

# Rotherham Playing Pitch Strategy

**2009**

**Culture & Leisure Services**

# **Rotherham Playing Pitch Strategy**

## **Part 1 – Setting the Scene**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This document presents a strategic framework for the development of playing pitches with community access across Rotherham. It includes a summary and interpretation of the findings of the Playing Pitch Assessment for Rotherham, carried out by Council appointed consultants (Scott Wilson and Strategic Leisure) upon which most strategic recommendations are based. The full assessment and a further report focused on provision by Area Assembly are available on the Council's website (<http://www.rotherham.gov.uk>) under "Leisure" or by contacting Culture & Leisure Services on 01709 822453.

The assessment considered all levels of club provision and participation, excluding professional clubs, although it is acknowledged that it may not have identified all provision and participation in Rotherham due to the difficulties associated with gathering this amount of information. The strategy will need to establish a process of review in order to take account of ever changing circumstances.

The method used in this work was in accordance with the guidance: "Towards A Level Playing Field: A Guide to the production of Playing Pitch Strategies" published by Sport England and the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) in October 2002 and Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17), both of which encourage local authorities to determine local needs in order to plan future provision. It represents a move away from pre-existing approaches to determining need for playing pitches (e.g. the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) 'six acre' standard), which Sport England consider to be less effective as a basis for strategy development reflecting local needs and opportunities.

### **1.2 The need for partnership**

The Council recognises that in implementing this strategy, success will be dependent on the development of effective partnership working. The strategy is aspirational and no single organisation, working alone, will be able to deliver the intended outcomes. Public, private and voluntary organisations, interested in the development of sport and physical activity will need to commit to working together in order to make the most of current and potential resources.

This strategy is intended to provide a firm foundation upon which the interested partners can take forward their aspirations to develop and deliver a wide range of high quality playing pitch provision that will meet the many different needs of the communities across the Rotherham borough.

### **1.3 Why develop a Playing Pitch Strategy?**

The purpose of a strategy is to ensure that the Council considers not only national planning policy and standards of provision, but also the needs of local voluntary clubs and other user groups in Rotherham when planning future provision. Playing pitches have long been

established in Rotherham but the development of new residential areas and related population changes, the reduction in facility provision by organisations other than the council, and customers' changing expectations have led to changes in demand and adequacy of provision.

## **1.4 What are the benefits of a Playing Pitch Strategy?**

A Playing Pitch Strategy for the Rotherham borough will provide many benefits including:

1. Demonstrating a commitment to meeting local need. The assessment methodology has included considerable consultation with local sports clubs, schools and stakeholders.
2. Providing a strategic approach to playing pitch provision with a clear direction and a set of priorities for pitch development and associated sports.
3. Helping to deliver government policies for social inclusion, environmental protection, community involvement and healthy living.
4. Highlighting the value of leisure related services during times of increasing scrutiny for non-statutory services.
5. Providing robust evidence to support funding applications to agencies including: Football Foundation, Sport England, Big Lottery Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund.
6. Providing planning related guidance e.g. pitch requirements arising from new housing development, identification of sites for protection from unwelcome development, change of use from/to recreation provision. It is one of the best "tools" for the protection of pitches threatened by development.
7. Linking closely with work being undertaken on open spaces (through PPG17) to provide an holistic approach to open space improvement and protection
8. Improving the local authority's asset management by providing detailed audit information and facility user views. This should result in more efficient use of resources and reduced overheads

## **Part 2 - How was the assessment carried out?**

### **2.1 National and Local Policy Context**

The Government's Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) – 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' (July 2002) advises that local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities. Such assessments should include the use made of existing facilities, access in terms of location and cost, and opportunities for new facilities. It should also consider the quantity and quality of the facilities. Carrying out this work should allow local authorities to identify specific needs and over or under supply of pitches, and therefore provide an effective starting point to establish a strategy for provision at a local level.

This assessment was guided by principles set out in the PPG17 Companion Guide Assessing Needs and Opportunities (2002), and Sport England's analysis and audit methodology which compares the demand for pitches with their supply.

To ensure the provision of playing pitches in Rotherham meets the strategic needs of the local community existing strategy documents have been reviewed to identify key priorities

which the playing pitch strategy needs to reflect, and objectives to which it should contribute. Specifically, the five priorities and two cross cutting themes within the Community Strategy, on which Rotherham MBC's corporate priorities are based, are supported by the recommendations arising within this Strategy. The five priorities are as follows:-

**Rotherham Alive** – We aim to improve the quality of life and levels of health and well being for all people in Rotherham by increasing and widening participation in cultural activities. The Strategy aims to contribute to this by ensuring people have access to good quality playing pitches across the borough.

**Rotherham Safe** – We aim to contribute to safer neighbourhoods and better environments through the active engagement of priority communities in cultural activity and targeting resources to improve priority sites. The Strategy seeks to improve priority pitch sites, including addressing safety and environmental concerns.

**Rotherham Achieving** – We aim to increase the economic vitality of the borough, specifically the town centre and disadvantaged communities, through targeted investment in cultural initiatives. Improvement of playing pitch sites through the Strategy is intended to improve the quality of life in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and thereby contribute to increased confidence and investment in them.

**Rotherham Learning** – We aim to improve the potential of Rotherham people by assisting them to develop through the provision of lifelong learning opportunities. The Strategy will improve priority playing pitch sites as settings for development of sports skills.

**Rotherham Proud** – We aim to increase levels of civic pride and citizen involvement through the provision of inclusive cultural services and opportunities for voluntary and community sector involvement. The Strategy provides a mechanism for continuing involvement by community stakeholders in the development and management of Rotherham's playing pitches.

The two cross-cutting themes are:-

**Sustainable Development** – The Strategy seeks to embed sustainability into the development of playing pitches by considering future needs and costs.

**Fairness** - A fundamental objective of the Strategy is to work towards ensuring that everyone within Rotherham has equal access to good quality playing pitches, whatever their circumstances.

A full list of reference documents is provided in Appendix A.

## 2.2 What was the scope of the assessment?

Rotherham comprises 7 Assembly Areas (21 Wards) and has a population of around 250,000. There is a wide range of playing pitch provision and demand within the borough. Many of the pitches are owned and managed by the Borough Council but there are a great number provided by Parish Councils, schools and colleges, private sports clubs, Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisations (CISWO) and private companies. The Playing Pitch Assessment considered all such provision across Rotherham (with minor exceptions) and the needs and demands of cricket, football, hockey, rugby league and rugby union. Assessments of supply and demand were carried out both on a borough-wide basis and by individual Assembly Areas.

The Assessment:

- Recorded the quantity, geographical location and ownership of pitches.
- Assessed the condition and quality of pitches and supporting facilities.
- Compared existing provision with National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) recommended standards.
- Identified the main user groups for each site, and sites without community use.
- Consulted user groups and identified the current and potential future demand for pitches.
- Analysed supply and demand to identify surpluses and deficiencies, sites with greatest potential for pitch development, and sites where there is very little or no demand for playing pitches.

The resulting information provided a basis for setting standards and policies for future pitch provision to meet local needs for football, cricket, rugby league, rugby union and hockey.

## 2.3 How was information collected?

The current supply of pitches was established through a series of research and consultation exercises. These consisted of:

- Review of information held by RMBC;
- Survey of pitches owned and managed by RMBC, and other providers at local level;
- Consultation with key shareholders;
- A postal survey issued to all Town and Parish Councils;
- A postal survey of all schools; and
- A postal survey to all identified sports clubs.

The quality of playing pitches was assessed by:

- Site visits and a non technical turf pitch assessment of all pitches identified as having secured community use (based) on a visual inspection, with pitch quality being assessed by means of a Sport England Toolkit using a range of measures including sloping, unevenness, grass cover, drainage, etc.
- Self ratings by schools of their own facilities
- Ratings by local clubs of the facilities they use
- Consultation with Sheffield and Hallamshire FA

Levels of use of pitches were assessed through consultation with clubs and questionnaires.

Current demand for pitches was established through a series of research and consultation exercises. These consisted of:

- An initial club/organisation questionnaire sent to identified groups within the study area;
- Telephone consultation with key sports clubs;
- A postal survey to all Town and Parish Councils;
- Booking information from pitch sites within the study area; and
- Analysis of cricket and football league handbooks, including Rotherham and District Junior and Senior Football Leagues, The Mexborough Football League and The South Yorkshire Cricket League amongst others.

The level of demand for playing pitches (number of teams) against the current supply of pitches was assessed in accordance with the Sport England methodology. Team Generation Rates (TGR's) were used to provide information on the current demand and situation. However it is recognised that the number of pitches and teams may differ from

season to season and for this reasons there is a need to ensure that the data used within the assessment is updated at appropriate intervals.

## Part 3 - Assessment Findings

### 3.1 Playing Pitch Quantities

Table 1 shows the audited total number of natural turf (grass) playing pitches within the Rotherham borough boundary, while Table 2 shows the number with secured community use. Table 3 shows the number of synthetic turf pitches available.

**Table 1- Total Playing Pitch Provision**

Pitch Provider	No of Sites	No of Pitches
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	35	81
Education Sites*	95	185
Private/Voluntary Sports Clubs	20	35
Trust	2	2
CISWO	7	24
Parish	34	57
<b>Total Provision Identified</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>384</b>

\*Education sites only includes formally marked pitch sites

**Table 2 - Playing Pitches with Secured Community use**

Pitch Provider	No of Sites	No of Pitches	% of total
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	35	81	100
Education Sites	22	61	33
Private/Voluntary Sports Clubs	19	33	94
Trust	2	2	100
CISWO	7	24	100
Parish	34	57	100
<b>TOTAL PROVISION AVAILABLE</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>67</b>

**Table 3 - Synthetic Turf Pitch (STP) Full Size Provision** (secured community use).

Pitch Provider	No of Sites	*No of Pitches
Education Sites	3†	3(9)
Private/Voluntary Sports Clubs	1	1(4)
<b>Total Provision Identified</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4(13)</b>

\*Number of 5-a-side pitches shown in brackets †1 STP surface is only suitable for football

There are pitches that are not accessible to the local community, including most that are in use by private and professional clubs, and some that are owned by schools. The use of education pitches by community sports clubs is inconsistent across the borough, with no formal dual use arrangements encompassing all schools, this instead being dependent upon the policy of individual schools. However all local authority pitches, Trust, CISWO and Parish Council pitches are available to the local community to access on a formal hire

agreement or through the sports clubs offering sports participation opportunities to the local community.

## 3.2 Playing Pitch Quality

Non-technical visual inspection of pitches by consultants and Council officers found 73% as being of good quality, 23% average, and 4% were found to be of poor quality. Common pitch problems include dog fouling on 31% of the sites, litter on 31% of the sites, car/bike damage on 14% of the sites, golf divots on 20% of the sites and moles on 4% of the sites.

97 of the schools consulted provided comments about the quality of their pitches. The key findings indicated that of those schools with community use 66% rated their pitches as “good” or “very good”, 10% rated their pitches as “average” and 24% rated their pitches as “poor” or “very poor”.

A consultation exercise was undertaken with all identified sports pitch clubs within the Rotherham Borough Council boundary. The response rate was good, and many clubs who were consulted did attempt to rate the quality of the pitches they use. The key findings of the survey showed that, 55% rated the pitches used as ‘very good’ or ‘good’, 29% rated the pitches used as ‘average’, 16% rated the pitches used as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. Only a handful of clubs commented on the quality of changing rooms and other ancillary provision. This revealed that, where provided, changing facilities were considered quite basic but in most cases users regarded them as acceptable. 66% of sites were judged to have adequate onsite car parking and 34% have roadside parking.

Football league secretaries and Sheffield and Hallamshire FA made a number of comments regarding pitch supply, quality, and development, including the following:

- There are poor quality facilities at some sites and there is a lack of floodlit areas, e.g. multi use games areas (mainly for training purposes).
- In their view changing facilities are of a very low standard. This is one of the reasons often attributed to teams folding. In particular, Barkers Park has been highlighted as an urgent priority for new changing facilities, along with Herringthorpe.
- A regional girl’s league used to use Herringthorpe playing fields (3/4 pitches weekly) but pulled out as the pitches were in very poor condition.

## 3.3 Playing Pitch Use

Whilst it has not been possible to establish detailed usage levels of every pitch in Rotherham, consultation has allowed identification of detailed levels of usage for all of the pitch facilities within RMBC ownership.

This showed that there were a number of single pitch sites with no recorded use and multiple pitch sites registering just one team. No clear reason is identified for the apparent ‘lack of demand’ for these sites and this may change from season to season. An unused pitch will still incur operational and maintenance costs.

Under utilisation of pitches should not be considered as an opportunity to dispose of sites without first considering the potential value of such sites for pitch rotation, alternative sport and recreation uses, or most importantly, the reasons for under use and whether these can be addressed. It may be that such sites perform a useful open space function, which will be considered in the emerging Green Space Strategy, or provide an opportunity for

unrecorded and informal use. Alternative sport and recreation use should be considered in the first instance and this is reflected in the Strategy's recommendations. The following sites were found to be under-utilised.

1. Piccadilly Recreation Ground, Wentworth Rd, Swinton, S64 8JZ, Area Assembly- Wentworth North
2. Hamilton Rd (Cherry Tree Park), Maltby, S66 7NE, Area Assembly- Rother Valley East
3. Highfield Park, Maltby, S66 7DU, Area Assembly- Rother Valley East
4. Lodge Lane, Thorpe Hesley, S61 2SF, Area Assembly- Rotherham North
5. St Paul's Field, Kimberworth Park Rd, Kimberworth Park, S61 3JQ, Area Assembly- Rotherham North
6. Mowbray Gardens, East Dene, S65 2UH- Area Assembly- Rotherham South
7. Newhill Park, Cemetery Rd, Wath, S63 6HU, Area Assembly- Wentworth North
8. Mill Lane, Treeton, S60 5PC, Area Assembly- Rother Valley West
9. Well Lane, Treeton, S60 5QA, Area Assembly- Rother Valley West

By contrast, some sites are very well used, and this has implications for wear and tear and the requirement for the maintenance of sites, as well as for potential investment priorities and facility development. This is an issue which needs to be considered in more detail and is reflected in the Strategy's recommendations.

### 3.4 Playing Pitch Supply and Demand by Sport

Below is a summary of the analysis of supply and demand for pitches by sport and related key findings. The assessment reveals whether the pitches with secured community use are in surplus, deficit or adequate to accommodate the number of teams in the borough.

#### **Cricket**

The study identified **50 clubs** based within the Rotherham area generating **154 teams**. The number of teams generated by each club varies significantly, from single team clubs to those with in excess of eleven teams ranging from junior (11-17yrs) to senior. **36 pitches** were identified and included in the assessment calculation. Key findings include:

**Pitch ownership** - The majority (36%) of pitches used by local clubs are in private/voluntary ownership or management. Only 5 pitches are owned/managed by RMBC (Greenlands Park, Kilnhurst Recreation Ground, Wath Sports Centre and Herringthorpe Playing Fields [2]). The other pitches are provided by Education (5), Parish (7), Trust (1) and CISWO (5). Cricket pitches in private ownership were perceived to be of a higher quality than those in public parks/open spaces.

**Pitches with no community use** - The assessment identified 5 cricket pitches without community use (all on school sites)

**Demand for matches (variable)** - The assessment reveals that there are approximately 79 matches a week during the season. The peak demand is spread across the weekend (Saturday 37% and Sunday 25%). The remainder (38%) are played in mid-week.

**Surplus / deficiencies** - There is a surplus of cricket pitch provision to meet peak demand weekend (+ 6 pitches).



**Potential demand** - On the basis of questionnaire returns, it would appear that nearly 50% of clubs are expected to remain the same in terms of membership. Several clubs have cited lack of funding as a factor inhibiting growth.

**Long-term demand** - Long-term demand for playing pitches is difficult to ascertain as there are many factors which can contribute to a change in demand including the success of local teams, sports development initiatives and the quality/accessibility of local facilities and nature/scope of local leagues. Many clubs within Rotherham are hoping to start girls teams, this will increase demand for pitches.

**Team Generation Rates** – Compared to other authorities Rotherham has a fairly high rate for junior boy's cricket.

## **Football**

The study identified **201 football clubs** based within the Rotherham area generating **365 teams**. The number of teams generated by each club varies significantly, from single team clubs to those with in excess of ten teams ranging from under 7's to senior.

The study identified **203 football pitches** ranging from mini to senior.

**Pitch ownership** – Rotherham Borough Council (34% of all pitches), Education (24%), Parish (23%), CISWO (9%), Private (9%) and Trust (1%)

**Pitches with no community use** - 98 pitches (14 senior, 72 junior and 12 mini) that do not have secured community use. The majority of these are on school sites.

**Demand for matches (variable)** – There are approximately 184 matches per week mostly played on a Sunday (85% of all football matches)

**Surplus / deficiencies** – Mini, Junior and Senior Football - The number of mini football pitches currently with secured community use is shown by the assessment to be insufficient to meet peak demand on Sunday, when there is a deficit of 6 pitches. The current supply of designated junior pitches is insufficient to meet current peak demand on a Sunday, when there is a deficit of 14 pitches. The number of senior football pitches identified as available for community use is more than adequate to meet the demand for senior football. The majority of senior football is played on a Sunday (77% of fixtures), when there is a surplus of 67 pitches

**Potential demand** - An attempt was made to assess levels of future demand in the borough. This was predominately conducted through consultation with sports clubs who were asked to identify issues with provision. Unmet demand could be viewed as an area within football where there has been significant growth, e.g. mini soccer. The level of demand within Rotherham is anticipated to remain constant within the majority of clubs. However, some clubs have identified a lack of pitches within the area and problems getting pitches as limiting factors.

**Long-term demand** - Long-term demand for playing pitches is difficult to ascertain as there are many factors which can contribute to a change in the demand for playing pitches including the success of local teams, sports development initiatives, the quality/accessibility of local facilities and nature/scope of local leagues. Through club consultation, it is

suggested that there will be an increase in the number of girls' teams. Sheffield and Hallamshire FA are currently setting up a girl's league which many clubs are signing up to.

**Team Generation Rates** – Compared to other authorities Rotherham has a high rate for junior boy's football but a low rate for junior girls.

### **Hockey**

The study identified **3 clubs** based within the Rotherham area generating **11 teams**, all for men or women between 16 and 45 years of age. **3 synthetic turf pitches (STP)** and **4 grass pitches** were identified and included in the assessment calculation. Rotherham Hockey Club operates a number of junior hockey teams. However, these teams only play matches once a month and often play away games, although they do train at their home ground.

Key findings include:

**Pitch ownership** - The 3 STPs available for community use (hockey) are in Education and Private ownership.

**Pitches with no community use** - There are no STPs in Rotherham without community use, although there is an STP at Dearne Valley College which is only suitable for football and therefore has not been counted in the hockey assessment.

**Demand for matches (variable)** - The assessment reveals that all games are played on a Saturday.

**Surplus/Deficiencies** - Based on 2-3 matches per day there is sufficient supply of pitches within the borough to accommodate the current demand for hockey matches.

The Sport England Facilities Planning Model works on the broad assumption that there should be one full size synthetic turf pitch per 60,000 population (other criteria also apply, such as drive times etc). The provision in Rotherham can be assessed against this 'model'. Currently there are 4 publicly (full or partially) accessible full size STP's (this figure includes the football-only STP at Dearne Valley College) serving an estimated population of 253,200. Based on the need for 1 STP per 60,000 there is a need for 4.22 STP's in the Rotherham borough. Output from Sport England's last run of the Facilities Planning Model indicated that a synthetic turf pitch was required in the South of Rotherham to meet existing demand. This demand has been met with the development of the new STP at Dinnington Comprehensive School.

**Potential demand** - An attempt was made to assess potential levels of demand in the borough. This was predominately conducted through consultation with sports clubs who were asked to identify issues with provision. The clubs involved raised no issues.

**Long-term demand** - Long-term demand for playing pitches is difficult to ascertain as there are many factors which can contribute to a change in demand for playing pitches including the success of local teams, sport development initiatives and the quality/accessibility of local facilities and nature/scope of local leagues. The new STP at Dinnington Comprehensive School will provide additional opportunities for Hockey Club fixtures.

**Team Generation Rates** - Compared to other authorities Rotherham generally has low team rates for hockey.

## **Rugby League**

The study identified **2 clubs** based within the Rotherham area generating **4 teams**. All the teams are for senior men aged 18 to 45 years. **3 pitches** were identified and included in the assessment calculation. Key findings include:

**Pitch ownership** - The audit has identified that RMBC owns / manages 1 of the 3 rugby league pitches in the borough, the remaining pitches are owned by Education (2)

**Pitches with no community use** - The assessment has identified 1 rugby league pitch without community use (on a school site)

**Demand for matches (variable)** - The assessment reveals that all games are played on a Saturday

**Surplus / deficiencies** - The results show that the number of rugby pitches currently in secured public use is surplus to meet peak demand (+1 pitches). It should however be noted that any increases in the number of teams playing rugby league may not be able to be accommodated on the current stock of pitches at peak time

**Potential demand** - An attempt was made to assess potential levels of demand in the borough. This was predominately conducted through consultation with sports clubs who were asked to identify issues with provision. The two clubs involved raised no issues.

**Long-term demand** - Long-term demand for playing pitches is difficult to ascertain as there are many factors which can contribute to a change in the demand for playing pitches including the success of local teams, sports development initiatives and the quality/accessibility of local facilities and nature/scope of local leagues.

**Team Generation Rates** – Compared to other authorities Rotherham has a fairly low team rate for men's rugby league.

## **Rugby Union**

The study identified **5 clubs** based within the Rotherham area, generating **26 teams**. The number of teams generated by each club varies significantly, from single team clubs to those with in excess of thirteen teams ranging from junior to senior. **9 pitches** were identified and included in the assessment calculation. Key findings include:

**Pitch ownership** - The assessment has identified that RMBC owns/manages 6 of the 9 rugby union pitches in the borough, the remaining 3 pitches are owned by Parish Councils

**Pitches with no community use** - The audit has identified 12 rugby union pitches with no community use (all Education owned), 2 of these pitches (at Wickersley School) have organised use without written agreement and for this reason and in line with the Sport England Methodology these pitches have not been included in the assessment.

**Demand for matches (variable)** - The audit revealed that the majority of matches are played on a Sunday; all senior men's games are played on Saturdays.

**Surplus / deficiencies** - The results show that the number of rugby union pitches currently with secured community use is adequate (the number of matches played is equal to the number of pitches available) to meet peak demand. Peak demand is on a Sunday when all junior teams play. There is a small surplus of 4 pitches on a Saturday. It should however be noted that any increases in the number of teams playing rugby union may not be able to be accommodated on the current stock of pitches at peak time.

**Potential demand** - The level of demand within Rotherham is difficult to predict, but it appears from questionnaire returns that memberships will remain stable in the majority of clubs. That is with the exception of predicted growth at Dinnington Rugby Union Football Club who anticipate that their membership level will increase by 30 – 40 members in the coming years due to new facilities.

**Long-term demand** - Long-term demand for playing pitches is also difficult to ascertain as there are many factors which can contribute to a change in the demand for playing pitches including the success of local teams, sports development initiatives and the quality/accessibility of local facilities and nature/scope of local leagues.

**Team Generation Rates** – Compared to other authorities Rotherham has a low rate for mini rugby but a fairly high rate for junior boys

## Part 4 - Conclusions

### 4.1 Summary of the key issues

Based on the assessment undertaken, the following key issues relate to pitch supply and demand in the Rotherham borough:

#### General

- G1. Need to continually review information in order to record site developments and identify and respond to changes in demand
- G2. Impact of off-road vehicles, litter, dog-fouling, and informal access and use of sites
- G3. Ancillary facilities (e.g. changing rooms) may not be able to cope with increase new teams (girls)
- G4. The future of surplus pitches needs to be determined
- G5. Need to protect playing pitch provision, excepted where otherwise indicated
- G6. Inconsistent community access to school sites

#### Cricket

- C1. Peak demand for cricket is at the weekend and there is a small surplus of 6 pitches available to meet demand. It is therefore necessary to maintain all existing pitches
- C2. Any large increase in the number of cricket teams in the borough would be difficult to accommodate on the existing stock of pitches at peak time. The assessment revealed that there are only a small number of pitches without community use which have potential for future community access. The audit also revealed that a large increase in teams is unlikely.
- C3. Girl's cricket is an area of development within Rotherham and several clubs are committed to starting girls/women sides. A small number of clubs operate friendly

sides, these teams do not play regular fixtures and as a result they are not included within the assessment, They do however demand a pitch and as such should be considered in future demand. It may be necessary to carry out more detailed assessment of future demand arising from growth of girl's and women's cricket in order to determine future pitch and ancillary facility requirements

## Football

- F1. There is a significant surplus of Senior Football pitches (+67) across the borough to cater for peak demand. Although a surplus is required to allow for resting, renovation, development and increase in demand, it could be argued that a significant surplus reflects an inefficient use of resources (i.e. maintaining pitches that are not needed). Therefore there is a need to rationalise the supply of senior football pitches to better reflect current and predicted demand. However, the findings need to be considered within the context of the local area
- F2. There is a deficit of mini (-6) and junior pitches (-14). These deficiencies could be rectified through re-designation of current surpluses in senior provision.
- F3. A substantial number of junior and mini pitches are owned by educational establishments. However, only 22 of the 97 educational establishments with pitches have formal community use agreements. This can often lead to access being denied for the community to use this provision.
- F4. Around 30% of clubs predicted a rise in membership over the next few years with just 11% anticipating falling membership; some hoped to start girl's teams and/or introduce new age groups. These increases need to be accommodated. Although pitch supply would appear to be adequate, there was a general view that the standard of ancillary facilities needs to be improved to cater for these anticipated growth areas.
- F5. Some clubs expressed difficulties in accessing outdoor floodlight training facilities
- F6. Although most teams manage to find a suitable pitch for their activity (though not always their first choice and /or in the community they prefer) there is a perception that supply is insufficient in certain areas of the borough.
- F7. A number of site-specific issues have been identified including poor changing accommodation at Barkers Park and Herringthorpe, poor pitch quality at Herringthorpe, no provision of junior pitches in Wentworth and Thorpe Hesley and limited provision of mini football pitches.
- F8. To be effective against vandalism some changing facilities are converted shipping containers but these can be detrimental to the quality of site character.
- F9. Drainage seemed to be generally very good on inspection but there are some problems at specific sites throughout the borough at certain times of the year.
- F10. There are also a number of facilities which experience significant over-use with up to 6 teams playing on each pitch.

## Hockey

- H1. There are surplus pitches available to meet the current demand for hockey within the borough, based on 2-3 fixtures per day.
- H2. Current provision should be maintained due to multi-sport use, e.g. football training.
- H3. Not all sites are available for community use at all times.
- H4. The new floodlit full size STP at Dinnington Comprehensive School will be a key site for hockey development.
- H5. Rotherham Hockey Club has expressed a desire to relocate to another site within the borough.

## Rugby League

RL1. There is a small surplus of pitches at peak time (+1)

RL2. No junior teams were identified.

RL3. There is a need to maintain all existing sites to accommodate current demand

## Rugby Union

RU1. There is an adequate supply of pitches at peak time (the number of games played is equal to the number of pitches available).

RU2. There is a need to maintain all existing sites to accommodate current demand

## 4.2 A Hierarchical Approach to Site Development

In view of the need to achieve higher standards of pitch and ancillary provision across the borough using limited resources, a hierarchy of sites is proposed linked to the requirements of sports development and competition. This would identify the pitches providing for higher level adult and junior competition, and those for lower level adult competition, casual play and training. A set of qualitative standards would need to be confirmed for each tier in the hierarchy.

Priority sites for investment need to be confirmed taking into consideration the following factors:-

- Accessibility e.g. public and private transport, walking distance, car parking
- Size i.e. focus on sites capable of accommodating a number of pitches, changing facilities
- Quality i.e. can the pitch(es) meet the required standards for improvement?
- Location
- Availability of other pitches locally

Based on an appraisal of sites using these factors, the following have been identified as being most suitable for inclusion in a top tier of pitch sites:-

1. Herringthorpe Playing Fields, Middle Lane South, Herringthorpe, Area Assembly - Rotherham South
2. Barkers Park, Redscope Crescent, Kimberworth Park, Area Assembly –Rotherham North
3. Bill Hawes Recreation Site, Wroxham Way, Bramley, Area Assembly – Wentworth Valley
4. Greenlands Park, Quarry Lane, North Anston, Area Assembly – Rother Valley South
5. Swinton Recreation Ground, Park Road, Swinton, Area Assembly – Wentworth North

Bill Hawes Recreation Ground has also been identified as being subject to particularly high levels of use at weekends.

Sites assessed as being under-utilised will be subject to further review, possibly leading to continued maintenance as reserve sites to cater for teams displaced from normal playing venues, to provide informal recreational space, or alternatively for disposal. The following sites have been identified within the assessment as being under-utilised:-

1. Piccadilly Recreation Ground, Swinton.
2. Hamilton Rd (Cherry Tree Park), Maltby
3. Highfield Park, Maltby
4. Lodge Lane, Thorpe Hesley
5. St Paul's Field, Kimberworth Park
6. Mowbray Gardens, East Dene/East Herringthorpe
7. Newhill Park, West Melton
8. Mill Lane, Treeton
9. Well Lane, Treeton

Remaining sites will be categorised as standard pitch sites which will be protected and maintained to an agreed standard.

## Part 5 Recommendations

The following strategic recommendations have been developed from the assessment of pitch sports in the borough and are aimed at addressing the key issues identified above. These have been categorised as recommendations relating to strategic planning, facility development, land use planning and policy and sports development

### Strategic Planning (SP)

<b>Strategic Planning – Recommendation 1</b>
Develop a hierarchy of pitch and ancillary facility provision for the borough, including the following top tier sites as priorities for improvement: Herringthorpe Playing Fields, Barkers Park (Kimberworth Park), Greenlands Park (North Anston), Bill Hawes Recreation Ground (Bramley) and Swinton Recreation Ground.
Key Issues Addressed: G3,C3,F4,F6,F7,F8,F9,H5,RL1,RU1

<b>Strategic Planning – Recommendation 2</b>
Develop qualitative standards for pitches and ancillary provision for sites at each tier in the proposed hierarchy, reflecting where appropriate Sport England guidelines, child protection requirements, female use and DDA requirements, Standards should also specify whether access for general recreational use is permitted on pitches at each tier.
Key Issues Addressed: G3,C3,F4,F6,F7,F8,F9,H5

<b>Strategic Planning – Recommendation 3</b>
Seek to develop the overall use of education pitches for community use and in so doing develop appropriate local support to facilitate access and use, especially for junior and mini teams. There should be a priority focus on those schools which have NOF3 funding, are Specialist Sports Colleges, or within the PFI or Building Schools for the Future programmes. (Only 33% of school sites are currently available for community use in Rotherham).
Key Issues Addressed: G6,F2,F3,H3,H4

**Strategic Planning – Recommendation 4**

Promote the overall value and benefits of playing pitch provision, and its contribution to open space in the local area. Ensure that the “dual” function of playing pitches and their value as part of the borough’s stock of green space is considered through a wider Green Space Strategy for the borough as part of the Council’s response to Planning Policy Note (PPG17). An overarching Green Space Strategy is vital in assessing the role and value of all green space across the borough. In some cases assessment of informal open space may identify potential sites for formal playing pitch development.

Key Issues Addressed: G5

**Strategic Planning – Recommendation 5**

Consider the findings of the Area Assembly Assessment to confirm adequacy of supply at local level, where supply and demand may vary that at a borough-wide level, e.g. mini soccer may be very popular in one area of the borough but not played in another area. Proposals to improve or redesignate specific sites should take this into account.

Key Issues Addressed: G4,C1,F1,F2,H1,RL1,RU1

**Strategic Planning – Recommendation 6**

Undertake further investigation into under-use of specific pitches to monitor trends from season to season. If a pitch is continually underused it should be redesignated, in the first instance to another sport/category to cater for identified need. Some under-used football sites should be maintained to provide facilities to ease the ‘cross-over’ period at the end of the season and to cater for the predicted growth in Sunday football (mainly junior teams). Ultimately such sites may be considered for other open-space uses within the Green Spaces Strategy or reallocation within the Local Development Framework.

Key Issues Addressed: G1,H1

**Strategic Planning – Recommendation 7**

All existing cricket provision in the borough should be retained.

All existing rugby provision (both disciplines) in the borough should be retained.

All existing hockey provision in the borough should be retained.

Key Issues Addressed: G5,C1,H2,RL3,RU4

**Strategic Planning – Recommendation 8**

The Playing Pitch Assessment data should be updated on an annual basis and a repeat of the strategy development undertaken every 5/7 years. Annual updating should include repeating quality inspections to monitor changes to quality of pitches and on-going consultation with stakeholders.



Key Issues Addressed: G1,C2,C3,H1
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## Facility Development (FD)

### Facility Development – Recommendation 1

Ensure sustained access to floodlit training facilities e.g. synthetic turf pitches or grass training areas - to support the overall development of pitch sports at local level.

Key Issues Addressed: F5
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### Facility Development – Recommendation 2

Seek to improve the overall quality and quantity of existing pitches and ancillary accommodation where necessary to meet proposed standards and in line with the proposed hierarchy of provision.

Key Issues Addressed: G3,C3,F4,F6,F7,F8,F9,H5,RL1,RU1
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### Facility Development – Recommendation 3

Ensure that where provided, informal grass kick about areas (5-a-side pitches) are maintained and adequately provide for informal play – this is to ensure that informal use of formal pitches is kept to a minimum in order to sustain quality.

Key Issues Addressed: G2,F7
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### Facility Development – Recommendation 4

Regular maintenance programmes should be implemented at STPs and provision made for investment in/replacement of such facilities.

Key Issues Addressed: F5,H2,H4,H5
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### Facility Development – Recommendation 5

Manage access and overuse of public provision with preventative maintenance programmes. Ensure appropriate measures are in place to control nuisance behaviour e.g. dog fouling, motor cycling, etc.

Key Issues Addressed: G2
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### Facility Development – Recommendation 6

Ensure playing pitch and public access requirements are addressed at the initial stages of any future residential and educational developments in line with proposed quantitative and qualitative standards and hierarchy priorities.

Key Issues Addressed: G2,G6,C1,F2,F3,H3,RL1,RU1
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### **Facility Development – Recommendation 7**

Develop a prioritised strategy for re-designating adult football pitches as junior and mini pitches, against the identified priorities from the proposed Local Area Assessment.

Key Issues Addressed: F1,F2

## **Land Use Planning and Policy (LP)**

### **Land Use Planning and Policy – Recommendation 1**

Current policy principles contained in the UDP need to be carried forward into the revised planning policy framework (Local Development Framework) in that there should be protection of playing pitches and associated facilities at levels recommended by this Strategy. Any loss of such facilities/pitches should be addressed through the provision of appropriate replacement provision

Key Issues Addressed: G5

### **Land Use Planning and Policy – Recommendation 2**

Ensure appropriate planning policies are developed to support facility development and investment for future provision in line with the identified priorities in this strategy. These should incorporate the individual standards recommended for each type of pitch, (qualitative and quantitative).

Key Issues Addressed: G3,G5,C1,C3,F2,F4,F7,F8,F9,H2

### **Land Use Planning and Policy – Recommendation 3**

Where there is potential for rationalisation of under-utilised sites, it is recommended that the Planning Service consider such opportunities through the development plan process. Where sites with development potential are disposed of, priority applications should be made for funding qualitative improvements to other outdoor sports facilities through direct funding or via Section106 Agreements.

Key Issues Addressed: G4

### **Land Use Planning and Policy – Recommendation 4**

There are a number of particular sites where there is intensive usage (overuse), examples include Herringthorpe Playing Fields, Bill Hawes Recreation Ground and Barkers Park. Opportunities to utilise the planning system, including use of S106 agreements, to improve these facilities should be followed.

Key Issues Addressed: G3,C3,F4,F6,F7,F8,F9,F10,H5,RL1,RU1

## Sports Development (SD)

### Sports Development – Recommendation 1

It may be necessary to carry out more detailed assessment of future demand arising from growth of girl's and women's cricket in order to determine future pitch facility requirements using Team Generation Rates as a benchmark.

Key Issues Addressed: C3,F4

### Sports Development – Recommendation 2

Consideration should be given to prioritising support particularly to mini pitch sports and creating opportunities for girls to participate. In comparing trends for girls' participation in all pitch sports in Rotherham, there is an identified need for promoting and actively creating more sustainable opportunities for girls and women to take part. In the case of football this has already been catered for by the appointment of the football development officer.

Key Issues Addressed: C3,RL2

### Sports Development – Recommendation 3

Consideration should be given to allocating specific sports development support to key education establishments e.g. NOF schools, Specialist Sports Colleges, PFI and BSF in developing community access to outdoor sports facilities and in developing formal community use agreements.

Key Issues Addressed: G6,F3,H3

### Sports Development – Recommendation 4

Where appropriate, initiate and encourage the development of 'community clubs' which reflect local priorities for sports development across pitch sports and provide for mini, junior and senior teams, training and competitive play and girls teams. Community clubs will require use of good quality pitches, with training and changing facilities on site.

Key Issues Addressed: C3,F2,H5,RL2

## Part 6 Draft Action Plan

A Rotherham Playing Pitch Action Plan (working document) is detailed below.

Ref.	PROPOSED ACTION	RECOMMENDATION REFERENCE	LEAD	PARTNER AGENCIES	RESOURCES	TIMESCALE
A1	Continue to provide playing pitches within Parks to enable teams to play in their own community, where there is known demand. This is particularly important where there is high deprivation and low car ownership and is in line with the recommendations of " <i>The Playing Pitch Strategy</i> " (Sport England).	SP1, SP4, SP6, SD4, FD3, FD6, LP2	RMBC	Local Clubs/Community	RMBC	Ongoing
A2	Develop an ongoing programme of consultation and involvement with local stakeholders and key user groups. Focus should be on agreeing, developing and delivering planned improvements	SP8,	RMBC	Local Clubs/local residents/cultural associations	RMBC	Short-Medium
A3	Set minimum quality standards for pitch sites in order to establish consistency in approach to pitch provision, facility development and strategic planning.	SP2,LP2	RMBC	Local Clubs/user groups	RMBC	Short-Medium
A4	Develop a hierarchy of pitch sites including strategically placed key sites that can offer higher level provision, and taking into consideration local variations in supply and demand as shown in Area Assembly assessments.	SP1,SP5	RMBC	Local Clubs/user groups	RMBC	Short-Medium
A5	Improve the quality of provision where necessary to meet agreed minimum quality standards by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Developing a prioritised and costed programme of site improvements for submission to Rotherham MBC's Capital Programme, external funding organisations, etc</li> <li>b. Identifying potential to create new pitches on informal open spaces within the Green Space Strategy as a way to address under-supply of junior and mini football pitches</li> <li>c. Establishing local partnerships to optimise the use of available resources to improve provision e.g. Section 106 agreements, NOF, schools, clubs.</li> <li>d. Closer co-operation with neighbouring authorities where facilities serve catchments that straddle the boundary</li> </ul>	SP3, SP4, FD2, FD4,LP2,LP3,LP4	RMBC	Local Clubs/user groups/community/schools Neighbour Authorities	RMBC	Short-Medium

Ref.	PROPOSED ACTION	RECOMMENDATION REFERENCE	LEAD	PARTNER AGENCIES	RESOURCES	TIMESCALE
A6	Undertake further research to discover why some sites are identified as having low use (e.g. one team playing at site with multiple pitches) and others are over used (e.g. six teams playing at one site)	SP6	RMBC	Local Clubs/Local Leagues	RMBC	Short – Medium
A7	<p>Agree surplus sites based on current and potential usage levels, so that where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. adult pitches can be redesignated as junior or mini pitches</li> <li>b. pitches can be designated to be used to ‘rest’ pitches and address issues of wear and tear.</li> <li>c. alternative uses may be considered within the Green Space Strategy</li> </ul>	SP6, FD7, LP3	RMBC	Local Clubs/Local Leagues	RMBC	Short – Medium
A8	Develop partnerships with Schools/Colleges (where there is an identified deficiency in provision which is not alleviated by provision elsewhere locally) in order to establish agreements for community use of pitches	SP3,FD6, SD3	RMBC	Sports Colleges/ Schools	None	Ongoing
A9	<p>Establish closer strategic working between leisure and planning services to develop policies within the Local Development Framework to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. protect pitches at levels indicated by this strategy</li> <li>b. support facility development and investment to recommended standards (including the use of Section 106 Agreements)</li> </ul>	SP7,FD6, LP1, LP2,LP3,LP4	RMBC	None	None	Ongoing
A10	Undertake a further assessment of demand for training facilities, including floodlit sites and synthetic turf pitches, to allow adequacy of existing supply to be established and any requirement for additional provision to be identified and pursued.	FD1	RMBC	Local Clubs/Local Leagues/ Sport England	RMBC	Short and on-going

Ref.	PROPOSED ACTION	RECOMMENDATION REFERENCE	LEAD	PARTNER AGENCIES	RESOURCES	TIMESCALE
A11	Develop and pursue costed proposals for improved preventative maintenance and site protection measures to reduce dog fouling, litter, motor cycles, nuisance behaviour, etc	FD5	RMBC	Local Clubs/local residents	RMBC/ External Funding	Short and on-going
A12	Establish process and time table for on-going reviews of playing pitch supply and demand in Rotherham in order to record site developments and to allow for changes in demand to be identified and responded to	SP6,SP8	RMBC	Sport England/ Local Clubs/other providers	RMBC/Sport England	Long
A13	Develop a costed methodology and seek resources for:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annual data review</li> <li>• complete refresh of the Strategy in 2011</li> <li>• detailed assessment of demand for training facilities</li> <li>• detailed assessment of growth in girls/women's pitch sports</li> </ul>	SP6,SP8,SD1, SD2, FD1	RMBC	Sport England/ Local Clubs/Local Leagues/ other pitch providers	RMBC/ External Funding	Short-Medium
A14	Ensure that the needs of outdoor sports participants are considered in planned indoor developments and the programming of indoor facilities.	SP2,SP5	RMBC	Local Clubs	RMBC	Ongoing
A15	Give favourable consideration to applications from the private sector to provide new playing fields or qualitative improvements to other facilities in the vicinity where a need is identified (including through Section 106 agreements).	FD2,FD6, LP4, LP5	RMBC	Private Sector Clubs	To be determined	Ongoing
A16	Integrate Sports Development issues into RMBC Sports Development plans <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use of team generation rates to support prioritisation of sports development plans</li> <li>b. Developing, promoting and sustaining, junior and women/girls participation</li> <li>c. Sports development support for education sites</li> <li>d. Support development of 'community clubs'</li> </ol>	SD1, SD2, SD3, SD4	RMBC	Local Clubs/Local Leagues/ Sports Colleges/ Schools	RMBC Local Clubs	Ongoing

## Appendix A: Key Strategic Documents

Rotherham Corporate Plan
Rotherham MBC Best Value Performance Plan
Local Agenda 21 Strategy
Sport and Active Recreation Plan 2002 – 2007
Green Spaces Best Value Review
Rotherham Draft Community Strategy 2202 – 2007
Cultural Strategy for Rotherham
South Yorkshire Health Action Zone
PPG 1 General Policies and Principles
PPG 3 Housing
PPG 12 Development Plans
PPG 13 Transport
PPG 17 Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation
RPG12 Regional Planning Guidance for Yorkshire and the Humber
Rotherham Unitary Development Plan
UDP Review Issues Paper
Local Transport Plan
<i>'A Sporting Future for All'</i> – The Government's Plan for Sport
General Household Survey Participation in Sport – Past trends and future prospect (2001 publication)
<i>'Realising for Potential of Cultural Services: The Case for Sport'</i>
Football – FA National Facilities Plan
Cricket – ECB National Facilities Strategy
Yorkshire Cricket Board Development Plan 2001 - 2005
Rugby Union The National Facilities for Rugby Union in England
Hockey – People and Places: A National Facilities Strategy for Hockey 1999 – 2004
Yorkshire Region Hockey Facilities Strategy 2000 – 2005