



**BLACK COUNTRY**

**PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY**

**OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

**DECEMBER 2022**

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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**CONTENTS**

ABBREVIATIONS .....1

PART 1: INTRODUCTION .....2

PART 2: RESEARCH FINDINGS.....6

PART 3: OVERARCHING SPORT RECOMMENDATIONS .....34

PART 4: OVERARCHING STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS .....40

PART 5: OVERARCHING ACTION PLAN .....56

PART 6: DELIVER THE STRATEGY AND KEEP IT ROBUST AND UP TO DATE.....61

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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## ABBREVIATIONS

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
BC	Bowls Club
BFA	Birmingham County FA
BCGBA	British Crown Green Bowling Association
BSUK	Baseball Softball UK
CC	Cricket Club
CFA	County Football Association
EA	England Athletics
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
EN	England Netball
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FF	Football Foundation
HC	Hockey Club
GMA	Grounds Maintenance Association
IoG	Institute of Groundsmanship
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LFFP	Local Football Facility Plan
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NTP	Non-turf pitch
PPOSS	Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sport Strategy
PQS	Performance Quality Standard
RFU	Rugby Football Union
SCB	Staffordshire Cricket Board
RUFC	Rugby Union Football Club
TC	Tennis Club

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Following completion of a Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) for each of the four Black Country authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton, this document brings the findings of the studies together to provide an Overarching Strategic Framework. This should be used to address sub-regional issues, guide relevant planning policy and to ensure cross-boundary and collaborative working.

Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) has been commissioned by the local authorities, together with the Black Country Consortium, to assess playing pitch and outdoor sport facility requirements across the individual areas, as well as considering these needs in the wider context of the area. The output has been separate needs assessments and strategies for each authority, with the findings fed into this document.

The Overarching Strategic Framework and the recommendations within it have been put forward based on the evidence that has been gathered as part of the delivery of each individual PPOSS. However, it is recognised that not everything will be actionable by all of the authorities, at least in the short-term. It should instead be used as a long-term document that can assist, where possible, with guiding future actions when it comes to playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities.

The main objectives of the study have been to:

- ✦ Identify current supply and demand issues for sport and recreation facilities in the Black Country, based on quality, quantity and accessibility.
- ✦ Enable the Councils to plan appropriately for the protection and/or enhancement of existing sport and recreation facilities and identify sites best suited for development/ new provision or refurbishment in future Local Plan priorities.
- ✦ Make strategic proposals for local authority-controlled facilities such as investment in new and enhanced facilities and rationalisation, including cross-boundary co-ordination of local authority provision if appropriate.
- ✦ Help inform wider fixed asset/property reviews.
- ✦ Assess the continued value of retaining land for playing pitches where the land has high potential development value for other uses, subject to ensuring compliance with relevant planning policy.
- ✦ Enable the authorities to plan appropriately, in compliance with planning policy, for the creation of new and/or replacement sport facilities, including opportunities for relocation and to allocate sites for development within emerging local plans.
- ✦ Identify the potential for a strategic approach to the role of education sites in meeting community needs with a district or sub-regional approach in addition to individual recommendations.
- ✦ Identify whether existing sports infrastructure is fit for purpose to deliver local and corporate priorities and wider health and wellbeing outcomes in an efficient way, now and in the future.
- ✦ Identify where pitches are under-used or in such poor condition that release for other uses may be considered appropriate, subject to ensuring compliance with planning policy.
- ✦ Provide policy recommendations and practical proposals for securing investment into sport and open space.
- ✦ Use the findings to identify how best to meet local needs and to develop a means of calculating developer contributions to fund appropriate works.
- ✦ Act as a tool for the four authorities and partner organisations to guide resource allocation and investment and set priorities for sports moving forward.
- ✦ Identify how sport and recreation infrastructure can help deliver national, regional, local and Sport England strategies.
- ✦ Identify how sport, physical activity and recreation can contribute to corporate agendas for each authority.

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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- ◆ Support an increase in formal and informal sport activity rates to improve the health and wellbeing of the whole community including through consultation with public health colleagues to deliver healthier lifestyles and achieve positive health outcomes.
- ◆ Promote sports development and help unlock latent demand by identifying changes in demand for different sports and where the lack of facilities might be suppressing the formation of teams and/or failing to meet community needs.

In addition, specific planning objectives have been to:

- ◆ Help provide a robust evidence base for the preparation and support of the Black Country Plan (which will now be replaced by four separate local plans).
- ◆ Help meet “Duty to Co-operate” requirements under Section 110 of the Localism Act.
- ◆ Inform policies on green infrastructure, leisure, outdoor sports facilities and health and well-being in emerging local plans.
- ◆ Guide decisions on planning applications affecting existing playing pitches or generating demand for new provision.

The PPOSS for each local authority has been developed in accordance with Sport England guidance and under the direction of a Steering Group including each council, Sport England, Active Black Country and National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs). This has ensured that a consistent approach has been applied across the project.

### **Scope**

A wide range of playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities have been included across all four Black Country authorities. In full, this covers:

- ◆ Athletics
- ◆ Cricket
- ◆ Football (including 3G pitches)
- ◆ Hockey (sand/water based AGPs)
- ◆ Rugby union (including 3G pitches)
- ◆ Tennis
- ◆ Bowls
- ◆ Cycling
- ◆ Golf
- ◆ Netball
- ◆ Rugby league (including 3G pitches)
- ◆ Water sports (e.g., sailing and water skiing)

In addition, other grass pitch sports have been included where they have been identified as having a presence.

### **Study area**

The study area is considered to be the whole boundary area of each of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Further to this, existing analysis areas have also been used within each authority to allow for a more localised assessment of provision and the examination of outdoor sport supply and demand at a local level. These are summarised in the table below.

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

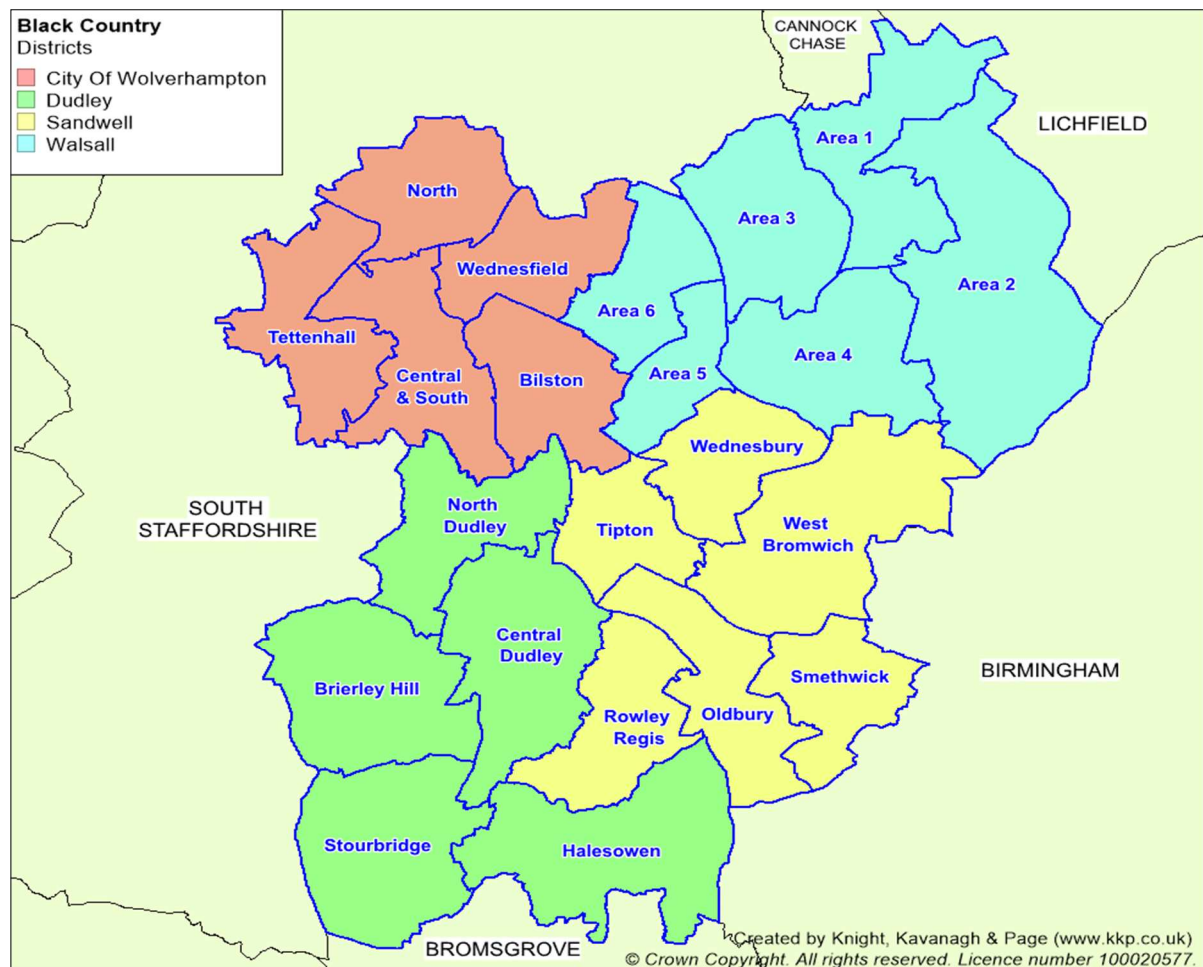
*Table 1.1: Summary of the study area*

Local authority	Analysis areas
Dudley	Brierley Hill
Dudley	Central Dudley
Dudley	Halesowen
Dudley	North Dudley
Dudley	Stourbridge
Sandwell	Oldbury
Sandwell	Rowley Regis
Sandwell	Smethwick
Sandwell	Tipton
Sandwell	Wednesbury
Sandwell	West Bromwich
Walsall	Brownhills / Pelsall / Rushall / Shelfield (Area 1)
Walsall	Aldridge / Streetly / Pheasey / Walsall Wood (Area 2)
Walsall	Bloxwich / Blakenall / Birchills / Leamore (Area 3)
Walsall	St Matthew's / Paddock / Palfrey / Pleck (Area 4)
Walsall	Darlaston / Bentley (Area 5)
Walsall	Willenhall / Short Heath (Area 6)
Wolverhampton	Bilston
Wolverhampton	Central & South
Wolverhampton	North
Wolverhampton	Tettenhall
Wolverhampton	Wednesfield

For the boundary lines, please refer to the figure below.

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Figure 1.1: Analysis area map



# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

## PART 2: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Summarised below are the key findings across the four Black Country authorities for each included sport/facility type relating to aspects such as quantity, quality, levels of demand (including exported/imported demand) and the presence of current and future shortfalls. Such issues are considered most important to the overarching strategic framework due to the potential impact they have on supply and demand across local authority boundaries and, as such, across the Black Country.

Notwithstanding the above, it must be noted that, where spare capacity is identified in a local authority, this cannot be relied upon to offset shortfalls of provision and other issues elsewhere within the Black Country. It may not necessarily be accessible to the demand that needs access, meaning there is still a requirement to consider the individual PPOSS findings and recommendations in respect of the local picture for supply and demand.

### 2.1: Black Country summary

#### Football

- There are 729 football pitches in the Black Country across 330 sites, with 577 pitches available for community use across 229 sites.

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

Local authority	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Dudley	43	23	33	29	26	154
Sandwell	86	13	21	12	7	139
Walsall	68	15	37	13	14	147
Wolverhampton	63	23	28	18	5	137
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>577</b>

- Of the community available pitches, 39 are assessed as good quality, 282 are assessed as standard quality and 256 are assessed as poor.

Table 2.2: Football pitch quality summary (community use pitches)

Local authority	Good	Standard	Poor
Dudley	10	76	68
Sandwell	5	51	83
Walsall	9	90	48
Wolverhampton	15	65	57
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>256</b>

- A total of 1,460 teams are identified from within 367 clubs.
- Demand is highest for youth 11v11 football, followed by adult football, whilst it is lowest for mini 5v5 football.



## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Table 2.3: Summary of teams

Local authority	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Dudley	89	116	70	74	64	<b>413</b>
Sandwell	109	108	59	43	29	<b>348</b>
Walsall	121	130	83	74	38	<b>446</b>
Wolverhampton	86	74	38	34	21	<b>253</b>
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>1,460</b>

- There is a current and future shortfall of adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitch capacity.
- Supply of mini 7v7 pitches is currently meeting demand, although future growth will result in a capacity shortfall.
- Both current and future demand for mini 5v5 football is being met.

Table 2.4: Supply and demand analysis by pitch type and local authority in Match equivalent sessions per week

Pitch type	Local authority	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Adult	Dudley	-	16	16	3	19
Adult	Sandwell	6.5	23.5	17	2	19
Adult	Walsall	14	7	7	5	2
Adult	Wolverhampton	17.5	19	1.5	2.5	4
Adult	<b>Black Country</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>65.5</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>40</b>
Youth 11v11	Dudley	-	7.5	7.5	4	11.5
Youth 11v11	Sandwell	3	13	10	2	12
Youth 11v11	Walsall	-	5	5	7.5	12.5
Youth 11v11	Wolverhampton	4.5	2	2.5	5.5	3
Youth 11v11	<b>Black Country</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>
Youth 9v9	Dudley	1	10.5	9.5	-	9.5
Youth 9v9	Sandwell	1	10	9	-	9
Youth 9v9	Walsall	11	10.5	0.5	0.5	0
Youth 9v9	Wolverhampton	13.5	2.5	11.5	-	11.5
Youth 9v9	<b>Black Country</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>7.5</b>
Mini 7v7	Dudley	2	3	1	-	1
Mini 7v7	Sandwell	0.5	1	0.5	-	0.5
Mini 7v7	Walsall	1	1.5	0.5	1	1.5
Mini 7v7	Wolverhampton	2	-	2	-	2
Mini 7v7	<b>Black Country</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Mini 5v5	Dudley	2	1	1	-	1
Mini 5v5	Sandwell	2	0.5	1.5	-	1.5
Mini 5v5	Walsall	2.5	-	2.5	-	2.5
Mini 5v5	Wolverhampton	2.5	-	2.5	-	2.5
Mini 5v5	<b>Black Country</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7.5</b>

- Projected housing growth across the Black Country is likely to create demand equating to the need for 69.66 grass football pitches.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Table 2.5: Likely demand generated from housing growth for grass football pitches

Local authority	Adult pitches	Youth pitches	Mini pitches	Total
Dudley	4.17	8.72	6.46	<b>19.35</b>
Sandwell	3.44	5.27	2.27	<b>10.98</b>
Walsall	7.10	12.51	6.57	<b>26.18</b>
Wolverhampton	4.47	5.82	2.86	<b>13.15</b>
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>19.18</b>	<b>32.32</b>	<b>18.16</b>	<b>69.66</b>

### 3G pitches

- There are currently 23 full size 3G pitches provided across the Black Country, with 19 available for community use (two in both Sandwell and Wolverhampton are unavailable).

Table 2.6: Summary of full size 3G supply

Local authority	No. of full size pitches available for community use
Dudley	4
Sandwell	4
Walsall	9
Wolverhampton	2
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>19</b>

- Based on the FA training model of one full size pitch being required to accommodate every 38 football teams within an authority, there is an overall shortfall of 15.5 full size pitches currently and 17.5 full size pitches when accounting for future demand.

Table 2.7: Summary of 3G shortfalls

Local authority	Current shortfall	Future shortfall
Dudley	4.75	5.25
Sandwell	4.50	4.50
Walsall	2.75	3.50
Wolverhampton	3.50	4.50
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>15.50</b>	<b>17.75</b>

- For the shortfalls to be met, new pitches are required that are fully accessible to the community and floodlit. The picture in each authority is further summarised in the table below.

Table 2.8: Summary of supply and demand analysis

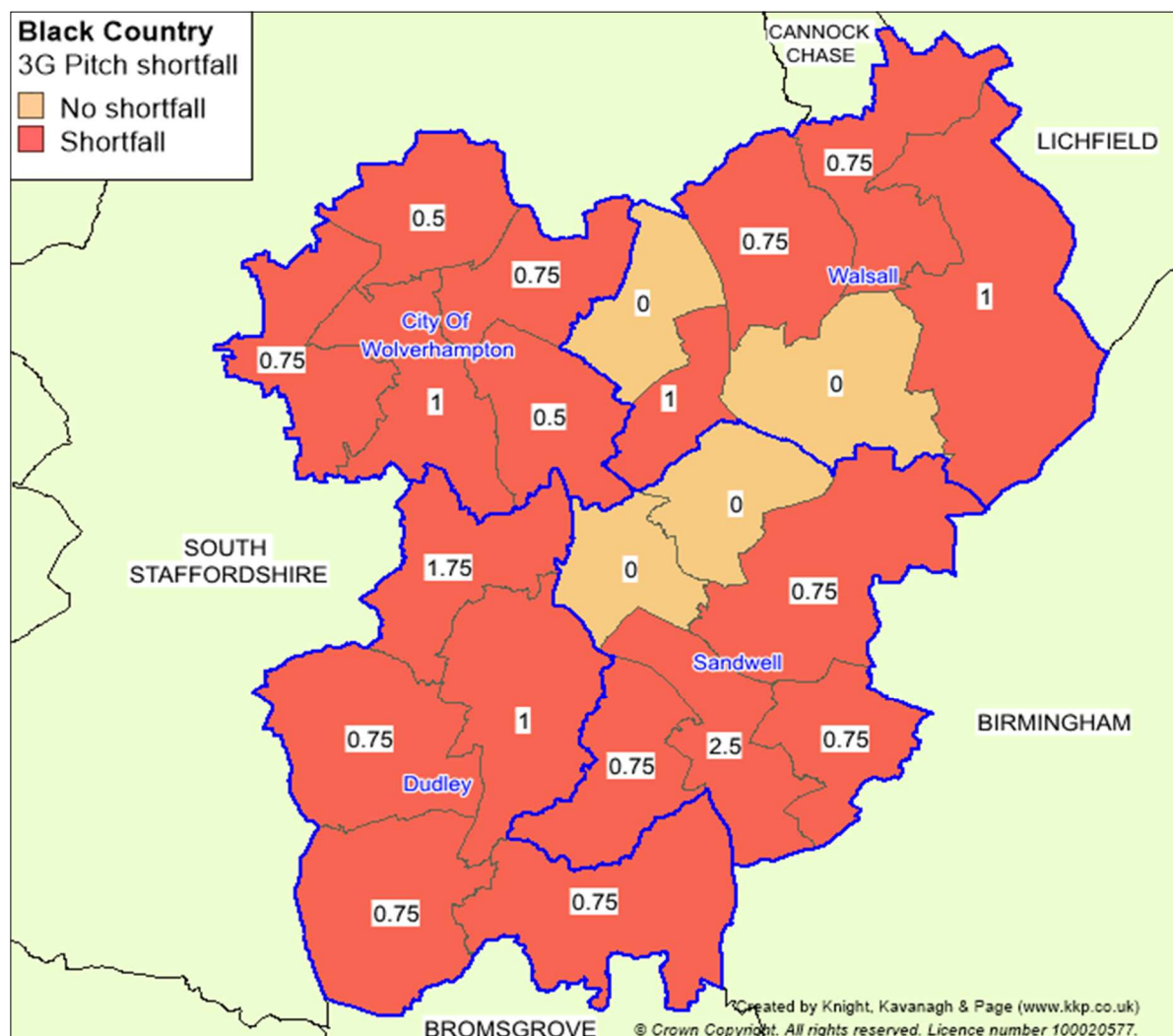
Local authority	Comments
Dudley	There are currently four full size 3G pitches provided, all of which are floodlit and available to the community. There is, however, a need for 8.75 full size 3G pitches, meaning a current shortfall of 4.75 pitches. When factoring in future demand, this increases to 5.25 pitches.
Sandwell	There are currently six full size 3G pitches provided; however, two of these are unavailable to the community (at Sandwell Academy and West Bromwich Albion FC Academy) and are therefore discounted. With a need for 8.5 pitches, this equates to a shortfall of 4.5. The future shortfall remains the same.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Local authority	Comments
Walsall	There are currently nine full size 3G pitches provided, all of which are floodlit and available to the community. There is, however, a need for 11.75 full size 3G pitches, meaning a current shortfall of 2.75 pitches. When factoring in future demand, this increases to 3.5 pitches.
Wolverhampton	There are currently four full size 3G pitches provided; however, two of these are unavailable to the community (at Heath Park School and Sir Jack Hayward Training Ground) and are therefore discounted. With a need for 5.5 pitches, this equates to a shortfall of 3.5, which increases to 4.5 when accounting for future demand.

- The figure below identifies where shortfalls are present on an analysis area level; this can be used to identify where new 3G pitches could be strategically placed to best meet demand and to reduce deficits across analysis areas and local authorities in the most efficient way (e.g., one full size pitch could be established close to the border of two areas with a shortfall of 0.5 or 0.75 pitches).

Figure 2.1: Location of 3G pitch shortfalls (by sub area)



- Scope also exists for additional World Rugby provision to cater for Walsall clubs.
- Projected housing growth across the Black Country is likely to create demand equating to 3.67 additional full size pitches.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Table 2.9: Likely demand generated from housing growth for 3G pitches

Local authority	No. of 3G pitches required
Dudley	1.02
Sandwell	0.58
Walsall	1.38
Wolverhampton	0.69
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>3.67</b>

### Cricket

- There are 48 grass wicket squares provided across the Black Country, with 44 available for community use.

Table 2.10: Summary of grass wicket squares available for community use

Local authority	No. of squares available for community use
Dudley	11
Sandwell	6
Walsall	13
Wolverhampton	14
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>44</b>

- Of the community available squares, 21 are assessed as good quality, 22 as standard quality and just one as poor quality.

Table 2.11: Cricket pitch quality summary (community use pitches)

Local authority	Good	Standard	Poor
Dudley	6	5	-
Sandwell	5	1	-
Walsall	5	8	-
Wolverhampton	5	8	1
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>

- There are 29 cricket clubs collectively providing 231 teams.

Table 2.12 Summary of cricket teams

Local authority	Senior male	Senior female	Junior
Dudley	35	6	35
Sandwell	19	2	19
Walsall	25	1	28
Wolverhampton	29	3	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>111</b>

- There is an overall capacity shortfall for Saturday cricket.
- Overall spare capacity exists for Sunday and midweek cricket.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Table 2.13: Cricket supply and demand analysis in Match equivalent sessions per week

Format of play	Local authority	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Saturday cricket	Dudley	-	65	65	-	65
Saturday cricket	Sandwell	-	23	23	-	23
Saturday cricket	Walsall	24	14	10	-	10
Saturday cricket	Wolverhampton	24	49	25	-	25
Saturday cricket	<b>Black Country</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>103</b>
Sunday cricket	Dudley	48	65	17	-	17
Sunday cricket	Sandwell	28	23	5	-	5
Sunday cricket	Walsall	84	14	70	-	70
Sunday cricket	Wolverhampton	108	49	59	-	59
Sunday cricket	<b>Black Country</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>117</b>
Midweek cricket	Dudley	74	65	9	-	9
Midweek cricket	Sandwell	16	23	7	-	7
Midweek cricket	Walsall	104	14	90	-	90
Midweek cricket	Wolverhampton	120	49	81	-	81
Midweek cricket	<b>Black Country</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>164</b>

- Projected housing growth across the Black Country is likely to create demand equating to 4.42 cricket pitches.

Table 2.14: Likely demand generated from housing growth for cricket pitches

Local authority	No. of pitches
Dudley	1.43
Sandwell	0.50
Walsall	1.23
Wolverhampton	1.26
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>4.42</b>

### Rugby union

- There are 54 rugby union pitches in the Black Country, with 38 available for community use.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Table 2.15: Summary of rugby union pitches

Local authority	No. of senior pitches	No. of junior/mini pitches
Dudley	2	1
Sandwell	4	-
Walsall	19	1
Wolverhampton	6	5
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>7</b>

- Of the community available pitches, two are assessed as good quality, 15 as standard and 21 as poor.

Table 2.16: Rugby union pitch quality summary (community use pitches)

Local authority	Good	Standard	Poor
Dudley	-	2	1
Sandwell	1	1	2
Walsall	-	10	10
Wolverhampton	1	2	8
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>

- There are 10 clubs collectively fielding 64 teams.
- All clubs from Dudley are exported outside of the Borough to South Staffordshire and Bromsgrove.

Table 2.17: Summary of rugby union demand by teams

Local authority	Senior male	Senior female	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini mixed
Dudley	-	-	-	-	-
Sandwell	3	1	-	-	-
Walsall	13	1	14	3	12
Wolverhampton	3	1	7	-	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>

- There is a current and future shortfall of rugby union pitch capacity.

Table 2.18: Rugby union supply and demand analysis in Match equivalent sessions per week

Local authority	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current demand	Future demand	Future total
Dudley	-	-	0	-	0
Sandwell	1.5	0.5	1	-	1
Walsall	1.25	5.5	4.25	-	4.25
Wolverhampton	1.5	4.5	3	0.5	3.5
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>6.25</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>6.75</b>

- Projected housing growth across the Black Country is likely to create demand equating to 2.77 rugby union pitches.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Table 2.19: Likely demand generated from housing growth for rugby union pitches

Local authority	No. of pitches
Dudley	-
Sandwell	0.13
Walsall	1.99
Wolverhampton	0.65
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>2.77</b>

### Rugby league

- There are no rugby league pitches and no demand has been identified.
- Any residual need is unlikely to be sufficient enough for a club to be created, with individuals instead likely to travel to form part of the clubs based in other, nearby authorities.

### Hockey

- There are 12 full size, hockey suitable AGPs in the Black Country, all of which are available for community use.

Table 2.20: Summary of full size hockey pitch supply

Local authority	No. of full size pitches available for community use
Dudley	1
Sandwell	2
Walsall	4
Wolverhampton	5
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>12</b>

- Of the pitches, two are assessed as good quality, six as standard quality and four as poor quality.

Table 2.21: Hockey pitch quality summary (community use pitches)

Local authority	Good	Standard	Poor
Dudley	-	-	1
Sandwell	-	1	1
Walsall	-	2	2
Wolverhampton	2	3	-
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>

- There are 10 clubs identified, collectively providing 64 teams and catering for 1,155 playing members.
- All Dudley based demand is exported out of the Borough to Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Birmingham.
- Two clubs exported demand from Sandwell into Walsall.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Table 2.22: Summary of hockey demand in teams

Local authority	Senior men	Senior women	Junior	No. of members
Dudley	-	-	-	0
Sandwell	5	1	3	100
Walsall	16	6	9	550
Wolverhampton	16	6	2	505
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1,155</b>

- There is a need to protect all the pitches that are currently provided in addition to quality and access improvements.
- There may be a requirement for new provision in Dudley and/or Sandwell.

Table 2.23: Summary of supply and demand analysis

Local authority	Comments
Dudley	At least one suitable pitch needs to be provided, meaning there is a need to improve the pitch at Coseley Leisure Centre or develop new provision. This will be sufficient to return exported demand.
Sandwell	There is currently a requirement for two hockey suitable AGPs. As the pitch at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy is not serving any purposeful means, it therefore needs to be enhanced or an additional pitch is required. However, if a pitch is provided in Dudley, only one pitch in Sandwell will be required as imported demand can return.
Walsall	All four existing pitches require protection, with emphasis required on securing tenure.
Wolverhampton	All five pitches require protecting, including the currently unused pitch at WV Aldersley.

- Projected housing growth across the Black Country is likely to create demand equating to 0.67 hockey pitches.

Table 2.24: Likely demand generated from housing growth for hockey pitches

Local authority	No. of pitches
Dudley	-
Sandwell	0.05
Walsall	0.33
Wolverhampton	0.29
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>0.67</b>

### Tennis

- There are 334 tennis courts across the Black Country across 104 sites.
- Of the courts, 199 are available for community use across 60 sites, with most unavailable courts located at schools.



## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Table 2.25: Summary of tennis court supply

Local authority	No. of courts available for community use	No. of courts unavailable for community use
Dudley	49	40
Sandwell	35	22
Walsall	41	22
Wolverhampton	74	51
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>135</b>

- Only 114 courts are serviced by sports lighting, representing just 34% of the total provision across the region.

Table 2.26: Summary of courts with sports lighting

Local authority	No. of courts with sports lighting	% of courts with sports lighting
Dudley	23	26%
Sandwell	10	18%
Walsall	24	38%
Wolverhampton	57	47%
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>34%</b>

- Of the courts, 82 are assessed as good quality, 160 as standard quality and 92 as poor quality.

Table 2.27: Tennis court quality summary

Local authority	Good	Standard	Poor
Dudley	24	29	36
Sandwell	8	32	17
Walsall	2	48	13
Wolverhampton	48	51	26
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>92</b>

- There are 14 clubs identified.
- Where membership is known, there are 2,899 members across the clubs equating to 1,953 senior members and 946 junior members.

Table 2.28: Summary of tennis club demand

Local authority	No. of clubs	No. of senior members	No. of junior members
Dudley	3	393	275
Sandwell	2	114	100
Walsall	3	451	207
Wolverhampton	6	995	364
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1,953</b>	<b>946</b>

- For clubs, there are capacity shortfalls for five clubs in Dudley and Walsall, whilst supply is seemingly sufficient in Walsall and Wolverhampton.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Table 2.29: Summary of supply and demand analysis (club activity)

Local authority	Comments
Dudley	There are current capacity shortfalls for Halesowen and Wall Heath tennis clubs as well as future shortfalls for Quarry Bank TC.
Sandwell	Supply is sufficient to meet demand, although further exploration is required to fully determine membership at Wednesbury TC.
Walsall	Streetly TC is operating above capacity, whilst Walsall TC needs its own home venue with at least one floodlit court or two non-floodlit courts.
Wolverhampton	Supply is sufficient to meet demand.

- Regarding non-club courts, none are identified as having capacity issues, with focus instead needing to be placed on improving quality to promote and increase informal/recreational play.

### Netball

- There are 278 netball courts across the Black Country at 120 sites.
- Of the courts, only 89 are available for community use across 28 sites, with most unavailable courts located at schools.

Table 2.30: Summary of netball court supply

Local authority	No. of courts available for community use	No. of courts unavailable for community use
Dudley	14	73
Sandwell	27	35
Walsall	13	47
Wolverhampton	35	34
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>189</b>

- Only 63 courts are serviced by sports lighting, representing just 27% of the provision compared to a national average of 38%.

Table 2.31: Summary of netball courts with sports lighting

Local authority	No. of courts with sports lighting	% of courts with sports lighting
Dudley	4	5%
Sandwell	23	37%
Walsall	7	12%
Wolverhampton	29	41%
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>34%</b>

- Of the courts, 82 are assessed as good quality, 158 as standard quality and 92 as poor quality.

Table 2.32: Netball court quality summary

Local authority	Good	Standard	Poor
Dudley	6	52	29
Sandwell	20	29	13
Walsall	4	52	4
Wolverhampton	20	46	3
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>49</b>

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

- ◀ The Dudley Netball League exports out of Dudley, into Sandwell, due to a lack of suitable provision.
- ◀ The Walsall Netball League also exports to Sandwell, although this is through choice.
- ◀ Demand in Wolverhampton is being met.

*Table 2.33: Summary of supply and demand analysis*

Local authority	Comments
Dudley	Whilst there are a large quantity of netball courts provided, the large majority are serving no purpose outside of curricular and extra-curricular demand, contributing to the Dudley Netball League being unable to use a central venue in the Borough despite it expressing an aspiration to do so. Options should therefore be explored to accommodate such demand.
Sandwell	Sandwell is relatively well catered for regarding netball and focus should therefore be placed on protecting the facilities at George Salter Academy and Phoenix Collegiate and ensuring that the quality of the provision remains adequate to meet the demand. Should demand relocate to Dudley, it is also imperative that any Sandwell-based demand remains provided for and that the provision remains sustainable.
Walsall	Whilst there is a large quantity of netball courts provided in Walsall, the large majority are serving no purpose outside of curricular and extra-curricular demand. However, there is no clear requirement for a facility to be provided within the Borough.
Wolverhampton	All demand is seemingly being catered for through use of WV Active Aldersley.

### **Bowls**

- ◀ There are 96 bowling greens provided.

*Table 2.34: Summary of bowling green supply*

Local authority	No. of greens
Dudley	28
Sandwell	18
Walsall	29
Wolverhampton	21
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>96</b>

- ◀ Of the greens, 69 are assessed as good, 19 as standard and eight as poor quality.

*Table 2.35: Summary of bowling green quality*

Local authority	Good	Standard	Poor
Dudley	9	13	6
Sandwell	17	1	-
Walsall	26	3	-
Wolverhampton	17	2	2
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>

- ◀ There are 82 clubs identified.
- ◀ Where membership is known, there are 2,882 members across the clubs equating to 2,841 senior members and 41 junior members.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Table 2.36: Summary of bowls club demand

Local authority	No. of clubs	No. of senior members	No. of junior members
Dudley	23	808	3
Sandwell	16	412	8
Walsall	26	890	11
Wolverhampton	17	731	19
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>2,841</b>	<b>41</b>

- There are 14 clubs operating above the recommended capacity limit for use of a single green, although none report any particularly capacity concerns.
- Four clubs are operating below what would be considered a sustainable level and therefore require support.
- Some unused greens are in existence which may offer a solution for some of the larger clubs, if required (strategic reserve).

Table 2.37: Summary of supply and demand analysis

Local authority	Comments
Dudley	Five clubs are operating above capacity limits, whilst two are operating below sustainable levels. However, no clubs report any issues, suggesting that supply is sufficient to meet demand.
Sandwell	One club is operating above capacity limits, whilst one is operating below a sustainable level. However, no clubs report any issues, suggesting that supply is sufficient to meet demand.
Walsall	Five clubs are operating above capacity, whilst one is operating below sustainable levels. As there are four unused greens, these may offer strategic reserve for some of the larger clubs.
Wolverhampton	Three clubs are operating above capacity limits. However, no clubs report any issues, suggesting that supply is sufficient to meet demand.

### Cycling

- There are cycling facilities provided in Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton, whilst Walsall is without provision.
- A total of eight venues provide for cycling.

Table 2.38: Summary of cycling supply

Local authority	Facilities
Dudley	Manor Abbey Stadium provides a 400-metre cycling track.
Sandwell	Sandwell Valley Country Park features a range of surfaced and unsurfaced cycling tracks as well as a mountain bike trail and a pump track, whilst Hadley Stadium is also used for cycling activity.
Walsall	No dedicated provision provided.
Wolverhampton	Ashmore Park and East Park provide cycle speedway tracks, Bilston Pump Park and Hilton Road Playing Fields provide BMX pump tracks and WV Aldersley has an asphalt cycling track.

- A total of 15 cycling clubs are identified.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

*Table 2.39: Summary of cycling demand*

Local authority	Clubs
Dudley	Halesowen Cycling Club, Stourbridge Cycling Club and Stourbug.
Sandwell	Bangladeshi Association Cycling Club, Hadley Stadium Cycling Club, Lightwoods Community Cycle Club and Smethwick Beat the Streets Community Cycling Club.
Walsall	Pelsall Social Cycling Club and Walsall Road Cycling Club.
Wolverhampton	Wednesfield Aces, Wolverhampton Wheelers, Wolverhampton Racing Cycling Club, East Park Wolves Cycle Speedway Club and Let Us Play Cycling.

- Supply is generally sufficient to meet demand, although facilities require protection and some quality improvements are necessary.

### **Athletics**

- There are nine sites providing athletics facilities.

*Table 2.40: Summary of athletics supply*

Local authority	Facilities
Dudley	The Dell Stadium provides a 400-metre track and Manor Abbey Stadium provides a 350-metre track.
Sandwell	400-metre tracks are provided at Hadley Stadium, Phoenix Collegiate and Tipton Sports Academy, whilst Sandwell Academy has a 200-metre track.
Walsall	The University of Wolverhampton provides a 200-metre track.
Wolverhampton	WV Active Aldersley provides a 400-metre track and The King's Church of England School provides a 200-metre, albeit this is not available for community use.

- A total of 21 clubs undertaking athletics and/or running activity.
- One Park Run is held in each authority every Saturday.

*Table 2.41: Summary of athletics demand*

Local authority	Clubs
Dudley	Dudley & Stourbridge Harriers Athletics Club, Halesowen Athletics & Cycling Club, Dudley Kingswinford Running Club, Sedgley Striders, Yellow Army Running Club, Stourbridge Running Club, Dudley Ladies Running Club, Halesowen Triathlon Club and Action Heart Running Club.
Sandwell	Tipton Harriers, Black Country Running Club, Sandwell Valley Running Club, West Bromwich Harriers and Warley Wasps Triathlon & Running Club.
Walsall	Walsall Arboretum Running Club, Aldridge Running Club, Sneyd Striders and Jog Walsall.
Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton & Bilston Athletics Club, Jolly Joggers Wolverhampton and Sedgley Striders.

- Supply is generally sufficient to meet demand, with no need for additional facilities.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

### Golf

- There are 22 sites across the Black Country providing golf facilities.
- Across the sites, there are 20 standard hole courses, one Par 3 course and eight driving ranges.

Table 2.42: Summary of golf supply

Local authority	No. of golf sites
Dudley	3
Sandwell	5
Walsall	8
Wolverhampton	6
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>22</b>

- There are 7,025 members attached to the sites that offer a membership.

Table 2.43: Summary of golf demand

Local authority	No. of clubs	No. of members
Dudley	3	1,325
Sandwell	5	932
Walsall	8	2,669
Wolverhampton	6	2,099
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7,025</b>

- Supply is generally sufficient to meet demand, with all aspects of the golfing market accommodated across the area.

### Outdoor water sports

- Outdoor water sport activity takes place at a variety of sites across the Black Country via a mix of natural bodies of water and built facilities.

Table 2.44: Summary of outdoor water sport supply

Local authority	Facilities
Dudley	Dudley Water Sports Centre accommodates diving, rowing, open water swimming, sailing, snorkelling, wakeboarding and water skiing, whilst Dudley Canal and Himley Hall can also be used.
Sandwell	Swan Pool accommodates sailing, canoeing and open water swimming.
Walsall	Chase Water Sports Centre provides for water skiing, knee boarding, trick skiing, wakeboarding and wake surfing, whilst Sneyd Water Activity Centre provides for canoeing, kayaking, power boating, sailing and windsurfing. Aldridge Marina and The Swag are also used for some activity.
Wolverhampton	Canoeing takes place on the Staffordshire & Worcester Canal, whilst boat racing takes place along the Staffordshire Union Canal.

- A total of 18 clubs provide for some form of outdoor water sports demand.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

*Table 2.45: Summary of outdoor water sports demand*

Local authority	Clubs
Dudley	Dudley, Waterski & Wakeboard Club, Dudley Nautilus Sub-Aqua Club, Dudley Sailing Club, Dudley Dolphin British Sub-Aqua Club, Dudley Rowing Club, Netherton Open Water Swimming Club and Warley Wasps Triathlon & Running Club.
Sandwell	Sandwell Valley Sailing Club, Oldbury Swimming & Triathlon Club and Birmingham Canoe Club.
Walsall	Aldridge Sailing Club, Chase Open Water Swimming Club, Chase Sailing Club, Pier 52 and Royal Sutton Coldfield Canoe Club.
Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton Canoe Club, Wolverhampton Boat Club and Chillington Divers.

- Given that it is not a coastal area, the Black Country is very well catered for when it comes to outdoor water sports, with most activities provided for in some form.

### **Other grass pitch sports**

- American football, baseball/softball and Gaelic football are all identified as having supply and/or demand in the Black Country.
- There is a need for facility solutions to better accommodate all three sports.

*Table 2.46: Summary of other grass pitch sport supply and demand*

Sport	Local authority	Comments
American football	Dudley	Black Country Vipers has one team which uses a 3G pitch at Stourbridge Rugby Club. This is sufficient to meet its demand.
American football	Sandwell / Walsall	Sandwell Steelers uses an over marked football pitch at Tipton Sports Academy for matches, 3G pitches at Gosepl Oak Academy and Portway Leisure Centre for training, and exports some demand to Walsall Rugby Club in Walsall. Providing one venue for all activity should be explored.
Baseball/softball	Dudley/ Wolverhampton	Stourbridge Titans Baseball Club previously used a diamond at Thorns Leisure Centre but now exports to Colton Hills Community School, in Wolverhampton. Options should be explored to return this activity.
Baseball/softball	Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton Baseball Club uses the diamond at Colton Hills High School and this sufficient to meets its need, although a community use agreement should be sought.
Gaelic football	Wolverhampton	St Marys Gaelic Football Club uses an overmarked football pitch at Aldersley High School for its activity. This is undersized and therefore insufficient to meet its needs.



## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

### 2.2: Cross-boundary demand

Due to the proximity of the four Black Country authorities, the relationship between them and the issues that are present, some demand is displaced (imported/exported) across boundary lines. This is sometimes through choice, but is often due to a lack of suitable provision and/or capacity within a particular area. As such, given the joint nature of this study, the councils should work together to return as much of the demand as possible to ensure that it is adequately accommodated in a suitable location and that it does not put added pressure on supply within the authority that it is imported into.

The table below summarises where displaced demand has been identified in the PPOSS between the four authorities and where it expresses the desire to return.

*Table 2.47: Summary of displaced demand*

Sport	Local authority demand is exported from	Local authority demand is imported to	Comments
Football	Dudley	Sandwell	Cradley Town FC uses a number of sites in Sandwell due to a lack of availability in Dudley.
Football	Dudley	Sandwell	Halas Hawks FC uses a number of sites in Sandwell due to a lack of availability in Dudley.
Football	Dudley	Sandwell	Stourbridge FC uses a number of sites in Sandwell due to a lack of availability in Dudley.
Football	Dudley	Walsall	Dudley Town FC's 1 <sup>st</sup> team exports to Aspray Arena due to a lack of suitable venues in Dudley; it requires a pitch capable of meeting football pyramid criteria.
Football	Dudley	Wolverhampton	Sedgley & Gornal FC exports a proportion of its demand to sites in Wolverhampton due to not being able to access a site large enough in Dudley to accommodate all of its teams.
Football	Sandwell	Walsall	Great Barr Harriers FC exports a team to the University of Aston Recreation Centre.
Football	Sandwell	Walsall	Oldbury United FC exports a team to the University of Aston Recreation Centre.
Football	Sandwell	Dudley	Oldbury United FC utilises Cradley Town FC for three of its teams due to a lack of pitches in Sandwell.
Football	Sandwell	Dudley	Bustleholme FC groundshares with AFC Birmingham due to no suitable venue being available in Sandwell.
Cricket	Dudley	Sandwell	Coseley CC accesses a secondary venue in Sandwell for its 3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday team due to a lack of capacity in Dudley.
Hockey	Dudley	Sandwell	Old Halesonians HC uses Ormiston Forge Academy for some of its demand (accessing a site in Birmingham for the remainder) due to no hockey suitable provision being available in Dudley.
Hockey	Dudley	Wolverhampton	Dudley Ladies HC fields its demand at SWB Academy as no hockey suitable provision is available in Dudley.
Hockey	Sandwell	Walsall	West Bromwich HC accesses Aston University Recreation Centre for all of its demand following the 3G conversion of the pitch at George Salter Academy.



## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Sport	Local authority demand is exported from	Local authority demand is imported to	Comments
Netball	Dudley	Sandwell	The Dudley Netball League currently utilises a central venue in Sandwell for all of its demand but has an aspiration to use a site in Dudley.
Athletics	Sandwell	Walsall	West Bromwich Harriers uses Walsall Rugby Club as a home base following the loss of access to a site in Oldbury.
Other grass pitch sports	Dudley	Wolverhampton	Stourbridge Titans Baseball Club uses Colton Hills Community School due to no provision existing within Dudley.
Other grass pitch sports	Sandwell	Walsall	Sandwell Steelers American Football Club uses Walsall Rugby Club for its junior matches due to a lack of provision in Sandwell.

In addition to the table above, there is also additional imported and exported demand identified in relation to the Black Country and other local authority areas, especially Birmingham (e.g., into/from Sandwell) and South Staffordshire (e.g., into/from Wolverhampton), but also relevant to the likes of Bromsgrove and Lichfield. As such, a partnership approach should also be sought with these authorities in an attempt to return the demand, where required and possible.

Overarching recommendations when it comes to exported/imported demand are as follows:

- ✦ Through cross-authority working, seek to return demand to its home local authority through identifying sites that meet requirements in terms of factors such as location, accessibility capacity, quantity, quality and level of play.
- ✦ Where such provision does not exist, strive to create/provide appropriate facilities through actioning recommendations in individual PPOSS documents e.g., through pitch quality improvements, alleviating overplay, securing tenure and securing community access to currently unavailable sites.
- ✦ To ensure demand is adequately re-located, carry out further consultation with affected clubs/teams/users to fully determine their requirements and to discuss potential options, supported by relevant NGBs if necessary.
- ✦ Seek funding to enable the relocation, where required, potentially via S106 contributions.
- ✦ Ensure access to provision that is currently used by exported demand is protected until it is no longer required.

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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### 2.3: Individual authority summaries

The above has been formulated using the findings from each of the individual authorities. As such, the key findings for each authority are summarised below to identify how the overarching summary has been developed, as well as to evidence any additional local authority specific issues and findings that will need to be addressed in addition to the Black Country wide approach.

#### **Dudley**

##### *Football*

- ✦ The audit identifies a total of 176 grass football pitches across 94 sites, including 152 pitches available for community use across 75 sites.
- ✦ Lapsed/disused pitches are identified at eight sites, and nine council sites previously provided more pitches than they currently do.
- ✦ Of the community available pitches, ten are assessed as good quality, 78 as standard and 64 as poor.
- ✦ A total of 413 teams from within 100 clubs are identified and there is a trend of significant growth in recent years.
- ✦ There are high levels of exported demand, with a large number of teams playing in neighbouring authorities due to a lack of pitch capacity and availability.
- ✦ There is a current and future shortfall of adult, youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 match equivalent sessions, whilst minimal spare capacity exists on mini 5v5 pitches.

##### *3G pitches*

- ✦ There are four full size 3G pitches, all of which are floodlit and available for community use.
- ✦ There are also 30 smaller sized 3G pitches across nine sites.
- ✦ One full size pitch (at Thorns Leisure Centre) is not FA accredited and it is poor quality having reached the end of its lifespan, whereas the remaining pitches are assessed as good quality and can be used competitively.
- ✦ One pitch (at the Dell Stadium) is World Rugby compliant, although it is not currently in use for this purpose.
- ✦ The existing 3G provision is reported to be operating at or close to capacity at peak times, with all current community activity being football-based.
- ✦ With 413 football teams, there is a calculated shortfall of 4.75 full size 3G pitches to meet training needs.
- ✦ When accounting for future demand for an additional 14 teams (based on population increases), the shortfall increases 5.25 pitches.
- ✦ No demand has been identified from other sports for access to 3G provision.

##### *Cricket*

- ✦ In total, there are 12 grass cricket squares, with 11 available for community use.
- ✦ Six are considered to be good quality and the remaining six are standard quality; none are assessed as poor.
- ✦ There are non-turf wickets accompanying grass wicket squares at six sites and there are standalone non-turf wickets at nine sites.
- ✦ Six clubs report a demand for new, improved or additional training facilities.
- ✦ There are eight clubs which collectively provide 76 teams.
- ✦ Five clubs export demand to neighbouring local authorities, representing a substantial amount of exported demand.
- ✦ For senior cricket, both current and future shortfalls are evidenced on Saturdays and Sundays, whilst there is overall spare capacity during midweek for junior cricket.

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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### *Rugby union*

- There are six sites containing a total of seven senior and three junior rugby union pitches, with two senior and one junior pitch available for community use.
- All of the pitches are school-based and each pitch is either standard or poor quality.
- Despite four clubs drawing players from the area, none have a need or a want to play within the Borough, meaning that there is no clear requirement for community available rugby union pitches.

### *Rugby league*

- There are no rugby league pitches and no demand has been identified.
- Any residual need is unlikely to be sufficient enough for a club to be created, with individuals instead likely to travel to form part of the clubs based in other, nearby authorities.

### *Hockey*

- There is one full size hockey suitable AGP provided at Coseley Leisure Centre, and this is floodlit and available to the community.
- There are seven smaller size pitches, of which two (at Windsor High School & Sixth College and The Earls High School) are large enough for some form of hockey demand.
- Aspirations exist to convert the pitches at Coseley Leisure Centre and Windsor High School & Sixth Form College to 3G.
- The pitch at Coseley Leisure Centre is assessed as poor quality and is not known to have been resurfaced since it was installed in 2000, and the pitch at Windsor High School & Sixth Form College is also poor quality.
- There are no affiliated hockey clubs identified although Kingswinford, Old Halesonians and Dudley Ladies hockey previously played in the Borough.
- Dudley Ladies and Old Halesonians hockey clubs have a preference to return their demand to Dudley, whereas Kingswinford HC is considered to be a Birmingham-based club given how long it has played in the City for.
- Focus should be placed on ensuring that at least one suitable venue for hockey is provided, meaning there is either a need to improve the quality at Coseley Leisure Centre, or, if 3G proposals at the site are to go ahead, there is a requirement to develop a new full size sand-based AGP elsewhere.
- The creation of a second hockey-suitable AGP could also be sought to ensure that all future can be met within Dudley.

### *Tennis*

- There are a total of 89 tennis courts identified across 28 sites, with 49 courts categorised as being available for community use at 17 sites.
- Of the courts, 24 are assessed as good quality, 29 as standard quality and 36 as poor quality.
- There are three tennis clubs.
- There is a shortfall of provision for club-based tennis, whilst quality is inadequate standard for informal play.

### *Netball*

- There is a large supply of outdoor netball courts, with 87 identified across 60 sites; however, only 14 courts at five sites are available for community use.
- Six courts are assessed as good quality, 52 as standard quality and 29 as poor quality.
- Clubs form part of the Dudley Netball League, with all matches played at George Salter Academy, which is located in Sandwell (exported demand).
- The League would like to use a venue in the Borough to better accommodate its demand but no suitable venues currently exist.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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### *Bowls*

- There are 28 crown green bowls greens provided across 26 sites as well as one flat green (at Stevens Park (Wollescote)).
- There are also two disused greens (at Buffery Park and Gornal & Sedgley Labour Club).
- Overall, nine crown greens are assessed as good quality, 13 as standard quality and six as poor quality, whilst the flat green is assessed as standard.
- There are 23 crown green clubs using bowling greens and one flat green club.
- All clubs report that existing membership can be accommodated on the current level of provision and that no potential members are being turned away, suggesting that supply is sufficient to meet demand.

### *Cycling*

- Manor Abbey Stadium provides a 400-metre cycling track.
- The track is of an overall adequate quality; however, resurfacing will be required in the near future as it reaches the end of its lifespan.
- High demand for cycling is identified, with three clubs in operation (Halesowen Cycling Club, Stourbridge Cycling Club and Stourbug) in addition to cycling initiatives.

### *Athletics*

- There are two purpose-built athletics tracks (one at the Dell Stadium and one at Manor Abbey Stadium).
- Both tracks are assessed as good quality.
- Eight clubs have a current focus on athletics and/or running activity.
- Supply is sufficient to meet demand but requires protection to ensure this remains the case.

### *Golf*

- There are currently three golf sites collectively providing two standard hole courses, one 9-hole course and one driving range.
- Membership is higher than the national average.
- It is considered that there is a sufficient level of golf provision.

### *Water sports*

- Dudley Water Sports Centre provides facilities that are compatible with a number of water sports and other water-related activities.
- Dudley Canal is also used for some water sport activities such as canoeing and kayaking, whilst Himley Hall has a lake that is frequently used for sailing.
- Dudley Water Sports Centre is home to numerous clubs, whilst Dudley Canal and Himley Hall also host activity.
- Through Dudley Water Centre, Dudley Canal and Himley Hall, supply is sufficient to meet demand.

### *Other grass pitch sports*

- Black Country Vipers (American Football Club) accesses the 3G pitch at Stourbridge Rugby Club for its activity, which is sufficient.
- Stourbridge Titans Baseball Club is exported from the Borough.

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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### **Sandwell**

#### *Football*

- There are 171 grass football pitches across 70 sites, with 139 pitches available for community use across 48 sites.
- Lapsed/disused pitches are identified at five sites.
- Of the available pitches, five are assessed as good quality, 51 as standard and 83 as poor.
- A total of 348 teams from within 115 clubs are identified.
- There are high levels of exported demand identified, with a large number of clubs and teams playing in neighbouring authorities due to a lack of pitch capacity and availability within the Borough.
- There is a current shortfall of adult, youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 match equivalent sessions, whilst minimal capacity exists on mini 5v5 pitches.
- When incorporating future demand, shortfalls are predicted to worsen on adult and youth 11v11 pitches.

#### *3G pitches*

- There are six outdoor full size 3G pitches, all of which are floodlit and four of which are available for community use.
- There is also a full size indoor pitch (at West Bromwich Albion FC Academy), although this is also unavailable for community use.
- There are also 13 smaller sized 3G pitches across six sites, all of which are available for community use and floodlit.
- Four of the six full size pitches are on the FA register for match play (pitches at Sandwell Academy and West Bromwich Albion FC Academy are not), whereas none are World Rugby compliant.
- All of the full size pitches are good or standard quality and within their recommended lifespans.
- The existing community available 3G provision is reported to be operating at or close to capacity, especially at peak times, with all current community activity identified as being football-based.
- There is a calculated current and future deficit of 4.5 full size 3G pitches to meet football training needs.

#### *Cricket*

- There are six grass cricket squares, with all six available for community use.
- Numerous others sites previously provided grass wicket squares, including council parks.
- There is one accompanying non-turf wicket and 15 standalone non-turf wickets at 14 sites.
- The audit of community available grass wicket cricket squares found five to be good quality and the remaining one to be standard quality; none are assessed as poor.
- Four clubs report a demand for new, improved or additional training facilities.
- There are five clubs which collectively provide 40 teams.
- Two clubs (Old Hill CC and Smethwick CC) export demand to sites in Birmingham, whilst one club (Coseley CC) imports demand.
- There is a shortfall for Saturday and midweek cricket, whilst spare capacity exists on Sundays.

#### *Rugby union*

- There are seven sites containing the same number of pitches, all of which are senior although only four are available for community use.
- Of the community available pitches, one is assessed as good quality and two as poor.
- Two community rugby union clubs are identified; Warley RUFC and Wednesbury RUFC.
- There is overall spare capacity on rugby union pitches in Sandwell, although a localised shortfall exists for Wednesbury RUFC.

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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### *Rugby league*

- There are no rugby league pitches and no demand has been identified.
- Any residual need is unlikely to be sufficient enough for a club to be created, with individuals instead likely to travel to form part of the clubs based in other, nearby authorities.

### *Hockey*

- There are two full size hockey suitable AGPs (at Ormiston Forge Academy and Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy).
- Both pitches are available for community use; however, the pitch at Ormiston Forge Academy is without floodlighting.
- The pitch at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy is assessed as poor quality.
- Old Halesonians HC is the only hockey club playing in the Borough, although the Club previously played in Dudley and considers this to be its home authority (imported demand).
- Both Wednesbury HC and West Bromwich HC export demand.
- There is a requirement for two hockey suitable AGPs, which is not currently being met due to quality and floodlighting issues at Ormiston Forge Academy.

### *Tennis*

- There are a total of 57 tennis courts identified across 18 sites, with 35 courts categorised as being available for community use at 12 sites.
- Eight courts are assessed as good quality, 32 as standard quality and 17 as poor quality.
- Discussions are ongoing regarding development plans at Tipton Sports Academy, whilst the Council is also working with the LTA on a potential parks development project for 2022.
- There are two tennis clubs; Old Hill TC and Wednesbury TC.
- Club-based demand is being met, although improvements are required to satisfy informal play.

### *Netball*

- There are 62 courts identified across 24 sites, with 27 courts available for community use.
- There are 20 courts assessed as good quality, 29 as standard quality and 13 as poor quality.
- The courts at George Salter Academy and Phoenix Collegiate are accessed by the Dudley Netball League and the Walsall Netball League, respectively.
- Both leagues import demand and the Dudley Netball League has a preference to relocate to its home authority (Dudley).
- Supply meets demand, with a large number of community available netball courts provided and with a good number of these being dedicated to netball.

### *Bowls*

- There are 18 crown green bowls greens provided across 17 sites.
- Three disused greens have also been identified, whilst the green at Cradley Sports & Social Club is at risk to development.
- In total, 17 greens are assessed as good quality and one is standard quality.
- There are 16 clubs.
- All clubs report that existing membership can be accommodated on the current level of provision, suggesting that supply is sufficient to meet demand.

### *Cycling*

- Sandwell Valley Country Park features a range of surfaced and unsurfaced cycling tracks as well as a mountain bike trail and a pump track.
- Two national cycling routes run are evident; Route 5 (from Reading to North Wales) and Route 81 (from Aberystwyth to Wolverhampton).
- Cycling is also encouraged along canal towpaths throughout the Borough.
- There are four prominent cycling clubs, although none are currently affiliated.



# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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### *Athletics*

- There are four purpose-built athletics tracks (at Hadley Stadium, Phoenix Collegiate, Sandwell Academy and Tipton Sports Academy).
- The track at Hadley Stadium is also assessed as poor quality and is no longer useable.
- Five clubs have a current focus on athletics and/or running activity.
- Given how well provided for the Borough is, the track at Hadley Stadium is deemed surplus to requirements in its current form.

### *Golf*

- There are currently five golf sites.
- In addition, there is disused provision at Brandhall Golf Club, which previously provided an 18-hole course but did not re-open following initial Covid-19 restrictions.
- Across the sites there are two 18-hole courses, three 9-hole courses and a driving range.
- Overall, clubs operating a membership scheme are below the national membership average, suggesting that provision is well placed to meet demand.

### *Water sports*

- Swan Pool provides facilities that are compatible with a number of water sports and other water-related activities and it is home to several clubs.
- Through Swan Pool, supply is sufficient to meet demand.

### *Other grass pitch sports*

- Sandwell Steelers American Football Club has to split its activity across numerous venues, with no dedicated provision existing.

## **Walsall**

### **Football**

- The audit identifies a total of 179 grass football pitches across 60 sites, including 147 pitches available for community use across 48 sites.
- Lapsed/disused pitches are identified at four sites.
- Of the available pitches, nine are assessed good quality, 89 as standard and 48 as poor.
- A total of 446 teams are evidenced, with a general trend of growth in recent years.
- Dudley Town FC (Step 6) imports demand as its requirements cannot be met in Dudley.
- There are shortfalls for youth 11v11 and mini 7v7 football, whilst adult, youth 9v9, and mini 5v5 pitches all provide current and future spare capacity.

### **3G pitches**

- There are nine full size 3G pitches, of which all are floodlit and available for community use.
- There are also 22 smaller sized 3G pitches across five sites.
- Six full size pitches are on the FA register and one pitch is World Rugby compliant.
- All full-size pitches are good or standard quality and within their life expectancy.
- The existing 3G provision is reported to be operating at or close to capacity at peak times.
- With 446 football teams currently playing, there is a calculated shortfall of 2.75 full size 3G pitches to meet training needs, increasing to 3.5 pitches when factoring in future demand.
- The creation of additional full size 3G pitches that are World Rugby compliant in strategically viable locations would also relieve pressure on rugby union grass pitches.

### **Cricket**

- In total, there are 13 grass cricket squares, all of which are available to the community.
- Five are assessed as good quality and eight are assessed as standard quality (none are assessed as poor quality).
- There are non-turf wickets accompanying grass wicket squares at five sites and there are 10 standalone non-turf wickets at nine sites.
- There are eight affiliated clubs which collectively provide 54 teams.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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- ◀ One club (Streetly CC) exports some demand (into Lichfield).
- ◀ Demand for senior cricket is currently being met; however, a future shortfall is evident in regards to Saturday cricket.
- ◀ It is expected that junior cricket will be able to be satisfied taking into account both current and future demand.

### Rugby union

- ◀ There are 16 sites containing a total of 25 senior and one mini rugby union pitches, of which 14 senior and the mini pitch is available for community use across eight sites.
- ◀ There are 12 senior pitches assessed as standard quality and 14 as poor quality (none are assessed as good quality).
- ◀ There are five rugby clubs providing 43 teams.
- ◀ There is currently an insufficient supply of provision for rugby union to accommodate existing demand.

### Rugby league

- ◀ There are no rugby league pitches and no demand has been identified.
- ◀ Any residual need is unlikely to be sufficient enough for a club to be created, with individuals instead likely to travel to form part of the clubs based in other, nearby authorities

### Hockey

- ◀ There are four full size hockey suitable AGPs, all of which are available to the community and floodlit.
- ◀ Two pitches (at Sneyd Community Association and Willenhall E-Act Academy) are assessed as poor quality and have considerably exceeded their expected lifespans.
- ◀ Five hockey clubs consist of 34 teams.
- ◀ To ensure supply can meet demand, all four full size pitches are required.

### Tennis

- ◀ There are a total of 63 tennis courts identified across 20 sites, with 41 courts categorised as being available for community use at 13 sites.
- ◀ Of the courts, two are assessed as good quality, 48 as standard quality and 13 as poor quality.
- ◀ There are three tennis clubs.
- ◀ For club-based tennis demand to be met, Walsall TC requires a dedicated home venue with a sufficient number of courts.
- ◀ For non-club activity, quality improvements are required to better cater for informal and recreational play.

### Netball

- ◀ There is a total of 60 netball courts identified across 17 sites, with 13 courts at five sites are available for community use.
- ◀ All 60 of the courts are over marked by other sports provision and only seven of the courts are serviced by floodlighting
- ◀ Of the community available courts, there are none rated as good quality, 13 rated as standard and two as poor.
- ◀ Given that the Walsall Netball League exports to a central venue in Sandwell and given that this is its preference, there is no clear requirement for a club/league facility to be provided in Walsall.

### Bowls

- ◀ There are 29 crown green bowls greens provided across 28 sites.
- ◀ Overall, 26 greens are assessed as good quality and three as standard quality (none are assessed as poor quality).
- ◀ There are 26 clubs using bowling greens.



# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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- ◆ One club indicates a need for access to an additional green (this being Willenhall Nordley BC).
- ◆ Supply is deemed to be sufficient for all remaining clubs.

### **Cycling**

- ◆ There are no purpose built cycling facilities identified in the area.
- ◆ There are two British Cycling affiliated clubs (Pelsall Social Cycling Club and Walsall Road Cycling Club), both of which use the road network for activity.

### **Athletics**

- ◆ There is one purpose-built athletics track, provided at the University of Wolverhampton (Walsall Campus).
- ◆ The track is standard quality with resurfacing required in the near future.
- ◆ Four clubs have been identified that have a current focus on athletics and/or running activity, with none of these having a requirement for a purpose-built facility.
- ◆ The supply of dedicated athletics facilities is sufficient to meet demand, although quality improvements may be required in the near future.

### **Golf**

- ◆ There are currently seven golf sites, collectively providing six standard hole courses, one par 3 course and two driving ranges.
- ◆ All but one of the clubs is operating above the national average for membership, although none of the clubs have a significantly low base.
- ◆ As no clubs have a significantly low membership and as levels have recently increased, it is apparent that each venue is required.

### **Water sports**

- ◆ Chasewater Water Sports Centre provides facilities that are compatible with a number of water sports and other water-related activities.
- ◆ In addition, Sneyd Water Activity Centre is also used for some water sport activities such as canoeing and power boating, whilst The Swag is a reservoir frequently used for sailing.
- ◆ Aldridge Marina also caters for canoeing.
- ◆ Numerous clubs are identified (Aldridge Sailing Club, Chase Sailing Club and Pier 52).
- ◆ The Borough is particularly well catered for when it comes to outdoor water sports given that it is not a coastal authority and this is sufficient to meet demand.

### **Other grass pitch sports**

- ◆ No supply or demand for other sports is identified, although informal activity may take place

## **Wolverhampton**

### **Football**

- ◆ The audit identifies a total of 203 grass football pitches across 106 sites, including 137 pitches available for community use across 58 sites.
- ◆ Lapsed/disused pitches are identified at six sites.
- ◆ 15 community available pitches are assessed as good quality, 65 as standard and 57 as poor.
- ◆ 253 teams from within 87 clubs are identified, with a recent trend of significant growth.
- ◆ There are high levels of imported and exported demand, with a large number of teams playing in neighbouring authorities.
- ◆ There is a current shortfall of adult match equivalent sessions, whilst some capacity exists on youth 11v11, youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches.
- ◆ After factoring in future demand, shortfalls on adult pitches are exacerbated and a shortfall emerges on youth 11v11 pitches.

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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### **3G pitches**

- There are four full size 3G pitches, of which all are floodlit.
- Two pitches are available for community use (at City of Wolverhampton College and Our Lady & St Chad Catholic Academy) and two are not (at Heath Park School and Sir Jack Hayward Training Ground).
- There are also eight smaller sized 3G pitches across six sites.
- The community available full size 3G pitches are currently FA approved and can therefore host competitive matches.
- The pitch at the City of Wolverhampton College is at the end of its lifespan and is therefore assessed as poor quality.
- The existing 3G provision is reported to be operating at or close to capacity at peak times, with all current community activity being football-based.
- With 253 football teams currently playing, there is a shortfall of 3.5 full size 3G pitches to meet training needs, increasing to 4.5 pitches when factoring in future demand.
- No demand has been identified from other sports for access to 3G provision.

### **Cricket**

- In total, there are 13 grass cricket squares, with 11 available for community use.
- The audit of community available grass wicket cricket squares identifies five as good quality, seven as standard quality and one as poor quality (at Claregate Park).
- There are non-turf wickets accompanying grass wicket squares at five sites and there are standalone non-turf wickets at 15.
- Four clubs report a demand for new, improved, or additional training facilities.
- There are eight clubs identified, collectively providing 61 teams.
- There is both a current and future shortfall of provision to accommodate Saturday cricket, whereas spare capacity exists in relation to Sunday and midweek cricket.

### **Rugby union**

- There are four school sites providing rugby union pitches, all of which are available for community use.
- Each pitch is assessed as poor quality.
- Wolverhampton RUFC are based just over the border, in South Staffordshire, but are considered to be a Wolverhampton club.
- The Club has a shortfall of provision.

### **Rugby league**

- There are no rugby league pitches and no demand has been identified.
- Any residual need is unlikely to be sufficient enough for a club to be created, with individuals instead likely to travel to form part of the clubs based in other, nearby authorities.

### **Hockey**

- There are five full size hockey suitable AGP's, all of which are floodlit and available to the community.
- All pitches are good or standard quality.
- There are four affiliated hockey clubs identified (Dudley Ladies, Wolverhampton, Finchfield and Old Wulfrunians hockey clubs).
- Dudley Ladies HC previously accessed The Dell Stadium, in Dudley, before its conversion to 3G in 2016 (imported demand).
- Current supply of AGP's within Wolverhampton can accommodate the existing demand for hockey within the City but there is a need for all of the existing pitches to be protected.

### **Tennis**

- There are 125 tennis courts identified across 28 sites, with 74 courts available at 17 sites.
- Of the courts, 51 are assessed as good quality, 51 as standard quality and 26 as poor quality.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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- There are six tennis clubs.
- Supply is sufficient to meet demand for clubs.
- For non-club activity, quality improvements are required to better cater for play.

### **Netball**

- There is a large supply of outdoor netball courts, with 69 identified across 19 sites; however, only 35 courts at 10 sites are available for community use.
- Of the available courts, 15 are rated as good quality, 20 as standard and none as poor.
- The Wolverhampton Netball League uses WV Active Aldersley as a central venue.
- The supply of netball courts is considered to be sufficient to meet demand.

### **Bowls**

- There are 21 crown green bowls greens provided across 18 sites.
- There are also four disused greens identified.
- Overall, 17 greens are assessed as good quality, two as standard and two as poor.
- There are 17 clubs using bowling greens.
- All clubs report that existing membership can be accommodated on the current level of provision, suggesting that supply is sufficient to meet demand.

### **Cycling**

- There are two cycle speedway tracks, one asphalt track and two pump tracks.
- There are several local clubs, with membership relatively high.
- Supply is sufficient to meet demand provided that it is protected.

### **Athletics**

There are two purpose-built athletics tracks, a 400-metre track WV Active Aldersley and a 200-metre track at The King's Church of England School.

- Four clubs as well as a few programmes have a current focus on athletics and/or running activity, although only one has a requirement for a purpose-built facility.
- The supply of dedicated athletics facilities is sufficient to meet demand.

### **Golf**

- There are seven golf sites, collectively providing seven courses and four driving ranges.
- All but one club (Wergs Golf Club) operate above the national membership average.
- Supply of golf provision is relatively high and well varied, although each site is required to continue to meet demand.

### **Water sports**

- Staffordshire and Worcester Canal provides facilities that are compatible with water sports.
- Despite not having a large outdoor water sports facility like that provided elsewhere within the Black County, the City still has three clubs participating.

### **Other grass pitch sports**

- Wolverhampton Baseball Club accesses a diamond at Colton Hill High School and the site also accommodates Stourbridge Titans Baseball Club (imported demand).
- St Mary's Gaelic Football Club uses an overmarked and undersized football pitch at Aldersley High School, with aspirations existing for a dedicated venue to be provided.

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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## PART 3: OVERARCHING SPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to help develop the recommendations/actions and to understand the potential impact, a number of relevant scenario questions are tested against key issues for each outdoor sport, resulting in sport specific recommendations. These scenarios can be seen in the individual strategies for each local authority.

The recommendations within the individual strategy documents have now, where appropriate, been applied across the Black Country area to enable a joined-up approach to addressing key issues identified. These are identified below. The Steering Group should look to implement these on a Black Country-wide basis to enable joint working on strategic and cross-boundary issues and for efficiency purposes.

Implementation of these recommendations and actions are discussed further in the delivery section of this report (Part 6).

### 3.1: Sport-by-sport recommendations

#### **Football**

- ✦ Protect existing quantity of pitches, including lapsed and disused provision, until all demand is being met (unless replacement provision meets Sport England requirements and is agreed upon and provided).
- ✦ Where pitches are overplayed and assessed as poor or standard quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to ensure they are of an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality.
- ✦ Use the Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) as a guide to determine suitable sites for grass pitch investment and update the priority projects within it following this study.
- ✦ Utilise the Football Foundation's PitchPower web app to assist in the improvement and ongoing maintenance of provision.
- ✦ Consider pitch re-configuration where capacity of one pitch type can be used to reduce shortfalls of another, and where it can better accommodate what demand is received.
- ✦ Transfer play from sites which remain overplayed to alternative sites with spare capacity (or 3G provision), or to sites which are not currently available for community use.
- ✦ Consider bringing lapsed/disused sites back into use as well as pitches that were previously marked out at sites still in use.
- ✦ Work to accommodate latent and future demand at sites which are not operating at capacity or at sites which are not currently available for community use.
- ✦ Seek a resolution to identified exported/imported demand, particularly where evidenced between the four Black Country authorities.
- ✦ Look to secure tenure for those clubs accessing unsecure sites.
- ✦ Seek to gain access to sites not currently available for community use, particularly where a large number of pitches are provided.
- ✦ Improve ancillary facilities where there is a demand to do so and where it can benefit the wider footballing offer.
- ✦ Where appropriate, develop partnerships and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded clubs to manage their own sites.
- ✦ Ensure that any housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision and/or off-side contributions through master planning on an individual basis.

#### **3G pitches**

- ✦ Protect current stock of 3G pitches.
- ✦ Resurface pitches that have reached the end of their lifespans and ensure a sinking fund is in place for all pitches so that refurbishment can take place when required (the expectation is that sites should already have a sinking fund in place to enable this).

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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- ▶ To alleviate identified competitive and training demand shortfalls, look to create additional 3G pitches, focusing on strategic locations (see Figure 2.1).
- ▶ Where shortfalls exist in sub areas close to local authority boundary areas, ensure the relevant councils work together to focus on sites that can meet cross-border needs, minimise the pitch requirements and ensure an unsustainable oversupply is not created.
- ▶ Ensure, where possible, that any existing and new 3G pitches have community use agreements in place.
- ▶ Encourage more match play demand to transfer to 3G pitches and ensure all pitches are FA tested (and re-tested every three years) so that they can accommodate competitive fixtures.
- ▶ For World Rugby compliant pitches, ensure re-resting every two years to ensure they remain accredited.
- ▶ Ensure that all new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA/RFU recommended dimensions and quality performance standards.
- ▶ Ensure, where possible, that any new 3G pitches are priced competitively against the cost of hiring a grass pitch and are aimed at local grassroots clubs; this can be achieved when pitches are established through external funding by adding appropriate terms and conditions to the funding agreement.

### **Cricket**

- ▶ Protect existing quantity of cricket squares.
- ▶ Improve quality at sites assessed as poor or standard and ensure quality is sustained at sites assessed as good.
- ▶ Address overplay via quality improvements, an increase in NTPs accompanying grass wickets and increased utilisation of existing NTPs.
- ▶ Consider bringing lapsed/disused squares back into use, where identified, as another means of reducing shortfalls.
- ▶ If overplay cannot be alleviated through the abovementioned methods, explore the feasibility of creating new cricket squares, particularly if future growth aspirations are realised.
- ▶ Seek a resolution to identified exported/imported demand, particularly where evidenced between the four Black Country authorities.
- ▶ Pursue improved security of tenure for clubs without ownership or a long-term lease arrangement in place.
- ▶ Improve the changing facilities where there is a need to do so.
- ▶ Consider options to increase and improve stock of suitable practice facilities.
- ▶ Continue to support ECB initiatives such as All Stars and Dynamos and ensure unaffiliated demand and recreational cricket is provided for.
- ▶ Ensure that any housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision and/or off-side contributions through master planning on an individual basis.

### **Rugby union**

- ▶ Protect existing quantity of rugby union pitches.
- ▶ Improve pitch quality at all sites used by clubs through improved maintenance and/or the installation of drainage systems.
- ▶ Where possible, install additional floodlighting to allow training demand to be dispersed and to create further capacity.
- ▶ Explore the potential creation of additional World Rugby compliant 3G pitches in strategic locations and where sufficient demand can be evidenced.
- ▶ Seek a resolution to identified exported/imported demand, particularly where evidenced between the four Black Country authorities.
- ▶ Support aspirations for ancillary facility enhancements where improvements are required.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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- ◀ Ensure that any housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision and/or off-side contributions through master planning on an individual basis.

### ***Rugby league - grass pitches***

- ◀ Ensure any future rugby league activity is signposted to clubs in neighbouring authorities so that demand can be met.

### ***Hockey (sand/water-based AGPs)***

- ◀ Protect existing sand-based pitches that are in current use for hockey, unless it can be evidenced that demand can be accommodated without the pitch in question (or unless replacement provision is secured).
- ◀ To improve the capacity of the existing pitch stock, explore the installation of floodlighting where it is not currently provided and the extension of opening hours where availability is currently limited.
- ◀ Create additional pitches where demand is not being met and as a resolution to returning exported activity (i.e., to Dudley and Sandwell).
- ◀ Resurface pitches that have reached the end of their lifespans and ensure a sinking fund is in place for all pitches so that refurbishment can take place when required.
- ◀ Ensure, where possible, security of tenure is provided to all clubs.
- ◀ Improve the ancillary offer supporting pitches where it is required.
- ◀ Consult England Hockey regarding any proposals for the development of new 3G pitches or proposed conversions to 3G to ensure a sufficient supply of hockey provision remains and that it will still be sustainable.
- ◀ Ensure that any housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision and/or off-side contributions through master planning on an individual basis.

### ***Tennis***

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of courts.
- ◀ Seek to improve court quality at sites assessed as poor or standard quality and sustain quality at sites assessed as good, especially at sites in use by clubs or that are (or could be) well used for recreational demand.
- ◀ Seek to improve park provision as a priority to create a year-round recreational tennis option to meet local demand, especially at sites with multiple courts.
- ◀ Explore options to further improve the recreational tennis offer via utilisation of technology provided by the LTA (e.g., Clubspark) to support the customer journey and through investment into facilities and accompanying ancillary provision.
- ◀ Ensure sinking funds are put into place by providers, where possible, for long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Explore installation of additional floodlighting at club-based venues, particularly at sites operating above the capacity guidance.
- ◀ Provide additional court space for clubs operating above the capacity guidance, potentially via better utilisation of existing provision.
- ◀ Improve ancillary provision, where it is required.

### ***Netball***

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of courts.
- ◀ Seek to improve poor quality courts quality through resurfacing and/or improved maintenance.
- ◀ Seek a resolution to demand that is exported and that wants to return by identifying and securing access to provision within home authorities.
- ◀ Explore opportunities to gain access to sites not currently available for community use, especially where multiple courts are provided and where demand is not being met.
- ◀ Facilitate improved engagement between England Netball and schools.



# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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- ◀ Look to continue and expand the use of courts for England Netball initiatives such as Back to Netball and Walking Netball.

### **Bowls**

- ◀ Retain existing quantity of greens where demand is being met.
- ◀ Explore opportunities to provide clubs operating above the capacity guidance with access to additional green space, where such demand exists.
- ◀ Monitor clubs operating below the capacity guidance to ensure they remain sustainable and provide support to clubs with plans to increase membership so that growth can be maximised.
- ◀ Seek to improve poor and standard quality greens.
- ◀ Support clubs to improve ancillary facility quality where it is required.
- ◀ Where clubs are facing capacity pressures, retain any unused/disused greens in the locality as strategic reserve should they be required and ensure that any potential development of unused or disused greens is mitigated in line with planning policy.

### **Cycling**

- ◀ Protect existing stock of purpose-built facilities.
- ◀ Work to deliver recommendations identified in the British Cycling 2022 Commonwealth Games Needs Assessment.
- ◀ Pursue quality improvements where required through track resurfacing and/or improved maintenance.
- ◀ Seek to improve ancillary facilities supporting the provision where there is a need to do so.
- ◀ Explore creation of additional facilities, or the re-instatement of old facilities, if it is determined that demand would be sufficient.
- ◀ Improve public transport and road links to provision, where necessary.
- ◀ Look to continue and expand British Cycling programmes such as HSBC UK Go-Ride and HSBC UK Breeze.

### **Athletics**

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of tracks that remain in use.
- ◀ Where sufficient usage is not being received, consider re-purposing the provision whilst exploring the development of innovative athletics facilities as part of this (i.e., at Hadley Stadium).
- ◀ Seek to improve provision through resurfacing when it is required and via enhanced maintenance.
- ◀ Support providers to retain or gain TrackMark status.
- ◀ Support clubs, running groups, events and England Athletics initiatives such as Park Run and pursue increased participation, where possible.
- ◀ Continue to increase participation both within affiliated clubs and the wider running market, signposting potential club members from the likes of Parkrun events and other health initiatives.

### **Golf**

- ◀ Protect all existing golf provision.
- ◀ Sustain course and ancillary facility quality and seek improvements where necessary.
- ◀ Support clubs in membership retention and potential growth and encourage clubs and providers to work more collaboratively in terms of creating pathways for players.

### **Water sports**

- ◀ Seek to ensure that existing provision is retained and supporting facilities remain of sufficient quality.
- ◀ Support clubs to maximise demand and fully utilise the unique facilities offered.

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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### ***Other grass pitch sports (American football, baseball/softball, Gaelic football)***

- ◀ Protect existing provision is retained for continued use.
- ◀ Explore opportunities to provide dedicated provision where required.
- ◀ Seek resolution to exported demand.

### **3.2: Cross-sport opportunities/recommendations**

In addition to the sport-by-sport recommendations identified above, it should also be noted that some of the issues and opportunities are applicable to multiple sports. Where this is case, there is scope for partnership working to ensure that the recommendations, when carried out, have maximum impact. This approach can also be more economically viable.

Examples of the above include:

- ◀ Improving pitch quality – several sites across the Black Country have provision for more than one sport, particularly the key centres and hub sites identified in the individual PPOSS documents. Where quality improvements take place, this should therefore consider how the enhancements can apply across the provision, such as through implementing an improved maintenance regime site-wide.
- ◀ Improving ancillary provision – as above, many clubhouses at sites are servicing multiple sports and any improvement should therefore recognise this. Consideration should also be given as how to best accommodate all users when enhancements, re-configurations and new developments take place.
- ◀ Improving access to education sites – most education sites, particularly secondary schools, have a wide range of sports facilities for several sports. As such, any community use agreements established should cover access to all of these, where possible.
- ◀ Establishing lease agreements – tenure agreements do not necessarily have to be entered into by one club. Where a site is used by multiple, large development-minded clubs, an umbrella organisation could be established to take over the management of a site, where it is considered suitable.
- ◀ Developing/converting artificial surfaces – relevant sporting bodies should work together when new artificial (3G and sand) pitches are established or where a conversion is proposed. This is to ensure that usage can be maximised whilst also safeguarding the relevant sports and the viability of existing pitches and users. Primarily, this is for the Football Foundation, County FA and EH to work together on, ensuring there is no duplication of provision, that no conversions take place that will be detrimental to a sport, and that new pitches are located in the best possible areas.
- ◀ Utilising shared surfaces – when existing provision is refurbished or when new provision is developed, consideration should be given to maximising use by ensuring multi-sport accessibility, especially when one sport is unlikely to utilise all capacity. An example of this is for the development of court sport, which should consider the needs of both tennis and netball, whilst the development of a 3G surface can consider the needs of not only football but also sports such as rugby union, rugby league, American football and lacrosse. Sand-based surfaces can also cater for several sports as well as hockey, including tennis and netball.
- ◀ Securing developer contributions – it is unlikely that a housing development will only generate demand for one sport, meaning a joined-up approach should be sought to determine where funding can go. This could be through contributions going to a different site/s for each relevant sport, or through all contributions being pooled for a site/s that will benefit each sport appropriately (or a combination of both).
- ◀ Creating new provision – for significantly large housing developments, or where significantly large shortfalls currently exist, there could be a need for a new site to be established. Where this is the case, consideration should be given as to what sports should be included within this, and how a site masterplan can be designed to ensure that they can be accommodated without any future issues. This should take into account pitch



## **BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

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configuration, ancillary facility needs, peak time access requirements and long-term sustainability.

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

## PART 4: OVERARCHING STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategic recommendations have been developed via a combination of information gathered during consultation, site visits and analysis, which culminated in the production of the individual assessment reports and the individual strategies. They reflect overarching and common areas to be addressed across the Black Country and apply across all outdoor sports facilities, rather than being specific to one sport.

The recommendations all fall under three broad aims, shown below, which in turn are based on the Sport England themes of protect, enhance and provide. Whilst the same recommendations apply to each authority, the scale to which they need to be acted upon and the steps required to achieve them may differ. As such, for further guidance, please refer to the individual strategy documents, which set out more specific direction.

### AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities where it is needed to meet current and future needs.

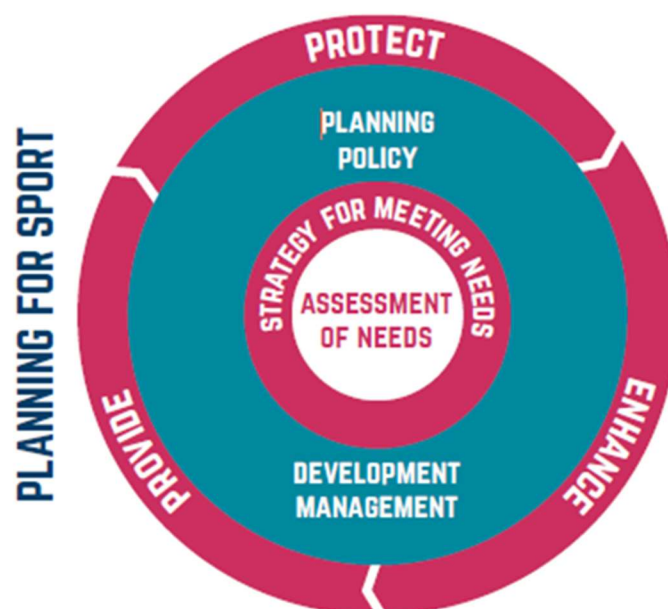
### AIM 2

To **enhance** outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites.

### AIM 3

To **provide** new outdoor sport facilities where there is current or future demand to do so.

*Figure 3.1: Sport England themes*



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

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

### AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sports facilities where it is needed to meet current and future needs.

### Recommendations:

- a. Ensure, through the use of the PPOSS, that outdoor sports facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy.
- b. Secure tenure and access to sites through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.
- c. Maximise community use of education facilities where needed.

### **Recommendation (a) – Ensure, through the use of the PPOSS, that outdoor sport facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy.**

The individual PPOSS assessment reports show that in each local authority, all existing playing field and outdoor sport sites cannot be deemed surplus to requirements because of shortfalls now and in the future. As such, all provision requires protection or replacement until all identified shortfalls have been overcome, including lapsed, disused, underused and poor quality sites. There is a requirement for such provision to help meet and alleviate the identified shortfalls.

When shortfalls are evident, provision can only be permanently lost when the current picture changes to the extent that the site in question is no longer needed as a result of no shortfalls existing, or unless replacement provision is provided and agreed upon by all stakeholders. NPPF paragraph 99 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

Existing policies in the Black Country Core Strategy and individual 'Black Country Authorities' Local Plans also support the protection of playing fields and outdoor sports facilities. The PPOSS should be used to help inform the implementation of these policies and inform the development of replacement policies. It should be used to help inform development management decisions that affect existing or new provision and accompanying ancillary facilities, with all applications to be assessed by the Local Planning Authority on a case-by-case basis taking into account site specific factors alongside national guidance and local planning policy.

In addition, Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications that affect or prejudice the use of sports facilities that been active within the last five years and will use the PPOSS to help assess that planning application against its planning policy. Sport England will oppose the loss of provision unless it complies with one of more of the following policy exceptions:

### *Policy Exception E1:*

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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'A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated to the satisfaction of Sport England that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport'. Where a PPOSS cannot demonstrate that the site, or part of a site, is clearly surplus to requirements then replacement of the site, or part of a site, will be required to comply with the remaining Sport England policy exceptions.

### *Policy Exception E2*

'The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity and quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use'.

### *Policy Exception E3*

The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- ▶ Reduce the size of any playing pitch;
- ▶ Result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- ▶ Reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain quality;
- ▶ Result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site;
- ▶ Prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site'.

### *Policy Exception E4:*

'The playing field or fields to be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new playing field site or sites:

- ▶ of equivalent or better quality and
- ▶ of equivalent or greater quantity;
- ▶ in a suitable location and;
- ▶ subject to equivalent or better management arrangements.

### *Policy Exception E5*

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

Notwithstanding the above, there may be instances where the loss of provision can be supported and seen as a positive development, in line with the NPPF, local planning policy and Sport England's policy exceptions. For example, it may be appropriate to consider rationalisation of certain low value sites (i.e. one/two pitch sites with no changing provision) to generate investment in creating bigger and better venues (hub sites). It is vital, however, that there is no net loss of facilities and that replacement provision is in place and available for use prior to existing provision being lost.

There may also be instances where re-purposing provision can be supported. For example, a site may be unused and not required for its current sporting purpose but could help overcome identified shortfalls for other sports by converting the facilities that are provided.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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### **Recommendation (b) – Secure tenure and access to sites through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.**

A number of sites across the Black Country provide playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities but either do not provide community access or do so in an unsecure manner. As a result, any capacity at these sites is discounted as long-term access cannot be guaranteed.

#### ***Securing community access***

A number of education sites are being used across the local authorities for competitive play. In some cases, such use has been classified as secure; however, this is commonly not the case, which presents a risk for users as access could technically be terminated at any time. Securing community use at such sites will therefore help to create additional capacity and could help to address deficiencies.

For education sites, NGBs, Sport England and other appropriate bodies such as Active Black Country and the Football Foundation can often help to negotiate and engage with providers where the local authority may not have direct influence. This is particularly the case at sites that have received funding from these bodies or are going to receive funding in the future as community access can be a condition of any agreement.

Some non-education sites are also without security of tenure, such as venues that are operated privately or commercially, or that have development proposals in place. Providers of these sites should also be engaged to understand if a secure usage agreement can be implemented to safeguard access. Where this is not possible, users should be encouraged to transfer demand to alternative sites, at which point additional work may be required to ensure such demand can be catered for.

#### ***Alternative management models***

To further improve security of tenure, the councils should also explore possible alternative options for the future management of some sites within their portfolios, including lease arrangements or community asset transfer. Potential benefits of these include reducing costs, which may allow for the retention and possible improvement of other retained sites, as well as potentially opening up new routes to the improvement of sites and access to external funding opportunities through club-led management models.

Local sports clubs that may be suitable to take on the operation of a site should be supported by partners to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership work. For example, club development should be supported and clubs should be encouraged to develop evidence of business and sports development plans that can generate income via their facilities.

In light of local authority budget constraints, it is increasingly important for the councils to work with voluntary sector organisations to enable them to take greater levels of ownership and support the wider development and maintenance of facilities. To facilitate this, where practical, they should support and enable clubs to generate sufficient funds, providing that this is to the benefit of sport.

#### ***Long-term leasehold***

Where lease arrangements are sought, agreements should be for a minimum of 25 years, as recommended by Sport England and NGBs, so clubs are in a position to apply for external funding. This is particularly the case at poor quality sites, possibly with inadequate ancillary facilities, so that quality can be improved and sites developed.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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For clubs with leaseholds already in place, these should be reviewed when fewer than 25 years remain on existing agreements to secure extensions, thus improving security of tenure and helping clubs attract funding for site developments. Any club with less than 25 years remaining on an agreement is unlikely to meet conditions of grants funded by external partners.

### *Community Asset Transfer*

This is the transfer of management and/or ownership of public land and buildings from its owner (usually a local authority) to a community organisation (such as a Development Trust, a Community Interest Company or a social enterprise) for less than market value, to achieve a local social, economic or environmental benefit.

Community based organisations are often much more effective at engaging people than other types of organisations because they are close to and directly accountable to their community. They can mobilise a lot of volunteer time and energy, whilst delivering services that make them more inclusive and responsible than state run examples. Asset transfer can, for example:

- ✦ Help local authorities meet policy objectives.
- ✦ Make better use of underused assets.
- ✦ Open and increase opportunities for clubs/organisations to access grant funding for which local authorities cannot apply.
- ✦ Open opportunities to revenue generation and greater self-dependence.
- ✦ Improve assets through increased time and resource (both financial and volunteer) than what the local authority may be able to contribute.
- ✦ Reduce costs to the local authority and protection against further budgetary cuts.
- ✦ Give sports clubs and community organisations more security and sustainability and help transition clubs away from being funding dependent.
- ✦ Enable people to protect the assets in their communities – including iconic heritage buildings and open spaces.
- ✦ Involve people in designing and running the services from which they benefit.
- ✦ Be a catalyst for getting people more involved as volunteers.
- ✦ Keep money in the local economy through enterprise and locally owned assets.

The Sport England Community Sport Asset Transfer Toolkit is a bespoke, interactive web based tool that provides a step by step guide through each stage of the asset transfer process should this be an option for the Council to consider. It can be accessed via: [Link to Sport England community assets and rights](#)

### ***Asset transfer policy***

The PPOSS should help inform each policy on asset transfer (whether via leasehold or community asset transfer).

Each club or organisation interested in acquiring a site should be required to meet service and/or strategic recommendations. An additional set of criteria should also be considered, which takes into account club quality, aligned to its long-term development objectives and sustainability. The following table highlights some recommended criteria, as a starting point, that can be used to determine suitability.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

*Table 4.1: Recommended criteria for lease of sport sites to clubs/organisations*

Criteria
Based within the local authority area, in communities closest to the facility
Hold current NGB affiliation for their sport(s) – e.g., England Football Accreditation.
Hold a current 'ClubMark' or equivalent quality accreditation which includes governance, equality and diversity and safeguarding
Provide a clear pathway for the development of children, young people and adults
Able to demonstrate an inclusive approach to all members of the wider community and to benefit as wide and diverse a range of local people as possible
Have the appropriate skillset and depth of volunteers/members required to make self-management sustainable
Have fit-for-purpose governance to manage an asset
Due diligence is carried out through reviewing business and development plans or other appropriate documents and assessing financial viability/sustainability to manage the asset.
Need to be a legal entity - usually in the form of a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, society, Charitable Incorporated Organisation or Community Interest Company - that exists to deliver social, economic, or environmental benefit to the Borough and can demonstrate community benefit objectives with surpluses/profits reinvested back into the community to further their aims.

Linked to the above, the councils could establish core outcomes to derive from clubs taking on management duties to ensure that the most appropriate are assigned sites. Outcomes may, for example, include:

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

In addition, clubs should be made fully aware of the associated responsibilities/liabilities when considering taking on provision within multi-use public playing fields. It is important in these instances that the sites, to some degree, remain available for other purposes or for other users.

### **Recommendation (c) - Maximise community use of education facilities where there is a need to do so**

A large number of sporting facilities are located on education sites and making these available to sports clubs can offer significant benefits to both the schools and local clubs, as well helping to reduce identified shortfalls. It is, however, common for school provision not to be fully maximised for community use, even on established community use sites.

To maximise community use, a more coherent, structured relationship with schools and higher/further education sites is recommended. Across the Black Country, pricing policies at facilities can be a barrier to access at some education sites but physical access, poor quality and resistance from schools to open up provision is also an issue, especially at private schools and academies.

Where poor quality is preventing access, remedial works may be required before community use can be established. The low carrying capacity of these facilities sometimes leads to them being played to capacity or overplayed simply due to curricular and extra-curricular use, meaning they cannot accommodate any additional use by the community.



## **BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

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Although there are a growing number of academies over which local authorities have little or no control, it is still important to understand the significance of such sites and attempt to work with the schools where there are opportunities for community use. In addition, relevant NGBs have a role to play in supporting the Council to deliver upon this recommendation and communicating with schools where necessary to address shortfalls in provision.

As detailed earlier, the NGBs, as well as Active Black Country and Sport England, can often help to negotiate and engage with schools where the local authority may have limited direct influence. This is particularly the case at sites that have received funding from the relevant bodies or are going to receive funding in the future (e.g., to improve quality) as community access can be a condition of the funding agreement.

As a priority, community use options should firstly be explored at large schools offering numerous pitches as securing access to these will significantly reduce grass pitch shortfalls throughout the local authorities that they are based within. For schools that form part of multi-academy trusts, these should be addressed on a collective basis, with securing community access a co-ordinated approach between the schools and relevant stakeholders. Consideration should be given to a centralised booking system for community use of such facilities to minimise administration and make access easier for the users.

Where new schools are provided in major new residential developments, they should be designed to facilitate community access, with opportunities for meeting the community's outdoor sports needs explored at the outset to maximise the impact. An example of this is ensuring the provision of youth 11v11 and/or youth 9v9 grass football pitches, given current shortfalls and their suitability for the playing format of students, or multi-use provision such as courts that can accommodate both tennis and netball activity.

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

## AIM 2

To **enhance** outdoor sports provision and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites.

### Recommendations:

- d. Maintain quality and seek improvements where necessary
- e. Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites.
- f. Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding
- g. Secure developer contributions.

### ***Recommendation (d) - Maintain quality and seek improvements where necessary***

There are a number of ways in which it is possible to improve quality, including, for example, addressing overplay and improving maintenance. Given that the majority of councils face reducing budgets, it is currently advisable to look at improving key sites as a priority (e.g., the largest sites that are the most overplayed or the poorest).

With such pressures on budgets, any wide-ranging and direct investment into quality is unlikely and other options for improvements should be considered. This could be via asset transfer or clubs leasing/managing sites as highlighted in Objective 1, with clubs taking on maintenance, whilst other options may include equipment banks and the pooling of resources for maintenance.

### ***Addressing quality issues***

Quality across the Black Country is variable but generally most pitches are assessed as poor or standard quality. Where facilities are assessed as standard or poor quality and/or overplayed, maintenance regimes should be reviewed and, where possible, improved to ensure that what is being done is of an appropriate standard to sustain/improve pitch quality. Ensuring continuance of existing maintenance of good quality sites is also essential.

Based upon an achievable target, using existing quality scoring to provide a baseline, a standard should be used to identify deficiencies and investment should be focused on those sites which fail to meet the proposed quality standard. For the purposes of quality assessments, the Strategy refers to pitches and ancillary facilities separately as being of 'good', 'standard' or 'poor' quality. However, some good quality sites have poor quality elements and vice versa (e.g., a good quality pitch may be serviced by poor quality changing facilities).

It is also important to note the impact the weather has on quality. The worse the weather, the poorer facilities tend to become, especially if no drainage systems are in place or if existing drainage systems are inadequate. This also means that quality can vary, year on year, dependent upon the weather and levels of rainfall, which in turn means that maintenance might need to increase at specific times.

If a poor quality site receives little or no usage that is not to say that no improvement is needed. It may instead be the case that it receives no demand because of its quality, thus an

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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improvement in said quality will attract demand to the site, potentially from overplayed standard or good quality sites (thus reducing capacity issues).

In addition, without appropriate, fit for purpose ancillary facilities, good quality provision may be underutilised, especially by adults and female users who have more of a requirement. Changing facilities form the most essential part of this offer and therefore key sites should be given priority for improvement. For the majority of sports, no senior league matches can take place without appropriate changing facilities and the same also applies to women's and girls' demand.

For football, The FA has a Pitch Improvement Programme aimed at improving the standard of grass pitches across England. For provision included in the programme, clubs can utilise the services of the Football Foundation's PitchPower web app to carry out a free on-site assessment of their pitches. This then provides the Grounds Management Association (GMA) with the detail needed to create a personalised, informative report to advise on how improvements can be made. Clubs then receive bespoke advice and support to help with any future actions, funding applications and equipment, with clubs getting access to discounted rates for machinery and consumables through local partnerships.

The tool is available across mobile apps and desktop and is open to access by all providers, including clubs, schools and local authorities. Following a PitchPower report, organisations can work towards the recommended dedicated maintenance regime identified to improve the quality of their pitches. Applicants are required to submit a PitchPower assessment for each of their pitches as a condition of a grant funding application for Football Foundation grass pitch investment, such as the Grass Pitch Maintenance fund.

For cricket and the ECB, the equivalent is the Grounds and Natural Turf Improvement Programme, which is jointly funded by the ECB, FA, Football Foundation and the GMA. Its aim is to raise the standards of sports surfaces as well as the understanding of sports turf management practices among grassroots sports clubs across England and Wales.

Specifically for tennis, the LTA has secured a £22 million investment fund to be put into public tennis courts across Britain, together with an £8.5 million investment from the LTA. This will see thousands of public park tennis courts that are in poor or unplayable condition improved for the benefit of the local communities. The LTA is working with the Council to access the funding for improvements in Dudley.

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

### ***Addressing overplay***

In order to improve the overall quality of the outdoor facility stock it is necessary to ensure that provision is not overplayed beyond recommended carrying capacity. This is determined by assessing quality (via a non-technical site assessment) and allocating a match limit to each (daily for hockey, weekly for football and rugby union and seasonal for cricket).

The FA, RFU, RFL, ECB and EH all recommend a number of matches that pitches should take based on quality, as seen in the table below. For other grass pitch sports, no guidelines are set by the NGBs although it can be assumed that a similar trend should be followed.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Table 4.2: Capacity of pitches in No. of matches

Sport	Pitch type	Good quality	Standard quality	Poor quality
Football	Adult pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
Football	Youth pitches	4 per week	2 per week	1 per week
Football	Mini pitches	6 per week	4 per week	2 per week
Rugby union	Natural Inadequate (D0)	2 per week	1.5 per week	0.5 per week
Rugby union	Natural Adequate (D1)	3 per week	2 per week	1.5 per week
Rugby union	Pipe Drained (D2)	3.25 per week	2.5 per week	1.75 per week
Rugby union	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	3.5 per week	3 per week	2 per week
Cricket	One grass wicket	5 per season	4 per season	0 per season
	One synthetic wicket	60 per season		
Hockey	Full size AGP	4 per day	4 per day	4 per day

For non-pitch sports, capacity is not linked to the number of matches taking place but rather the number of members (and other users) attracted to a site. For example, for tennis, a floodlit hard court is said to have capacity for 60 members, whereas a non-floodlit hard court has capacity for 40 members (this varies for grass courts). For bowls, a green is considered at capacity if it has over 80 members, whilst a membership of under 20 could be unsustainable.

It is imperative to engage with clubs to ensure that sites are not played beyond their capacity. Where overplay is identified, play should be encouraged, where possible, to be transferred to alternative venues that are not operating at capacity or, where possible, quality should be improved to increase capacity to appropriate levels. Where play is transferred, this may include transferring play to 3G pitches or to sites not currently available for community use but which may be in the future.

For cricket, an increase in the usage of NTPs is key to alleviating overplay as this allows for the transfer of junior demand from grass wickets. It also does not require any additional playing pitch space as NTPs can be installed in situ on existing squares.

For rugby union, additional floodlighting can mitigate some of the overplay as it allows training demand to be spread across a greater number of pitches or unmarked areas. If permanent floodlighting is not possible, portable floodlighting is an alternative, as is the installation of a World Rugby compliant 3G pitch.

As mentioned earlier, there are also sites that are poor quality but are not overplayed. These should not be overlooked as often poor quality sites have less demand than others but demand could increase if the quality was improved. It does, however, work both ways as potential improvements may make sites more attractive and therefore more popular, which in the long run can lead again to them becoming poor quality pitches if not properly maintained.

### **Improving changing provision**

There is a need to address changing provision at some sites across the Black Country. Sites which predominantly accommodate adult and female sport should be prioritised for improvements, with further focused placed on multi-pitch and multi-sport sites where demand tends to be highest.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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The above is not to say that other sites do not require improvement, although there is a trend for younger junior age groups (particularly for football) not to require use of changing provision. Where this is the case, emphasis should be placed more on ensuring that suitable male and female toilet provision is provided.

### **Recommendation (e) – Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites**

To allow for facility developments to be prioritised and programmed on a phased basis, the councils should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of outdoor sport sites and associated facilities. This hierarchy is set out for each authority in its individual Strategy document and its individual action plan.

### **Recommendation (f) – Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding**

It should be ensured that the funding secured for improved sports provision is directed to areas of need, underpinned by a robust strategy for improvement in outdoor sport provision and accompanying ancillary facilities (as provided by the PPOSS). To ensure that this is the case, a co-ordinated approach to strategic investment is required and the councils should, thus, maintain regular dialogue with local partners through the PPOSS Steering Group.

Although some investment in new provision will not be made by the councils directly, it is important that the Steering Group directs and leads a co-ordinated approach to facility development whether made at/by education sites, NGBs, sports clubs and the commercial sector. This is to ensure that the extent to which it addresses community need is optimised and duplication is avoided.

One of sport's key contributions is its positive impact on public health. It is therefore important to lever in investment from other sectors such as, for example, health and wellbeing. Sport and physical activity can have a profound effect on people's lives, and plays a crucial role in improving community cohesion, educational attainment and self-confidence.

### **Recommendation (g) – Secure developer contributions**

It is important that the PPOSS informs policies and supplementary planning documents by setting out the approach to securing new and improved sport and recreational facilities through new housing development. Sport England recommends that a number of objectives should be implemented to enable this to be delivered:

- ◀ Planning consent should include appropriate conditions and/or be subject to specific planning obligations.
- ◀ Where developer contributions are applicable, a S106 agreement or equivalent must be completed that should specify, when applied, the amount that will be linked to Sport England's Building Cost Information Service from the date of the permission and timing of the contribution/s to be made.
- ◀ Contributions should also be secured towards the first ten years of maintenance on new pitches (lifecycle costs).
- ◀ External funding should be sought/secured to achieve maximum benefit from the investment into appropriate facility enhancement, alongside other open space provision, and its subsequent maintenance.
- ◀ Where new provision is provided, appropriate changing rooms and, where relevant, associated car parking should be located on site and locations should be sought which are accessible via public transport and active travel modes.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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- ◀ All new or improved outdoor sports facilities on school sites should be subject to community use agreements.

For playing pitches, it is recommended that the councils use Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator as a tool for helping to determine the additional demand for pitches and to estimate the likely developer contribution required linking to sites within the locality. This should form part of the Council working with Sport England to develop a process and guidance for obtaining developer contributions.

The calculator uses the current number of teams by sports pitch type and calculates the percentage within each age group that play that sport. That percentage is then applied to the population growth. The additional teams likely to be generated are then converted into match equivalent sessions and associated pitch requirements in the peak period, with the associated costs (both for providing the pitch/facility and for its life cycle) then given. The calculator splits the requirement into peak time demand for natural turf pitches, training demand for artificial grass pitches, and the number of new changing rooms required.

The PPOSS should be used to help determine the likely impact of a new development on demand and the capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity of existing provision or if new provision is required. Where a development is located within access of existing high-quality provision, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further provision or improvement to existing provision, as additional demand arising from the development is likely to result in increased usage (which can result in overplay or quality deterioration).

Where it is determined that new provision is required to accompany a development, priority should be placed on providing facilities that contribute towards alleviating existing shortfalls within the locality. To determine what supply of provision is provided, it is imperative that the PPOSS findings are taken into consideration and that for particularly large developments consultation takes place with the relevant NGBs and Sport England. This is due to the importance of ensuring that the stock of facilities provided is correct to avoid provision becoming unsustainable and unused. The preference is for multi-pitch and potentially multi-sport sites to be developed, supported by a clubhouse and adequate parking facilities which consider the potential for future AGP development.

In addition, consideration also needs to be given to access to a site where new outdoor sports provision is to be established. This includes ensuring appropriate and sufficient access by car, such as through ensuring a large enough car park is provided, as well as access by public transport and through active travel modes (e.g., walking and cycling). It is imperative that the provision is accessible to all and this also includes the access road, which should be suitable for all users, regardless of their travel preferences.

The guidance provided by the Playing Pitch Calculator should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to include provision and/or enhancement of appropriate provision and subsequent maintenance (lifecycle costs), and planning policy should provide the link to attaining the contributions that are to be sought. S106 contributions could also be used to improve the condition of pitches in order to increase pitch capacity to accommodate more matches.



## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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Where S106 contributions are provided, the Black County authorities should look to pool together the funds, where necessary, to deliver facility improvements that can help address key issues. This is particularly the case for large-scale developments that will have an impact on more than the local authority in which it is based. Furthermore, where major developments are in locations that have implications for more than one local authority, such as new settlements, urban extensions and cross-boundary developments, a sports facility masterplan should be developed. This should strategically consider the effects of both existing outdoor sports provision within all affected authorities and what new provision is required, with input from the PPOSS Steering Group key.

As well as considering needs across the Black Country authorities, recognition should also be given to other neighbouring authorities, especially where there is already significant evidence of cross-border supply and demand activity. An example of this is the relationship between Wolverhampton and South Staffordshire.

To further assist with identifying investment opportunities, additional analysis should be undertaken in regards to major housing sites to show the spatial relationship between the proposed developments and major opportunities for new provision and facility improvements at existing sites for each relevant sport. This can be achieved via using the action plans within the individual PPOSS reports to identify sites in need of investment, mapping these against housing growth sites to help determine those most suitable to receive associated investment.

The above modelling will not only further help understand where investment should be directed, but it can in turn help secure contributions and provide evidence for securing funds for analysis areas that are different, but close by, to where the developments are located (including, where considered appropriate/necessary, cross-boundary areas). This is because some priority sites for investment may sit outside of an analysis area that is subject to the housing growth but that are still well placed to cater for the increased demand due to their location and importance.

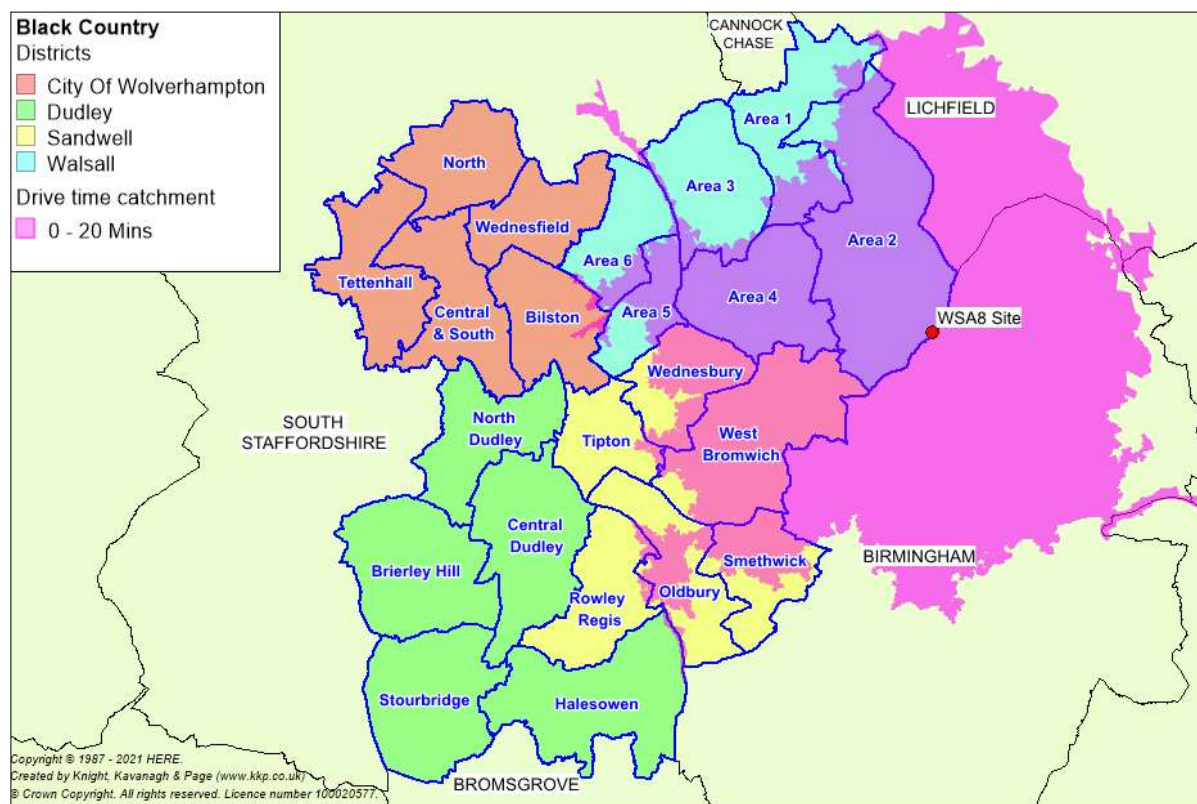
Sport England often advises the use of a 20-minute drive time catchment area, recognising that sports teams and users do not necessarily acknowledge local authority boundary lines. Via Active Places, it also provides a Catchment Profile tool that can aid the mapping and site selection process.

An example of the process that can be undertaken is shown below, using a proposed housing allocation from Walsall (WSA8). A 20-minute drive time catchment from this site encompasses several analysis areas in the Black Country (as well as in Lichfield and Birmingham), not only covering Walsall but also Sandwell, in addition to a small area of Wolverhampton. This is evidenced in the figure below.



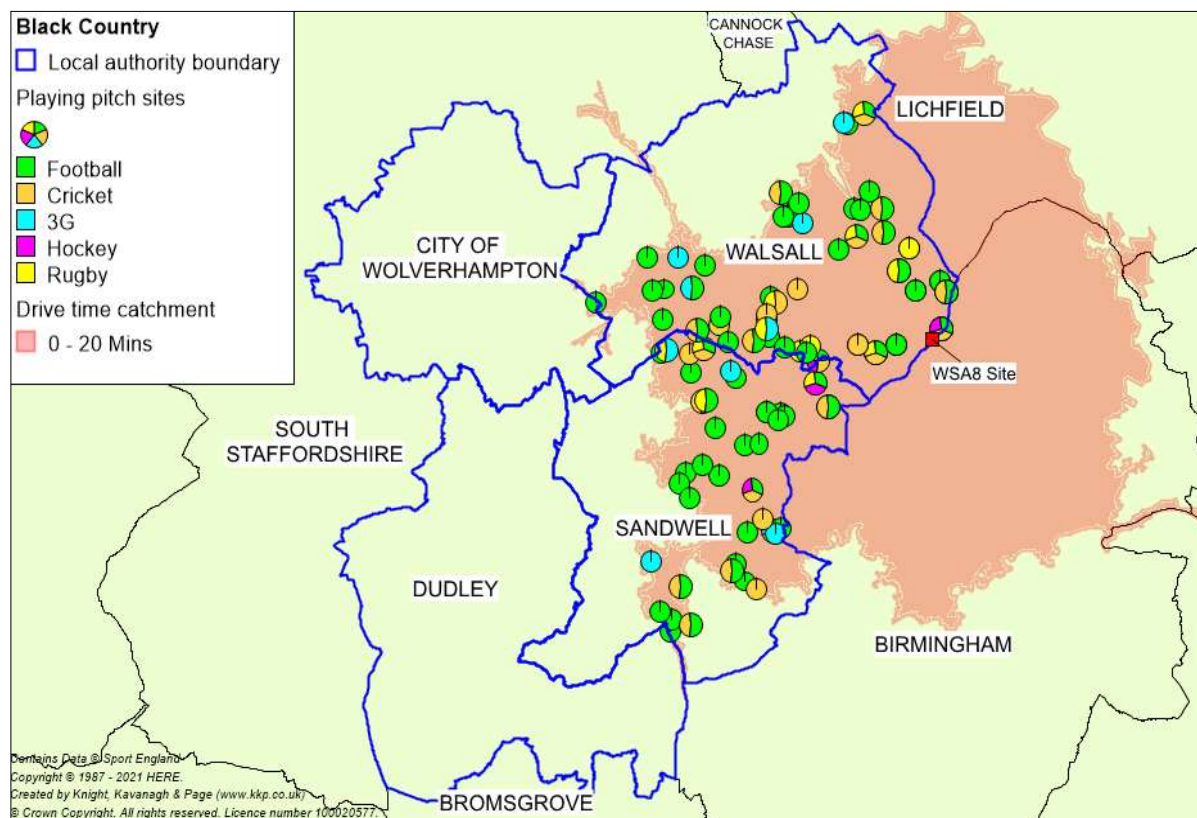
# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Figure 5.1: Example mapping exercise for securing developer contributions



Using this drive time catchment area, it is then possible to map all playing pitch sites identified in the PPOSS, including for each sport, as shown below.

Figure 5.1: PPOSS sites within the example catchment area



## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

These sites can then be cross-referenced in the individual action plans to determine which are most in need of investment and which would be most likely to require improvement in order to satisfy the growth in demand that will come from the development.

Figure 5.3: Sites within the example catchment area in Walsall

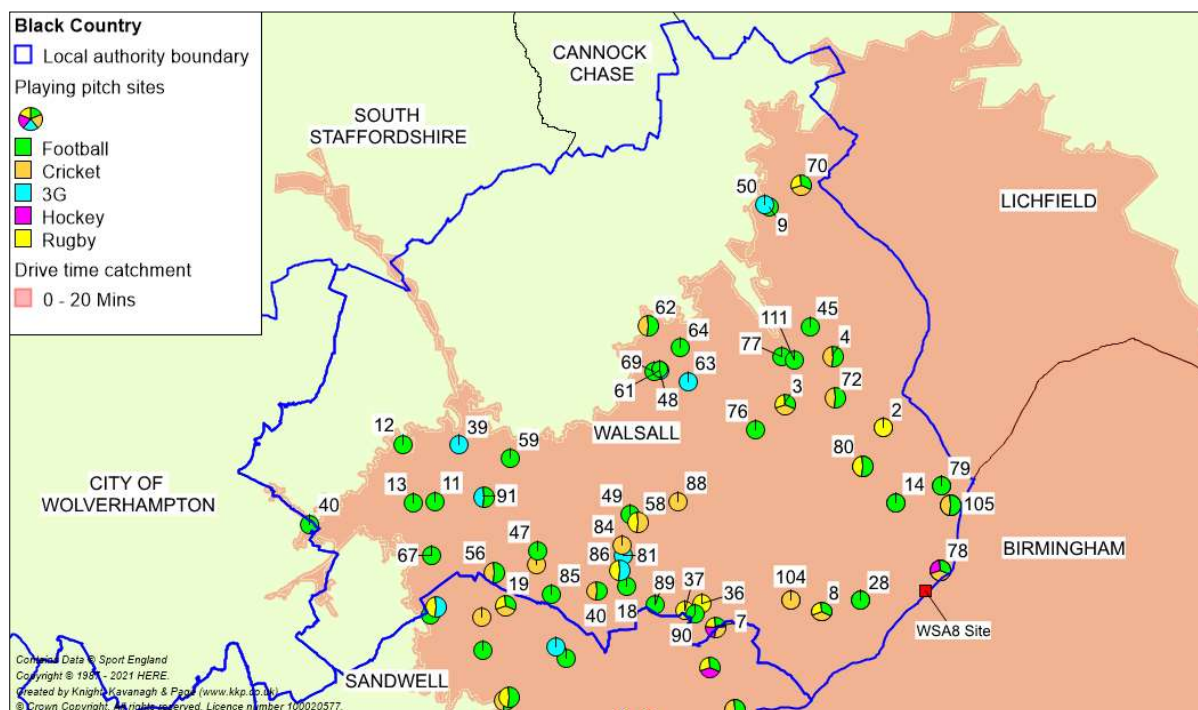
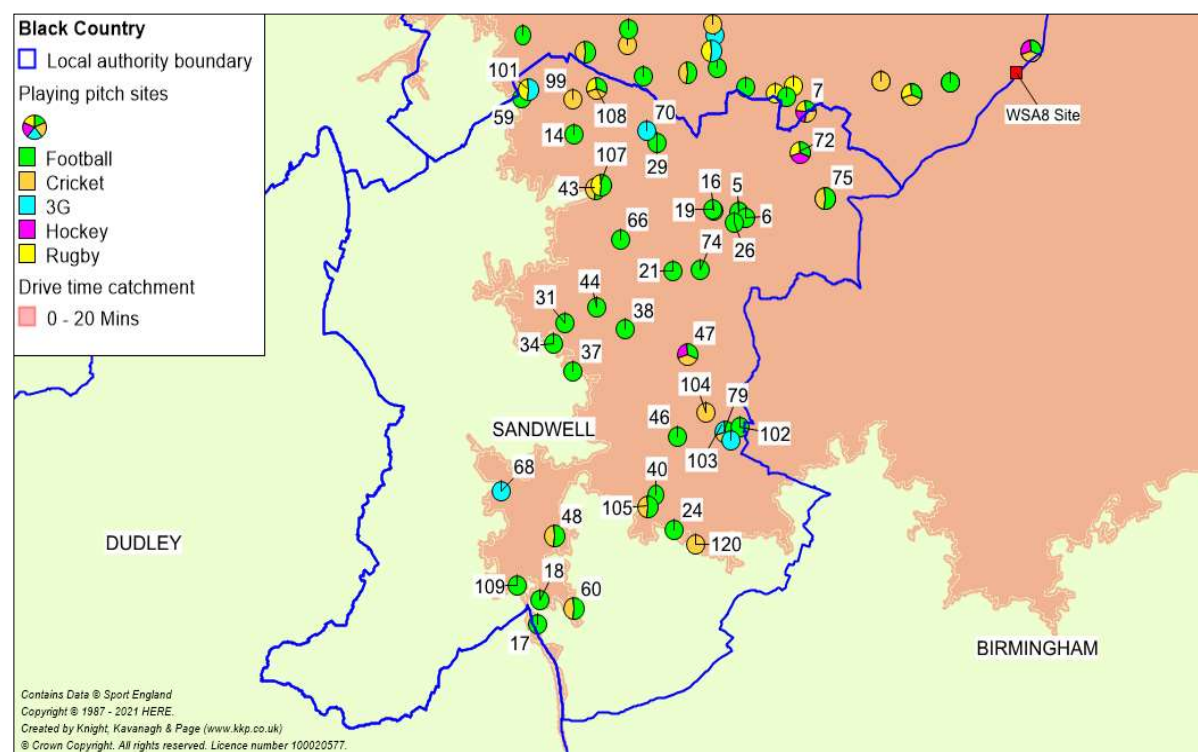


Figure 5.4: Sites within the example catchment area in Sandwell/Wolverhampton



## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

### AIM 3

To **provide** new outdoor sports facilities where there is current or future demand to do so.

#### Recommendations:

- h. Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock.
- i. Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.

#### Recommendation (h) - Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock

The councils and partners should work to rectify identified inadequacies and meet identified shortfalls as outlined in the individual assessment reports and strategies, as well as the sport-by-sport specific recommendations (Part 3) and the following Action Plan (Part 5) of this report. To help enable the above, it is important that the current levels of provision are protected, maintained and enhanced to secure and improve provision both for now and in the future.

Maximising use of existing provision through a combination of the following will help to reduce shortfalls and accommodate future demand:

- ◀ Improving quality in order to improve the capacity to accommodate more demand.
- ◀ Transferring demand from overplayed sites to sites with spare capacity.
- ◀ The re-designation of facilities e.g. converting an unused pitch (or pitch type) for one sport to instead cater for another sport (or another pitch type).
- ◀ Securing community use at school sites including those currently unavailable.
- ◀ Working with commercial and private providers to increase usage.

The PPOSS identifies priority sites that should be focused upon as a starting point, including those that are presently overplayed and/or poor quality, or unused sites that are particularly large. It also advises how specific issues can be overcome.

#### Recommendation (i) - Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock

The Steering Group should use and regularly update the Action Plan within this Strategy. The Action Plan lists recommendations for each site, focused upon both qualitative and quantitative improvements, which if delivered will lessen the need for new provision.

Linked to the above, although there are identified shortfalls, most current and future demand is currently being met and most shortfalls can be addressed via quality improvements and/or improved access to sites that are presently used minimally or that are currently unavailable. Adding to the current stock, particularly in the short term, is therefore not recommended as a priority, except for localised exceptions and for 3G and sand-based pitches, the shortfall for which cannot be reduced without new stock.

Large scale housing developments (see recommendation G) and the establishment of new schools may also necessitate the need for new provision. Where new schools are developed, there is an opportunity to combine the building of the School to the development of a new multi-sport site that will be of a benefit to the School as well as the wider community.

### **PART 5: OVERARCHING ACTION PLAN**

The following strategic action plan provides recommendations that can help achieve what is set out in Part 3 and Part 4 of this document. This includes options for consideration with regards to improving facilities, improving security of tenure, securing developer contributions and adding to the existing stock of facilities. These have been chosen as they are considered to relate to each local authority included, although the extent to which may vary.

The recommendations have been put forward based on the evidence that has been gathered as part of the delivery of each individual PPOSS. However, it is recognised that not everything will be actionable by all of the authorities, at least in the short-term. It should instead be used as a long-term plan that can assist, where possible, with guiding future actions when it comes to playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities.

The individual strategies for the four local authorities contain site-by-site action plans that include recommendations for each site included across the study. These recommendations are generally linked to the strategic recommendations featured below but will still require consideration on their own merit in order to be adequately delivered.

#### ***Timescale***

This refers to the timescale in which the recommendation should begin to be implemented, based on a short (1-2 years), medium (2-5 years) and long-term (5-10 years) basis. If possible, this should also be the target of adopting the recommendation within planning policy.

#### ***Lead***

This refers to which organisation/s should take the lead on implementing and progressing the recommendations and references members of the Steering Group. As such, this can include the local authorities, Sport England, NGBs and Active Black Country.



## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

### Strategic Action Plan

Action	Recommendation	Timescale	Lead
A collaborative approach across the Black Country to deliver the recommendations and actions identified in this strategy and the individual strategies that all partners are committed to	Ensure a continued working relationship exists between relevant partners which should as a minimum include each of the local authorities, Sport England, the relevant NGBs and Active Black Country.	Short	Local authorities Sport England
A collaborative approach across the Black Country to deliver the recommendations and actions identified in this strategy and the individual strategies that all partners are committed to	Establish an Implementation Group at the earliest opportunity made up of the local authorities, Active Black Country, NGBs and Sport England.	Short	Local authorities Sport England
A collaborative approach across the Black Country to deliver the recommendations and actions identified in this strategy and the individual strategies that all partners are committed to	Develop a short-term action plan to identify and prioritise actions in the Strategy for the first years of implementation, then reviewing this annually (or every six months).	Short	Local authorities Sport England
A collaborative approach across the Black Country to deliver the recommendations and actions identified in this strategy and the individual strategies that all partners are committed to	Agree a mechanism for engaging and updating elected members from the local authorities on progress with delivering the recommendations and the action plans from the study.	Short	Local authorities Sport England
A collaborative approach across the Black Country to deliver the recommendations and actions identified in this strategy and the individual strategies that all partners are committed to	Collectively ensure that each individual PPOSS is kept up to date via a Black Country-wide annual review, utilising the supporting databases for each local authority and engaging all relevant partners and stakeholders from the Steering Group. This will prolong the lifespan of the study and lengthen the requirement for a full update.	Short	Local authorities Sport England
Protect existing outdoor sports facilities	Ensure local planning policy documents reflect the need to protect all outdoor sport facilities unless policy exceptions are met or unless the picture changes to the extent that no shortfalls exist.	Short	Local authorities
Protect existing outdoor sports facilities	Retain land where any sports facilities are out of current use (lapsed/disused) or are taken out of use so that it can be brought back into use in the future.	Short	Local authorities
Protect existing outdoor sports facilities	Ensure any net loss of provision is mitigated as per the NPPF and, for relevant provision, Sport England's playing fields policy.	Short	Local authorities
Protect existing outdoor sports facilities	Allow developments if they will result in wider sporting benefits (i.e., through re-purposing land for other sporting use) if there are pitches/facilities that are no longer required for the sport/s they currently provide for.	Short	Local authorities
Rationalisation of sites	Consider the loss and/or re-purposing of low value sites (i.e., those that contain one or two pitches with no changing provision) to generate investment and focus resources towards the development of bigger, better quality sites, providing that planning policy is met, relevant partners are supportive and that there is no net loss of provision or land.	Long	Local authorities NGBs
Secure tenure	Ensure used education sites have robust community use agreements in place. For those that do not, explore options to create such an agreement, potentially linked to future funding opportunities.	Medium	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Secure tenure	For clubs with lease agreements in place with less than 25-years remaining, explore options to extend the arrangement.	Medium	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Secure tenure	Where tenure cannot be secured, ensure an appropriate mitigation package is in place to offset any permanent loss.	Medium	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Secure tenure	Work towards adopting a policy that supports community management and ownership of assets to local clubs, community groups and trusts, thus providing an opportunity for such entities to take ownership of facilities. Ensure that suitable clubs conform with set criteria to enable the sites to be sustainable and to attract funding for site improvement.	Medium	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Maximise use of education facilities	Identify priority schools to focus on and establish a more coherent, structured relationship with them, focusing on the largest school that provide the most and/or best quality facilities.	Medium	Local authorities Active Black Country NGBs Sport England
Maximise use of education facilities	Identify specific key issues through engagement with individual schools and identify strategic solutions that can apply to multiple schools such as the creation of a centralised booking system.		

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

### OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Action	Recommendation	Timescale	Lead
Maximise use of education facilities	Where required, seek internal investment to overcome issues currently preventing community use, such as to improve quality, and look to tie in community use agreements as a condition of the funding.	Medium	Local authorities Active Black Country NGBs Sport England
Maximise use of education facilities	Ensure any new schools allow for community use via a secured agreement and that they provide the right facilities in order to attract demand and reduce local shortfalls via input from relevant NGBs.	Medium	Local authorities Active Black Country NGBs Sport England
Maximise use of education facilities	Ensure pricing policies do not deter access.	Medium	Local authorities Active Black Country NGBs Sport England
Maximise use of education facilities	Ensure existing community use agreements are upheld.	Medium	Local authorities Active Black Country NGBs Sport England
Maximise use of education facilities	Use examples of best practice from other authorities/counties as a guide to increasing access, such as through hosting a workshop for schools. Consider asking counterparts from areas of best practice to provide an overview of work carried out e.g., Gloucester.	Medium	Local authorities Active Black Country NGBs Sport England
Secure developer contributions	As standard, begin to utilise Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator as the basis for negotiation with housing developers. This should be used to ascertain the likely impact of a new development (or a group of developments) on demand and the capacity of existing sites, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity or if new provision is required.	Short	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Secure developer contributions	To assist with identifying investment opportunities, carry out additional analysis in regards to major housing sites to show the spatial relationship between the proposed developments and major opportunities for new provision and facility improvements for each relevant sport. This can be achieved via using the action plans within the individual PPOSS reports to identify sites in need of investment, with these then able to be mapped against housing growth sites to help determine those most suitable to receive associated investment with an appropriate catchment area.	Short	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Secure developer contributions	Look to pool together S106 contributions, where necessary, to deliver facility improvements that can help address issues within an appropriate catchment area. This is particularly the case for large developments that will have an impact on more than the area in which it is based.	Short	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Secure developer contributions	Where a development is not of a size to justify on-site provision, use contributions to improve existing sites within the locality that are most in need and will go the furthest to reducing shortfalls. Pooling contributions from individual allocations should also be considered to meet known shortfalls for natural turf cricket provision to satisfy peak time demand issues by providing new provision for clubs.	Short	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Secure developer contributions	Where a development is of a size to justify on-site provision, focus on multi-pitch sites that reduce shortfalls, with accompanying clubhouse provision included given that single pitch sites without appropriate facilities can be unsustainable. Also ensure the site can accommodate artificial provision, if not immediately then at a later date as part of a phased approach.	Short	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Secure developer contributions	Ensure consideration is given to the accessibility of the provision. This includes access by car as well as by public transport and active travel modes.	Short	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Secure developer contributions	Ensure any new facilities are provided to a good quality and have an adequate operational structure in place to ensure sustainability.	Short	Local authorities Sport England NGBs

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Action	Recommendation	Timescale	Lead
Secure developer contributions	For cricket, ensure that any proposals for new squares will attract demand, with such provision ideally located within proximity to an existing club that requires additional provision. It is also key to ensure that new developments do not prejudice the use of an existing or new square, which can happen when built in close proximity (ball strike issues).	Short	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Secure developer contributions	Consult with appropriate NGBs when securing developer contributions in order to provide guidance on which sites the funding can go towards or on which new provision is required.	Short	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding	Ensure that appropriate funding is secured for improved sports provision and directed to areas of need, focusing on sites that need quality improvements, are overplayed or would benefit from additional provision. There should be a co-ordinated approach to direct investment, ensuring that there is no duplication of provision across local authority boundaries and ensuring that funding is allocated to sites that provide (or will provide) the best benefit to the wider sporting offer in the locality. The local authorities should work in partnership with each other to ensure that this is case and to deliver projects that mutually benefit their communities. Opportunities to do this should be discussed as part of an agenda item at each future PPOSS meeting and guided by the wider Steering Group.	Short	Local authorities NGBs
Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding	Ensure the PPOSS is kept updated so that it continues to provide a robust evidence base to secure appropriate funding.	Long	Local authorities Sport England NGBs
Improve quality of provision	Prioritise the largest sites, poor quality sites and overplayed sites as improvements to these will have the biggest impacting on alleviating shortfalls and accommodating demand.	Short	Local authorities NGBs
Improve quality of provision	Engage with NGBs to secure investment into quality improvements and utilise tools that can aid with this e.g., through the Football Foundation's PitchPower web app or the LTA's Clubspark scheme.	Short	Local authorities NGBs
Improve quality of provision	Look at the best strategic locations for maintenance equipment banks for clubs to access for improved maintenance regimes on non-council managed sites.	Short	Local authorities NGBs
Improve quality of provision	Consider asset transfer of more sites to suitable clubs/organisations so that they can take over maintenance and attract additional funding, with council maintenance regimes then able to be concentrated and enhanced towards fewer sites.	Short	Local authorities NGBs
Improve quality of provision	Resurface AGPs, athletics tracks and courts when the current surface nears the end of its lifespan (estimated to be ten years, depending on usage) and ensure sinking funds are in place at all venues for long-term sustainability.	Short	Local authorities NGBs
Improve quality of provision	Ensure appropriate ancillary facilities are provided, particularly those servicing key sites. Changing facilities should be of an adequate size, able to accommodate both males and females as well as referees/umpires and should have separate enclosed shower and toilet facilities.	Short	Local authorities NGBs
Address overplay	Where sites are overplayed and assessed as poor or standard quality, improve quality to increase capacity and ensure no additional usage until overplay is eradicated.	Short	Local authorities NGBs
Address overplay	For cricket, install NTPs to accompany overplayed grass wicket squares and encourage the transfer of junior demand to relieve capacity issues.	Short	Local authorities NGBs
Address overplay	For rugby union and tennis, explore the creation of additional floodlighting to increase capacity and to enable demand to be dispersed, thus reducing concentrated levels of overplay.	Short	Local authorities NGBs
Address overplay	Where overplay cannot be fully alleviated via other means, transfer demand to sites with actual spare capacity or to sites not currently available for community use but that could be in the future.	Short	Local authorities NGBs
Add to the overall facility stock	In the main, creating additional provision is not required as the majority of shortfalls can be overcome through other means, such as improving quality, securing tenure and alleviating overplay; however, an increase in 3G pitches is required, as is an increase in cricket squares (for peak time Saturday cricket), NTPs and sand-based AGPs. Additional provision may also be required following housing growth.	Medium	Local authorities NGBs
Add to the overall facility stock	Where new provision is required, give preference to multi-pitch sites and sites that are strategically located, possibility providing the ability to cater for demand from more than one local authority. Ensure an appropriate, sustainable management structure is in place as well as a robust business, usage and maintenance plan.	Medium	Local authorities NGBs



## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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Action	Recommendation	Timescale	Lead
Add to the overall facility stock	Utilise Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator to determine the level of new provision required where there is significant housing growth.	Medium	Local authorities NGBs

# BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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## PART 6: DELIVER THE STRATEGY AND KEEP IT ROBUST AND UP TO DATE

### *Delivery*

The overarching PPOSS provides guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across the Black Country authorities. By addressing issues identified in the individual strategies and by using the strategic framework presented in this document, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of the Black Country can be met. The study identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and identifies how best to resolve this in the future.

Production of the individual strategies and this overarching framework is the start of the planning process. Successful implementation and the benefits to be gained depend upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a mutually bought into strategic approach. It is important that each document is used in a practical manner, supports engagement with partners and encourages partnerships to be developed in order to ensure that outdoor sports facilities are regarded as a vital aspect of community life and which contribute to the achievement of local authority priorities.

To help ensure that each PPS is well used it should be regarded as the key document within each study area guiding the improvement and protection of outdoor sports provision. It needs to be the document to which people and agencies regularly turn to for information in respect of how current demand should be met and what actions are required to improve the situation and meet future demand. To ensure that this is achieved the Steering Group need to have a clear understanding of how the PPS can be applied and therefore delivered.

The process of PPOSS development has already led to a number of benefits that assist its application and delivery. These include enhanced partnership work across different agendas and organisations and the pooling of resources along with strengthened relationships and understanding between stakeholders, members of the Steering Group and the sporting community.

The drivers behind the PPOSS and the work to develop the recommendations and action plans will have also highlighted, and helped those involved to understand, the key areas to which their input is necessary. Each member of the Steering Group should take the lead to ensure the PPOSS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence and the role of the Steering Group should therefore not end with the completion of the study.

Following adoption of each PPOSS, a short-term Action Plan should be prepared by the councils, in consultation with relevant partners, in order to distil the existing action plans and to give the Steering Group a short-term focus. This would then need to be revised through regular meetings.

### *Monitoring and updating*

It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in each strategy. This should be led by the councils and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the Steering Group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPOSS has been applied should be a key component of monitoring its delivery and be an on-going role of the group.

## BLACK COUNTRY PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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The Steering Group that takes the PPOSS forward should be an area group made up of the four local authorities included within the study as well as other partners such as the NGBs and Active Black Country. This offers benefits in terms of joint working on strategic and cross-boundary issues and will also be more efficient in terms of administration when compared to each authority having its own individual Steering Group.

KKP will provide the tools used to produce the PPOSS to the councils as well as training on how to use such tools, such as the supporting databases used to hold all information gathered. This will enable the monitoring and updating process to be carried out, which the councils should be responsible for. As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the study being signed off, the information on which it is based will be considered to be out of date.

The nature of the supply and in particular the demand for outdoor sports facilities will be likely to have changed over three years. Therefore, without any form of review and update within this time period it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

Ideally progress on actions in the PPOSS should be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment built up during its development and, taking into account the time to develop the study, it should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than three years old without being reviewed. A review should not be regarded as a particular resource intensive task. However, it should highlight:

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

Alongside regular Steering Group meetings a good way to keep the PPOSS up to date and maintain relationships is to hold annual sport specific meetings with pitch sport NGBs and other relevant parties. These could be part of a process of updating key supply and demand information plus, if necessary, amending assessment work, tracking progress in respect of implementing action plan recommendations and highlighting new issues and opportunities.

Meetings could be timed to coincide with annual NGB affiliation processes as this would help to signal changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area. Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites could also feed into these meetings. NGBs will also be able to confirm any further performance quality assessments undertaken within the study area.