
72	Monks Sports & Social Club	WA1 4NS	1	Standard
104	St Elphin's Park	WA1 3AS	2	Good
127	Thornton Road Recreation Centre	WA5 2TH	1	Good
131	Victoria Park	WA4 1DG	2	Good
136	Whitecross Community Centre	WA5 1PT	1	Good
163	Bewsey Park	WA5 0AN	3	Good
164	Brooklands Hotel Bowling Green	WA5 1PQ	1	Good
165	Workingmen's Mission Recreation Club	WA5 1TY	1	Standard
167	Bulls Head Public House	WA1 2SX	1	Standard
168	King & Queen Public House	WA1 3SP	1	Standard
169	Alford Hall Social Club	WA1 3NJ	1	Good
170	St Oswalds Club	WA1 3LB	1	Good
171	Padgate Tennis & Bowls Club	WA1 4HU	1	Standard
173	Woolston Social Club	WA1 4AD	1	Standard
174	The Irish Club Bowling Green	WA2 7AL	1	Good
175	Orford Park	WA2 8DN	2	Good
177	Walkers Sports and Social Club	WA2 8PU	2	Good
182	Penketh Bowling Club	WA5 2SG	1	Standard
183	The Stag Public House	WA4 6EG	1	Standard
184	Walton Gardens	WA4 6SN	1	Good
185	Alexander Park	WA4 2UT	2	Standard
186	Grappenhall Ex-Servicemans Club	WA4 2QG	1	Good
188	Oughtrington Bowling Green	WA13 9JG	1	Good
189	Croft Bowling Association	WA3 7JE	1	Good
191	Burtonwood Bowling Green	WA5 4LH	1	Standard
205	Longbarn Bowling Green	WA2 0QX	1	Standard

Even though most greens across Borough are good quality, they still require substantial levels of dedicated maintenance to sustain this standard. It should also be noted that greens at Bank Park, St Elphin's Park and Victoria Park are also used for a winter playing season, limiting the time available for off-season maintenance.

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A green is considered good quality if it has a high percentage of grass coverage, an even playing surface and limited signs of wear and tear on surrounding ditches/boarding and hard standing areas. In addition, there must be little to no evidence of litter, dog fouling, leaves and inappropriate usage of the green.

Burtonwood BC is currently in the process of fundraising to improve the quality of the green at Burtonwood Bowling Club. Similarly, Irish Club BC has plans to improve the green at The Irish Club Bowling Green.

Irish Club BC, Penketh BC and Orford WM BC all indicate green quality has improved at their respective home venues due to improved maintenance and perceived better weather whilst Burtonwood BC green quality has deteriorated due to limited maintenance by the previous committee. The new committee is hoping to rectify this through improved maintenance as stated above.

Ancillary facilities

All clubs which responded to consultation have access to some form of clubhouse/pavilion on site or through an adjoining public house. The quality of these range from purpose built brick pavilions to basic wooden huts and shelters. Wooden pavilions, huts and shelters are typically considered to be poor quality facilities whilst temporary structures being utilised as permanent pavilions are generally considered to be of standard quality. Brick built permanent clubhouses are considered to be good quality facilities. Three sites are accompanied by good quality facilities whereas two sites have standard quality ancillary provision.

Table 10.5: Summary of club ancillary provision comments from consultation

Site ID	Site name	Club	Analysis area	Quality
131	Victoria Park	Victoria Park BC	Central	Good
174	The Irish Club Bowling Green	Irish Club BC	Central	Standard
175	Orford Park	Orford WM BC	Central	Good
182	Penketh Bowling Club	Penketh BC	West	Standard
191	Burtonwood Bowling Green	Burtonwood BC	West	Good

Victoria Park BC states the facilities at Victoria Park are one of the best in the league and are used regularly for major finals by the Warrington and District Bowls Association.

Despite the above, Penketh BC, Victoria Park BC and Orford WM BC all state they are without changing provision at their respective home venues whilst Irish Club BC and Penketh BC state their clubhouses are in poor condition although rate their overall facilities as standard.

Sports lighting

In Warrington, 16 bowls sites are serviced by sports lighting:

- ◀ Bank Park
- ◀ Brooklands Hotel Bowling Green
- ◀ Bulls Head Public House
- ◀ Burtonwood Bowling Green
- ◀ Croft Bowling Association
- ◀ Grappenhall Ex-Servicemens Club
- ◀ Grange Sports & Social Club
- ◀ Monks Sports & Social Club
- ◀ Orford Park
- ◀ Padgate Tennis & Bowls Club
- ◀ St Oswalds Club
- ◀ The Stag Public House
- ◀ Thornton Road Recreation Ground
- ◀ Victoria Park
- ◀ Walkers Sports and Social Club
- ◀ Woolston Social Club

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Additionally, Irish Club BC also aspires to install sports lights to service the green at The Irish Club.

Greens with sports lighting offer opportunities to access provision for training and matches during evenings outside of the summer months. However, they are relatively rare across the Country, with the level of sports lighting supply in Warrington therefore considered to be comparatively high.

10.3: Demand

Current demand

There are 25 bowling clubs identified as playing in Warrington although only five have responded to consultation requests to date. Where known, membership of the responsive clubs totals 382, broken down by club in the table below.

Table 10.6: Membership for bowls clubs across Warrington

Club name	Current membership			
	Senior males	Senior females	Juniors (U18)	Total
Burtonwood BC	45	32	-	77
Irish Club BC	20	-	-	20
Orford WM BC	60	34	-	94
Penketh BC	62	55	-	117
Victoria Park BC	45	29	-	74
Total	232	150	-	382

The largest club according to known membership is currently Penketh BC, with 117 members, followed by Orford WM BC with 94 members. The smallest club is Irish Club BC with only 20 members.

Future demand

The BCGBA is actively working to negate the stereotype that bowls is a sport is for the older generation. As such, it is taking active steps at a county and national level to encourage younger players.

Of responding clubs, all five clubs highlight plans to increase membership, although only four clubs quantify this aspiration.

Table 10.7: Future demand aspirations

Club name	Future demand		Total
	Senior	Junior (U18)	
Burtonwood BC	5	-	5
Irish Club BC	10	-	10
Penketh BC	15	-	15
Victoria Park BC	6	-	6

Orford WM BC did not quantify its future demand aspirations.

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Additional demand

Penketh and Burtonwood bowls clubs report that their greens are also available for pay and play, in addition for use by members, although little external demand is received. This is also a key reason as to why most of the other clubs do not offer pay and play, with many stating it is not worthwhile as the greens would have to have a continuous onsite presence to manage any visitors although Irish Club BC states it may look into enabling this.

Latent demand

Sport England's Market Segmentation Tool⁴⁰ 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 358 people who would like to participate in the sport within Warrington. This represents approximately 0.17% of the Borough's population compared to a national average of 0.16%.

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

10.4: Supply and demand analysis

The capacity of a bowling green is very much dependent on the leagues 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 used during the afternoons by club members which bowl socially, with access a potential issue during peak times if membership is particularly high.

Bowling clubs are generally considered viable if they have the appropriate level of membership to sustain their bowling green and accompanying ancillary facilities. Therefore, clubs that have lower levels of participation in comparison to the remaining clubs within Warrington may have issues maintaining their provision. Irish Club BC falls into this category and so focus should be placed on supporting the Club to realise its future demand aspirations to ensure its future viability.

Conversely those clubs which have a substantial level of demand also need to be monitored to ensure they have the appropriate quantity/quality of provision. All remaining clubs (where known) have over 60 members and should therefore be consulted with regularly to ensure their provision remains suitable for their level of demand.

Where known, all clubs are willing to accept new members. As such, it is considered that anyone within Warrington that would like to start participating could do so at the clubs and greens already in existence. This suggests supply is sufficient to meet current and future levels of demand. Therefore, priority should be based on retaining the quantity and quality of existing provision and supporting clubs to improve their facilities.

⁴⁰ <https://segments.sportengland.org/>

10.5: Conclusion

In summary, there is currently sufficient capacity for crown bowling greens in Warrington to meet current and future demand where known. However, bowling clubs may need support to improve ancillary facilities at their respective home sites and clubs with high level of demand should be monitored to ensure their existing facilities remain suitable for their demand. Additionally, further investigation is required into the unresponsive clubs to determine whether they have capacity issues at their respective home venues.

Bowls summary

- ◀ **There is currently sufficient capacity for crown bowling greens to meet both current and future demand.**
- ◀ There are 39 bowling greens in Warrington located across 29 sites.
- ◀ Most bowling greens are owned and managed by the Local Authority or the respective sports club, operating 17 and 18 greens respectively. The remaining are operated privately.
- ◀ Most (27) greens are rated as good quality, with 12 greens rated as standard quality. No greens are rated as poor quality.
- ◀ Burtonwood BC is currently in the process of fundraising to improve the quality of the green at Burtonwood Bowling Club. Similarly, Irish Club BC has plans to improve the green at The Irish Club Bowling Green.
- ◀ Of the responding clubs, three have access to good quality ancillary facilities whereas two have standard quality ancillary provision. Despite this, Penketh, Victoria Park and Orford WM bowls clubs are without changing facilities and Irish Club and Penketh bowls clubs state their respective clubhouses are in poor condition.
- ◀ There are 25 bowling clubs identified as playing in Warrington although only five have responded to consultation requests to date. Where known, membership of the responsive clubs totals 382.
- ◀ The largest club according to known membership is currently Penketh BC, with 117 members, followed by Orford WM BC with 94 members. The smallest club is Irish Club BC with only 20 members.
- ◀ Of responding clubs, all five clubs highlight plans to increase membership, although only four clubs quantify this aspiration. In total, future demand aspirations total 36 members.

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PART 11: CYCLING

11.1: Introduction

British Cycling is the NGB for all forms of cycling. It oversees six sporting disciplines, with each having a dedicated facility type:

- ◀ Track cycling – velodromes
- ◀ Road cycling – closed road circuits
- ◀ Mountain biking – trails
- ◀ BMX racing – race/pump tracks
- ◀ Cycle speedway – cycle speedway tracks
- ◀ Cyclocross – non-dedicated, non-permanent venues

British Cycling aids in the development of all six formats, helping to safeguard those that wish to participate in a competitive and compelling environment. The popularity of cycling has increased since recent, elite sporting success in the Olympics and Paralympics as well as in other major championships.

11.2: Supply

There are no dedicated cycling facilities in Warrington. Warrington Road Club, Wild Bikes Cycling Club and North Cheshire Clarion are on and off-road cycling clubs.

Cycling routes

The Council, in collaboration with local cyclists, has recommended cycling routes for people to use. This includes the Terry O'Neill Way, Trans Pennine Trail, and Sankey Valley Trail. These are a just a few popular cycling routes in Warrington and range in distance and elevation for different ages and abilities.

11.3: Demand

Warrington Road Club

Warrington Road Club supports both competitive and non-competitive, on and off-road cycling. The Club currently has 60 members, some of which compete in local road races and time trials.

The Club offers two social club runs which includes a Sunday Club Run which is generally between 70-100 miles depending on weather and time of year, departing from War Memorial Monument, Knutsford Road. For the Wednesday Club Run, the Club meets at Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge for its Wednesday Club Run before heading to 2 Mills Cycle Café (Chester) and back.

Wild Bikes Cycling Club

Wild Bikes Cycling Club is a road cycling club that organises a range of rides for its members to cater for all levels of ability. The Club offer two rides on Wednesdays; a club training ride which is suited for riders who are looking to improve fitness and practice their group riding skills and a mixed level training ride which is suited to riders wanting to build confidence and fitness.

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The Club also run four rides on Sundays, which includes a social ride, an active ride, an intermediate ride and a club ride. All these runs depart from Mulberry Tree, Stockton Heath and range in speed and distance to suit different abilities.

North Cheshire Clarion

North Cheshire Clarion is a cycling club based in Warrington which is run by local cyclists. The Club supports both competitive and non-competitive, on and off-road cycling. The Club accommodates over 200 members, including both adults and children of all ages and abilities. There are no entry requirements to join the club.

HSBC UK Go-Ride

HSBC UK Go-Ride is a British Cycling's development programme for young people. It offers a fun and safe way to introduce young people to the sport and provides a platform to improve cycling skills. People can get involved through holiday coaching programmes or through their local accredited club which allows them to sample the various disciplines of the sport. Progression is obtainable with Go-Ride Racing, offering competition for riders to transition from school or club coaching to inter club and open regional competitions.

North Cheshire Clarion is a British Cycling Clubmark accredited Go-Ride Cycling Club based in Warrington.

HSBC UK Breeze

HSBC UK Breeze is a British Cycling's development programme for women. It offers three categories (easy going, steady and challenging) to allow women of all abilities to get involved. The programme offers exercise whilst also creating a comfortable environment to meet new people.

In Warrington, there is an active group involved in the programme, known as Warrington Breeze Ladies.

Future/latent demand

Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in cycling but are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies latent demand of 8,601 people who would like to participate in the sport within Warrington which equates to 4.1% of the Borough's population. This is relatively high when compared to the national average of approximately 3.4%.

Notwithstanding the above, it must be noted that future and latent demand does not account for societal factors or changes in the way people may wish to participate in sport and 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, there is a focus by British Cycling to develop youth participation through the HSBC UK Go-Ride or HSBC UK Breeze schemes, which may lead to further increases in demand.

11.4: Supply and demand analysis

High demand for cycling is identified within Warrington, both currently and when taking into account latent demand. Furthermore, it is imperative that other cycling activity is supported given the prevalence of formalised cycling demand within Warrington.

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11.5: Conclusion

Whilst no demand is identified for dedicated cycling facilities in Warrington, cycling routes throughout the Borough have a high level of demand through cycling clubs as well as recreational use and for travel.

Cycling – supply and demand summary

- ◀ **High demand for cycling is identified within Warrington, both currently and when taking into account latent demand.**
- ◀ There are no dedicated cycling facilities in Warrington. Warrington Road Club, Wild Bikes Cycling Club and North Cheshire Clarion are on and off-road cycling clubs.
- ◀ The Council, in collaboration with local cyclists, have recommended cycling routes for people to use. This includes the Terry O'Neill Way, Trans Pennine Trail, and Sankey Valley Trail.
- ◀ Warrington Road Club supports both competitive and non-competitive, on and off-road cycling. The Club currently has 60 members, some of which compete in local road races and time trials.
- ◀ Wild Bikes Cycling Club is a road cycling club that organises a range of rides for its members to cater for all levels of ability. The Club offers two rides on Wednesdays and four rides on Sundays.
- ◀ North Cheshire Clarion is a cycling club based in Warrington which is run by local cyclists. The Club supports both competitive and non-competitive, on and off-road cycling and has over 200 members.
- ◀ North Cheshire Clarion is a British Cycling Clubmark accredited Go-Ride Cycling Club based in Warrington.
- ◀ In Warrington, there is an active group involved in Breeze, known as Warrington Breeze Ladies.

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PART 12: GOLF

12.1: Introduction

Golf is the fifth largest participation sport in England, with around 730,000 members belonging to one of 1,800 affiliated clubs and a further two million people playing independently outside of club membership. Emerging data from England Golf suggests that there are now over four million golfers in England, representing an increase of 1.7 million golfers since 2019. Additionally, there has been an increase in affiliated membership of approximately 110,000 members.

There are an estimated 3,000 golf courses across the Country, with approximately 90 designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest because apart from the intensively managed trees and greens they have other habitats with high wildlife value. Many other courses also exist within designated Heritage Coast sites, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or listed Historic Parklands.

Nationally, the sport is governed by England Golf. Its role includes providing competitions for players of all ages and abilities, identifying and developing the most talented golfers, maintaining a uniform system of handicapping, administering and applying the rules, and introducing new golfers via its initiatives such as 'Get into Golf'.

Consultation

This section was informed via consultation with England Golf, which provided information relating to all facilities and clubs within Warrington. All golf clubs were also invited to complete an online survey although only Walton Hall and Leigh golf clubs were responsive.

12.2: Supply

There are three different types of golf facilities recognised by Sport England and governed by England Golf, as defined in the table below. Facilities such as pitch and putt courses and miniature/crazy golf courses (like those located at Walton Hall Gardens) are not included as these are not considered to be traditional formats of the game and are not comparable offerings.

Table 12.1: Definitions of golf facilities

Facility type	Description
Standard	A standard par course, with a minimum of 9 holes but normally associated with 18-hole courses; many 9-hole courses have different tee boxes which allow the provision to be played as an 18-hole course. Some courses provide 27 holes, with any two loops of 9-holes played to make up an 18-hole round.
Par 3	Shorter length of holes than a standard course, with no hole longer than Par 3. Most likely to be a 9-hole course although 18-hole offerings do exist. Does not include pitch and putt courses, which are even shorter offerings and are not considered to be a traditional version of the sport.
Driving Range	Includes covered and uncovered driving range bays but not practice areas within golf courses; ranges are based on the hiring of balls, with users not required to retrieve, whereas practice areas are generally for members to use with their own balls (although a growing number have dispensers). Does not include 'entertainment' ranges or virtual offerings, although some driving ranges have expanded to also provide these features.

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Within Warrington, there are nine golf venues that provide facilities conforming with the above definitions, as identified in Table 13.1 and Table 13.2 below. Four are located in the East Analysis Area, three in the South Analysis Area and two in the West Analysis Area. The Central Analysis Area does not provide any formal golf facilities.

Figure 12.1: Location of golf courses in Warrington

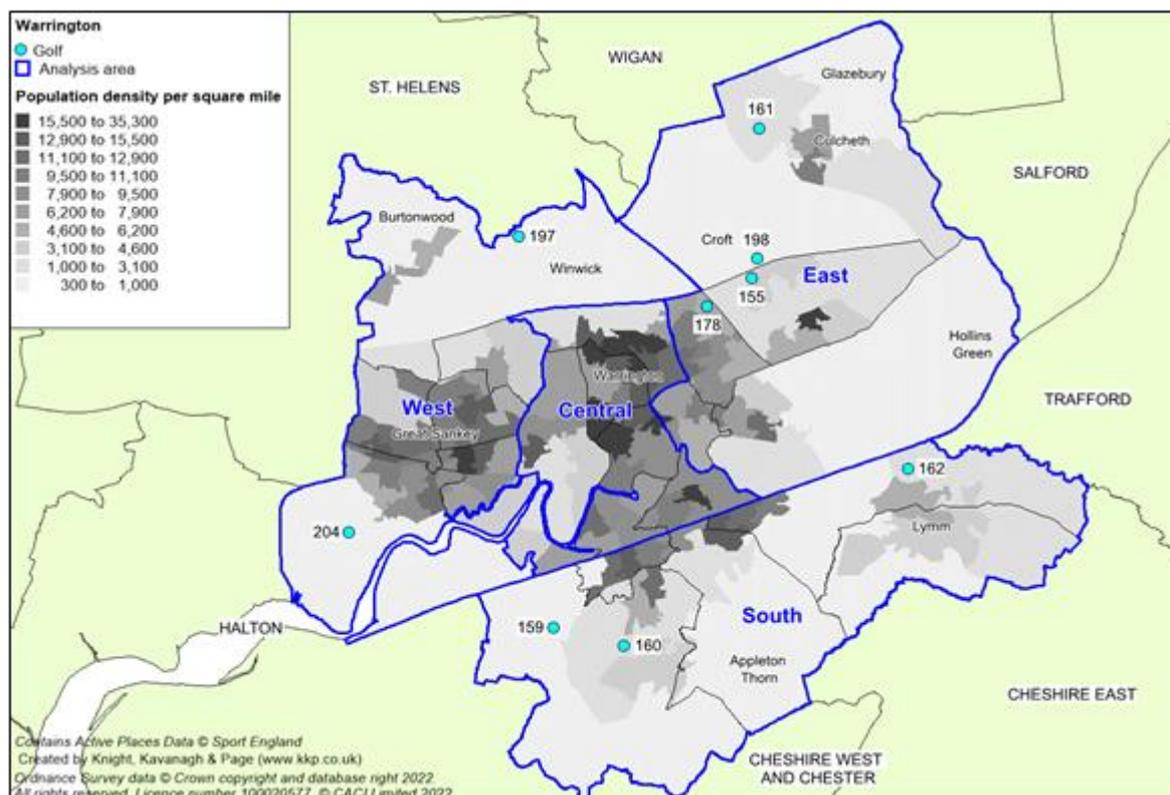


Table 12.2: Golf facilities within Warrington

Site ID	Site Name	Postcode	Analysis area
155	Birchwood Golf Club	WA3 7PB	East
159	Walton Hall Golf Course	WA4 5LU	South
160	Warrington Golf Club	WA4 5HR	South
161	Leigh Golf Club	WA3 4BG	East
162	Lymm Golf Club	WA13 9AN	South
178	Poulton Park Golf Club	WA2 0SH	East
197	Alder Root Golf Club	WA2 8RZ	West
198	Croft Golf Centre	WA3 7AW	East
204	True Fit Golf Centre	WA5 2UW	West

Standard hole golf courses

Seven of the nine golf sites within Warrington provide 18-hole golf courses whilst Poulton Park Golf Club has a 9-hole, 18 tee golf course. These are summarised in the table below. Only Croft Golf Centre is without a standard hole course, instead providing a driving range on site.

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Table 12.3: Summary of standard hole provision in Warrington

Site ID	Site name	Holes	Par	Yardage ⁴¹			Slope rating
155	Birchwood Golf Club	18	72	6,350	6,070	5,488	124 - 131
159	Walton Hall Golf Course	18	72	6,638	6,293	5,832	133 - 136
160	Warrington Golf Club	18	71	6,216	5,925	5,709	110 - 136
161	Leigh Golf Club	18	69	5,904	5,633	5,244	123 - 140
162	Lymm Golf Club	18	71	6,351	6,103	5,575	131 - 135
178	Poulton Park Golf Club	9	35	2,820	2,709	2,550	127 - 130
197	Alder Root Golf Club	18	71	6,122	5,926	5,358	126 - 134
204	True Fit Golf Centre	18	70	5,483	5,254	4,996	-

Of the seven 18 holes courses, Walton Hall Golf Course provides the longest offering, with True Fit Golf Centre providing the shortest. However, both are in the range of what you would expect from traditional provision. Shorter courses tend to offer some variety that may appeal more so to a defined market that would not feel comfortable playing lengthier provision e.g. beginner and/or casual golfers.

Nationally, many 9-hole courses are shorter than the front or back nine of an 18-hole course, primarily to attract and cater for a different userbase. However, this does not apply at Poulton Park Golf Club, with the total course yardage representing approximately half that of a traditional 18-hole course.

Slope ratings

Slope ratings are new to golf across the World. The intention is for them to allow the handicap system to reflect course difficulty and the difference in difficulty for all players compared to scratch golfers. In effect, this enables each player to have a handicap that will vary from course-to-course, depending on difficulty, as well as a general handicap.

The maximum slope rating is 155, whereas the minimum is 55. The standard difficulty is considered to be 113, which means that the courses in Warrington are generally considered to be more difficult than the mean, with them collectively ranging from 110-140 (the slope rating varies depending on which tee is used).

No slope rating is provided for True Fit Golf Centre as the site is unaffiliated to England Golf. This means that an assessment has not taken place.

Par 3 golf holes

Most commonly, Par 3 provision is used by beginner and casual players, although they are also frequented by more traditional golfers wanting to practice their short game. That being said, there are no Par 3 golf courses provided in Warrington although there is a nine-hole, pitch and putt course at Walton Gardens.

Driving range bays

Only the golf courses at Birchwood Golf Club and True Fit Golf Centre are supported by a driving ranges.

The range at Birchwood Golf Club only has four bays and is only available to club members.

⁴¹ White denotes Championship tees, yellow denotes men's tees and red denotes ladies' tees.

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True Fit Golf Centre provides a 22-bay floodlit driving range. Croft Golf Centre also provides a 20-bay floodlit driving range. Provision of floodlights at both of these sites allows year round and late evening use and both are available for anyone to use on a pay and play basis.

Table 12.4: Summary of driving range bays in Warrington

Site ID	Site name	No. of bays	Sports lighting?	Pay and play?
155	Birchwood Golf Club	4	No	No
198	Croft Golf Centre	20	Yes	Yes
204	True Fit Golf Centre	22	Yes	Yes

Management and ownership

There are three main types of ownership and management models of golf facilities in England; members clubs, proprietary clubs and municipal facilities, as summarised below.

Table 12.5: Types of ownership and management of golf facilities

Management type	Description
Members	Traditionally owned by members and run by committees. They are likely to hire caterers and green staff. Most members' clubs offer some level of pay and play and encourage golf societies but are mostly focused on membership numbers.
Proprietary	Owned or managed by businesses or individuals, these can include country club type facilities at the high end of the golfing market alongside more localised facilities. Many have clubs operating within them but can also take a much more relaxed attitude to dress and traditions of golf. Pay and play opportunities tend to be a key feature of the business plan.
Municipal	These are generally owned by a local authority, although in a growing number of instances, management has been contracted and externalised to private companies. Due to a lack of financial viability, many have closed across the Country in recent years and many that remain are under threat.

It is recognised that members clubs and visitors to such clubs are normally expected to dress appropriately, have a registered handicap certificate (a certificate issued by the Council of National Golf Unions (CONGU)) and be familiar with the rules and etiquette of the game. This is not uncommon at some proprietary clubs, but municipal courses tend to be more relaxed and do not require people to have handicaps, making golf much more accessible.

Consequently, municipal courses are, in many instances, seen as entry level facilities, with players using them before having the confidence to move on to a members' or high-end proprietary club (although many people can and do stay attached to a particular course). They also tend to offer a more affordable golfing experience.

The business model for members clubs tends to rely heavily on income through membership subscriptions and use of ancillary facilities, rather than from pay and play usage. The same can be said for some proprietary clubs, although, in general, more emphasis is placed on supplementing regular activity with green fee sales. Conversely, municipal sites have always been heavily reliant on visitors even though membership packages are normally available (often in the shape of season tickets). On occasion, these can be linked to access to other local authority operated sports facilities, such as leisure centres and swimming pools.

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Despite the above generalisations, each golf facility, regardless of management type, will have its own processes in terms of how much focus is placed on membership and pay and play usage, or whether it equally encourages both. There is no correct way to run a site. A club that focuses on members has guaranteed income, but this can often deter more casual players or nomadic golfers through, for example, a lack of peak time availability. In contrast, a site that depends on visitors can struggle to be viable if there are spells of inclement weather during summer months and can discourage people that want to be part of a club environment.

In Warrington, most golf facilities are members clubs although Alder Root Golf Club, Croft Golf Centre and True Fit Golf Centre are proprietary facilities. The only municipal golf facility in Warrington is located at Walton Hall Golf Course.

Table 12.6: Summary of ownership/management in Warrington

Site ID	Site name	Management type
155	Birchwood Golf Club	Members
159	Walton Hall Golf Course	Municipal
160	Warrington Golf Club	Members
161	Leigh Golf Club	Members
162	Lymm Golf Club	Members
178	Poulton Park Golf Club	Members
197	Alder Root Golf Club	Proprietary
198	Croft Golf Centre	Proprietary
204	True Fit Golf Centre	Proprietary

Pricing

A key issue for the wider golf population is whether golf courses are available to the general population at a price point which is accessible to the majority of residents. Better quality courses tend to cost more to use, whilst 18-hole provision is generally more expensive to access than 9-hole provision.

Nationally, over the past few years, many facilities have altered their pricing structures to allow for discounts following a previous decline in golf membership. England Golf has positively encouraged this as its view is that clubs are more likely to experience growth when flexible packages are available. For instance, some now offer five and/or six day memberships (whereby members can access the course on specific days but not on one or both weekend days), whilst others provide discounts that are no longer limited solely to junior players (e.g. discounts for those aged 18-21 and 21-30 or for those aged 65 and over). In the past, it was common for many clubs to have waiting lists in place for membership, but this has become rare in the present day.

England Golf reports that the average cost of a full adult membership across the Country is currently £901. In Warrington, membership to Poulton Park Golf Club, Alder Root Golf Club and True Fit Golf Centre is below this figure, although at the former this can be attributed to it providing a 9-hole course rather than an 18-hole course.

At the other end of the scale, membership to Warrington Golf Club and Leigh Golf Club, at £1,115 and £1,090 per year respectively, is above the national average. Both courses are also subject to substantial joining fees of £1,000 and £600 respectively, suggesting these facilities are relatively high-end. Due to the joining fee at Lymm Golf Club, it is expected that membership costs would be comparable to Warrington and Leigh golf clubs.

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Green fees are available at all eight sites, with Walton Hall Golf Course presenting the cheapest offering and Warrington Golf Club being the most expensive to access.

Table 12.7: Pricing structures at golf facilities within Warrington

Site ID	Site name	Joining fee	Full membership (per year)	Green fee (per round)	
				Weekday	Weekend
155	Birchwood Golf Club	N/A	£945	£28.00	£33.00
159	Walton Hall Golf Course	N/A	£90 ⁴²	£16.00	£20.00
160	Warrington Golf Club	£1,000	£1,115	£65.00	£65.00
161	Leigh Golf Club	£600	£1,090	£35.00	£45.00
162	Lymm Golf Club	£500	Available via enquiry	£44.00	£50.00
178	Poulton Park Golf Club ⁴³	N/A	£660	£23.00	£28.00
197	Alder Root Golf Club	N/A	£629	£19.00	£22.00
204	True Fit Golf Centre	N/A	£300	£20.00	£25.00

In addition to pricing options above, a loyalty card can also be purchased at True Fit Golf Centre for £30 which provides a £10 discount on all green fees for 12 months.

In addition to the course at True Fit Golf Centre, the driving range is accessible for pay and play usage. It costs £4 for 35 balls, £7 for 70 balls or £8 for 100 balls. The driving range at Croft Golf Centre offers 50 balls for £3 or 100 balls for £5.

Quality

There are no official national or county golf facility rankings. Generally, the better course quality and supporting infrastructure is, the higher the joining/membership and green fees are likely to be. Some sites gain status through hosting county, national and international golf events and some tend to feature in ranking articles put together by golf magazines.

Quality of the golf courses in Warrington is relatively good across the eight sites, with no significant issues identified. Drainage issues were previously prevalent on the first and second holes at Birchwood Golf Club but this has now been rectified via drainage improvements. The course at Leigh Golf Club is also said to have recently had £100,000 worth of improvement works.

The ancillary facilities are also for the most part good across Warrington. Birchwood Golf Club's clubhouse consists of a lounge bar and separate restaurant area with indoor and outdoor seating. It also caters for weddings, conferences and private events. Warrington Golf Club is also supported by a function room for up to 120 people overlooking the course which is available to hire.

Leigh Golf Club accesses the Grade II listed Kenyon Hall as its clubhouse which is regularly hired for weddings, parties and celebrations. Alder Root Golf Club also offers a range of wedding and function packages.

⁴² Members of Walton Hall Golf Course receive a discount to the regular green fee when playing in Sunday Competitions.

⁴³ Green fees listed at Poulton Park Golf Club are for an 18-hole round.

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Lymm Golf Club's clubhouse was rebuilt in 2007 and has recently had further internal refurbishment. It includes a lounge bar, snooker bar, dining room and patio area and is available for hire for functions and weddings. True Fit Golf Centre is supported by a new bar and bistro on site.

12.3: Demand

Around 2004, participation in golf began declining; however, recent signs show that the reduction has not only levelled off but that demand has started to increase, especially following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, both in 2020 and 2021. As one of the first sports to be allowed on both occasions, people have been able to play whilst maintaining social distancing and England Golf has provided very clear guidance as to how this should manifest itself (e.g. by not allowing the flag to be taken out or rakes to be used). Some courses have reported a near doubling of usual demand compared to pre-pandemic levels, highlighting that a significant opportunity now exists to retain increased participation in the long-term.

Membership

England Golf suggests that the average membership of a golf club nationally is 386, which is based on a central national handicap platform.

Club-specific membership figures are no longer available via England Golf although average membership across the seven affiliated clubs in Warrington (Birchwood Golf Club, Alder Root Golf Club, Leigh Golf Club, Warrington Golf Club, Poulton Park Golf Club, Walton Hall Golf Club and Lymm Golf Club) equates to 516. Therefore, total membership across these clubs equals 3,612.

The above figures indicate that golf club membership in Warrington is higher than the national average, with all clubs likely to be operating at or above 386 members.

Membership trends

In line with a national trend of increasing membership, membership across Warrington has increased since 2015. From 2015 to 2018, membership levels in the Borough had remained static, with average membership fluctuating between 402 and 401 members. However, from 2018 to 2022, average membership has jumped to 516, representing a 29% growth in golf club membership across Warrington.

Pay and play

Whilst pay and play usage has increased across England in recent years, usage figures within Warrington are not known as it is not something that is tracked by England Golf. However, it would be expected that demand would be highest at Walton Hall, Alder Root and True Fit golf clubs given the operational structures in place and the cheaper price points for access.

Unmet demand

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to golf facilities. Warrington Golf Club reports having a waiting list in place for male full playing and full playing restricted membership although spaces are available for female members. Lymm Golf Club also states its full membership package is now full so a waiting list has been implemented. However, despite this representing unmet demand for access to these particular sites, it is open to question as to whether it equates to true unmet demand for golf as it is more than likely that those on waiting lists will be accessing other provision in the meantime.

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None of the remaining sites report having a waiting list in place for membership and each site that operates a membership scheme is advertising and welcoming applications online, suggesting that they are all open for new members.

Furthermore, no clubs are turning away pay and play users at times when such usage is allowed. Most pay and play rounds across the sites can be booked online or via telephone.

Latent demand

Latent demand is demand for golf that is not currently being realised. This could be for numerous reasons, such as time constraints, financial reasons and a lack of suitable, available provision. To that end, Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in golf but 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies latent demand of 2,402 people within Warrington.

Whilst the reasoning for the latent demand is unknown and is likely to be varied, the data does show relatively high demand which would significantly increase membership and/or pay and play usage across facilities if realised. England Golf is supportive of clubs that proactively target new audiences in an attempt to tap into such demand i.e. through developing a variety of golfing offers, coaching programmes and a range of membership options.

In addition, England Golf has a mapping tool that enables an assessment of potential demand within a 20-minute drive time of each golf facility, with the population broken down into nine golfing segments. These segments are defined to help provide an indication as to what type of golfing offer each would be most likely to access. They are:

- ◀ Relaxed members
- ◀ Older traditionalists
- ◀ Younger traditionalists
- ◀ Younger fanatics
- ◀ Younger actives
- ◀ Late enthusiasts
- ◀ Occasional time pressed
- ◀ Social couples
- ◀ Casual fun

Across Warrington, Alder Root Golf Club is identified as having the largest potential demand, with 196,379 people falling within the segments within a 20-minute drive time. Lymm Golf Club has the smallest potential demand, equating to 48,719 people.

The demand for each of the sites is relatively evenly split across the nine segments; the highest demand is from "relaxed members" (12,290 people), whilst the lowest is from "older traditionalists" (10,565 people).

Imported demand

Leigh and Walton Hall golf clubs both report the majority of its members travel between two and five miles to play the respective courses although approximately 11-25% of players travel from outside of the Borough to each club.

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Future demand

England Golf has an aim to increase membership of clubs nationally; however, after reaching its previous target, it no longer has a fixed goal in terms of growth. Nationally, many clubs, especially the most established ones, will be happy to retain current demand levels, whilst others will be open to growing and some considerably so. In that regard, England Golf reports that many providers are proactively targeting new audiences through coaching programmes and a wider range of membership and playing options.

In Warrington, each facility will have different aspirations in terms of future levels of demand. Nevertheless, with membership across the District already higher than average, capacity to accommodate significant growth could be questionable.

12.4: Supply and demand analysis

With nine golf facilities in Warrington and a mix of 18-hole and 9-hole courses, as well as two well-equipped driving ranges available to the community, supply is well placed to meet demand. This is especially the case given the various operational structures in place, with some facilities prioritising membership and others prioritising pay and play usage and with some offering a high price point and others offering a low price point. This suggests that all types of golfers are being catered for.

Notwithstanding the above, the only less-traditional formats of the game catered for within Warrington are the 9-hole golf course at Poulton Park Golf Club and the driving ranges at Birchwood Golf Club, Croft Golf Centre and True Fit Golf Centre. Whilst Walton Gardens provides a pitch and putt course, there may be a gap in demand in the Borough for a par 3 golf course or another similar shorter format golf facility.

In the meantime, emphasis should be placed on protecting the facilities that are provided, with options explored to increase demand to more sustainable levels. Additionally, with average golf membership in Warrington above the national average, it is not considered feasible that this demand could be amalgamated onto a fewer number of courses. Therefore, current demand could not be sustained if any provision was lost. England Golf can assist in this regard, primarily through a variety of tools that can be used to better understand the local market. There may also be opportunities for some clubs across the area to work more collaboratively in terms of creating pathways where appropriate to collectively cater for all types of players.

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Golf – supply and demand summary

- ◀ With nine golf facilities in Warrington and a mix of 18-hole and 9-hole courses, as well as two well-equipped driving ranges available to the community, supply is well placed to meet demand.
- ◀ Notwithstanding the above, there may be a gap in demand in the Borough for informal golf facilities such as a par 3 golf course or another similar shorter format golf facility.
- ◀ With average golf membership in Warrington above the national average, it is not considered feasible that this demand could be amalgamated onto a fewer number of courses. Therefore, current demand could not be sustained if any provision was lost.

Golf – supply summary

- ◀ There are currently nine golf venues in Warrington.
- ◀ Eight golf sites within Warrington provide one standard hole course, with seven 18-hole courses (Birchwood, Walton Hall, Warrington, Leigh, Lymm, Alder Root and True Fit golf clubs) and one 9-hole course (Poulton Park Golf Club) in place.
- ◀ No Par 3 course is provided.
- ◀ Croft Golf Centre and True Fit Golf Centre provide covered and floodlit driving ranges that are available to the community whilst Birchwood Golf Club has a driving range available for members only.
- ◀ The majority of golf facilities are members clubs although Alder Root Golf Club, Croft Golf Centre and True Fit Golf Centre are proprietary facilities. The only municipal golf facility in Warrington is located at Walton Hall Golf Course.
- ◀ Warrington and Leigh golf clubs operate above the national average for membership costs, suggesting they are high-end facilities. Lymm Golf Club is expected to have comparable costs. The remaining sites are below the rate.
- ◀ In terms of quality of the golf facilities, it is relatively good across Warrington with no significant issues identified.
- ◀ Drainage issues on the first and second holes have been rectified at Birchwood Golf Club whilst course improvement works have recently been undertaken at Leigh Golf Club.
- ◀ The clubhouse at Lymm Golf Club has been recently refurbished whilst True Fit Golf Centre is supported by a new bar and bistro.

Golf – demand summary

- ◀ Average membership across the seven affiliated clubs in Warrington (Birchwood Golf Club, Alder Root Golf Club, Leigh Golf Club, Warrington Golf Club, Poulton Park Golf Club, Walton Hall Golf Club and Lymm Golf Club) exceeds the national average of golf membership.
- ◀ Membership levels across Warrington were static from 2015 to 2018 although from 2018 to 2022, average membership has increased by 29%.
- ◀ Membership has increased collectively across the clubs by approximately 798 members.
- ◀ England Golf's mapping tool identifies a significant amount of potential demand, with Alder Root Golf Club shown to have the highest population base.
- ◀ Pay and play usage is unknown but is likely to be highest at sites such as Walton Hall, Alder Root and True Fit golf clubs given the operational structure in place and the lower price point.

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 make 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 (updated 2021)

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.

Active Cheshire Connected

This Autumn Active Cheshire will be launching its new strategy '**Active Cheshire Connected**'. This sets out a new direction for Active Cheshire, where it will play a system leader role and focus heavily on partnership working to drive systemic change, with sport and physical activity as one solution to tackling inequalities. The vision of the strategy is **more people to be more active, more often, living longer, happier, and healthier lives**. Impact will be measured based on:

- ◀ More Healthy, More Active people
- ◀ Greater Health Equity
- ◀ Increased participation in Physical Activity, Sport and Movement
- ◀ High-Quality Partnerships with key stakeholders
- ◀ A coordinated, functioning physical activity system

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Synergy will be seen between Active Cheshire Connect and Sport England's Uniting the Movement. This is intentional, with a shared purpose around tackling inequalities, removing barriers to physical activity, and embedding sustainability, to allow our communities to thrive through improved health and wellbeing and equal opportunities.

The strategy demonstrates Active Cheshire's commitment to being driven by data and insight. Data and insight will sit at the heart of everything it does, driving direction, resource deployment and investment based on where there is most need within local communities. It will look to create shared ownership of this across the local sport and physical activity system and embed a learning culture through its **'Listen, Learn, Create, Innovate, Share, Reflect'** cycle.

The FA National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)

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

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

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

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

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

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

- ◀ **Improve 20,000 Natural Turf pitches**, with a focus on addressing drop off due to a poor playing experience;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 3G AGP 'equivalents'** (mix of full size and small sided provision, including MUGAs - small sided facilities are likely to have a key role in smaller / rural communities and encouraging multi-sport offers), enhancing the quality of playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 changing pavilions/clubhouses**, linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development;

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- ◀ **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
- ◀ 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: Time for Change Strategy (2020-24)

The FA launched its new National Game Strategy in January 2021 which aims to 'unite the game and inspire the nation'. It will do this in two ways, by 'changing the game to maximise its impact' and by 'serving the game to deliver football for all'.

To achieve this, the strategy will focus on six Game Changer objectives, to change the fabric of the game and tackle long-term issues, to make the largest possible impact in the years ahead:

- ◀ Win a major tournament
- ◀ Service > two million through a transformed media platform
- ◀ Ensure equal opportunities for every girl
- ◀ Delivery of 5,000 quality pitches
- ◀ A game free of discrimination
- ◀ Maximise the appeal and revenue of the FA cups and BFAWSL

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These are underpinned by eight Serve objectives, ensuring maintenance of brilliant business-as-usual services to support the growing and evolving needs of the game:

- ◀ Trusted, progressive regulation and administration
- ◀ Safe and inclusive football pathways and environment
- ◀ Personalised and connected learning experiences
- ◀ Maximum investment into the game
- ◀ Diverse, high-performing workforce and inclusive culture
- ◀ World class venues and events
- ◀ Strong reputation and clear brand identity
- ◀ Technology enabled and insight driven

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

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

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

- ◀ ***Grow and nurture the core***
 - ◀ Create an infrastructure investment fund for First Class County Clubs (FCCs)
 - ◀ Introduce a new Community Investment Funding for FCCs and County Cricket Boards (CCBs)
 - ◀ Invest in club facilities
 - ◀ Develop the role of National Counties Cricket
 - ◀ Further invest in County Competitions
- ◀ ***Inspire through elite teams***
 - ◀ Increase investment in the county talent pathway
 - ◀ Incentivise the counties to develop England Players
 - ◀ Drive the performance system through technology and innovation
 - ◀ Create heroes and connect them with a new generation of fans
- ◀ ***Make cricket accessible***
 - ◀ Broaden crickets appeal through the New Competition
 - ◀ Create a new digital community for cricket
 - ◀ Install non-traditional playing facilities in urban areas
 - ◀ Continue to deliver South Asian Action Plans
 - ◀ Launch a new participation product, linked to the New Competition
- ◀ ***Engage children and young people***
 - ◀ Double cricket participation in primary schools
 - ◀ Deliver a compelling and coordinated recreational playing offer from age five upwards
 - ◀ Develop our safeguarding to promote safe spaces for children and young people
- ◀ ***Transform women's and girls' cricket***
 - ◀ Grow the base through participation and facilities investment
 - ◀ Launch centres of excellence and a new elite domestic structure
 - ◀ Invest in girls' county age group cricket
 - ◀ Deliver a girls' secondary school programme

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◀ **Support our communities**

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

The Rugby Football Union Strategy 2021 Onwards

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

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

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

Game Objectives:

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

Driving Objectives:

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

England Hockey Strategy

England Hockey's Facilities Strategy can be found [here](#). Please note it is currently being updated.

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.

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◀ **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.

◀ **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.

Rugby Football League Strategic Plan 2015 – 2021

The RFL's most recent strategy aims to establish rugby league as "a growing sport, available throughout the country, that is recognised as providing positive experience for all participants and spectators, in environments that are welcoming, inclusive, vibrant, safe and comfortable - encouraging people to return again and again, featuring:

- ◀ Financially viable and sustainable professional clubs creating stable employment opportunities, showcasing local, national and international playing talent, and leading the sport's development - and making a difference - in their own communities;
- ◀ Welcoming community clubs, putting players first, offering recreational enjoyment for children and adults alike in a safe and inclusive environment;
- ◀ A central organisation that stands out for excellence, innovation, mutual respect, integrity and inclusion that understands its role in servicing the wider sport;
- ◀ A sports that lives its values in all its decisions and actions.

This vision is underpinned by 13 core principles, including:

- ◀ **An integrated whole sport.** Each constituent part of the sport will have a responsibility to ensure the good health of the entire game;
- ◀ **Return on investment.** Investment will be targeted to ensure the sustainability of member clubs, and growth in the number and quality of players thus seeking an effective return for the game;
- ◀ **Financial parameters.** Financial distributions will be undertaken to ensure the whole of the game will move forward together;
- ◀ **Geographic expansion.** Geographic expansion of the sport should be carried out in a proportionate and sustainable manner.

Rugby League World Cup 'Inspired by 2021' Legacy Programme

The Rugby League World Cup 2021 will develop a £10 million legacy programme with funds driven into local clubs and community projects. The government investment, delivered by Sport England, is part of RLWC 2021's ambitious plan to grow the sport and make it more visible, engaging and welcoming to current and potential participants.

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The funding will be split into large transformational community projects, such as changing room improvements and new artificial grass pitches with the remaining funding used for smaller scale initiatives such as supplying new kit and equipment to promote club and community development. The investment will focus on the following four key areas:

- ◀ Creating welcoming environments
- ◀ Encouraging participation growth
- ◀ Building community engagement
- ◀ Cultivating further investment

Tennis in Britain - LTA Strategy

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

Objectives

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

Strategies

1. Visibility -Broaden relevance and increase visibility of tennis all year round to build engagement and participation with fans and players.
2. Innovation - Innovate in the delivery of tennis to widen its appeal.
3. Investment - Support community facilities and schools to increase the opportunities to play
4. Accessibility - Make the customer journey to playing tennis easier and more accessible for anyone
5. Engagement - Engage and collaborate with everyone involved in delivering tennis in Britain, particularly coaches and volunteers to attract and maintain more people in the game.
6. Performance - Create a pathway for British champions that nurtures a diverse team of players, people and leaders.
7. Leadership - Lead tennis in Britain to the highest standard so it is a safe, welcoming, well-run sport.

England Athletics Strategic Plan – Athletics & Running: for everyone, forever – 2017 and beyond

This plan sets out England Athletics' mission, vision and strategic priorities that will direct how they work as an organisation during the coming years: what they do and how they will do it.

Vision: Make athletics and running the most inclusive and popular sport in England, led by a network of progressive clubs and organisations and supported by a sustainable, respected and trusted governing body.

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For England Athletics to achieve this vision, they will focus on three values:

- ◀ Pride – taking pride in their work and demonstrating to athletes that they recognise the importance of their role in bettering athletics.
- ◀ Integrity – demonstrate integrity to earn respect and to build effective partnerships.
- ◀ Inclusivity – promote inclusivity in all their actions.

Mission: To grow opportunities for everyone to experience athletics and running, to enable them to reach their full potential.

In order to achieve their mission, England Athletics will have three strategic priorities.

1. To expand the capacity of the sport by supporting and developing its volunteers and other workforce. The target is to achieve a 6% increase every year of licensed leaders, coaches and officials.
2. To sustain and increase participation and performance levels in our sport. To achieve this, England Athletics’ current targets are to increase the number of club registered athletes from (149,000 to 172,000), engage 135,000 people through the RunTogether programme and to increase athlete performance levels across all events and disciplines by 1% every year.
3. To influence participation in the wider athletics market. Their target here is to increase the number of regular athletes or runners by at least one million.

England Athletics Facility Strategy (2018 – 2025)

The purpose of this document is to set out our long term vision for athletics facilities in England. Facilities form a vital component of the overall England Athletics strategy.

The development, protection and enhancement of facilities will support our strategic plan and help England Athletics contribute to the delivery of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport’s Sporting Futures: A New Strategy for Sport and Sport England’s strategy Towards an Active Nation. Appropriate facilities help to attract and inspire new participants and provide the foundation and focus for a significant proportion of the England Athletics family.

The England Athletics Strategic Plan notes that the sport increasingly needs to become financially sustainable and that a business-like and innovative approach is a vital component of its future success. Facilities are fundamental, but they are also expensive to create and to maintain. The sport therefore faces a significant challenge to develop, improve and maintain facilities, most of which are currently operated and funded by third parties.

This strategy sets out a challenge to all those involved with the delivery of the sport to be innovative and business like in the operation and development of facilities at a time of financial challenge, as it aims “To create an innovative and inspiring network of sustainable athletic facilities, with the capacity to meet both current and future demand across England”.

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

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

- ◀ Strengthen governance in all aspects of the sport
- ◀ Deliver safeguarding throughout the golfing community
- ◀ Utilise data and technology to enhance decision making

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

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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				<i>If yes, please indicate what pitches are overmarked? (i.e. one mini/ midi pitch is overmarked on a senior pitch) in Pitch Issues</i>						
Community Use - used, Community Use - unused, No Community Use, Available but Unused										
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			
								Pitch Maintenance Score		
Drainage	Natural (inadequate) SCORE D0		Natural (adequate) SCORE D1		Pipe drained SCORE D2		Pipe and slit drained SCORE D3		Unknown SCORE D0	
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.										

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Cricket non-technical assessment

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 ECD basic standard	
Length of grass	Good	Acceptable	Poor	Ideally 42mm - 25mm	
Evenness	Even	Uneven		Ball should run without deviation or pump	
Evidence of Dog fouling/glass/stones/litter?	None	Yes	Immediate action required	Play also wish to refer to sewer survey. If yes, refer to maintenance site message	
Evidence of Unofficial use?	None	Yes	Immediate action required	eg informal, casual use, unbooked use, kids kickabout etc. Play also wish to refer to sewer survey. If yes, refer to maintenance site message	
Evidence of Damage to surface?	None	Yes	Immediate action required	eg from animals/vehicles - rabbits, cattle and horses etc may also wish to refer to sewer survey	
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 unevenness in surface levels	
Stump holes	Yes	No		Should be no wider than a standard cricket ball	
Moss or materials in the surface	Yes	No		There should be none	
Rips or surface lifting	Yes	No		If "yes" send out site message	
Surface worn in high traffic areas - creases	Yes	No		If "yes" send out site message	
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 on wicket wicket/42mm rest of square	
Evidence of repair work on old wickets	Yes	No			
Grass coverage (square and wickets)	Yes	No		<80% falls below the ECD 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, w 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				
				Good	80+	Potential Rating	Poor		

