

# Hartlepool Borough

## Playing Pitch Strategy

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# 1. Introduction and Context

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## Introduction

- 1.1 Since the development of the 2004 PPS and the 2008 PPG17 study the popularity of different sports has changed, and the nature of pitch sports continues to evolve as new forms of each game are introduced to drive participation increases. The 2004 PPS generated investment into facilities in Hartlepool and also enhanced the role of schools in meeting community needs.
- 1.2 In addition to the changes that have taken place within the sporting context, following a period of decline up to 2001, the population has levelled and more recently has increased to circa 92,000 residents. With targets to provide sites for 5,400 new households up to the year 2027, playing fields are likely to increasingly become under pressure for alternative uses, and at the same time, the number of people in the Borough who might want to participate in sport is growing.
- 1.3 The changing landscape means that it is now necessary to update the PPS to ensure it remains relevant and reflective of sporting priorities in the Borough.
- 1.4 The provision of sport and recreational facilities from grass roots to elite venues is also central to the achievement of many wider local and regional objectives. In particular, the vision of the Hartlepool Partnership's Community Strategy is to ensure that Hartlepool is 'an ambitious, healthy, respectful, inclusive, thriving and outward looking community, in an attractive and safe environment, where everyone is able to realise their potential'. Effective strategic planning, delivery and response to change is therefore of paramount importance not only in providing a high standard of opportunities for participation, but also in achieving the wider lifestyle goals.
- 1.5 This Playing Pitch Strategy has therefore been prepared in response to these challenges to guide the delivery of playing fields and outdoor sports facilities and to inform decision making in relation to pitch provision. It sets out the key issues and priorities for facilities for football, cricket, rugby union, rugby league, hockey, tennis and bowls across Hartlepool and identifies specific actions, timescales and responsibilities for implementation and delivery.
- 1.6 This strategy document should be read in conjunction with the Needs and Evidence base, which was finalised in May 2012 and sets out in detail the data collated on supply and demand in the Borough. It has been developed using the Sport England recognised methodology 'Towards a Level Playing Field.'

## Key Drivers

- 1.7 This strategy is therefore required to respond to the changing sporting and demographic landscape in Hartlepool and has been developed to;
  - inform decision making on the need for new and enhanced pitch and outdoor sports provision both now, and as the population grows and the profile of the population changes;

- help to maximise the use of existing resources including school facilities to meet community need and to address projected deficiencies in provision in terms of both quality and quantity
- support the creation of appropriate policy within the Local Development Framework and facilitate decision making on the re-provision, protection and disposal of playing fields;
- ensure that outdoor sports facilities provide high quality opportunities to participate in sport across the Borough and maximise the role that they play in continuing the rise in levels of participation and physical activity;
- guide a strategic and innovative approach to the delivery of playing pitches linking with local, regional and National Governing Body priorities and in the context of the challenging financial environment; and
- provide a strategic context for any funding opportunities that arise.

### **Strategic Vision**

- 1.8 The strategy sets out how the Council and its delivery partners will work to create;

*'An accessible, high quality and sustainable network of sports pitches and other outdoor sports facilities, which provides local opportunities for participation at all levels of play from grassroots to elite'.*

### **Objectives**

- 1.9 To achieve this strategic vision for outdoor sports facilities in Hartlepool, the strategy seeks to make sure that the following objectives are met;
- Ensure that the quantity of pitches is sufficient to meet current and future need;
  - Ensure that the quality of pitches meets current and future need; and
  - Support initiatives to increase participation and promote sustainable club development.
- 1.10 As well as the achievement of the strategic vision of this strategy, the successful delivery of the key strategy objectives will also contribute to the delivery of many other national, regional and local strategic targets. Links between this Playing Pitch Strategy and other national, regional and local strategies and policies are summarised in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Contribution of this strategy to the achievement of wider aims and objectives

Objectives for the future delivery of Playing Pitches			
	Enhance the quality of playing pitches	Ensure the quantity of playing pitches is sufficient to meet local needs	Maximise access and functionality of playing pitches
<b>Strategic Documents</b>			
Sustainable Community Strategy	✓	✓	✓
Hartlepool Borough Local Development Framework	✓	✓	✓
Hartlepool Borough Sport and Physical Activity Strategy	✓	✓	✓
Hartlepool Borough Cultural Strategy	✓	✓	✓
Hartlepool Borough Council PPG17 Study	✓	✓	✓

### Strategic Direction

- 1.11 The end goal of this strategy is to deliver the overarching vision and achieve the specific aims and objectives set out on the previous page. Sections 2 – 7 summarise the context, adequacy of current provision, priorities and recommendations for each sport and the key actions required to meet this end goal (subject to available resources).
- 1.12 The recommendations and related actions are based on the key issues identified for each sport and are derived from the following principles:
- **Quality and specification of facilities is as important as the amount of provision** – the strategy seeks to ensure that Hartlepool Borough contains the right amount of facilities of the right quality and specification. We seek to provide appropriate facilities that recognise the needs of clubs at different levels of sport and that enhance the overall playing experience
  - **Pitch and outdoor sport provision across the Borough will be delivered in partnership.** The strategy seeks to bring together key partners in the delivery of playing fields including Hartlepool Borough Council, National Governing Bodies of Sport, Schools, Sports Associations and Sports Clubs and to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and effectively aligned to maximise the value of assets to the community and pitch sports users
  - **Sustainability of provision and of the clubs using these facilities is central to the success of playing fields in the Borough** – all recommendations seek to deliver facilities in a sustainable manner, supporting well established clubs, promoting longevity, encouraging increases in participation and sharing good practice.

- **We will regularly respond to change** – the action plan seeks to have impact in the short, medium and long term. The importance of monitoring and update is recognised and the preparation of the strategy represents the start of a partnership and not the end.

### **Methodology**

1.13 The priorities set out in this strategy were established through the preparation of a full evidence base including extensive consultation and analysis. This document presents a summary of findings and priorities only – full detail is provided within the evidence based assessment. The methodology adopted in the preparation of the strategy and evidence base is briefly summarised below.

### ***Evidence Base***

1.14 The evidence based assessment of need was produced in line with Towards a Level Playing Field, A Manual for Production of Playing Pitch Strategies (TaLPPF) (Sport England 2001).

1.15 The key phases of the approach included:

- a full audit of teams for football, cricket, rugby and hockey, tennis and bowls playing or wishing to play within Hartlepool Borough boundaries;
- identification of all sites containing formal playing fields and quality assessments of all community use sites in the Borough as well as a random sample of school sites;
- a full programme of consultation with local clubs, league secretaries, National Governing Bodies of Sport and internal and external stakeholders;
- application and interpretation of the Playing Pitch Methodology – an eight stage calculation process to identify the adequacy of pitch provision in terms of quality and quantity;
- identification of key issues for provision in the borough and scenario testing to further explore these issues and the impact that they have;
- preparation of a local standard for playing pitch provision.

### ***Strategy Development***

1.16 Following the preparation of the assessment of need, which identified the key issues for pitch provision in Hartlepool, this strategy has been developed to outline the key actions that will be required to address the issues identified and to clearly define the responsibilities and timeframes associated with these actions.

### **Context**

1.17 The character and make up of an area can have significant impact on the demand for playing pitches and should be taken into account when planning for the future. This section briefly summarises the context for the provision of facilities for football, cricket, rugby, hockey, tennis and bowls across Hartlepool and outlines the potential implications on the demand for these sports.

## *Demographics*

- 1.18 Demographics can impact upon the propensity of the population both to participate in sport and physical activity and on the types of activity they take part in. Projected changes to the population profile of Hartlepool Borough have therefore been taken into account when evaluating demand for facilities. Key issues raised include;
- the total population of Hartlepool Borough is likely to increase by 2% by 2017 – this means that there will be more people living in the borough who might want to use playing pitches. This rate is below national and regional averages.
  - despite this, the age groups with the highest population between 2009 – 2015 are the 45-49 and 50 – 54 age brackets. The changing age profile is significant in terms of demand for playing fields as the older population are less likely to participate in pitch sports; and
  - reflecting this, there are currently 40,800 residents aged between 10 and 44, the traditional ages for pitch sports. Despite the projected population increases, it is anticipated that only 39,700 residents will be aged between 10 and 44 by 2015.
  - while the amount of younger residents aged up to 9 is likely to increase (perhaps having implications for longer term demand), there will be a significant decline in the number of young people currently falling within the junior age groups. There is anticipated to be an increase in the number of adults between 25 and 49.
- 1.19 This means that although the overall population is projected to increase, the number of people within the age range that play pitch sports (10 - 44) is likely to decline, particularly in the shorter term. Longer term, there will be only a very small increase in the number of people in this age group, despite population growth. This suggests that current participation is reflective of peak time demand for playing pitches and that demand is unlikely to increase significantly as a direct result of population growth. These changes to the population profile are however positive for bowls, as there are likely to be more residents falling into the age ranges that have a high propensity to play bowls over the strategy period.

## *Participation Profile*

- 1.20 The propensity of the population to participate in different sports also impacts upon demand for facilities and it is therefore important that this account when setting a strategy for the delivery of playing fields. The Sport England Active People Survey provides an understanding of the current levels of participation and reveals that:
- participation in Hartlepool Borough has fluctuated over the last five years, although in general there has been an upward trend.
  - of the pitch sports included within this strategy, only football features within the top five sports played by residents of Hartlepool. Participation remains relatively static, although significant recent increases in the amount of mini soccer played has been recorded over the last ten years. This suggests that while many residents are interested in pitch sports, there may also be other opportunities to increase participation in the borough through the provision of facilities for alternative activities.
- 1.21 To provide an understanding of the type of sports that residents are most likely to participate in, Sport England have divided the population into 19 segments. This enables analysis of the type of residents living in an area and provides an understanding of the

sports that are likely to be most popular. For Hartlepool, the dominant market segments are:

- Elsie & Arnold - they are much less active than the average adult population, but their activity levels are consistent with other segments in this age range. They are likely to be doing less sport than 12 months ago, mainly due to health or injury. The top sports that Elsie & Arnold participate in are keep fit and gym with 10% of this group taking part, 7% take part in swimming, and 3% playing bowls.
- Kev has average levels of sports participation. He is a social rather than competitive organised participant. Kev participates in keep fit and gym. 12% of this segment takes part in football compared to 4% of all adults nationally. In addition, 11% of people in this segment take part in cycling, and 10% go swimming. Kev may also take part in athletics or running, golf, angling, badminton, archery or martial arts/combat sports.
- Brenda is generally less active than the average adult population. The top sports that Brenda participates in are keep fit/gym (15%), followed by swimming (13%) and cycling (4%). Other sports are athletics (including running), followed by badminton, horse riding, tennis, martial arts (including Tai Chi), football and golf. In all cases Brenda's participation levels are below the national average for all adults.
- Terry is generally less active than the general adult population. Golf, angling and archery are the only sports where a higher proportion of Terry's participate than the national average. In all other cases his participation in his top sports is below average. The top sports that Terry participates in are Keep fit/gym is the most popular sport with 8% of the segment doing this, followed by swimming (6%) and cycling (6%). Angling and golf are the next most popular sports, both being played by 4% of this segment.
- Philip is in his late forties and is the most active in his age group. The top sports that Philip participates in are cycling, keep fit/gym, swimming, football, golf and athletics (running). His participation in most of his top sports is above the national average, which is indicative of the priority he places on sport.

1.22 For sports considered in this document, this means that:

- only one of the dominant market segments – Kev – participates in football.
- the four other dominant market segments are either (1) not of the age profile for playing pitch sports – Elsie and Arnold (highest segment) or have below average levels of participation (Philip, Brenda and Terry).
- overall, a large element of the current and future population are not major pitch sport participants although Elsie and Arnold, the dominant population segment in the Borough, have a higher propensity than average to participate in bowls.



- Effective delivery of playing fields and outdoor sports facilities contributes to the achievement of wider national and local aims and objectives and will be instrumental in the delivery of the objectives set out in the Hartlepool Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.
- Participation in sport and physical activity is fluctuating although there is an upward trend, suggesting that demand may increase in coming years.
- Despite this, the profile of residents in the Borough means that there is a comparatively low propensity to participate in pitch sports, although demand for football is above average and the dominant market sector have a high propensity to participate in bowls.
- Although population growth is expected, the proportion of residents who will fall within the age groups most likely to participate in pitch sports is projected to decline in the short term and stabilise longer term, meaning that in reality peak time for participation in pitch sports in the Borough is now.

### Structure

1.23 The remainder of this strategy is set out as follows:

- Section 2 – Football
- Section 3 – Cricket
- Section 4 – Rugby
- Section 5 – Hockey
- Section 6 – Tennis
- Section 7 - Bowls
- Section 8 – Delivery and Implementation

## 2. Football

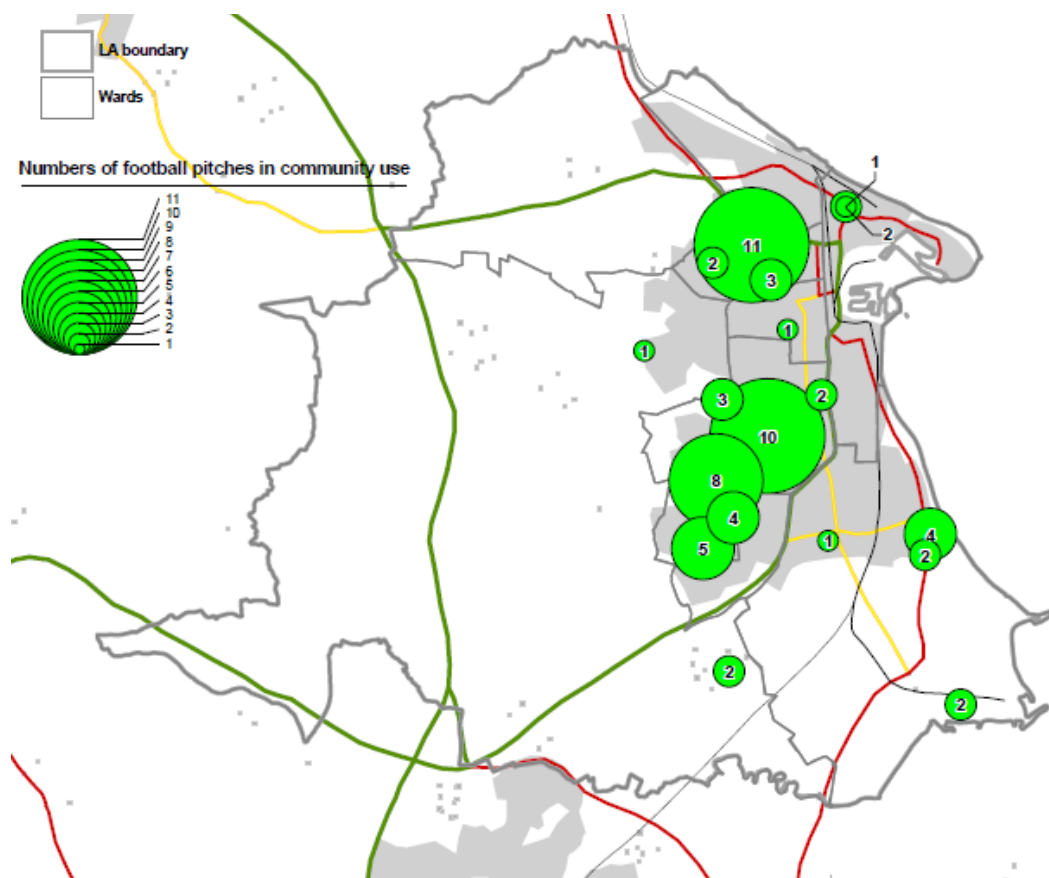
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### Context

### Supply

- 2.1 There are 105 individual grass football pitches across Hartlepool of which nearly 60% are secured for formal community use. Specifically these include:
  - 46 adult football pitches (of which 34 are available for secured community use and a further 8 have informal use);
  - 36 junior football pitches (of which 14 have formal community use and 9 offer informal community use); and
  - 23 mini soccer pitches (of which 12 are available for secured community use).
- 2.2 The amount of football pitches available has increased since the previous strategy as some sites have been reconfigured and additional pitches have been marked out on in response to changing demands. Generally facilities not offering secured community use are located at school sites, several of the school sites where use is not secured are important facilities for sport and are currently used by local clubs.
- 2.3 The distribution of all facilities accessible to the local community is illustrated on Map 2.1. Larger sites are represented by larger circles. It demonstrates that the adult, junior and mini pitches that are available for formal community use are situated at 18 sites of varying size. Four sites contain 5 or more football pitches (Rift House, Grayfields, Manor College of Technology and Brierton Sports Centre). Sites are evenly distributed across the Borough and larger sites are well dispersed. The Hartlepool United pitch (Victoria Park) is included as a non community use pitch only.
- 2.4 There are three full size Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) that complement the spread of grass football pitches. Two of these facilities (at English Martyrs RC School Sports Centre and St Hilds C of E School), are sand based pitches, meaning that while they are acceptable for football training / 5 a side matches, they have limited role in a competitive football environment. The sand based pitch at Dyke House School has recently been relaid and is now a 3g pitch and there is also a 3g (3/4 size) pitch at Grayfields. Supporting these facilities, there is a smaller sized 3g pitch at West View School. In addition to these pitches, there is an all weather compound pitch at Brierton Sports Centre. This facility is floodlit and is used by some football teams for training.
- 2.5 Proposals for a new sports dome at the Mayfair development are also underway and planning permission has been received. This development will include AGPs (likely small sided facilities), that will further enhance the stock of AGPs in the borough.

Map 2.1 – Scale and Distribution of community use Playing Fields across Hartlepool Borough



### *Demand*

- 2.6 The Sport England Active People survey reveals that participation in football is almost spatially uniform across the Borough, with between 5.1% - 10% of adults playing at least once a month. The one exception to this is in the South/Centre of the Borough where there is a lower rate of football participation - only 2% - 5% of the adult population play at least once a month. This corresponds with the location of residents falling in the Elsie and Arnold bracket, who have a lower propensity to participate in pitch sports. Participation in football is dominated by young adult males in the market segments of Jamie, Kev, Ben, Tim, and Philip.
- 2.7 Again when considering those residents that would like to play football, there is relative uniformity across Hartlepool Borough, with between 1.1% - 2% of the adult population wishing to participate. Residents in the same output area to the south/central part of the Borough have a lower propensity to participate in football (between 0% and 1% of the population would like to play). There is low latent demand for football in general across the borough, and potential demand is by those in the same young male market segment groups that currently play.
- 2.8 In terms of current participation, reflecting the amount of space dedicated to football pitches, football is the most popular sport in Hartlepool. In addition to informal football, which takes place recreationally in streets and in public parks and private gardens, there are 156 formal community teams playing in leagues at varying levels of the football pyramid, specifically:

- 71 adult male and 4 adult female football teams;
  - 51 junior male and 4 junior female football teams; and
  - 26 mini soccer teams.
- 2.9 This represents an overall increase on the number of teams since 2004, which can largely be attributed to a growth in mini soccer. While adult football has remained relatively static, following significant growth in youth football, there has been a more recent small decline in participation in junior football in terms of the number of teams run (this is partially caused by a fall in the number of children in this age group). The FA see the reverse of the drop off between junior and adult football as a key priority and are implementing initiatives which seek to address this trend. There has however been a similar decline across the Durham FA and this is not unique to Hartlepool.
- 2.10 Analysis of Team Generation Rates suggests that participation is broadly in line with levels that would be expected in the Borough based on the profile of the population. Despite declines in participation in junior football, Team Generation Rates have remained consistent as the number of boys in the junior football age group has declined.
- 2.11 It is notable however that while there are numerous large clubs, there are limited opportunities for progression through a club, with few clubs running both junior and senior teams. Junior and mini teams are primarily part of larger clubs, whilst the majority of adult teams are single teams.
- 2.12 Boroughwide, the peak day for football is Sunday morning, with nearly 50% of adult football and over 60% of junior football taking place at this time. This means that demand is particularly high at this time. Mini soccer is played on a Sunday afternoon.

### **Key Issues and Adequacy of Current Provision**

- 2.13 The adequacy of provision for football has been assessed through a detailed consultation programme and calculations and scenario testing in line with TaLPP (contained within a separate document). This assessment reveals the following:
- In quantitative terms, when including all pitches that are secured for community use, modelling reveals that there are small surpluses of adult pitches across Borough, with circa 16 pitches spare on a peak day. In contrast, there are shortfalls of junior pitches (-2.8 pitches) although there are enough mini pitches to meet demand (6.9);
  - While in the above scenario (when including all pitches that are formally secured for community use) there is enough provision on a peak day, the spread of demand means that there are relatively high amounts of play at other times of the week too, with almost 50% of adult football taking place on Saturdays, as well as some mini and junior football meaning that pitches are used throughout the weekend. Despite this, most sites have capacity to accommodate some additional play, be it at peak time or outside peak hours. The amount of junior pitches available is however more restricted and the availability of enough pitches of the right size was highlighted as a key issue by several junior football clubs. This, along with the identified shortfalls suggests that the current stock of facilities does not necessarily meet the balance of demand;
  - Adding to this, there is an imbalance in the levels of usage across the Borough. While some sites are heavily used, there are some sites which receive little or no use either

due to the lack of quality of pitch, location or lack of changing facilities. Even within sites, the imbalance of play is clear, with some pitches (particularly those closer to changing accommodation at large sites) receiving high levels of use and others being used much less frequently. There is limited rotation of pitches and as a result, some sustain much more use than others. This is particularly evident at Grayfields and Rift House. As well as the large sites, club bases receive high levels of use and the bases of several clubs are already at capacity. Sites that are particularly frequently used include Seaton Carew FC, King George V, Rossmere Way Sports Pitches and Dodds Field (Seaton Park).

- For many consultees, issues relating to the quality and specification of facilities are far more pressing than the amount of facilities available. 50% of clubs are happy with the current pitch stock and for almost all adult teams, quality of pitches and changing facilities is the main issue raised. While independent site visits reveal that the maintenance programmes are relatively effective, some sites are lacking in appropriate changing facilities (or enough facilities for the number of pitches), meaning that they do not meet with league regulations. There are also issues with wear and tear (generated by heavy use of some pitches) unofficial use and drainage. The quality of sites is perceived by users to vary across the Borough and this is also evident from site visits, although it is noted that this is impacted upon by overuse of some pitches. When excluding pitches that do not meet league specifications (for example in terms of the availability of changing facilities) from calculations, there are shortfalls of 9.8 junior pitches. The surplus of adult pitches reduces to just under 5 and there remain enough mini pitches. This clearly indicates that there are not enough pitches of the right specification in the Borough and therefore demonstrates the real issue with pitch provision in Hartlepool. It perhaps also reveals the reason behind the uneven use of pitches.
- Furthermore, some clubs have aspirations to improve the standard at which they play - It is essential that this is considered in the planning of pitches and provision of support if the longer term development of football in the area is not to be inhibited. The enclosed playing field at Grayfields (which is of higher quality than other facilities) currently enables several clubs to play in leagues requiring better facilities. Several clubs also have aspirations to manage and run their own facilities.
- While it is essential to ensure that provision is adequate to meet current demand, this strategy must also facilitate planning to meet future demand. Population projections suggest that despite overall increases in the number of people living within the borough, the trends towards an ageing population means that the number of people within the age groups that traditionally play football is likely to decrease in the shorter term and stabilise again longer term. As a consequence, the overall propensity of residents to participate in football is therefore likely to drop over the strategy period. While the borough will see population growth, the impact of this is negated to an extent by the change in the population profile. This is particularly true of those in the age groups that play adult and mini football and participation is therefore likely to remain constant. In contrast, it is likely that demand for junior football will increase, with the numbers in the age group that traditionally play growing. By 2027, shortfalls could increase to almost 7 pitches.
- This does not however take into account the aspirations of key partners to increase participation across the borough. It also assumes that participation is not inhibited by the quality or amount of existing facilities. If a 15% increase in participation was to occur (broadly representing 1% per annum up to 2027) then shortfalls of junior pitches would increase to almost 10 pitches, while surpluses of adult and mini pitches

would decrease to 14 pitches and 7 pitches respectively. This assumes that participation increases are constant across all forms of the game.

- While this participation increase may take place, it is perhaps more realistic to predict participation on the basis of the aspirations of existing clubs. If all teams were to achieve their stated aspirations, this could represent an increase of circa 26 teams in the next 3 - 5 years. Golden Flatts Youth FC, Seaton Carew FC, St Francis 2000 and Diabolos FC all highlight issues with capacity at their current sites and most are seeking to create additional teams
- FA conversion rates indicate that to bring participation in Hartlepool in line with that of similar authorities, up to 60 additional male youth teams and 22 mini teams would need to be created (from the current baseline position. If this was achieved;
  - The surplus adult pitches would remain (16.8)
  - There would be a shortfall of 21 junior pitches
  - There would be a slight shortfall of 0.8 mini pitches.

This serves to demonstrate the increases in participation that could take place and the potential impact on facility requirements.

- Adding to this, the recent review of football by the FA has seen the introduction of new forms of football designed to ease the transition between mini and junior football. This brings with it requirements for a new type of pitch to the Borough, with two different sized junior pitches and 2 different sized mini pitches to be phased in between 2012 and 2014. U7 and U8 will play in a 5 v 5 format, whilst 9 v 9 will be introduced at U11 and U12. Demand in Hartlepool is likely to broadly equate to 8 5 v 5 teams (1 – 2 pitches), 14 U9 / U10 teams (playing 7 a side), 18 9 v 9 teams (requiring 9 v 9 pitches) and 29 junior football teams (requiring youth pitches). The need to mark pitches out specific to the age group will place further pressures on small sided and junior pitches and will place extra demands on the existing pitch stock (although it will be possible to overmark pitches etc to maximise the use of facilities). While this represents the baseline number of pitches required, most teams that are impacted are based at junior clubs who have their own grounds, and more pitches are therefore likely to be required to meet these needs.
- Coupled with issues relating to the quality and quantity of provision, there are several clubs that are fragmented and spread across two or more venues and this is not beneficial to the creation of sustainable clubs.
- The existing stock of 3g pitches is considered to be poor in terms of both the amount of facilities provided and the quality of facilities. The FA believe that there is scope to provide another 3g pitch in the Borough. The Sport England Planning Model also supports the need for another 3g pitch but indicates that overall there are enough AGPs in the Borough, but that they are not of the right surfaces (two of the full sized pitches are sand based and they are not used to their maximum potential). It identifies the need for an additional 3g surface (replacing one of the sand based pitches).
- The cost of participating was highlighted as a key issue by many clubs and a lack of volunteers and coaches was also seen as detrimental to ongoing football

development. Analysis demonstrates that pitch pricing is comparable with other local areas, however there are inconsistencies within the overall pitch stock.

### Summary - Key issues to address

- Shortages of junior pitches (and these are likely to increase as participation continues to grow)
- Shortages of pitches that are of the right specification to meet current needs and expectations, with particular issues relating to ancillary facility provision. While demographic changes mean that population growth will have little impact and demand will remain stable, growth in participation would see shortfalls increase. Participation may be inhibited if improvements are not made to the facility stock.
- imbalance of use between sites, with some facilities at capacity and others hardly used
- dispersion of clubs across multiple sites which is not beneficial for sustainable club development
- Changes to the way football is played will place further pressures on football pitches and the stock of existing facilities.

### Key Priorities

2.14 The strategic priorities for addressing the above issues are set out below. The key priorities for each site are summarised in Section 8.

### Ensure that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

**F1: Protect all current playing fields to ensure the longevity of the pitch stock across the Borough.**

**F2: Review the designation of pitches across the Borough to address deficiencies in junior football and to accommodate the recent FA review of youth football.** Ensure that all teams are playing on pitches of the right size. In particular, there is scope to provide / improve junior pitches at Central Park and King George V Recreation Ground (linked with R3). This will involve consultation with junior football clubs and local leagues in order to understand how best to resolve these issues. Existing pressures on junior pitches mean that pitch allocations will need to be carefully considered (this links with other Recommendations).

**F3: To maximise the use of existing resources and to address deficiencies, particularly in junior football, formalise community agreements at school sites that are currently important to sport in the Borough, or have the potential to be.** Priority sites where it would be of benefit to secure community use agreements include;

- High Tunstall High School – large site with no existing community use of pitches
- St Hilds School – unsecured access
- English Martyrs School
- Hartlepool 6th Form College (has limited community use currently)



**F4: Linking with F3 above, support clubs to find home venues to ensure that they are not dispersed across multiple sites.** This may involve establishing links between schools and community clubs. Longer term, and dependent upon increases in participation, new venues are likely to be required to accommodate clubs and ensure that they are not dispersed across multiple sites.

**F5: Consider the replacement of one sand based surface with a 3g surface to provide extra training facilities for football clubs.** To maximise the use of the facility, floodlights would be required. Alternatively, a new facility could be provided, however it must be noted that sand based facilities are not currently used to their full potential. Options for further consideration include the provision of a 3g pitch at Brierton Sports Centre, the refurbishment of the existing sand based pitch at English Martyrs School and / or the creation of a new 3g pitch at West Hartlepool RUFC / Hartlepool 6<sup>th</sup> Form College.

### Ensure that facilities are of appropriate quality to meet current and future demand

**F6: Seek to ensure that all clubs have access to facilities of the appropriate specification by focusing on the improvement of ancillary facilities and pitch quality, prioritising;**

- The provision of changing accommodation at all sites where adult football is played, and a minimum of toilet provision at junior and mini football sites
- The retention of appropriate maintenance regimes, building upon site specific priorities recommended by the internal inspections of grounds maintenance procedures that were recently undertaken. This should include internal knowledge sharing and training, to ensure that all staff have an understanding of the appropriate maintenance procedures
- Addressing basic quality issues at key sites
- The provision of floodlights at training venues across the Borough
- Supporting clubs in the creation of facilities of higher specification where these are required for club progression.

**F7: Review the current booking process to ensure that play is even across the pitch stock (both across each site and at each pitch on the site) and to implement rotation of pitches to allow even rest and recovery during the season.**

**F8: Implement the recently reviewed consistent pricing structures at sites across the Borough to ensure that value for money is consistent across the pitch stock, and that prices continue to be reflective of pitch quality and the availability of changing accommodation.**

### Promote increased participation and sustainable club development

**F9: Establish clear routes of communication with pitch users ensuring that all decisions are taken with a full understanding of needs and aspirations.** Maximise channels of communication by continuing with the Football Action Group consisting of key clubs and league secretaries as well as other key partners including the FA and Hartlepool Borough Council.

**F10: Support clubs in their growth and sustainability by implementing a policy of asset transfer / management agreements where clubs are able to demonstrate long term development plans**



**and have achieved appropriate accreditations.** The impact of the above recommendations at a site specific level are discussed in Section 8, delivery and implementation.

## 3. Cricket

03

### Context

#### *Pitch supply*

3.1 There are six cricket pitches in Hartlepool Borough, specifically;

- Hartlepool Cricket Club – site leased and managed by the club. Includes changing facilities and a grass square and contains both grass and artificial wickets.
- Seaton Sports and Social Club – site leased and managed by multi-sport club. Includes changing facilities and a grass square and contains both grass and artificial wickets.
- Grayfields – managed by Hartlepool Borough Council and includes grass square and artificial wicket. Site contains pavilion and changing accommodation but this is not located directly adjacent to the cricket square.
- Hartlepool Power Station – managed by club but facilities are rented from the Power Station. Includes a grass square but no artificial wicket or nets.
- King George V Recreation Ground – managed by Hartlepool BC. Includes an artificial wicket but no grass wicket.
- High Tunstall College of Science – school site with private use only. Includes artificial wicket only and no grass wicket.

3.2 Notably, High Tunstall College of Science is the only school to provide a cricket wicket and the only facility not to be accessible to the public.

#### *Demand*

3.3 Analysis from the Active People survey suggests that demand for cricket is consistent across the borough. Participants are largely made up from the same male groups as football but there is a split between those who play cricket for casual and social reasons (Philip, Kev and Terry) and those who prefer to play more competitively (Jamie, Tim and Ben).

3.4 Cricket in Hartlepool has remained static between 2004 and 2012. There are 18 teams in total and participation is largely focused on two large clubs, specifically Hartlepool Cricket Club (7 teams) and Seaton Carew Cricket Club (7 teams). Paragonians CC and Seal Sands CC have one team each, while Power Station CC has two teams.

3.5 While the overall amount of teams has remained constant, the period between 2004 and 2012 has seen a decline in the number of teams playing informal cricket while the number of teams run by the two larger clubs has grown.

3.6 Team Generation Rates indicate that participation is below national averages, suggesting that there may be opportunities to increase the number of participants in cricket. The Active People survey and market segmentation however suggest that there is relatively

limited latent demand (partially due to the make up of the population and their propensity to participate in cricket).

- 3.7 Current participation in cricket is spread across the week, with 33% taking place on a Saturday afternoon, 22% on Sunday morning and 28% on Sunday afternoon (remainder midweek). This means that demand at peak time is comparatively low.

### **Adequacy of Provision**

- 3.8 The adequacy of facilities for cricket has been assessed through a detailed consultation programme and calculations in line with TaLPPF. This assessment reveals the following:

- Provision is above the amount required to meet demand at peak times. Club bases are well used, but there is spare capacity at both Hartlepool Power Station and Grayfields. In addition, the cricket pitch at King George Recreation Ground currently receives very little use.
- While population growth alone is likely to have limited impact on the demand for cricket pitches, Seaton Carew CC, Hartlepool Power Station CC and Paragonians CC all indicated that they wish to increase the number of teams that they are running (in total a girls team, two senior teams and a junior team). Such increases would place greater pressures on cricket pitches but the existing stock would be just sufficient to meet this need.
- Site by site analysis reveals that like at peak time, there is some spare capacity to meet demand during the week and in weekend time slots. While both Hartlepool CC and Seaton Carew CC run several junior teams, there is no use of other facilities midweek, other than training. While there are enough pitches to meet demand at peak time, the spread of play across the week means that wickets at Hartlepool CC are used particularly extensively, although there is some capacity at Seaton Carew CC and at the other facilities to accommodate further use. There is relatively little spare capacity at either Seaton Carew CC or Hartlepool CC at peak times.
- The quality of facilities at the two key clubs is high, with the quality of grounds rated amongst the best in the North East, although there are wider issues with the pavilion and changing facilities, particularly at Hartlepool CC. In contrast, the quality of other facilities, in particular Grayfields, is lower. There are no practice facilities at either this site (the existing artificial wicket is ripped and unusable) or the Power Station Cricket Club and the site also lacks other facilities. There are concerns relating to the quality of both the pitches and changing accommodation (quality concerns at the Power Station, concerns over changing location at Grayfields).
- While the quantity of facilities is currently sufficient and is likely to be able to withstand anticipated increases in club participation in the short term, there are significant initiatives in place to grow the amount of cricket played in schools, including inter school tournaments and the creation of a new cricket academy. In addition, the ECB is now seeking to drive participation in informal cricket in the Borough, which if successful, may have a longer term impact upon the demand for public facilities as such activity is likely to focus upon a public site.

## Key issues to address – Cricket

- The amount of provision is sufficient to meet current and future demand.
- There are some quality improvements required at club bases to ensure the sustainability of cricket at these sites.
- The increase of more informal cricket in the borough is a key priority of the ECB and this might impact upon demand for facilities.

### Key Priorities

3.9 The strategic priorities for addressing the above issues are set out below.

#### Ensure that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

**C1 Retain the facilities on existing club sites and the public facility at Grayfields.**

**C2 Consider the removal of the artificial wicket at King George V Recreation Ground, which is of poor quality and no longer used.**

#### Ensure that the quality of facilities is sufficient to meet current and future demand

**C3: Work with clubs to maintain and improve the quality of cricket pitches across the Borough. Provide specialist support and training for clubs to improve maintenance and support clubs in pitch improvements.** In particular focus upon;

- Improving the pavilion and changing facilities for Hartlepool CC
- In partnership with Paragonians CC, improve the quality of facilities for cricket at Grayfields, specifically;
  - Improve the quality of the grass wicket and outfield
  - Improve the quality of the artificial wicket
  - Review the maintenance programme for the cricket square.

Longer term, in partnership with the ECB, Grayfields should be established as a base for informal cricket as well as the club base for Paragonians CC. If successful in attracting outside investment in future partnership the potential to provide enhanced pavilion facilities located in closer proximity to the cricket and bowls pitches could be investigated.

**C4: Explore a partnership with EDF Energy and Hartlepool Power Station CC at the Power Station to improve facilities and build a sustainable club.**

#### Promote increases in participation and the creation of sustainable clubs

**C5: Seek to increase the amount of cricket played in the Borough through the continuation of current initiatives to grow participation.** These should include;

- The introduction of more informal forms of the game (using Grayfields as a base)

- Ongoing support of cricket clubs and school club links
- Inter school cricket
- Links with Hartlepool College of Further Education, including the creation of a cricket academy

**C6: Reinvigorate the Cricket Development Group to ensure that dialogue between all key partners in cricket across the borough is maintained.**

## 4. Rugby Union and Rugby League

04

### Context

#### Pitch supply

- 4.1 There are 18 rugby union pitches within Hartlepool Borough. Of these:
- Five are located at school sites that have limited or no community use. Although English Martyrs School permit community use currently, there is no secured access to the site.
  - Two are owned and managed by Hartlepool Borough Council – King George V Playing Fields and Central Park
  - The remainder (ten full size pitches and one midi pitch) are situated at the six club sites in the Borough. West Hartlepool RUFC is the largest facility, with three senior pitches and a midi pitch. Three of the club based facilities have just one rugby pitch.
- 4.2 All club based facilities also include changing rooms and club houses. Facilities are much more limited at school sites and Council facilities, although changing facilities are available at King George V.

#### *Rugby League*

- 4.3 There are no dedicated rugby league facilities – the clubs share existing rugby union pitches at their club bases.

### Demand

#### *Rugby Union*

- 4.4 Analysis from the Active People survey demonstrates that across most of Hartlepool, between 1% -2% of adults are currently participating in rugby union. In an area which runs through the centre of the Borough from north to south, participation in rugby union is lower. This area is characterised by clusters of older residents who have a lower propensity to participate in pitch sports. Participants are similar to those who also play football and cricket, specifically Jamie, Ben and Tim. Boroughwide, there is limited latent demand for rugby.
- 4.5 Reflecting this, rugby is a popular sport in Hartlepool and there are six rugby clubs based in the Borough, although this represents a decline on the number of clubs since 2004.
- 4.6 Within these six clubs, there are 41 teams in total, of which 15 are senior teams and 9 are midi teams, with the remainder being juniors and colts. Although the number of clubs has declined, the number of teams has remained static, with just one more team now than in 2004. There are now also rugby academies running at both Hartlepool 6th Form College and Hartlepool College of FE in conjunction with the clubs, which seek to further develop the standard of rugby and to increase participation in the longer term.

- 4.7 While some clubs have thrived and increased the numbers of teams that they are running, others are struggling. The Hartlepool TDSOB are a particular example of this, as they are running no teams at all this year. Adding to this, Hartlepool Athletic RFC folded last season due to insufficient players to run a team and ongoing issues with declining membership. Several of the clubs operate both junior and mini teams as well as adult teams, meaning that there are opportunities for progression through the age groups.
- 4.8 In general, senior rugby takes place on a Saturday afternoon and junior and midi rugby takes place on a Sunday morning. Participation is above average for both male junior and senior rugby, although the amount of midi rugby played is marginally below average. Participation by women and girls is comparably low, suggesting that there may be some latent demand in this form of the game. The RFU is seeking to increase adult participation as well to improve the conversion from junior to adult play and an increase of one team per club is targeted.

### ***Rugby League***

- 4.9 Hartlepool RFL are the only existing team within Hartlepool Borough playing rugby league. The team plays rugby union during the winter months and then participates in rugby league in the summer. An additional team from Hartlepool Rovers has expressed an interest in playing this season. Due to the scheduling of the league, the team is likely to have to play friendlies this season and then participate in competitive fixtures during 2013. It is anticipated that both teams will use the rugby union pitches at their existing club bases for rugby league fixtures.

### **Adequacy of Provision**

- 4.10 Adequacy of the current supply of pitches to meet demand has been measured through consultations and calculations in line with TaLPF. Evidence collated reveals that:
- The static levels of participation recorded disguise issues with regards sustainability at some clubs. While some large clubs are thriving and are running large numbers of teams, others are fighting declining memberships and are struggling to field teams and needing to diversify in order to remain sustainable. One club is currently renting out their facilities to a football club.
  - Overall in the Borough there are enough rugby pitches to meet current demand with a surplus of 9 pitches at peak time. Most rugby clubs however train on the grass pitches at their club bases well as using them for their competitive fixtures. School use, use by the rugby academies and recreational use of pitches all add to general wear and tear. When factoring this use in, it is clear that pitches are used in some cases above optimum levels.
  - While consideration of the overall adequacy of provision is useful, rugby is a club based sport and clubs prefer to accommodate all play at their club bases as far as possible to maximise club development and sustainability. When focusing specifically on activity at the club bases it is clear that some of the thriving clubs are nearing capacity at their existing sites. Hartlepool Rovers in particular are seeking a new venue in order to ensure that they can continue to accommodate demand and Seaton Carew RFC are also nearing capacity. The focus upon the club base however means that there is a more limited role for the public rugby pitches and these act largely as overspill grounds for matches and training.

- For many of the clubs, the quality of facilities is a greater issue than the amount of provision. There are some quality issues identified on existing club sites with regards the adequacy of the club house at West Hartlepool RFC, Seaton Carew RFC and Hartlepool Rovers RFC. Some clubs also highlight the need for drainage improvements and other minor quality improvements at their sites.
- There are significant efforts to increase participation in rugby union underway including the creation of a rugby action group, interschool coaching competitions and rugby festivals. Tag rugby is also being introduced as a less formal form of the sport in an attempt to attract residents who would perhaps not otherwise participate. Several clubs have aspirations to continue to grow and if these are achieved, there will be greater pressures on the existing stock of facilities. Like other pitch sports, population projections however suggest that there are declining numbers of people within the age brackets that typically participate in pitch sports.
- Rugby league is in its infancy in the borough, but participation is growing rapidly in the North East and the sport has been introduced to schools in Hartlepool. There are no current issues in relation to facilities; however the use of rugby union facilities for rugby league places further pressures on pitches, some of which already sustain extensive use.

#### Key issues to address – Rugby Union and Rugby League

- Pressures on the capacity at larger club sites
- The role of public facilities in providing for rugby in the Borough
- The need to improve the quality of facilities
- The sustainability of rugby clubs
- Potential future demand for rugby league.

#### Key Priorities

4.11 The key priorities for rugby are set out below.

#### Ensure that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

**R1: Ensure that all rugby union clubs have access to sufficient pitches and ancillary facilities to meet current and projected requirements. Hartlepool Rovers are currently seeking additional space to accommodate their teams and this search should be supported. Consideration should be given to;**

- A partnership between English Martyrs School or High Tunstall School (develop links with Hartlepool Rovers RFC)
- The potential for Hartlepool Rovers RUFC to acquire the patch of land opposite the existing club base for transformation into additional rugby pitches.

**R2: Ensure that all clubs have access to appropriate training facilities. This should include a minimum of one floodlit pitch for training at each club site. This may include:**



- Consideration to the provision of a new 3g pitch that can be used for training. There are several potential locations for such a facility that should be considered further. These include;
  - Brierton Sports Centre – a Council venue which is already a popular venue for football. The creation of such a facility would maximise the use of the site but any surface provided would also need to be suitable for football use
  - West Hartlepool RUFC, shared with the 6<sup>th</sup> Form College, where it could be used to accommodate the rugby academy as well as training requirements of the club. The provision of a facility in this location would mean that it could also be used to meet the footballing needs of the 6<sup>th</sup> Form College. Both the West Hartlepool RUFC and the College have aspirations for this facility and there is evidence to suggest that this would be of benefit from a club based perspective (although theoretical modelling does not support the need for an additional pitch). If provided at this site, the facility should also be considered for use by Hartlepool Rovers RFC who are at capacity (assuming that St Hilds School is retained as sand)
  - Consideration of the potential to convert the existing sand based pitch at English Martyrs School to a 3g pitch (on the assumption that St Hilds School is retained as sand based).
- Working with individual clubs to identify issues and opportunities at the club base.

**R3: Following the establishment of additional pitches by Hartlepool Rovers RFC, reallocate the existing pitches at Central Park / King George V Recreation Ground to junior football.**

**Ensure that facilities are of sufficient quality to meet current and future demand**

**R4: Support clubs in the improvement of quality of existing club facilities. This may include:**

- Improvement to changing facilities and drainage on main pitch at West Hartlepool RUFC
- Improvement to drainage and changing facilities at Hartlepool Rovers RFC
- Improvement to drainage and pitch surface at Seaton Carew RFC

**Promote increases in participation and the creation of sustainable clubs**

**R5: Support increases in participation in rugby through the existing club structure, academy structure and improvement of links with potential participants.** This may involve the introduction of new forms of the game including Tag Rugby.

**R6: Work specifically with clubs currently suffering from issues of sustainability to increase participation and to secure the future of the clubs.** This may involve the merge of clubs / club bases and / or channelling new participants into these clubs through recommendations set out in R5 above. Priority should be given to West Hartlepool TDSOB and Hartlepool BBOB, both of whom have expressed an interest in increasing participation against the backdrop of falling membership.

**R7: in order to promote knowledge sharing across the Borough, ensure that the reinvigorated rugby action group continues.**

## 5. Hockey

### Context

#### *Pitch supply*

- 05
- 5.1 Representing a substantial change from the 2004 Playing Pitch Strategy, hockey is almost exclusively played on Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) and grass pitches are largely obsolete for competitive forms of the game. Guidance on AGPs (Sport England 2010) indicates that the following surfaces are suitable for hockey:
- Water Based (suitable for high level hockey)
  - Sand Filled (preferred surface for hockey)
  - Sand Dressed (acceptable surface for hockey)
  - Short Pile 3g (acceptable surface for hockey).
- 5.2 There are five AGPs across Hartlepool Borough, of which three are full sized. Two of the full sized AGPs are sand based, meaning that they are suitable for hockey. At the time of the 2004 strategy, the AGP at Dyke House School was used by the hockey club; however this has since been converted to a 3g surface and is no longer suitable for hockey. The pitch at Grayfields Recreation Ground is also a 3g surface and is  $\frac{3}{4}$  sized.
- 5.3 The pitch at West View School is a small sized 3g pitch and consequently is also unsuitable for hockey.

#### *Demand*

- 5.4 The Active People survey reveals that participation in hockey is uniform across the Borough, with between 0.1 and 1% of the population playing hockey. Hockey has a much more balanced and even participation profile across both sexes and a wider age range of participants than other pitch sports. Whilst participation is in low numbers, the four market segments in the 16 – 29 age range and across both sexes of Ben, Jamie, Chloe and Leanne have a high overall profile of participation in hockey. Like the amount of actual participants, the amount of people who would like to play hockey is even across the borough but overall, there is relatively low latent demand although there are opportunities to increase current participation.
- 5.5 Hartlepool Caledonians Hockey Club is the only club within the Borough Council boundary. The club has been established since 1896 and now operates 2 male teams, 2 female teams (one of which plays indoor) and a mixed youth team. This membership represents an increase from the 2004 strategy, when there were only 34 playing members following the merge of the male and women's sections which took place in 2001.
- 5.6 During the winter months, the club uses English Martyrs School as the home pitch for both training and matches. They move to St Hilds School in April as the facility is perceived to be

of higher quality. This site is not usable during the winter months as there are no floodlights. 30% of club members live within a mile of the home ground, while an additional 48% live within 1 and 5 miles.

- 5.7 Participation in hockey within schools in Hartlepool Borough is relatively low, with only English Martyrs RC School, Dyke House College of Sports and Technology and St Hilds Church of England Schools playing. Hartlepool Caledonians Hockey Club are keen to build links with St Hilds School and to develop hockey in the Borough through these links.

### **Adequacy of Existing Provision**

- 5.8 Analysis of the adequacy of the current supply to meet demand, drawing upon consultation, as well as calculations and scenario testing undertaken in line with TaLPP reveals the following:

- At peak time, there are enough sand based pitches to accommodate the Hartlepool Caledonians Hockey Club and in reality, the club could be accommodated at one site. For training however, there are issues with regards to access to appropriate facilities, particularly as only one site has floodlights, and there are competing requirements from football clubs for use of this facility.
- The lack of floodlights emerges as the key issue relating to the quality of hockey pitches in the Borough. The quality of both facilities is considered to be acceptable, but the lack of floodlights restricts the usage that can be made of the facility at St Hilds, an issue which is also raised in the theoretical modelling run by Sport England (Facility Planning Model).
- Cost is identified as a key barrier to participation by the club and they are actively seeking ways to reduce costs and ensure that the sport is accessible to more users.
- There are high aspirations for the growth of hockey in the Borough with the club and other key partners seeking to reduce latent demand and increase participation, creating three additional teams over the next three years. There is currently limited hockey played in schools. To reverse this, the club are keen to build a relationship with St Hilds School and to locate the club at the school site, providing strong school club links or alternatively, to link with a club from another sport and to build relationships in this way. If activity at the club base was to expand, one sand based pitch would remain sufficient to meet needs.
- Despite aspirations for growth of the club, there have been recent issues with a decline in adult membership. Both England Hockey and the club are keen to halt this decline, potentially through the implementation of a Back to Hockey Programme, as well as through the introduction of Rush Hockey, a small sided form of the game that can be played on one of several different facilities.

### **Key issues to address – Hockey**

- Although the stock of sand based facilities is sufficient, only one pitch is floodlit, meaning that use of the site as a club base is restricted
- Although the club has aspirations to increase participation, membership is declining
- England Hockey is seeking to reverse participation trends through the implementation of

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new forms of the game which require more flexible facilities.

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### Key Priorities

5.9 The key priorities for the future delivery of hockey across the Borough are set out below.

#### Ensure that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

**H1: Ensure that at least one sand based surface pitch remains in the borough for the benefit of the hockey club.** Assuming the delivery of recommendation H3, the pitch at St Hilds School should as a minimum remain sand based.

**H2: When new 3g AGPs are built, or surfaces are refurbished, work with providers to transfer users of existing sand based facilities to the new 3g pitches in order to prioritise access for the hockey club at sites that are suitable for their needs.**

#### Ensure that facilities are of sufficient quality to meet current and future demand

**H3: Support a new application for the installation of floodlights on St Hilds School AGP to maximise the value of the facility to the Hartlepool Caledonians and to enable the creation of a formal link between the club and the school at this site.**

#### Promote increases in participation and the creation of sustainable clubs

**H4: support the introduction of new forms of hockey into Hartlepool through the provision of appropriate facilities for the new form of the game.** In particular, promote the implementation of Rush Hockey across the borough and ensure appropriate flexible spaces are available to accommodate this form of the game where demand is evident.

**H5: Continue with the reinvigoration of the hockey action group to ensure sharing of best practice and ongoing partnerships between those involved in hockey in the borough.**

## 6. Tennis

06

### Context

#### Supply

6.1 45 courts are available across Hartlepool Borough. 40% of these courts are located at school sites and 27% are in club ownership. With the exception of the court managed by Greatham Sports Association, the remainder of the sites are owned and managed by Hartlepool Borough Council. Specifically, the tennis courts available in the borough are as follows;

- Brierton Sports Centre 6 courts available free of charge
- English Martyrs RC School and Sixth Form College 6 courts, limited access
- Seaton Park 4 courts available free of charge
- Hartlepool Tennis Club 5 courts that are club based but some pay and play access available
- Eldon Grove Tennis and Bowls Club 7 courts that are club based but some pay and play access available
- High Tunstall College of Science 4 courts, with no access
- Dyke House Sports and Technology College 4 courts with limited / no access
- Town Moor 4 courts available free of charge
- Greatham Sports Association 1 court with pay and play access
- Manor College of Technology 4 courts with limited access

6.2 Noticeably, only the courts at Brierton are floodlit and all surfaces are tarmac, meaning that there is little variation in opportunities provided.

6.3 There are also several disused tennis courts at Grayfields.

### Demand

6.4 According to Active People, participation in tennis is at a higher level than the pitch sports of rugby union, hockey and cricket. In the western half of the Borough, 2.1% - 5% of the adult population play tennis at least once a month. In contrast, in the eastern half of the authority, participation in tennis is lower, with only 1.1% – 2% adults playing at least once in the past month.

6.5 Around 14 market segments out of 19 have a tennis participation profile. This indicates that tennis is played across both sexes and that the age of participants is much more widespread than for other sports.

- 6.6 Active People surveys and analysis of market segmentation data reveal relatively high levels of latent demand for tennis with more people having the propensity to participate than actually play at the moment. This suggests that there are particular opportunities to increase the number of tennis players in the borough.
- 6.7 There are currently two formal tennis clubs in Hartlepool Borough, specifically;
- **Eldon Grove Tennis Club** - the largest tennis club in the Borough with circa 200 members and of these, just over 120 are junior members. The club is running 3 adult male teams, 2 adult female teams, 2 mixed teams and a veterans team.
  - **Hartlepool Tennis Club** run three teams – a male team, a female team and a mixed team. The club **has** 56 members of which 46 are adult members. According to data held by the LTA, there has been a decline in membership over the past few seasons.
- 6.8 Eldon Grove Tennis club in particular have strong links with primary schools, with the coach travelling into schools to undertake taster sessions. English Martyrs RC High School, High Tunstall College of Science and Technology and Dyke House Sports and Technology College all participate competitively in tennis. Tennis has also been delivered through the School Sports Partnership and is a key priority for ongoing development.
- 6.9 In addition to more formal participation in tennis, public tennis facilities are accessible to the general public free of charge and there is relatively little understanding of the level of use of these facilities. There are however opportunities for informal participation in the sport across the borough.

#### **Key Issues and Adequacy of existing provision**

- 6.10 The key issues arising from analysis and assessment of facilities for tennis in the Borough are as follows;
- In quantitative terms, provision in the central areas of the Borough is much higher than in other areas. While the LTA now predominantly measures the adequacy of facilities in an area using a series of targets around accessibility, previous standards have suggested a target of providing one court per 45 participants as being sufficient. This suggests that current provision is more than sufficient to meet current demand – with 45 courts and 1202 participants, there are only 25 players per court if all courts were open to the community. When discounting facilities that are not available, provision becomes more closely matched with estimated demand. When projecting forwards, if all existing latent demand (according to Active People surveys) was realised, provision would fall below 1 court per 45 players. It would therefore be important to ensure that all facilities were open to the public. In addition to increases in the proportion of population participating in tennis, changes to the population profile may also impact on demand. It can be concluded however that while population growth is likely to occur, the impact of the ageing population suggests that demand will be broadly equivalent to now. Supporting these observations, the Hartlepool BC PPG17 study sets a standard of 0.02ha per 1000 population of tennis courts. Provision per 1000 population in 2012 remains above this standard.
  - Reflecting conclusions from the analysis of quantity standards, there is no evidence that the existing network of club and parks courts, with the backup of courts at school sites, is insufficient to meet current demand. Both clubs have spare capacity and are looking to grow both the adult and junior memberships and are able to do

so within the existing infrastructure in terms of the number of courts provided. While Eldon Grove has an above average membership, the amount of residents participating in Hartlepool is below average. Adding to this, there is thought to be scope to increase the usage of Council facilities and there is limited if any use of school tennis courts outside of curricular hours. The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) in particular reference opportunities to work towards the achievement of their Beacon Status programme at a Council facility. Brierton Sports Centre represents a particular opportunity to do this, especially as the site already contains floodlights.

- There is however clear latent demand, supported by both the Active People survey and suggestions from providers that tennis courts could be better used. In terms of access to facilities, all residents are within a 10 minute drive of a pay and play tennis court but not all residents have access to a club marked facility within a ten minute drivetime of their home. If latent demand was realised, demand would be closely balanced with, and perhaps exceed, supply. In this event, access to school facilities would become essential. The tennis action group is working to increase participation in the Borough and higher levels of take up of the sport may therefore become a reality.
- While the overall quantity of facilities is sufficient, there are some quality issues that need to be addressed in terms of both public and private facilities, specifically;
  - resurfacing at several sites
  - provision of floodlights at club sites and new changing facilities at Eldon Grove Tennis Club.

### Key Priorities

6.11 The key priorities for the future delivery of tennis across the borough are set out below.

#### Ensure that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

**T1: Protect all existing facilities in the short term**

**T2: Negotiate access to school facilities as demand grows, through the creation of links with existing clubs and schools and the development of satellite tennis clubs.** School sites should be used to accommodate both pay and play and more club based coaching and activity.

**T3: Work with the LTA to develop a Council venue as a key community tennis venue under the Beacon sites programme.** Brierton Sports Centre represents a particular opportunity to develop such a site. It is located at the other side of the town to the existing tennis clubs, and in close proximity to areas where residents have a higher propensity to participate. It also already has floodlights. This links to Recommendation T6.

#### Ensure that facilities are of sufficient quality to meet current and future demand

**T4: Support clubs in the improvement of club bases, specifically;**

- Eldon Grove Tennis Club – improvements to changing accommodation and provision of floodlights

- Hartlepool Tennis Club – resurfacing of tennis courts

**T5: Continue to maintain Council tennis facilities and ensure that the quality of facilities is sufficient to attract participants.** This may include improvements to the surface quality at Brierton Sports Centre, Seaton Park and Town Moor.

#### Promote increases in participation and the creation of sustainable clubs

**T6: Review opportunities to maximise the use of tennis courts through effective programming and coaching opportunities.**

**T7: Support increase in tennis participation through knowledge sharing and partnership working by maintaining commitment to the Tennis Action Group.** This group should also provide support for existing clubs to help them grow and sustain their membership base.



## 7. Bowls

### Context

- 7.1 The outdoor bowls venues across Hartlepool Borough are set out in Table 7.1. There is also an indoor bowls centre located in the town centre which has an eight rink bowling green and a bar, meeting room and conferencing area.

**Table 7.1 – Bowling greens in Hartlepool Borough**

Facility	Number of Greens	Ward	Ownership
South Durham	1	Burn Valley	Club
Lower Burn Valley / Blakelock Gardens	1	Burn Valley	Hartlepool Borough Council
Brinkburn	2	Burn Valley	Hartlepool Borough Council
Grayfields	2	Jesmond	Hartlepool Borough Council
Ward Jackson Park	1	Victoria	Hartlepool Borough Council
Eldon Grove	1	Burn Valley	Bowls and Tennis Club
Owton Lodge	1	Seaton	Club
Seaton Park	1	Seaton	Hartlepool Borough Council
Town Moor	1	Headland and Harbour	Hartlepool Borough Council
Friar Terrace	1	Headland and Harbour	Hartlepool Borough Council

- 7.2 All sites have a pavilion, although these are in varying condition.

### Demand

- 7.3 Analysis of Active Places data reveals that there are two different rates of estimated bowls participation in Hartlepool. Along the western and some of the north eastern side of the borough less than 1% of the population participate in bowls once a month while along the eastern and southern sides of the authority participation is higher, with between 1% -2% of the adult population playing bowls. This split is consistent with the location of residents in the borough, which demonstrates that the southern half of the authority is populated by older residents (and in particular the Elsie and Arnold market segment). Participation in bowls in Hartlepool is higher by those in the Elsie and Arnold market categorisation than any other but participation is the second lowest of all sports considered in this strategy. There is relatively limited latent demand for bowls.

7.4 In total, there are sixty six teams (based at 29 clubs) playing bowls in Hartlepool in the following leagues;

- Veterans Leagues
- Male Leagues (Saturday and Midweek)
- Female Leagues
- Disabled Association.

7.5 Hartlepool and District Bowls Association represents clubs playing within the Hartlepool and District Area and controls inter club competitive fixtures. In addition, the Association also manages the leases for Council bowling greens and provides a channel of communication between the clubs and the Grounds maintenance team.

### **Key Issues and Adequacy of Provision**

7.6 The key issues arising from analysis and assessment of facilities for bowls in the Borough are as follows;

- In quantitative terms, there are no supply and demand models for bowls greens and it is therefore not appropriate to assess demand by applying the methodology used by other sports. For indicative purposes however it is possible to compare provision with the historic Sports Council standard. This standard advocates 10 greens per 60,000 people (*Planning for Sport 1970*) and therefore gives a requirement of circa 15 (15.3) greens across Hartlepool Borough based on a population of 92,000. The current provision of 12 greens means that provision falls below this standard. The Hartlepool Indoor Bowls Centre does however offer further opportunities and can be considered to negate some of this shortfall. Similarly, the 2008 PPG17 sets a standard of 0.03ha of bowling greens per 1000 population. The quantity of facilities also falls below this standard (by 2 greens).
- Despite quantity standards suggesting that there is a requirement for additional greens, analysis of the capacity of existing facilities suggests that while greens are heavily used, all but one club has capacity for additional members, and there is scope to accommodate additional teams on some current greens (assuming that each green can accommodate 4 midweek teams and 2 Saturday teams). This requires flexible use of the facilities through careful programming of fixtures but ensures that maximum value is gained from the greens.
- Adding to this, while current participation in bowls is high, there is no evidence of increasing membership in clubs in recent years (although 45% of clubs have been trying to increase their membership) and there is limited latent demand and very few junior members. In contrast to pitch sports however, the ageing population of the borough may see bowls become more popular in future years, as market segmentation demonstrates that it is the older age groups who have a higher propensity to participate.
- The high levels of use that the bowling greens are required to sustain however means that the quality of facilities is important. The majority of clubs and the Hartlepool Bowls Association currently highlight quality issues as the main area for improvement – only 22% of clubs are happy with the stock of facilities and almost all reference quality. The maintenance of greens, playing surface and changing facilities / toilets are identified as key priorities. Notably, the bowling greens that currently have capacity are largely those where the quality of provision is poorer.

## Key Priorities

7.7 The key strategic priorities for bowls are therefore set out below:

### Ensure that there are enough facilities to meet current and future demand

**BG1: Protect all remaining bowling greens (excluding Foggy Furze, which has already closed). Any other greens that are subject to closure should be replaced within the town.** The quality of some bowling greens is so poor with limited options for improving facilities. In cases such as these it may potentially be more cost effective to close an old poor quality green and replace it with a new higher quality green situated with better access to ancillary facilities at an alternative location.

**BG2: Monitor the requirement for additional facilities in the event of high growth in participation.**

### Ensure that facilities are of sufficient quality to meet current and future demand

**BG3: Reinvest proceeds from the sale of Foggy Furze Bowling Green into improvements to the quality of existing facilities rather than the creation of further bowling green.** The quality of some bowling greens is so poor with limited options for improving facilities. In cases such as these it may potentially be more cost effective to close an old poor quality green and replace it with a new higher quality green situated with better access to ancillary facilities at an alternative location. Lower Burn Valley site is an early candidate for this type of consideration.

**BG4: Work with the Hartlepool Bowls Association and existing Clubs to improve the quality and consistency of maintenance of bowling greens across the Borough.** This should include ensuring that all those maintaining greens have specialist knowledge of the intricacies of maintaining such facilities.

**BG5: Improve quality issues identified at current bowling green sites, in particular;**

- Town Moor – surface improvements and pavilion facilities
- Grayfields – minor repairs. Longer term, consider potential to provide additional pavilion facilities adjacent to bowling and cricket facilities for shared use by these sports.
- Brinkburn – surface refurbishments. Work currently underway to provide ditches
- Lower Burn Valley – surface improvement and pavilion facilities
- Seaton Bowling Green – edging.
- Owton Lodge – ditches / pavilion facilities
- Eldon Bowling Green – pavilion facilities.

### Promote increases in participation and the creation of sustainable clubs

**BG6: Support clubs to proactively increase participation and membership.** To maximise the sustainability of bowls as a sport, efforts should focus on recruitment of junior players as well as adult and veterans.

## 8. Delivery and Implementation

### Introduction

08

- 8.1 Sections 2 - 7 outline the context for each sport and the key future priorities across Hartlepool Borough, drawing upon the evidence base, supply and demand modelling, consultation and site visits.
- 8.2 While to date and for clarity, each sport has been considered separately within this strategy, recommendations should be implemented strategically, considering opportunities for partnerships between sports. There are some good examples of sustainable clubs and multi sport partnerships already and these provide foundations for a successful future delivery model. It will be essential to ensure that good practice and knowledge from these successful ventures is spread across the borough through knowledge sharing and effective training and guidance.
- 8.3 In addition to proactive improvement of pitches, this also relates to the allocation of Section 106 / Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, which should consider the strategic need for playing fields and outdoor sports facilities across the borough. Both of these terms will be explained later in this section (under the headings planning issues).
- 8.4 To support the implementation of the key priorities and recommendations, Table 8.1 sets out an action plan for delivery of the recommendations listed in Sections 2 – 7. It briefly summarises the recommendation and provides an indication of the timeframe and the lead responsibility.
- 8.5 Table 8.2 outlines the site specific implications of these recommendations and highlights where the key priorities for investment lie.

Table 8.1 – Action Plan

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
<b>FOOTBALL</b>				
<b>F1 Protect all current playing fields to ensure the longevity of the pitch stock across the Borough.</b>	All sites currently offering opportunities for football. Pitches should only be lost where they are replaced with facilities of equal or better quality and capital receipts arising from any loss should be reinvested in quality improvements.	Ensure that policy within the LDF requires the protection of all current sites for football	Short Term	HBC
<b>F2: Review the designation of pitches across the borough to address deficiencies in junior football and to accommodate the recent FA review of youth football.</b>	Use of all sites should be considered as part of the review. No pitch disposals should be considered until the implications of this are fully understood. Ensure that all teams are playing on pitches of the right size. It is estimated that at least two 5 v 5 and six 9 v 9 pitches will be required. If teams are to continue to play at their home bases however this will be considerably more. Key priorities for discussion include Hartlepool Youth, Seaton Carew FC, St Francis 2000, Greatham Youth FC, Golden Flatts Youth FC.	Undertake a programme of consultation with the leagues and clubs to agree requirements for new seasons and identify a programme of redesignation. This should include discussion with the FA in relation to the implementation of new forms of football.  Review and monitor requirements for pitches to ensure that facilities provided meet needs.	Short Term	HBC

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
	There may be opportunities to redesignate a rugby pitch at King George V to junior football in line with R3.			
<p><b>F3: To maximise the use of existing resources and to address deficiencies, particularly in junior football, formalise community agreements at school sites that are currently important to sport in the borough, or have the potential to be.</b></p> <p>Longer term, new facilities may be required if participation increases do occur and / or efforts to action Recommendations F2 – F4 and F6 are not successfully delivered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Tunstall High School – large site with no existing community use of pitches</li> <li>• St Hilds School – unsecured access</li> <li>• English Martyrs School</li> <li>• Hartlepool 6th Form College</li> </ul>	<p>Approach schools to negotiate formal agreements for community use of sports pitches. It should be ensured that this includes access to changing facilities as well as pitch facilities.</p> <p>Identify opportunities for new provision if participation increases become a reality and / or if negotiations for use of school sites are unsuccessful.</p>	<p>Short – Medium Term</p> <p>Long Term (new provision) as issues arise</p>	HBC
<p><b>F4: Linking with F3 above, support clubs to find home venues to ensure that they are not dispersed across multiple sites. This may involve establishing links between schools and community clubs or longer term, new facilities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Tunstall High School – large site with no existing community use of pitches</li> <li>• St Hilds School – unsecured access</li> <li>• English Martyrs School</li> </ul>	Engage in meaningful consultation with local clubs to support the identification of appropriate venues.	<p>Short term (to address current issues)</p> <p>Ongoing – as issues arise</p> <p>Long Term (new</p>	HBC

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hartlepool 6th Form College</li> <li>Catcote Business College</li> </ul>		provision) as issues arise	
<b>F5: Consider the replacement of one sand based surface with a 3g surface to provide extra training facilities for football clubs.</b>	<p>Consideration should be given to the potential to convert facilities at English Martyrs High School (assuming that floodlighting can be secured at St Hilds, re. recommendation H3).</p> <p>If resurfacing is not possible, consideration should be given to the provision of a new 3g pitch. Potential locations include Brierton Sports Centre and West Hartlepool RUFC / 6th Form College.</p>	<p>Undertake a detailed strategic review of AGP provision in the borough (In the context of recommendation H1) to determine future surface requirements. Ensure full consultation is carried out before the change in any pitch surfaces.</p> <p>Any decisions made should also be undertaken in consideration with recommendation R2.</p>	Short Term	FA / EH / HBC
<p><b>F6: Seek to ensure that all clubs have access to facilities of the appropriate specification by focusing on the improvement of ancillary facilities and pitch quality, prioritising;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant changing facilities</li> <li>The retention of appropriate maintenance regimes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dodds Field (Seaton Park)-changing</li> <li>Central Park</li> <li>Rift House</li> <li>Grayfields</li> <li>Brierton Sports Centre</li> </ul>	<p>Undertake a programme of internal training / knowledge sharing to ensure that all grounds maintenance staff have relevant training to provide a consistent service. Support other providers to review maintenance schedules and share good practice.</p> <p>Work with partners to identify</p>	Short Term	HBC



Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addressing basic quality issues at key sites</li> <li>The provision of floodlights at training venues across the Borough</li> <li>Supporting clubs in the creation of facilities of higher specification where these are required for club progression.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rossmere Way Pitches</li> </ul>	<p>opportunities to improve the quality and availability of changing facilities across the borough. In consultation with clubs and leagues, prioritise sites and identify sources of funding.</p> <p>Work with partners to identify opportunities to address issues relating to pitch quality across the borough. In consultation with clubs and leagues, prioritise sites and identify sources of funding.</p> <p>Consult with and support clubs who have already expressed issues with their current facilities.</p> <p>Throughout the strategy period, engage with clubs where specific needs are identified to establish a sustainable way forward.</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <p>Short Medium Term</p> <p>Short Term</p>	HBC
<b>F7: Review the current booking process to ensure that play is even across the pitch stock (both across each site and at each pitch on the site) and to implement rotation of pitches to allow even rest and recovery</b>	N/A	Review and implement new pitch booking process to include rest, recovery and rotation through liaison with pitch users, pitch management and grounds maintenance	Short Term	HBC

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
during the season.		teams.		
<b>F8: Implement the recently reviewed consistent pricing structures at sites across the borough to ensure that value for money is consistent across the pitch stock, and that prices continue to be reflective of pitch quality and the availability of changing accommodation.</b>	Ensure pricing at Brierton Sports Centre is in line with other similar venues.	Implement pricing review to maximise consistency across venues.  Review pricing regularly to ensure that prices continue to be reflective of pitch quality and the availability of changing accommodation.	Short Term  Ongoing	HBC
<b>F9: Establish clear routes of communication with pitch users ensuring that all decisions are taken with a full understanding of needs and aspirations.</b>	N/A	Maximise channels of communication by reinvigorating the Football Action Group consisting of key clubs and league secretaries as well as other key partners including the FA and Hartlepool Borough Council.	Short Term	HBC
<b>F10: Support clubs in their growth and sustainability by implementing a policy of asset transfer / management agreements where clubs are able to demonstrate long term development plans and have achieved appropriate accreditations.</b>	Clubs who have expressed an interest include Greatham FC and Hartlepool Youth FC.	Educate clubs on the prerequisites to be considered for asset transfer through club forums and knowledge transfer. Share criteria for asset transfer with potentially interested clubs and negotiate agreements with those who meet these conditions.	Medium Term	HBC / The FA

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
<b>CRICKET</b>				
<b>C1 Retain the facilities on existing club sites and the public facility at Grayfields.</b>	All	Ensure that sites are protected through policies and allocations in the Local Development Framework.	Short Term	HBC
<b>C2 Consider the removal of the artificial wicket at King George V Recreation Ground, which is of poor quality and no longer used.</b>	King George V Recreation Ground	Reduce maintenance of cricket wicket and allow for better orientation of pitch layout	Medium Term	HBC
<b>C3: Work with clubs to maintain and improve the quality of cricket pitches across the Borough. Provide specialist support and training for clubs to improve maintenance and support clubs in pitch improvements.</b>	All  Hartlepool CC (pavilion and changing facilities)  Grayfields (improved maintenance, quality of wicket (grass and artificial) and outfield, - longer term provision of new pavilion in proximity to cricket square once site has been established as a venue for informal cricket as well as club base). This facility could serve	Work with IOG to provide a programme of training on grounds maintenance issues.  Identify funding for pitch improvement at Hartlepool CC  Identify funding for pitch improvements at Grayfields and work in partnership with Paragonians and the ECB to deliver required improvements  Support clubs in creating and maintaining club development plans to enable targeted and accurate forecasting of future	Short Term  Short Term  Short – Medium term. Pavilion improvements long term  Long Term	ECB  ECB / Hartlepool CC  HBC / ECB  ECB

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
	both cricket and bowls.	pitch requirements.		
<b>C4: Explore a partnership with EDF Energy and Hartlepool Power Station CC at the Power Station to improve facilities and build a sustainable club.</b>	Hartlepool Power Station	Engage in discussion with EDF Energy in relation to sports facilities	Medium Term	HBC / ECB
<b>C5: Seek to increase the amount of cricket played in the Borough through the continuation of current initiatives to grow participation.</b>	<p>These should include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction of more informal forms of the game (using Grayfields as a base)</li> <li>• Ongoing support of cricket clubs and school club links</li> <li>• Inter school cricket</li> </ul> <p>Links with Hartlepool College of Further Education, including the creation of a cricket academy</p>	Continue with initiatives to increase participation in cricket across the Borough and linking with the cricket Action Group (C6), prepare an annual cricket development plan. Review success on an annual basis.	Ongoing	ECB / Cricket Action Group
<b>C6: Reinvigorate the Cricket Development Group to ensure that dialogue between all</b>	N/A	Engage with key partners in cricket across the borough and	Short Term	HCB

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
key partners in cricket across the borough is maintained.		establish a series of meeting dates.		
<b>RUGBY</b>				
<b>R1: Ensure that all rugby union clubs have access to sufficient pitches and ancillary facilities to meet current and projected requirements.</b>	<p>Hartlepool Rovers. Potential options include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A partnership between the club and a school</li> <li>• The potential for Hartlepool Rovers to acquire the patch of land opposite the existing club base for transformation into additional rugby pitches.</li> </ul>	<p>Liaise with clubs and identify opportunities to increase facilities in line with need.</p> <p>Support clubs in creating and maintaining club development plans to enable targeted and accurate forecasting of future pitch requirements.</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	HCB / RFU / Club
<b>R2: Ensure that all clubs have access to appropriate training facilities. This should include a minimum of one floodlit pitch for training at each club site.</b>	<p>Options include;</p> <p>Conversion of 3g pitch at English Martyrs School</p> <p>For rugby, potential location of 3g pitch at West Hartlepool RUFC, shared with the 6th Form College, where it could be used to accommodate the rugby academy as well as training requirements of the club. The provision of a facility in this location would mean that it could also be used to meet the footballing needs of the 6th Form</p>	<p>Undertake a detailed strategic review of AGP provision in the borough (In the context of recommendation H1 and F5) to determine future surface requirements. Ensure full consultation is carried out before the change in any pitch surfaces / new provision.</p> <p>Engage with Hartlepool RUFC and 6th Form College to determine requirement for 3g rugby pitch on site.</p> <p>In line with R1 above, support</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>	HBC / RFU

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
	<p>College. Both the club and the College have aspirations for this facility and there is evidence to suggest that this would be of benefit from a club based perspective (although theoretical modelling does not support the need for an additional pitch). If provided at this site, the facility should also be considered for use by Hartlepool Rovers RFC who are at capacity.</p> <p>Brierton Sports Centre also represents a potential venue for a 3g pitch for football usage. There is potential that a facility at this site could be shared between rugby and football.</p>	<p>clubs in creating and maintaining club development plans to enable targeted and accurate forecasting of future. This should identification of facility issues and requirements, taking into account current participation and anticipated growth in participation and membership numbers.</p>		
<p><b>R3: Following the establishment of additional pitches by Hartlepool Rovers RFC, reallocate the existing pitches at Central Park / King George V Recreation Ground to junior football.</b></p>	<p>Central Park / King George V Recreation Ground.</p>	<p>Following implementation of other recommendations, consult with clubs to determine further need and requirement for overspill pitches. Assuming that the stock of pitches at club bases remain sufficient, redesignate pitches at Central Park and King George V Recreation Ground.</p>	<p>Medium – Long Term</p>	<p>HBC</p>

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
<b>R4: Support clubs in the improvement of quality of existing club facilities.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement to changing facilities and drainage on main pitch at West Hartlepool RUFC;</li> <li>Improvement to drainage and changing facilities at Hartlepool Rovers RFC</li> <li>Improvement to drainage and pitch surface at Seaton Carew RFC.</li> </ul>	Support clubs in the identification of funding to improve the quality of club bases across the borough.	Ongoing	RFU / HBC
<b>R5: Support increases in participation in rugby through the existing club structure and improvement of links with potential participants.</b>	N/A	Produce and continue to update a participation development plan outlining opportunities to bring new participants into the game. This may involve the introduction of new forms of the game including Tag Rugby	Short Term / Ongoing	Rugby Action Group
<b>R6: Work specifically with clubs currently suffering from issues of sustainability to increase participation and to secure the future of the clubs.</b>	Priority should be given to West Hartlepool TDSOB and Hartlepool BBOB, both of whom have expressed an interest in increasing participation against the backdrop of falling membership	Engage with clubs and clearly define a strategy to increase membership at these clubs. This may involve the merge of clubs / club bases and / or channelling new participants into these clubs through recommendations set out in R5 above.	Short Term	RFU

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
R7: in order to promote knowledge sharing across the Borough, ensure that the reinvigorated rugby action group continues.	N/A	Maintain rugby action group	Ongoing	HBC / RFU
<b>HOCKEY</b>				
H1: Ensure that at least one sand based surface pitch remains in the borough for the benefit of the hockey club.	N/A	Undertake a detailed strategic review of AGP provision in the borough (In the context of recommendation H1) to determine future surface requirements. Ensure full consultation is carried out before the change in any pitch surfaces. Assuming the delivery of recommendation H3, the pitch at St Hilds School should as a minimum remain sand based.	Short Term	EH / FA
H2: When new 3g AGPs are built or resurfaced, work with providers to transfer users of existing sand based facilities to the new 3g pitches in order to prioritise access for the hockey club at sites that are suitable for their needs.		Engage with key providers and clubs at the outset of any proposals to create new full size pitches and maximise the value of these facilities to clubs.	Long Term	HBC
H3: Support a new planning application for the installation of floodlights on St Hilds School AGP to maximise the value of the facility to the Hartlepool Caledonians and to enable the	St Hilds School	Liaise with the club and school with regards planning issues relating to the provision of	Short Term	HBC / EH



Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
creation of a formal link between the club and the school at this site.		floodlights on the St Hilds site.		
H4: support the introduction of new forms of hockey into Hartlepool through the provision of appropriate facilities for the new form of the game.	N/A	<p>Communicate in relation to initiatives designed to increase participation in hockey across the Borough. In particular, promote the implementation of Rush Hockey across the borough and ensure appropriate flexible spaces are available to accommodate this form of the game where demand is evident.</p> <p>Facilitate access to appropriate facilities for rush hockey (for example sports halls / community venues etc) where appropriate</p>	Short / Medium Term	EH / HBC
H5: Continue with the reinvigoration of the hockey action group to ensure sharing of best practice and ongoing partnerships between those involved in hockey in the borough.	N/A	Proactively support the reinvigoration of the hockey action group through Active leadership and involvement.	Ongoing	HBC / EH
<b>TENNIS</b>				
T1: Protect all existing facilities in the short term	None	Include the need to retain appropriate tennis provision	Short Term	HBC

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
		within LDF policy.		
<b>T2: Negotiate access to school facilities as demand grows, through the creation of links with existing clubs and schools and the development of satellite tennis clubs.</b>	English Martyrs, High Tunstall, Dyke House, Manor College	Approach schools to negotiate formal agreements for community use of tennis courts. School sites should be used to accommodate both pay and play and more club based coaching and activity.	Medium Term	HBC
<b>T3: Work with the LTA to develop a Council venue as a key community tennis venue under the Beacon sites programme.</b>	The location of Brierton Sports Centre (at the other side of the town to the existing tennis clubs, and in close proximity to areas where residents have a higher propensity to participate) should be considered. This links to Recommendation T6.	Identify funding to improve the quality of tennis courts at Brierton Sports Centre.  Engage with the LTA to establish Brierton Sports Centre as a community tennis venue. This will include a review of programming and introduction of coaching.	Medium Term	HBC  HBC / LTA
<b>T4: Support clubs in the improvement of club bases.</b>	Eldon Grove Tennis Club – improvements to changing accommodation and provision of floodlights  Hartlepool Tennis Club – resurfacing of tennis courts	Support clubs in the identification of funding to improve the quality of club bases across the Borough.	Short – Medium Term	HBC / LTA

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
<b>T5: Continue to maintain Council tennis facilities and ensure that the quality of facilities is sufficient to attract participants.</b>	This may include improvements to the surface quality at Brierton Sports Centre, Seaton Park and Town Moor.	Identify funding to improve the quality of tennis facilities across the Borough.	Medium – Long Term	HBC
<b>T6: Review opportunities to maximise the use of tennis courts through effective programming and coaching opportunities.</b>	N/A	Produce a participation development plan outlining opportunities to bring new participants into the game for both adults and juniors.  Maintain free access to public tennis courts at times outside of coaching schedules.	Medium – Long Term	Tennis Action Group
<b>T7: Support increase in tennis participation through knowledge sharing and partnership working by maintaining commitment to the Tennis Action Group.</b>	N/A	Proactively support partnership working through attendance at the Tennis Action Group. This group should also provide support for existing clubs to help them grow and sustain their membership base.		HBC / Tennis Action Group
<b>BOWLS</b>				
<b>BG1: Protect all remaining bowling greens (excluding Foggy Furze, which has already closed).</b>	All	Include the need to retain appropriate bowls provision within LDF policy. Any other greens that are subject to closure should be replaced within the town. The quality of some green's is poor with	Short Term	HBC

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
		limited options for improving facilities. In cases such as these it may potentially be more cost effective to close an old poor quality green and replace it with a new higher quality green situated with better access to ancillary facilities at an alternative location.		
<b>BG2: Monitor the requirement for additional facilities in the event of high growth in participation.</b>	N/A	Retain regular communication with Hartlepool Bowls Association. Identify an appropriate site and location for an additional green when / if the need for new facilities arises.	Short Term	HBC
<b>BG3: Reinvest proceeds from the sale of Foggy Furze Bowling Green into improvements to the quality of existing facilities rather than the creation of further bowling greens.</b>	Town Moor, Grayfields, Brinkburn, Lower Burn Valley, Seaton Bowling Green.	Ensure that any capital from receipts from the sale of Foggy Furze Bowling Green is ring fenced for reinvestment into poorer quality facilities.	Short Term	HBC / Bowling Clubs
<b>BG4: Work with the Hartlepool Bowls Association and existing Clubs to improve the quality and consistency of maintenance of bowling greens across the Borough.</b>	N/A	Undertake a programme of internal training / knowledge sharing to ensure that all grounds maintenance staff have relevant training to provide a consistent service. Support other providers to	Short Term	HBC

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
		review maintenance schedules and share good practice. This should include ensuring that all those maintaining greens have specialist knowledge of the intricacies of maintaining such facilities.		
<b>BG5: Improve quality issues identified at current bowling green sites.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Moor – surface improvements and pavilion</li> <li>• Grayfields – minor repairs. Consider new pavilion in conjunction with reinvigoration of cricket facility</li> <li>• Brinkburn – surface refurbishments. Work currently underway to provide ditches</li> <li>• Lower Burn Valley – surface improvement and pavilion</li> <li>• Seaton Bowling Green – edging.</li> <li>• Owton Lodge – ditches /</li> </ul>	Support clubs in the identification of funding to improve the quality of club bases across the borough. Identify funding to improve Council facilities in partnership with clubs and the Hartlepool Bowls Association and undertake the required repairs.	Short – Medium Term	HBC

Strategic Recommendation	Priority Sites	Action	Timescales	Responsibilities
	pavilion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eldon Bowling Green – pavilion</li> </ul>			
<b>BG6: Support clubs to proactively increase participation and membership.</b>	N/A	Work with the Hartlepool Bowls Association to produce a participation development plan outlining opportunities to bring new participants into the game for both adults and juniors. To maximise the sustainability of bowls as a sport, efforts should focus on recruitment of junior players as well as adult and veterans.	Short – Medium Term	HBC

**Table 8.2 – Site Specific Implications**

Level of Access	Site Name	Action	Priorities / Comments
Secured Community Use	King George V Recreation Ground	Protect / New provision	Potential to lay out additional pitches. Longer term potential to provide football pitch through redesignation of rugby pitch. Cricket wicket rarely used – scope to remove this pitch.
Secured Community Use	Central Park	Protect / Enhance	Changing facilities / pitch improvements. Designation as junior football site.
Secured Community Use	Hartlepool Rovers RFC	Protect / New Provision	Additional facilities required to support club growth.
Secured Community Use	Hartlepool TDSOB and Hartlepool FC	Protect	
Secured Community Use	Manor College of Technology	Protect	Strong links with St Francis 2000. Site is important facility for football.
Secured Community Use	Town Moor BBOB	Protect	
Secured Community Use	Seaton Carew Sports and Social Club	Protect / Enhance	Complete additional football pitches. Improved pavilion. Pitch improvements to cricket field, including drainage.
Secured Community Use	Hartlepool RFC – Mayfield	Protect	
Secured Community Use	West Hartlepool Rugby Club	Protect / Enhance / New	Option for changing facilities and pavilion.

Level of Access	Site Name	Action	Priorities / Comments
		provision	Potential location for a 3g pitch.
Secured Community Use	Grayfields	Protect / Enhance	Improvement to pitch quality (Cricket and football), changing facilities / pavilion (cricket and bowls) and bowling green.
Secured Community Use	Hartlepool Cricket Club	Protect/ Enhance	Changing and pavilion
Secured Community Use	Hartlepool Power Station	Protect/ Enhance.	Potential to become cricket venue. Also potential to build relationship with a club for football.
Secured Community Use	Brierton Sports Centre	Protect / Enhance / New provision	Important large venue to accommodate large clubs. Requirement for pitch and tennis court improvements. Potential multi sport hub that could also include a new 3g pitch.
Secured Community Use	Catcote College of Business and Enterprise	Protect	Potential to enhance usage - build relationship with junior club
Secured Community Use	Dodds Field (Seaton Park)	Protect / Enhance	Changing facilities
Secured Community Use	Dyke House School	Protect	Potential to enhance usage – build relationship with junior club
Secured Community Use	Golden Flatts Primary School	Protect / Enhance	
Secured Community	Greatham Sports Association	Protect / Enhance	Changing / parking



Level of Access	Site Name	Action	Priorities / Comments
Use			
Secured Community Use	Lynn Field Primary School	Protect	
Secured Community Use	Rift House Recreation Ground	Protect / Enhance.	Changing facilities. Pitch surfacing.
Secured Community Use	Rossmere Way Sports Pitches	Protect / enhance	Changing facilities
Secured Community Use	Stranton Primary School	Protect	Important site for community use.
Secured Community Use	West View Park Primary School	Protect	Potential to enhance usage
Informal Community Use	West Hartlepool RFC / Hartlepool 6th Form College	Protect / New provision	Option to provide new AGP (linked with West Hartlepool RUFC). Priority for secured community use for football pitches.
Informal Community Use	St Josephs Primary School	Protect	
Informal Community Use	St Aidans C of E Primary School	Protect	Potential to provide mini soccer on adjacent open space.
Informal Community Use	Owton Manor Primary School	Protect	
Informal Community	Ward Jackson C of E Primary School	Protect	

Level of Access	Site Name	Action	Priorities / Comments
Use			
Informal Community Use	Hart Primary School	Protect	
Informal Community Use	English Martyrs	Protect	Potential to increase usage of pitches. Priority for secured community use. Consideration of conversion of sand based AGP to 3g pitch when pitch requires resurfacing.
Informal Community Use	Brougham Primary School	Protect	
Informal Community Use	Rossmere School	Protect	
Informal Community Use	St Hilds School	Protect / Enhance	Floodlights for AGP. Potential to increase use of pitch. Priority for secured community use.
No community use	St Cuthberts RC Primary School	Protect	
No community use	Fens Primary School	Protect	
No community use	Holy Trinity Primary School	Protect	
No community use	Jesmond Gardens Primary School	Protect	
No community use	Sacred Heart Primary School	Protect	
No community use	St Peters CE Elwick Primary School	Protect	

Level of Access	Site Name	Action	Priorities / Comments
No community use	Clavering Primary School	Protect	
No community use	Grange Primary School	Protect	
No community use	St John Vianney Primary School	Protect	
No community use	Greatham C of E Primary School	Protect	
No community use	St Helens Primary School	Protect	
No community use	High Tunstall College of Science	Protect	Priority for secured community use
No community use	Eldon Grove Primary School	Protect	
No community use	Kingsley Primary School	Protect	
No community use	Barnard Grove Primary School	Protect	
No community use	Rift House Primary School	Protect	
No community use	St Bega's RC Primary School	Protect	
No community use	St Teresas Primary School	Protect	
No community use	Throston Primary School	Protect	

## Partnership Working

- 8.6 While each sport is considered separately within this strategy, implementation of recommendations and the delivery of pitches across the borough should be looked at strategically, considering opportunities for partnerships between sports, as well as evaluating each sport in isolation. There are some good examples of multi sport partnerships already in the borough and these provide foundations for a successful future delivery model.
- 8.7 In addition to proactive improvement of pitches, this also relates to the allocation of S106 and CIL funding, which should consider the strategic need for playing fields.
- 8.8 Sport England has recently launched a *Protection of Playing Fields* funding programme which funds new, under threat, disused playing fields and pitch improvement schemes. Successful applicants will be required to demonstrate a strategic need, partnership working and positive impacts for sports participation. This scheme may provide opportunities for the further improvement of pitches across the Borough.

## Planning Issues

- 8.9 The identified deficiencies of certain pitch types (and pressures on the stock of pitch sports in other areas) emphasise the importance of protecting many of the existing areas of playing pitch land and open space in public, private and educational ownership, as playing pitches can be under threat from other, non sport development.
- 8.10 Policies should therefore protect all playing fields from development, unless it can be proven that the site is surplus to requirements, using this strategy as a basis for decision making. Sport England are a statutory consultee on playing field assessments. In 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England: Policy on Planning Applications for Development on Playing Fields' (Sport England, 1997), it is indicated that Sport England will oppose any developments that will result in the loss of playing field space in all but exceptional circumstances, whether the land is in public, private or educational use. Sport England considers the definition of a playing field to be 'the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch'.
- 8.11 Sport England will not object to the loss of playing fields where one or more of the following exception criteria are met:
- An assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.
  - The proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field or playing fields, and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use.
  - The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, and does not result in the loss of or inability to make use of any playing pitch.
  - Lost playing fields would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable

location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development.

- The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.

8.12 Table 8.2 outlined sites of particular sporting importance and all of these sites should be afforded protection within specific policies that benefit sport and physical activity in the Borough, drawing upon the above criteria, and the key recommendations within this strategy for decision making. There is however a need to ensure that policies are flexible. There are an abundance of larger clubs in the borough who wish to use large multi pitch sites that benefit club development. In some instances therefore, it may be appropriate to replace several single pitch sites with one or more larger multi pitch and / or multi sport venue. There may also opportunities to improve the quality of a pitch site or bowling green by providing a new facility to replace a worn out and poor quality site. Policy should allow this without compromising the protection of existing playing fields.

### **Local Standards**

8.13 Local standards can be used to determine the requirements of new developments, as well as to evaluate improvements required to the existing facility stock. They provide an indication as to the amount of provision that is expected in the area.

8.14 The population growth that is forecast in the borough means that ensuring appropriate contributions from new developments towards outdoor sports facilities will be essential if the facility stock is to meet local need in terms of both quality and quantity.

8.15 It is recommended that local standards should include:

- quantitative elements (how much new provision may be needed);
- a qualitative component (against which to measure the need for the enhancement of existing facilities); and
- accessibility (including distance thresholds and consideration of the cost of using a facility).

8.16 Local standards will:

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

8.17 As well as providing an overall evidence base, local standards enable the assessment of sites on a site by site basis, enabling locally informed decision making. This will be essential for both proactive and reactive planning across the Borough.

## Quantity Standards

- 8.18 Fields in Trust standard for pitch provision states that for every 1,000 people, 1.2 hectares of playing pitches should be provided. However, this is a national benchmark and it is important to also consider the local context that may impact.
- 8.19 The Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) outlines where current shortfalls and surpluses exist for each type of sport. It takes into account the additional pitches needed (or surplus pitches identified) to meet demand and enables the calculation of the area of this required level of provision. These calculations are derived directly from a robust assessment of local need.
- 8.20 The Hartlepool Borough Council PPG17 Study sets the following standards for pitches, tennis and bowling greens;
- Playing Fields – 1.23ha per 1000 population
  - Tennis Courts – 0.02ha per 1000 population
  - Bowling Greens – 0.03ha per 1000 population.
- 8.21 The evidence collated as part of this playing fields assessment enables these standards to be updated to reflect current needs and aspirations.
- 8.22 Table 8.3 summarises the requirements for provision in 2028 based on meeting baseline peak time demand. **It includes community use provision only** – non community use pitches should be considered separately.
- 8.23 Calculation of the local standard is based upon the assumption that in order to maintain adequate pitch protection, all pitches that are currently available for community use are protected (or directly replaced). This is particularly important given the as yet unknown implications of the FA Youth Review which are currently being worked through. It is also important given aspirations in the borough to increase participation. It assumes that all pitches are up to the required specification to accommodate play.
- 8.24 Where clear deficiencies in pitch provision have been identified (eg in junior football) these have also been included in the standard. The strategy sets out a series of recommendations designed to address these deficiencies. The strategy recommendations therefore form the basis of the calculations of a local standard which represents a minimum level of provision. It does not take into account the need to maintain a strategic reserve.

**Table 8.3 – Local Standard Calculations**

Pitch Type	Current numbers available for community use	Minimum Number Required to meet Baseline Demand	Approximate Size Per Pitch	Total Requirement
Adult Football	34	34	0.9	30.6
Junior Football	14	27	0.6	16.2
Mini Football	16	16	0.22	3.52
Cricket	4	5	1.5	7.5
Rugby	13	15	1.2	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	81	97	N/A	75.82

8.25 Table 8.3 suggests that a minimum of 75.82 hectares is required to meet baseline demand. This equates to circa 0.78ha per 1000 population. This constitutes a minimum level of provision to ensure that supply and demand are aligned for community use only, and does not take into account the need to have a strategic reserve.

8.26 It reflects the amount of pitches that are required for **community use** only. This considers only the pitch area and does not account for changing accommodation / pitch run off and changing or parking.

8.27 When taking these issues into account:

- changing room / pavilion - provision of around 200m<sup>2</sup> – 0.02 ha would provide sufficient space for a small multi functional pavilion with four changing rooms, match officials space, showers, toilets, circulation space and a small kitchen.
- parking and access - 0.025 ha would provide sufficient for a parking area of 10m x 25m

8.28 Demand is therefore equivalent to 0.82 ha per 1000 population.

8.29 As well as ensuring that deficiencies are met for each sport and each pitch type, some degree of spare capacity is an integral part of playing pitch provision for the following reasons:

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

8.30 For the reasons highlighted above, it is important to ensure that a strategic reserve of facilities is maintained. An additional 10% has been added onto the standard to

accommodate this. The overall standard therefore equates to 0.9 ha per 1000 population and represents the amount of playing fields required.

8.31 For tennis and bowls, the standards set within the PPG17 study continue to reflect local need as set out in sections 6 and 7. Standards set are therefore as follows:

- Tennis Courts – 0.02ha per 1000 population (represents existing level of provision)
- Bowling Greens – 0.03ha per 1000 population (provision slightly below).

### Quality Standards

8.32 When determining the required quality of pitches, it is important to consider:

- the standard of play at the site and expectations of users (including league requirements);
- the demand on the site (the number of games played per week);
- the need to facilitate concurrent usage by young people, women and other;
- target groups through appropriate ancillary facilities; and
- facility specifications from National Governing Body (NGB) strategies.

8.33 Reflecting this, there are several factors integral to the successful delivery of a network of high sports facilities, stating that:

*'Quality depends on two things: the needs and expectations of users, on the one hand, and design, management and maintenance on the other'.*

8.34 Specific to playing pitches for football, rugby and cricket, all pitches should include:

- a high standard of maintenance, enabling the pitch to be played at least twice per week without detrimental impact and ensuring that sites are clean and attractive facilities;
- adequate changing facilities that:
  - are flexible, fit for a variety of purposes and
  - which fully comply with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act
  - provide for a number of different groups to use the facility at the same time, in safety and comfort
  - meet current standards - Sport England and NGB guidelines
- managed community access;
- easily accessible by public transport and by car;
- sufficient car parking;
- size of pitches and run offs must meet NGB specification;
- located in a no flood zone;
- security of tenure (at least 10 years) if a club is to be based at the site; and



- for rugby clubs in particular, sites should include floodlit training facilities.

8.35 Each National Governing Body (NGB) provides detailed guidance on the design of facilities and changing accommodation as follows:

***Rugby Pitches*** -

<http://www.rfu.com/ManagingRugby/ClubDevelopment/FacilitiesAndEquipment.aspx>

***Football Pitches*** -

[http://www.thefa.com/GetIntoFootball/~/\\_link.aspx?id=2B126098B0014E32A550A5560117734E&\\_z=z](http://www.thefa.com/GetIntoFootball/~/_link.aspx?id=2B126098B0014E32A550A5560117734E&_z=z) (currently being updated)

***Cricket Pitches*** - <http://www.ecb.co.uk/development/facilities-funding/technical-specifications/>.

***Artificial Grass Pitches*** -

[http://www.sportengland.org/facilities\\_planning/design\\_guidance\\_notes.asp](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/design_guidance_notes.asp)

8.36 All new sites within Hartlepool Borough and any modifications to existing facilities should be undertaken in line with this guidance.

The PPG17 study provides further guidance on the quality of playing pitches, using the scores achieved against the Towards a Level Playing Field matrix (also used in this report as a basis). Evidence collated suggests that these standards remain appropriate, and the local standards are therefore as follows;

- The quality standard for playing pitches is that for an average pitch i.e. 66 - 79% with an aspiration to bring all pitches up to the level of a good pitch i.e. 80 -94%.
- The recommended quality benchmark for changing accommodation is for a good facility i.e. 60% - 89%. The benchmark facility is Brierton Sports Centre (formerly Brierton School) at 85%.
- The recommended quality benchmark for bowling greens is 76%
- The recommended quality benchmark for tennis courts is 75%

### **Accessibility Standards**

8.37 Consultation undertaken as part of this study demonstrates that:

- The nature of football pitches in Hartlepool means that players travel to reach larger sites. Most players live within 2 – 5 miles of their home ground and only five clubs are not playing at their preferred venue.
- The majority of cricket clubs have a relatively wide catchment area. Between 15% and 30% of each clubs' membership travel for five miles or greater to reach the home ground. Notably, Paragonians CC, who play cricket more informally, have a much more localised membership base, with 60% of residents living within a mile of Grayfields.

- like cricket, rugby is club based and residents travel from further afield to reach their club;
  - there is only one hockey club in the Borough and this is located relatively centrally
  - nearly 80% of users of bowling greens travel between one and five miles to reach their home green.
- 8.38 For all sports, residents demonstrate a willingness to travel (within reason) to facilities that meet their specification and requirements.
- 8.39 This suggests that when planning new facilities, particularly as part of new developments, linking with the quantity standards set out above, there is a need to consider the location of the site and to focus development around club bases (and avoid the provision of dispersed pitches). New provision should therefore be located off a development site, or in conjunction with the development of a new club, or satellite club to an existing facility. The recommendations draw out the key priorities for the future delivery of playing fields in Hartlepool Borough.

### **Incorporating Pitch Issues into the Local Planning Framework**

- 8.40 A separate guidance note has been prepared based on this strategy and action plan setting out the implications for local planning policy for the authority to consider at the adoption stage of the Local Plan.
- 8.41 The 2004 Playing Pitch Strategy indicated that land should be allocated for additional playing field use. On the assumption that all existing playing fields are retained and improved to ensure that they meet specifications and that community use can be secured for additional sites, there are sufficient sites to meet demand in the short term. There is however a clear need to improve the specification of existing facilities and to maximise community use of school sites otherwise provision is insufficient.
- 8.42 Longer term, while adult and mini participation is likely to remain static, junior participation may continue to grow and several clubs have aspirations to increase participation. This will increase demand and pitch requirements.
- 8.43 While there is no requirement for additional pitches to meet current demand, it is clear that there remains demand for more larger facilities that can accommodate all teams from a club (as opposed to dispersing teams across multiple venues), particularly if demand increases in line with aspirations. Proposals that see the creation of large multi pitch sites should be encouraged. Taking this into account, and to account for the likely increase in demand which will occur longer term (and result in demand for additional playing fields), the existing allocation for playing pitches should be retained.

### **Implications for Planning**

**P1: Planning policy should protect existing playing fields from development and seek to ensure the playing field requirements set out in the Playing Pitch strategy are met. There maybe opportunities for development of playing fields but only based on where there is net benefit to sport from development. This may include the reinvestment of funds generated from the development of a single pitch site into qualitative improvements to nearby sites or more likely, the replacement of single pitch sites with a larger multi pitch site. The potential for the site to fulfil a role as a wider open space should be considered prior to disposal. Overall the Council should adopt a flexible approach to development**

but ensuring in all potential developments there is a net benefit to sport and this is identified and safeguarded.

**P2: Using the guidance note provided as part of this strategy, incorporate the local standards into the Hartlepool Borough Planning Framework and ensure that they are considered material at any planning stage.**

**P3: To take into account the impact of new population growth on the demand for playing fields and the location of this demand, planning policy should require contributions towards pitch and outdoor sports provision from all new developments.**

**P4: The creation of new multi pitch sites should be prioritised and the delivery of new single pitches should be avoided**

### **Monitoring and Review**

- 8.44 As set out, the strategy should be owned by all partners across Hartlepool Borough with an interest in playing pitch investment and provision. The evidence base and strategy should form the basis of all future decision making. It is important however to establish who will be guardians of both the implementation and updating of the strategy.
- 8.45 Hartlepool Borough will need to own the Strategy and it should be embedded in all relevant departments across the Council. All partners however should sign-up to the key actions and the implementation of priorities for the relevant sports across the Borough.
- 8.46 The evolving context of participation in sport and active recreation means that monitoring and review of the strategy is as important as the initial preparation of the document. To keep the strategy alive it is therefore proposed that:
- changes to the pitch stock in the Borough both qualitative and quantitative will be monitored and recorded annually ;
  - an annual review of participation will be undertaken with support from National Governing Bodies, to identify any key changes to participation trends in the Borough, and the likely implications of these changes for the strategy;
  - a working group (led by Hartlepool BC) meets quarterly to review progress by all key partners on the strategy delivery, identify additional priorities and draw on the data collated as part of the above two actions to ensure the strategy remains relevant and current;
  - all proposals involving changes to pitch provision will be considered by a small working group consisting of representatives of different departments within the Council and Sport England. The process for providing feedback will be reviewed regularly; and
  - the amount of funding for pitches or provision of additional pitches delivered in association with new development is monitored through the Planning Divisions AMR (Annual Monitoring Report).
- 8.47 It is proposed that a periodical full refresh of the strategy will be undertaken every five years. In line with the strategy, progress will be communicated to all key partners.

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