

Playing pitch strategy

Introduction

9.1 The key areas of this part of the study included:

- analysing the current level of pitch provision within the District
- assisting the Council in meeting the requirements for playing pitches in accordance with the methodology developed by Sport England in conjunction with the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR)
- providing information for decision-making and future development proposals.

9.2 The application of the playing pitch methodology provides more detail regarding the provision of pitches and builds on the analysis set out in elsewhere in this report. An electronic toolkit has also been provided to the Council to enable it to regularly update the data as pitch demand and usage evolves over the next few years, including any demographic changes or increases in participation.

9.3 The Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) assesses participation in competitive pitch sports by adults and young people. This section applies the PPM calculations to the following sports (these will be referred to as 'pitch sports' in the body of the report):

- association football (football)
- rugby
- cricket

Usually hockey is included within this list but there is currently no competitive hockey played in the District, mainly due to the absence of an accessible suitable synthetic turf pitch (STP).

9.4 This section presents the key findings arising from pitch specific survey work and consultation, highlighting areas of concern and opportunity. It is important to note that, in terms of the PPM, the strategy discusses the provision of playing pitches (ie the playing surface, safety margins and the wider area for repositioning the pitch within the playing field) and not playing fields nor open spaces (which include grass or other areas which are not used for sport). This is an important distinction because some of the areas surrounding pitches are not used for sport but rather have a value as a recreational area. Calculations set out in this section may therefore differ from figures quoted in section 7 of this study.

9.5 This strategy covers the following key areas:

- the current picture – a review of current participation trends and playing pitch and provision in England for pitch sports and outdoor sports, at national and local levels
- methodology – a summary of the research process
- supply and demand – an overview of the playing pitch facilities and pitch sport activity in Bromsgrove
- an application of Sport England's PPM
- key actions, recommendations and priorities for the future based on development of the main issues arising from the supply and demand analysis.

The Playing Pitch Methodology

- 9.6 Our process follows the methodology set out in 'Towards a Level Playing Field: A manual for the production of a playing pitch strategy'.
- 9.7 The aim of the PPM is to determine the number of pitches required for each activity based on demand in an actual or predicted set of circumstances. The essential difference between the methodology and previous approaches based on national standards is that, instead of using land area per head of population as the basic unit, it measures demand (at peak times) in terms of teams requiring pitches and then compares this with the pitches available, thus enabling a tangible measure of the adequacy of existing supply.
- 9.8 The particular advantage of this methodology is that it is related precisely to the local situation and the task of collating and analysing the information highlights problems and issues from which policy options and solutions can be explored.
- 9.9 In line with this methodology, this strategy only applies the PPM to pitch provision for football, rugby and cricket.
- 9.10 The success of the PPM outlined above depends largely on obtaining as accurate a tally as possible of the number of teams and pitches. To achieve this, a full audit of pitches, users and providers within the District boundary was conducted. A variety of methods were used to identify pitch provision:
- review of Active Places to determine the number and relative proximity of pitches
 - review of The FA's Local Area Data Report for the District, which details the number of teams
 - Parish Council questionnaires (see Appendix C)
 - telephone consultation with private pitch providers (eg work grounds such as Britannica Insurance) and schools
 - identification of sports facility sites via aerial maps and subsequent visits by PMP site assessment staff.

All known football, cricket, rugby and hockey clubs were identified in governing body and county association handbooks, league handbooks, pitch booking records, websites, local press, telephone directories, or local knowledge. To ensure accuracy the records were verified against the FA's Local Area Data report for Bromsgrove District.

Supply and demand of playing pitches

Pitch stock

9.11 There is a total of 94 pitches in the District. This figure includes all known public, private, school and other pitches whether they are in secured public use or not. The full audit of pitches can be seen in Appendix D. They comprise:

- 49 adult football pitches
- 5 dedicated junior football pitches
- 6 dedicated mini soccer pitches
- 15 cricket pitches
- 21 rugby union pitches
- 3 STPs

(It should be recognised that, in practice, the adult pitch stock accommodates junior matches and a low number of junior pitches is not necessarily reflective of the state of junior sport in any local authority)

Adult pitches

9.12 Based on the current adult population in the District there is a ratio of one pitch to every 875 adults. This is quite a high ratio, especially taking into account that a high percentage (88%) of the total pitch stock is made up of adult pitches. As an illustration, the best figure we have encountered is 1:365 in Kennett in Wiltshire and the worst is 1:2,637 in Newham. Provision in Bromsgrove is similar to that in North Wiltshire and there are more pitches per head of adult population than the national average (1:989).

9.13 Table 9.1 sets out a selection of previous results from studies that PMP has undertaken for illustration purposes.

Table 9.1 - Ratio of adult pitches per 1,000 adults

Local Authority	Ratio (Pitches: adults)
Kennett	1: 365
Bath and North East Somerset	1: 574
Colchester	1:655
Elmbridge	1:681
Canterbury	1:720
Maidstone	1:723
Huntingdonshire District	1:725
District	1:743
North Wiltshire	1: 804
Bromsgrove	1:875
England	1: 989
St. Helens	1: 1,050
Portsmouth	1: 1,100
Worcester	1:1,125
Torbay	1: 1,313

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- 9.14 The ratio for Bromsgrove has also been compared with the national averages for each sport (Table 9.2 below) taken from the Sport England database. The comparison shows that Bromsgrove has a higher number of adult football and rugby union pitches per head of adult population compared to the national averages. However, the ratio of cricket pitches is low compared to the national average.

Table 9.2 – Ratio of Pitches to Adult

Sport	Bromsgrove District (pitches: adults)	England (pitches: adults)
Football	1:1,351	1: 1,840
Cricket	1:5,451	1: 4,243
Rugby	1:3,374	1: 8,968

Community pitches

- 9.15 In line with the updated documentation '*Towards a Level Playing Field: A Manual for the Production of a Playing Pitch Strategy*' our definition of community pitches is those pitches with 'secured community use', recognising that this has a considerable bearing upon the value of facilities both individually and collectively to the community at large.

- 9.16 In practice this definition embraces:

- all local authority and parish council facilities
- any school facilities where they are subject to formal dual/community use agreements between the school/education authority and the Council
- any other institutional facilities which are available to the public as a result of formal dual/community agreements
- any facilities owned, used or maintained by clubs/private individuals, which as a matter of policy or practice are available for use by large sections of the public through membership of a club or admission fee. In either case the cost of use must be reasonable and affordable for the majority of the community.

- 9.17 Of the 99 pitches identified, 74 (74.7%) are secured for the local community. Table 9.3 shows how pitches secured for community use in Bromsgrove compares to other local authorities in the country.

Table 9.3 - Pitches with secured community use

Local Authority	% of pitches secured for community
Bromsgrove District Council	74.7%
South Somerset Borough Council	69%
Maidstone Borough Council	61%
Elmbridge Borough Council	60%
Canterbury City Council	50%
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead	33.2%

- 9.18 Table 9.3 shows that the proportion of pitches secured for community pitches in Bromsgrove District is very high in comparison with other local authorities for which data is available. This figure should be treated with caution as it is often difficult to ascertain as to whether community usage of school sites is actually subject to a formal use agreement, or whether it is as a result of a relationship between the club and an individual staff member.
- 9.19 It is therefore recommended that further work should be undertaken to determine the level of formal community use agreements in place.

Quality of pitch and ancillary facilities

Consultation feedback

- 9.20 As stated in the Playing Pitch Strategy methodology ‘Towards a Level Playing Field’, pitch quality is a key issue. The presence, and quality, of ancillary facilities is also important, particularly in an era when child protection is high on the sporting agenda. Access to changing facilities is also often a league requirement placed on local clubs. In our experience it is often the case that the *perceived* quality of pitches (and ancillary facilities) is more important than their *actual* quality, and such perceptions can heavily influence the pattern of demand and explain why certain sites are ‘overplayed’ whilst others are not used to the same extent. Perceived quality of pitches has been looked at from a user perspective as well as a detailed pitch quality inspection (completed by the PMP in 2008).
- 9.21 All sports clubs were sent a postal questionnaire to provide qualitative feedback about the pitch stock in the District. In addition a focus group was held at the Council offices for local sports clubs to provide feedback as to the quality and quantity of facilities. Some clubs and league secretaries were also telephoned to gather basic quantitative information, but actually provided additional qualitative feedback verbally. This feedback is summarised below. It is not unusual for this feedback to be inherently negative as it reflects people’s perception of facilities. This analysis should not therefore be treated in isolation and examined alongside the PPM findings throughout the report.

Football	
Value for money	The overriding view of respondents is that clubs do not receive value for money when hiring Council pitches. Specifically, the perceived lack of preparation and ongoing maintenance is not reflected through a reduced cost of pitch hire, which has actually increased over the last few years. In particular, clubs feel that they are somewhat ‘left to their own devices’ when preparing the pitch and have to mark the lines out themselves, without receiving any assistance in sourcing equipment to do this.

Football	
Pitch availability	<p>Examination of the Council booking sheets for pitches suggests that there is spare capacity in the pitch stock in the District. For example, Charford Recreation Ground is not officially used on Saturdays for either of its match slots whilst other facilities such as Aston Fields Recreation Ground, Frankley, Rubery Recreation Ground and Sanders Park have capacity to accommodate additional matches if necessary.</p> <p>The Council operates a first come, first served system concerning pitch bookings and, as a result, there is a natural scramble amongst clubs to play on what are perceived to be the best quality, or most conveniently located, pitches. This policy can lead to junior teams playing on senior pitches (eg Bromsgrove Town Juniors FC use Charford Recreation Ground, which has two senior pitches) despite there being capacity at other junior pitch sites in the District.</p> <p>The Bromsgrove Football League is the principal senior football competition covering the District. It has around 20 teams and some clubs are forced to hire pitches in neighbouring local authorities, such as Droitwich, when ideally they would prefer to play matches in the Bromsgrove area. There is also a demand from teams playing in the Redditch League to use the facilities (due to pitch demand outstripping supply in Redditch) which increases demand for the pitches and means that Bromsgrove League matches have to be played outside the District.</p> <p>In terms of demand, the League has reduced in size over the last few seasons, which has meant less demand for pitches. Clubs attribute this to the ever increasing costs to participate in league competition as well as high facility costs. It should, however, be noted that this trend is mirrored countrywide and is not unique to Bromsgrove.</p> <p>Clubs also refer to the lack of affordable access to school facilities, mainly due to the high rent costs associated with the need to pay for a caretaker to facilitate access to facilities.</p>
General quality	<p>The majority of respondents rate the pitches as either average or poor. In particular dog foul was identified as the single biggest inconvenience at Council sites, along with poor preparation and maintenance.</p> <p>The perception of users is that the quality of pitches has reduced over the last few years. In particular the length of grass, unevenness of surfaces and lack of ancillary facilities were identified as three areas where the quality of the facilities could be improved.</p> <p>Clubs identified that the best pitches were located at private sites, specifically those at Stoke Prior Sports &</p>

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Football	
	<p>Social Club, Barnt Green Sports Club and Britannia Insurance. However, like schools, access to these sites was considered to be difficult and there is a perception amongst clubs that the pitches are not used to capacity.</p> <p>Charford Recreation Ground was identified as being the best pitch site in the District of those that are accessible.</p> <p>Belbroughton Recreation Ground and Hopwood Playing Fields were assessed as the worst scoring pitches in the District. The main reasons for this are the unevenness of the pitches, the long grass length and the evidence of high levels of unofficial use for non-competitive matches, which is detrimental to their long-term quality.</p>
Ancillary accommodation	<p>Only two of the Council's sites having ancillary accommodation, namely Charford Recreation Ground and Rubery Recreation Ground.</p> <p>Worcestershire County FA states that a minimum league requirement is to have access to changing facilities on playing pitch sites. This is a requirement in the Bromsgrove & District League. Due to this clubs feel that a high number of pitches in Bromsgrove are not 'fit for purpose', and this could explain why they travel outside the District to alternative sites with suitable ancillary facilities.</p>
Cricket	
Pitch ownership	<p>All the cricket pitches in the District are club-based. There are therefore no Council maintained pitches available to local clubs. This is not unique to Bromsgrove as the high level of preparation and ongoing maintenance necessary to prepare a good quality, not to mention safe, cricket pitch would place an increased strain on Council budgets.</p>
Quality and quantity	<p>Consultation with clubs has highlighted that, overall, the quality of facilities in Bromsgrove is good. There are no fundamental pitch issues to report and all clubs have private groundstaff that prepare the pitches to the highest quality.</p> <p>The ground regulations to compete in league competitions are stringent and as a result clubs are subject to annual audits to ensure that their grounds meet quality standards. Clubs identified modifications to their grounds which they hoped to make in the future with upgrades to practice nets and increases in the number of square wickets, to further protect the quality of the pitches.</p> <p>Bromsgrove Cricket Club has considered installing an artificial wicket onto the pitch to increase the number of junior matches which can be played, but this surface can be dangerous when wet.</p>

Rugby union	
Club structure	<p>There are five main clubs playing in Bromsgrove:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bromsgrove RUFC • Five Ways Old Edwardians RUFC • Old Halesonians RUFC • Kings Norton RUFC • Woodrush RUFC <p>As with cricket, all the facilities are privately owned and maintained. The RFU conducts regular facility audit checks, which allows the governing body to directly support clubs to achieve their facility development aspirations. A number of key facility improvement projects have recently been supported as a result of this structure, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodrush RUFC – developed a 8.3 acre site adjacent to the current ground to provide one additional pitch to accommodate the Club’s junior programme and relieve pressure from the first team pitch • Bromsgrove RUFC – funding to floodlight the main pitch to RFU standards. • Old Halesonians RUFC – new clubhouse facility has recently opened with improved changing facilities and social areas.
Quality	<p>Clubs have identified that a lack of proper pitch drainage is an issue, particularly with the level of junior usage of the pitches. This pressure is particularly acute at Bromsgrove RUFC which has a large junior section and therefore a great demand on the pitches.</p> <p>Clubs expressed a desire to improve their facilities overall but, other than drainage, the improvements relate to improving the floodlighting or installing barriers to protect the first team pitch. Such improvements can therefore be described as aspirational rather than absolutely necessary in the short-term.</p>

Hockey	
Lack of facilities	The only facility within the District is located at Wythall, which is a 10 mile drive from the town centre. It is therefore more practical for the club to access facilities at Trinity High School in Redditch. Nevertheless, Bromsgrove Hockey Club feels that there is not a sufficient number of artificial turf pitches in the District.
Access to facilities	The club occasionally hires the STP at Bromsgrove High School during the week for training purposes. However, this facility is over-subscribed and is not available for hire on Saturdays, which is when competitive matches are played.

Site visits – an overview

- 9.22 PMP carried out a number of site visits to the outdoor sports facilities. In total around sites were visited and assessed using a series of criteria in line with Sport England guidance. Some sites were subsequently not included in the audit as the pitches were not considered suitable for competitive matches to be played and therefore not required for the Playing Pitch Model.
- 9.23 There is a total of 48 sites in Bromsgrove. All sites were given an overall quality rating of poor, average or good:
- 38 sites scored above average
 - 8 sites scored average
 - 2 sites scored poor.
- 9.24 It should be noted that these assessments do present a snap shot in time and as such cannot be used to provide a definitive quality assessment of the pitches. The site assessments were carried out in the summer of 2008 at a time when the pitches were generally in their best condition as they were out of season or, in the case of cricket actually in season and therefore prepared to their highest standard. These results should therefore not be treated in isolation from the consultation findings.

Demand from sports clubs in Bromsgrove District

9.25 Table 9.4 below illustrates the number of teams playing each sport in Bromsgrove. These include adult, junior and mini teams.

Table 9.4 - Sports clubs using playing pitches in Bromsgrove

	Football	Cricket	Rugby Union	Hockey	TOTAL
Total number of teams	138	81	46	N/A	264
Number of adult teams	44	46	18	N/A	108
Number of junior teams	58	35	28	N/A	121
Number of mini-teams	36	N/A	N/A	N/A	36

9.26 The revised playing pitch methodology, *Towards a Level Playing Field*, assumes that clubs are based in the ward where they play their home matches and does not take into consideration where players live or where they would prefer to play their matches. The key issues emerging from this analysis include:

- the dominant sport in the District is football. Around half of the total number of teams plays football. There are more junior teams than adult teams which could lead to an increase in demand for senior pitches in the future if these teams are retained in the sport
- cricket teams represent nearly a third (31%) of the total teams in the District. There is a relatively even split of adult and junior teams in the District
- five rugby union clubs make up the 46 teams within the District
- there is no hockey club playing in the District, as Bromsgrove Hockey Club plays its matches in Redditch. This is principally due to a lack of a suitable and accessible facility to play matches.

The Playing Pitch Methodology

9.27 The Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) comprises eight stages. Stages one to six involve numerical calculations, whilst stages seven and eight develop issues and solutions. The methodology is employed to analyse the adequacy of current provision and to assess possible future situations, in order that latent and future demand (identified through Team Generation Rates), and the problems with quality, use and capacity of existing pitches can be taken into account.

9.28 It is important to note that the methodology deals with each sport individually with a specific set of calculations because, despite some superficial similarities, they exhibit very different patterns of play.

9.29 We have further subdivided the analysis of some sports to deal with specific sub-sectors of activity, e.g. junior play or adult play, so that important aspects are not

submerged in aggregated data. Football and rugby have been subdivided in this manner, whereas no differentiation has been made between junior and senior cricket as they play on pitches of similar dimensions.

- 9.30 It should be noted that these sub-sections of activity are not always clearly defined and therefore cannot claim to provide a totally accurate picture of participation in the District. For example, it is common for junior teams to play matches on senior pitches, perhaps due to the improved facilities at such sites. This can distort the supply/demand figures in relation to a particular sub-section of pitches and therefore any conclusions around surpluses or deficiencies should be treated in the light of each other, ie whether senior pitches do in fact accommodate junior matches.
- 9.31 The 1991 playing pitch methodology assumed that all pitches are of sufficient standard to sustain two games per week. The 2002 playing pitch methodology suggests that the quality of a pitch should be taken into account. This information can be gained from three sources:
- club surveys
 - site visits (conducted by PMP in June 2008)
 - consultation with key officers and stakeholders.
- 9.32 Using all of this information, it is possible to make a judgement on the carrying capacity of the District's pitches. It should be recognised that there is no formula for factors such as weather conditions, age of users, quality of players, etc. However, through local knowledge, user surveys, interviews and an analysis of usage patterns from the previous season it is possible to consider the capacity of each pitch.
- 9.33 To assign a carrying capacity to each pitch, we have used the estimate provided by clubs for their own pitches and utilised the information gathered from surveys and consultation to estimate the carrying capacity for other pitches. Where we have received no specific comments regarding a pitch, the following assumptions have been made:
- carrying capacity weighting of 0.5 for all school facilities as they are not likely to be able to take as many matches as a public facility
 - parish council/local authority pitches have a carrying capacity weighting of one (ie they can carry two matches per week - a standard assumption).
- 9.34 The pitch site assessments conducted allowed for the lowest quality pitches to be identified and their carrying capacity reduced suitably within the playing pitch model. These pitches scored 'poor' for the quality of the site overall as well as scoring poorly on more than one specific pitch quality factor, namely:
- grass cover
 - quality of surface
 - slope of pitch or outfield
 - evenness of pitch
 - quality of equipment.

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9.35 Those pitches whose carrying capacity was reduced based on the findings for these pitch quality factors were:

- Braces Lane
- Hopwood

In addition the capacity for all school sites has been reduced to cater for curriculum use that takes place on them.

(NB – pitches were assessed during the summer months, which can misrepresent their true quality throughout the season).

PPM calculations

9.36 Table 9.5 below demonstrates the calculations undertaken to determine the surplus/deficit of pitches in the District. It should be noted that the calculated surplus/deficit is based upon the peak load of games to be played at a specific time during the week (i.e. am or pm on a day). However, for some sports such as mini-soccer it may be possible to spread the games during the course of a Sunday morning and therefore not require the maximum amount of pitches. The calculations take into account the capacity of pitches (determined by quality) available. Improvements to pitch quality would increase the number of games a pitch is able to sustain (capacity) and would therefore reduce any shortfalls.

9.37 The PPM calculations can inform the basis of Local Development Framework policies with the objective of resolving deficits and oversupplies of pitches.

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Table 9.5 – PPM summary

		Football	Mini-soccer	Cricket	Rugby Union	Rugby League	Hockey		
STAGE ONE		Adult games	44	36	46	18	0	0	
Identifying teams		Junior teams	58		35	28	0	0	
STAGE TWO		Adult games	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	
Calculate home games per week		Junior teams	0.5		0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	
STAGE THREE (S1x S2)		Adult games	22	18	32	9	0	0	
Assessing total home games per week		Junior teams	29		25	14	0	0	
STAGE FOUR Establish temporal demand for pitches	Saturday AM	Adult games	0%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
		Junior teams	30%		0%	0%	0%	0%	
	Saturday PM	Adult games	20%	0%	45%	100%	100%	100%	
		Junior teams	0%		0%	0%	0%	0%	
	Sunday AM	Adult games	55%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
		Junior teams	40%		0%	75%	100%	100%	
	Sunday PM	Adult games	25%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	
		Junior teams	30%		20%	25%	0%	0%	
	Mid week 1- Specify day	Adult games	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	
		Junior teams	0%		80%	0%	0%	0%	
	Mid week 2- Specify day	Adult games	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
		Junior teams	0%		0%	0%	0%	0%	
	STAGE FIVE (S3 x S4) Defining pitches used each day	Saturday AM	Adult games	0	7	0	0	0	0
			Junior teams	9		0	0	0	0
Saturday PM		Adult games	4	0	14	9	0	0	
		Junior teams	0		0	0	0	0	
Sunday AM		Adult games	12	11	0	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	12		0	11	0	0	
Sunday PM		Adult games	6	0	16	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	9		5	4	0	0	
Mid week 1- Specify day		Adult games	0	0	2	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	0		20	0	0	0	
Mid week 2- Specify day		Adult games	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	0		0	0	0	0	
STAGE SIX		Adult games	30	9	19	19	0	0	
Establishing pitches currently available		Junior teams	3		0	0	0		
STAGE SEVEN (S6-S5) Identifying shortfall (-) and surplus (+)	Saturday AM	Adult games	29.5	1.8	19.0	19.0	0.0	0.0	
		Junior teams	-5.7			0.0	0.0		
	Saturday PM	Adult games	25.1	9.0	4.5	10.0	0.0	0.0	
		Junior teams	3.0			0.0	0.0		
	Sunday AM	Adult games	17.4	-1.8	19.0	19.0	0.0	0.0	
		Junior teams	-8.6			-10.5	0.0		
	Sunday PM	Adult games	24.0	9.0	-2.0	19.0	0.0	0.0	
		Junior teams	-5.7			-3.5	0.0		
	Mid week 1- Specify day	Adult games	29.5	9.0	-2.2	19.0	0.0	0.0	
		Junior teams	3.0			0.0	0.0		
	Mid week 2- Specify day	Adult games	29.5	9.0	19.0	19.0	0.0	0.0	
		Junior teams	3.0			0.0	0.0		

Key issues

9.38 Key issues arising from the PPM are:

- there is an theoretical oversupply (17.4) of adult football pitches on the peak day across the District
- there is an undersupply of junior pitches (-8.6) on the peak day (Sunday). However, in practice the adult pitch stock is being used by junior teams
- there is an undersupply of (-1.8) mini-soccer pitches on the peak day (Sunday). This indicates that mini soccer teams are likely to be using adult / junior pitches
- there is a slight shortfall of cricket pitches (-2.0) on the peak day (Sunday)
- there is an oversupply (10) of adult rugby union pitches on the peak day (Saturday)
- there is an undersupply (-10.5) of junior rugby pitches on the peak day, which is Sunday mornings. However, there is also a theoretical surplus of adult pitches on this day, which is used to accommodate junior matches

9.39 The PPM can then be applied at ward level (see Table 9.6 below) showing the over and under supply compared to the current demand in each ward. However it should be strongly noted that ward boundaries are effectively an artificial barrier in so far as people naturally travel across boundaries to access pitches. Therefore an oversupply in one ward is likely to cater for the needs of a neighbouring ward that may have an undersupply. Nevertheless it is a useful way of displaying the data at a local level.

Table 9.6 - Summary of PPM results by ward areas

Ward name	Shortfall of adult football	Shortfall of junior football	Shortfall of Mini-soccer	Shortfall of cricket	Shortfall of adult rugby union	Shortfall of junior rugby union	Shortfall of adult rugby league	Shortfall of junior rugby league	Shortfall of hockey	Total pitches	Sub-area
Alvechurch	0.9	-0.4	-1.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.5	Sub-area3
Beacon	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Sub-area1
Catshill	1.0	-0.6	-1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.8	Sub-area5
Charford	-0.5	-0.9	-1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-2.9	Sub-area5
Drakes Cross & Walkers Heath	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.9	2.0	-1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	Sub-area4
Furlongs	1.0	0.0	0.0	-2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-1.2	Sub-area2
Hagley	1.7	-1.0	-1.2	0.2	4.0	-3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	Sub-area2
Hillside	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.5	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	Sub-area1
Hollywood & Majors Green	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Sub-area4
Linthurst	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	Sub-area5
Marlbrook	-0.1	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	Sub-area5
Norton	0.0	-0.6	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	Sub-area5
Sidemoor	-0.7	-0.3	0.0	0.0	1.5	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	Sub-area5
Slideslow	1.0	-0.2	-0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	Sub-area5
St Johns	-0.3	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	Sub-area5
Stoke Heath	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	Sub-area5
Stoke Prior	4.4	-1.4	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	Sub-area5
Tardebigge	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	1.0	-4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	-2.9	Sub-area3
Uffdown	1.0	-0.2	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	Sub-area2
Waseley	4.2	-0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	Sub-area1
Whitford	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	Sub-area5
Woodvale	1.2	-0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	Sub-area2
Wythall South	1.2	-0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	Sub-area4
	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
Total	17.4	-5.7	-1.8	4.5	10.0	-10.5	0.0	0.0	0.0		

9.40 Table 9.6 shows that there are no significant over/under supplies of pitches anywhere in the District, although the greatest deficiency was identified in the Tardebigge and Charford wards.

9.41 Consultation identified that there are a number of Bromsgrove teams playing matches in neighbouring local authority areas, particularly Birmingham. The geographical location of Bromsgrove gives club the opportunity to travel locally to access suitable pitch provision.

Amalgamation of wards

- 9.42 For pitch sports, there is an accepted need for players to travel to games. Therefore, analysis at ward level can misrepresent the real situation by not taking into account cross-boundary issues.
- 9.43 Table 9.7 overleaf shows the allocation of wards into analysis areas. These analysis areas reflect those used in the remainder of this report when considering open space provision. It permits analysis at a local level slightly higher than ward level. The groupings were identified following discussions with Bromsgrove Council throughout the process.

Table 9.7- Analysis areas

Analysis area	Wards
Sub area 1	Beacon, Hillside, Waseley,
Sub area 2	Furlongs, Hagley, Uffdown, Woodvalle
Sub area 3	Alvechurch, Tarebigge
Sub area 4	Dukes Cross & Walker Heath, Hollywood & Majors Green, Wythall South
Sub area 5	Catshill, Charford, Linthurst, Marlbrook, Norton, Sidemoor, Slideslow, St Johns, Stoke Heath, Stoke Prior, Whitford

- 9.44 Since clubs/teams may travel to adjoining or nearby wards in order to play their home matches the findings of the study were also analysed at an analysis area level. These results are shown in Table 9.8 below.

Table 9.8 - Summary of PPM result by analysis areas

Sub-area name	Shortfall of adult football	Shortfall of junior football	Shortfall of Mini-soccer	Shortfall of cricket	Shortfall of adult rugby union	Shortfall of junior rugby union	Shortfall of adult rugby league	Shortfall of junior rugby league	Shortfall of hockey	Total pitches
Sub-area1	4.2	-0.8	0.0	2.0	1.5	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.6
Sub-area2	4.9	-1.4	-1.2	-0.5	4.0	-3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1
Sub-area3	0.9	-0.4	-1.8	1.0	1.0	-4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	-3.3
Sub-area4	1.5	-0.3	0.0	0.9	2.0	-1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2
Sub-area5	5.9	-2.9	1.2	1.0	1.5	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.4
	17.4	-5.7	-1.8	4.5	10.0	-10.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	

9.45 The key issues arising from Table 9.8 at an analysis level are:

- there is an overall shortfall of pitches in sub-area 3 (Alvechurch, Tarebigge)
- there is an overall oversupply of adult football pitches in all analysis areas
- despite the surplus of adult football pitches, there are shortfalls of junior football pitches in three of the five analysis areas indicating that junior teams may also be using adult pitches
- there are shortfalls of mini soccer pitches in two of the sub-areas (sub-areas 2 and 3). This indicates that there is a concentration of mini soccer in these areas and consideration should be given to increasing provision in these areas
- there are shortfalls of junior rugby union provision across all analysis areas, although in reality the adult pitch stock is able to accommodate junior demand
- there is a slight shortfall of cricket in sub area 2, although this is not reflective of the generally sufficient supply of pitches across the District.

Predicting the future

Team Generation Rates

- 9.46 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. TGRs are derived by dividing the appropriate population age band for the relevant sport (eg for adult football it is the 16-45 age group) by the number of teams playing that sport. Calculating TGRs enables fair comparison to be made between different areas where similar studies have been undertaken.
- 9.47 TGRs can be calculated for each of the individual disciplines, such as adult men’s football, adult women’s football, mini-soccer. Once these TGRs have been calculated, they can be brought together to form one TGR for each sport.
- 9.48 The TGRs for each sport in Bromsgrove District are shown below and are compared to the national average based on Sport England database of Playing Pitch Strategy information.

Table 9.9 - Football Team Generation Rates

Age group	Bromsgrove District TGR	National average
Senior male	379	1:314
Senior female	16,453	10,593
Junior male	72	1:71
Junior female	443	1:818
Mini-soccer	120	1:141
Overall	394	239

Table 9.10 - Cricket Team Generation Rates

Age group	TGR
Senior male	618
Senior female	7,288
Junior male	159
Junior female	574
Overall	736
National average	761

Table 9.11 - Rugby Union Team Generation Rates

Age group	TGR
Senior male	1,015
Senior female	15,381
Junior male	103
Junior female	1,072
Overall	783
National average	1,498

What do these numbers mean?

9.49 The following examples help clarify what TGRs mean:

1:100 → high TGR → relatively low latent (unmet) demand

1:1000 → low TGR → relatively high latent (unmet) demand

9.50 These figures are only a guide and do not specify the sport or refer to local conditions. For example, the national popularity of football will mean that it will almost always have the lowest TGR. Equally, hockey usually has the highest. Therefore, it is more useful to compare Bromsgrove District’s TGRs with other areas.

9.51 From our previous work we have found that football TGRs range from 1:118 in Mid-Devon to 1:636 in Waltham Forest, with an England average of 1:239. This means that Bromsgrove District has a relatively high latent demand for football compared to the other local authority areas. This may be reflective of the District’s proximity to major urban sprawls, such as Birmingham, which attract players out of the District to compete in more competitive competitions.

9.52 For cricket, the TGRs have ranged from 1:212 in West Devon to 1:9,450 in Newham. The national average TGR for cricket is 1:761 and it can be concluded that the participation in Bromsgrove is broadly representative of the national participation trend.

9.53 For rugby union, TGRs have ranged from 1:495 in Mid-Devon to 1:6,615 in Newham. Therefore, the TGR in Bromsgrove (1:783) is significantly higher than the national average (1:1,498) and suggests that there is a strong and thriving club structure in the District which is meeting current levels of demand.

9.54 Overall, the TGRs for Bromsgrove are good, which indicates low levels of latent demand and a strong club structure across most pitch sports. The most notable exception to this is the absence of competitive hockey in the District, with Bromsgrove Hockey Club playing its matches at Trinity High School in Redditch. The TGR for football could also be another area to target development, in particularly the developing womens and girls teams to bring them in line with national ratios.

Projections for 2026

- 9.55 By applying TGRs to the population projections for 2026 we can project the theoretical number of teams that would be generated over the next few years. This can then be applied to the PPM model to forecast any future shortfall of pitches, assuming that no new pitches are provided in the interim.
- 9.56 Small increases in participation in football, cricket and rugby union (5%) have been factored into the model. This assumes that a combination of sports development initiatives, the growth of mini and junior sports (which may have a knock on impact to adult participation) and enhanced promotion of the health agenda and physical activity will have an impact on demand for pitch provision. These increases are therefore reflected in the figures for 2026.
- 9.57 As can be seen in Table 9.13, this increase in demand is reflected in the increased deficiencies in all the pitches across the District. As currently, the most severe deficiency in 2026 will be in sub area 3.

Table 9.13 - PPM calculations by analysis area (2026)

Sub-area name	Shortfall of adult football	Shortfall of junior football	Shortfall of Mini-soccer	Shortfall of cricket	Shortfall of adult rugby union	Shortfall of junior rugby union	Shortfall of adult rugby league	Shortfall of junior rugby league	Shortfall of hockey	Total pitches
Sub-area1	4.0	-0.9	0.0	1.4	1.3	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4
Sub-area2	4.7	-1.8	-1.4	-1.1	3.7	-4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2
Sub-area3	0.7	-0.6	-2.1	0.4	0.6	-4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	-5.7
Sub-area4	1.1	-0.4	0.0	0.8	1.9	-2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2
Sub-area5	4.8	-3.6	-0.1	0.4	1.3	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
	15.3	-7.2	-3.7	2.0	8.7	-12.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	

- 9.58 It is not predicted that the supply/demand patterns will change significantly in the future, although clearly the deficiencies will become more acute as development initiatives result in increased team participation and therefore a greater demand for pitches.
- 9.59 There is likely to be a shortfall of rugby union pitches, with the over supply of senior pitches (8.7) not sufficient to accommodate the junior deficiency (-12.1).
- 9.60 The only two pitch types to have a true surplus in 2026 are senior football and cricket, although once again the surplus in senior football pitches will be used to accommodate deficiencies in both junior and mini pitches.
- 9.61 It can be seen from the issues raised above that there can be key changes over a period of years (such as an increase in population and participation) that will change the demand for pitches. The capability to model 'what if?' scenarios ensures that a changing local context can always be accommodated and local policies changed to

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reflect this. The electronic database provided with the playing pitch strategy element of the work ensures that changes can be accounted for and supply and demand in the District can be reassessed.

- 9.62 This section has presented the modelling element of the Playing Pitch Strategy which considers both the quality and quantity of provision. The key conclusions for pitch sports arising from the application of the playing pitch methodology are set out in the paragraphs that follow. These conclusions are specific to pitch sport provision within the District and should complement and supplement those recommendations outlined within the outdoor sports analysis in the previous section.

Priorities for action and key recommendations

9.63 Priorities and key recommendations for pitch provision in Bromsgrove are considered under the following headings:

- protection of existing provision
- identifying deficiencies
 - improving access to provision
 - enhancing the quality of existing pitches
- further opportunities for improvement.

9.64 The principles behind each of the above elements is considered generally across the District and then specific issues within each of the analysis areas are highlighted and solutions to address the issues are discussed.

Protection of existing provision

9.65 The identified deficiencies of certain pitch types (and pressures on the overall pitch stock in the District) emphasise the importance of protecting many of the existing areas of playing pitch land and open space in public, private and educational ownership as playing pitches are often under threat from other, non-sport, development.

9.66 Due to the current levels of demand and the pressures on pitches to cope with this demand, all known playing fields sites should be afforded protection within specific policies that benefit sport and physical activity in Bromsgrove.

9.67 Policies RAT4/S31/S32 in the Bromsgrove Local Plan identifies the commitment of the District to protect open spaces, sport and recreation facilities, at public, private and education sites. The application of the playing pitch methodology supports this protectionist stance.

PPS 1	All pitch sites should specifically be afforded protection within the Local Development Framework. Protection policies should link with policies for other open space typologies. This is discussed further in the planning implementation section.
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9.68 In light of the growth aspirations of the District, particularly in relation to the market towns and key centres for growth, a formal requirement for contributions towards new pitch provision (S106 agreements) should be set out in the LDF. The local standard outlined later in this section should be used to ascertain the level of input from developers specifically for pitches (as opposed to outdoor sports facilities in general). The results of the application of the playing pitch methodology should inform the most appropriate use for this money in pitch terms.

PPS 2	The Council should secure developer contributions to improve the quality of existing outdoor playing fields or alternative sporting provision in the District and provide new ones where a shortfall has been identified. Developers cannot be asked to make up existing deficiencies, only to contribute to those caused by or exacerbated by their development. This links with recommendations outlined in the planning implementation section.
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Pitch issues – dealing with surpluses and deficiencies.

- 9.69 Deficiencies in pitches arise when there is an absolute shortage and/or when existing pitch (es) cannot accommodate existing demand, particularly at peak periods. Application of the sports pitch methodology to the District as a whole disguises sport and location specific shortfalls and issues. The results of the playing pitch methodology calculations at sub area level indicate that there are locational deficiencies in pitch provision as well as some areas where pitch provision is currently above the minimum level of demand.
- 9.70 Opportunities for optimising pitch provision and addressing deficiencies include:
- redesignation of pitches
 - increasing access to pitches, particularly school sites
 - creation of new pitches.
- 9.71 It must be acknowledged that the recommendations for pitches are a minimum level of provision, based on a pragmatic approach to what may be feasible in the long-term and where the latent demand/pressure for additional pitches both now and in the future has been identified. Key recommendations for addressing pitch provision in each analysis area are set out in tables 8.14 – 8.18.
- 9.72 The principles behind the solutions proposed are outlined in detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Improving access to school pitches

- 9.73 There remain some pitches at school sites that are not dual use facilities at the present time.
- 9.74 Access to these facilities could provide a vital community resource, both in terms of access to open space (particularly in smaller settlements where there is limited provision) but more specifically through meeting the demand for pitch provision.
- 9.75 School facilities permitting community use maximise use of existing assets and such partnerships are attractive to public funding partners. School sites can also be used to address areas of deficiency and to provide training facilities. Developing facilities at school sites offers the opportunity to enhance school club links and to foster development of sports within the school environment at an early age.
- 9.76 Ensuring this open access policy and encouraging schools to permit community use may require genuine financial commitment from the Council to improve playing surfaces and capacity, provide or improve changing accommodation.

PPS 3	Investigate the option of securing additional school facilities for dual use. Schools in areas of deficiency of pitch provision should be prioritised. This links with recommendations in the outdoor sports facility section, which suggests securing community access to school sites that serve a unique catchment area.
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- 9.77 While community use of school pitches should be encouraged in order to maximise the use of assets, it must be acknowledged that school pitches are required to meet curricular demand during the week as well as sustaining community use at

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weekends. It is essential that they can effectively meet this role first, as their primary purpose, and therefore wear and tear on these sites should be minimised.

PPS 4	Where possible, any school pitches used for community use should be assigned for youth games to protect the site and ensure it is able to serve its primary purpose – curriculum use.
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9.78 The development of community use agreements could help to offset some of the unmet demand for junior and mini pitches, and therefore create capacity at some of the principal senior pitch sites in the District (eg Charford).

9.79 In addition to making better use of corporate resources, the development of formal long term community use agreements will also help to:

- improve school club links
- develop extended school links
- maximise public assets
- aid junior progression and development routes.

9.80 Where community use agreements are negotiated it should be ensured that these facilities are accessible to community teams and that a clear booking system is in place. Where possible, prices should also be standardised. The inclusion of parish pitches and pitches owned by other providers would further improve the ease of access to pitches within Bromsgrove District.

PPS 5	Consider the inclusion of school pitches available to community within the existing pitch booking system.
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Providing a minimum level of provision

9.81 While it is important to ensure that deficiencies are met for each sport and each pitch type, some degree of spare capacity is an integral part of playing pitch provision for the following reasons:

- to accommodate latent and future demand for existing pitch sport teams
- to enable the development of new clubs and teams
- for the development / expansion of new pitch sports (such as mini-soccer and 'tag' rugby)
- to accommodate backlogs and for rest and recovery periods.

9.82 The playing pitch methodology considers the minimum supply of pitches needed to meet demand. For the reasons highlighted above, it is important to ensure that a strategic reserve of facilities is maintained. Ideally, this should represent about 10% of demand and consideration of the maintenance of this strategic reserve should be taken into account when addressing deficiencies.

9.83 This strategic reserve is of increased importance in Bromsgrove, especially considering that anecdotal evidence suggests that neighbouring local authorities such as Birmingham City and Redditch are struggling to meet demand through their

current pitch stock. Therefore, travelling to access these sites, whilst practical due to the good transport links enveloping the District, is in fact not a realistic solution. In many of the smaller settlements (such as parishes) the sports club or playing fields are in a focal point of community life and even if it is not used to maximum pitch capacity (two games per week) the pitch has an important role in enabling local players to participate in sport and providing them with home grounds.

PPS 6	Maintain a strategic reserve of pitches to accommodate backlogs and enable rest and recovery. Ideally this should be around 10% of demand.
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Enhancement of existing provision

- 9.84 The overall quality of pitches and ancillary accommodation is important as it impacts not only on the quality of play, but also on the potential capacity of a pitch and hence numerical surpluses and deficiencies.
- 9.85 The majority of pitches within the District are good quality pitches and maintained to a high standard of play. Despite this, some sites were perceived not to be of sufficient quality to sustain two games per week. Site-specific enhancements have been highlighted in tables 8.14 to 8.18 that follow this section.
- 9.86 Deficiencies highlighted earlier can be addressed through improvements to the existing pitch stock (as this generates an increase in the capacity of pitches). Some of the key issues specific to the overall quality of pitches in Bromsgrove include:
- perception of value for money is poor
 - only a handful of sites have ancillary facilities, which makes them unsuitable for clubs competing in local league competitions. This may also lead to issues accommodating female teams and problems for providing for junior teams alongside senior teams for child protection issues.
 - good quality sites are located at privately run facilities, which are deemed inaccessible to the public
 - there is limited on site parking at some sites
 - the lack of suitable drainage was the most fundamental issue concerning pitch quality
- 9.87 Implementation of this playing pitch strategy should drive a programme of improvements that will simultaneously assist in meeting identified deficiencies. Improved facilities will drive increases in participation, improve access for all groups and enable higher participation levels to be maintained over a sustained period.
- 9.88 Any programme of improvements should bear in mind the following issues:
- the standard of play at the site (including league requirements)
 - the intended capacity of the site (number of games and training sessions per week and level of informal use)

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- the need to encourage use by young people, women and other target groups through appropriate ancillary facilities
- facility specifications from National Governing Body (NGB) strategies.

PPS 7	Identify a priority list of pitches for facility improvements The Council should act as an enabler and support Parish Councils and voluntary clubs in the improvement of facilities where necessary. The programme of improvement should concentrate on pitches in areas of deficiency first and should look to target the achievement of the quality vision outlined for all outdoor sports facilities.
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9.89 The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995 received additional powers in October 2004 when an additional phase came into force. The implications of this are considerable as all goods, services and facilities – whether charged for or provided free of charge – are covered by the legislation which requires providers to ensure that:

- people are not treated less favourably
- service providers must make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their services
- service providers may have to make other reasonable adjustments in relation to the physical features of their premises to overcome barriers to access.

The full Code of Practice is downloadable from <http://www.disability.gov.uk>.

PPS 7	A full access audit should be undertaken ensuring that pitch facilities are accessible to all community groups. This should include an assessment of compliancy with DDA.
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Ensuring provision meets demand

9.90 As part of this study, we have looked at what could happen in the future, taking into account demographic and participation changes. The spreadsheet provided to the Council ensures that changes to both the pitch stock and the demand for those pitches can be modelled. The continual updating of this spreadsheet to reflect changes to provision and demand will be particularly important in the coming years in light of the proposed growth agenda and the current uncertainty as to the extent of the impact of this.

PPS 8	Ensure the modelling spreadsheet is kept up to date to reflect the ongoing changes in population, housing developments and sports development initiatives in addition to improvements made to the pitch stock.
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9.91 Tables 8.14 to 8.18 overleaf examine the current issues for pitch provision in each of the analysis areas and propose solutions based on the principles outlined in the

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previous page. These solutions should be prioritised and turned into an action plan, driving continuous improvement of the pitch stock in Bromsgrove.

PPS 9	Develop a specific action plan based on the issues lists highlighted in tables 11.17 to 11.22
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- 9.92 Potential sources of funding are outlined in section 11; Resourcing the Strategy. While the Council should act as the coordinator in ensuring that pitch provision meets the needs of the community, it is important to continue to work in partnership to ensure that effective delivery of sports provision in all areas of the District. Key partners include voluntary clubs, Parish Councils and National and Local Governing Bodies such as the Worcestershire FA.

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Table 9.14 - Playing pitch issues and solutions: Sub area 1 - QUANTITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sub area 1 = 19.24ha of playing pitch provision of which 14.08ha is secured for community use. ➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand 	
<p>Football Adult (4) Junior (-1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An oversupply of adult football pitches in this area indicates a potential need to convert adult pitches into smaller sized pitches alleviating the current deficiency of junior and mini pitches. In reality the adult pitch stock is able to accommodate junior matches and, whilst not ideal from a development perspective, maintaining a degree of flexibility in the pitch stock (ie use by both senior and junior teams) can be beneficial to maximising the pitch stock. ➤ New provision of junior and mini football pitches should be considered when none of these policies are effective at sufficiently increasing pitch provision in the analysis area. This could involve utilising other appropriate open space sites, perhaps those which are currently underused or of low quality.
<p>Cricket (2.0)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The current surplus of cricket pitches in the analysis area should be maintained in line with the recommended 10% level of strategic reserve. ➤ Barnt Green Cricket Club has access to two facilities, although it believes that its second team pitch is too small to adequately accommodate its teams. The first team ground is now outdated and requires modernisation, in particular to bring it up to DDA requirements. The Club has planning permission for six additional practice nets and this will relieve pressure on the pitches for practice.
<p>Rugby Adult (1.5) Junior (-1.0)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is currently sufficient provision to meet the demand of adult rugby in this area. The model indicates that there is a shortfall in the supply of junior rugby pitches equivalent to one pitch, but this deficiency will be accommodated by the senior pitch stock.
QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES	
Frankley	Pitch is not used on Saturdays, only by Rubery Juniors on a Sunday. There are no changing rooms available at the site which limits the attractiveness of the site for local teams. Consideration should be given to funding proposals to construct a changing facility at the site to make it eligible to host local league matches. Pitch quality is average although the grass coverage and line markings were identified as the main quality issues.
Barnt Green Cricket Club	The pavilion does not comply with DDA standards and is in need of modernisation. This has been identified by the Worcestershire Cricket Board. The Club also has planning permission for practice nets, which it hopes will reduce the need to practice on the main pitch. It is also considering the possibility of installing an artificial cricket wicket on its third team pitch (Douglas Ground) and play some of its junior matches using this facility. However, there is a safety risk associated with this as it becomes very slippery when wet.

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Table 9.15 - Playing pitch issues and solutions: Sub area 2 – QUANTITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sub area 2 has 21.52ha of pitch stock, of which 15.36ha is available for community use. ➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand 	
<p>Football</p> <p>Adult (3.9) Junior (-1.3) Mini (-1.2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is only a small surplus of adult football pitch provision in this area which should be maintained as a strategic reserve and used to overcome the shortfall of junior and mini pitches. Improvements to the adult pitch at Hail Weston would increase the capacity of adult football pitches in this area. The installation of changing facilities at Belbroughton Recreation Ground would enhance the site and make it more usable for local clubs. ➤ PMP was unable to confirm whether the pitches at Haybridge Sports Centre are used by the community. There is potentially three senior pitches and one junior pitch located on this site. Due to the relatively small level of surplus in adult football provision, and the need to overcome junior deficiencies, consideration should be given to formalising use of appropriate school sites in the area. ➤ The Sports Centre is a dual-use facility which is available to the community outside school hours. However, the pitch bookings are controlled by the School rather than via the commercial operator at the Centre. To increase community use of the pitches consideration should be given to transferring booking control of the pitches to the commercial operator. ➤ New provision of junior and mini football pitches should also be considered to ensure that demand is not suppressed by a lack of facilities. This could involve utilising other appropriate open space sites, perhaps those which are currently underused or of low quality.
<p>Cricket</p> <p>(-0.7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is a small deficiency of cricket provision in Sub area 1 highlighting that there is pressure on existing cricket provision to cope with the level of demand. Both Belbroughton Cricket Club and the Mews Cricket Club are privately maintained grounds which are considered to be good quality with no significant improvements necessary at either site.
<p>Rugby</p> <p>Adult (4.0) Junior (-3.8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ As other pitch types in Sub area 2, there is pressure on pitches to meet the demand from rugby teams. Old Halesonians is the largest club in the area, with six rugby pitches at its site. The Club currently fields 14 teams and can accommodate this level of demand at its current site. There is limited potential for increasing provision, although providing additional grass areas for mini rugby could alleviate some pressure from the existing match pitches and maintain their long-term quality. It is recommended that demand is monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that pitch provision does not suppress demand.

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QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES	
Belbroughton Cricket Club	The pitch is quite small although there are no major quality issues.
Belbroughton Recreation Ground	A site visit to the site suggests that the grass should be cut more regularly. The pitches are on an open recreation ground and there is evidence that there are significant levels of unofficial use of the pitches for kick-arounds, which has a negative impact on the long-term quality of the pitches.
Hagley Community Centre	A site visit identified that the grass was too long to be suitable for football. There is also a slight slope on the pitches.
The Mews Church Cricket Club	Pitch is heavily sloped for cricket and the level of grass coverage on the outfield is considered to be poor.

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Table 9.16 - Playing pitch issues and solutions: Sub area 3 - QUANTITY

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sub area 3 has the second lowest level of pitch provision in the District (10.26ha). The area centres is made up from Alvechurch and Tarebigge wards. ➤ Despite this the quality of pitch provision is actually very high, with Bromsgrove FC, Bromsgrove RUFC, Alvechurch FC and Harris Brush Works (private site), all of which are privately maintained and high quality sites. ➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand 	
<p>Football</p> <p>Adult (0.9)</p> <p>Junior (-0.4)</p> <p>Mini (-1.8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is neither a surplus nor a deficiency of pitches in this analysis area. In order to meet the strategic reserve target opportunities to increase the pitch stock in this area should be explored. ➤ One of the District's main football clubs is located in this area –Alvechurch FC, which competes in the National League System. The level of competition places a requirement for a certain base level of facilities to compete at this level of competition, including a spectator stand and floodlights. ➤ New provision of mini football pitches should be considered to ensure that demand is not suppressed by a lack of facilities. This could involve utilising other appropriate open space sites, perhaps those which are currently underused or of low quality. The Council should investigate the opportunity to use school sites to provide additional mini-soccer and/or junior pitches. ➤ An improvement in the quality of Hopwood Community Centre pitches would increase their carrying capacity and allow them to take more matches per week. Also, local clubs' perception of the facilities at Harris Brush Works is that the site is not readily available for hire.
<p>Cricket</p> <p>(0.8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The small surplus of provision should be retained to allow for the rest and recovery of pitches.
<p>Rugby</p> <p>Adult (1.0)</p> <p>Junior (-4.1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ As can be seen, there is pressure on pitches to meet the demand from rugby teams, particularly junior pitches. Bromsgrove RUFC has high numbers of teams, in particular a very active junior section, and it may be that some overspill provision is required. The Club has been in discussions with an adjacent landowner to purchase an additional area and create two additional pitches. However, discussions are still ongoing to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

SECTION 8 – PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES	
Bromsgrove RUFC	The drainage on the main pitch is poor and leads to the cancellation of matches during periods of inclement weather.
Lye Meadow	Site is privately maintained and has a stand and floodlights. The Club does permit usage of the pitch on Sundays.

Table 9.17- Playing pitch issues and solutions: Sub area 4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The level of provision in sub area 4 is the lowest across all of the five geographical areas 8.72ha). There is no rugby played in this area. ➤ The quality of pitch provision in sub area 4 is good. There are a number of privately maintained sites in the area, such as Wythall Park, Woodrush RUFC and the Britannia Insurance site. ➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand 	
<p>Football</p> <p>Adult (1.5) Junior (-0.3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The main football pitch site in the area is Britannia Insurance facility and is maintained privately to a high standard. The pitches are excellent quality and therefore able to accommodate the maximum number of matches per week. Other than this site there are no other accessible football pitches in the area. ➤ The shortfalls of junior pitches are accommodated by the surplus in senior pitches.
<p>Cricket</p> <p>(0.9)</p>	<p>This minimal over provision should be monitored to ensure that a lack of available pitches does not inhibit demand. Wythall Cricket Club has a relatively small junior section at present in comparison to other clubs in the District and therefore demand for pitches is relatively low. However, future club development should be monitored to ensure the club's facility needs are understood.</p>
<p>Rugby</p> <p>Adult (2.0) Junior (-1.9)</p>	<p>These supply/demand calculations do not take into account the additional two pitches to be constructed at Woodrush RUFC, which will help achieve the 10% strategic reserve target.</p>

SECTION 8 – PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES	
Wythall Park	Site is owned and maintained by Wythall Community Association. The sports facilities are contained within 37 acres of recreational parkland and the facility has a volunteer community management team to maintain the quality of the facilities.
Woodrush RUFC	Poor drainage of first and second team pitches is a problem and this issue is exacerbated by the heavy use of the pitches by the club's junior section. The club has recently bought an adjacent piece of land to develop two additional pitches, which will relieve pressure on the existing stock. Due to the increase in pitches there is now pressure on the existing changing facility and the Club has been granted planning permission to construct a new changing facility but has a match funding gap of around £50,000, which makes any upgrade unrealistic for the foreseeable future.
Britannica Insurance	Private site with good quality pitches and associated changing facilities.

SECTION 8 – PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Table 9.18- Playing pitch issues and solutions: Sub area 5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sub-area 5 has the largest amount of playing pitch provision in the District (23.8ha) and contains some of the principal outdoor sports facilities in the District. ➤ Braces Lane Recreation ground is perceived to be poor quality and this explains the current poor levels of usage on the site. ➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand 	
<p>Football</p> <p>Adult (5.9) Junior (-2.9) Mini (1.2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The small oversupply of adult football pitches should be retained to allow for a strategic reserve and rest and recovery of pitches. It is also being used currently to accommodate the deficiency in junior pitches. ➤ Despite there being a theoretical oversupply of senior pitches this is not supported through local consultation as clubs are unable to secure pitches in this area. The highest demand for pitches in this area comes from junior teams and this is illustrated by the usage levels at senior pitch sites in the area, for example at Charford Recreation Ground, which is used by Bromsgrove Town FC's junior teams. At present the Council operates a first come, first served policy and should consider re-directing junior teams playing at Charford to other sites in the area (eg Sanders Park) to create capacity for senior teams playing in the Bromsgrove League. ➤ There is an opportunity to re-designate the mini-soccer pitches sites in the area (eg Sanders Park) to junior pitches, which would create additional capacity to enable junior 11-a-side teams, currently using senior pitches, to play at the site.
<p>Cricket</p> <p>(-1.0)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The small shortfall of one pitch should be monitored in order to understand whether there is demand for additional cricket provision. If required, consideration should be given to making use of an existing sports site in the area and installing a cricket wicket. This could be done in liaison with Bromsgrove Cricket Club.
<p>Rugby</p> <p>Adult (1.5) Junior (-0.4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Kings Norton RUFC is the main club in the area and does not have any major facility issues.
<p>Hockey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is recommended that discussions are held with Bromsgrove School with a view to facilitating access to the STP for Bromsgrove Hockey Club to play competitive matches on Saturdays. This should centre around the need to ensure that the facility is made available and supervised for weekend community use.

SECTION 8 – PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES	
Bromsgrove Rovers FC	Site is privately maintained and is used beyond its recommended capacity during the week, both by the youth teams of the Club and by teams using the pitch on Sunday mornings. This has a detrimental effect on the surface but does ensure that the pitch is made available to local clubs.
Charford Recreation Ground	The pitches are described as the best in the District but the drainage is poor and they become unplayable during periods of inclement weather. The changing facilities are adequate quality.
Hunters Hill Playing Field	Pitch is adequate quality, although the level of grass coverage could be improved and there is a demand for the pitches to be cut more regularly. The fact that there is no changing at the site makes it unattractive to local teams, although the fact it is a single pitch site means that constructing a changing facility is not recommended.
Braces Lane Recreation Ground	Only junior/youth team pitches on the site which are poor quality. Investment to improve the drainage and pitch surfaces at this site would increase their carrying capacity.
Market Street Recreation Ground	Pitch is not suitable for competitive league matches due to the unevenness of the surface and poor goalpost quality.
Harris Brush Works	Private facility with good quality football pitches.
Sanders Park Recreation Ground	The pitch is uneven in places and the quality of the goalposts is poor. The site is mainly used exclusively for mini-soccer yet there is no changing facility available to teams.
Stoke Prior Recreation Ground	Length of grass is poor and the pitch is particularly uneven. The quality of the goalposts and line markings could also be improved.
Stoke Prior Sports & Country Club	Excellent site, although the outfield is uneven which makes it dangerous for cricket.

Training facilities

- 9.93 A lack of training facilities emerged as a key issue in consultations across the District, with both clubs and other consultees highlighting difficulties in accessing appropriate facilities midweek.
- 9.94 This was raised particularly by football clubs who wish to use the synthetic pitches for midweek training and match practice and clearly have competing interests with hockey teams. Bromsgrove School has two STPs, only one of which is available for community hire. However, this is oversubscribed and clubs cannot book time slots.
- 9.95 Provision for training is an important part of pitch provision. Without this, clubs may use match day facilities meaning deterioration in the overall quality of pitches due to the number of matches that they are required to sustain.
- 9.96 Further provision of pitches dedicated to / suitable for training should be considered. There is also no accessible STP available for Bromsgrove Hockey Club, although this could be overcome by facilitating access to a suitable facility at weekends. Provision of a further synthetic facility to be used for competitive hockey on peak competition days may also provide opportunities for football clubs to train. Alternatively, floodlighting training areas located at the side of some existing pitch sites should be considered in order to facilitate evening training for football clubs, while ensuring that the quality of match pitches is sustained.

PPS 9	<p>Further investigate the provision of floodlit training facilities.</p> <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• additional synthetic pitch provision• provision of small floodlit pitches adjacent to the main pitch area <p>At least one facility should be made available within each geographical area of the District.</p>
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Developing a local standard

9.97 An important outcome from a playing pitch strategy is the development of local standards of provision, in accordance with national planning policy. Such standards will:

- underpin negotiations with developers over their contributions for new pitch provision to meet the needs of new residential developments
- provide an additional overview of the general supply of pitches/level of provision
- assist in protecting land in playing field use
- assist in benchmarking with other areas/authorities.

9.98 Overall quality, quantity and accessibility standards for outdoor sports facilities are set in section 7 of this report. This includes consideration of pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens.

9.99 The application of the playing pitch methodology enables the calculation of a more specific local standard for pitches which provides detail on the amount of pitches required. The application of the playing pitch methodology (which measures supply against demand) can then be used to determine the most appropriate balance of pitches between the four pitch sports – football, cricket, rugby and hockey.

9.100 The existing and future local standards have been calculated in Table 9.19. The existing local standard is based upon the current supply of pitches (measured in area) in each sub area, divided by the population in that analysis area. The total represents the current standard, which is 0.87 ha per 1000 population.

9.101 The future local standard calculation is based upon the findings of this report for the future year 2026. It takes into account the additional (or surplus) pitches identified within this report in 2026 and calculates the required area per 1000 population, which is 0.91ha. This is set out in Table 9.19 below.

Table 9.19 – Calculation of Local Standard

Sub-area	Population	Total playing pitch area with secured community use (ha)	Playing pitch area per 1,000 population (ha)	Additional pitch area required (ha)	Total future pitch area (ha)	Future population	Future playing pitch area per 1,000 population (ha)
Sub-area1	11,247	14.08	1.25	0.72	14.80	12,556	1.18
Sub-area2	12,723	17.72	1.39	4.75	22.47	14,203	1.58
Sub-area3	9,305	11.76	1.26	3.88	15.64	10,387	1.51
Sub-area4	11,377	8.72	0.77	1.67	10.39	12,701	0.82
Sub-area5	43,185	23.80	0.55	1.77	25.57	48,209	0.53
Total	87,837	76.08	0.87	13.13	89.21	98,056	0.91

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9.102 It is important to also allow for rest and recovery of pitches (strategic reserve) as highlighted in recommendation PPS 6. An allowance for a strategic reserve equivalent to 10% should therefore be included within the standard; hence the recommended local standard for future provision should be 0.81 hectares per 1000 population.

PPS 9	A local standard of 0.81 hectares per 1000 population specific to pitch provision in Bromsgrove should be applied. This complements the standard set for outdoor sports facilities of 1.67 ha, indicating that a minimum of 0.81 ha of the 1.67 should be made up of pitches available for community use.
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Summary

9.103 This assessment of pitches provides a greater level of detail on the provision of pitches in Bromsgrove and has been carried out following the methodology set out in Towards a Level Playing Field (Sport England 2002).

9.104 The key issues arising from the application of the methodology include:

- there is an theoretical oversupply (17.4) of adult football pitches on the peak day across the District
- there is an undersupply of junior pitches (-8.6) on the peak day (Sunday). However, in practice the adult pitch stock is being used by junior teams
- there is an undersupply of (-1.8) mini-soccer pitches on the peak day (Sunday). This indicates that mini soccer teams are likely to be using adult / junior pitches
- there is a slight shortfall of cricket pitches (-2.0) on the peak day (Sunday)
- there is an oversupply (10) of adult rugby union pitches on the peak day (Saturday)
- there is an undersupply (-10.5) of junior rugby pitches on the peak day, which is Sunday mornings. However, there is also a theoretical surplus of adult pitches on this day, which is used to accommodate junior matches
- in order to maximise resources, increasing access to school facilities should be a key priority going forward.

9.105 The key implications of these findings for the Local Development Framework are:

- protect all pitches from development unless it can be proven that the replacement of a facility will result in a higher quality facility in a nearby location
- seek to improve the quality of pitches. Sites should meet National Governing Body criteria. This includes the provision of appropriate changing facilities and installation of drainage where required
- allow for a strategic reserve of pitches to ensure that rest and recovery can take place

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- allocate additional land for the development of at least one synthetic pitch and floodlit training facilities for football.