



BLACKPOOL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

Update

April 2021

(Final)

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Contents

- Abbreviations 5
- Part 1: Introduction 6
 - Background..... 6
 - Context 7
 - Policy Framework 8
 - Methodology 9
 - Monitoring and updating 10
 - Study Area 10
 - Regeneration Initiatives Post 2016 11
 - Headline Findings of the Assessment Report (July 2019) 13
 - Headline Conclusions 15
- Part 2: Vision and Objectives..... 18
 - Vision 18
 - Objectives 18
- PART 3: Sport Specific Issues Scenarios and Reccommendations..... 20
 - Football - Grass Pitches 20
 - Third generation turf (3G) pitches 31
 - Cricket pitches 35
 - Rugby Union 38
 - Rugby League 42
 - Artificial grass pitches (AGPs) for hockey 45
- Part 4 - Lapsed and Disused sites 48
 - Introduction..... 48
 - Assessment and Outcomes 49
- Part 5: Strategic Recommendations..... 52
 - Objective 1..... 52
 - Objective 2..... 55
 - Objective 3..... 60
- Part 6: Action Plan 64
 - Introduction..... 64
 - Action Plan Columns..... 64
 - Action Plan..... 66
 - Summary 92
- Part 7: Housing Growth Scenarios..... 95
 - Conclusions..... 98
- Part 8: Keeping The Strategy Robust And Up To Date 101
 - Delivery..... 101

Monitoring and updating	101
Checklist	104
Appendices	105
Appendix 1: Strategic Context.....	107
Appendix 2: Overview of the current provision and the proposed re-provision of sporting facilities at Common Edge Road (as at February 2021).....	115
Appendix 3: Increasing Football Use of 3G Pitches.....	119
Appendix 4: Criteria for Lease of Sports Sites to Clubs/Organisations	123
Appendix 5: Quality Assessment Standards.....	125
Appendix 6: Future Housing Sites (as at 31 st March 2019) and Existing Playing Pitch Sites.....	127
Appendix 7: Glossary of Terms.....	129

Abbreviations

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
AP	Active Partnership
BC	Blackpool Council
CFA	County Football Association
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FF	Football Foundation
FE	Further Education
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HE	Higher Education
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LFA	Lancashire County Football Association
LCF	Lancashire Cricket Foundation
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
RFL	Rugby Football League
RFU	Rugby Football Union

Part 1: Introduction

Background

1.0 This is an update to the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for Blackpool (originally adopted in 2016). The update has been produced by the Council working with KKP Consultants and has been informed by the updated Assessment Report (dated July 2019) which contains data relating to the 2018 sporting season, to provide a clear strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities in Blackpool between 2019 and 2027.

1.1 The update is being undertaken to:

- ensure the requirements of the guidance are met in terms of monitoring and reviewing the 2016 strategy; and
- consider the impact of key housing and employment regeneration initiatives that are being brought forward in the Borough; to ensure that the provision of playing pitches continues to meet current and future demands; and that the requirements of paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance including the appropriate exception requirements are met in bringing forward these initiatives.

1.2 A Steering Group has led and will continue to lead the PPS to ensure the delivery and implementation of its recommendations and actions. It is also responsible for overseeing that regular monitoring and review is undertaken in line with the guidelines to ensure the strategy and action plan does not become outdated.

1.3 The Steering Group is made up of representatives from the Council, Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs).

1.4 The following types of outdoor sports facilities were agreed for inclusion in the Assessment and Strategy:

- Football pitches
- Rugby union pitches
- Rugby league pitches
- Cricket pitches
- Third generation artificial grass (3G) pitches
- Artificial grass pitches (AGPs - including use for hockey)

1.5 A Playing Pitch Strategy will provide the evidence and framework required to help protect, enhance and provide playing fields to ensure sufficient land is available to meet existing and projected future pitch requirements. Planning Policy and other relevant sport related corporate strategies must be based upon a robust evidence base in order to ensure planning, local policies and sport development criteria can be implemented efficiently and effectively. For Blackpool the strategy will:

- Provide a clear framework for all playing pitch providers, including the public, private and third sectors;
- Clearly address the needs of all identified sports within the local area, picking up particular local demand issues;
- Address issues of population growth and or major growth/regeneration areas/initiatives;
- Address issues of cross boundary facility provision;
- Address issues of accessibility, quality and management with regard to facility provision;
- Inform the Local Plan policy framework as a robust evidence base;
- Inform Development Management decisions on planning applications and the need for S106 contributions
- Provide realistic aspirations which are implementable within the local authority's budgetary position and procurement regime.

1.6 The partner organisations have a vested interest in ensuring existing playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities can be protected and enhanced. Many of the objectives and actions will need to be delivered and implemented by sports organisations and education establishments in addition to the Council.

Context

1.7 The primary purpose of the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of outdoor playing pitches meet the local needs of existing and future residents across Blackpool. The Strategy is produced in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (October 2013 as updated in March 2014) and the NPPF and provides robust and objective justification for future playing pitch provision throughout the Borough.

1.8 One of the core planning principles of the NPPF is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Section 8 of the NPPF deals specifically with the topic of healthy communities. Paragraph 96 discusses the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation that can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

1.9 Paragraph 96 of the NPPF requires "planning policies to be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of need. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required." Paragraph 97 of the NPPF requires assessments to be used to inform the protection of "existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields."

1.10 Planning Policy and other relevant sport related corporate strategies must be based upon a robust evidence base in order to ensure planning and sports development policy can be implemented efficiently and effectively:

Corporate and strategic:

- It ensures a strategic approach to playing pitch provision. The PPS will act as a tool for Blackpool Council and partner organisations to guide resource allocation and set priorities for pitch sports in the future.
- It provides robust evidence for capital funding, as well as proving the need for developer contributions towards pitches and facilities, where appropriate. A PPS can also provide evidence of need for a range of capital grants.

Planning:

- The Blackpool Local Plan needs to be based upon a robust evidence base.
- It will support strategic policies on green infrastructure, leisure, outdoors.
- Sports facilities and health and well-being.
- Evidence to inform where appropriate the Community Infrastructure Levy and Developer Contributions.

Operational:

- It can help improve management of assets, which should result in more efficient use of resources and reduced overheads.
- The Action Plan will identify sites where quality of provision can be enhanced.
- An assessment of all pitches (in use and lapsed) will be undertaken to understand how pitches are used and whether the current maintenance and management regimes are appropriate or require change.

Sports development:

- It helps identify which sites have community use and whether that use is secure or not.
- It helps identify where community use of school sports pitches is most needed to address any identified deficits in pitch provision.
- It provides better information to residents and other users of sports pitches available for use. This includes information about both pitches and sports teams / user groups.
- It promotes sports development and can help unlock latent demand by identifying where the lack of facilities might be suppressing the formation of teams/community needs.

Policy Framework

1.11 The Blackpool Local Plan 2012-2027 will guide planning matters for the Borough, replacing the previous Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016. The Part One: Core Strategy (adopted January 2016) sets out the Council's strategic planning policies i.e. where new development (including housing, employment, retail and leisure) should be located to meet Blackpool's future needs to 2027. The Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document allocates sites for development, safeguarding or protecting and sets out a suite of development management policies to guide appropriate development. Part 2 is currently under preparation with an Informal

Draft Sites and DM Policies Paper consulted on earlier this year and the Publication version to be consulted upon during 2021.

1.12 The Strategy also contributes to the delivery of other local strategies and policies including:

- The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
- The Active Lives Strategy 2021 - 2026
- The Open Space Assessment 2018/19
- The Health and Well-Being Strategy
- The Healthy Weight Declaration

Methodology

1.13 The Strategy has been produced in accordance with Sport England Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (October 2013 as updated in March 2014) and the NPPF.¹

1.14 The recommendations have been established through the preparation of a full evidence based assessment which included extensive consultation and analysis. The Blackpool Playing Pitch Assessment (July 2019) contains detailed information on how the assessment was carried out, who was consulted and detailed site and sport analysis information.

1.15 The Strategy provides:

- A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of outdoor sports facilities.
- A number of aims to help deliver the recommendations and actions.
- A series of sport by sport recommendations which provide a strategic framework for sport led improvements to provision.
- A range of sport by sport and local authority wide scenarios to help inform policy recommendations and prioritisation of actions.
- A series of strategic recommendations which provide a framework for the improvement, maintenance, development and as appropriate, rationalisation of provision.
- A prioritised action plan to address key issues.

1.16 The Strategy and Action Plan recommends a number of priority projects for the Borough which should be implemented over the next ten years. It provides a framework for improvement and although resources may not currently be in place to implement it, potential partners and possible sources of external funding are identified.

1.17 The recommendations that come out of this strategy should be incorporated into local plan policy so there is a policy mechanism to protect provision where required and secure investment where the opportunity arises.

¹ Refer Appendix 1: Strategic Context

Monitoring and updating

1.18 It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring will be led by the Council and supported by the Steering Group. As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPS being signed off by the Steering Group, then Sport England and the NGBs would consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date. If the PPS is used as a 'live' document, and kept up to date, the time frame can be extended to five years.

1.19 The PPS should be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the Steering Group. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment that would have been built up when developing the PPS. Taking into account the time to develop the PPS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed. Part 8 of this strategy report contains a suggested process for carrying out the update and monitoring. The Steering Group will need to agree the process prior to adoption of this strategy.

Study Area

1.20 Blackpool is England's largest and most popular seaside resort located in the North West of England on the Fylde Coast peninsula adjacent to the Irish Sea, between the Ribble and Wyre estuaries.

1.21 Blackpool is intensely urban and compact in form with approximately 80% of the authority area developed. It supports a population of around 139,870² which is estimated to decrease to 137,091³ by 2027. Bordered by Wyre to the north and east and Fylde to the south and east, the wider 'travel to play' area includes Thornton, Lytham St Anne's and Poulton-le-Fylde.

1.22 The town is the seventh most densely populated borough in England and Wales outside Greater London. The population is heavily concentrated in Blackpool's Inner Area which experiences considerable transience. The health of people in Blackpool is generally worse than the national average. The town records one of the lowest life expectancy rates nationally and there are inequalities by deprivation and gender. Improving public health is a clear responsibility of the local authority and Blackpool Council is developing a range of approaches to tackle the underlying causes of poor health and promoting healthier lives. In 2017, Blackpool Council was the first Local Authority in England and Wales to sign a Declaration on Healthy Weight which includes a commitment to make the most of planning and infrastructure opportunities to positively impact on physical health. The PPS directly links to and supports the Public Health Authorities priorities and Declaration.

² Source: ONS Mid-2017 Population Estimates for Lower Layer Super Output Areas in England and Wales by Single Year of Age and Sex

³ Source: ONS 2016-based projections 2016-2041. Released: 24 May 2018

1.23 Due to the compact characteristics and geography of Blackpool, there has been no need to adopt a sub-area analysis approach, the study area therefore comprises the whole of the Blackpool Council administrative area.

Figure 1: Map of Study Area



Regeneration Initiatives Post 2016

1.24 A key aim of updating the PPS is to assess the impact of a number of committed regeneration initiatives on the provision of playing pitches in the Borough.

1.25 These initiatives relate to 3 sites - the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone which includes active playing pitches within its boundary; a site which includes land at the former Bispham High School; and a site at Grange Park. Both the former Bispham High School and Grange Park sites are classified as lapsed. A brief summary of these regeneration initiatives is set out below.

Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone

1.26 Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone (EZ) status was approved by the Department of Communities and Local Government in November 2015 and the site became operative in April 2016. The status of the EZ is valid for 25 years and provides financial business incentives through rates relief and enhanced capital allowance. Its success is a key objective in diversifying the economy of Blackpool and to drive higher skilled jobs in the Borough and the wider Fylde Coast and Lancashire.

1.27 The site straddles the Blackpool Fylde boundary covering 144 hectares of which around 62 hectares are in Blackpool. The site incorporates the existing Category III Airport buildings and surrounding business and employment lands, areas of open space and sports playing fields at Common Edge Road. A summary of the Masterplan can be found at the following link:

<https://blackpoolez.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/EZ-Blackpool-Masterplan-Summary.pdf>

1.28 The masterplan has a commitment to ensuring that alongside the wider employment development, the playing field and pitch facilities at the site meet the current and future sporting needs at this location, creating an enhanced sporting hub which provides capacity not only for the clubs that currently use the facility at Common Edge but if possible provide capacity for use by other clubs in the Borough. EZ funding has been committed by the Council⁴ to enable the re-provision of facilities. The re-provision of facilities is on land within the EZ and land adjacent to the EZ in Fylde. In relation to this, both Blackpool and Fylde Councils have agreed a Statement of Common Ground on the use of the re-provided pitches. The implications of the re-provision is considered under the Scenario section of this Strategy.

Former Bispham High School and adjacent land

1.29 Increased housing provision is a key target for central government and all local planning authorities must show a continuous 5 year supply of housing land available and deliverable for development. This is challenging for Blackpool due to the highly constrained nature of the Borough and difficult decisions have had to be taken to achieve a sustainable balance in relation to the different use demands of available land. To meet the government's housing requirements the Council has in recent years taken a proactive approach and in doing so received Land Release funding of £1,050,000 for the site at the former Bispham High School and adjacent land for housing development. Part of the site has been identified in the Council's Housing Land Availability Study for over a decade.

1.30 The Land Release Fund (LRF) is a cross-government initiative between the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and One Public Estate (OPE) which is delivered in partnership by the Local Government Association. The money was awarded in 2018 the aim of which is to assist in building stronger communities bringing forward council owned land for new homes.

1.31 The site lies in the north of Blackpool and was formally occupied by a mainstream secondary school, Bispham High School. The site was vacated and made redundant in November 2015, following the merger and relocation of two schools into one establishment under the Academies Act. The newly formed school now occupies a site approximately 1 mile to the east. The former school buildings have

⁴ 5 July 2018 Executive

since been demolished leaving the site clear for future development and disused for a significant period of time.

1.32 The proposed redevelopment of the site would see the site used for residential use, comprising of around 176 properties. An outline application has already been submitted in 2019 and a commitment has been made by the Council in relation to this development to provide appropriate mitigation in terms of a financial contribution based on the area of playing field to be lost. The mitigation will be used to implement qualitative improvements to existing playing fields informed by the Playing Pitch Strategy and associated Action Plan

1.33 As the site is disused and demolition has been undertaken the playing pitches associated with the former school site have not been included in the capacity analysis. Further information on this lapsed site is provided in Part 4 of the Strategy.

Social Housing Regeneration at Grange Park

1.34 The site at Grange Park is part of a wider social housing regeneration initiative which includes land at Chepstow Road, Dinmore Avenue and Bathurst Avenue to provide new homes which meet the needs of the Blackpool housing market and supports improved quality of life for residents of Grange Park⁵. This initiative is a project within the Council Homes Investment Programme (CHIP) (Jan 2020) and funding is secured.

1.35 Included in the development proposals is an area of land which is identified on the 2006 Proposals Map as playing fields associated with the school. However this area of land actually lies outside the school boundary and has not been formally marked out with pitches for the past 18 years. Although it should be noted that there is no positive obligation in planning law for a playing field to be actively used as such. Part of this open space area to the east, within the proposals, will contribute to providing a children's enhanced play area and design proposals are currently being drafted to meet the community's requirements.

1.36 As no formal pitches have been marked out in the last 18 years this site has not been included in the capacity analysis. Further information on this lapsed site is provided in Part 4.

Headline Findings of the Assessment Report (July 2019)

1.37 The following section highlights the headline findings of the updated Blackpool PPS Assessment Report (July 2019) including any quantitative shortfalls. The latter are presented in match equivalent sessions (MES) which has been used as the comparable unit for natural grass pitches. Converting both the amount of play a site can accommodate (its carrying capacity) and how much play takes place there (its current use) into the same unit of demand enables a comparison to be undertaken.

⁵ 6 <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Housing/New-housing-developments/Grange-Park-development.aspx>

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

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

1.40 The PPS guidance does not advocate the conversion of MES to pitches as there is not always a case for providing pitches to meet the demand/shortfalls expressed. For example, improving the quality of pitches can also increase the capacity of existing pitches to accommodate such demand. For qualitative findings and site-specific findings, please see Part 3: Sport Specific Recommendations and Scenarios, and Part 6: Action Plan.

1.41 For artificial surfaces (AGPs and 3G pitches), how much play can be accommodated is primarily determined by availability, rather than how much play it can accommodate before its quality is adversely affected as with natural grass pitches. Therefore, whole pitches are used as the comparable unit.

Table 1.1: Summary of Headline Findings

Sport	Current Demand , Shortfall, Spare Capacity	Future picture to 2027 ⁶
Football (Grass Pitches)	<p>Current demand is being met for all pitch formats⁷, although adult pitches are played to capacity.</p> <p>9 MES of overplay some of which related to over-marking by youth and mini pitches affecting pitch quality</p> <p>Capacity exists at the following site to mark out additional pitches: Stanley Park, Claremont Park and Whiteholme Recreation Ground (Gala Field)</p>	<p>Shortfall of 2.5 MES at mini 5v5 format to accommodate growth in future demand</p>
3G Pitches	<p>Shortfalls of two full sized floodlit 3G pitches to accommodate football training needs.</p>	<p>If identified current shortfall not addressed - Shortfall of two full sized floodlit 3G</p>

⁶ Please note that this is demand that will exist in 2027 if a current demand shortfall is not met

⁷ Table 2.11 Summary of Actual Spare Capacity and Table 2.14 Summary of Demand for Pitches – Updated Assessment Report July 2019

Sport	Current Demand , Shortfall, Spare Capacity	Future picture to 2027 ⁶
		pitches to accommodate football training needs.
Cricket	<p>Current demand can be met by existing pitches, but no capacity exists for additional play at adult peak time on Saturdays.</p> <p>Spare capacity exists for Senior cricket on Sundays at Fleetwood Rd. Recreation Ground</p> <p>Spare capacity exists for junior cricket across all clubs</p>	<p>Future Demand can be met by existing pitches but no capacity exists for additional play at adult peak time.</p> <p>Spare capacity exists for junior cricket across all clubs</p>
Rugby Union	0.5 MES of spare capacity however no security of tenure and poor quality pitch	0.5 MES of spare capacity
Rugby League	3.5 MES of spare capacity	3.5 MES of spare capacity
Hockey	No current club demand therefore no formal requirement for full size hockey suitable AGP provision in the Borough.	No forecasted club demand therefore there is no formal requirement for full size hockey suitable AGP provision in the Borough.

Headline Conclusions

1.42 The existing position for grass football pitches is that demand is currently being met. However in the future there is a need for mini 5v5 formats based on anticipated growth in demand, particularly in girls' football. Some pitches are overplayed (by 9 MES per week) and adult pitches are played to capacity, although there is no predicted growth in the adult group⁸, however changes in sport participation and trends and proposed housing growth need to be recognised and factored into future facility planning where appropriate.

1.43 Spare peak time capacity does exist on Youth and Mini 7v7 pitch types, and certain sites have sufficient area to accommodate additional pitch markings. With respect to 3G pitches for training there is a current need for two pitches which if met would negate the need for any further 3G provision to 2027. The Strategy and Action Plan seek to address the deficiencies through the consideration of scenarios and subsequent recommended actions.

1.44 Spare capacity exists on rugby union and rugby league pitches. However, for rugby union there is currently no security of tenure and pitch quality is poor.

⁸ Refer to Table 2.8 Team Generation Rates – Updated Assessment Report 2019

1.45 For cricket there is no spare capacity for additional play at adult peak time on Saturdays on cricket pitches however there is spare capacity for senior cricket on Sundays at Fleetwood Road Recreation Ground. Spare capacity however does exist for junior cricket both now and in the future.

1.46 There is no longer formal demand for club hockey within the Borough. There are however new facilities in neighbouring Fylde Borough which are considered to be accessible and open for use by Blackpool residents wishing to play hockey.

1.47 It is important to highlight that the headline findings are based on an assessment which has taken into account current sport pitch provision at Common Edge Road, including AFC Blackpool's youth training ground, Collins Park and South Shore Cricket, Rugby League and Squash Club. These facilities are co-located and are part of a wider area which is subject to development proposals associated with the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone, which became operational in 2016. The pitch provision associated with these existing facilities will need to be re-provided for appropriately, taking into account national and local planning policy and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance.

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Part 2: Vision and Objectives

Vision

2.0 A vision has been set out to provide a clear focus with desired outcomes for the Blackpool PPS:

“To ensure Blackpool has the appropriate provision of playing pitch community facilities to promote active sport and provide exercise opportunity for all.”

Objectives

2.1 To achieve this strategic vision, the strategy seeks to deliver the following objectives:

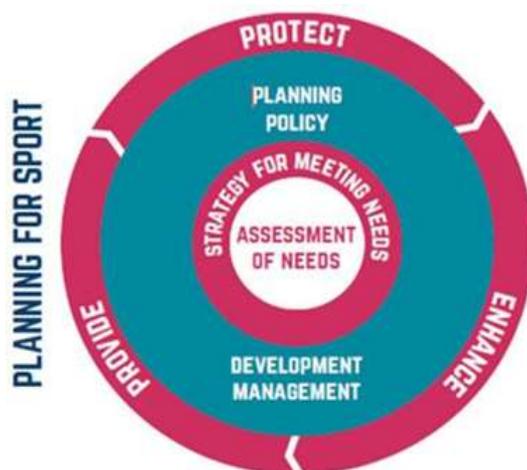
Objective 1: To protect the existing supply of playing pitches where it is needed for meeting current and future needs

Objective 2: To enhance playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites to assist in meeting current and future demand

Objective 3: To provide new provision where there is a need to meet current or future demand

2.2 These objectives are based on the three Sport England themes (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Sport England Planning Themes



Source: Sport England, Planning for Sport Guidance (June 2019)

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Part 3: Sport Specific Issues Scenarios and Recommendations

3.0 To help develop a clear set of recommendations and a prioritised sport and site specific action plan, this section sets out the key summary findings and issues for each sport and then considers a number of relevant scenarios. This helps to develop the recommendations/actions and to understand their potential impact. In relation to the impact of the development proposals at the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone (refer to paragraphs 1.26 to 1.28) on the sporting provision at that location the considered impact is dealt with under each relevant sport where affected. However Appendix 2 provides a collective overview of current and future provision for all sports affected.

Football - Grass Pitches

3.1 Summary of Key Findings

Supply:

- The current supply of football pitch provision across the borough is sufficient to accommodate current football although there are local deficiencies at certain sites resulting in overplay of pitches;
- There are a total of 77 grass football pitches in Blackpool of which all but one is reported to be available for community use on some level
- Most pitches (88% some 67 pitches) available for community use are rated as standard quality and a further 11% (8 pitches) are poor quality, with only one adult pitch at Squires Gate FC rated as good (1%)
- There is a total of 12 match sessions of actual spare capacity located across pitches that are currently in use to some level. There are a further 10 match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity on unused pitches located at Stanley Park, Unity College Blackpool and Armfield Academy⁹
- Overmarking occurs at 6 of the 16 sites available for community use in Blackpool including key sites at Common Edge Road, Boundary Park and Whiteholme Recreation Ground.
- Changing facilities at Boundary Park are reported to be poor quality and insufficient to serve all pitches. Changing provision within Blackpool Sports Centre is said to be of good quality, however, there is no dedicated officials changing rooms
- Of the 16 sites used for community use 5 do not have secured community use agreements or security of tenure
- Some school sites with football pitches are not made available for community use

⁹ Technical Assessment July 2019 page 30 Tables 2.11 and 2.12

- There are 15 pitches overplayed across five sites by a total of nine match equivalent sessions. The majority of overplay takes place on adult pitches, with only a single youth 11v11 and a single youth 9v9 pitch currently overplayed in the Borough¹⁰
- Additional capacity exists at Stanley Park, Claremont Park and Whiteholme Recreation Ground (Gala Field) to accommodate additional marked pitches depending on demand
- Generally mini 5v5 pitches in the Borough are not formally marked out as agreed with the Football clubs
- The current provision of football pitches at Common Edge Road, Collins Park and Blackpool AFC youth training pitch at the Common Edge Rd. site are subject to re-development proposals as part of the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone

Demand:

- A total of 188 affiliated teams are identified as playing matches on football pitches within Blackpool during the 2018/19 season
- Population growth (applied to team generation rates) indicate the likely creation of an additional five junior boys' teams
- There are ten Wildcats centres in Blackpool, all delivering sessions to increase girls' participation in football. It has been assumed that half of these centres will establish an U7 girls' team in the coming seasons¹¹
- Future demand may exceed forecasts as a result of targeted development work and strategic growth priorities at national level, for example the growth of women and girls football.

Key issues to address

- To ensure the re-provision of football pitches at the Enterprise Zone provides as a minimum for current and future growth needs at the site
- That the level of pitch provision currently in use across the borough is maintained to provide for current and future need
- When considering future demand there is a need to accommodate growth of 2.5 MES for mini 5v5 format to 2027 in response to the growth in the Wildcats under 7's age group
- Consideration of the impact of reducing overplay on certain pitches

¹⁰ Technical Assessment July 2019 page 31 Tables 2.13

¹¹ Refer to Page 24 – Updated Assessment Report July 2019

- Consideration of the impact of improving the quality of pitches from poor to standard or to good and assess the implications for increasing carrying capacity

Scenario F1: Re-provision and enhancement of football facilities at Common Edge Road and Collins Park; and Blackpool AFC Youth Training Pitches as part of investment at Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone

3.2 Proposed development of the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone will see investment in the re-provision and enhancement of football playing pitches related to Common Edge Road, Collins Park and Blackpool AFC youth training facilities (the latter located within the Common Edge Rd. current provision). This will involve some of the current grass pitch area remaining in situ but the majority of pitches relocated southwards within the EZ boundary on land within Fylde. The quality of all pitches will be upgraded.

3.3 Currently the existing facilities comprise 8 adult pitches, 1 youth 9v9 pitch; 5 over- marked youth 9v9 pitches and 2 over-marked mini 7v7 pitches; with 1 adult pitch at Collins Park. The current quality of all pitches is 'standard'.

3.4 These pitches are presently used for a total of 22.5 match equivalent sessions (MES) per week of match play which results in a total overplay of 2.5 MES. A proportion of this current use is by 15 teams from Foxhall JFC which is temporarily relocated from Fishers Field due to works being undertaken by United Utilities at their home ground.

3.5 Once Foxhall JFC returns to Fishers Field for the 2020/21 season, the total match play **demand based at Common Edge Rd. will be 14 MES per week (1 Adult, 4.5 Youth 11v11, 2.5 Youth 9v9, 3 Mini 7v7, 3 Mini 5v5) equivalent to 28 teams.**

3.6 The re-provision and enhancement of grass football pitches at the EZ will cover in total some 100,100sqm functional playing field to accommodate the current and future football playing pitch requirement at this location. This compares to the current playing field functional area provision of 99,600sqm. Whilst the proposed grass pitch provision can be flexible in responding to specific yearly requirements the proposed playing field area can accommodate as an example the following grass pitch provision:

Table 3.1 – Grass Pitch Re-Provision

Pitch Type	Number of Pitches to be Provided	FA Standard	FA Standard matches per week	Total MES per week
Adult/ Youth 11v11	7	Good	3	21
Youth 9v9	3	Good	4	12
Minis 7v7	3	Good	6	18
Minis 5v5	4	Good	6	24
			Total	75

3.7 The proposed re-provision of new grass pitches will be able to sustain as an example 75 MESs each week and **removes the need for over marking and overplay of pitches to protect the pitch quality standard**. Along with the proposed new 3G pitch (consideration of this is provided in Part 3 page 30) this enhanced provision will also be able to accommodate if required overplay occurring at other sites in Blackpool for example South Shore Academy and potentially meet training demand from the north Fylde area, particularly St Anne’s Juniors.

3.8 Table 3.2 below summarises the current and future provision of **grass football pitches** at the Enterprise Zone. The re-provision of pitches set out in this scenario is assessed to more than meet the current need and future demand identified in Table 1.1 of this document and in doing so allows flexibility of match management and the capacity to be able to rotate grass pitches to maintain their quality. In assessing the re provision in terms of quantity and quality of pitches the proposals must meet the requirements of Paragraph 97 of the NPPF and Sport England Playing Fields Policy including the relevant Exceptions 4.¹²

Table 3.2 – Summary of Current Provision and Future Re-Provision of Grass Football Pitches at Blackpool Enterprise Zone

Site	Criteria	Current Pitch Provision (Includes accommodating temporary relocation of 15 teams from Foxhall JFC due to United Utilities work at home ground)			Re-Provision of grass pitches as part of the EZ Masterplan (Illustrative can be remarked depending on specific yearly requirements.)		
Collins Park and Common Edge Rd.*	Functional grass pitch area sqm.	99,600			100,100 ¹³		
	Pitch Type	Adult/Youth 11v11	9	MES ¹⁴ 18	Adult/Youth full size 11v11	7	MES (based on 'Good' quality rating) 21
		Youth 9v9	1	4.5	Youth 9v9	3	12
			5 overmarked on adult pitches	* ¹⁵			
		Minis 7v7	2 over marked on adult pitches		Minis 7v7	3	18
				Minis 5v5	4	24	

¹² Paragraphs 57 to 80 Playing Fields Policy and Guidance March 2018

¹³ Included as part of Planning Application 20/0810 approved May 2020

¹⁴ Refer to Table 2.9 Assessment Report July 2019

¹⁵ Where pitches are overmarked recommended capacity is based on larger pitches. Refer to Table 2.9 Assessment Report July 2019

Site	Criteria	Current Pitch Provision (Includes accommodating temporary relocation of 15 teams from Foxhall JFC due to United Utilities work at home ground)	Re-Provision of grass pitches as part of the EZ Masterplan (Illustrative can be remarked depending on specific yearly requirements.)
	Total number of Pitches	10 (excludes overmarking)	17 (No overmarking)
	Standard of Pitch Quality	All pitches assessed as Standard Quality	All pitches to be Good Quality
	Total Match Equivalent Sessions (MES)	Current MES – 22.5 FA recommended MES - 20	75

* Main AFC Ground unaffected

Scenario F2 - Improving pitch quality

3.9 Pitch quality is affected by how much a pitch is used for matches and training and whether sufficient maintenance and drainage works are undertaken/carried out to maximise the quality of the pitch which subsequently affects the carrying capacity. Due to the highly constrained nature of Blackpool and the competing use of land within the Borough, the implications of improving the quality of existing pitches to maximise their carrying capacity is an important scenario to consider. Therefore the following scenario assesses the impact of improving quality to reduce overplay and improve quality by removing over-marking.

3.10 The updated Assessment Report identifies that the quality of community use pitches across the spectrum of adult through to Mini 5v5 is 1 pitch categorised as good; 67 categorised as standard and 8 categorised as poor.

Scenario F2 (i) - Improving pitch quality - reducing overplay

3.11 There are 5 sites in Blackpool that are overplayed as set out in Table 3.3 with current overplay amounting to 9 match equivalent sessions.

Table 3.3 – Overplayed Football Site

Site	Pitch Type	Tenure	Current Pitch Quality	No. of Pitches	Current Play MES	Current overplay MES	Improved pitch quality	MES Capacity with improved quality	Impact on reducing overplay (MES)
Blackpool AFC;	Adult	Secure	Standard	1	4	2	Good	3	1

Site	Pitch Type	Tenure	Current Pitch Quality	No. of Pitches	Current Play MES	Current overplay MES	Improved pitch quality	MES Capacity with improved quality	Impact on overplay MES
Common Edge Road	Adult	Secure	Standard	8	17.5	1.5	Good	24	+6.5
	Youth 9v9		Standard	1	4.5	2.5	Good	4	0.5
South Shore Academy	Youth 11v11	Unsecure	Poor	1	2.5	1.5	Standard	2	0.5
							Good	4	+1.5
Squires Gate FC	Adult	Secure	Good	1	4	1	Good	3	1
St. Mary's Catholic Academy	Adult	Unsecure	Standard	3	6.5	0.5	Good	9	+2.5
Total						9			+6 / 8¹⁶

3.12 The Blackpool AFC pitch is rated as standard and current match play is 4 sessions which is an over play of 2 matches on the pitch. If the pitch was upgraded to good (the highest FA standard) it could accommodate 3 matches therefore there would still be 1 outstanding session of overplay.

3.13 At Common Edge Road if the pitch quality was improved cumulatively there would be 7 MES available. As previously stated this site is the subject of re-provision and enhancement proposals at the Enterprise Zone as set out in Scenario F1 and overplay would be eliminated if Scenario F1 was implemented.

3.14 The youth pitch (11v11) at South Shore Academy is overplayed by 1.5 MESs improving the quality to 'standard' would accommodate an additional match session still leaving - 0.5 MES of over play outstanding. If the pitch was upgraded to 'good' the pitch would be able to accommodate 4 match sessions leaving an enhanced capacity of +1.5 MESs.

3.15 Squires Gate FC is already rated as good quality therefore there is no scope to increase carrying capacity of the single adult pitch through qualitative improvement in order to reduce overplay of one match equivalent session per week.

3.16 St. Mary's Catholic Academy has 0.5 MES of over play on the 3 adult pitches. Upgrading the 3 pitches to good would eliminate overplay and accommodate an additional +2.5 MESs.

3.17 For Blackpool AFC and Squires Gate FC access to additional pitch provision is required to transfer use from these pitches in order to eliminate overplay. Both sites are located close to the proposed Common Edge Road development and the enhanced pitch provision proposed including a 3G pitch could provide additional capacity to achieve capacity balance at both club sites in the future.

¹⁶ Dependent of pitch quality assumed at South Shore Academy.

Scenario F2 (ii) - Improving quality by removing overmarking

3.18 Overmarking of football pitches occurs where youth or mini pitches are marked within larger pitches which often intensifies the use of the pitch. There are six sites in Blackpool which have overmarking:

- Boundary Park
- Common Edge Road
- South Shore Academy
- St Mary's Catholic Academy
- Whiteholme Recreation Ground
- St George's Church of England High School

3.19 Boundary Park is played to capacity whilst Whiteholme Recreation Ground exhibits some spare capacity on the overmarked adult pitches of +1.5 MES, which includes +1 MES at peak time.

3.20 Common Edge Road, South Shore Academy, St Mary's Catholic Academy all have pitches which are overmarked and overplayed as set out below.

Table 3.4 – Overmarked and Overplayed Football Pitches

Site ID	Site name	Overmarked pitches		Recommended pitch type	Match equivalent sessions per week	Capacity balance	
		Type	Number			Current	Effect
10	Common Edge Road	Adult	8	Mini 7v7	4.5	1.5	2.5 ¹⁷
				Mini 5v5	3.5		
18	South Shore Academy	Youth 11v11	1	Youth 9v9	2	1.5	0.5
22	St Mary's Catholic Academy	Adult	3	Youth 11v11	3.5	0.5	5
				Youth 9v9			

3.21 The transfer of overmarked use from overplayed pitches at these sites can sufficiently eliminate overplay and create some spare capacity. A total of 3.5 mini 5v5, 4.5 mini 7v7, 4.0 youth 9v9 and 3.5 youth 11v11 match equivalent sessions per week would be required to achieve this.

3.22 At present there are sites in the Borough with secured tenure where additional pitches could be marked. For example at Stanley Park there is the capacity to mark out additional pitches including a combination of all formats including two 11v11 pitches or three 9v9 or six mini 7v7 or eight mini 5v5. Claremont Park and Whiteholme Recreation Ground can both accommodate an additional two

¹⁷ Where mini team play using half rather than a full adult pitch represent 0.25 adult match equivalent sessions per week.

mini 5v5 formats. In addition, capacity required at both mini formats could be accommodated through the re-provision proposals at Common Edge Rd. The increased use of 3G pitch provision to accommodate mini match play demand can alternatively assist in meeting this provision. The proposals under Scenarios F1, 3G1 and 3G2 for additional 3G pitches address this deficit.

The Local Facility Football Plan (LFFP)

3.23 The improvement of grass pitches is considered in the Local Facility Football Plan (LFFP).¹⁸ Every local authority area in England has a LFFP to enable investment in football facilities to be accurately targeted. The purpose of a LFFP is to identify the priority projects for potential investment in a local area. Blackpool’s LFFP (2019) identifies five priority projects for grass pitch improvement. Whilst pitch improvement across the Borough should not be limited to just sites identified as priorities within the LFFP, improvement of pitches at these particular sites to good quality has been recommended which would have the following effect on capacity:

Table 3.5 – LFFP (2019) Priority Projects for Grass Pitches

Site ID	Site Name	Pitches		Current Quality	Match Equivalent Sessions Per Week		
		Type	Number		Current Play	Current Capacity Balance	Improved Capacity Balance
8	Boundary Park	Adult	4	Standard	8	–	4
		Youth 9v9	2				
		Mini 7v7	2				
16	Moor Park Extension	Youth	2	Standard	3.5 1.5 2	0.5 4.5 6	4.5 10.5 10
		11v11 ¹⁹	3				
		Youth 9v9	2				
		Mini 7v7	2				
18	South Shore Academy (unsecure)	Youth 11v11	1	Poor	2.5	1.5	1.5
		Youth 9v9	1				
22	St. Mary’s Catholic Academy (unsecure)	Adult	3	Standard	6.5	0.5	2.5
		Youth 9v9	3				
		Mini 7v7	3		8	4	10
		Mini 5v5	3				
25	Whiteholme Recreation Ground	Adult	5	Standard	8.5	1.5	6.5
		Youth 9v9	4				
		Mini 7v7	2		2	–	2
		Youth 9v9	1				
		Mini 7v7	6		5.5	18.5	30.5
		Mini 5v5	1		5	–	2
Total increased capacity across all pitch type							84

3.24 Notwithstanding the above, it is important to recognise that the LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment; it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a PPS and is not

¹⁸ 15 Developed in partnership with the County FA

¹⁹ The site is large enough to accommodate as many as five adult pitches subject to demand

accepted evidence base for site change of use or disposal. A LFFP does however build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities. However, in the cases where a LFFP has been prepared without the benefit of an up to date PPS in place then each LFFP project should be assessed to identify whether the PPS evidence supports that priority project. Where the PPS suggests there is no or little evidence to support the project then the LFFP should be updated accordingly.

3.25 Improvement of the LFFP sites to good quality from standard or poor would create significant additional capacity over the week at all sites and is sufficient to eliminate overplay at both South Shore Academy and St Mary's Catholic Academy.

3.26 It should be noted that of the increased capacity, 14 MES' relate to unsecured sites, however whilst these sites do not have a secure tenure agreements at this stage, they are currently used by the community. The issue of unsecure community use of sites is considered under scenario F3.

3.27 The improvements to quality would increase the carrying capacity over the week, however there is limited increase in actual spare capacity i.e. availability at peak time. Actual spare capacity of one match equivalent session per week would be created at Boundary Park on Sunday mornings for adult football. Otherwise there would be no net increase in actual spare capacity available at peak times at other sites beyond the 22 MESs that are identified in Table 2.11 of the updated Assessment Report (July 2019).

3.28 Whilst improving pitch quality has limited impact on peak time availability over and above existing availability, the overall benefit of improving quality at these sites could eliminate overplay and improve the surface quality and the experience and quality of play. To support this, a review of maintenance programmes should be undertaken **following the Football Association Pitch Improvement Programme and methodology**, to ensure capacity and funding is available to implement the improvements.

Scenario F3 – Securing Community Use

3.29 There are 22 sites in Blackpool that accommodate playing pitches for football²⁰. Of these sites 13 have secured community use and 9 unsecured. Of the 13 secure sites 7 are Council managed, 4 are Sport Club managed and 2 are educational sites managed by Academies. Of the 9 unsecured sites all relate to educational sites²¹. Five of the unsecure sites do accommodate community use.

3.30 When considering pitch numbers including overmarking, the number of pitches which have secure tenure and have community use is 64 and pitches with unsecured community use equates to 24. On the educational sites with no recorded community use 8 pitches are secure and 5 pitches are unsecure.

3.31 Consideration should be given to the most appropriate option to secure community use which may include security of tenure; or community use agreements; or through partnership

²⁰ Assessment Report July 2019 page 27 Table 2.9

²¹ 6 Academies, 2 Local Authority and 1 Sixth Form College

agreements with community clubs to ensure their continued use. This relates to the following 5 educational sites:

- Blackpool sixth Form College
- South Shore Academy
- St. George's Church of England Primary School
- St. Mary's Catholic Academy
- Stanley Primary School

3.32 The educational sites with no community use (4 sites) if secured, would provide carrying capacity of 3 adult MES, 2 youth MES and 8 mini MES at their current standards. If the quality of pitch is raised to good this would provide an additional 5 MES across the pitches. It should be noted that the schools where the pitches are located will require some of this capacity. Depending on the availability of these pitches, consideration should be given to securing community use at these locations to add to the availability of pitches which could assist in the overall management of current and future demand.

Summary of Scenario F1, F2 and F3

3.33 Through a combination of addressing overplay on the pitches currently used either through quality improvements or reducing overmarking, marking additional pitches at sites with capacity and making use of 3G pitches for match play (refer to Section 3.2 re 3G provision), there would be no requirement for new grass football pitches to be provided in Blackpool to accommodate current and future demand. This would be subject to current pitches in use being protected and the enhanced re-provision proposal being implemented at the Enterprise Zone (including adjacent land in Fylde). Securing community use at unsecure sites where possible would add resilience to the capacity provision.

Recommendations

3.34 Taking into account the findings of the scenarios the following recommendation are proposed to guide the improvement of grass playing pitch provision for Blackpool:

- **Protect the existing quantity of football pitches**
- **Ensure the re-provision at the Enterprise Zone and adjacent land in Fylde meets as a minimum the current and future demand at this location. Any proposal will need to meet national and local planning policy and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance including the appropriate exceptions.**
- **Where pitches are overplayed and rated as standard or poor quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain/improve pitch quality**
- **Where additional capacity exists at current sites explore the opportunity to maximise pitch provision to address issues of overmarking, overplay and quantitative deficiencies**

- Utilise the FA Pitch Improvement Programme (PIP) to ensure maintenance regimes are of an appropriate standard to sustain/improve pitch quality and increase carry capacity
- Seek to remove or reduce the number of overmarked pitches either by improving the quality of pitches and/or through increased use of 3G pitches in order to increase the carrying capacity available and reduce intensification of use
- Look to utilise actual spare capacity expressed at sites in order to cater for demand and overplay expressed on adult pitches. This may require improvements to pitch quality and is explored on a site by site basis within the accompanying action plan.
- Explore opportunities for local clubs to undertake more self-maintenance to assist in maintaining and/or improving pitch quality
- Pursue increased access to 3G pitches to cater for future shortfalls and to reduce overmarking of pitches at existing grass pitch sites. In particular, pursue transfer of mini soccer and youth 9v9 play onto 3G pitches in line with FA strategic direction nationally. Review impact on grass pitches as part of the PPS Annual Review. 3G provision will need to meet paragraph 97 (C) of the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Field Policy and Guidance and Exception 5 where they are located on existing playing field
- Seek to secure community use through formal agreement on currently community used unsecure sites and at educational sites where community use is not occurring. Where a new pitches is provided seek to secure community use through the planning process
- Improve, provide and increase access to changing and toilet facilities which serve grass football pitches. Ensure suitability for female and disability access to facilitate increased formats of football at key sites, including toilet facilities as a minimum at key mini and youth football sites, extending to changing facilities at key adult football sites
- Where increased demand is generated by housing development ensure adequate provision is secured through appropriately calculated developer contributions

Third generation turf (3G) pitches

3.35 Summary of Findings

Supply

- There are four full size 3G pitches in Blackpool. Three are floodlit and are located at Bispham Sports Centre (Blackpool and The Fylde College), Blackpool Sports Centre Stanley Park and Unity Academy. Armfield Academy is not floodlit.
- All three floodlit full size 3G pitches are FA registered to accommodate match play as well as training.
- None of the existing 3G pitches are RFU registered as World Rugby compliant for contact rugby union practice or match play.
- Blackpool Sports Centre and Unity Academy were both supported by partnership funding through the Football Foundation.
- All four full size 3G pitches are rated as good quality
- There are geographical gaps in provision in the south area where there is a full size pitch at Armfield Academy but lack of lighting means there remains a gap in floodlit provision in the south
- The council are seeking to deliver full sized 3G pitch provision as part of the enhanced sporting facilities at the Enterprise Zone.
- The Council is exploring the potential with the Football Foundation to replace the AGP carpet at Blackpool Sports Centre (Stanley Park) with a 3G surface to develop what would be a dual 3G pitch hub with accompanying grass pitches available within Stanley Park.
- There are 8 small sided 3G pitches, 7 of which are located at Playfootball in north east of Blackpool and 1 at South Shore Academy in the south which help to accommodate affiliated training particularly for mini teams.

Demand

- Many single team football clubs within Blackpool do not train throughout the week as hire of artificial floodlit pitches may be considered to be too costly or there is no desire to train.
- Most football clubs use numerous 3G pitches for training, particularly those with a large number of teams. Some train on small size AGPs such as at Playfootball.
- Some 3G pitches also host commercial small sided football leagues which sometimes limits availability and accessibility for team training.

- The FA training model estimates that there is a need for in total five full size 3G pitches to service football training needs in the Borough to accommodate current demand. This current requirement can also meet future demand to 2027.²²

Key Issues to address

- The need to provide two additional full sized 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated future demand based on the FA training model for football.
- In order to meet the above demand incorporate appropriate 3G pitch provision at the Enterprise Zone supported by the Football Foundation to enhance provision.
- The replacement of the AGP carpet at Blackpool Sports Centre (Stanley Park) with a 3G surface, supported by the Football Foundation, to develop what would be a dual 3G pitch hub with accompanying grass pitches available within Stanley Park.
- Consideration of the installation of flood lighting at Armfield Academy to allow the 3G pitch to be used to its full potential.

Scenario 3G1 - Maximising use of existing 3G pitches

3.36 There is an existing 3G pitch at Armfield Academy which has committed to community access as part of a CUA, however it is currently not able to be accessed by local clubs in the evenings due to a lack of floodlighting.

3.37 The current and future identified shortfall is for two more full sized 3G pitches with floodlighting and unrestricted availability within the peak period. Installation of floodlighting and unrestricted community use at Armfield Academy would reduce the shortfall to one full sized 3G pitch.

Scenario 3G2 – Creating new 3G pitches

3.38 The Blackpool Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) identifies opportunity at two sites, Stanley Park and the Enterprise Zone, to support the development of additional full sized 3G pitches, based on the identified PPS shortfall of two full sized 3G pitches.

3.39 Stanley Park could provide one additional 3G pitch through the conversion of an existing AGP hockey pitch which is no longer required; and the Enterprise Zone has sufficient area at the site to accommodate one 3G pitch and two if feasible and economically viable.

3.40 Development of all three 3G pitches with unrestricted community access and floodlighting would not only meet identified shortfalls for affiliated team training for Blackpool based clubs but provide additional capacity beyond the requirement. Provision of additional 3G pitches would help support co-ordination of grass pitch usage for match play through increased proportion of play on 3G and could also help to meet identified team training shortfalls in neighbouring Fylde.

²² This need was established in the approved 2016 Play Pitch Strategy and carried forward in this update.

3.41 Lancashire FA and the Council will continue to work in close dialogue with England Hockey in pursuing conversion of the one remaining sand based AGP at Stanley Park which is deemed surplus to requirements for hockey, in order to increase 3G pitch provision and develop the site as a dual 3G pitch football hub.

3.42 If all three 3G pitches are developed at the two proposed sites, the shortfall of 3G pitches in Blackpool will be exceeded. The total provision in the Borough would rise to six 3G floodlit pitches (FA certified standard) and potentially 7 if Armfield Academy was to be floodlit and certified. If two 3G pitches are pursued this would meet the identified deficit to 2027 and provide a total of five 3G pitches in the Borough.

Scenario 3G3 - Moving football teams to play on 3G pitches²³

3.43 During the last decade 3G pitches have played an increasing role within the national game. They are regarded by the Football Association (FA) as the optimum facility for training by clubs. In recent seasons, they have also become more popular for competitive matches. Two scenarios have been looked at to help with understanding what demand there may be for full size floodlit 3G pitches in Blackpool if increased amounts of play were to take place on them.

3.44 There are currently 32 mini 5v5 and 38 mini 7v7 teams which would require a total of four full size 3G pitches (rounded from 3.38) to accommodate all mini teams on Saturday mornings. This is on the basis that both playing formats can be accommodated on one morning using staggered kick off times. This includes teams presently recorded within the scenario for the Common Edge Road site.

3.45 The requirement for four full size 3G pitches to accommodate all present mini soccer demand would also provide sufficient capacity to be able to meet the identified future shortfall of 2.5 match equivalent sessions for mini 5v5 football, representative of five mini teams.

3.46 Extending this to include all 35 youth 9v9 teams would increase this requirement to seven full size 3G pitches (rounded from 6.1).

Summary of Scenarios 3G1, 2 and 3

3.47 Additional provision of 3G pitches in the Borough will provide enhanced sporting facilities and provide flexibility in the management of matches and training sessions; potentially provide capacity for teams in north Fylde and provide resilience in the capacity of available sporting pitches. The conversion of the AGP hockey pitch at Stanley Park and the provision of one 3G pitch at the Enterprise Zone will meet the identified current and future deficit.

Recommendations

3.48 Taking into account the findings of the scenarios the following recommendation are proposed to guide the provision of 3G pitches for Blackpool

²³ Refer to Appendix 3: Increasing Football Use of 3G Pitches

- Increase sustainable provision of 3G pitches in Blackpool to meet football team training demand due to shortfalls. This should be in line with priority projects for 3G pitches identified within the Blackpool Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP)
- Explore opportunities to create multi-pitch (potentially multi-sport) hub sites where 3G provision is able to support grass pitches as a broader, sustainable, all-in-one community offer.
- Ensure current supply is maintained regularly and rigorously as required to ensure continued quality for use and ensure they are of sufficient quality to pass performance standing testing or certification renewal
- Retain all certified 3G pitches on the respective sporting registers and ensure certification of each is renewed through performance standard testing so to maintain the level of 3G capacity available to accommodate demand from different sports
- Seek to maximise use of capacity where available at weekends to accommodate match play in order to service future grass pitch shortfalls and to reduce pressure on grass football pitch provision such as that caused by overmarking of pitches
- Secured access should be safeguarded on new 3G pitches through formal usage agreements where possible as a condition of partnership investment or planning conditions
- The Council to work with Lancashire FA in close dialogue with England Hockey in pursuing conversion of the one remaining sand based AGP at Stanley Park which is deemed surplus to requirements for hockey, in order to increase 3G pitch provision and develop the site as a dual 3G pitch football hub
- New 3G pitches should be built, to meet FA (and if applicable RFU/RFL) recommendations rather than minimum dimensions where land footprint allows, so as to maximise opportunities for use for all formats of competitive play
- Encourage providers to have a mechanism in place which ensures the long-term sustainability of provision, such as an adequate sinking fund for repairs or resurfacing formed over time
- Through the creation of new full size 3G pitches, explore opportunities to deliver a wide variety of sporting opportunities, including new formats of competitive football such as central venue midweek flexi and Vets leagues, as well as walking football and female development centres
- On new 3G pitches, consider potential to certify for use by sports additional to football as part of a shared scheme, for example to provide floodlit capacity for rugby union or rugby league training compliant for contact activity.

Cricket pitches

3.49 Summary of Key Findings

Supply

- There are 2 cricket clubs playing in Blackpool – Blackpool CC and South Shore CC both of which have secure tenure
- There are three grass cricket squares at Blackpool Cricket Club; Fleetwood Rd. Recreation Ground; and at South Shore Cricket, Squash and Rugby Club all of which are available for community use and used by one of the two clubs
- There is one available non-turf pitch which is on the main square at South Shore Cricket, Squash & Rugby Club however it is now little used as the Club has dedicated net training provision elsewhere onsite
- Squares at Blackpool Cricket Club and Fleetwood Road Recreation Ground are rated as standard quality, whilst South Shore Cricket, Squash & Rugby Club is assessed as good quality
- Blackpool CC supports this standard quality rating stating that the quality of the square has declined in recent years due to limited investment in remedial and maintenance work.
- Blackpool CC has taken on a long-term lease of the pavilion building at Fleetwood Road Recreation Ground and has invested in improving the facilities so that they are now fit for purpose and able to be used again
- There is no peak time availability to accommodate additional play on Saturday afternoons for senior league matches in Blackpool. Some additional capacity exists on Sunday afternoons at Fleetwood Road Recreation Ground with capacity sufficient to accommodate at least one more senior team (if demand arose) or used for junior use releasing capacity at Blackpool CC to accommodate County fixtures and allow better maintenance of the square at the club site
- Junior matches are able to be played across a number of days throughout the week and all sites have capacity across the season to accommodate additional use of at least one junior team if not more
- No cricket sites in Blackpool are overplayed
- The development proposals at the EZ do not affect the existing cricket wicket or outfield boundary or the location of the cricket nets at South Shore CC.

Demand

- The two cricket clubs support 12 senior and 10 junior teams
- There is some infrequent exported demand from Blackpool CC which uses a cricket pitch in Fylde on occasions, though this is only a contingency measure should there be three home fixtures that day
- Based solely on population change, change in demand is not sufficient to create any whole new cricket teams. However, targeted development programmes for junior and women and girls' cricket is likely to see increases in participation at these age formats, contrary to population forecasts based on the current dynamics of cricket in the Borough.

Key Issues to address

- Overall there is sufficient capacity in Blackpool to accommodate current and future demand for senior and junior match play on existing squares
- Focus for cricket facilities in Blackpool should be to ensure that ancillary provision at both Blackpool Cricket Club and South Shore Cricket Club are able to support increased footfall from juniors and the requirements for growth in female participation
- The impact of improving the standard of squares should be considered to accommodate any increased footfall and provide resilience in provision
- Consideration of better use of Fleetwood Road Recreation Ground to provide additional capacity to remove ad hoc use of a cricket pitch in north Fylde and allow better maintenance of other squares in Blackpool
- Future consideration should also be given to temporal demand and programming of cricket club sites in order to be able to sufficiently support All Stars Cricket, women's softball, training and square maintenance.

Scenario C1 - Improving pitch quality

3.50 Club management and maintenance of the square is likely to improve pitch quality through greater time and cost able to be invested in relation to current regimes.

3.51 Transfer of more play to the better quality secondary site such as Fleetwood Rd. Recreation Ground would help to alleviate use at Blackpool CC and assist with improvements to pitch quality.

Scenario C2 - Utilising spare capacity

3.52 There are no shortfalls at present and both Fleetwood Road Recreation Ground and South Shore Cricket Club display spare capacity to accommodate further play on Sundays and midweek.

Scenario C3 – Increase use of non-turf pitches

3.53 Only one non-turf pitch (NTP) exists at South Shore Cricket Club which is rarely used. However consideration of the feasibility of increasing the use of NTP and introducing new NTPs at the two other sites could provide resilience in the capacity to accommodate demand increases in response to the various ECB initiatives. NTPs would also allow for resting grass wickets to ensure quality of wicket is maintained to accommodate the level of cricket played in the Borough.

Summary of Scenarios C1, C2 and C3

3.54 If pitch quality is addressed; access to existing pitches maximised to accommodate future demand and proposals at the Enterprise Zone meet with ECB requirements there would be no requirement for new grass pitches to be sought in Blackpool.

Recommendations

3.55 Taking into account the findings of the scenarios the following recommendation are proposed to guide cricket provision in Blackpool:

- Existing quantity of cricket pitches to be protected
- Support Blackpool CC to improve square quality at both Blackpool Cricket Club and Fleetwood Recreation Ground to ensure both are of sufficient quality to accommodate the standard of competition, including County first and second team matches at Blackpool Cricket Club.
- Ensure that clubs have sufficient access to the required equipment in order to maintain grounds as required and to work towards qualitative improvements.
- Utilise spare capacity to accommodate possible future growth, particularly development of junior and women's and girls' cricket
- Continue to grow delivery of All Stars Cricket and women and girls' activity to increase junior and female participation
- Consider the feasibility of increasing the use of non-turf wickets to provide resilience in capacity
- Ensure quality of changing room, toilet, shower and social space provision at both club sites is able to provide a welcoming and suitable environment to juniors and spectators to support All Stars Cricket delivery, as well as suitability for the requirements and expectations of female cricketers in order to facilitate growth of women's cricket
- Continue to develop cricket within local schools in conjunction with Lancashire Cricket Foundation (LCF) development coaches, linking to clubs to develop junior participation
- Ensure sufficient access to training facilities of the required quality.

Rugby Union

3.56 Summary of Key Findings

Supply

- There is one available grass rugby union pitch in Blackpool at Blackpool RUFC Fleetwood Road
- There are no World Rugby certified 3G pitches for contact rugby union activity
- The pitch at Blackpool RUFC is rated as poor quality. It is maintained by a small group of club volunteers with limited equipment, consequently the pitch suffers from overgrown grass and worn areas
- Changing and ancillary facilities at Blackpool RUFC are poor quality and in need of improvement.
- The Club operates with some financial difficulty and potential for revenue generation is limited, impacting on the ability to maintain the pitch and its ancillary facilities to the required standard
- The previous lease agreement with the Council expired in 2014 and the Club now rents via an annual rolling agreement. The RFU is keen for the Club to secure long- term tenure of the site so that it might be able to support with resolving financial issues and future development of facilities and participation.
- Blackpool RUFC is the only club in the Borough and regularly fields one senior men's team. The Club has a junior age group at U11 which plays friendly matches and trains onsite
- The Club has grown participation over the last two years, particularly at senior level and from almost folding is now able to field a senior men's team consistently each week. It has also since established a junior section.

Demand

- There is only one senior men's team in the Borough that plays league fixtures on Saturday afternoons
- There is some emerging junior activity at U11 age group and some occasional friendly matches are played
- Team generation rates based solely on population change do not anticipate the creation of any whole new rugby union teams in Blackpool to 2027. However, this does not take into account targeted activity by either the Club or RFU in the Blackpool area

Key issues to address

- There is sufficient supply of rugby union pitches to accommodate both current and anticipated future demand in Blackpool
- To support making Blackpool RUFC sustainable whilst seeking to secure formal long- term use of the site to help facilitate investment into the improvement of facilities.

Scenario RU1 - Improving Pitch Quality

3.57 Improvements are required to the maintenance programme and drainage at Blackpool RUFC in order to improve quality for play and increase available capacity for further use.

3.58 The impact of improvement in the maintenance programme and impact of pitch drainage installation is highlighted in the table below.

Table 3.6 – Impact of improvements to the maintenance programme at Blackpool RUFC

Site ID	Site name	Pitch type	Quality rating	Floodlit	Match equivalent sessions (per week)		
					Usage	Pitch capacity	Capacity balance
<i>Present position</i>							
5	Blackpool RUFC (Fleetwood Road)	Senior	M0/D1 (Poor)	No	1	1.5	0.5
<i>Increased maintenance regime – one increment</i>							
5	Blackpool RUFC (Fleetwood Road)	Senior	M1/D1 (Standard)	No	1	2	1
<i>Increased maintenance regime (one increment) Inc. drainage system installation</i>							
5	Blackpool RUFC (Fleetwood Road)	Senior	M1/D2 (Poor)	No	1	2.5	1.5

Scenario RU2 - Impact of additional floodlighting

3.59 Blackpool RUFC trains over two nights for a total of three hours (two match equivalent sessions) per week on a poor quality floodlit area onsite.

3.60 There are two options in relation to installing floodlighting:

Option 1 – installing floodlighting to the match pitch and relocating this demand to it would increase usage to two match equivalent sessions per week (refer Table 3.7) on the basis that partial floodlighting for training would require use of half pitch space rather than a full pitch twice weekly (equivalent of one match equivalent session per week). Pitch quality of M1/D1 would need to be achieved to increase capacity to sufficient levels to sustain this level of use. However this option may have operational implications for the club which would need to be taken into account; and

Table 3.7 – Impact of Floodlighting at Fleetwood Rd – Blackpool RUFC

Site ID	Site name	Pitch type	Quality rating	Floodlit	Match equivalent sessions (per week)		
					Usage	Pitch capacity	Capacity balance
<i>Relocation of training to match pitch through floodlighting</i>							
5	Blackpool RUFC (Fleetwood Road)	Senior	M1/D1 (Standard)	Yes (partial)	2	2	-

Option 2 – Improving the floodlighting on the training area alongside improvement to the surface, to provide a better training experience whilst protecting the match pitch surface from overplay and potentially providing a better operational solution.

Scenario RU3 -Impact of World Rugby certified 3G pitches

3.61 There are presently no World Rugby certified 3G pitches to relocate contact rugby union activity. Development of a new World Rugby certified pitch would provide a better quality floodlit training facility and would require three hours access to half a full size 3G pitch to service present club training needs. However consideration needs to be given to financial viability and long term sustainability of providing such a facility.

Summary of Scenarios Ru1, RU2 and RU3

3.62 Improving the quality of the pitch at Blackpool RUFC will increase capacity and playing experience. Enhancing the quality of the existing off-pitch floodlit area, as well as associated floodlights would also improve the quality of experience on the training area. Access to 3G, subject to viability and sustainability, would provide further resilience and allow grass pitches to be rested to maintain quality.

Recommendations

3.63 Taking into account the findings of the scenarios the following recommendation are proposed to guide Rugby Union provision in Blackpool.

- Existing quantity of rugby pitches to be protected
- In the short term, the Council and RFU should support Blackpool RUFC in developing robust club structures and to work towards a position of operational sustainability
- Engage with Blackpool RUFC to secure a long-term lease which will facilitate the club in seeking funding support for external partners to support improvements to club facilities
- Improve pitch quality at Blackpool RUFC to improve quality for play and increase available capacity for further use, through improved and more regular maintenance. In the longer term this could include the opportunity to install a dedicated drainage system
- Blackpool RUFC should consider the need for enhanced maintenance equipment
- Improve quality of changing and ancillary provision at Blackpool RUFC

- In the medium to longer term, seek to secure increased access to better quality floodlit provision suitable for rugby union contact activity for team training. This could be achieved through enhanced floodlighting to the training area alongside improvement to the training surface to provide a better training experience; or through access to a world rugby Regulation 22 registered compliant 3G pitch.

Rugby League

3.64 Summary of Key Findings

Supply

- There are three rugby league pitches in use within Blackpool at Kingscote Park, South Shore Cricket and Squash Club and Common Edge Road.
- There are two rugby league clubs in Blackpool; Blackpool Stanley ARLFC and Blackpool Scorpions ARLFC, each field a single senior men's team. There are no women's, girls or boys' teams
- Blackpool Stanley ARLFC has secure tenure at Kingscote Park and have aspirations to create enough space for a second pitch and to extend the club house to include a second pair of changing rooms to service the new pitch
- Future developments of sporting facilities to replace existing provision as part of the proposed Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone to include an enhanced re-orientated rugby grass pitch and training area at the Common Edge Rd. site with priority use for the rugby league club
- Current rugby league pitch marked on the southern outfield at South Shore Cricket Ground. Since the rugby league season shifted to the summer season this sometimes causes clashes with the cricket matches leading to Blackpool Scorpions ARLFC to make use of a grass rugby league marked pitch at the adjacent Common Edge Road playing pitch site as a contingency when required
- All 3 pitches are assessed as standard quality and can subsequently accommodate two match equivalent sessions per week
- All pitches have potential spare capacity and availability to accommodate additional play at both senior and junior levels with the pitches at Common Edge Rd. and Kingscote Park having peak time availability on both Saturday (senior) and Sunday (junior) mornings

Demand

- There are 2 senior men's teams and no women's girls or boys' teams
- Blackpool Stanley ARLFC runs a primary school age development training session on Sunday mornings at Kingscote Park
- Team generation rates based solely on population change do not anticipate the creation of any whole new rugby league teams in Blackpool to 2027.

Key issues to address

- ensure there continues to be sufficient rugby league pitch provision to accommodate current and future demand
- ensure that the development proposals at the EZ in relation to the Common Edge Road site and South Shore Cricket and Squash Club appropriately accommodate the current and future rugby league playing pitch demand at these locations
- improving the quality of pitches to enhance quality of play and resilience in provision
- Improving the current facilities at Kingscote Park to avoid overplay of the match pitch

Scenario RL1 - Improving pitch quality

3.65 Improved maintenance to increase pitch quality to good would increase capacity on all pitches in total by 3 match equivalent sessions; help to address any overplay as well as improving the play experience. The creation of a second good quality pitch at Kingscote would create an additional three match sessions, therefore the four extra match sessions across the two pitches in total would be sufficient to accommodate both current overplay and future demand.

Table 3.8 Impact of Improving Quality of Rugby League Pitches

Site ID	Site name	Security of tenure	Pitch type	Floodlit	Quality rating	Match equivalent sessions per week		
						Current use	Site capacity	Capacity balance
Current provision								
10	Common Edge Road	Secure	Senior	No	Standard	0.5	2	1.5
19	South Shore Cricket, Squash & Rugby Club	Secure	Senior	No	Standard	0.5	2	1.5
26	Kingscote Park	Secure	Senior	No	Standard	1.5	2	0.5
Impact of Improved Quality								
10	Common Edge Road	Secure	Senior	No	Good	0.5	3	2.5
19	South Shore Cricket, Squash & Rugby Club	Secure	Senior	No	Good	0.5	3	2.5
26	Kingscote Park	Secure	Senior	No	Good	1.5	3	1.5

Scenario RL2 - Training away from the competitive pitch

3.66 Removing training demand from the match pitch at Kingscote Park would remove all overplay and create capacity of one match session to accommodate further play. Training could be moved to a general grass area away from the pitch or a 3G if appropriate for the manner of practice.

Summary of Scenarios of RL1 and RL2

3.67 Implementing Scenarios RL1 and 2 would address current overplay and more than adequately provide for future demand.

Recommendations

3.68 Taking into account the findings of the scenarios the following recommendation are proposed to guide Rugby League provision in Blackpool.

- **Sustain and improve pitch quality through improved maintenance in order to increase pitch quality**
- **Seek to transfer training demand from match pitches where this take place to other suitable areas**
- **Explore opportunities to create an additional rugby league pitch should growth in demand require and improve changing facilities at Kingscote Park**
- **Ensure that the re-provision proposals at the EZ provide for the current and future rugby league demand for Blackpool Scorpions ARLFC based at South Shore Cricket and Squash Club, with respect to pitch and accompanying ancillary facilities and meet national, local and Sport England planning policy**
- **Consider greater use of 3G pitches to accommodate training where appropriate and required.**

Artificial grass pitches (AGPs) for hockey

3.69 Summary of Key Findings

Supply

- There is one AGP suitable for competitive hockey within Blackpool located within Stanley Park and operated by Blackpool Sports Centre
- The pitch is sand dressed and rated as standard quality. The surface is now 11 years old following resurfacing in 2008 and has thus exceeded the ten year recommended lifespan
- There was a sand filled AGP at Arnold School which became disused since the closure of the site in late 2013. The new school on the former Arnold site, Armfield Academy opened in September 2018, with the previous AGP footprint now accommodating a 3G pitch

Demand

- Blackpool Hockey Club was the only community hockey club based within the Borough. Consultation with England Hockey confirms that the ladies section has disbanded whilst what was the men's section has now amalgamated to become part of Fylde Hockey Club
- Consequently, the only demand for community hockey comes from the Blackpool Hockey Festival which is an occasional event held over one weekend per year. Notwithstanding this one-off event, there is no known regular demand from within the Borough for hockey suitable AGP provision for either matches, training or social play
- Given there are no established hockey clubs based in Blackpool, it is anticipated that there will be no future demand for club hockey matches or activity in Blackpool given there is no club from which to drive participation, demand or growth.

Key Issues to address

- There is no regular demand for hockey in Blackpool and no requirement for full size hockey suitable AGP provision in the Borough to service community club based hockey
- The AGP at Blackpool Sports Centre (Stanley Park) is now predominantly and significantly used for football. Consideration should be given to the potential to convert the pitch to 3G to further develop Stanley Park as a football hub given there is no longer regular demand for its use for hockey.

Scenario H1 - Converting pitches to 3G

3.70 Given the shortfall of 3G pitches, England Hockey and Lancashire FA should work together to determine the feasibility of converting the sand based pitch at Stanley Park for football.

3.71 Potential conversion of the AGP to 3G surface would see the reduction of match play capacity for hockey from four match equivalent sessions to none on Saturdays, with no full size AGP provision for hockey training across the Borough.

3.72 In the absence of regular community club hockey demand in Blackpool, this would have no impact on community club hockey in the Borough provided residents are suitably signposted and can be accommodated at Fylde HC which is the main hockey club servicing the catchment.

Recommendations

3.73 Taking into account the findings of the scenarios the following recommendation are proposed to guide AGP hockey provision in Blackpool:

- **England Hockey should retain close dialogue with the Council and Lancashire FA regarding the potential future conversion of the one remaining sand based AGP at Stanley Park which is deemed surplus to requirements for hockey.**
- **Ensure that schools and local residents potentially wishing to play club hockey are signposted to local clubs in other local authority areas, particularly Fylde HC which is the main club now serving the Blackpool catchment.**

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Part 4 - Lapsed and Disused sites

Introduction

4.0 A key role of the PPS is to assess the requirement for playing pitches to accommodate current and future demands and lapsed and disused sites can play an important role if a deficit is identified.

4.1 **Disused sites** are categorised as sites that are not being used at all by any users and are not available for community hire either. Once these sites are disused for five or more years they will then be categorised as 'lapsed sites'.

4.2 **Lapsed sites** are sites where the last known use as a playing field is more than five years ago. These sites fall outside of Sport England's statutory remit but still have to be assessed using the criteria in Paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework which is set out below:

'Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

4.3 Sport England's Playing Pitch Guidance at D6 states that playing pitch provision should be protected unless the assessment has indicated that there is an excess of accessible pitches and particular provision at a site is surplus to requirements. In addition, D12 of the guidance advises in relation to spare capacity that retaining some spare capacity of accessible playing pitches should be a key outcome of a PPS to ensure a flexible amount of supply which can respond to for example unforeseen peaks in demand, helping to accommodate backlogs etc. D15 also states that any proposed change of use of a pitch that has been determined as being surplus to requirements should ensure significant and appropriate benefits are secured to help meet the identified deficiencies.

4.4 In addition, Sport England's Playing Field Policy and Guidance Exception E1²⁴ allows for development of lapsed or disused playing fields if a PPS shows a clear excess in the quantity of playing pitch provision at present and in the future across all playing pitch sports types and sizes. Where the PPS cannot demonstrate the site, or part of a site, is clearly surplus to requirements then replacement of the site, or part of a site, will be required to comply with Sport England policy Exception E4. This requires:

²⁴ <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/final-playing-fields-policy-and-guidance-document.pdf?WXTZnJYKUhHkAsLNfBEgtdwW1i5ndMBD>

‘The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new area of playing field of equivalent or better quality; and of equivalent or greater quantity; and in a suitable location; and subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.’

4.5 In relation to disposal of school playing fields local authorities need consent under Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, as well as consent required for disposal of any land used by a school or academy under Schedule 1 to the Academies Act 2010. It should be noted that consent under Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act does not necessarily mean subsequent planning approval will be granted. Therefore, any application for planning permission must meet the requirements of the relevant policy, in this case paragraph 97 of the Framework, Local Plan Policy and Sport England Policy. Indeed, applicants are advised to engage Sport England before submitting applications. Robust implementation of the statutory obligation will ensure protection of school playing fields for use by pupils (and sometimes the community as a whole) to ensure receipt is ploughed back into sports education.

Assessment and Outcomes

4.6 The headline findings of the Blackpool PPS are set out in Part 1 pages 14 to 17 which highlights the key deficits, namely the need for two additional 3G FA certified pitches; 2.5 MES at mini 5v5 format, the latter to accommodate the growing Wildcat requirement in the Borough to 2027; and the issue of overplay at certain sites of some 9 MES.

4.7 Part 3 of the PPS, as required by the guidance, sets out various scenarios for all sports covered in this strategy, to consider how the headline findings as well as other issues highlighted in the PPS Updated Assessment Report (July 2019), including issues of over making and overplay of certain pitches at certain sites, can be addressed which has then informed the strategic and Action Plan recommendations set out in Parts 5 and 6 of this PPS.

4.8 In undertaking the step by step requirements set out in the guidance the outcomes clearly show that Blackpool is able to accommodate both current and future playing pitch demand for all sports subject to the implementation of the recommendations in the Action Plan.

4.9 The table below provides further information on the lapsed and disused sites which are also listed in the Action Plan along with mitigation recommendations.

Table 4.1 – Lapsed and Disused Sites

Site Name	Sport	Status	Site Information
Former Bispham High School	School Playing Field	Lapsed	Bispham High School was vacated and permanently closed in November 2015. It was deemed surplus to educational requirements following the merger, by the Local Authority, of 2 former secondary schools Collegiate High and Bispham High. The newly formed merged school was then located at the former Collegiate High School site on Blackpool Rd. leaving Bispham High

Site Name	Sport	Status	Site Information
			<p>School site vacant. The school was demolished late 2016 early 2017.</p> <p>In 2018 the Council was awarded Land Release Funding (LRF) of £1,050,000 to bring the site forward, along with adjacent land, for housing development to boost supply in Blackpool. The LRF is a cross-government initiative between the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and One Public Estate (OPE) which is delivered in partnership by the Local Government Association. The aim is to assist in building stronger communities bringing forward council owned land for new homes.</p> <p>The proposed development at the former Bispham High School, which has been closed for over 5 years can accommodate around 176 properties with the retention of 1.6 hectares of existing playing field in the northwest part of the site. An outline application has already been submitted in 2019 and a commitment has been made by the Council in relation to this development to provide an appropriate mitigation package for the loss of grass playing fields. The preferred location for future investment in 3G investment at Stanley Park.</p> <p>No current or future sport activity or teams will be displaced if this site is not protected.</p>
Former Grange Park Primary School	School Playing Field	Lapsed	<p>The former Grange Park Primary School was replaced by the new Boundary Park Primary School development in 2003. The school was built on the existing playing pitches with the former Grange Park Primary School to be demolished once the children had transferred to the new school and a playing field to be instated on the former school building site. However due to fire damage at Devonshire Rd. Primary in August 2003 the former Grange Park School was used to accommodate the Devonshire Rd Primary children. Subsequent to the children moving back to Devonshire Rd., Grange Park was used as an educational referral centre until the school was eventually demolished in 2013. The site was then identified as open space, outside the school boundary. As part of the Grange Park re-development Blackpool Council and Boundary Primary School have recently agreed an area adjacent to the north west corner of the school, part of the former Presbytery site (demolished 2013), for a new informal play area.</p> <p>In 2018 the site at Grange Park became part of a wider social housing regeneration initiative²⁵ which includes land at Chepstow Road, Dinmore Avenue and Bathurst Avenue to provide new</p>

²⁵ <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Housing/New-housing-developments/Grange-Park-development.aspx>

Site Name	Sport	Status	Site Information
			<p>homes which meet the needs of the Blackpool housing market and supports improved quality of life for residents of Grange Park. This initiative is a project within the Council Homes Investment Programme (CHIP) (Jan 2020) and funding is secured. The development will provide new housing as well as open space and a children's enhanced play area and design proposals are currently being drafted to meet the community's requirements.</p> <p>No formal playing pitches have been marked out on the area in the last 18 years. There are no current users of the site.</p> <p>Determine future use of site to include the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to identify as green infrastructure and hold the site as a reserve site; or • Explore the opportunity for redevelopment of the site; and use developer contributions to improve pitch provision at the site or other pitches elsewhere
Mereside	Playing Fields - Football	Disused	<p>Mereside is located in South Blackpool north of Clifton Rd. It comprises two distinct areas of open space adjacent to one another. The open space can accommodate up to five adult football pitches (3 pitches on the western side and 2 on the eastern side). The space was last regularly used for playing football in 2014. There is now little demand for football use and the site has no on site changing or toilet facilities. The Council attempted to bring the site back into use in 2018 for summer football training however wet weather and drainage issues prevented use. Reportedly site is subject to anti-social behaviour. Area presently maintained as public open space.</p> <p>Determine future use of site to include the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to identify as green infrastructure and hold the site as a reserve site; or • Explore the opportunity for redevelopment of the site; and use developer contributions to improve pitch provision at the site or other pitches elsewhere

Part 5: Strategic Recommendations

5.0 The strategic recommendations for the Strategy have been informed by the key issues and Scenarios set out in Part 3 and have been categorised under each of the Strategy Objectives – **PROTECT, ENHANCE, PROVIDE**. They reflect overarching and common areas to be addressed which apply across outdoor sports facilities and may not be specific to just one sport.

Objective 1

To Protect the Existing Supply of Playing Pitch Facilities Where it is Needed for Meeting Current or Future Needs

Recommendations:

- A Protect playing field sites through local planning policy where they are needed for meeting current and future needs to 2027**
- B Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements**
- C Maximise community use of education facilities where there is a need to do so.**

Recommendation A – Protect playing field sites through local planning policy where they are needed for meeting current and future needs to 2027

5.1 Informed by the Technical Assessment Report July 2019 and the scenarios considered in the previous section there is a need to protect existing playing field sites irrespective of use to ensure that current and future quantitative needs up to 2027 are met.

5.2 The analysis shows that there are no current quantitative shortfalls of grass pitches, however, in the future up to 2027 there is a small shortfall of mini 5v5 football pitches. In addition there are also some qualitative shortfalls in grass pitches (Objective 2 refers). Therefore, according to Paragraph 97 of the NPPF and Sport England Playing Field Policy²⁶, there is a current need to protect or replace all existing playing field sites irrespective of use, as listed in Part 6: Action Plan and that these sites should not be built on unless:

- An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

²⁶ <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/playing-fields-policy/>

- The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

Recommendation B – Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs through a range of solutions and partnership agreements

5.3 Local sports clubs should be supported by partners including the Council, NGBs or the Active Partnership (AP) to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership working. For example, support club development and encourage clubs to develop evidence of business and sports development plans to generate an income through their facilities. All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC)²⁷. Clubs should also be encouraged to work with partners locally, whether volunteer support agencies or linking with local businesses.

5.4 Where sites also function as public open space or parks and as such must be retained accessible for public use, where the Council is unable to transfer full liability of these spaces to private clubs or organisations, clubs could negotiate exclusive licenses for formal sporting use. Consequently, the role of the Council as landowner is key in leveraging capital investment into improvement of facilities and pitches at these sites and the Council should work in partnership with resident clubs and organisations as lead applicant to secure external partnership funding towards the improvement of these public sites.

5.5 Furthermore, whilst the Council cannot lease public open greenspaces to private bodies, it can consider opportunities to offer long-term leasehold of ancillary facilities such as changing pavilions to resident clubs. Some sites have poor quality (or no) ancillary facilities. The Council can further explore opportunities where security of tenure could be granted to the clubs playing on these sites (minimum 25 years as recommended by Sport England and NGBs) so the clubs are in a position to apply for external funding to improve the ancillary facilities.

5.6 Further to this there could be examples in Blackpool where long-term leases could be put into place for the continued use of a site. Each club should be required to meet service and/or strategic recommendations. However, an additional set of criteria should be considered, which takes into account the quality of the club, aligned to its long term development objectives and sustainability (refer to Appendix 4). To facilitate this, the Council should support and enable clubs to generate sufficient funds to allow this.

5.7 The Council can further recognise the value of NGB club accreditation by adopting a policy of prioritising the clubs that are to have access to these better quality facilities. This may be achieved by inviting clubs to apply for season long leases on a particular site as an initial trial.

5.8 The Council should establish a series of core outcomes to derive from clubs taking on a lease arrangement to ensure that the most appropriate clubs are assigned to sites. As an example, outcomes may include:

²⁷ <http://www.cascinfo.co.uk/cascbenefits>

- Increasing participation.
- Supporting the development of coaches and volunteers.
- Commitment to quality standards.
- Improvements (where required) to facilities, or as a minimum retaining existing standards.

5.9 In addition, clubs should be made fully aware of the associated responsibilities/liabilities when considering leases of multi-use public playing fields.

Community asset transfer

5.10 The Council should continue to work towards adopting a policy which supports community management and ownership of assets to local clubs, community groups and trusts. This presents sports clubs and national governing bodies with opportunities to take ownership of their own facilities; it may also provide non-asset owning sports clubs with their first chance to take on a building.

5.11 The Sport England Community Sport Asset Transfer Toolkit is a bespoke, interactive web based tool that provides a step by step guide through each stage of the asset transfer process:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/asset-transfer/>

Recommendation C – Maximise community use of education sites where there is a need to do so

5.12 A number of school sites are being used in Blackpool for competitive play, predominately for football. In all cases the use of pitches has not been classified as secure, and use is not necessarily formalised. Further work should be carried out to ensure an appropriate Community Use Agreement (CUA) is put in place (including access to changing provision where required) with the assistance of NGBs where necessary.

5.13 In contrast to the unsecure sites, there are several Academies which have signed security of tenure agreements for community use but which remain unused.

5.14 Given the mix of providers in Blackpool, there is a need for the Council and NGBs to work with other partners to help maximise use of outdoor sports facilities and in particular grass pitches and AGPs.

5.15 In order to maximise community use of education facilities it is recommended to establish a coherent, structured relationship with schools. The ability to access good facilities within the local community is vital to any sports organisation, yet many clubs struggle to find good quality places to play and train. Pricing policies at facilities can be a barrier to access but also physical access and resistance from schools to open up provision due to staffing, site security or to protect quality of facilities for school use.

5.16 A number of sporting facilities are located on education sites and making these available to sports clubs can offer significant benefits to both the school/college and the local clubs.

5.17 Notably all full sized AGPs in operation are located at education sites and play a critical role for hockey but more significantly as floodlit facilities for football team training. The Council and other key partners need to work with schools and colleges to develop an understanding of the issues that restrict or affect community access. Support should be provided, where appropriate, to address any underlying problems.

5.18 Where appropriate, it will be important for schools to negotiate and sign formal and long-term agreements that secure community use.

5.19 It is not uncommon for school pitch stock not to be fully maximised for community use. Even on established community use sites, access to grass pitches for community use is limited.

5.20 In some instances, grass pitches are unavailable for community use due to poor quality and therefore remedial works will be required before community use can be established.

5.21 Sport England has produced guidance, online resources and toolkits to help open up and retain school sites for community use:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/use-our-school/>

5.22 There are a growing number of academies and college sites in Blackpool, over which the Council has no control. However, it is important to understand the opportunities for community use and attempt to work with the schools. The relevant NGB has a role to play in supporting the Council to deliver the strategy and communicating with schools where necessary.

Objective 2

To Enhance Playing Fields, Pitches and Ancillary Facilities through improving Quality and Management of Sites

Recommendations

- D Improve and sustain quality of pitches to maximise playing capacity across the Borough**
- E Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) for the management and improvement of sites.**
- F Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding**

Recommendation D – Improve and sustain quality of pitches to maximise playing capacity across the Borough

5.23 Informed by the scenarios and the Pitch Improvement Programme certain sites are identified in the Action Plan where improving pitch quality will be implemented through the following options or combination of options.

The FA Pitch Improvement Programme (PIP)

5.24 This programme provides football clubs with advice/practical solutions on a number of areas and discounts on machinery and materials to support improving the clubs' playing surface. The programme can be utilised to help any clubs that take on the management and maintenance of sites or which are currently managing and maintaining their own pitch site.

5.25 As subsidy is removed for pitch maintenance, the PIP is an essential toolkit in supporting self-management/maintenance of sites, particularly on adult sites that have historically been maintained by the Council.

Addressing quality issues by improving maintenance and reducing overplay

Maintenance regimes

5.26 Generally, where pitches are assessed as standard or poor quality and/or overplayed, maintenance regimes need to be reviewed and where necessary improved to ensure they are of an appropriate standard to sustain/improve pitch quality. In addition, ensuring existing maintenance of good quality pitches continues is important.

5.27 Based on an achievable target using existing quality scoring to provide a baseline, a standard should be used to identify deficiencies and investment should be focused on those sites which fail to meet the proposed quality standard (using the site audit database). The Strategy approach to these outdoor sports facilities achieving these standards should be to enhance quality and therefore the planning system should seek to protect them.

5.28 For the purposes of the Quality Assessments, this Strategy refers to pitches and ancillary facilities separately as Good, Standard or Poor quality. Some good or standard quality sites can have poor quality elements i.e. changing rooms or a specific pitch. Refer to Appendix 5 for information on quality standards.

5.29 Without appropriate fit for purpose ancillary facilities, good quality pitches may be underutilised. Changing facilities form the most essential part of this offer and therefore key sites should be given priority for improvement.

5.30 In order to prioritise investment into key sites it is recommended that the steering group works up a list of criteria, relevant to the area, to provide a steer on future investment.

5.31 NGB's can provide assistance with reviewing pitch maintenance regimes. For example, the FA and ECB in partnership have recently introduced a Pitch Advisor Scheme and have been working in partnership with the Grounds Maintenance Association (GMA) to develop a Grass Pitch Maintenance service that can be utilised by grassroots football clubs with the simple aim of improving the quality of

grass pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide football clubs with advice/practical solutions on a number of areas, with the simple aim of improving the club's playing surface.

5.32 Maintenance of grass pitches at self-managed football pitch sites is deemed to be basic and for football generally covers grass cutting and seeding only, resulting in several pitches being assessed as poor quality. Where self-managed pitches are recommended for improvement within the action plan, carrying out additional regular work such as aerating, sand dressing, fertilising and/or weed killing will all improve quality. An improvement in post-season remedial work is also recommended. It is recommended that self-managing clubs with help from the Council, should work with Lancashire County Football Association to fully determine the most appropriate pitch improvements on a site by site basis.

5.33 Lancashire FA has begun to explore opportunities in developing localised maintenance support networks partnering with other sports clubs/sites. This is based on the rationale that in Blackpool most other natural turf pitch sports such as cricket and particularly golf clubs (though not within the PPS scope) are asset owning, likely to already have equipment and storage facilities, whilst golf clubs have a high fine turf maintenance requirement and paid employees able to potentially carry out maintenance or top-up works at local community football sites at off-peak times such as daytimes midweek. Consideration should be given to the potential for the development of very local maintenance networks, possible opportunities for small grant support for football pitch maintenance equipment stored at non-football sites, as well as the potential to develop a model which if successful could possibly be held as a case study for replication across similar local authorities.

5.34 In relation to cricket, maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of cricket. If the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous. The ECB recommends full technical assessments of wickets and pitches available through a Performance Quality Standard Assessment (PQS). The PQS assesses a cricket square to ascertain whether the pitch meets the Performance Quality Standards that are benchmarked by the Grounds Maintenance Association (GMA). PQS assessments are also available for other sports, whilst the LCF Groundsman's Association offers maintenance tips to local clubs as well as an onsite assessment service with subsequent report advising recommended maintenance actions.

Addressing overplay

5.35 In order to improve the overall quality of the playing pitches stock; it is necessary to ensure that pitches are not overplayed beyond recommended weekly carrying capacity which is set out in the PPS Technical Assessment Report July 2019 for each sport where appropriate. Addressing pitch quality and overplay can be inextricably linked at some sites, therefore, there is a need to work with clubs to ensure that sites are not played beyond their capacity and to encourage play, where possible, to be transferred to alternative venues which are not operating at capacity.

Improving changing provision

5.36 There is a need to address changing provision at some sites in the Borough, including some local authority owned sites. Local authority managed sites notably requiring improving include Boundary Park and Moor Park Extension.

5.37 Sites which predominantly accommodate adult and/or older junior age group sports should be prioritised for improvements, whilst there is a trend for younger junior age groups (particularly for

football) not to require use of changing provision, with suitable male and female toilet provision for players and spectators considered to be of greater importance.

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

5.38 A tiered approach has been identified in the categorisation of sites to recognise the different roles that sites have across the borough in the provision and range of facilities they offer. The hierarchy along with other factors also assists in informing the prioritisation of sites in meeting the recommendations highlighted within this strategy. The hierarchy is set out in Table 5.1

5.39 Recommended tiered site criteria:

Table 5.1 – Site Criteria

Criteria	Hub sites	Key centres	Local sites	Reserve sites
Site location	Strategically located. Priority sites for NGBs.	Strategically located within the analysis area.	Serves the local community. Likely to include education sites.	Serves the local community.
Site layout	Accommodates three or more good quality grass pitches. Including provision of at least one AGP.	Accommodates two or more good quality grass pitches.	Accommodates more than one pitch.	Likely to be single-pitch site.
Type of Sport	Single or multi-sport provision.		Type of Sport	Single or multi- sport provision.
Maintenance regime	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Standard maintenance regime either by the club or in house contract.	Basic level of maintenance i.e. grass cutting.
Ancillary facilities	Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Appropriate access changing to accommodate both senior and junior use concurrently (if required).	No requirement for access to changing accommodation.

5.40 **Hub sites** are strategic sites of Borough wide importance where users are willing to travel to access the range and high quality of facilities offered and are likely to be multisport.

5.41 The financial, social and sporting benefits which can be achieved through development of strategic sites (also known as hub sites) are significant. Sport England provides further guidance on the development of community sports hubs at:

http://www.sportengland.org/facilitiesplanning/planning_tools_and_guidance/sports_hubs.aspx

5.42 **Key centres** are also strategically located and although they are more community focused, some are still likely to service a slightly wider area and/or they may have more of a focus on a specific sport i.e. a dedicated site.

5.43 Where development of Strategic Sites includes provision of 3G pitches for football it is recommended that further modelling/feasibility work is carried out to ensure sustainability of new 3G pitches to accommodate competitive fixtures. However, as a priority consultation should be carried out with leagues/clubs to gauge acceptance/buy in of moving competitive play to 3G pitches in the future.

5.44 Some financial investment may be necessary to improve the ancillary facilities at both Hub sites and Key Centres to complement the pitches in terms of access, flexibility (i.e. single-sex changing rooms if necessary), quality and that they meet the rules and regulations of local competitions.

5.45 **Local sites** refer to those sites which are generally one and two pitch sites and may be Council owned hired to clubs for a season or are sites which have been leased on a long-term basis. However, they are also likely to be private club sites serving one particular sport.

5.46 It is possible that sites could be included in this tier which are not currently hired or leased to a club, but have the potential to be leased to a suitable club. NGBs would expect the facility to be transferred in an adequate condition that the club can maintain. In the longer term, the Club should be in a position to source external funding to improve/extend the facilities.

5.47 **Reserve sites** could be used as overspill for neighbouring sites and/or for summer matches/competitions, training or informal play. They are most likely to be single-pitch sites with no ancillary facilities or school sites where there is no current demand for community use.

Recommendation F – Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding

5.48 Partners, led by the Council, should ensure that appropriate funding secured for improved sports provision is directed to areas of need, underpinned by a robust strategy for improvement in playing pitch facilities.

5.49 In order to address the community's needs, to target priority areas and to reduce duplication of provision, there will be a coordinated approach to strategic investment. In delivering this recommendation the Council will need to maintain a regular dialogue with local partners and through the Playing Pitch Steering Group.

5.50 Some investment in new provision will not be made by the Council directly, it is important, however, that the Council therefore seeks to direct and lead a strategic and co-ordinated approach to facility development by education sites, NGBs, sports clubs and the commercial sector to address community needs whilst avoiding duplication of provision.

5.51 The Council will need to secure appropriate Section 106 contributions from development, using the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator (see Part 6: Housing Growth Scenarios) as a guide. Contributions will be effectively utilised to undertake priority actions identified within the PPS Action Plan, where possible using this to further leverage external partnership investment towards capital schemes.

5.52 In addition further funding opportunities are also available from various funding bodies including (but not exclusive) the Big Lottery Fund, Sport England and various individual sporting foundations.

5.53 Sport and physical activity can have a profound effect on peoples' lives and plays a crucial role in improving community cohesion, educational attainment and self-confidence. However, one of sport's greatest contributions is its positive impact on public health. Therefore opportunities to lever in investment from other sectors such as health and wellbeing for example will be utilised through partnership working where considered appropriate.

5.54 The Council and its partners will need to work cooperatively to rectify the identified shortfall in 3G pitch and mini 5v5 provision as outlined in the Assessment Report.

Objective 3

To Provide New Outdoor Sports Pitches and Ancillary Provision Where There is Current or Future Demand to do so

Recommendations:

- G. **Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock.**
- H. **Identify opportunities to add resilience to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.**

Recommendation G - Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock.

5.55 The Council and its partners will work to implement the actions outlined in the Action Plan to rectify the identified inadequacies and shortfalls outlined in the Strategy and the sport by sport specific recommendations.

5.56 There are no **quantitative** shortfalls in the current grass pitch stock however it is important that the current levels of grass pitch provision are protected, maintained and enhanced to secure provision now and in the future and this is addressed under Objectives 1 and 2. The future quantitative deficiencies in Mini 5v5 format (2.5 MES per week) can be accommodated at existing community use secured sites including as part of the re-provision at Common Edge Rd. Other playing field sites which have the ability to accommodate this shortfall are identified in the Action Plan.

5.57 There is a current shortfall of two 3G artificial turf pitches and proposals are being pursued by the Council to provide an additional pitch at Stanley Park through conversion of the hockey AGP and further provision of a pitch at Common Edged Rd as part of the enhanced provision at the EZ.

5.58 For most sports the future demand for provision identified in Blackpool can be accommodated through maximising use of existing pitches through a combination of:

- Improving pitch quality in order to improve the capacity of pitches to accommodate more matches.
- The re-designation of pitches for which there is an oversupply and/or peak actual spare capacity.
- Securing long term community use at school sites.
- Working with commercial and private providers to increase usage
- Securing developer contributions in relation to housing development where appropriate to improve pitch standards and ancillary provision

5.59 Changes in sport participation and trends, and proposed housing growth should be recognised and factored into future facility planning. Assuming an increase in participation and housing growth occurs, it will impact on the future need for certain types of sports facilities.

5.60 The impact of housing growth is set out in detail in Part 7 of this document and concludes that - ‘Notwithstanding the need for new 3G pitches identified within this Strategy, it should ... be noted that through increasing the capacity of existing grass pitches (through improving quality and securing community use, for example) generated by implementing the actions set of in this Strategy and Action Plan demand through housing growth is also addressed’.

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

5.62 Sports development work also approximates unmet demand which cannot currently be quantified (i.e., it is not being suppressed by a lack of facilities) but is likely to occur. The following Table 5.2 highlights the main development trends in each sport and their likely impact on facilities. However, it is important to note that these may be subject to change.

5.63 Furthermore, retaining some spare capacity allows some pitches to be rested to protect overall pitch quality in the long term. Therefore, whilst in some instances it may be appropriate to re-designate a senior pitch where there is low demand identified, a holistic approach should be taken to re-designation for the reasons cited. The site-by-site action planning will seek to provide further clarification on where re-designation is suitable.

Table 5.2 - Likely future sport-by-sport demand trends

Sport	Future development trend	Strategy impact
Football	As a result of the FA Youth Development Review pitch demands are changing. This could also see changes in the seasonal demand of pitches (youth football).	Consider re-allocating leases to Community Charter Standard clubs with a large number of teams. Work with clubs to identify facility development opportunities. Work with clubs in relation to their pitch demands as a result of the FA Youth Development Review.

Sport	Future development trend	Strategy impact
	Demand for senior football is likely to be sustained based on current trends and the move to small sided football. County FA focus to maintain growth of youth football through to adults.	Sustain current stock but consideration given to reconfigure pitches if required.
	An increase in women and girls football following £2.4m investment from Sport England between 2014 and 2016 to increase the number of women and girls taking part in football sessions. Additionally, one of the major goals of The FA's 'Game Changer' strategy for Women's and Girls' football (2017-2020) is to double participation from the current 6,000 teams to 12,000.	A need to provide improved ancillary facilities to cater better for women and girls.
Cricket	Demand is likely to remain static for grass wickets for adult participation. The ECB targets participation increases at junior level through the Allstars Cricket Programme which may have a subsequent future impact on requirement for grass and non-turf cricket provision.	Isolated pockets of demand for access to additional facilities where pitches are operating at capacity. A need to encourage greater use of non-turf wickets particularly for junior use to help meet shortfalls.
	Women's and girls' cricket is a national priority and there is a targeted priority through 'Inspiring Generations and Transforming Women's Cricket', Blackpool being identified as a priority area by the LCF to grow women's and girl's cricket including the use of ASC and women's softball.	Support clubs to expand on providing cricket facilities that are welcoming and inclusive for all members of the community.
Rugby Union	Locally, the RFU wants to ensure access to pitches in the Borough that satisfies existing demand and predicted growth. It is also an aim to protect and improve pitch quality, as well as ancillary facilities including changing rooms and floodlights.	Clubs are likely to field more teams in the future. It is important, therefore, to work with the clubs to maintain the current pitch stock, support facility development where appropriate and increase the number of floodlit pitches where necessary.
Rugby League	RFL is working towards growing rugby league participation including through growth at junior clubs, Play Touch RL and 9 aside RL.	Review the need for dedicated rugby league pitches in the next three years.

Sport	Future development trend	Strategy impact
AGP's/3G Pitches	<p>Demand for 3G pitches for competitive football will increase. It is likely that future demand for the use of 3G pitches to service competitive football, particularly mini and youth will result in some reduced demand for grass pitches.</p> <p>Provision of 3G pitches which are World Rugby compliant will help to reduce overplay as a result of training on rugby pitches.</p>	<p>Ensure that access to new AGP provision across the Borough is maximised and that community use agreements are in place.</p> <p>Utilise Sport England/NGB guidance on choosing the correct surface:</p> <p>www.sportengland.org/media/30651/Selecting-the-right-artificial-surface-Rev2-2010</p>
Hockey	<p>Potential increase of participation particularly junior teams.</p>	<p>Sinking funds in place to improve quality and ensure continued use of provision for current and future hockey demand.</p>

Recommendation H - Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.

5.64 The Council will use and regularly update the Action Plan within this Strategy for improvements to its own pitches whilst recognising the need to support partners. The Action Plan lists improvements to be made to each site focused upon both qualitative and quantitative improvements.

5.65 Some sites (including adjacent land) in Blackpool may also have the potential to accommodate more pitches which may be a solution to meeting shortfalls identified or meeting sport demand trends as highlighted in the sport by sport trends Table 5.2 if these trends emerge in the longer term. To add resilience to the supply a reserved site is recommended in the Action Plan to potentially accommodate longer term requirements with various implementation options.

5.66 In addition where in the future school sites become redundant over the lifetime of the strategy the consideration of alternative uses for the redundant school site should include the potential the school site might offer to meet community needs on a localised basis, for example the playing fields may be converted to dedicated community use to help address unmet community needs.

Part 6: Action Plan

Introduction

6.0 The following action plan takes on board the recommendations set out in the Strategy on a site by site basis taking into account current levels of usage, pitch quality, available capacity and future demand. In recommending priority sites the site hierarchy categorisation and the PIP have influenced the prioritisation and the LFFP has also been taken into account where appropriate.

6.1 The Steering Group will need to consider these recommended priorities and review as appropriate. In delivering the Action Plan the Council will need to work closely with NGBs and other partners to ensure its implementation.

Action Plan Columns

6.2 The Action Plan includes the following columns:

Site ID	Unique site number
Site Name	Unique site name
Sport	Highlights which sport is played at the site
Management	Identifies whether the site is Council, school, college or sport club managed
Current Status	Provides a summary on the current provision, quality and capacity and whether the site is identified in the current Pitch Improvement Programme
Recommendations	Sets out the proposed recommendations for the site including where necessary the new provision/re-provision of pitches and facilities
Partners	Indicates partners - refers to the main organisation that the Council will liaise with in helping to deliver the actions
Site Hierarchy Tier	Highlights the tier to which the site has been allocated
Timescales	The action plan has been created to be delivered over a ten year period. The timescales relate to delivery times
Costs	The strategic actions have also been ranked as low, medium or high based on cost. The brackets in which these sit are: (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above. These are based on Sport England's estimated facility costs which can be found at https://www.sportengland.org/media/14034/facility-costs-q2-19.pdf
Objective	This column highlights which objective(s) of Enhance, Provide, Protect each action seeks to meet.

6.3 As the Steering Group reviews and updates the action plan medium and low priority sites will need to be identified as the next level of sites for attention. As a guide:

- Key centres are a medium priority and have analysis area importance and have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the issues identified in the assessment.
- Low priority sites are club or education sites with local specific importance and have been identified on a site by site basis as issues appertaining to individual sites but that may also contribute to addressing the issues identified in the assessment.

Action Plan

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
1	AFC Blackpool Jepson Way FY4 5FH	Football	Club	<p>Stadium. Adult pitch, standard quality, floodlit. Meets Step 5 ground grading requirements.</p> <p>Used by adult and youth teams from AFC Blackpool as well as an adult team which plays in the Blackpool & Fylde Sunday Alliance.</p> <p>Overplayed by 2 match sessions per week.</p> <p>Secure Tenure</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality from standard to good quality through better standard and more regular maintenance regime in order to increase capacity and reduce level of overplay. Quality improvement will increase capacity from 2 to 3 MES per week.</p> <p>Link the Club as a partner to proposed new facilities at Common Edge Road in order to transfer some use offsite and eliminate overplay at AFC Blackpool.</p>	<p>Club LFA Blackpool Council Fylde Borough Council</p>	Local	Medium	Low	<p>PROTECT</p> <p>ENHANCE</p>
2	Bispham Sports Centre (Blackpool & the Fylde College) Ashfield Rd. FY2 0HB	3G pitch	College	<p>Good quality full sized 3G pitch with floodlighting.</p>	<p>Explore potential for use as a mini soccer and/or BFSa central venue as part of a co-ordinated approach to use and pricing of 3G pitches for match play across the Borough.</p> <p>Ensure the provider retains and renews FA certification to be able to host competitive football. Encourage providers to put sinking funds in place to maintain long term quality.</p>	<p>College LFA Leagues</p>	Key Site	Short	Low	<p>PROTECT</p> <p>ENHANCE</p>

²⁸ Timescales: Short (1-2 years); Medium (3-5 years); Long (6+ years).

²⁹ 27 (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above.

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
3	Blackpool Aspire Academy (formerly Collegiate High School) Blackpool Old Rd. FY3 7LS	Football	Academy	Two adult football pitches reinstated Pitches currently have no Community use but the Academy may consider weekend hire of the pitches if it is deemed beneficial for the school; or Playfootball which would likely manage the bookings. The grass area is currently maintained by Fylde Borough Council.	Ensure that pitches are well maintained to sustain quality. Investigate potential for future community use and establish management arrangements. Maximise use of pitches to address existing shortfalls and create spare capacity.	Academy LFA	Local	Short	Medium	PROTECT ENHANCE
4	Blackpool Cricket Club West Park Drive FY3 9EQ	Cricket	Sports Club	Standard quality 21 wicket square, no peak time capacity available for additional play. Often used for County second team, academy and league representative matches. The Club has aspirations to make improvements to the changing room provision.	Improve pitch quality through increased maintenance in order to sustain the level of current use and provide the required quality of wickets for use by professional teams. ECB to support the Club with plans to improve changing room provision. Balance usage with additional limited capacity available at Fleetwood Road Recreation Ground in order to manage demand across the two sites. Consider the opportunity and feasibility of greater use of non-turf wickets to help meet any future increase in demand in response to targeted initiatives.	Club ECB	Key	Short to Medium	Low- Medium	PROTECT ENHANCE

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
5	Blackpool RUFC Fleetwood Rd. FY5 1RN	Rugby Union	Council	<p>Poor quality senior pitch used by just one senior team from Blackpool RUFC. Ancillary facilities also of poor quality. Currently no junior teams.</p> <p>Match Equivalent Sessions +0.5 capacity which could accommodate a second senior team.</p> <p>Tenure is not secured as the previous lease term with the Council expired in 2014.</p> <p>The Club has in recent past experienced financial issues which impact on maintenance budget available to prepare the pitch to the required standard.</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality with an enhanced maintenance programme. This would increase spare capacity to +1 MES if standard quality achieved and +2 if good quality is achieved. In addition consider the need to obtain enhanced pitch maintenance equipment.</p> <p>Establish long term security of tenure through renegotiation of the lease agreement with the Council; seek access to better floodlighting and improved training provision; and in the longer term Improve poor quality ancillary facilities.</p>	Council Club RFU	Local	Short to Medium	Low-Medium	PROTECT ENHANCE
6	Blackpool Sixth Form College Blackpool Old Rd. FY3 7LR	Football	College	<p>Poor quality adult pitch available for community use but not currently used beyond College activity.</p> <p>The pitch is currently played to capacity through curricular use.</p> <p>Unsecure Tenure</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through increased maintenance in order to increase available capacity. +1 MES if standard quality achieved +2 if good achieved.</p> <p>Explore potential to establish community use, provided sufficient access to toilet and changing facilities can be achieved</p>	College LFA	Local	Medium	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
7	Blackpool Sports Centre (Stanley Park) West Park Dr. FY3 9HQ	3G	Council	<p>Good quality full size 3G pitch converted from sand based AGP surface in 2018 supported by Football Foundation grant.</p> <p>Used by Blackpool & Fylde Sunday Alliance as central venue for some matches, with others held off site on grass pitch provision.</p> <p>Secure Tenure</p>	<p>Explore potential for increased use as a mini soccer central venue as part of a co-ordinated approach to use and pricing of 3G pitches for match play across the Borough.</p> <p>Ensure the provider retains and renews FA certification to be able to host competitive football.</p>	Council LFA EH	Hub	Short	High	PROTECT ENHANCE PROVIDE
		AGP		<p>Standard quality full size sand dressed AGP with floodlighting adjacent to new 3G surface as dual pitch site.</p> <p>Surface is now 11 years old and exceeds the recommended lifespan.</p> <p>No longer used for regular community club hockey since Blackpool HC folded but is used one weekend per year for the annual Blackpool Hockey Festival.</p> <p>Used almost entirely for football otherwise.</p>	<p>Lancashire FA and the Council to work in close dialogue with England Hockey to pursue conversion of AGP to 3G surface to develop the site as a dual 3G pitch football hub.</p> <p>Subsequently, seek to establish as a mini soccer central venue and develop existing BSFA central venue use as part of a co-ordinated approach to use and pricing of 3G pitches for match play across the Borough.</p> <p>Explore the potential effect of increased footfall that further conversion might bring to the site and pressure on the main sports centre ancillary facilities.</p>					

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
	Continued - Blackpool Sports Centre (Stanley Park) West Park Dr. FY3 9HQ				Development of a new exclusive pavilion to Service the pitches may be required. Encourage provider to put sinking funds in place to maintain long term quality.					
8	Boundary Park Pilling Crescent FY3 7TP	Football	Council	Four standard quality adult football pitches, overmarked with youth and mini soccer pitches. Played to capacity by Blackpool & Fylde Sunday Football Alliance and junior club FC Rangers. Poor quality changing pavilion onsite in need of replacement and increased capacity as there are only three rooms to service four adult pitches. Secure Tenure Included in the LFFP 2019 and PIP 2020	Undertake technical quality assessment of the site through the FA Pitch Improvement Programme and pursue improvement of pitch quality through better and more regular maintenance. Improvement to good quality increases capacity by + 4 MES per week including +1 at peak time Sunday mornings Replace the current dated changing pavilion onsite in order to better cater for both adult and junior football users in order to better meet current footballing needs.	Council LFA	Key	Short to Medium	High	PROTECT ENHANCE
9	Collins Park Common Edge Rd. FY4 5FH	Football	Council	Previously managed by the Blackpool & Fylde Sunday Alliance (BFSA). Lease now expired and management is now responsibility of the Council so tenure secure.	Ensure that the re-provision of playing pitches and ancillary provision at the EZ meets club users current and future needs, eliminating overplay and overmarking and accommodates	Council LFA Fylde Borough Council RFL	Hub	Short to Long	High	PROTECT ENHANCE PROVIDE

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
	<p>Continued - Collins Park</p> <p>Common Edge Rd. FY4 5FH</p>			<p>Now used as part of the wider Common Edge Road playing field offer or as a show pitch for finals.</p> <p>Currently regularly used by a single team at adult peak time.</p> <p>There is capacity for additional play of +1.5 MES which includes +1 at peak times.</p> <p>Site included in the designated EZ and subject to enhanced re-provision of sporting facilities including re-locating grass football pitches to the south of existing facilities, including on adjacent land in Fylde within the EZ boundary and including new ancillary facilities including changing facilities block, kitchens, club room, storage room and improved parking facilities.</p> <p>Application (20/0108) approved by Fylde Borough Council for new grass platform of 115,000 sqm. for the relocation of grass pitches at the EZ May 2020.</p> <p>Funding for re- provision approved by Council Executive July 2018</p>	<p>additional capacity to address wider deficiencies as appropriate.</p> <p>Ensure that the re-provision sufficiently meets national, local and Sport England Playing Field Policy.</p>					

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
10	Common Edge Rd. FY4 5FH	Football	Council	<p>Eight adult pitches of standard quality and have minimal capacity for further peak time use. Seven of the adult pitches overmarked with five youth 9v9 and two mini 7v7 pitches.</p> <p>One youth 9v9 pitch on site of standard quality and is overplayed by 2.5 MES per week</p> <p>Current match play is 22.5 MES per week of which 8.5 MES relate to Foxhall JFC who are using the pitches whilst UU undertake works on their home site at Fishers Field. JFC are programmed to move back to their home ground in Autumn 2020 reducing the need to 14 MES.</p> <p>Secure Tenure</p> <p>Site included in the designated EZ and subject to enhanced re-provision of sporting facilities including re-locating grass football pitches to the south of existing facilities, including on adjacent land in Fylde within the EZ boundary; and including new ancillary facilities including changing facilities block, kitchens, club room, storage room and improved parking facilities. (Scenario F1 refers).</p>						

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
	Continued - Common Edge Rd. FY4 5FH	Rugby League		<p>Application (20/0108) approved by Fylde Borough Council for new grass platform 115,000 sqm. for the relocation of grass pitches at the EZ May 2020.</p> <p>Funding for re- provision Approved by Blackpool Council Executive July 2018.</p> <p>Included in the LFFP 2019</p> <p>Standard quality senior pitch used irregularly by Blackpool Scorpions ARLFC based at the adjacent South Shore Cricket and Squash Club. Subsequently there is spare capacity for further use as the pitch is regularly under used.</p> <p>The pitch is subject to re-development proposals. Rugby league grass pitch to remain but re-orientated and enhanced to 'good' quality with training area of 4600m2 adjacent to re-orientated grass pitch. Priority use by the exiting rugby league club at the site of both facilities. Provision of floodlighting on eastern and western boundary of grass pitch with western boundary providing dual lighting to the training area subject to planning and airport approval. 2 containers to be provided on the new training area for storage of rugby equipment</p>						

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
	Continued - Common Edge Rd. FY4 5FH			Funding for re- provision approved by Executive July 2018.						
11	Fishers Field Highfield Rd. FY4 3NS	Football	Council	<p>3 standard quality youth 11v11 pitches but with no pavilion provision onsite.</p> <p>The site is home to Foxhall JFC who have temporarily used Common Edge Road whilst UU undertake works at Fishers Field.</p> <p>Provides 6 MES per week with a +2.5 capacity available at peak time.</p> <p>Secure Tenure</p> <p>As part of the works the pitches onsite have been reinstated, levelled, seeded and with new drainage installed, funded by contributions from both United Utilities and the Council. New pitch quality is rated as 'good' which provides 12 MES per week an increase of +6 at the site.</p> <p>Blackpool Council and Foxhall JFC currently working with the Football Foundation to develop an application to deliver new changing facilities onsite to be delivered in 2021. Existing changing rooms have been demolished.</p> <p>Included in the PIP 2020.</p>	<p>Blackpool Council and Foxhall JFC to develop new pavilion provision on site to replace that lost as a result of utilities works.</p> <p>The Council and the Football Foundation to work together to deliver a facility which meets the needs of the resident users, pursuing opportunities for partnership funding to provide betterment of re-provision</p> <p>The Council to negotiate with the club to make best use of the capacity at the site.</p> <p>Ensure that pitches are well maintained to sustain quality.</p>	Council United Utilities LFA	Local	Short	High	PROTECT ENHANCE PROVIDE

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
12	Fleetwood Rd. Recreation Ground FY5 1RN	Cricket	Council	<p>Standard quality square with nine wickets used by Blackpool CC as a secondary venue.</p> <p>Spare capacity of 4 matches per season with availability on Sundays and mid- week but no availability at senior peak time on Saturdays.</p> <p>The Club has taken long term lease of the old changing room building which has received investment into qualitative improvement that now means they are fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through better and more regular maintenance.</p> <p>Seek to transfer play from Blackpool CC where required and appropriate in order to balance usage and temporal demands across the two sites and where appropriate accommodating any growth in junior and women's participation.</p> <p>Consider the opportunity and feasibility of greater use of non-turf wickets to help meet any future increase in demand in response to targeted initiatives.</p>	Club LCF	Local	Short to Medium	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE
13	Highfield Leadership Academy (formerly Highfield Humanities College) Highfield Rd. FY4 3JZ	Football	Academy	<p>One poor quality adult pitch. Available for community use but not currently used beyond Academy activity.</p> <p>Currently played to capacity through curricular use.</p> <p>Unsecure Tenure</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through increased maintenance in order to increase available capacity. Improvement to standard quality provides + 1 MES, Good quality provides +2 MES per week.</p> <p>Explore potential to secure tenure and increase community use providing sufficient access to toilet and changing facilities where required.</p>	Academy LFA RFU	Local	Medium to Long	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE
		Rugby Union		<p>Poor quality senior pitch which acts as a dual use pitch and is also used for football. The Academy changes</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through increased maintenance in order to increase available capacity.</p>					

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
				<p>the goal posts and line markings when required.</p> <p>Available for use but likely to be overplayed given the limited capacity and Academy use throughout the week.</p>	<p>Explore potential to increase community use providing sufficient access to toilet and changing facilities where required.</p>					
14	<p>Mereside</p> <p>Clifton Road</p> <p>FY4 4TF</p>	Football	Council	<p>Disused site – western part of site can sufficiently accommodate up to 3 adult pitches, eastern part of site can accommodate 2.</p> <p>Issues of anti-social behaviour. Pitches last marked in 2014. Qualitative issues related to waterlogging.</p>	<p>Determine future use of site to include the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to identify as green infrastructure and hold the sites as a reserve playing field site; or - Explore the opportunity for redevelopment of the site and use developer contributions to improve pitch provision at the site or other pitches elsewhere. 	Council	Local	Medium to Long	Low	N/A
15	<p>Montgomery High School (Academy)</p> <p>All Hallows Rd.</p> <p>FY2 0AZ</p>	Football	Academy	<p>One adult and one youth 9v9 pitch, both available for community use and of standard quality but not currently used beyond Academy activity. Existing capacity = 4 MES per week</p> <p>Spare capacity exists on site but tenure unsecure.</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through increased maintenance in order to increase available capacity.</p> <p>Improvement to 'Good' quality would increase capacity by + 3 MES per week.</p> <p>Explore potential to secure tenure and make the pitches available for community use providing sufficient access to toilet and changing facilities where required.</p>	Academy LFA	Local Site	Long	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE
16	<p>Moor Park Extension</p>	Football	Council	<p>Pitch quality is standard across all pitches. Tenure is secure.</p>	<p>FA regional pitch advisor to carry out technical assessment and provide technical recommendations on improving quality.</p>	Council LFA	Local	Short	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
	Moor Park Ave. FY2 0LY			<p>The site is presently marked with 2 youth 11v11, 3 youth 9v9 and 2 mini 7v7 pitches.</p> <p>Site large enough to accommodate as many as six 11v11 pitches.</p> <p>Current play is 7 match sessions per week with additional capacity of +11 MES per week of which +1.5 is available at peak time on Youth 9v9 pitch.</p> <p>Secure Tenure</p> <p>Layton Juniors FC built its own dedicated facility onsite to replace the former changing rooms that were deemed to be unsafe for use.</p> <p>Included in the LFFP 2019 and PIP 2020</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through enhanced maintenance regime to increase capacity and accommodate further play. Improvement to 'Good' as advised in the LFFP would increase capacity by + 14 MES per week</p> <p>Consider additional pitch marking to provide resilience in provision and accommodate future 5v5 demand in the area.</p>					
17	Playfootball Blackpool In Association with Aspire Academy Garstang Rd West FY3 7JH	3G Pitches	Commercial	<p>Seven standard quality 5v5 sized 3G football cages. Installed in 2011 and part of a dual use site with Blackpool Aspire Academy which uses the pitches throughout the school day.</p> <p>Available and used by club teams but capacity for use is limited due to the number of small sided football leagues given the site operates commercially.</p>	<p>Maximise use of limited spare capacity where appropriate, such as mini team training and walking football development.</p> <p>Encourage provider to put sinking funds in place to maintain long term quality, repair and eventual resurfacing when required.</p>	Commercial LFA	Key	Short to Medium	Low	PROTECT

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
				<p>Also used by Blackpool FC Community Trust for walking football activity.</p> <p>Included in PIP 2020</p>						
18	<p>South Shore Academy</p> <p>St. Anne's Rd. FY4 2AR</p>	Football	Academy	<p>Small 3G pitch onsite, without floodlighting.</p> <p>One youth 11v11 pitch marked and used for 11v11 and 9v9 format football by South Shore Youth FC, poor quality and overplayed by 1.5 MES per week.</p> <p>The site has additional scope for marking of more pitches to what is currently prepared.</p> <p>Tenure unsecure although used by the community.</p> <p>Included in the LFFP 2019</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through better and more regular maintenance to increase capacity in order to eliminate overplay as per LFFP recommendation. Improvement of quality to good would provide 4 MES per week and result in + 1.5 MES on current play</p> <p>Seek to formally secure community access for clubs using the site, out with or as a condition of any future external investment such as opportunity identified through the LFFP.</p> <p>Explore opportunity to mark more pitches onsite to reduce overplay of current pitches and/or should Academy and/or community demand require in future.</p>	Academy LFA	Local	Medium	Low	PROTECT

19	<p>South Shore Cricket and Squash Club</p> <p>Common Edge Rd. FY4 5DY</p>	<p>Cricket</p> <hr/> <p>Rugby League</p>	Sports Club	<p>Good quality square with 18 natural turf wickets and one non-turf pitch. Spare capacity for an additional 59 matches per season but no capacity at senior peak time.</p> <p>Site included in the designated EZ however the proposals do not affect the existing cricket wicket and outfield boundary line or the location of the existing cricket nets.</p> <p>Southern outfield area is marked over by standard quality rugby league pitch some 91.5m by 60m which is below minimum size requirements for senior pitch. Where matches clash, Blackpool Scorpions use a rugby league marked football pitch at the adjacent Common Edge Rd.</p> <hr/> <p>Blackpool Scorpions ARLC ground. Club has 1 senior men's team in the North West Men's League.</p> <p>Rugby League grass pitch marked on cricket outfield rated as standard (refer above to South Shore cricket section - current status). Rugby matches can clash with senior cricket on Saturday afternoons when the rugby club makes use of a rugby league pitch at adjacent Common Edge Road when required as an overspill facility.</p>	<p>Continue to uphold and improve pitch quality through retained maintenance regime.</p> <p>Consider the opportunity and feasibility of greater use of non-turf wickets to help meet any future increase in demand in response to targeted initiatives.</p> <p>Ensure that the re-provision of rugby league facilities at the Enterprise Zone receives RFL approval and sufficiently meets national, local and Sport England Playing Field Policy.</p> <p>Ensure maintenance regime upholds new pitch quality.</p>	Sports Club LCF RFL	Key	Medium to Long	High	PROTECT ENHANCE
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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
				<p>Current rugby training area with 4 floodlights located to west of cricket clubhouse used during the week.</p> <p>Site included in the designated EZ and subject to re-provision proposal.</p> <p>Grass rugby league pitch on southern cricket outfield to remain size 91.5m by 60m. Pitch to be slightly re-positioned to accommodate new footpath and cycleway on southern boundary beyond cricket outfield. Provision of floodlighting on southern boundary subject to planning and airport approval, to enhance usage for any future junior team development and for training.</p> <p>Enhanced rugby league pitch facilities to be provided at adjacent Common Edge Rd. (Refer to Site 10 of Action Plan). The pitch is subject to re-development proposals. Rugby league grass pitch to remain but re-orientated and enhanced to 'good' quality with relocation of training area of 4600m² adjacent to re-orientated grass pitch. Priority use of both facilities by existing rugby league club to be established. The provision of 2 containers for storage of rugby equipment on new training area.</p>						

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
				<p>Provision of floodlighting on eastern and western boundary of grass pitch with western boundary providing dual lighting to the training area subject to planning and airport approval.</p> <p>Funding for re- provision approved by Council Executive July 2018</p>						
20	Squires Gate FC School Rd. FY4 5DS	Football	Sports Club	<p>Good quality adult pitch with floodlighting. Secure tenure.</p> <p>Compliant with Step 5 ground grading requirements.</p> <p>The pitch is currently overplayed by one match equivalent session per week through the Club's senior and youth teams.</p>	<p>Sustain pitch quality through dedicated maintenance regime in order to best accommodate levels of use.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to utilise additional capacity elsewhere e.g. Common Edge Rd. to transfer some use and eliminate overplay onsite.</p> <p>Seek to develop facilities to meet Step 4 ground grading requirements should the Club have ambitions to gain promotion.</p>	Sports Club LFA	Local	Short to Medium	Low	PROTECT
21	St. George's Church of England High School Cherry Tree Rd. FY4 4PH	Football	Academy	<p>2 Adult, 2 Mini 7v7 and 1 Youth 9v9 pitch, all of poor quality.</p> <p>Current capacity 4.5 MES with spare capacity of 0.5</p> <p>Some use by one team from Clifton Rangers JFC but the site offers no</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through enhanced maintenance regime to increase capacity. Improvement of quality to standard would provide 14 MES per week and good would provide 22 MES</p>	Academy LFA LCF RLA	Local	Short	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
				security of tenure for community users.	Seek to secure tenure to increase use by community teams to address shortfalls whilst ensuring sufficient access to changing and toilet facilities where required.					
		Cricket		Use to accommodate 3 wicket squares but is now no longer prepared.	No action required.					
		Rugby League		Standard quality pitch available for use but unused by community teams. Likely no spare capacity given Academy use throughout the week.	Improve pitch quality through increased and more regular maintenance.					
22	St. Mary's Catholic Academy St. Walburgas Rd. FY3 7EQ	Football	Academy	Three adult pitches, each overmarked with a youth 9v9 pitch and three mini 7v7 pitches each overmarked with a mini 5v5 pitch. All pitches are rated as standard quality and used by 25 teams from Clifton Rangers JFC. Current capacity 18 MES per week The adult pitches are overplayed by 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week whereas the mini 7v7 pitches are played to capacity at peak time but with +4.0 at non peak. Unsecure tenure.	FA regional pitch advisor to carry out technical assessment and provide technical recommendations on improving quality. Improve pitch quality through enhanced maintenance regime to increase capacity to eliminate overplay and accommodate further use. LFFP recommendation improvement to good quality will provide 27 MES per week. Seek to formally secure community access for clubs using the site, out	Academy LFA RUF	Key	Short	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
				Included in LFFP 2019	with or as a condition of any future external investment such as opportunity identified through the LFFP.					
		Rugby Union		Poor quality pitch available for use but unused by community teams.	Improve pitch quality through better and more regular maintenance.					
23	Stanley Park West. Park Dr. FY3 9HU	Football	Council	<p>Three standard quality adult pitches, one of which is over-marked with a youth 9v9 pitch.</p> <p>Adult pitches spare capacity of +2 MES at peak time. Youth pitch 9v9 spare capacity of +3.00 MES at peak time Mini 7v7 spare capacity of +1.5 MES at peak time</p> <p>Cricket wicket no longer used provides potential for further football pitches to provide additional capacity</p> <p>Capacity exists to provide additional pitch markings for a variety of pitches³⁰</p> <p>Changing facilities are provided in the main building at Blackpool Sports Centre though there is no specific referees changing room.</p> <p>Secure tenure.</p>	<p>Sustain pitch quality through current maintenance regime.</p> <p>Maximise use of available area to mark out additional pitches to assist in addressing current quantitative shortfall of 2.5 MES 5v5 football if required.</p> <p>Consider change of use of cricket wicket to football pitches</p> <p>Seek use of exclusive changing facilities for officials.</p>	Council LFA LCF RFL	Hub	Short	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE

³⁰ Additional capacity could accommodate two 11v11 pitches or three 9v9 or six 7v7 or eight 5v5 or a combination as required.

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
	Continued - Stanley Park West. Park Dr. FY3 9HU	Cricket		Included in the LFFP 2019 and PIP 2020						
				Previously had a cricket pitch last used in 2014 by teams playing in the unaffiliated Fylde Cricket League. Cricket pitch no longer maintained but remaining area still feasible to accommodate cricket depending on prioritisation of sports at Stanley Park.	Consider future reinstatement if required in the event of future demand for use.					
		Rugby League		Previously had a rugby league pitch marked out last used by Blackpool Stanley ARLFC in 2018. No longer maintained as a rugby league pitch by the Council due to lack of demand. Maintained now as an adult football pitch – standard quality providing 2 MES per week.	Consider future reinstatement if required in the event of future demand for use.					
24	Unity Academy Blackpool Warbreck Hill Rd. FY2 0TS	Football	Academy	Three standard quality youth 9v9 pitches with 6 MES per week capacity. Has secure tenure but not used by community teams. Spare capacity of +3 MES at peak time. The soil has a high clay content which causes pitch to drain poorly at times.	Improve pitch quality through enhanced maintenance regime to increase capacity and accommodate further play. Improvement of quality to good provides + 6 MES per week. Explore opportunity to extend community football offer to include use of grass pitches.	College LFA RFU	Key	Medium	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
	<p>Continued - Unity Academy Blackpool</p> <p>Warbreck Hill Rd. FY2 OTS</p>	3G		<p>Full size 3G pitch with floodlighting built in early 2019.</p> <p>Good quality and supported by Football Foundation investment. FA certified and registered to accommodate competitive football.</p>	<p>Explore potential for increased use as a mini soccer central venue as part of a co-ordinated approach to use and pricing of 3G pitches for match play across the Borough.</p> <p>Ensure the provider retains and renews FA certification to be able to host competitive football.</p>			Short		
		Rugby Union		<p>Poor quality Senior pitch available but not used by community teams.</p> <p>The soil has a high clay content which causes pitch to drain poorly at times. Likely to be overplayed given Academy use throughout the week.</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through increased maintenance to increase capacity.</p> <p>Seek to address drainage issues through increased aeration where effective.</p>			Short		
		AGP		<p>Small sized sand based AGP of standard quality without floodlighting. Available for community use and used by mini and youth 9v9 teams from Layton Juniors FC and Bispham JFF FC for training.</p>	<p>Ensure maintenance is of the required standard in order to sustain pitch quality.</p>					
25	<p>Whiteholme Recreation Ground (Gala Field)</p> <p>All Saints Rd. FY5 3AL</p>	Football	Sports Clubs	<p>Pitches are rated as standard quality. Tenure secure.</p> <p>Five adult pitches overmarked with four youth 9v9 pitches and two mini 7v7 pitches. A further six exclusive mini 7v7 pitches, one youth 9v9 pitch and one mini 5v5 pitch.</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through enhanced maintenance regime to increase capacity for growth and to reduce overmarking of pitches. Increased capacity in line with LFFP recommendation of 'Good' provides an additional 21 MES per week</p>	Sport Clubs LFA	Key	Long	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
	<p>Continued –</p> <p>Whiteholme Recreation Ground (Gala Field)</p> <p>All Saints Rd. FY5 3AL</p>			<p>Current capacity in total across all pitches 40 MES per week</p> <p>Youth 9v9 and mini 5v5 pitches are currently played to capacity.</p> <p>Adult pitches spare capacity of +1 MES at peak time</p> <p>Mini 7v7 spare capacity of +0.5 MES at peak time.</p> <p>Capacity exists to provide additional pitch markings for two 5v5 mini pitches.</p> <p>Included in LFFP 2019.</p>	<p>Transfer overmarked demand to exclusive grass pitches or 3G pitches to reduce intensification of use.</p> <p>Maximise use of available area to mark out additional pitches to assist in addressing current quantitative shortfall of 2.5 MES 5v5 football if required.</p>					
26	<p>Kingscote Park</p> <p>Kingscote Dr. FY3 7EN</p>	Rugby League	Sports Club	<p>Standard quality senior pitch home to Blackpool Stanley ARLFC. Pitch quality provides 2 matches per week.</p> <p>Some spare capacity amounting to 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week.</p> <p>Club has ambitions to rotate the pitch to create a second senior pitch, including possible extension of the clubhouse to add a second set of changing rooms to serve this pitch.</p>	<p>Sustain and improve pitch quality through improved maintenance in order to increase pitch capacity. If improvement to good will provide an additional +1 MES per week.</p> <p>Explore feasibility of creating an additional pitch and changing rooms at Kingscote Park in order to accommodate any future growth should demand require.</p>	Sports Club RFL	Local	Medium	M-H	PROTECT ENHANCE
27	Blackpool Wren Rovers FC	Football	Sports Club	Standard quality adult pitch with floodlighting with capacity of 2 MES per week. Pitch has spare capacity	Sustain and improve pitch quality to good through improved	Council LFA	Local	Long	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
	School Rd. FY4 5DX			of +0.5 MES at peak time. Compliant with present Step 7 ground grading requirements. Secure tenure.	maintenance to increase pitch capacity to + 1 MES per week.					
29	Claremont Park Claremont Road FY1 2QH	Football	Council	One standard quality adult pitch providing 2 MES per week. Spare capacity of +0.5 MES at peak time. Capacity exists to provide additional pitch markings for two 5v5 mini pitches. Committed Sum of £30,000 invested in pitch renovation and levelling and installation of a dedicated drainage system by 2022 (work completed 2020).	Sustain and improve pitch quality through improved maintenance in order to increase pitch capacity and to ensure that planned drainage works are effective. Improvement from standard to good quality will increase capacity by +1 MES week Maximise use of available area to mark out additional pitches to assist in addressing current quantitative shortfall of 2.5 MES 5v5 football if required.	Council LFA	Local	Medium	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE
31	Moor Park Primary School Moor Park Ave. FY2 0LY	Football	School	One standard quality mini 5v5 pitch which is presently used only by the school. Spare capacity discounted due to no security of tenure for external groups.	Sustain and improve pitch quality to good through improved maintenance in order to increase pitch capacity to provide 6 MES per week	School LFA	Local	Long	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE
32	St. Cuthbert's Catholic Academy Lightwood Ave. FY4 2AU	Football	Academy	One standard quality mini 7v7 pitch which is presently used only by the Academy.	Sustain and improve pitch quality to good through improved maintenance in order to increase pitch capacity to provide 6 MES per week	Academy LFA	Local	Long	Low	PROTECT ENHANCE

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
				Spare capacity discounted due to no security of tenure for external groups.						
35	Armfield Academy Lytham Rd. FY4 1TL	Football	Academy	<p>Three youth 11v11 and two youth 9v9 pitches, all of which are standard quality with secure tenure and available for community use providing 20 MES per week.</p> <p>Youth 11v11 spare capacity of +3 MES at peak time</p> <p>Youth 9v9 spare capacity of +2 MES at peak time</p> <p>Community Use Agreement for use of facilities is in place but community use operation presently extends only to the onsite sports centre.</p>	<p>The Council to work with the Academy to establish community use of the grass pitch and 3G facility at weekends.</p> <p>Consideration of the site to provide capacity for growth of other clubs for example for Foxhall JFC</p> <p>Encourage the provider to undertaken performance standard testing of the 3G pitch and seek to establish use of the 3G pitch for match play at weekends.</p> <p>Encourage provider to put sinking funds in place to maintain long term quality, repair and eventual resurfacing when required.</p> <p>Consider seeking planning approval for installing of floodlighting to expand community use if future demand requires.</p>	Academy LFA	Key	Short	Low	PROTECT
		3G		<p>Good quality full size 3G pitch without floodlighting, therefore is not able to contribute capacity at peak times of use midweek evenings within winter months.</p>						
36	Haweside Academy Johnsville Ave. FY4 3LN		Academy	<p>New primary academy funded in 2015-16 through the Priority Building Schools Programme and opened in November 2016.</p>	<p>Explore opportunities for community use if additional capacity is required to cater for demand in the area.</p>	Council	Local	Long	Medium	PROVIDE

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
				Academy playing field to the south of the site is unmarked but sufficient to accommodate circa two football pitches adult 11v11 or equivalent.						
	Whyndyke Farm Preston New Rd FY4 4XQ		Blackpool Council and Fylde Borough Council	Majority of the site lies within Fylde Borough. Will provide longer term residential development of around 1300 homes of which 80 will lie within Blackpool Borough. Later phases of development include sport provision. Current iterative plans include two adult pitches which if developed to a 'Good' standard will provide 6 MES per week.	Both Blackpool and Fylde Borough Councils to utilise the PPS assessments present in each local authority and Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) to determine nature of contribution towards development of sports provision based on new population from housing growth.	Blackpool and Fylde Councils	Local	Long	Medium	PROVIDE
LAPSED	Former Bispham High School site Bispham Road FY2 0NH	N/A	Council	The school was vacated and permanently closed in November 2015 becoming redundant to educational requirements and demolished in 2016. The site has received £1,050,000 Land Release Fund to support the site for housing development. The site is currently proposed as a housing allocation included within the emerging Local Plan Part 2.	Determine future use of site to include the following options: - Continue to identify as green infrastructure and hold the sites as a reserve playing field site; or - Explore the opportunity for redevelopment of the site and use developer contributions to improve pitch provision at the site or other pitches elsewhere.	Council Developer	N/A	Medium	N/A	N/A

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
				<p>The proposal would see the loss of a lapsed playing field land within former school boundary but retention of the open space /playing field land adjacent to Devonshire Rock Gardens</p> <p>Outline Application submitted 2019 awaiting decision.</p>						
LAPSED	<p>Land at Grange Park, Chepstow Road, Dinmore Avenue & Bathurst Avenue</p> <p>FY3 7RW</p>		Council	<p>Site identified as a project within the Council Homes Investment Programme (CHIP) (Jan 2020) with secure funding.</p> <p>Includes land which lies to the south of Boundary Primary School which was a former school playing field but which has not been formally marked out for 18 years. The area does not lie within the School boundary.</p> <p>As part of the Grange Park re-development housing initiative Blackpool Council and Boundary Primary School have recently agreed an area adjacent to the north west corner of the school site, part of the former Presbytery site (demolished 2013), for a new informal play area.</p> <p>Executive approval as a project within the Council's Homes Investment Programme (CHIP) January 2020</p>	<p>Determine future use of site to include the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to identify as green infrastructure and hold the sites as a reserve playing field site; or - Explore the opportunity for redevelopment of the site and use developer contributions to improve pitch provision at the site or other pitches elsewhere. 	Council Developer	N/A	Medium	N/A	N/A

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy	Timescale ²⁸	Cost ²⁹	Objective
				Proposed Allocation in the emerging Local Plan Part 2.						

Summary

6.4 The key headline findings of the study are set out in Table 1.1 of this Strategy document. The actions and recommendations set out in the Action Plan directly address these findings informed by the sport scenarios set out in Part 3 of the Strategy. In summary the outcome of the assessment as set out in the Strategy and Action Plan is that current and future playing pitch requirements to 2027 can be met by implementing the following:

- **Protecting all playing field sites irrespective of use as set out in the Action Plan;**

- **Re-provision of enhanced football playing pitches at Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone.** At Common Edge Road increasing the functional football playing field provision from the current 99,600sqm to 100,100sqm³¹. This provides sufficient playing field area to eliminate the current over marking and subsequent overplay of football pitches at the site; provide capacity if required for other overplayed sites in the area; and has the capacity to accommodate the identified future demand to 2027 for +2.5 match equivalent sessions for mini 5v5 wildcats;

- **Committed sustainable provision of 2 additional FA certified 3G pitches by the Council** to include the conversion of the AGP pitch at Stanley Park to provide for teams in north and central Blackpool and one 3G pitch at Common Edge Road included as part of the re-provision within the EZ area to provide for teams in central and south Blackpool. The Football Federation is supportive in principle of the 3G pitch locations at Stanley Park and Common Edge Road and discussions are on-going to secure the appropriate funding for the Stanley Park 3G pitch with the EZ funding the facility at Common Edge Rd. The justification and impact of the provision of 2 additional 3G pitches to cover current and future demand to 2027 is set out in detail in Part 6 of the Updated Assessment Report and Appendix 3 to this Strategy. The provision of these pitches will increase access by teams to 3G training and match play across the Borough and assist in alleviating overmarking and overplay of pitches; allow flexibility in the management of matches across the sporting seasons and provide the opportunity to allow grass pitches to rest and recover where required thereby improving the quality of pitches and play experience;

- **Improving pitch quality by reducing overmarking and overplay by:**
 - the provision of additional 3G pitches (as above) to increase the number of match equivalent sessions in the Borough and to provide capacity resilience in the provision of pitches and flexibility in the management of matches across the sports seasons;

 - the provision of additional pitch markings at sites where there is capacity, in particular at Stanley Park, Whiteholme Recreation Ground (Gala Field), Claremont Park and Common Edge Road, which could provide additional capacity in the north, central and southern areas of the Borough;

³¹ Included in Application 20/0810 permitted in May 2020

- enhancing pitch quality through improved maintenance and facilities, informed in part by the LFFP and in line with the Pitch Improvement Programme (PIP) to increase carrying capacity and improve play experience;
- **negotiating secure community use at unsecure sites.** There is significant security of tenure at many sites across the Borough, however the majority of sites where community use is not secure relate to school/Academy sites. To add resilience to the secure provision of pitches and increase accessibility for community use, the action plan identifies those sites where negotiations should be progressed in partnership with the sites management and the appropriate NGBs to secure long term use through Community Use Agreements.
 - **supporting Blackpool RUFC to become more sustainable** by seeking to secure long-term use of the Fleetwood Rd. site to help facilitate investment and improvement to pitch quality, the training area and ancillary facilities.
 - **enhanced re-provision of rugby league pitches for Blackpool Scorpions ARLC at Common Edge Road and SSCSC** , including priority use of a grass rugby pitch with enhanced grass surface and training area with 2 storage containers; and improved floodlighting subject to planning and airport approvals; along with use of improved communal car and coach parking facilities at Common Edge Road. At SSCSC rugby league pitch to remain on the cricket outfield but re-positioned to accommodate footpath/cycleway and floodlighting on the southern boundary of the outfield.
 - **Improved pitch quality and provision at Blackpool Stanley ARLFC** (Kingscote Park) by improving pitch maintenance and exploring the feasibility of creating an additional pitch to accommodate future growth if required.
 - **adding resilience to cricket wicket capacity across the Borough** by improving maintenance of the three grass squares; making better use of Fleetwood Rd. Recreation Ground; and considering the feasibility of using non-turf wickets to accommodate any increase in footfall from juniors and women’s cricket in response to sporting initiatives.
 - **enhancing existing and future pitch and ancillary sports provision** in line with the priorities set out in the Action Plan and the Greening Blackpool SPD by seeking appropriate developer contributions from new housing development across the Borough (refer to Appendix 6 for housing site locations) in line with the findings in Part 7: Housing Growth of this strategy.
 - **the lapsed sites have been identified as housing allocations in the Local Plan Part 2.** Consideration of paragraph 97 of the NPPF and exception 4 will need to be considered to provide appropriate mitigation informed by the Playing Pitch Strategy when the sites come forward through the planning process.

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Part 7: Housing Growth Scenarios

7.1 The PPS provides an estimate of demand for pitch sport based on population forecasts and club consultation to 2027 (in line with the Local Plan period). This future demand is translated into teams likely to be generated, rather than actual pitch provision required. The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) adds to this, updating the likely demand generated for pitch sports based on housing increases and converts the demand into match equivalent sessions and the number of pitches required. This is achieved via team generation rates (TGRs) in the Assessment Report to determine how many new teams would be generated from an increase in population derived from housing growth and gives the associated costs of supplying the increased pitch provision.

7.2 The scenarios below show the additional demand for pitch sports generated from housing growth. The demand is shown in match equivalent sessions per week for the majority of sports, with the exception of cricket, where match equivalent sessions are by season. Training demand is generally expressed in hours to reflect either 3G pitch use (to accommodate football training) or an AGP use (to accommodate hockey training). Where expressed in hours, this is because training demand for that sport usually takes place on floodlit grass pitches i.e. rugby union and rugby league.

7.3 The indicative figures assume that population growth will average 2.2³² per dwelling. The indicative figures will be applied to two exclusive scenarios as follows:

→ **Scenario One: Blackpool Council Housing requirement of 2,390 forecasted 2019/20-2026/27.**

→ **Scenario Two: Blackpool Council anticipated housing delivery over the next five years (2019/20-2023/24) of 1,460.**

7.4 The scenarios can be updated as required over the Local Plan period throughout the lifespan of the PPS to reflect population projections, changes in the housing requirement and change in the average household size.

7.5 The number of pitches required in the following tables has been rounded up or down accordingly, however capital and revenue costs are based on indicative pitch costs, proportionate to the total match equivalent sessions required rather than just whole pitches required. Though increases in match sessions for some sports are not sufficient to warrant the creation of new pitches, the associated costs have been incorporated and investment into alternative sites could instead be considered to increase capacity to accommodate this new demand.

Scenario 1: Likely demand generated for pitch sports from housing growth requirement over the Blackpool Local Plan period (2019/20-2026/27)

7.6 The estimated additional population derived from housing growth by 2026/27 is 5,258 (2,390 dwellings). This population increase equates to 3.55 match equivalent sessions of demand per week for

³² Based on Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment figures (SHMA)

grass pitch sports, no match equivalent sessions of demand per week on AGPs for hockey and 7.78 match equivalent sessions of demand per season for cricket.

7.7 Training demand equates to 6.99 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and no hockey use per week on AGPs. There are also 0.07 match equivalent sessions per week of training for rugby union and league on floodlit grass pitches for each sport respectively.

Table 7.1: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from housing growth (2019/20 - 2026/27)

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport (2026/27)	
	Match demand (MES) per week ³³	Training demand ³⁴
Adult football	0.66	6.99 hours
Youth football	1.51	
Mini soccer	1.32	
Rugby union	0.02	0.03 MES per week
Rugby league	0.04	0.04 MES per week
Adult hockey	0	0 hours
Junior & mixed U10 hockey	0	0 hours
Cricket	7.78 per season	-

7.8 The table below translates this estimated demand into potential pitch provision with associated capital and lifecycle costs.

Table 7.2: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision (2019/20 – 2026/27)

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches		
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ³⁵	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ³⁶
Adult football	0.66	£60,691	£12,806
Youth football	1.51	£115,601	£24,276
Mini soccer	1.32	£33,717	£7,081
Rugby union	0.02	£3,251	£696
Rugby league	0.04	£4,239	£937
Cricket	7.78 per season	£49,027	£9,904

³³ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

³⁴ Hours equate to access to a full size floodlit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

³⁵ Sport England Facilities Costs are updated on an annual basis (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

³⁶ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches		
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ³⁶	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ³⁷
Natural grass pitches total	3.55 per week 7.78 per season	£266,526	£55,699
Sand based AGP	0	£0	£0
3G pitch	0.18	£184,784	£6,703
Artificial Grass Pitches total	0.18	£184,784	£6,703

7.9 Further to the above, the PPC also estimates that there will be a need to provide 3.96 additional changing rooms to support new pitch provision which is identified in the table above. The total capital cost to deliver this level of additional changing provision is £662,005,

Scenario 2: Likely demand generated for pitch sports from housing growth over the next five years (2019/20-2023/24)

7.10 The expected Borough-wide housing increase over the next five years equates to 1,460 new dwellings based on the housing supply data from Blackpool Council’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The forecast is made up of residential schemes which are under construction, sites with planning permission where work hasn't yet started as well as additional sites which have the potential to accommodate residential development over the next five years.

7.11 The estimated additional population derived from housing growth by 2023/24 is 3,212 (1,460 dwellings). This population increase equates to 2.16 match equivalent sessions of demand per week for grass pitch sports, no match equivalent sessions of demand per week on AGPs for hockey and 4.75 match equivalent sessions of demand per season for cricket.

7.12 Training demand equates to 4.27 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and no hockey use per week on AGPs. There are also 0.02 match equivalent sessions per week of training each for rugby union and league on floodlit grass pitches for each sport respectively.

Table 7.3: Likely demand for grass pitch sports from housing growth in the next five years (2019/20-2023/24)

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport (2023/24)	
	Match demand (MES) per week ³⁷	Training demand ³⁸
Adult football	0.4	4.27 hours
Youth football	0.92	
Mini soccer	0.81	

³⁷ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

³⁸ Hours equate to access to a full size floodlit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport (2023/24)	
	Match demand (MES) per week ³⁷	Training demand ³⁸
Rugby union	0.01	0.02 MES per week
Rugby league	0.02	0.02 MES per week
Adult hockey	0	0 hours
Junior & mixed U10 hockey	0	0 hours
Cricket	4.75 per season	-

7.13 The table below translates this estimated demand into potential pitch provision with associated capital and lifecycle costs.

Table 7.4: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision (2019/20 – 2023/24)

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches		
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ³⁹	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ⁴⁰
Adult football	0.4	£39,175	£8,266
Youth football	0.92	£67,157	£14,103
Mini soccer	0.81	£19,587	£4,113
Rugby union	0.01	£1,959	£419
Rugby league	0.02	£2,462	£544
Cricket	0.1	£29,481	£5,955
Natural grass pitches total	2.16 per week 0.1 per season	£159,821	£33,401
Sand based AGP	0	£0	£0
3G pitch	0.11	£107,892	£4,115
Artificial Grass Pitches total	0.11	£107,892	£4,115

7.14 Further to the above, the PPC also estimates that there will be a need to provide 2.42 additional changing rooms to support new pitch provision which is identified in the table above. The total capital cost to deliver this level of additional changing provision is £399,260.

Conclusions

7.15 The tables above show that over the next five years and up to 2027, demand will be generated for each pitch sport to a lesser or greater extent, with the exception of hockey which is no longer played within the Borough. This position is indicative and does not provide information on where the housing

³⁹ Sport England Facilities Costs are updated on an annual basis (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

⁴⁰ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

is likely to be located, how many dwellings will actually be provided or to which existing playing fields the additional demand is likely to migrate.

7.16 Not all schemes will be of sufficient scale to generate demand in their own right; however the cumulative impact of housing across the local authority shows that there will be demand generated during the Local Plan period in the next five years.

7.17 Notwithstanding the need for new 3G pitches identified within this Strategy, it should also be noted that through increasing the capacity of existing grass pitches (through improving quality and securing community use, for example) generated by implementing the actions set of in this Strategy and Action Plan demand through housing growth is also addressed.

7.18 In addition the housing growth set out above should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to enhance existing provision in the locality through for example, improving quality or providing new or improved ancillary provision. The PPS Action Plan, as well as consultation with appropriate NGBs, should be used to assist in the selection of suitable sites and suitable enhancements in relation to new housing development. New housing development sites in the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies document are identified in Appendix 6.

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Part 8: Keeping The Strategy Robust And Up To Date

Delivery

8.0 The PPS seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across Blackpool. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in this Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of Blackpool can be satisfied. The Strategy identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and identifies how best to resolve this in the future.

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

8.2 The production of this Strategy should be regarded as the beginning of the planning process. The success of this Strategy and the benefits that are gained are dependent upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a strategic approach.

8.3 Each member of the steering group should take the lead to ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence. The role of the steering group should not end with the completion of the PPS document.

8.4 To help ensure the PPS is well used it should be regarded as the key document within the study area guiding the improvement and protection of playing pitch provision. It needs to be the document people regularly turn to for information on how the current demand is met and what actions are required to improve the situation and meet future demand. In order for this to be achieved the steering group need to have a clear understanding of how the PPS can be applied and therefore delivered. Key uses for the PPS include evidence for supporting funding bids, guidance to inform planning decisions and planning applications and decision making for capital investment.

8.5 The process of developing the PPS will hopefully have already resulted in a number of benefits that will help with its application and delivery. These may include enhanced partnership working across different agendas and organisations, pooling of resources along with strengthening relationships and understanding between different stakeholders and between members of the steering group and the sporting community. The drivers behind the PPS and the work to develop the recommendations and action plan will have also highlighted and helped the steering group to understand the key areas to which it can be applied and how it can be delivered.

Monitoring and updating

8.6 It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should be led by the local authority and supported by all members of and reported back to the steering group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery. This should form an ongoing role of the steering group. It is possible that in the interim between annual reviews the steering group could operate as a 'virtual' group; prepared to comment on suggestions and updates electronically when relevant. In relation to monitoring and updating consideration could be given to setting up a Task and Finish Group to support the implementation of the Strategy.

8.7 As the data in the Assessment Report which has informed this PPS and accompanying Action Plan relates to 2018 the Local Authority has committed to an immediate review of the document commencing summer 2021 and a bespoke monitoring plan will be developed to ensure all parties are aware of their role and responsibilities.

8.8 It should be noted that if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of a PPS being signed off by the steering group, then Sport England and the NGBs would consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date. If the PPS is used as a 'live' document, and kept up to date, the time frame can be extended to five years.

8.9 Furthermore, the process of refreshing the PPS would be much less resource intensive if changes and updates have been made throughout the five years. If there are no updates to the document within the period the nature of the supply and in particular the demand for playing pitches is likely to have changed. Therefore, without any form of review and update within this time period it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

8.10 Ideally the PPS could be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the steering group. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment that would have been built up when developing the PPS. Taking into account the time to develop the PPS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

8.11 An annual review should not be regarded as a particularly resource intensive task. However, it should highlight:

- How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others)
- How the PPS has been applied and the lessons learnt
- Any changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs in the area (e.g. the most used or high quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues
- Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport
- Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

8.12 Once the PPS is complete the role of the steering group should evolve so that it:

- Acts as a focal point for promoting the value and importance of the PPS and playing pitch provision in the area
- Monitors, evaluates and reviews progress with the delivery of the recommendations and action plan
- Shares lessons learnt from how the PPS has been used and how it has been applied to a variety of circumstances
- Ensures the PPS is used effectively to input into any new opportunities to secure improved provision and influence relevant programmes and initiatives
- Maintains links between all relevant parties with an interest in playing pitch provision in the area;
- Reviews the need to update the PPS along with the supply and demand information and assessment work on which it is based. Further to review the group should either:
 - Provide a short annual progress and update paper;
 - Provide a partial review focussing on particular sport, pitch type and/or sub area; or
 - Lead a full review and update of the PPS document (including the supply and demand information and assessment details).

8.13 Alongside the regular steering group meetings it is recommended that Blackpool Council holds annual sport specific meetings with the pitch sport NGBs and other relevant organisations. These meetings should look to update the key supply and demand information, if necessary amend the assessment work, track progress with implementing the recommendations and action plan and highlight any new issues and opportunities. Things to consider include formation of new teams or loss of teams, any new formats of the sports that would impact on facilities, changes in quality or creation of new facilities.

8.14 These meetings could be timed to fit with the annual affiliation process undertaken by the NGBs which would help to capture any changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area. Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites could be fed into these meetings. The NGBs will also be able to indicate any further performance quality assessments that have been undertaken within the study area. Discussion with the league secretaries may also indicate annual league meetings which it may be useful to attend to pick up any specific issues and/or enable a review of the relevant club details to be undertaken.

8.15 The steering group should regularly review and refresh area by area plans taking account of any improvements in pitch quality (and hence increases in pitch capacity) and also any new negotiations for community use of education or other private sites in the future. Updating the action plans will make the task of updating the PPS much easier.

8.16 It is important that the Council maintains the data contained with the accompanying Playing Pitch Database. This will enable it to refresh and update area by area plans on a regular basis. The accompanying databases are intended to be refreshed on a season by season basis and it is important

that there is cross-departmental working, including for example, grounds maintenance and sports, to ensure that this is achieved and that results are used to inform subsequent annual sports facility development plans. Results should be shared with partners via a consultative mechanism.

Checklist

8.17 To help ensure the PPS is delivered and is kept robust and up to date, the steering group can refer to the new methodology Stage E Checklist:

https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/pps-guidance-october-2013-updated.pdf?VersionId=afnAz9cYWu47InVNn_t3QCSem9.uRnwg

Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date	Tick 	
	Yes	Requires Attention
Step 9: Apply and deliver the strategy		
1. Are steering group members clear on how the PPS can be applied across a range of relevant areas?		
2. Is each member of the steering group committed to taking the lead to help ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence?		
3. Has a process been put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered and the PPS is being applied?		
Step 10: Keep the strategy robust and up to date		
1. Has a process been put in place to ensure the PPS is kept robust and up to date?		
2. Does the process involve an annual update of the PPS?		
3. Is the steering group to be maintained and is it clear of its on-going role?		
4. Is regular liaison with the NGBs and other parties planned?		
5. Has all the supply and demand information been collated and presented in a format (i.e. single document that can be filtered accordingly) that will help people to review it and highlight any changes?		
6. Have any changes made to the Active Places Power data been fed back to Sport England?		

Appendices

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Appendix 1: Strategic Context

A1.1 The recommendations within this Strategy have been developed via the combination of information gathered during consultation, site visits and analysis. They reflect key areas to be addressed over its lifetime. However, implementation must be considered in the context of financial implications and the need for some proposals to also meet planning considerations.

National context

A1.2 The provision of high quality and accessible community outdoor sports facilities at a local level is a key requirement for achieving the targets set out by the Government and Sport England. It is vital that this strategy is cognisant of and works towards these targets in addition to local priorities and plans.

Department of Media Culture and Sport Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation (2015)

A1.3 The Government published its strategy for sport in December 2015. This strategy confirms the recognition and understanding that sport makes a positive difference through broader means and that it will help the sector to deliver five simple but fundamental outcomes: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of 23 performance indicators under nine key headings, as follows:

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

Sport England: Uniting the Movement (2021-2031)

A1.4 Sport England has recently published a new 10 year strategy called 'Uniting the Movement'. Sport England believe sport and physical activity has a big role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society for all. More than anything, it seeks to tackle the inequalities in sport and physical activity. Providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind and helping to remove the barriers to activity has never been more important. Five key issues have been identified as providing the greatest potential for preventing and tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity. They include:

- Recover and reinvent
- Connecting communities
- Positive Experiences for children and young people
- Connecting with health and wellbeing
- Active Environments

A1.5 Further information regarding the strategy can be found below:

<https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement>

National Planning Policy Framework

A1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

A1.7 The NPPF states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

A1.8 The ‘promoting healthy communities’ theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies or surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

A1.9 As a prerequisite the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

A1.10 In order for planning policies to be ‘sound’ local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities.

The FA National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)

A1.11 The Football Association's (FA) National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a ten-year period. The Strategy is presently in draft and is due for publication.

A1.12 The Strategy sets out shared aims and objectives it aims to deliver on in conjunction with The Premier League, Sport England and the Government, to be delivered with support of the Football Foundation.

A1.13 These stakeholders have clearly identified the aspirations for football to contribute directly to nationally important social and health priorities. Alongside this, the strategy is clear that traditional, affiliated football remains an important priority and a core component of the game, whilst recognising and supporting the more informal environments used for the community and recreational game.

A1.14 Its vision is: "Within 10 years we aim to deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed"

A1.15 £1.3 billion has been spent by football and Government since 2000 to enhance existing football facilities and build new ones. However, more is needed if football and Government's shared objectives for participation, individual well-being and community cohesion are to be achieved. Nationally, direct investment will be increased – initially to £69 million per annum from football and Government (a 15% increase on recent years).

A1.16 The NFFS investment priorities can be broadly grouped into six areas, recognising the need to grow the game, support existing players and better understand the different football environments:

- Improve 20,000 Natural Turf pitches, with a focus on addressing drop off due to a poor playing experience;
- Deliver 1,000 3G AGP 'equivalents' (mix of full size and small sided provision, including MUGAs - small sided facilities are likely to have a key role in smaller / rural communities and encouraging multi-sport offers), enhancing the quality of playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision;
- Deliver 1,000 changing pavilions/clubhouses, linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development;
- Support access to flexible indoor spaces, including equipment and court markings, to support growth in futsal, walking football and to support the education and skills outcomes, exploiting opportunities for football to positively impact on personal and social outcomes for young people in particular;
- Refurbish existing stock to maintain current provision, recognising the need to address historic under-investment and issues with refurbishment of existing facilities;
- Support testing of technology and innovation, building on customer insight to deliver hubs for innovation, testing and development of the game.

Local Football Facility Plans

A1.17 To support in delivery of the NFFS, The FA has commissioned a national project. Over the next two years to 2020, a Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) will be produced for every local authority across England. Each plan will be unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation, including currently underrepresented communities.

A1.18 Identifying strategic priorities for football facilities across the formal, recreational and informal game, LFFPs will establish a ten-year vision for football facilities that aims to transform the playing pitch stock in a sustainable way. They will identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all will be identified via LFFPs. LFFPs will guide the allocation of 90% of national football investment (The FA, Premier League and DCMS) and forge stronger partnerships with local stakeholders to develop key sites. This, together with local match-funding will deliver over one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next 10-years.

A1.19 It is important to recognise that a LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Therefore, it cannot be used as a replacement for a PPS and it will not be accepted as an evidence base for site change of use or disposal.

A1.20 A LFFP will; however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

The FA: National Game Strategy (2018-2021)

A1.21 The FA launched its new National Game Strategy in July 2018 which aims to inspire a life-long journey in football for all. To achieve this, the strategy will focus on five key aspects of the game:

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

A1.22 Through these five pillars, The FA's objectives are to:

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

A1.23 The sustainable football facilities should provide support to an agreed portfolio of priority projects that meet National Football Facility Strategy (NFFS) investment priorities.

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

A1.24 The England and Wales Cricket Board unveiled a new strategic plan in 2019. The strategic plan aims to connect communities and improve lives by inspiring people to discover and share their passion for cricket

A1.25 The plan sets out six important priorities and activities, these are:

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

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

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

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

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

- Create a game-wide approach to Trust and Foundations through the cricket network
- Develop a new wave of officials and community coaches
- increase participation in disability cricket

The Rugby Football Union Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

A1.26 The RFU has released its new strategic vision for rugby in England. The strategy is based on four main elements which are; Protect, Engage, Grow and Win. It covers all elements of rugby union ranging from elite rugby to grassroots, although the general relevancy to the PPS is centred around growing the game.

A1.27 The RFU exists to promote and develop rugby union in England and ensure the long-term sustainability of clubs by growing player numbers and retaining them across all age groups. Responding to wider market influences, work will continue on developing new ways to take part in all forms of the game, without comprising the sports traditions. This will ensure a lasting legacy from elite success by attracting new players and encouraging current male and female adult players to play.

A1.28 The four key aims to ensure long term sustainability are to:

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

The Rugby Football League Facility Strategy

A1.29 The RFL's Facilities Strategy was published in 2011. The following themes have been prioritised:

- Clean, Dry, Safe & Playable
- Sustainable clubs
- Environmental Sustainability
- Geographical Spread
- Non-club Facilities

A1.30 The RFL Facilities Trust website www.rflfacilitiestrust.co.uk provides further information on:

- The RFL Community Facility Strategy
- Clean, Dry, Safe and Playable Programme
- Pitch Size Guidance
- The RFL Performance Standard for Artificial Grass Pitches
- Club guidance on the Annual Preparation and Maintenance of the Rugby League Pitch

A1.31 Further to the 2011 Strategy detail on the following specific programmes of particular relevance to pitches and facility planning are listed below and can be found via the trust link (see above):

- The RFL Pitch Improvement Programme 2013 – 2017
- Clean, Dry and Safe programmes 2013 - 2017

Rugby League World Cup ‘Inspired by 2021’ Legacy Programme

A1.32 The Rugby League World Cup 2021 will develop a £10 million legacy programme with funds driven into local clubs and community projects. The government investment, delivered by Sport England, is part of RLWC 2021’s ambitious plan to grow the sport and make it more visible, engaging and welcoming to current and potential participants.

A1.33 The funding will be split into large transformational community projects, such as changing room improvements and new artificial grass pitches with the remaining funding used for smaller scale initiatives such as supplying new kit and equipment to promote club and community development. The investment will focus on the following four key areas:

- Creating welcoming environments
- Encouraging participation growth
- Building community engagement
- Cultivating further investment

England Hockey Strategy

A1.34 England Hockey’s Facilities Strategy can be found here.

A1.35 Vision: For every hockey club in England to have appropriate and sustainable facilities that provide excellent experiences for players.

A1.36 Mission: More, Better, Happier Players with access to appropriate and sustainable facilities

A1.37 The 3 main objectives of the facilities strategy are:

1. PROTECT: To conserve the existing hockey provision

A1.38 There are currently over 800 pitches that are used by hockey clubs (club, school, universities) across the country. It is important to retain the current provision where appropriate to ensure that hockey is maintained across the country.

2. IMPROVE: To improve the existing facilities stock (physically and administratively)

A1.39 The current facilities stock is ageing and there needs to be strategic investment into refurbishing the pitches and ancillary facilities. England Hockey works to provide more support for clubs to obtain better agreements with facilities providers & education around owning an asset.

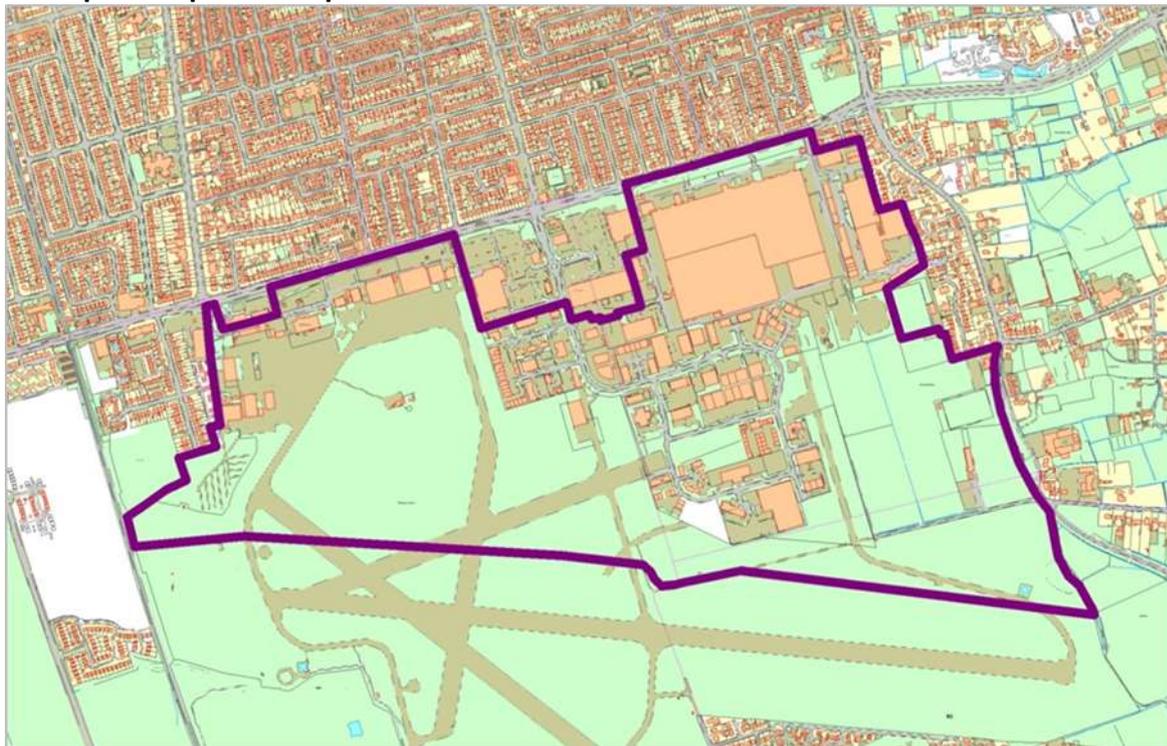
3. DEVELOP: To strategically build new hockey facilities where there is an identified need and ability to deliver and maintain. This might include consolidating hockey provision in a local area where appropriate.

A1.40 England Hockey has identified key areas across the country where there is a lack of suitable hockey provision and there is a need for additional pitches, suitable for hockey. There is an identified demand for multi pitches in the right places to consolidate hockey and allow clubs to have all of their provision catered for at one site.

Appendix 2: Overview of the current provision and the proposed re-provision of sporting facilities at Common Edge Road (as at February 2021)

A2.1 Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone was approved in November 2015 and the site became operable in April 2016. The site covers 144 hectares of which around 62 hectares lie within Blackpool Borough and 82 hectares in Fylde (refer to map below). The site incorporates the existing Category III airport buildings and surrounding business and employment lands, areas of open space and sports playing fields.

Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone



A2.2 The sporting facilities within the EZ boundary include playing pitches at Common Edge Road, Collins Park and South Shore Cricket, Rugby League and Squash Club ground and facilities. The AFC Blackpool ground is not included in the EZ boundary and is not subject to the re-development proposals at the EZ. However the AFC Blackpool youth training pitch is located at Common edge Road and is affected by the proposals.

A2.3 To support the implementation of the EZ an initial masterplan was developed in 2017 which can be viewed on the Blackpool Enterprise Zone website at the following link: <https://blackpoolez.com/> Overtime the proposals in the Masterplan have evolved responding to commercial and economic requirements and ongoing engagement with the Blackpool Leisure Services and the sporting bodies and clubs involved. The Masterplan is currently being updated.

A2.4 The Council is committed to re-provide enhanced sporting facilities at Common Edge Road and this requirement is embedded in emerging Blackpool Local Plan Part 2 – Policy DM8.

A2.5 The proposed Enterprise Zone re-provision proposals for the playing fields and facilities is set out below:

Summary of Current Provision and Future Re-Provision of Pitches at Blackpool Enterprise Zone

Site	Criteria	Current Pitch Provision	Re-Provision of pitches as part of the EZ Masterplan	
Collins Park and Common Edge Rd.*	Functional grass pitch area sqm.	99,600sqm	100,100sqm ⁴¹	
	FOOTBALL			
	<u>Grass Pitch Type</u>	Pitch provision below includes accommodating temporary relocation of 15 teams from Foxhall JFC due to United Utilities work at home ground)	Pitch provision is illustrative and can be remarked depending on specific yearly requirements	
	Adult/Youth 11v11	9	Adult/Youth full size 11v11	7
	Youth 9v9	1	Youth 9v9	3
		5 overmarked on adult pitches		
	Minis 7v7	2 over marked on adult pitches	Minis 7v7	3
			Minis 5v5	4
	<u>Total number of Grass Pitches</u>	10 (excludes overmarking)	17	
	<u>Standard of Grass Pitch Quality</u>	All pitches assessed as Standard Quality	All pitches to be Good Quality	
<u>Total Match Equivalent Sessions (MES)</u>	Current MES – 22.5 FA recommended - 20	75		
<u>3G Pitch</u>	None	1 FF/FA standard 3G floodlit pitch. (Floodlighting is subject to planning and airport approval).		

⁴¹ Included as part of Planning Application 20/0810 approved May 2020

	Criteria	Current Pitch Provision	Re-Provision of pitches as part of the EZ Masterplan
	Total Hours 3G available per week	N/A	34 hrs. ⁴²
	RUGBY LEAGUE		
	Grass Pitch Type	Adult	1 1 adult sized pitch re-orientated on north/south axis priority use for rugby league. Floodlighting proposed on eastern and western boundary of pitch.
	Standard of Grass Pitch Quality	Pitch assessed as Standard	Pitch to be re-provided to 'Good' Standard with improved drainage and playing surface.
	Grass Training Area	4600m ² with 4 floodlights	4600m ² training area located to west of re-orientated rugby pitch with priority use for Blackpool Scorpions. Floodlighting proposed on eastern boundary (dual lighting with rugby league pitch). 2 containers to be provided on training area for storage of rugby equipment.
South Shore Cricket, Squash and Rugby League Cub	Grass Pitch Type	1 pitch marked on southern cricket outfield. Size of pitch approximately 91.5m (includes in goal areas) by 60m (includes 2m run offs either side) determined through topographical survey and rugby post footings and site visits. Below minimum size in relation to RLF guidance of 104m by 59m (includes in-goal and run-offs). Current pitch size 91.5m by 60m.	1 Grass rugby league pitch on southern cricket outfield to remain and size maintained but pitch to be slightly re-positioned to accommodate new footpath and cycleway on southern boundary of cricket outfield. Floodlighting proposed (Included in amendments to Planning Application Ref 20/0564) to facilitate use in evenings.
	CRICKET		
	The cricket wicket, the boundary of the existing outfield and the location of the cricket training nets are not affected by the EZ proposals.		

A2.6 Planning permission was granted in May 2020 (planning reference 20/0108) for a grass platform to accommodate an enhanced pitch provision to replace the existing football pitches at Common Edge Rd. and Collins Park. The work to install the new pitches commenced June 2020 and

⁴² Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) applies an overall peak period for AGPs of 34 hours a week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00)

was completed in October 2020. The grass platform is now establishing and will be available for the 2021 football season in September.

A2.7 In addition to the above, a fully floodlit 3G pitch FA certified is to be developed at the Common Edge Rd site funded through the EZ which has been agreed with the Football Foundation.

A2.8 New football changing facilities to include 6 changing rooms with showers, first aid room, 2 referee changing rooms, 2 kitchens, storage and club room. New car and coach parking including 190 car parking spaces is also to be provided. The changing facilities will receive funding from the Football Foundation and are primarily for football use but there is the potential for the Blackpool Scorpions Rugby League Club to negotiate use of these facilities if the club so require..

A2.9 An application (reference 20/0564) for the 3G pitch, provision of a grass rugby league pitch and training area, football changing facilities and car and coach parking was submitted in September 2020 with further amendments to the application being submitted in January and February 2021 in relation to introduce additional floodlighting and additional technical information.

A2.10 For Rugby League the pitch marked on the cricket outfield at South Shore Cricket and Squash Club remains albeit slightly re-positioned to accommodate a new footpath and cycleway on southern boundary beyond cricket outfield. Floodlighting is proposed on the southern boundary to facilitate the use of the pitch in the evenings. Replacing the existing rugby league pitch at Common Edge Rd. is an enhanced re-orientated grass pitch, with proposed floodlighting on the eastern boundary (dual lighting with the 3G pitch) and western boundary with dual lighting to the relocated training area. The current training area to the north and west of the clubhouse some 4600m², is to be relocated west of the re-orientated rugby pitch with proposed floodlighting on the eastern boundary. The rugby league club will have priority use of both the rugby pitch and the training area. It has been agreed that two containers are to be provided on the training area for storage of rugby equipment. The priority use of the training area and grass rugby league pitch will be secured through a licence with the rugby league club and Blackpool Council.

A2.11 In relation to South Shore cricket ground, the Cricket Pavilion and Social Club is to remain in its current location. The wicket square – existing cricket wicket and existing outfield boundary is not affected and remains intact. The cricket nets also remain in their current location north of the clubhouse. The club will have use of the new car and coach parking to be located west of the clubhouse.

A2.12 South Shore Cricket and Squash Club has security of use through a long term lease which runs to 2034. The Council is currently negotiating to extend the lease to 25 years. Discussions are ongoing with Blackpool Scorpions RLFC and South Shore Cricket Club along with the NGBs for both sports to ensure satisfactory proposals are agreed and implemented.

Appendix 3: Increasing Football Use of 3G Pitches

A3.1 During the last decade 3G AGPs have played an increasing role within the national game. They are regarded by the Football Association (FA) as the optimum facility for training by clubs. In recent seasons, they have also become more popular for competitive matches. With this in mind, before developing the recommendations and action plan for this PPS, two scenarios have been looked at to help with understanding what demand there may be for full sized floodlit 3G AGPs in Blackpool if increased amounts of play were to take place on them.

A3.2 To do so, information from the 'Assessment' stage of developing this PPS, alongside details from The FA, have been used to help answer the following questions:

A3.3 How many full sized floodlit 3G AGPs may be required to meet demand within Blackpool if:

- All teams playing competitive football had access to a full size floodlit 3G AGP to train on once a week?
- All matches for teams currently playing mini soccer or 9v9 format football in Blackpool were played on full sized floodlit 3G AGPs?

A3.4 The answers to these questions are set out below and are based on full sized floodlit 3G AGPs which have full community use during peak periods. However, the results should be viewed as providing an indication of the 'full sized pitch equivalents' that may be demanded. In practice, the most appropriate ways of meeting any such increase in demand will vary depending on the nature of the local area. For example, in some areas new full sized floodlit AGPs may be appropriate, whereas in others small sided provision to cater for increased training use or securing greater community use/hours of existing provision may be the best way forward.

A3.5 Given the above, what the answers may mean for the Blackpool, taking into account the wider findings from the Assessment stage of developing the PPS, is also presented below. These details have been used to help inform the development of the PPS's recommendations and the action plan in Part 6.

A3.6 Scenario results

- i. **If all teams playing competitive football had access to a full sized floodlit 3G AGP to train on once a week.**
 - As a guide, The FA suggests that one full sized floodlit 3G AGP could potentially accommodate the training demand from 38 teams.
 - It is considered that there are currently 188 Blackpool based teams which require access to train once per week on floodlit 3G surface.

Current number of teams	Current requirement ⁴³	Current number of available full size 3G pitches	Current shortfall	Future number of teams (2027) ⁴⁴	Future requirement
188	4.94 - 5	3 ⁴⁵	2	193	5.07 - 5

- Using The FA's 1:38 ratio suggests that two additional full size floodlit 3G AGPs are required to meet this increased training use.
- At present, there are three full size 3G pitches across the Borough.
- Future demand from team generation rates indicates an increase of five new teams exclusively based on population growth, creating a subsequent total of 193 teams (assuming all were to train and play in Blackpool) by 2027.
- This would not be sufficient to increase the requirement and in turn the shortfall from the current figure of at least two, with the need to continue to some football training on sand based AGPs to ensure future viability. Neither current nor future requirements for 3G pitch provision are able to be met at present.

ii. If all matches for teams playing mini soccer or 9v9 format football in Blackpool were played on full sized floodlit 3G AGPs.

- The FA is keen to work with local authorities (LAs) to understand the potential demand for full sized floodlit 3G AGPs should all competitive matches, currently played on Council managed natural grass pitches be transferred to 3G.
- The Council presently manages just one site, so this scenario has been applied to all mini soccer and 9v9 play regardless of site management.
- Table A.1 takes information from the Assessment stage of this PPS to present the number of teams playing mini soccer or 9v9 football and the relevant peak periods.

Table A.1: Number of teams playing on natural grass pitches

Pitch type	Pitch size	Peak period	Number of teams
Youth	9v9	Saturday AM	35
Mini	7v7	Saturday AM	38
Mini	5v5	Saturday AM	32
Total			105

- The FA suggests an approach (see below) for estimating the number of full size floodlit 3G AGPs that teams may demand for competitive matches. Table A.2 presents the results of this approach for the teams set out in Table A.1.

⁴³ Figures have been rounded down where there is existing small size 3G pitches or full size sand based pitches which can accommodate football training.

⁴⁴ Based on increased demand forecasted from team generation rates

⁴⁵ Not including Armfield Academy which is not floodlit

Table A.2: Number of 3G AGPs that may be required

Format	Number of teams per time (x)	Number of matches at PEAK TIME (y)= x/2	3G units per match (z)	Total units required formats (A)=(y)*(z)	3G pitches required B= (A)/64
5v5	32	16	4	64	1
7v7	38	19	8	152	2.375
9v9	35	17.5	10	175	2.734375

- Transferring all matches for teams currently playing competitive football on natural grass pitches may equate to a demand for seven full size floodlit 3G AGPs (rounded up from 6.11) for mini soccer and youth 9v9 formats of the game.
- To accommodate just mini soccer (both formats) on Saturday mornings there would be a need for four full size pitches (rounded up from 3.4).
- The FA approach for estimating the number of full size floodlit 3G AGPs that teams may demand for competitive matches is based on:
 - A team playing a ‘home’ match every other week - therefore dividing the number of teams by two with the result rounded up to provide a figure for the number of matches a week during the peak period (Table A.2 Column y).
 - A 3G AGP being available for 4 hours a day during the peak period (e.g. 10am to 2pm). Therefore, all demand being programmed over the four hour period.
 - Using a unit measure which can be applied to the different formats of the game to quantify how a pitch can be used during this 4 hour period (Table A.2 Column z). One unit is taken as equating to a quarter of a full size 3G AGP for 15 minutes. Therefore, a full size 3G AGP provides 4 units per 15 minutes and 16 units per hour. Across the four hour period this totals a capacity of 64 units (16 units per hour x 4 hours).

A3.7 As set out in Table A.3 below, each format of the game will require a certain amount of units of a full size 3G AGP per match based on the required pitch size and match duration.

Table A.3: FA set units of a full size 3G AGP per match for each format

Format of the game	Number of pitches that fit on a full size 3G AGP	Number of matches per hour on a full size 3G AGP	Number of matches per 2 hour period on a full size 3G AGP	Number of units per match
5v5	4	4	8	4
7v7	2	2	4	8
9v9	2	2	2	10
11v11 Youth	1	0	1	32
11v11 Adult	1	0	1	32

Current supply

A3.8 There are three available full size 3G pitches in Blackpool at Bispham Sports Centre (Blackpool & The Fylde College), Blackpool Sports Centre (Stanley Park) and Unity Academy Blackpool. There is one AGP at Blackpool Sports Centre (Stanley Park) with scope for conversion to 3G, reducing the shortfall for training purposes to one new pitch required if achieved.

A3.9 A fourth existing pitch holds some potential scope for use on Saturday mornings at Armfield Academy, though the pitch would need to undergo performance standard testing and FA registration in order to accommodate competitive match play, whilst the community use operation for outdoor provision onsite is yet to be fully established.

Scenario ii Conclusion

A3.10 Development of at least two more full size 3G pitches in Blackpool (either new or through conversion) to service shortfalls for affiliated team training would provide enough extra weekend capacity to the existing supply across the Borough that together all mini soccer play at both 5v5 and 7v7 formats could be accommodated on 3G pitches at Saturday morning peak time.

Appendix 4: Criteria for Lease of Sports Sites to Clubs/Organisations

Club	Site
<p>Clubs should have Clubmark/FA Charter Standard accreditation award.</p> <p>Clubs commit to meeting demonstrable local demand and show pro-active commitment to developing school-club links.</p> <p>Clubs are sustainable, both in a financial sense and via their internal management structures in relation to recruitment and retention policy for both players and volunteers.</p> <p>Ideally, clubs should have already identified (and received an agreement in principle) any match funding required for initial capital investment identified.</p> <p>Clubs have processes in place to ensure capacity to maintain sites to the existing, or better, standards.</p>	<p>Sites should be those identified as 'Club Sites' (recommendation d) for new clubs (i.e. not those with a Borough wide significance) but which offer development potential. For established clubs which have proven success in terms of self-management 'Key Centres' are also appropriate.</p> <p>As a priority, sites should acquire capital investment to improve (which can be attributed to the presence of a Clubmark/Charter Standard club).</p> <p>Sites should be leased with the intention that investment can be sourced to contribute towards improvement of the site.</p> <p>An NGB/Council representative should sit on a management committee for each site leased to a club.</p>

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Appendix 5: Quality Assessment Standards

→ GOOD QUALITY

Good quality refers to pitches that have, for example, a good maintenance regime coupled with good grass cover, an even surface, are free from vandalism, litter etc. In terms of ancillary facilities, good quality refers to access for disabled people, sufficient provision for referees, juniors/women/girls and appropriate provision of showers, toilets and car parking. For rugby union, a good pitch is also pipe and/or slit drained.

→ STANDARD QUALITY

Standard quality refers to pitches that have, for example, an adequate maintenance regime coupled with adequate grass cover, minimal signs of wear and tear, goalposts may be secure but in need of minor repair. In terms of ancillary facilities, standard quality refers to adequately sized changing rooms, storage provision and provision of toilets. For rugby union, drainage is natural and adequate.

→ POOR QUALITY

Poor quality refers to pitches that have, for example, poor levels of maintenance coupled with inadequate grass cover, uneven surface and damage. In terms of ancillary facilities, poor quality refers to inappropriate size of changing rooms, no showers, no running water and old dated interior. For rugby union, drainage is natural and inadequate.

Reference: Sport England/NGB quality assessment guidelines.

→ ANCILLARY FACILITIES

In terms of ancillary facilities, poor quality refers to inappropriate size of changing rooms, no showers, no running water and old dated interior. Some facilities may not be suitable for the sole or part user group, for example suitable to host women's and girl's teams and need for separation between adults and juniors or male and female at peak times.

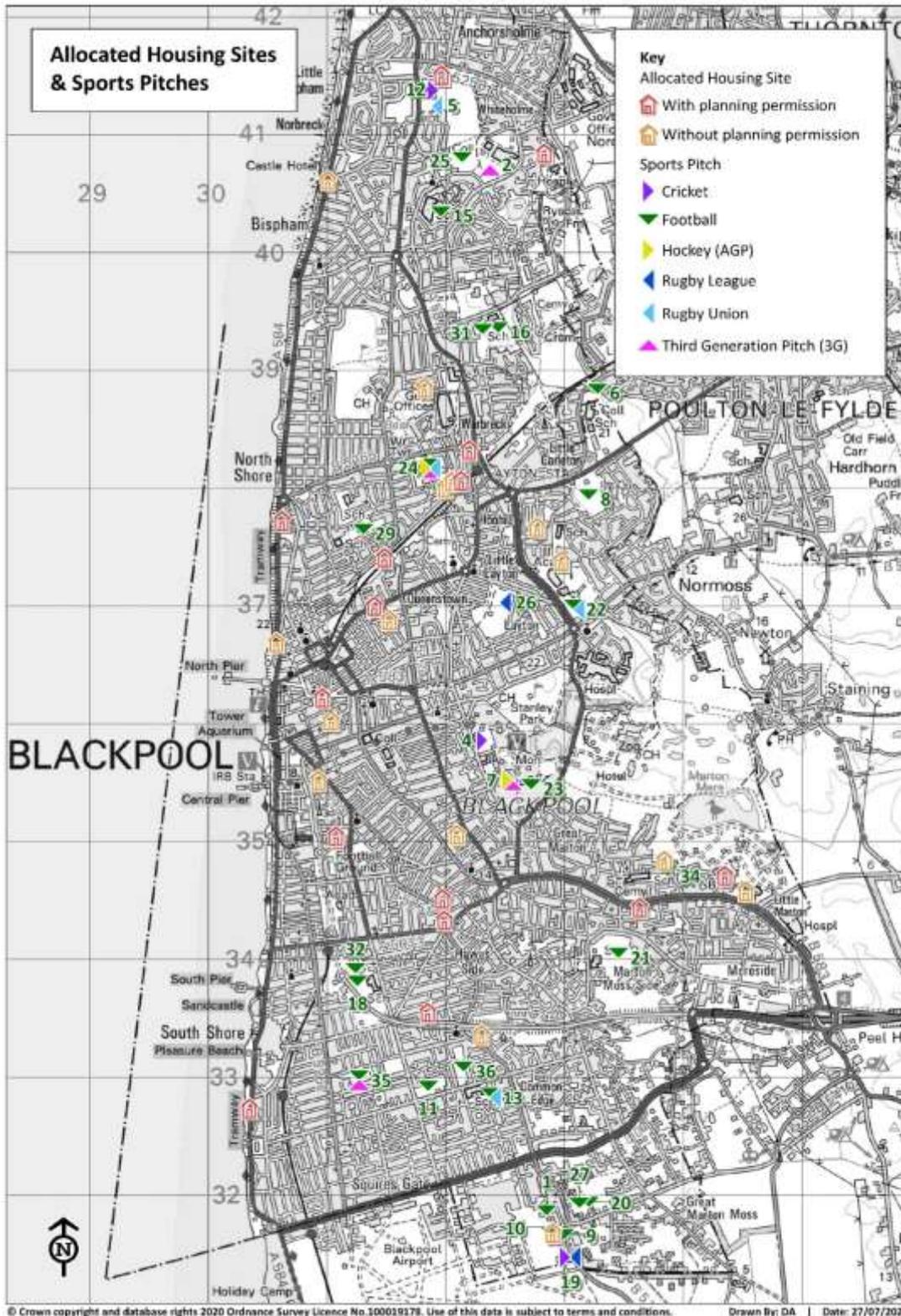
→ AGP's

For improvement/replacement of AGPs refer to Sport England and the NGBs 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface for Hockey, Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union' document for a guide as to suitable AGP surfaces:

www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/

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Appendix 6: Future Housing Sites (as at 31st March 2019) and Existing Playing Pitch Sites



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Site ID	Site Name	Management	Pitch Type
1	AFC Blackpool	Sports Club	Football
2	Bispham Sports Centre (Blackpool & The Fylde College)	College	3G
4	Blackpool Cricket Club	Sports Club	Cricket
5	Blackpool RUFC	Sports Club	Rugby Union
6	Blackpool Sixth Form College	Education	Football
7	Blackpool Sports Centre (Stanley Park)	Council	AGP Hockey 3G
8	Boundary Park	Council	Football
9	Collins Park	Council	Football
10	Common Edge Road	Council	Football Rugby League
11	Fishers Field	Council	Football
12	Fleetwood Road Recreation Ground	Sports Club	Cricket
13	Highfield Leadership Academy	Academy	Football Rugby Union
15	Montgomery High School	School	Football
16	Moor Park Extension	Council	Football
18	South Shore Academy	Academy	Football
19	South Shore Cricket, Squash & Rugby Club	Sports Club	Cricket Rugby League
20	Squires Gate FC	Sports Club	Football
21	St George's Church of England High School	School	Football
22	St Mary's Catholic Academy	Academy	Football Rugby Union
23	Stanley Park	Council	Football
24	Unity Academy Blackpool	Academy	Football Rugby Union 3G AGP Hockey
25	Whiteholme Recreation Ground	Sports Clubs	Football
26	Kingscote Park	Council	Rugby League
27	Blackpool Wren Rovers FC	Sports Club	Football
29	Claremont Park	Council	Football
31	Moor Park Primary School	School	Football
32	St Cuthbert's Catholic Academy	Academy	Football
34	Stanley Primary School	School	Football
35	Armfield Academy	Academy	Football 3G
36	Hawes Side Academy	Academy	Football

Appendix 7: Glossary of Terms

Match equivalent sessions is an appropriate comparable unit for pitch usage. For football, rugby union and rugby league, pitches should relate to a typical week within the season and one match = one match equivalent session if it occurs every week or 0.5 match equivalent sessions if it occurs every other week (i.e. reflecting home and away fixtures). For cricket pitches it is appropriate to look at the number of match equivalent sessions over the course of a season and one match = one match equivalent session.

Displaced demand generally relates to play by teams or other users of playing pitches from within the study area (i.e. from residents of the study area) which takes place outside of the area. This may be due to issues with the provision of pitches and ancillary facilities in the study area, just reflective of how the sports are played (e.g. at a central venue for the wider area) or due to the most convenient site for the respective users just falling outside of the local authority/study area.

Unmet demand is demand that is known to exist but unable to be accommodated on current supply of pitches. This could be in the form of a team with access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa. This could also be due to the poor quality and therefore limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement. League secretaries may be aware of some unmet demand as they may have declined applications from teams wishing to enter their competitions due to a lack of pitch provision which in turn is hindering the growth of the league.

Latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. This could include feedback from a sports club who may feel that they could set up and run an additional team if they had access to better provision.

Future demand is an informed estimate made of the likely future demand for pitches in the study area. This is generally based on the most appropriate current and future population projections for the relevant age and gender groupings for each sport. Key trends, local objectives and targets and consultation also inform this figure.

Casual use or other use could take place on natural grass pitches or AGPs and include:

- Regular play from non-sports club sources (e.g. companies, schools, fitness classes)
- Infrequent informal/friendly matches
- Informal training sessions
- More casual forms of a particular sport organised by sports clubs or other parties
- Significant public use and informal play, particularly where pitches are located in parks/recreation grounds.

Carrying capacity is the amount of play a site can regularly accommodate (in the relevant comparable unit) for community use without adversely affecting its quality and use. This is typically outlined by the NGB.

The capacity for pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people’s enjoyment of playing football. In extreme circumstances it can result in the inability of the pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off peak times. Pitch quality is often influenced by weather conditions and how well it drains. In Blackpool, the Council does not maintain or remediate any natural turf sports pitches, with most the responsibility of either sports clubs or education providers.

As a guide, each NGB has set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its current quality (pitch capacity):

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

Overplay is when a pitch is used over the amount that the carrying capacity will allow, (i.e. more than the site can accommodate). Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected.

Spare capacity is the amount of additional play that a pitch could potentially accommodate in addition to current activity. There may be reasons why this potential to accommodate additional play should not automatically be regarded as actual spare capacity, for example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below its carrying capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of friendly matches and training activity. This needs to be investigated before the capacity is deemed actual spare capacity.

Shortfalls are expressed in match equivalent sessions rather than converted to pitches. A pitch is able to accommodate one match equivalent session at peak time; however, one match per team is typically recorded as 0.5 match sessions per week based on the principle of playing matches on a home and away basis. Therefore, a team only requires use of one pitch every fortnight rather than every week. As such, it is considered that two teams are generally able to share use of one pitch by programming home matches on alternate weeks as shown below:

1 pitch ÷ 2 weeks = 0.5 match sessions required per week; or

0.5 match sessions (home team) + 0.5 match sessions (away team) = one pitch

Where demand of one match session per week exists in this manner it directly equates to a need for access to one additional pitch. However, demand for 0.5 match sessions also equates to a requirement for one additional pitch, as although the pitch may lie unused when the team is playing away from home, the following week a whole pitch is required to accommodate that team when it plays a home fixture.

Disused sites that are not being used at all by any users and are not available for community hire either. Once these sites are disused for five or more years they will then be categorised as 'lapsed sites'.

Lapsed sites last known use was as a playing field more than five years ago. These sites fall outside of Sport England's statutory remit but still have to be assessed using the criteria in paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Sport England would nonetheless challenge a proposed loss of playing pitches/playing field which fails to meet such criteria. It should be emphasised that the lawful planning use of a lapsed site is still that of a playing field.