

City of Stoke-on-Trent Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Needs Assessment

Final Report

May 2017



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

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1: Introduction and Context

Introduction

- 1.1 In June 2015, Stoke-on-Trent City Council commissioned naa to produce a combined Built Facilities Strategy (BFS) and Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). The combined strategies provide an updated evidence base to support the delivery of sport and physical activity across the City. The strategies update the Playing Pitch Strategy and Facility Strategy (2009).
- 1.2 These documents together, developed using the up-to-date Sport England methodologies, provide the council and its partners with a robust evidence base and set of strategic priorities to direct future sports planning policy and funding. These strategies will underpin the delivery of the Council's new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy "Active Together" (2016) and the Council's aspirations for the European City of Sport 2016.
- 1.3 The achievement of European City of Sport status supports the City Council's priorities by:
 - Helping to raise the profile of the City and wider county/surrounding areas on a national and international stage.
 - Improving the perceptions and aspirations of residents.
 - Encouraging participation in physical activity and sport, thus contributing to the health and wellbeing of the population.
 - Contributing to the local economy, supporting businesses and jobs, and using the status as a means to attract inward investment.
 - Sustaining the benefits associated with being a European City of Sport, by creating a strong legacy post-2016, in terms of engagement, participation and income generation where appropriate.

The BFS and PPS will seek to ensure the City has a facility infra-structure to deliver on these priorities and provide a facility legacy in line with the City of Sport aspirations, whilst addressing the council's long-term infra-structure challenges.

- 1.4 The Council and the City Physical Activity and Sports Board has recently approved a Physical Activity and Sport Strategy (PASS) the development of a sport and physical activity strategy and vision underpins the BFS and PPS works and helps to shape the recommendations set out. The strategies have therefore been undertaken and the report structured to address the key drivers of the council as set out in the PASS and central to the City of Sport 2016 and to ensure compliance with new national planning policy.
- 1.5 The needs assessment work has been produced in line with the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF), which requires that (Paragraph 73, page 18):

'.....planning policies are based upon robust and up-to-date assessments of needs for open space, sport and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.
- 1.6 This assessment and strategies have therefore been produced in line with guidance by Sport England (Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities; January 2014) and 'Playing Pitch Guidance, An approach to Developing and Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy (Sport England 2013).

- 1.7 This section summarises the methodology that has been used in the preparation of this assessment report and the strategy document that is under separate cover. This assessment and strategy has been produced in line with guidance by Sport England (Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities; Consultation Draft; December 2013) and 'Playing Pitch Guidance, An approach to Developing and Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy (Sport England 2013).

Playing Pitch Strategy Methodology

- 1.8 Figure 1.1 summarises the stages of this methodology. This assessment report represents steps 1 – 6 while the strategy document will include recommendations and actions.

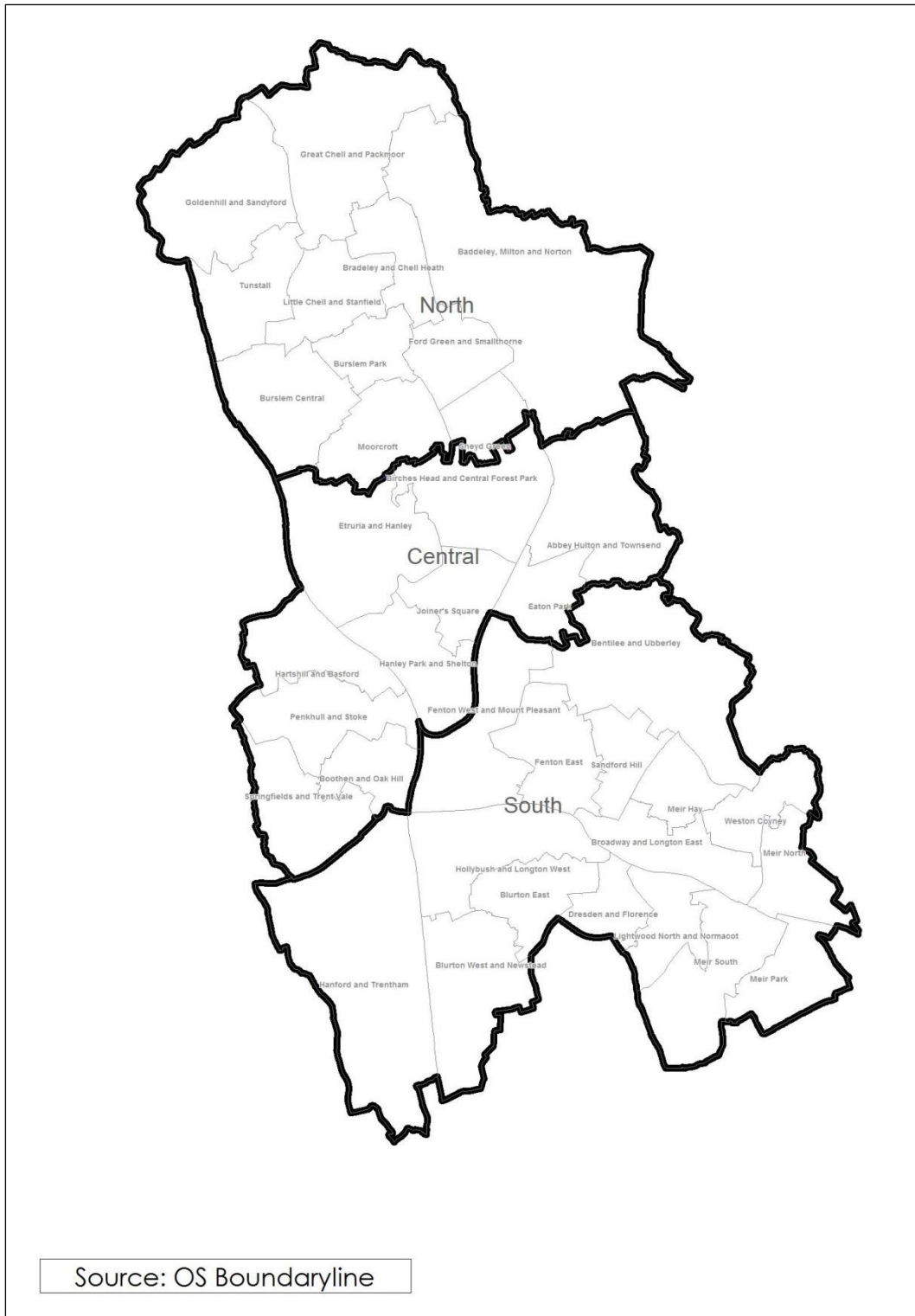
Figure 1.1: Developing and Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy – The 10 Step Approach



Geographical Analysis

- 1.9 The assessment covers the area within the local authority boundaries of Stoke City. Reflecting the tight boundaries of the City council area however, consideration is also given to the role that facilities in close proximity to the boundary play.
- 1.10 To provide a further understanding of the spatial distribution of both supply and demand, as well as to add a geographical dimension to analysis, the City has been divided into sub areas. These divide the City into three geographical sections; north, central and south, and these are shown on Map 1.1 below.

Map 1.1: City of Stoke sub areas



Steps 2 and 3 – Gather Supply and Demand Information and Views

Supply

1.11 The data collection process included a full audit of pitches across Stoke City. For each site, the following information was collected;

- Site name, location, ownership and management type
- Number and type of pitches and outdoor sports facilities
- Accessibility of pitches to the community
- Overall quality of pitches and ancillary facilities (including maintenance regimes)
- Level of protection and security of tenure
- Views of users and providers.

Demand

1.12 To evaluate the demand for playing pitches, the following information was collated;

- Number of sports clubs and teams and their match and training requirements
- Casual and other demand
- Educational demand
- Displaced demand (i.e. teams wishing to play within the City but unable to)
- Latent demand
- Future demand (including club and team aspirations for development as well as National Governing Body priorities and targets)
- User views and experiences, including trends and changes in demand.

1.13 The following tasks were undertaken to compile the above supply and demand data;

- Analysing the existing audit of playing fields and open space and the Sport England Active Places tool
- Reviewing NGB data on pitches, outdoor sports facilities and local participation
- Full review of local league websites, fixture lists and pitch booking records
- Use of available technical quality assessment reports
- Undertaking non-technical site visits
- Undertaking a detailed survey and follow up consultation with schools
- A full programme of consultation with sports clubs and league secretaries
- Face to face and telephone discussions with NGBs to discuss key issues and priorities.

Steps 4, 5 and 6 – Assessing the Supply and Demand Information and Views

1.14 The supply and demand information collated has been used, in line with the Sport England methodology, to;

- understand the situation at individual sites;
- develop the current and projected future pictures for each sport; and
- identify the key findings and issues that need to be addressed.

1.15 Figure 1.2 overleaf, extracted directly from the guidance (Sport England 2013), provides further detail of the issues explored during the analysis of the adequacy of provision.

Steps 6 - 10 Develop the Strategy and Deliver the Strategy and Keep it Up to Date and Robust

1.16 The strategy document will use the issues identified to set out a strategic framework for

the provision of pitches. Recommendations and priorities will be developed following extensive scenario testing and in conjunction with key stakeholders (both internal to the Council and external).

Non Pitch Sports - Sport England (Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities; Consultation Draft; December 2013)

- 1.17 For none pitch sports the assessment stages (Phase A) of the Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) approach are as follows:

Stage 1 – Prepare and tailor your assessment

Stage 2 – Gather information on supply and demand

Stage 3 – Assessment, bring the information together

Stage 1 Undertaking an Assessment:

- 1.18 Stage A was carried out through detailed discussions with the steering group.

Stage 2: Gather Information on Supply and Demand

- 1.19 To gather information on supply, visits were made to all tennis courts, bowling greens and athletics tracks within the City, and assessments made of their quality, maintenance and 'fit for purpose' rating. Discussions were held with operators, manager and users.

- 1.20 To gather information on demand, questionnaires were sent (many with follow up phone calls and/or visits) to all known sports clubs. Consultation took place with national and regional governing body of sport representative.

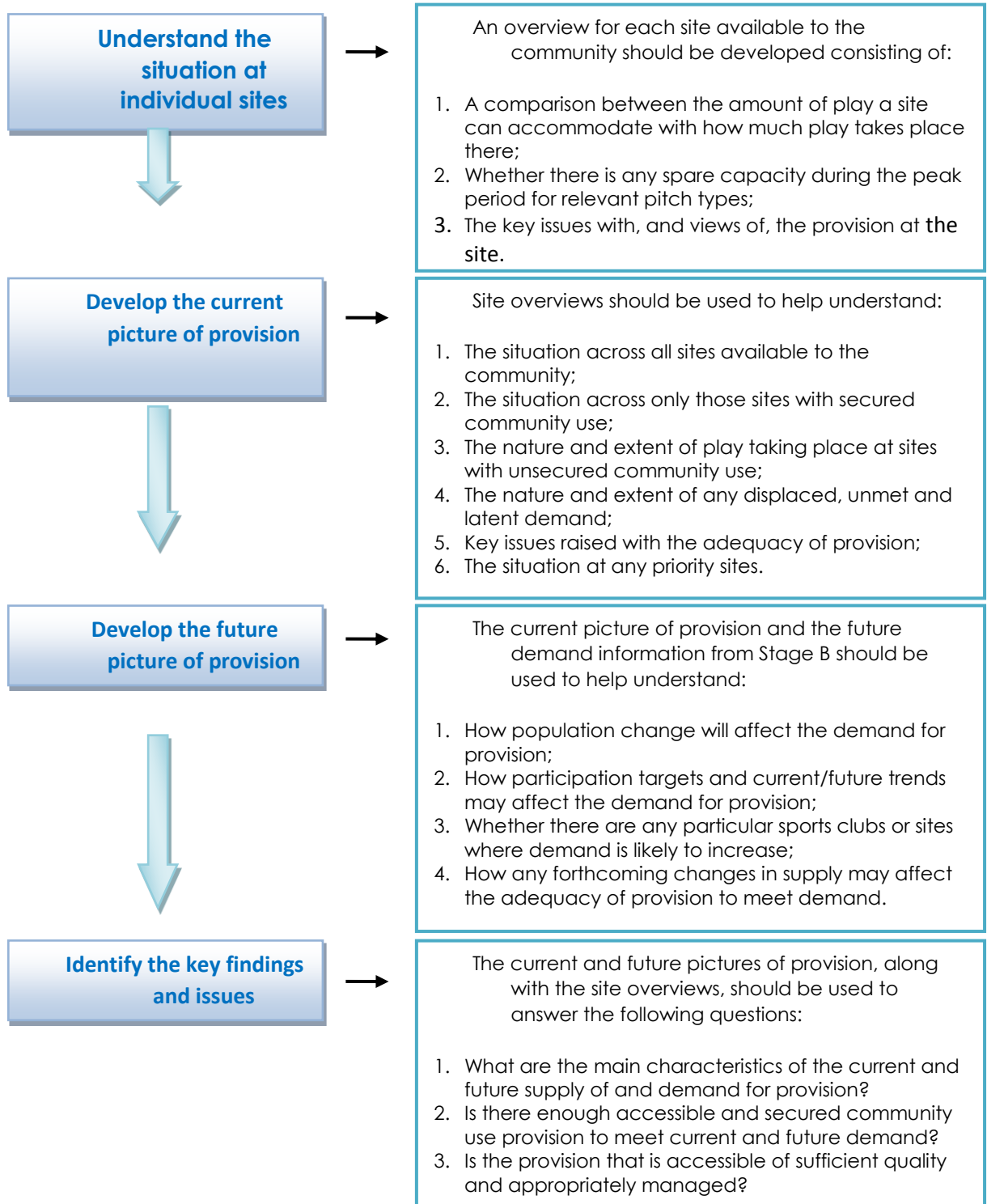
Stage 3: Assessment – Bring the Information Together

- 1.21 The analysis seeks to bring together the evidence gathered to gain an understanding of the relationship between supply and demand. Key findings and issues to be addressed are set out for each of the sports / facilities covered.

B Application of Assessment – Strategy Development

- 1.22 Recommendations and strategy priorities are developed to address the issues identified through the data collection and analysis undertaken in Step A.

Figure 1.2: Overview of the Assessment Process



This Assessment

- 1.23 The remainder of this report provides an overview of each sport in Stoke City and provides the evidence behind the issues presented in the Strategy and Action Plan (separate document).

Structure

- The remainder of this PPS strategy is set out as follows:
- Section 2: Strategic Context and Vision
- Section 3: Football
- Section 4: Rugby
- Section 5: Cricket
- Section 6: Hockey
- Section 7: Bowls
- Section 8: Tennis

2: Strategic Context & Vision

Introduction

- 2.1 An understanding of the local strategic context, population and sports participation trends is essential in order to ensure that the strategy is tailored to the characteristics, profile and aspirations for the local Stoke area.
- 2.2 This section therefore briefly summarises the key policies that impact upon the preparation of this assessment and strategy.

Strategic Context

National Level

- 2.3 At a national level, there are several key policies that impact upon the preparation of this Playing Pitch and outdoor sports facilities assessment.
- 2.4 **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** clearly establishes the requirement that local plans ensure that there is proper provision of community and cultural facilities to meet local needs. The NPPF's expectations for the development of local planning policy for sport and physical activity/recreation is set out in paragraphs 73 and 74 which require there to be a sound (i.e. up-to-date and verifiable) evidence base underpinning policy and its application. Paragraph 73 indicates that:

'Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.'

- 2.5 Paragraph 74 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.*

- 2.6 The preparation of this playing pitch assessment and strategy will help to ensure that Stoke City Council is able to deliver upon the requirements of this national policy.

- 2.7 **Sport England** has been a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing pitches since 1996 and has a long established policy of retention, which is the precursor to the National Planning Policy Framework guidance above. Sport England also advises that informed decisions on playing pitch matters require all local authorities to have an up to date assessment of need and a strategy emanating from this. Sport England recommend that a strategy is monitored and updated annually and refreshed every three years. This assessment will support the Council in implementing a robust strategic approach to the delivery of pitches. Sport England's National Strategy – (2011/12 – 2014/15) and Youth and Community Strategy (2012 – 2017) both underpin this playing pitch assessment.
- 2.8 Focusing specifically on sport, most of the National Governing Bodies have facility strategies setting out the requirements for their sport as follows;
- The Football Association - National Facilities Strategy 2013 - 2015
Champion Counties 2013-17 England and Wales Cricket Board Strategic Plan
 - The Rugby Football Union National Facilities Strategy (2013 – 2017)
 - Community Rugby League Facilities Strategy
 - The National Hockey Facility Strategy – The Right Facilities in the Right Places (2012)
 - The LTA - 2015 - 2018 British Tennis Strategy.
- 2.9 Individual sport section summarises the key principles of each of these strategic documents
- 2.10 The Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS): Published A New Strategy for Sport: Consultation Paper in August 2015. The consultation states the existing approach to increasing participation has exhausted its potential for further growth and calls for new innovative approaches which reflects the social, financial, attitudinal and technological realities. In December 2015 the Government published the new strategy (see later).

Local level

- 2.11 On a local level there is an extensive existing range of strategic documents for Stoke, either produced by the City Council for the City, or, as part of wider work across Staffordshire County.
- 2.12 In the development of the PPS the local strategic position has evolved and developed a clear focus.
- 2.13 As set out the Council have a new strategy and vision, the PASS is complete and the Government has published its new sport strategy.

Stronger Together – ‘Working together to create a stronger City we can all be proud of’ - is the new Stoke-on-Trent City Council Strategic Plan and sets out the vision, priorities and objectives for the City from 2016-2020

- 2.14 There are 5 key priorities to support the working together vision:
- Support our residents to fulfil their potential
 - Support our businesses, delivering investment in our towns and communities
 - Work with residents to make our towns and communities great places to live

- A commercial council, well governed and fit for purpose, delivering efficiency in everything we do
- Support vulnerable people in our communities to live their lives well

“Active Together” – is the Council’s new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy and sets the overarching vision for Sport and Physical Activity across the City

2.15 The adoption of a new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy supports the City Council’s priorities ‘Stronger Together’ and those of key partners and stakeholders in the City by:

- Encouraging participation in physical activity and sport, thus contributing to the health and wellbeing of the population.
- Developing community pride, cohesion and ambition at both City and grass-roots level
- Developing community capacity, e.g. sports club infrastructure
- Activating parks and open spaces
- Reducing the costs of physical inactivity to the City
- Improving educational attainment, training, skills and qualifications
- Improving community safety
- Helping to raise the profile of the City and wider county/surrounding areas on a national and international stage.
- Contributing to the local economy, supporting businesses and jobs.
- Sustaining the benefits associated with being a European City of Sport in 2016 (ECoS16), by creating a strong legacy.

2.16 Key findings from the consultation to guide delivery include:

- Be ambitious with us - an 'industrial' scale of change is needed
- Keep it local to me – people want opportunities near where they live, (e.g., parks, open spaces - cycling and walking routes)
- Make it safe for us – people, especially younger people, need to feel safe when going out to do physical activity and sport
- Build our capacity – identify and support local people to be activators and leaders, buddies and ambassadors, help clubs to prosper, do different activities, to grow and take on facilities
- Give us a good first go – design all activities and opportunities to have an effective high quality experience for first timers and every time, in high quality venues and facilities
- Show us how we can progress – ensure people can progress over the life course, from school to clubs, from informal family sessions to organised groups, from casual participation to a life-long lifestyle in age-appropriate offers
- Make it inclusive for us – so individuals and groups can take part if they have an impairment, and with families and friends
- Make it fun, and interesting - please do more events – local and national, in the City- so we can get involved
- Give us the information – use simple ways like social media so residents can find out what’s happening where and interact more
- Do your homework before you do your marketing – please don’t patronise us - tell us how it appeals to what we want to get out of it, and make it easy, not costly, local, fun social, informal and relevant

Vision and Priorities

2.17 'Active Together' has been shaped by and aligned to the strategic priorities of a range of local, regional and national partners to ensure both its relevance and contribution to key priority agendas. The strategy's vision, priorities and goals are very closely aligned to the four key objectives of Stoke-on-Trent City Council's new strategy "Stronger Together" which are to:

- Listen to our communities and provide services that resident's value.
- Help children, residents and businesses achieve full potential
- Invest in towns and communities, creating a City for all.
- Support those who need our help.

2.18 This has helped to establish the following Vision, key aims and objectives for the project:

By 2020, Stoke-on-Trent will be a City renowned for physical activity and sport where people are inspired and motivated to lead active and healthy lives.

2.19 City Wide Priorities:

- An Active City: With the right environment to achieve a step-change in behaviours so that more people choose to live active lifestyles
- A Destination City: With a thriving economy and an excellent infrastructure that underpins our active, sporting culture and cements our reputation as a leading destination for events, tourism, elite sport and sports related business
- A Healthy City: Where physical activity and sport are integral to helping improve peoples' health, well-being and resilience
- A Safer, Stronger and More Skilled City: With a skilled and confident sector workforce and a commitment to harnessing the unique power of physical activity and sport to inspire people to achieve, learn, volunteer and connect with their communities.

2.20 Clear strategies for Physical Activity and Sport have an important role in informing decisions arising from the land use planning system, particularly through Sport England's role as a statutory consultee on sports related planning applications. As a result the BFS and particularly the PPS which use Active Together as their base point will have a strong influence on how the council manages these assets in the future. This includes for example sites which are currently or which have in recent years been used for sport including playing fields located on now closed school sites.

2.21 The new government sport strategy will see Sport England's remit changed from investing in sport for those aged 14 and over to supporting people from five years old right through to pensioners, in a bid to create a more active nation. Investment will be targeted at sport projects that have a meaningful, measurable impact on how they are improving people's lives – from helping young people gain skills to get into work, to tackling social inclusion and improving physical and mental health. Funding will also be targeted at groups who have low participation rates to encourage those who do not take part in sport and physical activity to get involved. This includes supporting women, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people. Sport England will be encouraged to get inactive people physically active and will support and measure participation in sport and wider physical activity going forward.

2.22 There is therefore a definite shift to less traditional formal structures and a focus on flexible informal community based activity and innovation. This will have an influence on policies at local level.

2.23 There are therefore clear linkages between the strategies and drivers for both the PPS

and BFS work.

- 2.24 Together, the built facilities and sports playing pitch strategies will therefore inform planning policies, as well as the Development Management process, incorporating S106 and CIL contributions. These strategies will also determine the council's strategic spending priorities.
- 2.25 The outdoor sports playing pitch strategy will identify core improvements that are required to create a step change in provision. The Strategy should allow Stoke City Council to shape its core sport and physical activity offer both within its direct provision and that undertaken with partners in the education, voluntary and private sector.
- 2.26 As set out at the strategic level it will underpin the contribution that sport and physical activity makes to the City's corporate objectives and approach towards fulfilling national and corporate targets, for example in contributing to the public health, children and young people and adult social care outcomes. It will also help provide a rationale to enable National Governing Bodies to further invest and deliver their working outcomes as outlined in their Whole Sport Plans.
- 2.27 It is also evident that the above must be achieved in the context of difficult financial times. The council has been set the challenge of significant budget reductions. The strategy will therefore use the evidence base collated to set future priorities in the context of these financial pressures.
- 2.28 The key drivers for the production of the outdoor sports facility assessment and strategy can therefore be summarised as;
- to fully understand the current picture of supply and demand across the City;
 - i. understanding current participation patterns and the stock of facilities;
 - ii. exploring the role of education sites and identifying any opportunities to increase this;
 - iii. understanding of reasons behind current participation patterns; and
 - iv. understanding any issues with regards sustained access / security of tenure.
 - the need to provide up to date evidence to inform infrastructure requirements in light of population growth that is expected. In particular, information is required to inform the emerging local plan and to ensure that infrastructure requirements for sport and leisure are fully understood;
 - the need to provide evidence to aid decision making in relation to specific sites;
 - to inform decision making in relation to CIL and S106;
 - the opportunity to provide evidence to help both the Council and key partners secure external funding; and
 - the need to inform the development of a clear SMART action plan which brings together the priorities of key stakeholders and supports the delivery of sport and health agendas.
- 2.29 This document summarises the key issues arising from the assessment of facilities for those sports covered by the scope and informs the preparation of the action plans. For each

of the sports covered, it aims to;

- summarise the current supply of playing pitches and the characteristics of the pitch stock;
- outline current demand for facilities and evaluate projected demand up to 2030;
- evaluate the overall adequacy of provision to meet current and projected future demand; and
- identify the key issues for the Stoke City Council Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy to address.

2.30 The strategy document will build on the issues identified and set out strategic priorities and actions for delivery

Introduction

- 3.1 A summary of key issues for football is contained at the end of this section.
- 3.2 This section assesses the adequacy of pitches for football in Stoke. It includes:
- a brief overview of the supply and demand for football;
 - an understanding of activity at individual sites;
 - a picture of the adequacy of current provision;
 - the future picture of provision for football;
 - a summary of the main recommendations from the previous Stoke playing pitch strategy relating specifically to football and noting achievements¹; and,
 - a summary of key issues, including a review of the continuing relevance of the previous strategy recommendations still outstanding.

Football in Stoke – An Overview

Pitch Supply

- 3.3 As with other sports pitches covered by this study, the supply of football pitches has been subject to a 'check and challenge' process. There are an estimated 107 individual formal football pitches currently available for community use across Stoke. This figure omits informal pitches, and those not in compliance with governing body minimum regulations in respect of pitch dimensions and other specifications. Where appropriate spaces exist pitches can be marked out or taken out of use, and so the numbers of pitches can fluctuate. Changes to the supply where identified can be assimilated into future reviews of the Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 3.4 Where additional markings have been added over the top of an existing pitch, the underlying and largest pitch is the only one counted (as the largest size pitch). For example, if minisoccer pitches are marked out over an adult 11v11 pitch, then it is only the latter that is counted as a pitch. Table 3.1 summarises the breakdown of pitch sizes and also outlines the level of community access that is available. Site specific detail is provided in Appendix 1. Table 3.2 lists the FA's recommended pitch dimensions for different types of grass pitch. It is estimated that 18 pitches in this total are on 'single-pitch' sites.

¹ Stoke-on-Trent Sport & Physical Activity Strategy 2009-2016 (October 2009)

3: Football

Table 3.1: Grass Football Pitches in Stoke²

Age	Type	Recommended size without run-off		Recommended size including runoff		Recommended size of goalposts	
		Length x width (m)		Length x width (m)		Height x width (m)	
Mini soccer U7/U8	5v5	37	27	43	33	1.83	3.66
Mini soccer U9/U10	7v7	55	37	61	43	1.83	3.66
Youth U11/U12	9v9	73	46	79	52	2.13	4.88
Youth U13/U14	11v11	82	50	88	56	2.13	6.40
Youth U15/U16	11v11	91	55	97	61	2.44	7.32
Youth U17/U18	11v11	100	64	106	70	2.44	7.32
Over 18 (senior ages)	11v11	100	64	106	70	2.44	7.32

² The following FA recommended dimensions were used to categorise pitches.

Table 3.2: Recommended pitch dimensions for football

Pitch Type	Recommended Pitch Dimensions	Acceptable Minimum Pitch Dimensions	Pitches Available to the Community	% of Total Pitch provision
Adult Football 11v11 (aged U15+)	100 x 64 m	82 x 46 m	60	56%
Youth Football 11v11 (age U13 - U14)	91 x 55 m	82 x 46 m	13	12%
Youth Football 9 v 9 (age U11 and U12)	73 x 46 m	64 x 37 m	12	11%
Youth/mini 7 v 7 (age U9 and U10)	55 x 37 m	46 x 27 m	15	14%
Mini 5 v 5 (age U7 and U8)	37 x 27 m	27 x 18 m	7	7%
Total			107	

NB: Not included in this stock of pitches are artificial grass pitches (AGPs), which are considered separately; and, the private facilities belonging to and used exclusively by the 2 professional clubs – Stoke City and Port Vale.

Community Use

- 3.5 All of the pitches have been identified as being currently available for some degree of community use, meaning that there is a good degree of certainty within the pitch stock. 56% of pitches are full-sized grass pitches while the remainder of facilities cater for younger teams (although some of the pitches classified as adult and youth are interchangeable).
- 3.6 There are a number of community use agreements in place at schools within the City, most notably those establishments that have been developed as part of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, and later capital schemes, where there has been a concerted effort by the local authority and Sport England to secure good levels of community use of these and other in situ sports facilities.
- 3.7 However, although currently available for use, football pitches at some of the school sites in the City must be considered unsecured (i.e. not being subject to a formal community use agreement covering the pitches), as any change to academy status could see schools have the independence to withdraw community use, unless existing community use arrangements and agreements, provide protection for such eventualities.

Closed / little-used sites

- 3.8 There are several sites identified that have previously contained football pitches that no longer appear to be sustaining regular play. These are classified in Appendix 1 as 'available for community but not used', and have not therefore been included in any of the 'counts' of pitches made in this section. These sites may offer the potential to increase the pitch stock and to address any existing or projected future deficiencies. Some of these sites contain facilities that might be defined as football pitches, but are used for kick-a-rounds, and therefore can serve an important recreational function.
- 3.9 The following sites are included in the above category:

Table 3.3: Sites not currently sustaining regular team play

Pitch Name [postcodes and ownership/tenure to be added]	Sub area	Markings (if apparent)	Other notes
Anchor Road Stadium	South	2 Adult	Pitch quality rated as poor (See Appendix 1)
Barnfield Road (in a park- Grange Park)	North	kickaround	
Bentilee	South		Off Norwich Road, on urban fringe
(site of) Berry Hill High School	Central		Site not well-suited to pitch sports
Brookwood Drive opposite Western Coney junior school	South		Goalposts, but informal kickaround pitch
Bycars Park	North		Used for pre-season friendlies
Cobridge Park	North		
(site of Edensor High School)	South		
Fallowfield Park	South	Council owned but not a park. Some teams train on there	
Greenbank Road	North		
Hanley Park	Central		Football pitches removed permanently resulting from Council policy decision.
(site of) Longton High School	South		
Lymevale Road (St Peters Academy)	South	3 adult	
(site of) Mitchell High School	Central		
Monks Neil Park	North	friendly	
Normacot Grange (Meir Park)	South	2 adult	
off Woodhead Road	North		Up a gravel drive, away from the road

3.10 Included in table 3.3 are former secondary school campus sites that the City of Stoke Council have determined to be surplus to educational requirements. These include the former sites of Berry Hill and Mitchell High Schools (close to each other in the east of the City), and Edensor High School (off Greendock Street in the South of the City). These sites are currently disused for sport, but will be included in this needs assessment, as they may have potential to meet existing and future unmet needs for pitch space.

3.11 There are also several primary schools in the City where there is either a grass area large enough for a pitch, or where community use has yet to be established. Included in this category are:

- Ashcombe Green / Sutherland Primary School
- Sneyd Hill Primary
- Weston Coyney Junior School

3.12 The supply of 3G AGP pitches is detailed later in this section under a discrete subsection.

Distribution of Playing Fields

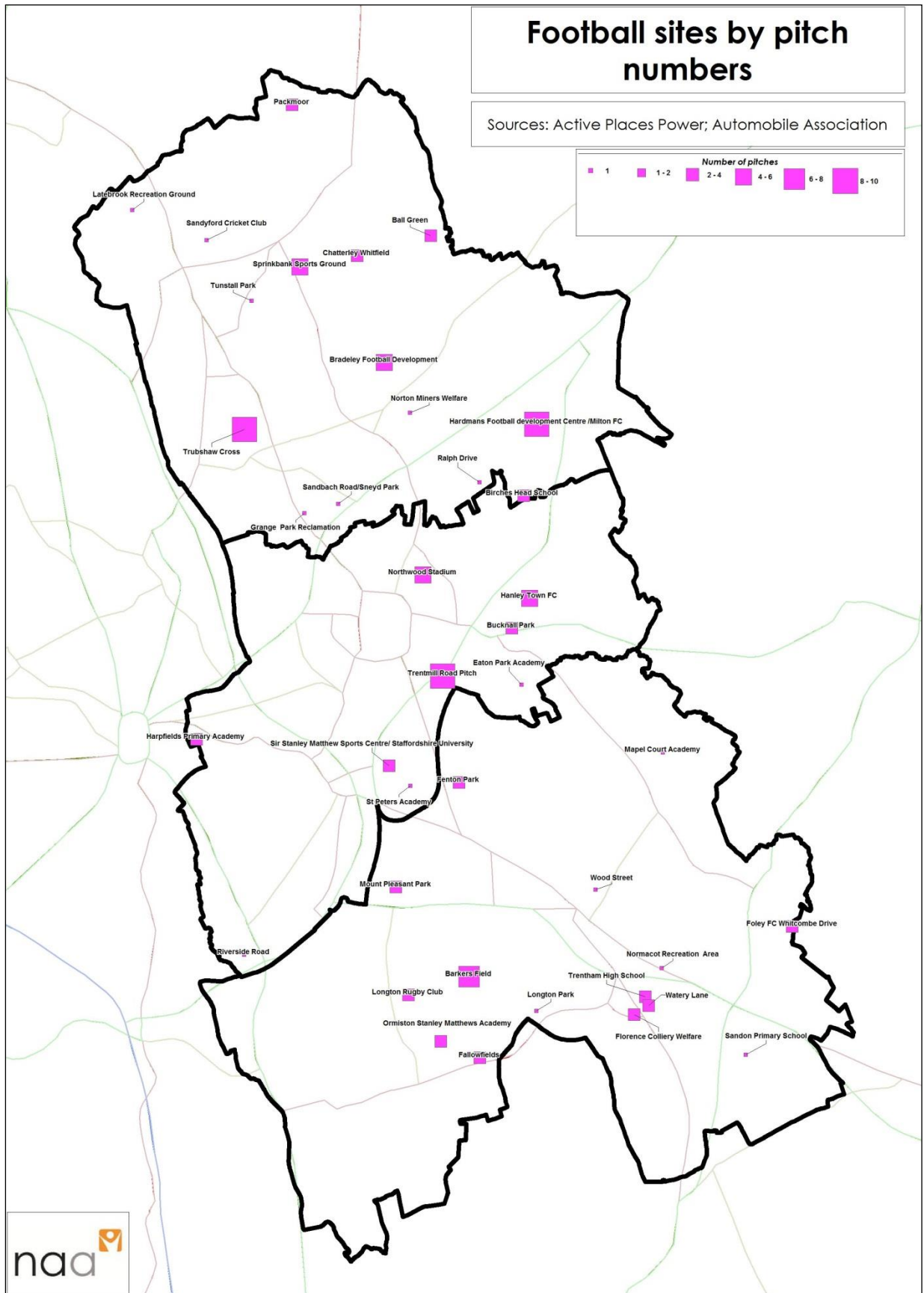
3.13 Table 3.4 provides a more detailed breakdown of the distribution of grass football pitches that are available for community use.

Table 3.4: Distribution of Grass Football Pitches across Stoke (sub areas defined in Section 1 and Map 1.1)

Area	Adult Football	Youth Football	9v9	7v7	5v5	% of Total Grass Pitch Stock
Central	11	2	5	4	4	24%
North	25	9	4	7	2	44%
South	24	2	5	2	1	32%
Total	60	13	14	13	7	

3.14 Building on the information in Table 3.4, Map 3.1 illustrates the scale and distribution of football pitches, as well as the level of access that is available to these sites. It is not easy to compare the amount of pitch space (above) with that estimated for the previous study. This is because, for football, pitch size regulations have changed amongst the younger age-groups and so (with the exception of adult pitches) it is not possible to compare like-for-like. It is, though, easier to compare the overall 'supply v demand' situation currently with that documented in the previous strategy, and this is considered later in the section.

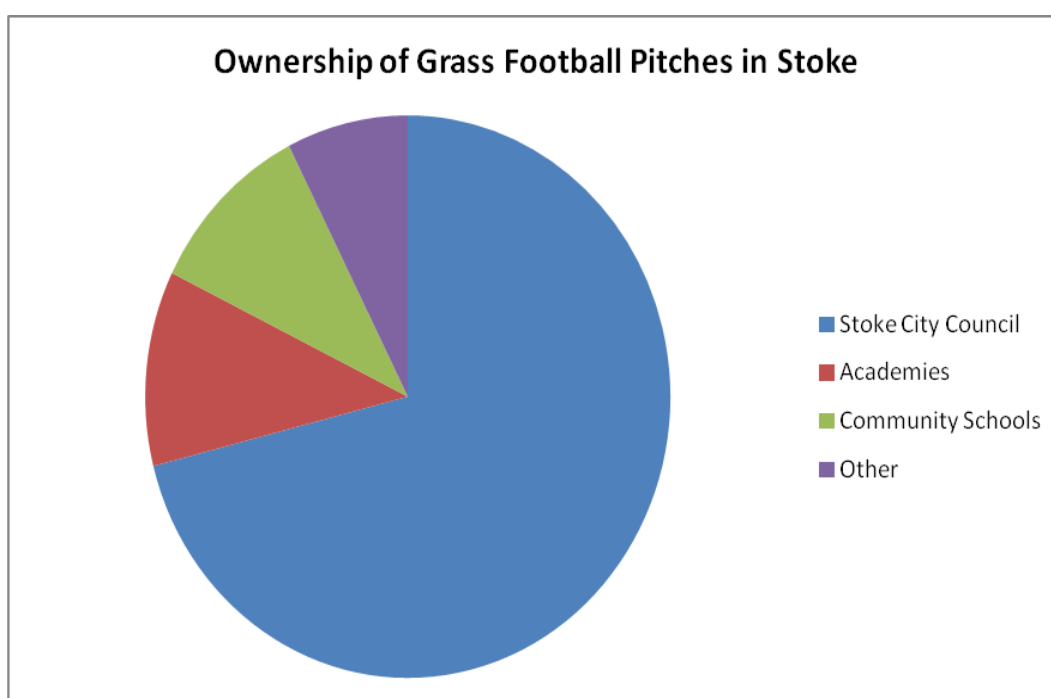
Map 3.1: Distribution and scale of the most significant football pitch sites



Ownership and Management (see Appendix 1)

3.15 Figure 3.1 illustrates that the City Council is the key provider of football pitches in the City. The Council therefore have significant control over the range, type and quality of facilities provided. Facilities are also managed by private clubs, as well as being located at school sites. The high proportion of facilities managed (and or/owned) by the local authority emphasises the important role that the Council has in enabling football participation and the particular reliance that football has on the public sector. The FA National Strategy recognises the challenges that this reliance brings and seeks to increase the number of asset-owning clubs. Later in this section the City Council's own initiative for the granting of 'sports development leases' on sites to local clubs is described.

Figure 3.1: Ownership/management of playing pitches (pitches available for community use only)



Recent changes to the football scene in the City

3.16 The local community football scene has been affected by several key changes in recent years, which have influenced (and continue to influence) the supply of community pitches for football, and the way it is played. These key changes, in summary, are:

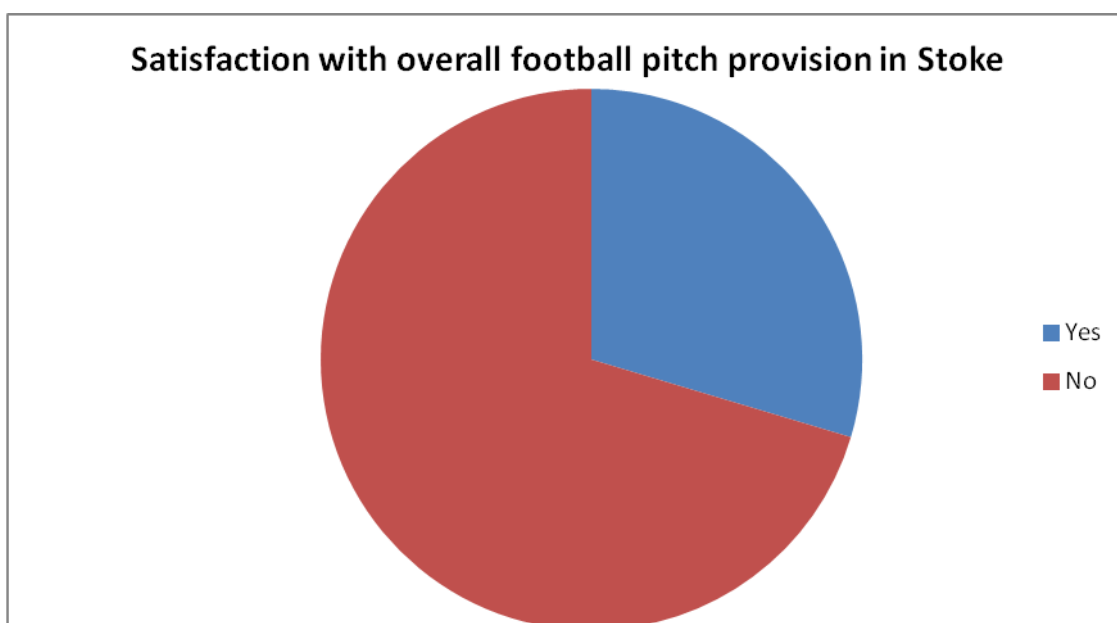
- The development of new education campuses resulting from the BFS and later capital programmes, as well as the continuing establishment of the Stoke campus of Staffordshire University
- The growth in the number of AGPs and, in particular, those with a 3G surface. This has to a large extent been as a result of the schools' capital projects locally, but also the previous PPS.

- The City Council's initiative to put more of its pitch sites into self-management (by users)- an on-going project discussed further later in this section.

Views on the Pitch Stock across Stoke

3.17 Figure 3.2 indicates that there are mixed views in relation to the overall pitch stock in Stoke, with a broadly equal proportion of responding clubs satisfied and dissatisfied. More clubs are satisfied with the pitch stock than are not, but the proportion of clubs that are not means that there remain improvements to be made. A pitch-by-pitch quality assessment has been undertaken as part of this project which must be taken into account, along with club and other views, to get a rounded picture of pitch quality.

Figure 3.2: Satisfaction with overall football pitch provision in Stoke



3.18 The key reasons given by those responding clubs that are dissatisfied are:

- perceived poor quality of pitches, particularly drainage, evenness and maintenance;
- quality of changing accommodation;
- cost of pitch hire; and,
- a lack of access to AGPs at key times on midweek evenings (these being the main free-time slots for most players to train).

Pitch Quality and Changing Accommodation

3.19 In general, most local football leagues require (within their rules) clubs to keep their grounds in playable condition. Pitch quality is therefore an essential component of an effective pitch stock.

3.20 The presence and quality of changing facilities can also be of significance in determining the suitability of pitches, and a lack of facilities can impact on the desirability of grounds for clubs, particularly where there is a lack of toilets as well as changing facilities.

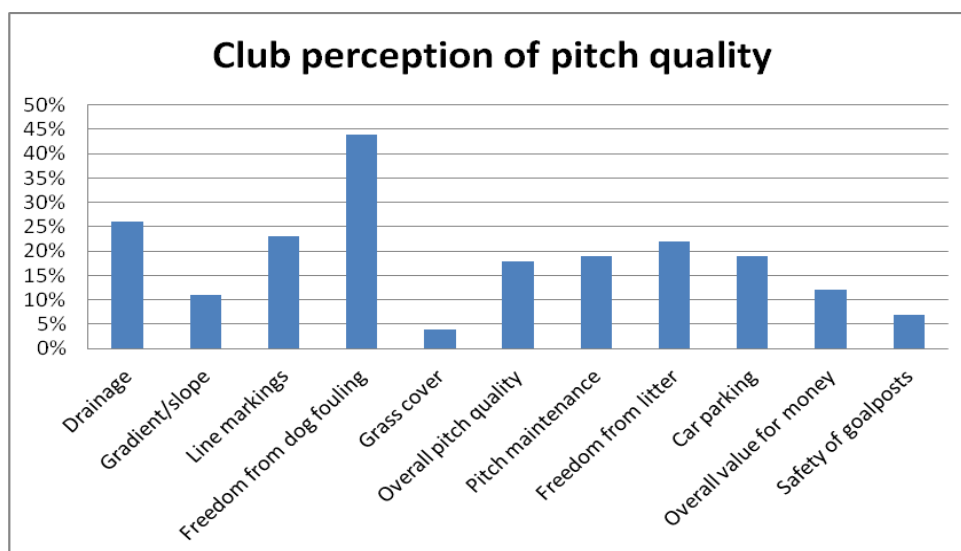
3.21 There are specific rules relating to pitch quality, changing accommodation and social facilities for clubs participating in leagues at all levels on the 'football pyramid'.

- 3.22 Pitch quality and changing accommodation are therefore as important as the number of pitches.
- 3.23 The quality of pitches and ancillary provision was identified by the previous City playing pitch strategy as being problematic. It is difficult to establish whether, since the earlier strategy was published, the quality of pitches and ancillary facilities has improved significantly. However, what is clear is that in the interim period a substantial investment programme has taken place in respect of school redevelopment, and the provision of new 3G AGPs: the latter have undoubtedly improved the provision of playing surfaces less vulnerable to 'overplay', or adverse weather conditions.

Quality of grass pitches in Stoke

- 3.24 Pitch quality scores are delineated as 0-49.9% = Poor; 50-79.9% = Standard and 80%+ = good. Site visits reveal that the majority of pitches are categorised as standard (based upon the views of providers / users / site visits). Only one pitch was rated as good - Hardmans Football Development Centre /Milton FC pitch 3. The lowest rated pitch was the adult pitch at Chatterly Whitfield (34%).
- 3.25 Figure 3.3 illustrates the club perceptions yielded from a club questionnaire survey³ relating to quality of pitches and confirms many of the findings of the site visits and other consultations. Drainage, litter and dog fouling are considered to be the key issues for clubs across the City, along with some issues with the changing facilities provided.
- 3.26 Incidents of dog fouling are primarily (but not exclusively) found on Council pitch sites, while concerns with drainage and evenness are found on all sites.
- 3.27 Some clubs also raise concerns with the adequacy of parking (particularly when all pitches are booked) and the proximity of parking facilities to pitches.

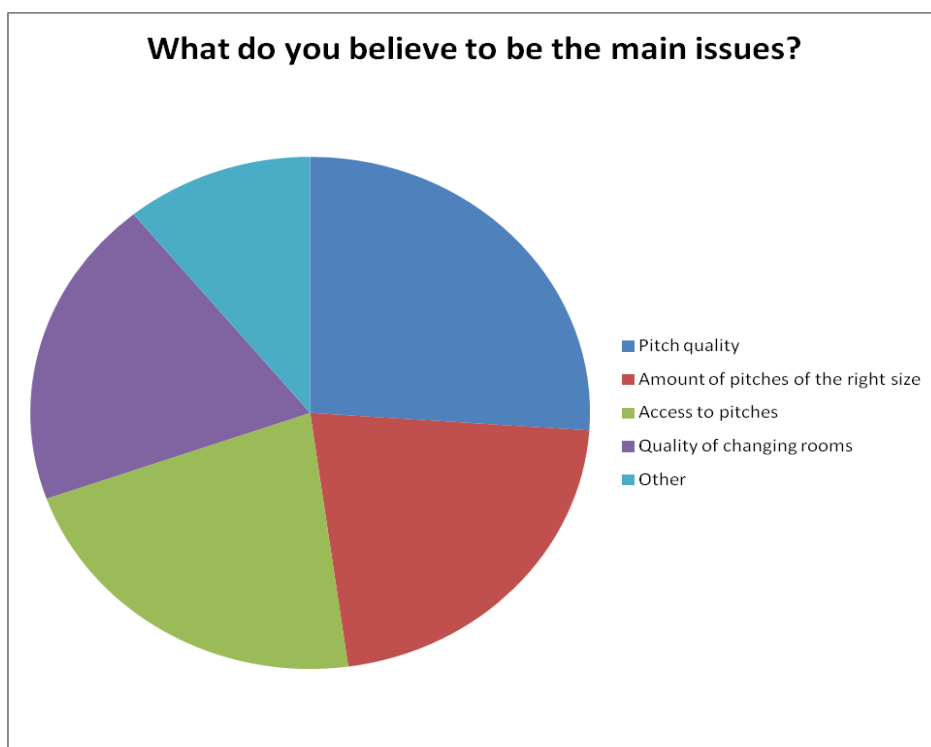
Figure 3.3: Club perception of pitch quality



- 3.28 The club questionnaire survey also asked clubs to indicate what they felt to be the main issues in respect to pitches in Stoke, with the answers summarised in Figure 3.4.

³ An online club questionnaire survey was conducted with links to an on-line survey sent to a contact for each local club, as provided by the Staffordshire FA. The response rate to this survey represented around 60% of clubs playing within the City.

Figure 3.4: What clubs in Stoke perceive to be the main issues



3.29 These results suggest that there is no one dominant 'theme' but that pitch quality, access to pitches, lack of pitches of the right size, and the quality of changing facilities are all pervasive concerns. Quality issues and views specific to each site and pitch are detailed in Appendix 1 and are also summarised later in this section, in Table 3.8.

Quantity and quality of Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) for football

3.30 AGP is a generic term used to cover artificial pitches based on a variety of surface types and specifications. It is acknowledged that there are sand-based AGPs in Stoke that are used for football training and some commercial 5-a-side leagues. However, the FA view is such surfaces as only suited to low key training and casual play. The view of the FA is that the only surfaces suited to serious football training and matchplay are those constructed to the rubber crumb 3rd Generation (3G) specification, and of the appropriate dimensions.

3.31 The FA is now promoting strongly the provision of 3G AGPs for both training and now also for matchplay- the latter especially for junior/minisoccer age groups. This policy initiative is discussed further later in this section. However, it will have implications in respect of the demand for 3G AGPs at certain times of the day and, potentially, the encouragement of a move of teams training from other types of artificial surface. One implication will be the need for flexibility on the part of local clubs and leagues to allow games to be played sequentially. This issue is considered further later in this section.

3.32 Table 3.5 summarises the 3G AGPs across the City and highlights, their general size, as well as the rating of the site⁴. At the time of writing this report, the situation in respect of the supply of the such pitches was in flux, with additional provision potentially coming on-

⁴ The AGPs were assessed using the approach recommended in Sport England's playing pitch strategy guidance.

line, using a variety of funding sources: public sector/education; commercial; and, club. The nature of all existing provision is relatively recent and therefore the overall quality ranging from standard to good reflects this fact. However, a measure of whether such facilities are considered suited to matchplay football is whether they are included on the FA register of FA 'approved' 3G pitches- those local pitches that are FA/FIFA approved are highlighted.

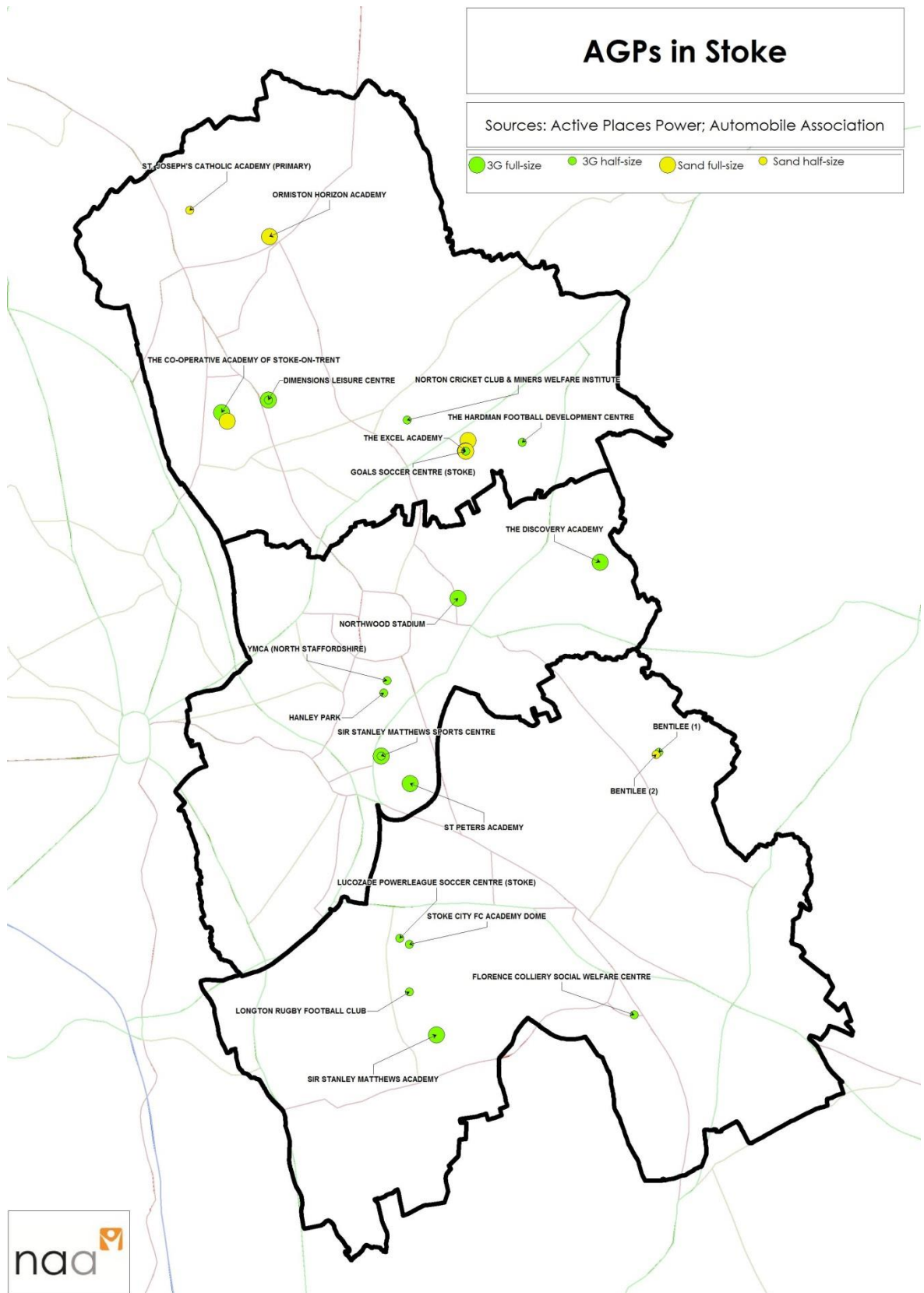
- 3.33 Where quality could not be assessed via on-site non-technical assessments, this is indicated in the appropriate column (N.A.= Not Assessed)
- 3.34 Reflecting the distribution of AGPs outlined in Table 3.4, Map 3.2 highlights the distribution of 3G AGPs. It will be seen that the major concentration of full-size 3G pitches is in the Central part of the City.

Table 3.5: AGP pitches (used for football) in the City

AGP type	Site Name	Pitches	Small AGP	Facility Status	Access Type	FA/FIFA approved	Floodlit?	Overall quality
3G full-size	THE CO-OPERATIVE ACADEMY OF STOKE-ON-TRENT	1	No	Operational	Pay and Play		Yes	Good
3G full-size	NORTHWOOD STADIUM	1	No	Operational	Pay and Play	FIFA approved	Yes	Good
3G full-size	DIMENSIONS LEISURE CENTRE	1	No	Operational	Pay and Play	FIFA approved	Yes	Good
3G full-size	SIR STANLEY MATTHEWS SPORTS CENTRE [CHECK FOR CERTIFICATION]	1	No	Operational	Pay and Play		Yes	Good
3G full-size	THE DISCOVERY ACADEMY	1	No	Operational	Pay and Play		Yes	Good
3G full-size	ST PETERS ACADEMY	1	No	Operational	Pay and Play		Yes	Good
3G full-size	SIR STANLEY MATTHEWS ACADEMY	1	No	Operational	Pay and Play		Yes	Good
Sand full-size	GOALS SOCCER CENTRE (STOKE)	1	No	Operational	Sports Club / Community Association		Yes	N.A.
Sand full-size	ORMISTON HORIZON ACADEMY	1	Yes (slightly less than full-size)	Operational	Sports Club / Community Association		Yes	Good
Sand full-size	THE EXCEL ACADEMY	1	No	Operational	Pay and Play		Yes	Standard
3G smaller-size	BENTILEE (1)	1	Yes	Operational	Pay and Play			Standard
3G smaller-size	FLORENCE COLLIERY SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE	1	Yes	Operational	Pay and Play			Standard

AGP type	Site Name	Pitches	Small AGP	Facility Status	Access Type	FA/FIFA approved	Floodlit?	Overall quality
3G smaller-size	THE HARDMAN FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE	1	Yes	Operational	Pay and Play			Standard
3G smaller-size	HANLEY PARK	1	Yes	Operational	Pay and Play			Poor
3G smaller-size	LUCOZADE POWERLEAGUE SOCCER CENTRE (STOKE)	10	Yes	Operational	Pay and Play			N.A.
3G smaller-size	STOKE CITY FC ACADEMY DOME	1	Yes	Operational	Private Use [ALTHOUGH CUA ON THIS FACILITY?]			N.A.
3G smaller-size	NORTON CRICKET CLUB & MINERS WELFARE INSTITUTE	1	Yes	Operational	Pay and Play			Standard
3G smaller-size	GOALS SOCCER CENTRE (STOKE)	8	Yes	Operational	Pay and Play			N.A.
3G smaller-size	DIMENSIONS LEISURE CENTRE	2	Yes	Operational	Pay and Play			Standard
3G smaller-size	SIR STANLEY MATTHEWS SPORTS CENTRE	1	Yes	Operational	Pay and Play			N.A.
3G smaller-size	LONGTON RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB	1	Yes	Operational	Pay and Play			Standard
3G smaller-size	YMCA (NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE)	1	Yes	Operational	Pay and Play			N.A.
Sand smaller-size	BENTILEE (2)	1	Yes	Operational	Pay and Play			Standard
Sand smaller-size	ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY (PRIMARY)	1	Yes	Operational	Sports Club / Community Association			N.A.

Map 3.2: AGPs (3G and other) in the City



Demand

Current Participation – Match Play

3.35 Table 3.6 summarises the teams currently based in Stoke playing on grass pitches. It excludes the majority of ladies and girls teams who play on AGPs; these are dealt with separately. Full details of all teams playing in the City are included in Appendix 2.

Table 3.6: Football Teams in Stoke (2015) playing on grass pitches

Format	Number of Teams	Proportion of Teams in City
Adult Football 11v11 (aged U15+)	106	49%
Youth Football 11v11 (age U13 - U14)	25	12%
Youth Football 9 v 9 (age U11 and U12))	30	14%
Youth/mini 7 v 7 (age U9 and U10)	27	13%
Mini 5 v 5 (age U7 and U8)	27	13%
TOTAL	215⁵	

3.36 It will be seen that, overall, adult 11v11 is the single largest age category in term of the number of teams. However, taking into account the more limited age-span covered by mini and youth football (u7 to u14) this age range generates a far larger number of teams relative to the population falling within this age group (although it is acknowledged that team sizes will generally be smaller than for the adult game). These figures can be compared with those recorded for previous playing pitch studies conducted within the City in which used data available for 2002 and 2007/8⁶.

3.37 In 2002, there were recorded to be 297 teams overall, of which 122 were adult (16-45+ years); and the remainder junior/mini age teams. In 2007/8 the overall figure was 331, and of which 120 were adult (16-45 years +), and remainder were junior/mini teams.

3.38 The above suggests, on first sight, that there has been an overall decline in the number of teams since 2007/8, and the current numbers do not compare well with previous totals. However, the following much be taken into account:

- the current figures for 2015 are for teams playing on grass pitches. Appendix 3 identifies that there are 51 teams that could not be assigned to a particular home grass pitch included in this assessment- this might be because they are playing professional clubs playing on their home grounds (Stoke City and Port Vale), or are booked into slots on 3G AGPs for their matches. Some of these clubs are also Academy teams under the wing of either Stoke City or Port Vale FC, and whilst such teams may use facilities under the exclusive control of those clubs, others will use facilities more generally available for community use (such as Port Vale FC Academy's use of pitches at Northwood Stadium); and,
- of these teams, an estimated 33 teams are of an age to be playing on full-size adult pitches.

⁵ This total excludes teams estimated to be playing matches on artificial pitches

⁶ These figures were taken from page 270 of the Sport & Physical Activity Strategy 2009-2016 (October 2009), and which were derived by the Nortoft consultancy using data available from the City Council and the County FA, at the time.

- 3.39 In previous years there would have been few if any adult full-size teams playing their matches on AGPs, and so to compare 'like-with-like' the above 51 teams should be added to the total in Table 3.6 to yield 267 teams, overall.
- 3.40 Even with this allowance, the 2015 figure is less than those for the two previous years. Arguably, this does not mean that there has been a decline in interest in playing football.
- 3.41 Whilst there might possibly have been a decline in the numbers of adult teams playing the conventional forms of the game at the 'traditional' times (i.e. Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning), it is very conceivable that such adults who would previously have been attracted to conventional football will have not be entirely lost to the game, but may now be playing in mid-week small-sided leagues, either indoors or outdoors (perhaps at commercial venues). These other versions of the game are outside the remit of this report directly, but any such trends are important to note.
- 3.42 Further discussion about reasons for the apparent decline in the numbers of 'conventional teams' is provided later in this section.

League Structure

- 3.43 There are several leagues operating within the City, catering for different age/gender groups and levels of play. The main leagues are as follows:
- City Traders Football League (primarily Sunday)
 - Coors League (Sunday)
 - North Staffordshire Junior Youth League (Ladsandads) (primarily Sunday)
 - North Staffs Saturday League
 - North Staffs Youth League (Sunday)
 - Potteries District Sunday League (Sunday)
 - Potteries Junior Youth League (primarily Sunday)
 - Staffordshire County Senior League (Saturday)
 - Staffs County Girls' League (Sunday)
 - Staffs County Women's League (Sunday)
 - There is also midweek 11v11 recreational participation taking place on 3G pitches in the City, organised by the Staffordshire FA.

Club Structure and Participation Trends

- 3.44 Other than the above trends, a very important movement in recent years has been the development and progression of 'Ladsandads' football within the City, and in north Staffordshire in general. 'Ladsandads' is an initiative that has its origins in the City, but now has expanded out to other parts of the County.
- 3.45 The initiative is borne out of the original desire of a local resident to provide opportunities for children who want to play football, but perhaps would not be offered an opportunity to play competitively- the ethos was (and still is) "everyone gets a game" and, therefore, on playing for enjoyment, and with no over-emphasis on winning.

- 3.46 Over recent years the scheme has expanded rapidly, and is focussed largely on central venues, and organised into 'branches'. Previously, the scheme was outside the conventional league administration, but has now affiliated with the Staffordshire FA as the North Staffordshire Junior Youth League. Each Branch (of which there are several of relevance within the City) assumes responsibility for the overall administration of various clubs/teams generally covering the mini-soccer/small-sided age groups.
- 3.47 The various Branches tend to operate on a central venue basis, of which some are now self-managed (The Trubshaw and Blurton Branches have both opted for the self-management of their venues, in agreement with the City Council, as owners). In addition, the Harman Centre Branch is under new management.
- 3.48 The City Council is actively promoting self-management by clubs on some of its sites, and this is considered further later in this section.
- 3.49 The growth of the movement/league is testimony to the originators and the hard work and forward-thinking of past and current individuals. However, growth has brought pressure in relation to access to appropriate facilities.
- 3.50 Beyond Ladsandads, local leagues report mixed trends in respect of club/team affiliation. Time and societal trends have meant that some of the traditional adult league formats have not fared as well, locally, as the Ladsandads. For example, the traditional Sunday morning league play has suffered a decline in team numbers as, for example, work patterns, and time commitments change.
- 3.51 Traditional Sunday league clubs tend to hire facilities rather than own/manage their own, and the clubs involved generally only field one or two teams, and do not have the structure or resources to sustain their own facilities. It is fair to say that, other than the above societal trends, clubs and local league representatives also attribute the decline in teams and interest to a declining quality in pitches and changing facilities which is off-putting.

Professional clubs

- 3.52 The City hosts two professional clubs: Stoke City FC who play in the Premier League; and, Port Vale FC who play in the Football League. Although these clubs' senior teams are not within the remit of this study, both clubs have academies and a 'community' section, the latter are involved in the wider community. The two clubs' academy teams are largely outside the remit of this study, and are self-contained. For example, Stoke City Academy teams play mostly at the Clubs indoor 'Dome' and at the Club's training facility at Clayton Woods in Newcastle. However, where teams fielded are in association with the clubs' community/outreach activities they have been included within the remit and analysis of this report. Aside from the two professional clubs of national prominence there are a few clubs playing in the national league pyramid system, which covers Step1 (Football Conference) – 7 (county leagues). These include Abbey Hulton FC, Florence FC, and Hanley Town FC (1st and reserve team). As a result of the standard of football played, there are specific requirements that must be adhered to in relation to the facilities provided at the home ground.
- 3.53 Issues identified at each site in relation to meeting these criteria will be evaluated later in this section.

Facility requirements

- 3.54 As the above suggests, competitive football can be seen as a hierarchy. Depending on the level of the league, the requirements for facilities will differ. At the most basic community level, the expectation will be for pitches marked out to the correct dimensions and with the appropriate equipment. Changing facilities are also highly

desirable. The higher up the football pyramid, there are additional demands, such as for floodlights, enclosed pitches, match officials' rooms etc. The precise requirements are identified in individual league handbooks, and these requirements need to be fully understood and taken into account in the planning and design of new and improved facilities that are intended to cater for specific levels of play.

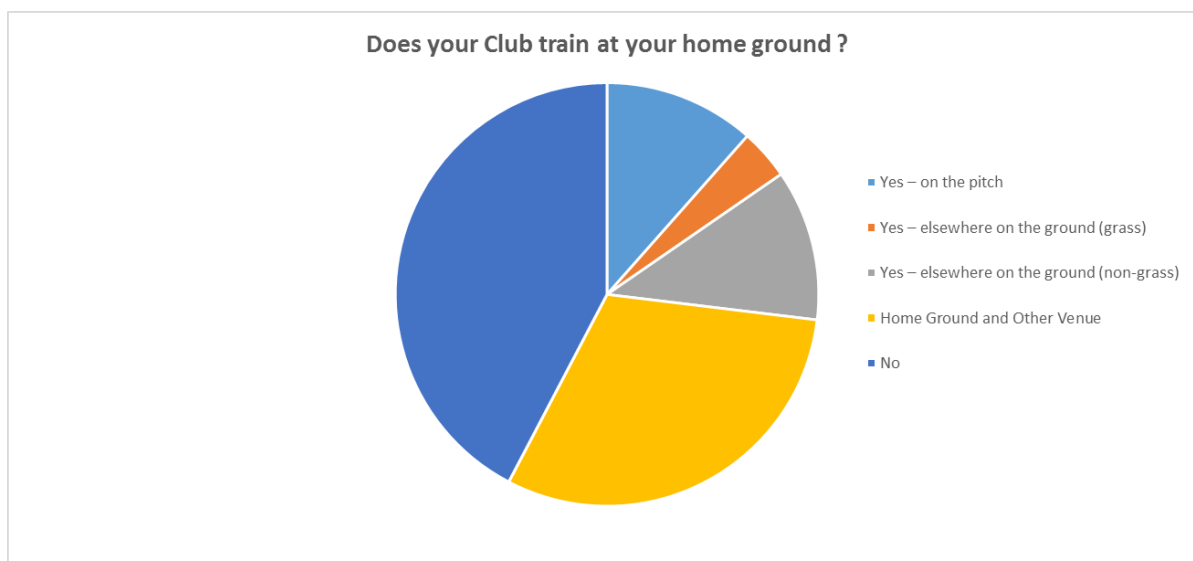
Displaced Demand

- 3.55 The City of Stoke's geographical relationship with Newcastle-under-Lyme means some clubs and teams based in the City will draw on players from Newcastle, or elsewhere; and vice versa. It is therefore difficult to discern whether there is displaced demand in respect of clubs or teams that are based in Newcastle (for example) but would prefer to play in the City of Stoke- much of the prevailing league structure catchments cover the Stoke/Newcastle conurbation.
- 3.56 A playing pitch strategy has been conducted for Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council. The strategy makes reference to the inter-relationship of the two local authorities in respect of teams and clubs with a greater 'affinity' with one local authority using facilities in the neighbouring local authority. However, the strategy does not appear to suggest that this is problematic, as commuting distances are relatively small.
- 3.57 This report takes the same view, insofar as commutes by clubs and teams into and out of the City to alternative venues may actually involve less time and distance than travelling to different facility elsewhere in the City.
- 3.58 The club questionnaire survey has not revealed any significant demand by clubs to move to preferred alternative venue/location, although it is noted that Stoke Town use facilities at Newcastle College to field some of their girls' teams.

Training Needs

- 3.59 The club questionnaire survey asked clubs whether they trained at their home ground, with the following results.

Figure 3.5: Where clubs and teams train



3.60 It can be seen that just less than half of responding clubs did not train at their home ground. However, a sizeable proportion of clubs/teams train on their home ground as well as other venues. Where clubs train at their home venues some of this training will take place off the pitch, by using marginal grass areas or other non-grass facilities.

3.61 Of those teams and clubs that train off-site, responses from the clubs suggest that AGPs are a very popular resource, together with indoor training at sports centres in the winter months. Commercial five-a-side venues are also cited as training venues.

3.62 The absence of floodlighting on most football pitches will not allow for evening training in the winter months. Some on-pitch training will take place at the beginning and the end of the season when daylight is longer. At these times of year the pitches will be subjected to drier conditions, generally, and training would not contribute significantly to the wear and tear of pitches. There are also issues of teams training on other teams pitches where these are in public open space. Trubshaw Cross is a particular example of this where pitches are damaged due to adult team training although no adult games are booked on the site.

3.63 Although poor quality training facilities was not identified expressly as a big problem facing local clubs. Face-to-face discussions with club and league representatives suggest that gaining access to AGP training facilities at an affordable price was problematic. A perceived lack of training facilities was considered to be one of the key issues for football in the City and concerns raised included:

- the cost of facilities is a barrier to usage, particularly for smaller clubs and those not afforded a discount;
- insufficient training pitches - all available slots are either too early (usually before 6 pm) or late; and
- bookings processes are inefficient, with teams from different clubs using facilities on different nights of the week and at varying times. This can make it difficult for other users.

3.64 The majority of single adult teams may well not train at all, purely playing on a Saturday / Sunday for recreational benefits. Some however indicate that they struggle to access appropriate facilities for training as they are either booked by larger clubs or cost too much.

Educational Demand

3.65 The majority of secondary schools in the City have their own playing fields: since BSF and other capital projects education pitch provision has been rationalised, often with the development of new AGP facilities on-campus. This has added to the range of options for local for football, both in respect of training and matchplay.

3.66 While not all schools mark out their playing field area as formal pitches, most have the capacity to do and there is only ad hoc use of other sites.

3.67 The degree of community access to the larger secondary schools as a result of formal agreements seems relatively high, in the experience of the report authors when considering access to school provision in some other parts of the country. This may in no small part be due to the extent to which formal community use agreements that have been agreed (and which cover sports pitches) as part of recent capital projects. However, the combined impact of school and community use can affect the quality of school pitches, and especially if they are not constructed and maintained to a good standard. Table 1.8 assesses the quality of pitches used for community clubs, including those on school sites.

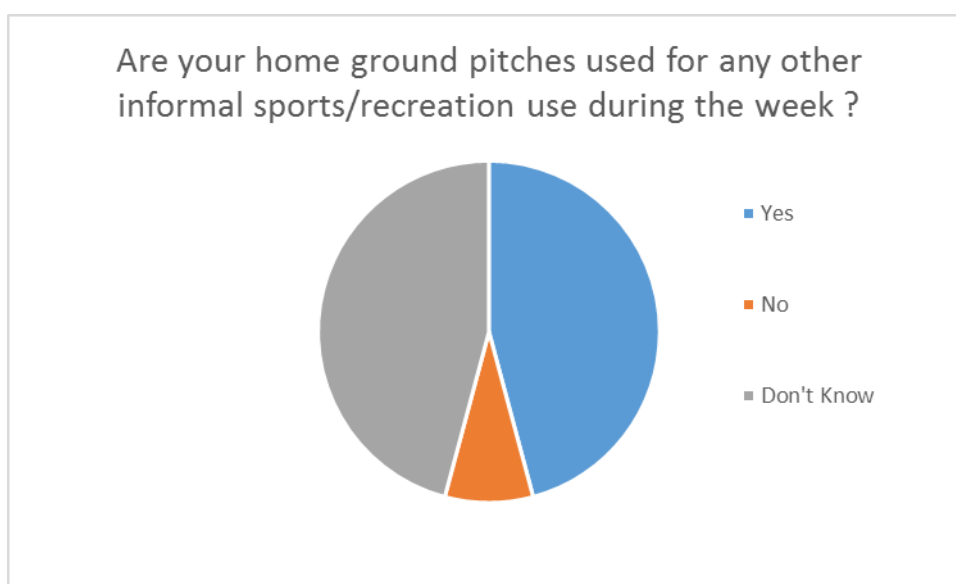
Casual Demand

3.68 Many sites also function as parks or public recreational areas. This impacts upon the quality of some pitches, particularly with regards dog-fouling, which has emerged as a key issue for many pitch users.

3.69 Figure 3.6 indicates that a substantial number of home grounds used by clubs responding to the survey were also used for other activities.

3.70 Where teams play on education sites, school use is obviously an activity that can limit the amount of community use on school pitches before their quality becomes unacceptable.

Figure 3.6: Other uses of home grounds



Other Issues

3.71 Other issues raised can be summarised as:

Cost of facility hire and running the club

- The cost of facility hire was raised by both adult and junior clubs and was a key concern for clubs using both public and private facilities. For those using public pitches, both leagues and clubs perceive cost to be a key contributing factor for the decline of adult football, particularly with a reduction in the availability of sponsorship
- For those at private pitches, both clubs and providers highlighted the pressures of ever increasing costs of maintenance and the difficulties of covering this within the fees paid through subs to clubs. There are opportunities for clubs to work together to share knowledge and equipment, particularly around grounds maintenance skills. This is however limited.

Impact of the perceived focus on performance and youth/mini football by the FA and local authority

- Discussions with league secretaries suggest a view that key stakeholders such as the City Council and the FA have concentrated on provision and opportunities for certain sectors of football community. Away from key football sites for football pitch quality at other sites is now perceived to be deteriorating and the gap in quality is becoming ever greater. The prime example cited was the quality of pitches and ancillary facilities for the basic levels of adult community football (such as in the Sunday leagues).

Adequacy of Pitch Provision – Assessing Supply and Demand information and Views

3.72 The Sport England Methodology enables evaluation of the adequacy of provision, taking into account both the quality and number of pitches provided. Adequacy is measured both over the course of a week and at peak time using the concept of match equivalents. There is a strong interrelationship between the quality of a pitch and the amount of matches that it can sustain.

Weekly Capacity

3.73 The quality of the pitch has a greater influence on weekly capacity - this directly impacts the number of matches that can be sustained. Table 3.7 summarises the guidelines used with regards pitch capacity (extracted from Sport England Guidance on the Production of a Playing Pitch Strategy, prepared by the FA).

Table 3.7: Capacity based upon Pitch Quality

Agreed pitch quality rating	Adult Football	Youth Football	Mini Soccer
	Number of match equivalent sessions a week		
Good	3	4	6
Standard	2	2	4
Poor	1	1	2

3.74 There are some examples of over-marking (where one pitch is marked with two or more sets of lines to cater for different age groups). Where additional markings have been

added over the top of existing pitches, pitches are only counted once (as the largest size pitch). For example, a senior pitch with 9v9 markings is considered to be a senior pitch. The use of the pitch by the 9v9 team is however taken into account. For the purposes of analysis therefore, it has been assumed that where a senior or youth pitch is used by a team playing 9v9, 7v7 or 5v5, this is equivalent to half a match equivalent, due to the more limited wear and tear that such teams generate on the pitch as a result of smaller players and shorter playing periods, as well as reduced numbers. This is in line with existing Sport England guidance.

- 3.75 It should also be noted that at some sites, pitch provision changes weekly to ensure that supply is matched with demand that weekend.

Peak Time Demand

- 3.76 Peak time demand is determined by evaluating the number of match equivalents at peak time and comparing it to the number of pitches available. Peak time is deemed to be the period in which the most play on that pitch type takes place. Peak times for matches is spread over the weekend with the precise time varying over the age groups.

- 3.77 Pitches can only be considered to have spare capacity at peak time when they are not already utilised to their full capacity over the course of a week. An adult pitch that is not used at peak time, but is used more than three times per week at other times would not be considered able to sustain additional play either at peak time, or at other times, even though no one would be using the facility then, as this would be detrimental to the quality of the pitch.

- 3.78 While adult leagues in the area have specific (and non-flexible) kick off times, kick off times for the younger teams can generally be staggered, ensuring that clubs are able to accommodate all desired play. In general, this means that peak time is less focused and that more matches can be accommodated on one pitch (subject to weekly capacity).

- **Senior Football – the majority of adult teams in the City** play on a Sunday morning. Teams playing at a higher standard, including those in the Non-league Pyramid, kick off on a Saturday afternoon. Ladies football is all played on a Sunday afternoon, meaning that pitch requirements do not clash with those of senior male teams.
- **Youth and 9v9 football** – almost all youth and 9v9 football also takes place on a Sunday. There is however a degree of flexibility in kick off times, with fixtures staggered. This means that more games can be accommodated over the course of the day.
- **5v5 and 7v7** - the majority of mini soccer play takes place on a Sunday morning.

- 3.79 The above indicates therefore that demand in the City for grass pitches is relatively concentrated, on the Sunday. This increases the number of pitches required to accommodate peak time demand but does however limit the demands on pitch maintenance, with most facilities hosting the majority of their activity on a Sunday.

Grass Pitches - Situation at Individual Sites

- 3.80 Table 3.8 provides a summary of the activity that takes place at each site offering community use of grass pitches in the City. It sets out the current supply and demand and outlines whether the pitch is being overplayed, played to the appropriate level or is able to sustain additional fixtures. The table is a summary of a much more detailed spreadsheet which also includes site specific comments, and is included as Appendix 4.

On pitches where there is calculated to be over-use the relevant figures in Table 3.8 appear in **Red**.

- 3.81 Quality ratings are derived from a combination of site visits (where as an indication, sites achieving a score of 50% - 80% are rated standard). Sites above this are considered good and below are rated poor) as well as consultation. Site visit scores do not necessarily correlate directly with the rating given, as club and provider feedback, as well as the overall impression at the time of the site visit is also taken into account to produce a final rating. Site visit scores for example may be influenced by a good (and therefore highly scoring) maintenance programme, but if this is ineffective due to underlying issues, quality is reduced.
- 3.82 Initial on-site pitch quality assessments were undertaken in December. The results of this quality assessment were then discussed at a meeting of the City Council's local 'Football Focus Group' to which league representatives are invited along with other key football stakeholders, locally. The results were also subject to 'check and challenge' via the Staffordshire FA, and its own pitch advisor (which included some confirmatory visits). All the assessments are a snapshot in time and pitches can vary from week to week depending on the weather, play and maintenance. So some pitches will vary in a few points scoring one way or the other, so this can affect pitches where they are on the cusp of the next category. But, in the main, a poor pitch is a poor pitch and a good pitch is a good pitch and the rest are standard in between. The poorer ones will be low standard, but probably adequate to play on and the better ones are high standard and good to play on.
- 3.83 The way the scoring system works means that to obtain a 'good' rating a pitch requires high quality maintenance including decompaction, seeding and top dressing out-of-season, with slitting and sanding of problem areas in the season. This is really the minimum requirement to maintain the turf in good condition. Good pitches should have grass that is uniform and verdant (no yellowing of the sward or bare patches), growing straight, no thatching, no weeds or moss and no squelching under foot, the grass feels springy underfoot with no unevenness.
- 3.84 Issues will be explored later in this section by pitch type, however the key issues emerging from the overall site overview are as follows.
- 3.85 The majority of pitches in the City are able to sustain additional play across the week. This is influenced by the strong focus on match play on a Sunday morning, which reduces the amount of games that pitches are required to sustain across the week. There is however evidence of overplay on one or more pitches on several sites and this is caused by a variety of things including heavy use, some training that might be conducted on grass pitches, the need to balance curricular requirements with community use and the poor quality of facilities (in some cases).
- 3.86 Based on the calculations in Table 3.8 over-use of individual pitches is sporadic. However, a site that does appear to subject to suffer significant over-use of many of its pitches is the Barkers Field/Blurton Primary School (South Sub Area). This is a complex that is important for junior football. It also hosts curricular use and many of its pitches are rated as poor in respect of capacity.
- 3.87 Many of the larger and busier sites, do not appear to have much, if any, spare peak time capacity. This is possibly a misleading picture as it is likely that kick-off times can and will be staggered for some of the younger age-group matches. As and when this happens it will spread the peak-time demand. Such measures may potentially lead to additional match day wear and tear on individual pitches. However, younger and smaller-sided teams have much less impact on the quality of pitches than adult teams.

3.88 It is to be noted that pitches at the recently developed Packmoor site have been included within the table, even though they have not yet been constructed to the appropriate specification to be adopted by the City Council, and therefore used. It is assumed that these issues will be resolved in the near future.

Table 3.8: Site Specific Usage at each site

A Site Name	Postcode	B Sub Area	C Pitch Type	D No. of Pitches	E Quality Rating	F Multiplier for pitch use	G Capacity for community use in (match equiv.) (D x F)	H							I Actual Community Use Total (match equiv.) (H/2)	J Difference (G-I) i.e. extent of spare capacity for community use per week	K Extent of any spare capacity during the peak period (match equiv.)	
								Sat AM (teams)	Sat PM (teams)	Sun AM (teams)	Sun PM (teams)	Midweek (teams)	Training	Education				Displaced
Abbey Hulton United FC	ST2 8DD	North	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2		2	4	1					3.5	-1.5	0.0
Ball Green	ST6 8BA	North	Adult 11v11	2	Standard	2	4			2						1.0	3.0	1.0
Barkers Field Blurton Primary School pitch 1	ST6 8BA	South	Youth 11v11	1	Poor	1	1			7						3.5	-2.5	0.0
Barkers Field Blurton Primary School pitch 2	ST6 8BA	South	Youth 9v9	1	Poor	1	1			7						3.5	-2.5	0.0
Barkers Field Blurton Primary School pitch 3	ST6 8BA	South	Mini 7v7	1	Poor	2	2			5						2.5	-0.5	0.0
Barkers Field Blurton Primary School pitch 6	ST6 8BA	South	Mini 5v5	1	Standard	4	4			7						3.5	0.5	0.0
Barkers Field Blurton Primary School pitches 4+5	ST6 8BA	South	Youth 7v7	2	Standard	2	4			10						5.0	-1.0	0.0
Birches Head School	ST2 8DD	North	Adult 11v11	2	Poor	1	2			1				2		1.5	0.5	1.5
Bradeley Football Development pitches 1+3	ST6 7NN	North	Youth 11v11	2	Standard	2	4			3						1.5	2.5	0.5
Bradeley Football Development pitches 2+4	ST6 7NN	North	Adult 11v11	2	Standard	2	4			3						1.5	2.5	0.5
Bucknall Park	ST2 8AB	Central	Adult 11v11	2	Poor	1	2			5						2.5	-0.5	0.0
Burnwood School	ST6 6QD	North	Adult 11v11	2	Standard	2	4			1				3		2.0	2.0	1.5
Chatterley Whitfield	ST6 6QD	North	Adult 11v11	1	Poor	1	1			3						1.5	-0.5	0.0
Eaton Park Academy	ST2 9PF	Central	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	2	2			1				2		1.5	0.5	0.5
Fallowfields pitch 1	ST3 3BT	South	Adult 11v11	1	Poor	1	1			1						0.5	0.5	0.5
Fallowfields pitch 2	ST3 3BT	South	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	2	2									0.0	2.0	1.0
Fenton Park	ST4 2SL	South	Adult 11v11	2	Standard	2	4			2						1.0	3.0	1.0
Florence Colliery Welfare	ST3 4JS	South	Adult 11v11	2	Standard	2	4		1	4	1					3.0	1.0	0.0
Foley FC Whitcombe Drive pitch 1	ST3 6NU	South	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2		1							0.5	1.5	1.0
Foley FC Whitcombe Drive pitch 2	ST3 6NU	South	Adult 11v11	1	Poor	1	1			2						1.0	0.0	0.0
Grange Park Reclamation	ST6 3DQ	North	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			1						0.5	1.5	0.5
Hanley Town FC pitch 2	ST2 8AJ	Central	Youth 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			2						1.0	1.0	0.0
Hanley Town FC pitch 3	ST2 8AJ	Central	Youth 7v7	1	Standard	4	4			4						2.0	2.0	0.0
Hanley Town FC pitches 1+4	ST2 8AJ	Central	Adult 11v11	2	Standard	2	4	1	2	5						4.0	0.0	0.0
Hardmans Football development Centre /Milton FC pitch 1	ST2 7DN	North	Mini 5v5	1	Standard	4	4			4						2.0	2.0	0.0
Hardmans Football development Centre /Milton FC pitch 10	ST2 7DN	North	Youth 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			3						1.5	0.5	0.0

A Site Name	Postcode	B Sub Area	C Pitch Type	D No. of Pitches	E Quality Rating	F Multiplier for pitch use	G Capacity for community use in (match equiv.) (D x F)	H							I Actual Community Use Total (match equiv.) (H/2)	J Difference (G-I) i.e. extent of spare capacity for community use per week	K Extent of any spare capacity during the peak period (match equiv.)	
								Sat AM (teams)	Sat PM (teams)	Sun AM (teams)	Sun PM (teams)	Midweek (teams)	Training	Education				Displaced
Hardmans Football development Centre /Milton FC pitch 2	ST2 7DN	North	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2		3	1						2.0	0.0	0.5
Hardmans Football development Centre /Milton FC pitch 3	ST2 7DN	North	Youth 11v11	1	Good	4	4			3						1.5	2.5	0.5
Hardmans Football development Centre /Milton FC pitch 4	ST2 7DN	North	Youth 7v7	1	Standard	2	2			3						1.5	0.5	0.0
Hardmans Football development Centre /Milton FC pitch 5	ST2 7DN	North	Mini 7v7	1	Standard	4	4			6						3.0	1.0	0.0
Hardmans Football development Centre /Milton FC pitch 6	ST2 7DN	North	Mini 5v5	1	Standard		0									0.0	0.0	0.0
Hardmans Football development Centre /Milton FC pitch 7	ST2 7DN	North	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	2	2			4						2.0	0.0	0.0
Hardmans Football development Centre /Milton FC pitch 8	ST2 7DN	North	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2		2	2	1					2.5	-0.5	0.0
Hardmans Football development Centre /Milton FC pitch 9	ST2 7DN	North	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	2	2		1	3						2.0	0.0	0.0
Harpfields Primary Academy	ST4 6AP	Central	Youth 9v9	2	Standard	2	4			1				2		1.5	2.5	1.5
Kemball Avenue	ST4 4LD	South	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			1						0.5	1.5	0.5
Latebrook Recreation Ground	ST6 6JA	North	Youth 11v11	1	Poor	1	1			2						1.0	0.0	0.0
Longton Park	ST3 4AZ	South	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			1						0.5	1.5	0.5
Longton Rugby Club Football pitch 1	ST4 8WG	South	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2	2	1	2						2.5	-0.5	0.0
Longton Rugby Club Football pitches 2 + 3	ST4 8WG	South	Mini 7v7	2	Standard	4	8			1						0.5	7.5	1.5
Mapel Court Academy	ST2 0QD	South	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	2	2			1				2		1.5	0.5	0.5
Mount Pleasant Park	ST4 4LD	South	Adult 11v11	1	Poor	1	1			2						1.0	0.0	0.0
Normacot Recreation Area	ST3 5LH	South	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			2						1.0	1.0	0.0
Northwood Stadium pitch 1	ST1 6PB	Central	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2		1	1						1.0	1.0	0.5
Northwood Stadium pitch 2	ST1 6PB	Central	Youth 9v9	1	Standard		0									0.0	0.0	0.0
Northwood Stadium pitch 3	ST1 6PB	Central	Mini 7v7	1	Standard		0									0.0	0.0	0.0
Northwood Stadium pitch 4	ST1 6PB	Central	Mini 5v5	1	Standard		0									0.0	0.0	0.0
Norton Miners Welfare	ST6 1QF	North	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2		1	2						1.5	0.5	0.0
Ormiston Stanley Matthews Academy	ST3 3JD	South	Adult 11v11	3	Standard	2	6			6	1					6.5	-0.5	0.0

A Site Name	Postcode	B Sub Area	C Pitch Type	D No. of Pitches	E Quality Rating	F Multiplier for pitch use	G Capacity for community use in (match equiv.) (D x F)	H							I Actual Community Use Total (match equiv.) (H/2)	J Difference (G-I) i.e. extent of spare capacity for community use per week	K Extent of any spare capacity during the peak period (match equiv.)
								Sat AM (teams)	Sat PM (teams)	Sun AM (teams)	Sun PM (teams)	Midweek (teams)	Training	Education			
Packmoor Pitches pitch 1	ST7 4SJ	North	Adult 11v11	1	Good	3	3			2					1.0	2.0	0.0
Packmoor Pitches pitch 2	ST7 4SJ	North	Youth 11v11	1	Good	4	4			2					1.0	3.0	0.0
Packmoor Pitches pitch 3	ST7 4SJ	North	Mini 5v5	1	Good	6	6			1					0.5	5.5	0.5
Ralph Drive	ST1 6JQ	North	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			1					0.5	1.5	0.5
Riverside Road	ST4 6NH	Central	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			2					1.0	1.0	0.0
Sandbach Road/Sneyd Park	ST6 2DQ	North	Youth 11v11	1	Poor	1	1			1					0.5	0.5	0.5
Sandon Primary School	ST3 7AW	South	Youth 7v7	1	Standard	2	2			1			2		1.5	0.5	0.5
Sandyford Cricket Club	ST6 5LR	North	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			1					0.5	1.5	0.5
Sir Stanley Matthew Sports Centre/ Staffordshire University	ST4 2YJ	Central	Adult 11v11	3	Standard	2	6			2			6		4.0	2.0	2.0
Sprinkbank Sports Ground	ST6 6JA	North	Adult 11v11	4	Poor	1	4			6					3.0	1.0	0.0
St Peters Academy pitch 1	ST4 2RR	Central	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			1			2		1.5	0.5	0.5
St Peters Academy pitches 2+3	ST4 2RR	Central	Youth 9v9		Standard		0								0.0	0.0	0.0
Trentham High School pitch 1	ST3 4QN	South	Adult 11v11	1	Poor	1	1			1			1		1.0	0.0	0.5
Trentham High School pitch 2	ST4 2YJ	South	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			1			2		1.5	0.5	0.5
Trentmill Road Pitch 1	ST1 3NH	Central	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			3					1.5	0.5	0.0
Trentmill Road Pitch 2	ST1 3NH	Central	Mini 7v7	1	Standard	4	4			3					1.5	2.5	0.0
Trentmill Road Pitch 3,4+5	ST1 3NH	Central	Mini 5v5	3	Standard	4	12			3					1.5	10.5	1.5
Trentmill Road Pitch 6	ST1 3NH	Central	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	2	2			3					1.5	0.5	0.0
Trentmill Road Pitch 7	ST1 3NH	Central	Youth 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			5					2.5	-0.5	0.0
Trentmill Road Pitch 8	ST1 3NH	Central	Youth 7v7	1	Standard	2	2			4					2.0	0.0	0.0
Trubshaw Cross Pitch 4	ST6 4JT	North	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	2	2			5					2.5	-0.5	0.0
Trubshaw Cross Pitch 5	ST6 4JT	North	Youth 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			4					2.0	0.0	0.0
Trubshaw Cross Pitch 6	ST6 4JT	North	Adult 11v11				0								0.0	0.0	0.0
Trubshaw Cross Pitch 8	ST6 4JT	North	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	2	2			3					1.5	0.5	0.0
Trubshaw Cross Pitches 1 + 3	ST6 4JT	North	Youth 7v7	2	Standard	2	4			9					4.5	-0.5	0.0
Trubshaw Cross Pitches 2 + 7	ST6 4JT	North	Mini 7v7	2	Standard	4	8			7					3.5	4.5	0.5
Trubshaw Cross Pitches 9+10	ST6 4JT	North	Youth 11v11	2	Standard	2	4			5					2.5	1.5	0.0
Tunstall Park	ST6 6DY	North	Adult 11v11	1	Standard	2	2			2					1.0	1.0	0.0
Watery Lane pitch 1	ST3 4QY	South	Youth 9v9	1	Poor	1	1			1					0.5	0.5	0.5
Watery Lane pitch 2	ST3 4QY	South	Adult 11v11	1	Poor	1	1			1					0.5	0.5	0.5
Wood Street	ST3 1DH	South	Adult 11v11	1	Poor	1	1			1					0.5	0.5	0.5

3.89 The site overviews set out in Table 1.8 allied to the further detail in Appendix 4 provide an understanding of the issues regarding the adequacy of pitch provision across the City and the situation at individual sites. Issues can be further evaluated looking first at the adequacy of provision for each type of pitch, as well as exploring whether the situation differs in the three sub areas of the City. In respect of the latter, the information contained in Table 3.8 can be summarised into a sub area 'overview' as contained in Figures 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9.

Figure 3.7: Capacity summary for adult pitches by sub areas

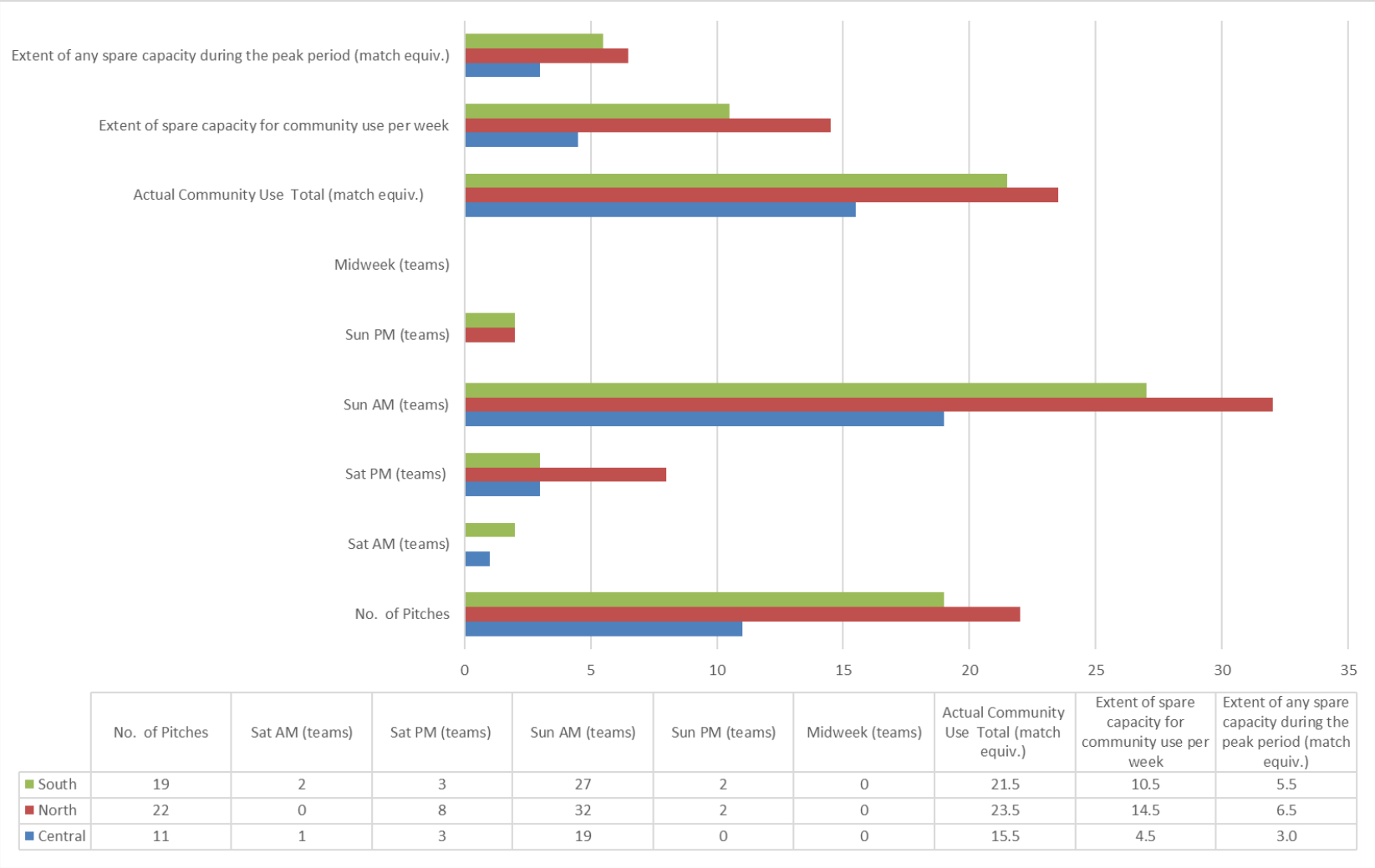


Figure 3.8: Capacity summary for youth pitches by sub areas

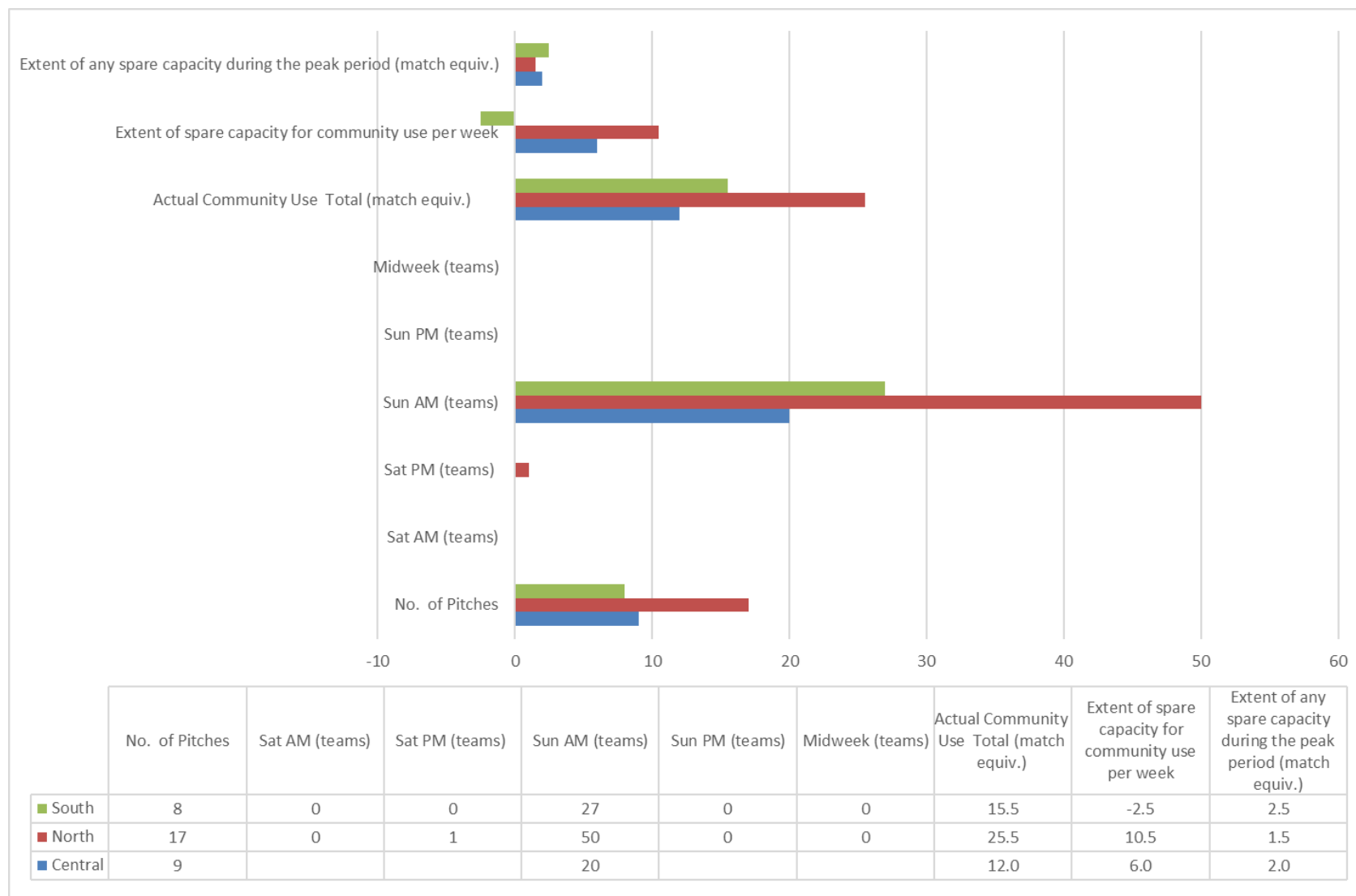
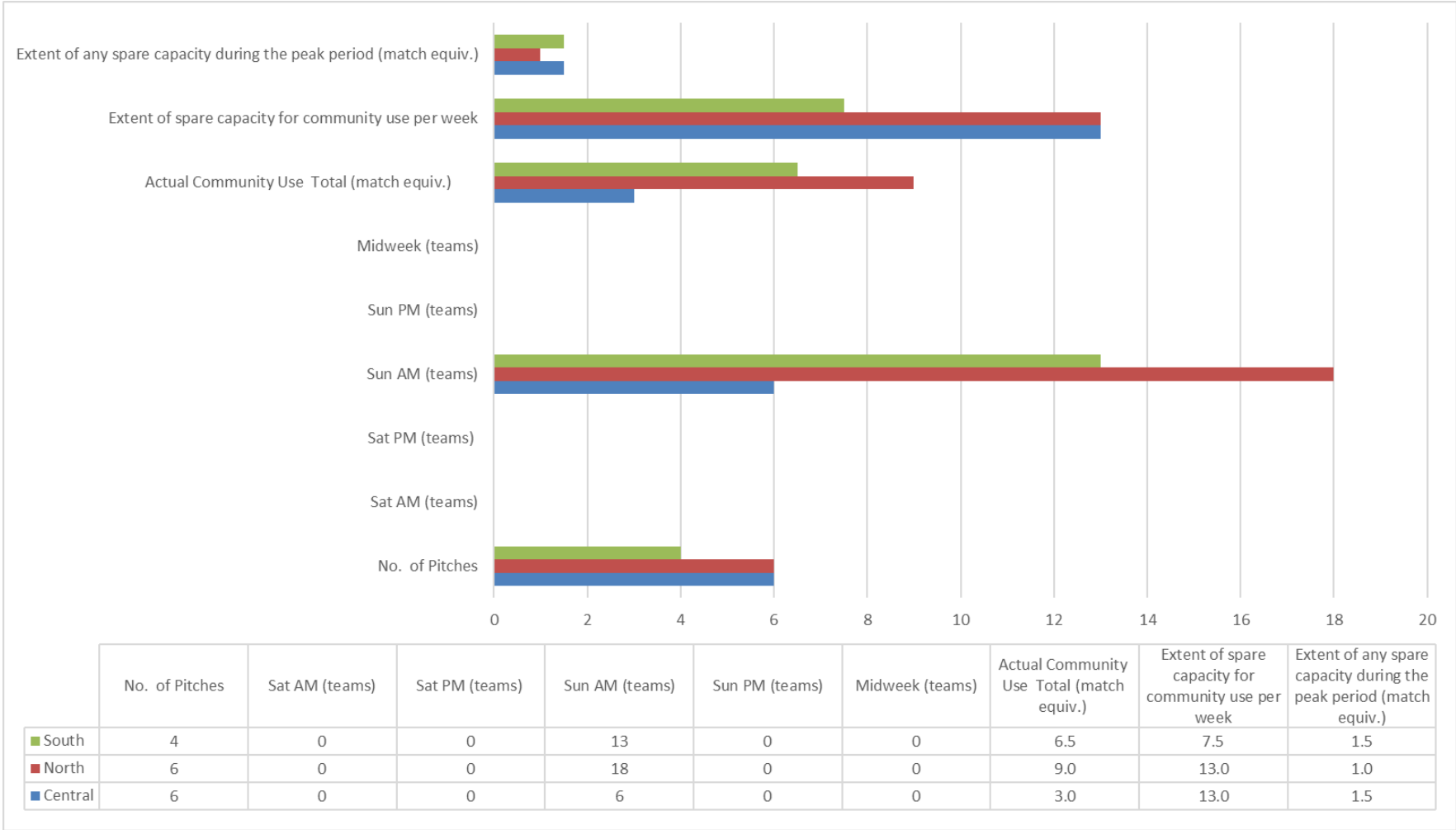


Figure 3.9: Capacity summary for minisoccer by sub areas



- 3.90 The above summary shows that the most acute problems in respect of over-use occur in the South Sub Area, and particularly with certain types of youth provision. In terms of peak-time capacity there appears for youth and mini provision to be little or no spare capacity, but the situation changes if matches are played in sequence, as explained earlier. The main issue currently therefore is overuse of some youth pitches leading to unacceptable wear and tear. This leads to a situation where (as in the South sub area) whilst there is a small peak-time surplus of youth pitches, there is heavy use of existing youth pitches, so as to limit the possibility of exploiting this peak-time surplus.
- 3.91 Generally, there are sufficient pitches to meet *current demand for grass pitches*, albeit there are quality issues restricting the playing capacity in some areas/locations, and which require attention. One solution where there are local capacity issues could be to remark some of the adult pitches to a smaller size which may, for example, address the capacity problems facing youth football in the South sub area.
- 3.92 Table 3.9 builds upon this, providing an area specific overview of the issues identified and the sites where capacity issues are currently experienced.
- 3.93 It will be noted from the table that there are several sites that have lapsed from use, at least for matchplay football. Further details are provided in Appendix 1.

Table 3.9: Area Specific Issues Identified

Sub Area	Overall Adequacy of Provision	Specific Issues Identified
North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptable in terms of weekly and peak-time capacity for adult football • Acceptable for mini soccer in terms of weekly capacity. Potentially more problematic in terms of peak time capacity, unless some matches are played in sequence. • Some weekly capacity issues in respect of youth pitches. Potentially more problematic in terms of peak time capacity, unless some matches are played in sequence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packmoor: Major issues with the quality of construction of pitches recently provided: these have yet to be signed off as ready for use. This has caused problems for the identified resident club. • Sprinkbank Sports Ground: Poor quality pitches and changing facilities. • Trubshaw Cross: Changing facilities at the site are poor considering the size and importance of this site. • Hardmans Football Development Centre /Milton FC: Pitch maintenance regime may have difficulty keeping up with very heavy use on this big site. • Chaterly Whitfield: pitch in poor quality and unused. • Grange Park Reclamation: room for more pitches, but no changing. • Unused pitch sites at Barnfield Road; Bycars Park; Cobridge Park; Greenbank Road; Monks Neil Park;
South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptable in terms of weekly and peak-time capacity for adult football • Acceptable for mini soccer in terms of weekly capacity. Potentially more problematic in terms of peak time capacity, unless some matches are played in sequence. • Some weekly capacity issues in respect of youth pitches. Potentially more problematic in terms of peak time capacity, unless some matches are played in sequence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barkers Field Blurton Primary School: The capacity and quality of many of the pitches at the challenging. Changing rooms on this important site for youth football also appear to be lacking. • Fallowfields pitches: Generally poor quality and no changing facilities. • Foley FC Whitcombe Drive: Pitches and changing generally in poor condition • Watery Lane: Poor quality pitches • Anchor Road Stadium: In poor condition and unused (for football) • Other unused pitch sites at Bentilee; Brookwood Drive; former Edensor High School; Fallowfield Park; former Longton High School; Normacott Grange (Meir Park)

Sub Area	Overall Adequacy of Provision	Specific Issues Identified
Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptable in terms of weekly and peak-time capacity for adult football • Acceptable for mini soccer in terms of weekly capacity. Potentially more problematic in terms of peak time capacity, unless some matches are played in sequence. • Few weekly capacity issues (compared with other sub areas) in respect of youth pitches. Potentially more problematic in terms of peak time capacity, unless some matches are played in sequence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bucknall Park (pitch quality) • Trentmill Road pitches are poorly served for changing facilities • Normacot Grange (Meir Park): large site and with scope for more pitches, with some remodelling • Other sites unused include former Berry Hill High School; former Mitchell High School

Scenario testing: Potential Impact of budget / Quality Reductions

3.94 The City Council faces severe challenges over continuing reductions in revenue and maintenance budgets available, as this can clearly affect the quality of its pitches, and their ability to absorb football activity. Table 3.10 reveals the situation if all pitches were retained, but the number of match equivalent sessions that could be sustained over a week as a result of a decline in quality fell by 25% some of the carrying capacity of the pitch stock would fall into a deficit (see red figures).

Table 3.10: Impact of 25% of pitches becoming poorer in quality

Pitch Type	A. Capacity for community use in (match equiv.)	B. Actual Community Use Total (match equiv.)	C. Difference (A-B) i.e. extent of spare capacity for community use per week	D. 25% reduction in capacity for community use in (match equiv.)	E. Difference (D-B) i.e. extent of spare capacity for community use per week
Adult 11v11	90	60.5	29.5	67.5	7
Mini 5v5	26	7.5	18.5	19.5	12
Mini 7v7	52	18.5	33.5	39	20.5
Youth 11v11	27	18.5	8.5	20.25	1.75
Youth 9v9	22	18	4	16.5	-1.5

3.95 The spare capacity is currently largely at sites with less use, any reduction in quality would be most significantly felt on sites that are already heavily used.

Self-management Policy

3.96 The City Council is pursuing its policy of self-management to allow sports clubs to take over the management and maintenance of pitches. This policy allows a more flexible approach to community asset management than full community asset transfer which is more onerous.

3.97 The aim of this policy is to both empower the community to take control of its own sporting assets and improve value for money by reducing the number of sites that are directly managed by the City Council.

3.98 Teams playing in the local leagues require access to facilities in order to register with the league and, as a result, access to Council's pitches has historically been one of the main options open to them. The Council believes that self-management will help meet a requirement from teams for an enhanced quality of facilities which the Council is unable to provide, by offering leagues and more established teams the opportunity to take on a facility and make improvements as they feel appropriate.

3.99 The Council is actively managing this policy to ensure that only appropriate pitches transfer, i.e. single pitch sites and not strategic pitches in key locations, to ensure a balanced and improving stock of pitches is available.

3.100 As a number of facilities transfer to self-management this will allow the Council's Grounds

Maintenance resources to be re-prioritised to improve remaining pitches, especially those located in key public parks which are especially well suited for use by newer teams.

- 3.101 Providing more opportunities for teams and other groups to operate their own facilities will create new opportunities for the FA to engage, and with the support of the Football Foundation funding help improve facilities. The FA are also fully committed to helping to support the development of teams and leagues who take on the management of a facility and have already indicated that they will seek to help operators find innovative solutions to the challenges that maintaining a facility presents, as well as providing training to ensure the relevant skills are available.
- 3.102 Since the City Council adopted this policy there have been several successful examples of successful self-management being established through the creation of 'Sports Development Leases'. These include The Hardman Centre (Milton United FC), and both Barkers Fields, and Trubshaw Cross venues which are now operated by Branches of Staffordshire Lads and Dads,
- 3.103 The transfer of selected playing field assets to local community organisations such as sports clubs, offers several real benefits beyond the simple reduction in the City Council's on-going financial liability for the site. Specifically, provided that lease holders are offered sufficient security of tenure at the time of application, these organisations can apply for a wide range of significant external funding that the City Council is either not able to access, or does not have the staff capacity / available match funds to pursue. Due to this, successful Sports Development Lease arrangements have considerable potential to both engage the local community in providing for the City's sport.
- 3.104 Table 3.11 provides a list of sites identified by City Council officers as potentially suited to self-management. Some of these are also included in Table 3.3.

Table 3.11: Sites identified in Table 3.3 and their suitability for inclusion for self-management

Action Plan Ref	Site Name	Sub Area
3	Anchor Road Stadium	South
6	Ball Green	North
17	Bradeley Football Development	North
29	Chatterley Whitfield	North
36	Lysander road or alternative site	South
39	Fallowfields	South
40	Fegg Hayes Sports & Social Club	North
57	Kemball Avenue	South
58	Latebrook Recreation Ground	North
60	Longton High School (site of)	Central
64	Lymevale Road (St Peters Academy)	South
70	Norwich Road (or alternative site)	Central
71	Monks Neil Park	North
74	Normacot Recreation Ground/Area	South
75	Normacot Grange (Meir Park)	South
83	Packmoor	North
85	Priorsfield	South

Action Plan Ref	Site Name	Sub Area
88	Riverside Road	Central
89	Sandbach Road/Sneyd Park	North
93	Sneyd Cricket Club (closed)	North
94	Sprinkbank Sports Ground	North
108	Wood Street	South
109	Woodhead Road (off)	North

3.105 The extension of the self-management principle to clubs on additional sites would perhaps benefit from the development of improved specialist maintenance equipment (e.g. drainage) for the Councils parks grounds team. This service could be bought in at cost by the self-management clubs who may not have the ability to do this work. This initiative would also help improve the councils retained pitches.

Measuring Demand on AGPs

3.106 Within the City AGPs are currently used mostly for football training and 5-a-side games. A large majority of conventional league matches still take place on grass pitches, with AGPs used as an overspill on the whole, rather than as a key part of the infrastructure for accommodating matches. It is thought that there is still a preference for the use of grass pitches amongst the majority of the football playing community, but this is subject to the adequacy of the grass pitches. The club survey has indicated strongly a preparedness on the part of many clubs, in principle, to use 3G AGPs both for matches and training.

3.107 Local leagues generally accept the need to use such pitches, and especially when matches on grass pitches are not possible due to weather conditions or where grass pitches are of poor quality. The lack of availability and cost of using AGPs for matchplay (as well as hiring for training) is also considered to be problematic for some clubs.

3.108 A major issue in enabling large numbers of adult teams to play matches on 3G AGPs is the need to play matches in sequence on these surfaces, and the extent to which this can happen will depend ultimately on the availability and flexibility of team members.

3.109 The club questionnaire survey conducted as part of this needs assessment revealed that the majority of responding clubs (60%) have stated that they would be prepared to play matches on 3G pitches. Furthermore, 70% of responding clubs stated that they would be prepared to be flexible in terms of kick-off times, in order to make most efficient use of 3G pitches. It is also very clear from the club survey that there is still a strong attachment amongst many footballers to playing football on natural turf, so long as it is of a good standard for play.

3.110 As mentioned earlier in this section, The FA are now strongly promoting the use of 3G AGPs for training, but also now for matchplay, and especially for mini-soccer and youth teams.

3.111 To ensure the full context is understood, the use of AGPs will therefore be considered separately, but evaluated within the context of grass pitch provision and the role that these sites do (and could) play in meeting competitive fixture requirements will be determined.

3.112 Primarily to take evaluate capacity and take up, the methodology indicates that the adequacy of AGPs is measured through:

- the amount of play that a site is able to sustain (based upon the number of hours that the pitch is accessible to the community during peak periods up to a

maximum of 34 hours per week). Peak periods have been deemed to be Monday to Thursday 18:00 to 21:00; Friday 17:00 to 19:00 and Saturday and Sunday 09:00 to 17:00;

- the amount of play that takes place (measured in hours);
- whether there is any spare capacity at the site based upon a comparison between the capacity of the site and the actual usage; and,
- any other key issues relating to the site which have arisen through consultation.

Scenario testing: FA AGP Demand Modelling

3.113 AGPs are becoming increasingly important for football. The FA facility strategy (2013 – 2015) seeks to shift football usage away from sand based AGPs to 3G pitches.

3.114 The FA vision (November 2014) which is the result of extensive analysis on the facilities used for football (including grass roots) places greater emphasis on the benefits of 3G pitches and their importance for the future delivery of football. The vision seeks to build a sustainable model to ensure that the development of significantly higher numbers of AGPs can happen. In particular, the FA cite the additional capacity that AGPs offer compared to grass and their ability to sustain play during periods of inclement weather, resulting in a reduced number of cancellations.

3.115 The vision sets several targets for 2020 including:

- the creation of football hubs in 30 cities – this will include increasing the number of top quality AGPs in urban areas by 130%. These hubs will be owned or managed by a new football organisation or trust;
- a 50% increase in the total number of full size, publicly accessible 3G AGPs across England, to over 1000; and,
- more than 50% of all mini soccer and youth football matches being played on the best quality AGPs.

3.116 A significant number of 3G AGPs have already been developed in the City. There are currently 7 full-size 3G pitches within the City. Only three of these pitches are presently included on the FA register as suitable for both serious training and matchplay. At the time of writing this report it was unclear as to the extent to which the City of Stoke (perhaps also including Newcastle under Lyme) would be a beneficiary of the above initiative). Whether or not the City is included in the initiative (under the aegis of the FA 'Parklife' project will have a major bearing on the way in which community football is played within the City. The implications are discussed more fully below.

3.117 FA data modelling evaluates the baseline requirement for 3G pitches taking into account the training requirements of clubs. It assumes that one 3G pitch is required per 42 teams⁷ and, that based on FA policy, all football training should take place on 3G pitches (as opposed to sand). However, if the FA's guidance of 42 teams per pitch for training is used, it would suggest a need for only just under 6 full-sized 3G AGPs to meet the training needs of all local teams, estimated to be around 260 team teams.

3.118 In addition to the full-size 3G pitches, there are also 10 small-sized pitches, which are used by local clubs. These smaller pitches will also absorb a significant amount of demand for training.

⁷ It is understood that this ratio figure may be subject to change.

3.119 On the face of it, therefore, the City is already very well provided for in respect of 3G pitches, based on FA guidelines. However, a phone survey of the use and spare capacity of the existing full-size pitches within the City suggests that, with the exception of the facility at the Discovery Academy, there is little spare capacity at times of peak demand which, for training, is midweek evenings.

3.120 If it is also noted that the existing full-size pitches are also hosting increasing numbers of adult games. This is, in part, as a consequence of a clear programming policy. For example, in the case of the Northwood stadium pitch, supported by the FA. However, elsewhere, pitches appear to be hosting matches as alternative venues when grass pitches are too waterlogged to allow for play.

3.121 Football demand for 3G pitches can be categorised into three areas:

- matchplay (requires use of a 3G pitch that is included on the FA register- although it is noted that some league matches are be played on facilities not on the register);
- informal / recreational use – pay and play or leagues; and
- training (The FA would like to see all clubs having access to a 3G pitch – they discourage the use of sand based facilities).

3.122 The Table 3.12 outlines the current use and spare capacity on *full-size 3G AGPs*⁸ across the City. It reveals that there is little spare capacity available, and almost none within the desirable time slots. It should also be noted that concerns have been raised by operators around the country about the lack of use of AGPs during the late spring and summer, as clubs tend to resort to training on grass once evenings are sufficiently light. With full-size pitches, the convention tends to be that the overall pitch is divided into 3 smaller units for training or 5-a-side during the week, which increases capacity and revenue for the operator. The standard time unit available is usually one hour, and users can take multiple time units. It is almost impossible to measure spare capacity in terms of hours with any precision, as the situation is very fluid with short-term bookings being made frequently. This has occurred recently where weekend football matches on grass have had to be played on 3G AGPs due to waterlogging etc of a grass pitch. In these circumstances bookings can be made at very short notice, and perhaps involving the entire pitch.

Table 3.12: Current Use and Spare Capacity on 3G AGPs

Site	Comments
Dimensions	Some slots available, but centre is only open between 10-4pm on Saturdays. Better opportunities on Sundays where venue is open between 10 and 7 pm
Northwood Stadium	Currently some availability of 1/3 pitch on Monday evenings. No availability on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Some availability on weekend afternoons.
Stanley Matthews Sports Centre	Little availability during the week because of student use, although the odd 1/3 pitch slot available.
The Discovery Academy	Still some availability for 1/3 pitch slots on weekday evenings (especially Fridays). Significant availability

⁸ Other (sand-based) AGPs across the City are used for football activity. However, the FA do not consider such surfaces to be suited to serious training or matchplay.

Site	Comments
	at weekends other than for 1 hour.
Sir Stanley Matthews Academy	Almost fully booked on mid-week evenings. The weekends are largely devoted to Stoke City 'outreach' coaching.
St. Peter's Academy	Very limited availability on weekday evenings. More availability on weekends, subject to restricted opening hours at school. Used by Port Vale Academy, and also, increasingly by teams wanting to play full-size matches on the surface due to grass pitches not being playable.

3.123 Table 3.12 therefore demonstrates that, with one exception, there is quite limited spare capacity across the week. Although there is scope to increase use at the weekend, this is either on pitches that are not on the FA register, or outside of peak times of demand. Although the situation can change, there is also thought to be some use of 3G AGPs by teams with their origins in Staffordshire Moorlands and Newcastle under Lyme local authorities.

3.124 Further use of the AGPs would however reduce levels of demand for grass pitches, particularly where training currently occurs. This suggests that the creation of further AGPs may reduce overuse of grass pitches rather than purely displace other activity. This is also supported by club consultation, which indicates that there is a belief that there remain insufficient 3G AGPs in the City.

3.125 What is becoming very clear is that the advent of 3G AGPs is, quite literally, a 'game changer' in terms of the way they have opened up the prospects for not just training on a consistent, weather-resistant, surface; but also; playing matches on such surfaces- a trend which is clearly beginning to emerge within the City. This is partly as a result of teams having to resort to such facilities to play matches which could not otherwise be played on waterlogged grass pitches; but also, seemingly, as a matter of choice.

3.126 Beyond training activity, the FA's Vision for 2020 seeks to relocate 50% of youth and Minisoccer matches on the 3G AGPs. There is currently no recognized and accepted way to calculate how many mini-soccer and youth matches can be hosted by a full-size 3G AGP over a given period, as the calculations would depend on such variables as the size of the teams (dictating whether pitches could be used for more than one match); the length of each match and turnover periods; and, the extent to which local leagues and teams would be prepared to stagger their matches over the course of a day to ensure that pitch capacity is fully exploited.

3.127 Given the nature of smaller-sided junior and mini-soccer, it is clearly far easier to introduce these age groups to 3G matchplay, as the team sizes involved mean that, on full-size pitches, multiple games can take place. It is far more difficult to introduce large numbers of full-size adult and youth teams to such facilities, given that with older age groups only one game can be played at a time on full-size pitches. Critically, with adult age groups, there would have to be agreement amongst leagues and providers enabling kick-off times to be staggered.

3.128 Quite apart from the implications for matchplay resulting from a greater reliance on 3G AGPs, there are also financial implications and, potentially benefits. All things being equal, the capital costs of providing a full-size adult grass pitches is much less than the comparative cost of a 3G AGP. Both natural and artificial turf pitches also have substantial maintenance costs. However, 3G AGPs have the ability to be used theoretically on a 24/7 basis if equipped with floodlights. 3G AGPs therefore have a much better capacity to generate income through greater levels of use compared to natural turf pitches; and, can break even financially, with good marketing and

management. On the other hand, turf pitches *by themselves* cannot be expected to be maintained without quite a high financial loss to whoever owns and provides such facilities.

3.129 The difference between the overall annual revenue losses that might be accrued from 3G AGPs as opposed to the natural turf pitches therefore differ markedly.

'Then and now': a comparison of the current supply and demand situation compared with 2009.

3.130 The previous Playing Pitch Strategy (in 2009) anticipated "that the demand for football on grass will remain approximately the same over the next few years". It identified that an anticipated increase in overall participation in football by adults seems would be offset in relation to grass pitches by the generally ageing population, and by the trend towards the use of synthetic surfaces. Demand for minis and juniors was however expected to continue to rise over time.

3.131 The Strategy suggested that, at the time, the current pitch stock did not meet the current or future needs of the City in terms of the mix and location of pitches, the lack of multi-pitch sites, the quality of the pitches, or in relation to the ancillary facilities, including changing provision.

3.132 The Strategy just predated the onset of the local 'Building Schools for the Future', and stated that the programme offered a unique opportunity to address some of the issues identified, by possibly transferring the existing school sites to community use. School sites at Edensor, Mitchell and Longton were cited in this regard.

3.133 The evidence gathered for this needs assessment suggests that, in general terms, the same issues and problems exist, albeit that there have been improvements to the stock of facilities in some respects.

3.134 The major improvements have come about through the development of a stock of 3G AGPs both on reorganised education campuses, as well as a result of other capital initiatives. These have provided for improved training opportunities, but also for increasing amounts of matchplay.

3.135 Based on the views of clubs and leagues analysed for this survey issues remain with regard to the quality of pitches and ancillary provision and, potentially with the general suitability of sites in relation to contemporary needs.

3.136 Another change, potentially for the better, is the transfer of some sites to clubs under a system of 'self-management': this is partly as a result of the Council seeking to reduce its revenue costs due to severe and continued financial pressures; but also, to allow clubs that demonstrate both keenness and capability, the opportunity to have security of tenure and the prospect of developing and managing facilities to better meet their own needs. (The granting of what have become known as 'sports development leases' is considered later in this section).

3.137 The other key observation to make is the stasis or decline in team numbers from previous counts made, as highlighted at the beginning of this section. Despite, the development of additional 3G AGPs that are theoretically capable of hosting very heavy training and matchplay activity, the number of teams playing conventional league football has declined.

3.138 The FA recognise the importance of embracing new forms of the game that appeal to people who may not wish to play football through the conventional club route, for whatever reason,

Future Picture of Provision

3.139 The future requirement for playing pitches will be impacted by several factors, including:

- population growth or change to the demographic profile of the population;
- changes in participation trends and in how pitch sports are played and, critically, the extent to which providers, managers and users of 3G AGPs embrace the growth of such surfaces not just as a medium for training, but also matchplay;
- club specific development plans and aspirations; and,
- amendments to the current facility stock.

3.140 These issues are considered in turn in order to build an accurate picture of future demand for playing pitches.

Population Change

3.141 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. They are used to project the theoretical number of teams that would be generated from population growth.

3.142 Table 3.14 summarises the current TGRs for football and uses them to evaluate the potential impact of projected population change on demand for football in the City of Stoke. For the purpose of these calculations all teams within the remit of this study (i.e. including those that appear to be playing matches on 3G AGPs) have been included to ensure that the overall changes in teams within the planning horizon can be calculated. The projections reveal that:

- the number of adult football teams is likely to increase, with a growth of around 8 (male) teams;
- there will also be a substantial increase in the number of youth 9v9 and 11v11 teams – in the order of 22 (including around 1 female team); and
- around 3 additional mini soccer teams may be generated.

Table 3.14: TGRs for Football in Stoke City

	2015 AGE GROUPS	2015 TEAMS	2015 TGRs	2026 AGE GROUPS	2026 TEAMS	CHANGE (+/-) by 2026	2033 AGE GROUPS	2033 TEAMS	CHANGE (+/-) by 2033
Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)	16,156	63	256	17,062	66.3	3.3	17,782	69.4	6.4
Junior football (10-15 male)	8,217	63	130	8,674	67	4	8,994	69.2	6.2
Junior football (10-15 female)	7,646	6	1,274	8,071	6.8	0.8	8,369	6.6	0.6
Senior football (16-45 male)	51,704	133	389	54,581	140.3	7	56,594	145.5	12.5
Senior football (16-45 female)	49,954	3	16,651	52,732	3.2	0.2	54,677	3.3	0.3

Based on projections provided by the City of Stoke Council in September 2015, derived from examining a range of scenarios including the 'Cambridge' modelling of 810 dwellings per annum.

3.143 These increases will impact the adequacy of capacity the City. There are many ways in which such increases in demand might impact upon the weekly and peak-time capacity of the existing stock of pitches, to absorb such increases, such as:

- where the demand is generated as it will be largely dependent on where population increases will be most heavily focussed. (Especially that arising out of planned new housing growth, the location of which was yet to be largely determined at the time of writing this report);
- the extent to which the quality of existing grass pitches can be improved to increase the weekly capacity of grass pitches/sites to support matches;
- the extent to which leagues and clubs would be prepared to 'stagger' kick-off times to allow for more than one match on a pitch over the course of a day; and
- the degree to which additional demand is to be focussed onto 3G AGP provision, as opposed to traditional grass pitches.

3.144 As will be seen from Tables 3.8 and Figures 3.8, 3.9, and 3.10 the situation at some venues and parts of the City has reached (or is near to reaching) capacity, and additional play would be unacceptable. It is likely that a disproportionate amount of the additional demand would be attracted towards the larger clubs and venues.

3.145 What is clear is that the additional demand must be factored into future planning, and the calculation of developer contributions through either or both Section 106 or the CIL should be calculated on the basis of the following table.

Table 3.15: Pitch requirements from population growth

	CHANGE IN NUMBER OF TEAMS (+/-) 2015-2033	ADDITIONAL PITCHES (n.b. this will be an associated need for additional changing accommodation and other ancillary facilities, such as car parking).
Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender)	6.4	1-2 (assuming 4 matches/week per pitch)
Youth football (10-15 male)	6.2	1-2 (assuming 2 matches/week per pitch)
Youth football (10-15 female)	0.6	Less than 1 (assuming 2 matches/week per pitch)
Senior football (16-45 male)	12.5	3-4 (assuming 2 matches/week per pitch)
Senior football (16-45 female)	0.3	Less than 1 (assuming 2 matches/week per pitch)

3.146 In terms of the impact of these changes on the capacity of the City's existing stock of pitches, it would mean that:

- For adult football weekly spare capacity and peak-time spare City-wide would be reduced to c. 23 match equivalents and c. 9 pitches respectively;
- For youth football weekly spare capacity and peak-time spare City-wide would be reduced to c. 10 match equivalents and c. 2 pitches respectively; and
- For minisoccer weekly spare capacity and peak-time spare City-wide would be reduced to c.30 match equivalents and 1 pitch respectively.

3.147 The City Council will need to determine the amount of the growth projected in Table 3.14 is created by new housing demand. At this time, it is unclear where this growth will be focussed within the City.

Changes in how football is played

3.149 Preceding paragraphs have already described the potential impact of 3G AGPs on the way in which football is played, including the potential impact of the FA's goal of seeing 50% of youth and mini matches played on 3G AGPs by 2020. The FA also recognise trends towards greater numbers of players being involved with forms of football that don't require being a member of conventional types of club. In both cases there will be an impact on the demand for access to 3G AGPs.

3.150 The extent to which 3G AGPs should form part of the facility mix to cater for local football needs is as much down to local judgement and the willingness of local leagues and clubs to play matches on such surfaces. Earlier in this section it was identified that local clubs appreciate playing on natural grass, so long as it is of a good quality and well-maintained. 3G AGPs are however, appreciated as a training resource, and a potential matchplay venue when grass pitches cannot be used in due to bad weather.

3.151 The club survey, and assessment of spare capacity at existing 3G AGPs suggests that some additional provision would be beneficial to provide improved training opportunities, and especially in the north and south of the City, where provision is relatively poor for this type of facility. However, the local football community needs to be fully supportive of any move to transfer a substantial amount of matchplay onto this type

of surface, which is an issue that the Strategy and Action Plan must consider an address.

Aspirations of Clubs

3.152 Added to the impact of population growth, it is also necessary to consider the potential for participation increases. Many clubs responding to the club questionnaire survey have indicated aspirations for growing their numbers of teams fielded, as shown below.

3.153 As will be seen, (Figure 3.10) the majority of aspirational growth would be devoted to fielding mini and youth teams. Clubs were asked what obstacles stopped them from achieving the above aspirations (Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.10: Types of additional teams that clubs would like to field.

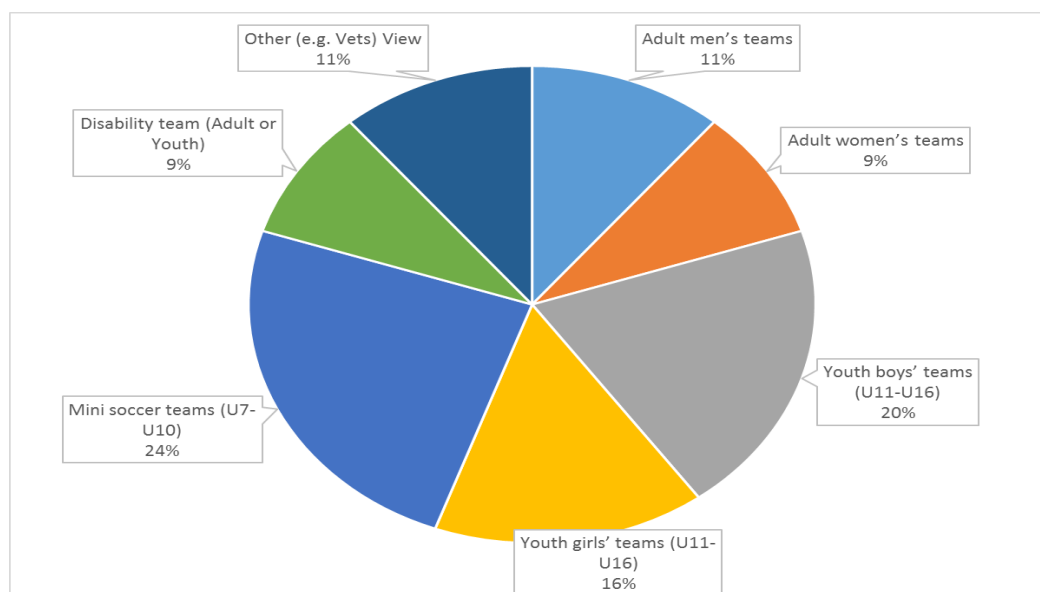


Figure 3.11: Obstacles stopping clubs fielding extra teams.



3.154 As can be seen, there are some dominant reasons cited- especially the cost of hiring/using facilities; lack of external funding (including grants); shortage of coaches and volunteers; and, lack of junior grass pitches.

3.155 The above results are based on the findings of a survey where not all local clubs have responded. In addition, aspirational growth depends on the overcoming of certain key obstacles to growth.

3.156 The Staffordshire County FA have been consulted on the growth rates estimated in Table 3.15. The Staffs FA have their own strategic, 'county-wide' growth targets for football amongst the various age and gender groups. Instead, whilst these targets are not therefore specific to the City of Stoke, they do tend to reflect the general growth trends indicated in Table 3.15, which therefore supports the realism of the figures in Table 3.15.

Amendments to the current facility stock

3.157 The supply of football pitches constantly changes, and this could also have an impact on the ability of the local stock of pitches to meet current and future demand for football. This section (see Table 3.3) has identified various sites that are no longer used for football (including some former school sites). Such sites have not been counted into the current supply, and the calculations made in the earlier paragraphs suggest that they probably won't be required to meet future needs, and especially if there is a future focus on providing far more opportunities to play on 3G AGPs. However, there are some sites, by their size, character and location that will be very suited to hosting facilities, and if they could be brought back into the facility supply they could be part of 'site swap' arrangements where the sites with the most potential could be brought into use in exchange for the disposal of sites that currently are of limited value for pitch sports (or other forms of open space) but which might release development value. Such an approach would have the result of improving the overall quality of provision within the City.

Summary of recommendations and progress from the previous strategy (2009-2016)⁹

3.158 The previous strategy (produced using former Sport England guidance) was part of a wider Sport & Physical Activity Strategy prepared in 2009. It offered various recommendations in respect of football. A good number of these recommendations have been pursued and achieved by the Council and its partners, especially in relation to the school's capital programme; and, the provision of additional 3G pitches. Other notable achievements are in relation to the improvement of specific venues and remarking of pitches.

Other recommendations have not been achieved, but changed circumstances and the findings of this Needs Assessment suggest that new priorities have come to the fore in the intervening years, as highlighted in this section and reflected in the Strategy and Action Plan.

Summary and key issues

3.156 Although some of the issues identified by the previous strategy have not been fully addressed it is clear from the analysis in this section that the 'football landscape' has changed markedly in the intervening years.

⁹ Stoke-on-Trent Page Sport & Physical Activity Strategy 2009-2016

3.159 Within the City the overall capacity of the grass football pitch stock is calculated to be as follows:

- For adult football weekly spare capacity and peak-time spare City-wide is 29.5 match equivalents and 15 pitches respectively;
- For youth football weekly spare capacity and peak-time spare City-wide is 14 match equivalents and 6 pitches respectively; and,
- For minisoccer weekly spare capacity and peak-time spare City-wide is 33.5 match equivalents and 4 pitches respectively.

3.157 Population change between now and 2033 is calculated to have the following impact on teams and requirements for pitches:

- Mini-soccer (6-9 mixed gender): 6.4 extra teams (requiring 1-2 grass pitches)
- Youth football (10-15 male and female): 6.8 extra teams (requiring c. 2 grass pitches)
- Senior football (16-45 male and female): 12.8 extra teams (requiring c. 4 grass pitches)

3.161 Where, in the City, this extra demand will manifest itself will largely be determined by where planned growth takes place.

3.162 In terms of the impact of these changes on the capacity of the City's existing stock of pitches, it would mean that:

- For adult football weekly spare capacity and peak-time spare City-wide would be reduced to c. 23 match equivalents and c. 9 pitches respectively;
- For youth football weekly spare capacity and peak-time spare City-wide would be reduced to c. 10 match equivalents and c. 2 pitches respectively; and
- For minisoccer weekly spare capacity and peak-time spare City-wide would be reduced to c.30 match equivalents and 1 pitch respectively.

3.163 Although there is no clear information on where planned future population growth (up to 2033) will be concentrated within the City, it is apparent that the main overall impact will be on youth and adult provision. If additional demand was spread evenly across the City it would have the most impact in respect of youth football, and especially in the South sub area. However, it is highly likely that these additional demands (in all three sub areas) could be met if:

- a) there were qualitative improvements to the pitches at key locations (to enable more games to be played each week);
- b) there was flexibility in respect of when games are played- to a large extent this flexibility is already apparent amongst younger age groups and teams, but it would also be beneficial amongst adult age groups; and,
- c) the potential of some sites currently unused (especially some former education playing fields) is exploited, and perhaps in conjunction with development 'land swap' arrangements involving existing pitch sport sites deemed to be of limited utility, and with no clear other function as open space.

3.164 Added to this is the FA's aspiration to see 50% of youth and mini-soccer matches played

on suitable 3G AGPs by 2020. The consultation underpinning this Needs Assessment suggests that the desire on the part of the football community as a whole is for better access to 3G AGPs for training, and that there is a general preference for good quality grass pitches for matchplay

3.165 A transfer of matchplay to a larger number of 3G AGPs offers significant benefits, but also will raise some potential issues.

3.166 **Table 3.17: AGPs- pros and cons**

Pros	Cons
It will potentially offer better and more consistent quality of playing surfaces for teams and players	Football is traditionally a sport played on grass, and it is not easy to move on from tradition
It will allow for higher levels of football activity to be focussed on each facility	Reliance on AGPs will require clubs and leagues to be flexible in kick-off times
AGPs would be a good focus for football hubs. The local Ladsandads activity might more easily cohere around sites with AGPs	AGPs must be well-managed and backed up with sound financial and business plans, including a disciplined approach to sinking pool management for longer-term overhaul
AGPs where they are proactively managed stand a chance of being financially self-sustaining	The infrastructure and noise/activity associated with AGPs can make them 'bad neighbours' in sensitive and inappropriate environments
Based on local evidence, there is a good level of support amongst clubs for the use of AGPs, both for training and some matchplay	
If more 3G AGPs were built this could drive down the potential cost of use, based on economic supply and demand	

3.167 The implications of the City Council pursuing such an approach, would involve the development of a strong portfolio of AGPs along with complementary grass pitch sites. There would be a significant reduction in the need to retain sites that are currently unused; and/or undersized relative to contemporary club needs. Some of these sites may be well-suited to serve as other forms of open space, or to meet other sporting needs. However, where this is not the case, their release for other development might help fund the provision of new 3G AGPs but also, critically, the means to improve the quality of existing and potential key grass pitch sites, and their continued maintenance.

Introduction

- 4.1 A summary of key issues for rugby is contained at the end of this section.
- 4.2 This section evaluates the adequacy of pitches for rugby union. It provides:
- An overview of the supply and demand for pitches
 - An understanding of activity at individual sites
 - A picture of the adequacy of current provision to meet current and projected future demand.

Overview – Supply and Demand

Pitch Supply

- 4.3 Table 4.1 summarises the distribution of grass pitches that appear to be in community use and outlines the level of access that is available.

Table 4.1: Rugby Pitches across the City

Sub Area	Sites	Ownership	Total Rugby Pitches	Number of Floodlit Pitches	Level of Community Use	Provision by Sub Area
South	Longton Rugby Football Club	Club	4 pitches (2 adult and 2 'junior' pitches- (one being shared with football).	1	Secured community use	8 rugby pitches technically in secured community use (including the 'junior' pitch at Longton, and the space at Trentham) The education sector pitch only appears to be used for curriculum purposes.
	St. Josephs RC College	Education	3 (1 adult and 2 junior)	0	Not in community use	
	Trentham Rugby Football Club	Club	3 pitches (This includes 2 adult pitches and also an area that is marked out and used for junior/mini play)	1	Secured community use	
	Sir Stanley Matthews Academy	Education	1	0	Secured community use	

Sub Area	Sites	Ownership	Total Rugby Pitches	Number of Floodlit Pitches	Level of Community Use	Provision by Sub Area
Central	Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre	Education	1	0	Secured community use	The education sector pitch only appears to be used by the University, and is part of the University Sports Complex

4.4 Table 4.1 indicates that:

- Most of the provision is located in the southern part of the City. Provision in the north and central areas is relatively sparse or non-existent in terms of facilities with potential for community use, although there may be schools that remark pitches between football and rugby
- all pitches in the above table are in secured for community use. In respect of the education sites; and
- The two existing club-based venues have the benefit of floodlighting, each on one of their pitches.

4.5 In addition to the above, pitches have been recorded at St. Joseph's Academy on a site removed from the main campus, and just on the edge of the City on Queensway. St. Joseph's College is an Academy School, which fields teams in schools' rugby competitions. Three rugby pitches are recorded on this site, but there is no community use, and there is unlikely to be in the foreseeable future.

4.6 There are several other schools that play rugby, although these are on pitches that can be remarked for other sports. The RFU runs development programmes with Ormiston Academy, Sandon HS, Discovery Academy, Blythe Bridge HS.

4.7 A rugby teams has also been recorded as being fielded by Stoke Sixth Form College, and was reportedly playing at "Fenton Manor". However, The Fenton Manor Leisure Centre outdoor sports facilities have been transferred to the neighbouring St. Peter's Academy to manage, and there is no record of a rugby pitch being marked out at that venue. Neither (according to staff at the nearby Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre) is a team recorded as playing at the pitch there- contact with staff at the redeveloped 6th Form College campus has not revealed further information on the continued existence of this team.

4.8 Other than St. Joseph's College, the most significant provider of rugby facilities within the education sector is the Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre, which is the base for University of Staffordshire's 2nd xv, which also has made use of facilities at Longton RUFC.

4.9 Just outside the City there are two significant clubs. Stoke-on-Trent RUFC, play in Stafford Borough at a venue in Barlaston, to the south east of the City. Newcastle (Staffs) Rugby Club is located in Clayton, Newcastle-under-Lyme. Up until recently there was a single-team club (Hanford RUFC) also playing in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

4.10 It is to be noted that both Stoke-on-Trent RUFC and the (former) Hanford RUFC, both have a strong association through name to within the City, despite the fact that both are/were located outside the City.

Pitch Quality

4.11 Table 4.2 explores the pitches that are available for community use in more detail. It highlights the pitches that are provided at each site, and the key issues relating to site quality that were identified through both site visits and club and key stakeholder consultation.

4.12 Assessments of pitch quality for rugby are based on guidance produced by the RFU and Sport England (<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>). As well as recording key characteristics of the site, including pitch condition and available ancillary facilities, the assessment also evaluates the frequency and type of maintenance, and

the drainage that is installed on the site.

4.13 Table 4.2 reveals that the key issues for quality in relation to club based pitches in the City.

Table 4.2: Quality of Community Use Sites in the City

Area	Site	Senior Pitches	Ancillary Provision	Site Assessment Comments	Quality Issues identified through consultation
South	Longton RUFC	2	The club is located in a purpose-built facility. There is a large clubhouse, with changing, and car parking. The facility also hosts a small AGP. The main pitch is floodlit	<p>The rugby club has good access, parking, and a function room and conference facilities</p> <p>Pitch 1 is barriered and floodlit and is closest to the club house. The pitch is slightly 'chewed-up' and uneven - there is some compaction and this needs mitigation. The grass sward is weed-free.</p> <p>Pitch 2 is behind pitch 1. There is compaction on this pitch, and it is uneven. The grass sward is weed-free.</p> <p>Pitch 3 is behind pitch 2 and at right angles to it in L shape of the site this pitch is a junior rugby pitch. There is some compaction and there is a slight slope on the pitch. The grass sward is weed-free.</p> <p>Pitch 4 is back-to-back with Pitch 3. It is a junior pitch and has both rugby and football posts but is marked out for football at the present time. There is some compaction. The grass sward is weed-free.</p>	The club consultation indicated that all aspects of pitch quality and ancillary changing provision were considered to be good.

Area	Site	Senior Pitches	Ancillary Provision	Site Assessment Comments	Quality Issues identified through consultation
South	Trenttham RUFC	2	Club house/changing exists. One pitch is also floodlit	<p>The rugby club has its own vehicular access to car parking and clubhouse. There is open access by foot from Hanford Park, and there is a public footpath running down the side of the clubhouse. The club house is fairly large with function room and changing.</p> <p>Pitch 1 is just below the clubhouse. It is not showing any evidence of poor drainage,</p> <p>Pitch 2 is floodlit, and away from the clubhouse, it is on the bottom tier and there appears to be compaction and poor drainage.</p> <p>There is also a 3rd pitch which is for junior teams.</p>	<p>The club consultation indicated that all aspects of pitch provision were rated as acceptable, with the exception of dog-fouling which is considered very problematic.</p> <p>The club finds that most aspects of its changing accommodation are considered acceptable with the exception of segregated male/female changing, which is non-existent and is a major obstacle to growing female participation.</p>
South	Sir Stanley Matthews Academy	1		The rugby pitch is in good condition, but with some compaction.	
Central	Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre	1		The pitch part of the university sports complex. Compacted but largely weed-free sward.	

Demand

4.14 The two clubs situated in the City are recorded as running the following teams based on the Club questionnaire survey and data from the RFU:

- **Longton RUFC:** 5 mini/midi teams; 2 youth teams; 3 adult male teams; and, 1 adult female team.
- **Trentham RUFC:** 6 mini/midi teams; 2 youth male teams; 2 girls (u13 & u15); and, 2 adult male teams.

4.15 Longton RUFC might be considered to be the 'bigger club' by most metrics (such as the scale of facilities; the number of adult teams; and, the level at which the first team plays). The Longton adult male first team plays in National 3 Midlands division; and its other male teams play in the Staffordshire Merit League. The ladies team and most of the youth/mini/midi teams play friendlies. The Trentham adult male first team play in the Cheshire South League, and the 2nd team currently only play friendlies. As with Longton, most of the youth/mini/midi teams play friendlies. Table 4.3 summarises the clubs and provides a breakdown of teams they are running, as well as their recent participation trends.

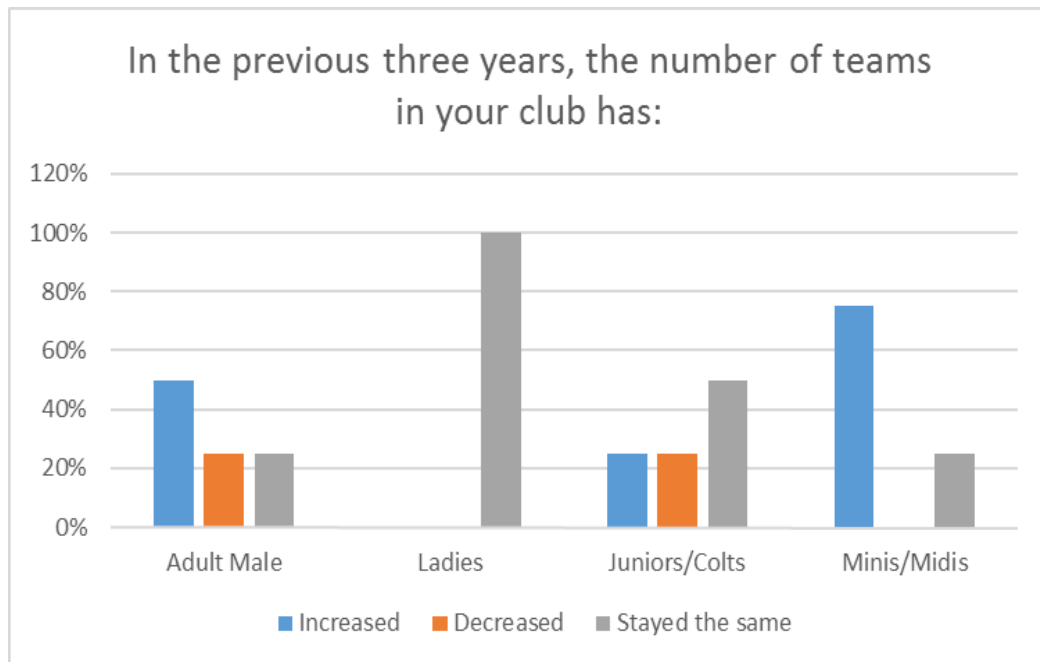
Table 4.3: Rugby Clubs in the City

Area	Club	Adult	Colts	Youth	Midi/ mini	Other	Trends
South	Longton RUFC	4		2	5	Touch	<p>The club reports an increase in the last 3 years in adult male teams; and mini/midi teams, and with adult female and youth team numbers remaining the same.</p> <p>The club suggests that these changes are as a result of an introduction of a third adult male team, and the development of a mini/midi section.</p> <p>The club suggests there is a "slight gap" currently from 14-20 year olds.</p> <p>The RFU believes that the facilities available to the club should enable the fielding of additional teams in the younger age groups, with the right initiatives.</p>
South	Trentham RUFC	2		4	6	Rugger Tots	<p>The club reports there has been an increase in youth/junior/mini/midi teams in the last three years. The club attributes this to work done with schools to encourage a club-school links.</p> <p>The decline in adult teams has been</p>

Area	Club	Adult	Colts	Youth	Midi/ mini	Other	Trends
							<p>attributed to retirement of ageing players and the lack of replacements coming through.</p> <p>The adult male second team currently only plays friendlies.</p> <p>The club has had recent success in being able to field girls' u13 and u15 teams, despite the lack of appropriate changing facilities.</p> <p>The RFU believes that the club is making significant progress in respect of the number of teams now fielded in the younger age-groups and, especially, in respect of the girls' teams.</p>
TOTAL		6	0	6	11	c.2	

- 4.16 In addition to the above there is activity outside the two 'community clubs'. This includes the Staffordshire University RUFC which has teams representing the Stoke campus. The University also has a team playing at the (soon to close) Stafford campus; and, the St. Joseph's College whose rugby teams play at their own ground. The University teams and their activity are discussed further later in this section.
- 4.17 Other school activity recorded is 'self-contained' and takes place on sites that are not shared with community rugby teams.
- 4.18 The club questionnaire survey was sent to all know local community clubs within, or on the periphery of the City, and so included responses from both Stoke-on-Trent, and Newcastle (Staffs) RUFC, both of whom also responded to the survey. When the answers of all four 'local' clubs are included in the analysis it suggests a general wider sub-regional trend upwards junior/youth participation together with a more general stasis in adult team numbers, as shown overleaf.

Figure 4.1: Changes in numbers of teams



Training Needs

4.19 Club training takes place as follows;

Trentham RUFC use their pitches for training, one of which is floodlit. Except for the very youngest teams, most teams are reported by the club to train twice a week. The club use indoor facilities at St. Joseph's College in severe weather. The pitches are also reported as being used for college and university matches and county tag tournaments, and this will have some impact on the quality of pitch surfaces depending on the frequency of such activity.

Longton RUFC teams use their own dedicated training pitch for training, with sessions being between 1 and 2 times week in frequency. The mini/midis have their own pitch.

There is some use by the local Stoke Sixth Form College. There are county tag tournaments, and this will have some impact on the quality of pitch surfaces depending on the frequency of such activity. Wear and tear from such is therefore not considered to be significant. It is to noted that the pitches are also used for university matches, although the University (Stoke campus) teams have a pitch (also used for American Football) at the Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre at the University. However, it is understood that much of this activity is not generally at the busiest times of year in terms of demands on the club's pitches from its own teams.

4.20 Neither of the resident local clubs expressed any strong views with regard to the adequacy of facilities for training, although access to indoor facilities in severe winter weather would be beneficial.

Educational Demand

- 4.21 Away from any local fee-paying schools there does not appear to be a high level of rugby activity within local schools, although the Trentham Club have reportedly worked with younger school age groups at various locations. The key education demand with implications for community club pitches is therefore the University: the University (Stoke Campus) team has its own pitch at its City Campus, but is reported to use the two club venues. In particular, it uses the Longton venue for its regular fixtures.
- 4.22 St. Joseph's College (as said) appears to have rugby as a key component of its PE curriculum, and seemingly field teams against other local schools, but it uses its own facilities off Queensway for home matches.
- 4.23 The Stoke Sixth Form College is reported to have a team that has used the Longton venue for its home matches on several occasions in the past season.

Assessing the Supply and Demand Information and Views

- 4.24 The adequacy of pitch provision for rugby is measured through the use of match equivalents. The ability of the pitch stock to service both training needs and competitive requirements is taken into account. To fully understand activity on a site, consideration is given to both;
- the adequacy of pitch provision over the course of a week; and
 - capacity of a site to meet additional demand at peak time.
- 4.25 For rugby, this analysis is based upon the following principles;

Capacity over the course of a week

- 4.26 The RFU sets a standard number of match equivalent sessions that natural grass pitches should be able to sustain without adversely affecting their current quality (pitch carrying capacity). This is based upon the drainage system installed at the site and the maintenance programme used to prepare the pitches. The guideline theoretical capacity for rugby pitches is summarised in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Theoretical Pitch Capacity Ratings (RFU)

		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Standard (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2
	Natural Adequate (D1)	1.5	2	3
	Pipe Drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2	3	3.5

- 4.27 Demand from each rugby club is converted into match equivalent sessions. This takes into account of both the requirement of pitches to accommodate competitive fixtures, and also the impact that training sessions will have on the capacity of pitches.

- 4.28 Young and smaller side-sided teams will not impact so much on the wear and tear on pitches as do adult teams. Accordingly, their training and match sessions should be weighted so that they are taken into account, but are not rated to have the same impact as adult pitches. **A colt match is afforded the same weighting as an adult team; a youth age-group team rates as half an adult team; and mini/midi teams are rated as a quarter of an adult team.**
- 4.29 Rugby Union has a strong culture of training on floodlit natural grass pitches on weekday evenings; these pitches are also used for matches at weekends. As a guide: 2 teams training on one pitch on one evening = one match equivalent session. A typical floodlit pitch may be used on 3 evenings per week for training. The number of training sessions per week per pitch should be established.

Peak Time Demand

- 4.30 To identify spare capacity at peak time, the number of match equivalent sessions at peak time is measured against the number of match equivalent sessions available.
- Senior men's rugby union - Saturday PM;
 - Colts rugby union – Sunday PM;
 - Youth rugby union - Sunday AM;
 - Mini/midi rugby union - Sunday AM
 - Women's rugby union - Sunday PM
 - Junior female (Sundays AM or PM)
- 4.31 Table 4.5 therefore provides a summary of activity at each site that is available for community use and the adequacy of provision to meet demand. Further detail is provided in the spreadsheet accompanying this assessment of need.
- 4.32 The text that follows then explores the issues identified for each club in more detail, highlighting the areas of key concern based upon the calculations undertaken.

Table 4.5: Site Overview

Site	A. Adult/colt teams	B. Youth teams	C. Mini/midi teams	D. Adult/colt matches per week (A*0.5)	E. Youth matches per week (B*0.5)	F. Mini/midi teams matches per week (C*0.25)	G. Adult/colt training per week (A*0.5)	H. Youth training per week (B*0.5)	I. Mini/midi training per week (C*0.25)	J. Maintenance / Capacity Rating	K. Capacity multiplier	L. Senior Pitches	M. Overall adult/colt pitch capacity (K*L)	N. Adult/colt Match Equivalents per week (D+E+F+G+H+I)	O. Spare Capacity (Match Play) (M-N)	P. Spare Capacity at Peak Time (Adult Play)	Floodlit Pitches
Longton RUFC	8	2	5	4	1	1.25	4	1	1.25	M1/D2	2.5	2	5	12.5	-7.5 (seen note in overview)	+1	1
Trentham RFUC	2 (see note in site overview)	4	6	1	2	1.5	1	2	1.5	M1/D1	1.5	2	3	9	-6 (see note in overview)	1	1
Stanley Matthews Academy										M0/D1	1.5	1	1.5	0	1.5	1	1
Stanley Matthews Sports Centre	1			0.5			0.5			M0/D1	1.5	1	1.5	1	0.5	0.5	0
<p>Longton RUFC: In addition to adult club activity there is some use of the pitch by Stafford University (Stoke campus) teams. It is understood that there are three teams (2 adult male and 1 women's team). These team use the Longton pitches on a regular basis, but perhaps on average 2 twice a month at most for matches per team. The Stoke Sixth Form College have also played several home matches at the venue in the past season, and this is also factored in. The club have not suggested there to be an issue with the over-play of pitches on site, and the on-site assessment suggests them to be of a reasonable standard and quite well maintained. Speaking to more than one representatives of the club it is understood that drainage improvements were installed within the last five years. Aggregating up the match equivalent sessions suggests that there is substantial over-use relative to notional carrying capacity. However, this conflicts with the views of the club, and also hides the situation that much of the training activity will take place on a nominated pitch. Therefore, despite the apparent over-use of pitches, the club appears happy with the pitches overall ability to absorb existing levels of use and, in fact, consider there to be additional carrying capacity (if not peak-time capacity). The University team tend to train mostly at Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre, and not at Longton (according to representatives of both the University and the Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre). However, other evidence provided by the RFU and the club questionnaire returns suggest that there is some University use of Longton in this regard.</p>																	
<p>Trentham RUFC: Aggregating up the match equivalent sessions suggests that there is over-use relative to notional carrying capacity. The overall site picture also hides the situation that much of the training activity will take place on a nominated pitch, and some of the younger age group activity will be hosted on the 'junior' pitch space. The site does appear to suffer from its location in a river plain, and part of the site can be boggy in prolonged wet weather, it is understood that the second team does not currently play in a league, but plays friendlies. These games are unlikely to be played as regularly as league games. However, if the club has an aspiration to field another adult league team (2nd XV), it is prudent to build this additional demand on capacity into the calculations (which has been done in the calculations).</p>																	
<p>Stanley Matthews Academy: Only curriculum activity is recorded to taken place on this site for rugby, during curriculum time.</p>																	
<p>Stanley Matthews Sports Centre: Only University activity is recorded to taken place on this site for rugby, during curriculum time. This equates to 1 training session a week for one team (Staffordshire University (Stoke Campus) RUFC).</p>																	

Current Picture of Provision

4.33 Table 4.5 therefore indicates that:

- In respect of Longton RFC, the availability of a junior/mini/midi pitch allows for some of the play for the younger age-group to be decanted from the senior size pitches. Given that youth/mini/midi teams tend to play on Sundays (after adult male matches on the Saturday) the fact that the former have access to their own bespoke pitch means that they do not have to rely wholly on a surface churned up from the previous day's activity. However, the number of youth/mini/midi teams and scheduling difficulties will mean that some of these matches will still have to be played on a senior pitch.
- Much of the adult training activity at the Longton club will tend to be concentrated on a single pitch designated for training but also for matchplay, to help protect the surface of the other two senior pitches for matchplay. This means that one of the adult pitches will be subject to significantly heavier use and wear and tear than the other two.
- Whilst there are two adult pitches at the Trentham Club, there is only one adult team that currently plays regular league fixtures (the 2nd adult team presently only plays friendlies). There is also a junior pitch space that is used by the youngest teams and marked appropriately. With two full-size pitches, the pitches probably have the capacity to cope with current demand and usage for matchplay and training, although drainage and waterlogging may be more of an issue on this site compared with the Longton site, given its location in a river plain. However, capacity issues in relation to the Trentham Club may be more in respect of the adequacy of built facilities (discussed shortly)
- Of the three other locations for pitches the Sir Stanley Matthews Academy only absorbs curriculum play, and there is no community play outside curriculum time (neither is there evidence of local demand, currently). The pitch at the Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre appears to be used solely by the Stoke campus xv for training (also used for American Football). The pitches at St Joseph's College on Queensway are used only for curriculum rugby.

4.34 Although there are facilities at school sites seemingly unused by community teams, it should be noted that rugby is primarily a club focused sport and facilities are an essential part of the way a club is run. Use of facilities that are outside of the club base is therefore usually not favoured. Added to this, there are no existing floodlights at any of the school sites, meaning that they cannot be used for training.

Displaced and Latent Demand

4.35 Although the Stoke-on-Trent RUFC are based to the south east of the City in Barlaston, it will draw many of its players from the City. The Club's response to a questionnaire survey conducted for this study indicated that this club may prefer to have a base within the City (albeit that the club appear to be in most other respects happy with the facilities they currently use). This suggests that there may be an element of displaced and/or latent demand for additional rugby facilities in the City: a point which is considered again later in this section.

Future Picture

4.36 The future requirement for rugby pitches will be impacted upon by changes to the population profile, as well as club specific aspirations and changing participation trends. These issues are considered in turn in order to build an accurate picture of future

demand.

Population Change

4.37 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. The application of TGRs to population projections enables the projection of the theoretical number of teams that would be generated from population growth and provides an understanding of future demand.

4.38 Table 4.6 summarises the current TGRs for rugby and projects the impact of population growth. It indicates that;

- the increase in people aged 19 - 45 will see the creation of less than 1 additional adult rugby team;
- similarly, less than 1 additional youth team; and,
- only one additional mini team.

Table 4.6: Impact of Changes to the Population Profile

	2015 AGE GROUPS	2015 TEAMS	2015 TGRs	2026 AGE GROUPS	2026 TEAMS	CHANGE (+/-) by 2026	2033 AGE GROUPS	2033 TEAMS	CHANGE (+/-) by 2033
Mini-rugby (7-12 mixed gender)	17,262	11	1,569	18,222	11.6	0.6	18,894	12.0	1.0
Youth rugby (13-18 male)	8,723	4	2,181	9,208	4.2	0.2	9,548	4.4	0.4
Youth rugby (13-18 female)	7,984	2	3,992	8,475	2.1	0.1	8,787	2.2	0.2
Senior rugby (19-45 male)	46,766	5	9,353	49,643	5.3	0.3	51,474	5.5	0.5
Senior rugby (19-45 female)	45,497	1	45,497	48,293	1.1	0.1	50,074	1.1	0.1

Based on projections provided by the City of Stoke Council in September 2015, derived from examining a range of scenarios including the 'Cambridge' modelling of 810 dwellings per annum.

Changes in Participation Trends and club development plans

4.39 While TGRs provide an indication of the potential impact of club growth directly attributable to increases in the population, the RFU believe that this is less indicative of the likely growth as a whole for rugby. Some clubs have development plans in place to drive increases in the number of teams, supported by RFU development officers, while the impact of the Rugby World Cup 2015 is also currently unknown). In addition to the use of TGRs therefore, consideration has also been given to club aspirations for growth

and the deliverability of these.

- 4.40 Rugby across the City is relatively static, although the Trentham club has been successful in growing its girls' teams in the last year. In reality neither of the local clubs would appear to have issues either in respect of hosting the additional demand arising out of demographically induced growth (which, as Table 6.6 shows, are likely to be small). Both of the resident clubs' aspirations in respect of additional teams are likely to be met by their existing pitches (Longton in particular), although Trentham very much require expanded changing accommodation to host their new female wing.
- 4.41 The RFU would like to see a greater presence for Rugby in Stoke, and has expressed a desire to see club rugby established in the northern part of the City. The most obvious candidate in this regard would be Stoke RUFC, currently playing in Barlaston, but which has suggested an aspiration to be located in the City from which it draws its name. The club runs 4-5 adult teams and a strong range of youth/mini teams- it would therefore require a substantial ground if it were to be able to relocate into the City. Robust training facilities would also be important.
- 4.42 Another potential impact upon the demand for and supply of local pitches would have been the planned closure of part of the Staffordshire University complex at Stafford, which had cast doubt over the future of facilities at the Beaconside Sports Centre. The Centre is now unlikely to be closed, however. The University of Stafford has sometimes also fielded a women's team. Demand for student rugby in Stoke may therefore fluctuate, but probably grow by around one team. With much of the potential to host an additional team (and perhaps other additional play) being available at the Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre.

Forthcoming Changes to Supply

- 4.43 At the time of preparing this report no information came to light in respect of additional rugby pitches being firmly proposed within the City. The Head of Sport at Staffordshire University has indicated a desire to remark the playing pitch area at the Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre with the aim of providing space for rugby. However, this is currently an aspiration and not a firm plan.

The RFU AGP Strategy (2015)

- 4.44 The RFU Council has recently approved a strategy to invest in Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP) which will see 100 artificial, floodlit pitches installed across the country over a four-year period. The strategy will see the creation of;
- 60 AGPs on rugby club sites to be used by the host club and other local clubs; and
 - 40 on community sites with a guaranteed number of hours for use by rugby.
- 4.45 The key drivers for this are to sustain and grow participation while addressing the increasing pressure on natural turf pitches, changing player expectations, competition from other sports investing in artificial pitches and changing weather conditions.
- 4.46 Although in its infancy, the new strategy may provide opportunities for the development of a Rugby-compliant 3G AGP either within the City to serve the needs of local clubs, or on the borders of the City at another community club, but with access for other clubs including those identified within this section. A site that also contained a 3G rugby-compliant pitch would also be a valuable asset in attracting greater rugby presence into the northern half of the City.

Key Issues and Summary

4.47 Of the two existing clubs:

- Longton RFC pitches are subject to heavy use and therefore wear and tear as a result of both matchplay and training.
- The capacity issues in relation to the Trentham Club may be more in respect of the adequacy of built facilities. Drainage improvements may also be desirable, given then club's location in a river plain.

4.43 Population change between now and 2033 will not in itself lead to significant changes in the number of rugby teams. However:

- The view of the RFU is that establishment of a greater presence for rugby in the northern part of the City is highly desirable.
- In respect of the above, opportunities should be explored for the relocation of Stoke RUFC into the City, perhaps in conjunction with the development of a rugby-compliant AGP.

Introduction

- 5.1 A summary of key issues for cricket is contained at the end of this section.
- 5.2 This section evaluates the adequacy of pitches for cricket and provides:
- An overview of the supply and demand for cricket pitches
 - An understanding of activity at individual sites in the local authority
 - A picture of the adequacy of current provision;
 - The future picture of provision for cricket;
 - A summary of the main recommendations from the previous Stoke playing pitch strategy relating specifically to Cricket and noting achievements; and,
 - A summary of key issues, including a review of the continuing relevance of the previous strategy recommendations still outstanding.

Pitch Supply

- 5.3 There are 17 sites containing grass facilities for cricket. This figure includes all known public, private, school and other pitches whether or not they offer community use. Facilities that are (or up until recently) have been available for community use are summarised in Table 5.1. The list includes Bagnall Norton and Wedgwood Cricket Clubs whose sites abut but are outside the City boundary. They are included because they have links with and use by teams from within the City.
- 5.4 There are school facilities that are known to be used for school cricket, but which are not available for community use (i.e. Category C sites). These are St. Joseph's RC College; Margaret Ward RC College; and Birches Head Academy.
- 5.5 There are other sites outside the City that are referenced in the previous strategy, but which have not been included in this report, as they do not appear to have relevance to existing clubs in the City in terms of their use (other than for 'away' matches), although it is accepted that some players will be happy to travel from the City to play for these clubs. These include at Kidsgrove and Knypersley (north of the City); Endon (East); Blythe (South East); and, Barlaston and Meir Heath (South East).
- 5.6 The Forsbrook CC site to the east of the City, is referenced in the section, as it is used as a second ground by one of the City teams (discussed later). However, it is not included in the supply calculations.
- 5.7 The Table also excludes the former Sneyd CC ground in the northern part of the City. This site is now redundant in terms of cricket use, and is currently very much unusable for this purpose. The 'SAHARA' project is looking to bring the site back into cricket usage and longer-term has plans for a health and wellbeing development around sport.
- 5.8 Advice from the ECB and Staffordshire Cricket indicates that Sneyd CC would be a preferred option for development to meet capacity needs and would provide a base for the nomadic Sport Asia with the opportunity for additional casual play capacity with a new non-turf pitch, as there is a significant south Asian demographic locally. Previous discussions have taken place between Staffordshire Cricket, SOT Council and the Sahara Project regarding this site. The site is constrained and, if decommissioned provision, should be made elsewhere locally to serve clear demand.
- 5.9 As a result of local school reorganisation and capital projects, additional sports facilities

5: Cricket

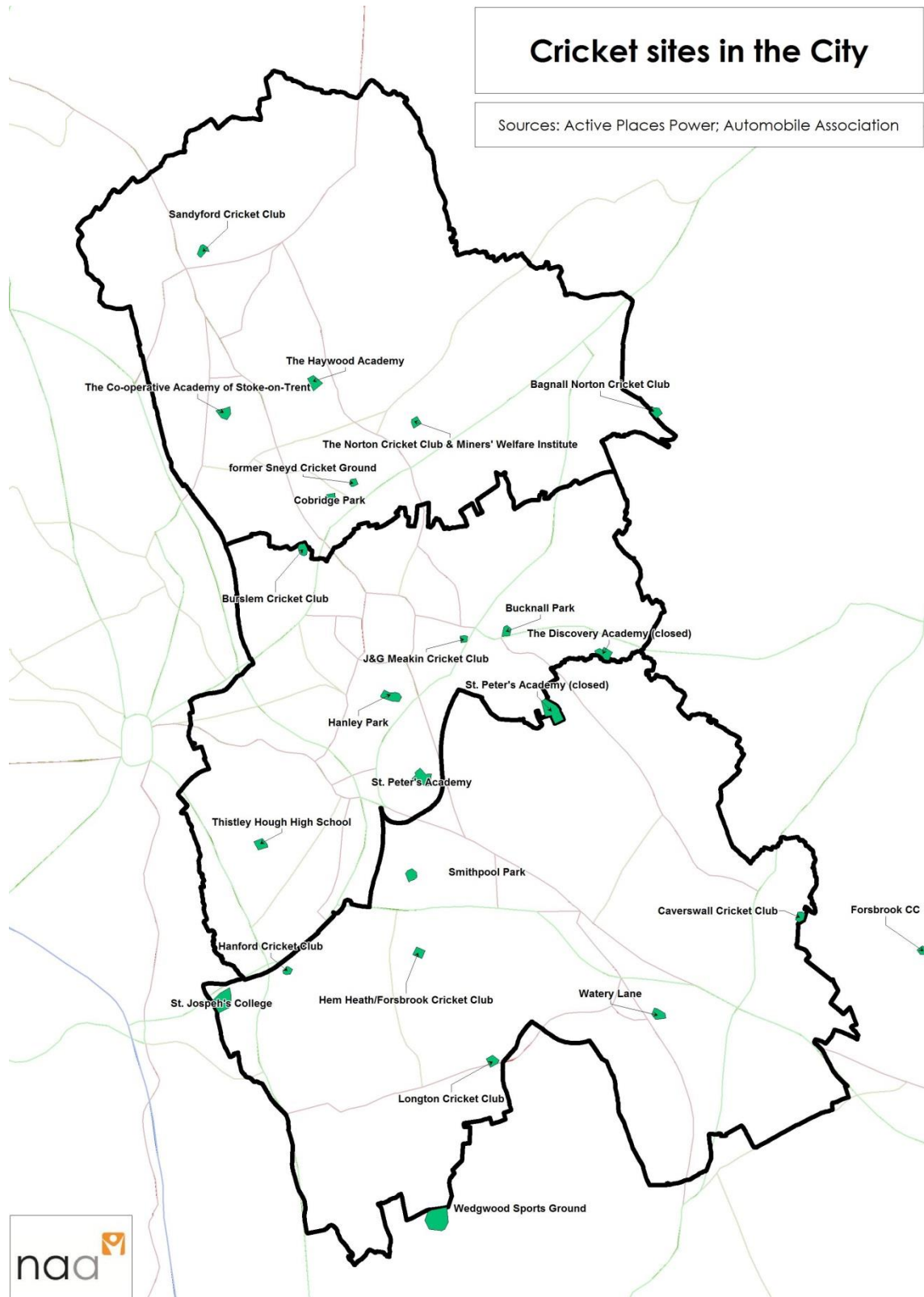
have been added to the supply locally. However, the Cooperative Academy site is the only education site included in the table, although it does not appear to be used by community teams. Certain other schools have playing fields that will host cricket during the summer months, but these are non-dedicated. The facility at Watery Lane (in the South of the City) has been included as it has a non-turf wicket and changing facilities.

Table 5.1: Grass cricket pitches across the City

Name	Availability	Sub Area	Number of grass cricket wicket strips	Number of artificial cricket wicket strips
Bagnall Norton Cricket Club	Club	outside	12	
Burslem Cricket Club	Club	Central	12	1
Caverswall Cricket Club	Club	South	15	
Cobridge Park	Council			1
J&G Meakin Cricket Club	Club	Central	10	1
Hanford Cricket Club	Club	South	13	
Hanley Park	Council	Central		1
Hem Heath Cricket Club	Club	South	14	2
Longton Cricket Club	Club	South	12	
Sandyford Cricket Club	Club	North	12	
Smithpool/Fenton Park	Council	South	12	
The Co-operative Academy of Stoke-on-Trent	Education	North		1
The Norton Cricket Club & Miners' Welfare Institute	Club	North	12	
The Wedgwood Estate	Club		12	
Watery Lane (informal facility with under-sized outfield)	Council	South		1

- 5.10 Facilities owned and managed by clubs proliferate within the City and, as will be seen, tend to be of relatively good quality. There is limited public sector provision in local parks. The only recognized formal provision in a public park is located at Fenton/Smithpool Park. However, other council parks are used for informal cricket matches, which appears to be a significant activity. This is considered further later in this section. Education provision that is theoretically available for community use is restricted to the Cooperative Academy.
- 5.11 Map 5.1 shows the distribution of facilities across the City. Provision is spread across the three sub areas, although the character and quality of provision within each of the three sub areas will vary significantly.
- 5.12 There is one site which once used to accommodate cricket, and now is now no longer used- the former Sneyd Cricket Club. Elsewhere, former school playing fields which once contained cricket facilities have now been 'reconfigured', as a result of education rationalisation and the development of a batch of new academy style schools.

Map 5.1: Cricket provision in the City



Management and Maintenance of Cricket Pitches

Pitch Quality

- 5.13 The quality of cricket pitches is a key component of pitch provision. The importance of quality in cricket means that some leagues require umpires to rate the pitches after each match, ensuring that they are fit for purposes and that any issues with the overall pitch quality, the wicket, or the outfield are identified. If pitches and associated ancillary provision are not up to the required quality standards, this can lead to relegation from the league and / or loss of promotion.
- 5.14 The quality of pitches in the City was therefore assessed through site visits undertaken using the non-technical assessment that accompanies the Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance note and prepared by the ECB, as well as consultation with the Staffordshire Cricket Board, and their 'Regional Pitch Advisor'.
- 5.15 Assessments indicate that the overall quality of formal cricket pitches and associated sites in the City is largely ranging between standard and good.
- 5.16 While most sites are used exclusively for cricket, some sites are also used for football. This can add to the wear and tear of pitches and impact upon the ability to undertake maintenance relating to both football and cricket pitches.
- 5.17 Table 5.2 summarises the sites containing cricket pitches in the City and the quality issues identified. It also provides an indication of the quality of existing non-turf wickets and training facilities at each site, as well as any issues that have been identified with maintenance of facilities. This incorporates comments made by clubs invited via an electronic club survey. Measured by the number of teams estimated to be fielded by local clubs, the responding clubs represented slightly over 50% of these teams.

Table 5.2: Overall quality assessment

Site Name	Ownership	General comments/observations and club's comments	Percentage score	Potential rating
Bagnall Norton CC	Club/Charity	<p>The club house is slowly being refurbished. The club has recently merged with Norton CC to become Bagnall Norton CC. Access through gate from road parking on stone slight slope on. Pitch in nice location. 2 x artificial lanes, covers, 3 x sightcreens, scoreboard. Boundary marked</p> <p>The club comment that for the first time in several years funds have been raised to ensure the ground is repaired at the end of the season. There are now volunteers who spend a lot of time working on the ground. There have been significant improvements to the club house.</p> <p>The club is concerned with the playing area, stating that the pitch is uneven and is on a slope and very bumpy. Wicket/square has suffered from neglect in recent years, this may take several years to address.</p>	82%	Good
Burslem Cricket and Bowls club	Club/charity	<p>Clubmark club. Host age-group, women's and district matches.</p> <p>The club is in a residential area - access off wide road to car park. The club has a large stand-alone scoreboard, and sight screens, 3 x artificial practice lanes that are new (money provided by BIFFA). Out-of cage old artificial lane, the boundary is rope. The outfield and the square are in good condition and the carpet of the artificial pitch is intact.</p> <p>The club comments that extra drainage has improved the playing surface although further drainage work is required as pitch is sited on a former landfill area. It has recently installed 3 new, non-turf nets and a new, fixed sight screen and wish to provide new dressing room facilities and a girl's changing area.</p>	89%	Good
Co-operative Academy	Education	Built 3 years ago and unused by community. Artificial wicket in poor condition	51%	Standard
Cobridge Park	Local authority	Artificial strip unusable – surface is torn and dirty. Football pitches to the side of the strip. The park is still used for play, dog walking and as a through route.		
Caverswall CC	Club/private	<p>Well-kept tidy site at edge of countryside. Practice nets look new and are in dedicated fenced area. No artificial wicket. Sightcreens, electronic scoreboard, good social facilities. Parking on tarmac. Lots of space.</p> <p>The club comments that drainage on one side of the ground is poor and slow, and that it would like a larger clubhouse with a separate function room.</p>	90%	Good

Site Name	Ownership	General comments/observations and club's comments	Percentage score	Potential rating
David Kettle Memorial Ground J&G Meakin CC	Club/private	<p>Clubmark club with lots of teams. It hosts age-group, women's and district matches. The venue has an urban setting and is constrained by a canal on one boundary and residential properties elsewhere. The ground is in good condition, a little scuffed in the outfield. Fenced boundary area as all training and games take place on the pitch. The club also uses Fenton CC's ground in Mount Pleasant park, as the clubs have merged.</p> <p>The club states that it needs extra practice lanes and the present ones could be improved. Small parking area on tarmac and grass. Outfield short by 5 metres on one side. There is a need for new heavy roller.</p>	87%	Good
Hanley Park	Local authority	Artificial wicket only, and this is in a different part of park to the artificial practice nets, which are in in good condition. The cricket strip is used informally only. There is no other equipment, and what would be outfield was long and needed cutting.	75%	Standard
Hanford CC	Club/charity	Access to cricket field through gate along stony lane. The facilities look a little tired. 2 good artificial practice lanes, covers, scoreboard, sightscreens. Game in progress at time of visit. Small parking area, that is partly surfaced. The club has concerns over the undulating nature of the outfield, and uneven nature of parts of the square, which makes parts unsuited to senior cricket. The club feels the non-turf practice facilities need replacing; and other facilities (such as scoreboard) also need upgrading.	85%	Good (Club rated overall quality as standard)
Hem Heath CC	Club/charity	<p>A large Clubmark performance club in the Premier League. Recently re-located to a new ground.</p> <p>Well supported club. Game in progress at time of visit. Good facilities and good social facilities. New practice nets, but also older ones. Sight screens, covers, scoreboard boundary rope. Two 2 artificial wickets both in excellent condition.</p>	90%	Good
Longton CC	Club/charity	<p>Clubmark, performance club in the Premier League. It hosts Staffordshire County matches. It also hosts age-group, woman's and district matches.</p> <p>Access through hotel carpark (dedicated access to club). Car park on tarmac (next to Hem Heath bowling green). Tidy and well kept club. A very large scoreboard with PA system. Large club house. Sightscreens, covers, and practice nets all present. The club comments that the clubhouse is now outdated and needs a total refurbishment, and the shower facilities need replacing.</p>	92%	Good

Site Name	Ownership	General comments/observations and club's comments	Percentage score	Potential rating
Norton CC and Miners Welfare	Club/charity	<p>This ground was still used until recently even though the original team of Norton have amalgamated and moved to the Bagnall site. The nomadic Sport Asia CC and Staffs University have made use of the ground this past season. Sport Asia CC would like to investigate a longer-term arrangement.</p> <p>The ground is in reasonable condition. Fairy ring fungus on pitch. Sightscreens, covers, scoreboard all exist. Marked up ready for play. The club maintained a dedicated artificial practice net area with weldmesh.</p> <p>It is understood that there are now plans to play extra football at this site, and this will have implications for the future of cricket on this site, and it should be prioritised for cricket</p>	90%	Good
Sandyford CC	Club/private	<p>Clubmark club, which appears to have a lease issue, as it is owned by a developer.</p> <p>Covers, sight screens, spectators dedicated seating all exist. The outfield is uneven.</p> <p>The club is concerned over future leasing options, and does not therefore have access to funding for new practice net and improved ancillary facilities.</p> <p>The club believes there is scope for investment and have 200+ members. They lease ground for football in winter.</p>	75%	Standard
Mount Pleasant Park /Fenton CC/ Smithpool Park	Local authority	<p>Good cricket facility in public park boundary marked wickets marked up, covers, sight screens, mobile practice lane (no netting) Pavilion looks to be in good condition with integral scoreboard. The resident club (Fenton CC) comments that requirements include: better sight screens, new cover sheets for the covers, new scoreboard, new kitchen, general improvements; weed reduction; need for non-turf practice facilities.</p>	86%	Good (responding club felt the overall quality was average)
Former Sneyd CC	Private	<p>There are goal posts for football on site - the artificial wicket is unusable - there is evidence of old practice nets on site - not used for some time, and needs investment if possible to bring it back into use. Access through gate from road. No car parking, except on grassed area and road - the area is retained by large retaining wall at road side. Existing boundary fencing is in poor condition.</p>		
Watery Lane	Local authority	<p>Gate locked at time of visit. Informal cricket venue. Artificial strip, and changing accommodation. This site is owned by the City Council. Considered by council officers not to be in good condition.</p>		
Wedgwood Estate	Club	<p>The club originally for Wedgwood workers only. 2 artificial practice lanes, covers, scoreboard, sightscreens, rollers, pavilion and changing on site.</p>		

- 5.18 Looking at the above assessment it is clear that those sites that are controlled by local clubs are generally considered to be of good quality (albeit that the detailed site assessments have highlighted specific areas where there might be scope for improvement (considered later). However, the local authority-controlled facility at Fenton Park is also well maintained to a good standard.
- 5.19 Elsewhere, where there are casual artificial wickets, such as on school sites and in other public open space, the quality is worse (reflecting the fact that such facilities are not used for competitive, affiliated cricket).

Bringing together both the findings of the site specific information presented in Table 4.2, as well as the key issues arising through consultation, it is clear that across the City:

- Dedicated cricket sites are generally of an average to good standard, although there are specific issues on certain sites, and some of the ancillary facilities are quite basic and require refurbishment/overhaul.
- Significant issues exist in relation to those facilities that are not part of a dedicated cricket site. Especially where there are artificial wickets in open public parks and school sites, and which are now in dilapidated condition, perhaps in part due to lack of maintenance- what is the (current) purpose of these facilities, and should they be retained/improved?
- In respect of less the less formal provision mentioned in the above table 'Last Man Stands' is a global cricket initiative that plays quick, often casual, limited over cricket primarily on artificial wickets in parks. Consideration for provision of artificial pitches to cater for this form of the game in Hanley Park, Watery Lane, Cobridge Park and the old Sneyd CC site were considered by the council but ultimately not pursued, although the local mainly South Asian community were frequent participants in the park. Consequently, Last Man Stands has not developed in the City at its expected rate.
- The issue of catering for informal cricket played by the asian community within parts of the City is considered further later in this section.

Security of Tenure

- 5.20 Given that most of the dedicated cricket facilities are controlled by the clubs, there is a relatively high level of club security of tenure, offering the prospect of developing clubs where resources permit this to happen.
- 5.21 However, Fenton Park CC have indicated that whilst they have a 20-year lease from the Council, there is only three years of this lease left.
- 5.22 Otherwise, the club questionnaires have not highlighted any particular issues with regard to security of tenure.
- 5.23 Two facilities (the former Sneyd CC and the operational Sandyford CC grounds) have unclear private ownership status.

Demand

Participation across the City

- 5.24 There are estimated to be 82 cricket teams in the City of Stoke (including the Bagnall Norton and Wedgwood Cricket Clubs, whose venues *abut*, but are outside, the City

Boundary). Of these 40 (48%) are senior teams and 42 (52%) are junior teams. This count also includes two teams that play at the Forsbrook CC ground that is a few miles to the east of the City, but which serves as a second ground for Hem Heath CC teams (considered later), and it has been included because of this venue's relationship with a club based primarily in the City. The teams are as follows:

Table 5.3: Teams fielded by Stoke-based clubs

Club	Principal ground	Sub area	Adult Team Total	Junior Team Total
Bagnell Norton CC	Light Oaks Ave		4	4
Burslem CC	Greyhound Way		4	5
Caverswall CC	Weston Coyney		3	3
Hanford CC	Church Lane		4	2
Hem Heath / Forsbrook CC	Dennis Violet Ave		6	9
J & G Meakin / Fenton CC	Ivy House Road		8	9
Longton CC	Trentham Road		2	7
Sandyford CC	Shelford Road		3	5
Sport Asia CC	Bignell End Cricket Club*		1	0
Wedgwood CC	Wedgwood Sports Ground*		5	0
			40	42

- 5.25 It is recognised that there are other clubs that will be based *wholly* outside the City boundaries, but which are likely to draw players from the City. For example, Meir Heath CC is just outside the city boundary in Stafford but has over 80% of its membership drawn from City postcode.
- 5.26 Representative teams are excluded from the above totals as they are made up of the same players as those in the club teams. They are however considered when evaluating the use of facilities and the impact that they have on the adequacy of provision.
- 5.27 Although clubs consulted through the questionnaire survey cited generally inclusive membership policies, there does not currently appear to be any significant provision for disability cricket, actively promoted in the area.
- 5.28 At this time there does not appear much evidence of teams/clubs having to travel into or out of the City boundary due to lack of pitches in their preferred locality. The exception to this is the Hem Heath Club, which has to use a facility at Forsbrook to the east of the City, to accommodate its third and fourth teams. Both Bagnall Norton and Wedgwood CCs play on venues outside, but abutting the City boundary, and whilst these clubs probably draw much of their membership from the City, their extremely close

proximity to the City makes it inappropriate to consider them to be displaced teams.

- 5.29 The evidence from the club questionnaire is that the majority of players will travel between two and five miles to reach their home venue, and so some amount of travel is an expectation.
- 5.30 Most clubs have junior teams, although it is the larger clubs such as J&G Meakin, and Hem Heath that have the widest spread of such teams over the age groups.
- 5.31 There are only two ladies teams recorded as being based in the City, and these are both fielded by the J&G Meakin Club. There will be significant numbers of junior females playing in younger age group mixed teams. However, it is again the J&G Meakin team who appear to have the only girl-only junior teams.
- 5.32 Activity in the educational sector is considered later in this section.
- 5.33 The majority of cricket is in the form of formal club based cricket teams, playing in a variety of leagues, in particular the following:

Table 5.4: Significant local leagues

Kidsgrove Junior Cricket League	
<i>Play on Sundays</i>	<i>7 divisions - 8 teams in each division</i>
South Moorlands Junior Cricket League	
<i>U9s play on Saturday</i>	<i>24 divisions - 6 or 8 teams in each division</i>
<i>U11, U13 & U15s play midweek</i>	
Stone & District Cricket League	
<i>Stoke teams play Sundays</i>	<i>6 divisions - 8 to 10 teams in each division</i>
North Staffs and South Cheshire League	
<i>Play Saturdays</i>	<i>16 divisions - 12 teams in Saturday divisions and 3 teams in Shark divisions (Midweek)</i>

- 5.34 There are some teams playing less formal cricket (either in midweek leagues or just friendlies). While most of these are associated with a club and a home ground, some travel to different grounds and rent their pitches depending upon availability.
- 5.35 Importantly, in the City is the significant amount of informal matches taking place in public parks amongst largely amongst black and minority ethnic groups (considered further later in this section).

Trends in Participation

- 5.36 Discussions with the Staffordshire County Cricket Board suggest that the growth area in cricket is within the 5/7/9/11s age groups where there are large numbers. Many of these lower age groups are also less pitch-reliant, as they just use outfields.

- 5.37 The Board also suggest that whilst The 'Chance to Shine' programme¹⁰ does generate big numbers clubs then struggle to cater for the numbers at the ages when formal pitches are required. They could run 2 or 3 under 13 teams but don't have sufficient pitches. The demand then dissipates. However, there is also a problem with the lack of volunteers needed to manage these greater numbers.
- 5.38 Of those clubs responding to the questionnaire survey there was a mixed response to the question asking whether there was an aspiration to field more teams. The majority said that they had no immediate intention. Where there was a positive intent, this was largely in respect of the junior age groups. Some clubs indicated a dropping off in participation in adult male sections, largely due to the time involved in participating and the conflict therefore with other commitments.
- 5.39 Bagnall Norton CC appear to buck the trend by increasing both their number of junior and senior teams this past season. Burslem CC state that overall numbers of participants is decreasing even though club is more active in running recruitment programmes with schools. Whereas Caverswall CC have increased the number of junior sides due to more U9s attending training sessions.

Displaced Teams

- 5.40 As stated earlier, the only examples of teams from within the City having to make a significant commute out of the City to use 'home' facilities is the Hem Heath Club whose 2nd and 3rd teams use facilities at Forsbrook CC, a few miles to the east of the City. However, this is not considered to be an unreasonable distance.

Training Needs

- 5.41 Clubs primarily use indoor training nets during the winter months, and there does appear to be a good standard and range of provision within and around the City in this regard. The principal indoor facilities exist at:
- Sandon Business Enterprise and Arts College has a specially designed hall for cricket with 5 courts and a specialist flooring.
 - Clayton Sports Centre (in Newcastle-under-Lyme), which is a key indoor facility. It is a 5-lane facility used for training and indoor leagues. A £330,000 project to upgrade and provide a new roof has been recently completed. A partnership between cricket and badminton who also play there.
 - In terms of Stoke indoor provision is located at the YMCA, Co-op Academy, Sandon Academy, Stoke 6th form College and Trentham School. And the Haywood Academy.
 - There is a 5-lane cricket-specific facility at Tunstall (The Cricket Cave) and also 4-lane indoor facility at Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy, Blurton.

The excellent facility at Stoke College is currently out-of-use due to structural issues but there is also a question mark over its long-term availability as the centre is not staffed at weekends.

¹⁰ The Chance to Shine Programme seeks to bring cricket back into primary schools and to create strong links between schools and clubs.

- 5.42 Training outdoors takes place on artificial wickets and in training nets at the club base. Training emerged as a key issue for some clubs, with some confirming that the condition of their existing training facilities (or lack of facilities) means that some training does take place on the grass square (or not at all). Clubs that have indicated an issue with club-based training facilities are:
- Bagnall Norton CC - Poor and restrictive facilities lacking capacity for all members to practice safely. Require non-turf practice nets and non-turf wicket on square with mobile net.
 - Caverswall CC – Require mobile net cage.
 - Fenton CC – Require non-turf practice nets at Fenton Park.
 - Hanford CC - Require replacement of old non-turf practice nets.
- 5.43 Staffordshire Cricket Board highlight the importance of clubs having access to appropriate training facilities – this is particularly important for clubs trying to develop junior sections, as juniors tend to gravitate towards high quality training facilities and a developmental environment.

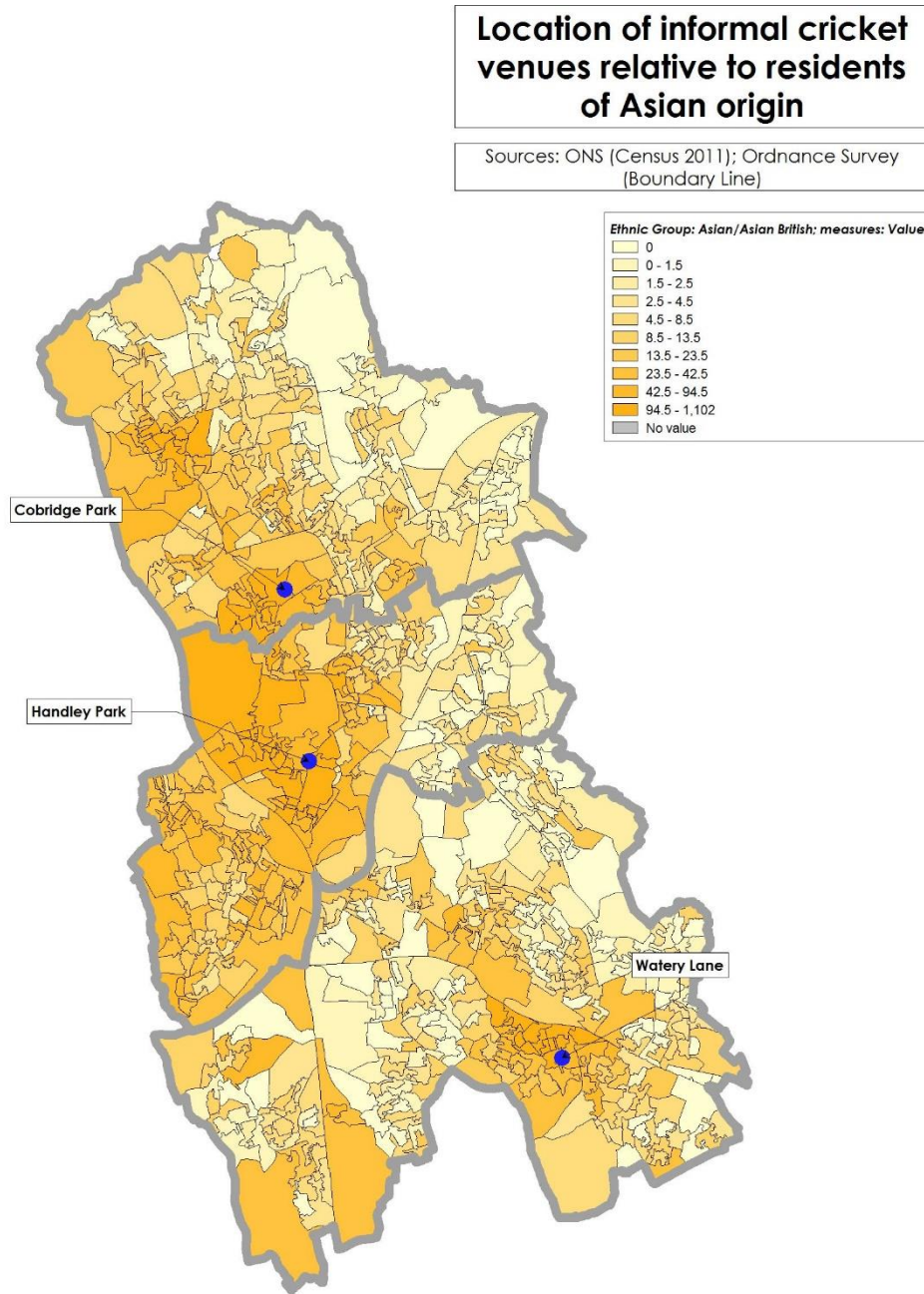
Educational Demand

- 5.44 Demand for formal cricket pitches is generally less evident from the state education sector than other sports. However, there is provision at some of the schools/academies, most notably at recently developed Co-operative Academy. In terms of school cricket activity this is limited:
- Heywood Academy are currently re-locating an artificial wicket but it will have small boundaries
 - St Joseph's RC College – this is the top playing school
 - Margaret Ward Academy, and Birches Head Academy – these play some cricket
- 5.45 Cricket at primary or first school typically does not involve the use of formal facilities, instead being played indoors or on the playground. The Chance to Shine Programme, which brings cricket back into primary schools and seeks to create strong links between schools and clubs has however been particularly successful and may have contributed to the small increase in junior cricket participation (as evidenced by earlier comments made by the Staffordshire Cricket Board).
- 5.46 The club questionnaire responses received do indicate that some host school activity, and especially junior activity, such as for inter-school tournaments. However, given that these will be largely mid-week during the day, and not using the turf square, there will be little impact in terms of conflict with club needs, and increased wear and tear on turf wickets.
- 5.47 A number of clubs responded saying that cricket is no longer played nor taught in schools. The Chance to Shine cricket programme, however, which Staffordshire Cricket deliver, reaches 20% of the city's state schools.
- 5.48 The Staffordshire University field a team that plays in both the BUCS indoor and outdoor leagues. In the summer the team has used facilities at Norton CC and Meakins CC, mid-week.

Casual Demand

- 5.49 There is a significant amount of informal cricket that takes place in some local parks within the City. This type of activity is difficult to quantify with any precision because of its non-affiliated character. It does not seem to use dedicated cricket facilities, with the possible exception perhaps of the small number of non-turf strips found in certain public parks (which themselves are in a poor condition). Much of this activity appears to be in the form of casual, competitive, matches amongst teams from the Asian community.
- 5.50 Observations of such ad hoc activities were made during the site visits to cricket facilities during the summer of 2015. Discussions were undertaken with City parks managers to try to further clarify the location, extent and character of such activity, and principal activity sites have been plotted below and overlain onto information showing the general concentrations of residents of Asian origin. See Map 5.2 below.

Map 5.2: Known venues for informal cricket overlain on distribution of residents of Asian extraction

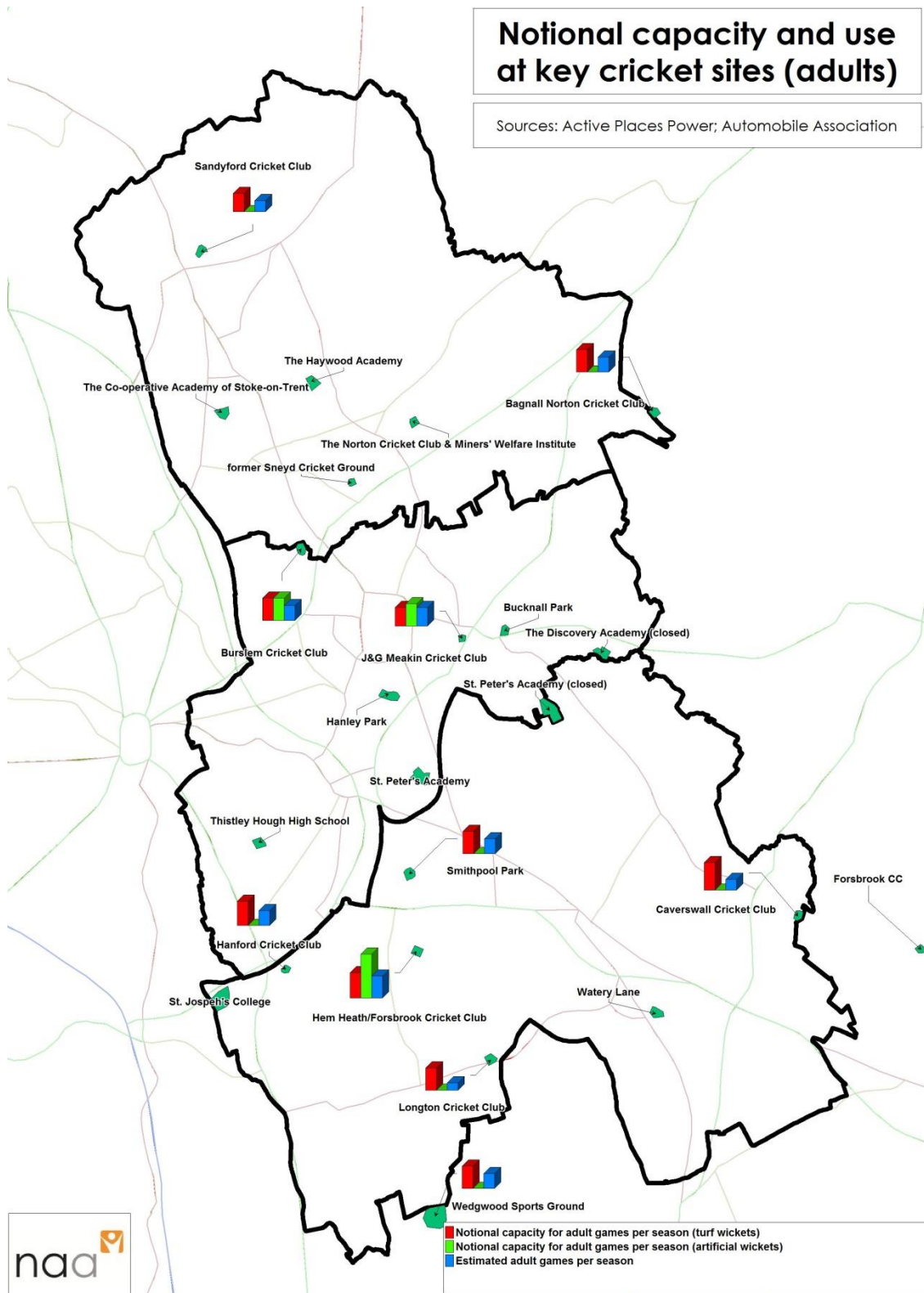


5.51 The three sites that are thought to be the currently most significant in respect of such activity, are geographically well-related to local populations of Black and Minority Ethnic origin. Hanley Park appears to be especially popular. Hanley Park, Sneyd CC, Cobridge Park and Watery Lane were investigated by Staffordshire Cricket with the local authority as potential locations to site up to 3 non-turf cricket pitches as part of the governing body's strategy to support informal play

Assessing the Supply and Demand Information and Views

- 5.52 The adequacy of facilities for cricket is measured by comparing the amount of wickets available against the level required times of use of these wickets. There are therefore two components involved in this calculation:
1. Assessing the 'capacity' of wickets to absorb the overall number matches they are required to host without undue wear and tear; and,
 2. Assessing the availability of pitches to be available for matches at the times that they will be required.
- 5.53 The above two are considered in the following paragraphs.
- 5.54 For cricket, unlike other pitch sports, the capacity of a pitch is measured on a seasonal basis (as opposed to weekly) and is primarily determined by the number and quality of wickets on a pitch. Play is rotated throughout the season across the wickets to reduce wear and allow for repair.
- 5.55 As a guide, the ECB suggests that a good quality wicket should be able to take:
- 5 matches per season per grass wicket (adults);
 - 7 matches per season per grass wicket (juniors);
 - 60 matches per season per non turf wicket (adults); and
 - 80 matches per season per non turf wicket (juniors).
- 5.56 Demand (in relation to capacity) is therefore measured in terms of the number of home games that each team will play per season.
- 5.57 Some junior play in the City will take place on non-turf wickets. This meets with ECB requirements, unless teams are playing in high standard junior play, and/or are in the 13 years + age groups, in which case play must take place on the grass square. The provision of non-turf wickets can therefore enhance the capacity of a site.
- 5.58 Assessing demand from adult teams is easier to establish due to the unambiguous requirement for turf pitches for play in local league structures and above. The following Map 5.3 summarises the situation at the cricket sites across the City in respect of the notional capacity of the sites to absorb adult matches against the estimated number of matches played by adult teams per season. Where there is no record of non-turf wickets existing at a site the capacity of such facilities will read as zero. In any event such wickets will be largely irrelevant in respect of adult matches, as it is the capacity of the turf wickets to accommodate match play that is the critical consideration. Cricket training will normally take place off the cricket square, and within nets, on non-turf wickets, in the outfield, or winter training indoor bowls. Training therefore is not a key factor in determining overall use of turf wickets over the course of a season.
- 5.59 The Map 4.3 suggests that on those sites hosting regular competitive league activity, there is usually spare capacity. The exceptions to this are the J&G Meakin, and the Hem Heath CC grounds. Both of these sites are close to capacity in terms of the notional ability to host adult games.

Map 5.3: Turf pitch capacity relative to adult use



5.60 In terms of quality (but also capacity) a relevant comment from the Staffordshire Cricket Board is that all the sites that are used by clubs in the City are single pitch sites. This has fostered various recent mergers where one club has the players but not the pitch capacity, and another club has the pitch capacity but not the players e.g. J&G Meakin (lots of teams but not enough pitches) now also use Fenton CC facilities (the Council pitch in Fenton Park- the only Council pitch, and Fenton do not have sufficient teams to fill it).

5.61 The above Map 5.3 gives a picture in relation to adult play alone. In order to understand more fully the situation for individual sites it is important to also take into account both the needs and impact of the junior play, as well as the existence and capacity of non-turf wickets to absorb such play.

5.62 The following **Table 5.5** considers the situation at individual sites.

Table 5.5: Capacity relative to usage at individual sites

	= spare capacity		= getting close to capacity use		= capacity reached (or being 'over-played')
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Club	Sub Area	Adult teams	Junior teams (7-18)	Adult cricket Sat	Adult cricket Sun	Adult cricket MW	Junior cricket Sat	Junior cricket Sun	Junior cricket MW	Comments
Bagnall Norton Cricket Club	O	4	4	2	2	0	0	2	2	This club has recently merged with the former Norton Miners Welfare CC, with the co-location to the Bagnall Norton site. The club now has the maximum number of adult teams playing on both Saturday and Sunday without requiring a second pitch. Overuse of the existing turf pitches is probably not currently a problem, although the older junior teams will require access, which will increase wear and tear.
Burslem Cricket Club	C	4	5	2	1	1	0	2	3	4 adult teams with 2 playing on Saturdays. An expansion in Saturday teams would require a second pitch, although this scenario is unlikely to be realised. There is a non-turf wicket on the site, and this helps absorb junior activity. There does not appear to be an issue in respect of overuse of the grass wickets.

Club	Sub Area	Adult teams	Junior teams (7-18)	Adult cricket Sat	Adult cricket Sun	Adult cricket MW	Junior cricket Sat	Junior cricket Sun	Junior cricket MW	Comments
Caverswall Cricket Club	S	3	1	2	0	1	1	0	2	3 adult teams with 2 playing on Saturday. More Saturday teams would require an additional pitch, although this scenario is probably unlikely to be realised. The club does not have a non-turf wicket for training and junior play, but there does not appear to be an issue with the over-use of the turf wickets.
Forsbrook CC	O	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	A small club site that is some distance removed from the City boundary, but is used as a second pitch site by the Hem Heath Club (see below). This site has not been quality assessed, due to its location.
J&G. Meakin Cricket Club	C	6	9	2	3	1	2	2	5	This large club has its own pitch as well as access to the Council owned pitch at Fenton/Smithpool Park. However, even so, capacity issues are looming. The women's section is developing with two teams – and these will presumably need to be juggled between this site and Fenton Park. There is also midweek activity, and a large junior section. Even with access to the Fenton Park facility, if the club continues to grow access to a <i>third pitch</i> may be necessary. It is also considered that the turf wickets are being used to their capacity in respect of wear and tear.
Hanford Cricket Club	S	4	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	The club has two teams playing on Saturday, and would require access to a second pitch if they wish to field a third team on Saturday, although this is considered to be unlikely. There is no non-turf strip, and provision could offset some future pressures on the turf wickets.
Hem Heath Cricket Club	S	3	9	2	1	0	2	2	5	This is a big club with a large number of both adult and junior teams. This has caused problems with respect to access to pitches on the relevant match days. The club has resolved this problem through achieving access to the Forsbrook ground outside the City boundary. However, there may still be capacity issues in terms of potential overuse of the existing wicket. Although there is a non-turf strip for some junior matches, the expectation is that some of the older juniors will play on the grass wickets, and the use of the wicket is therefore close to its notional capacity.

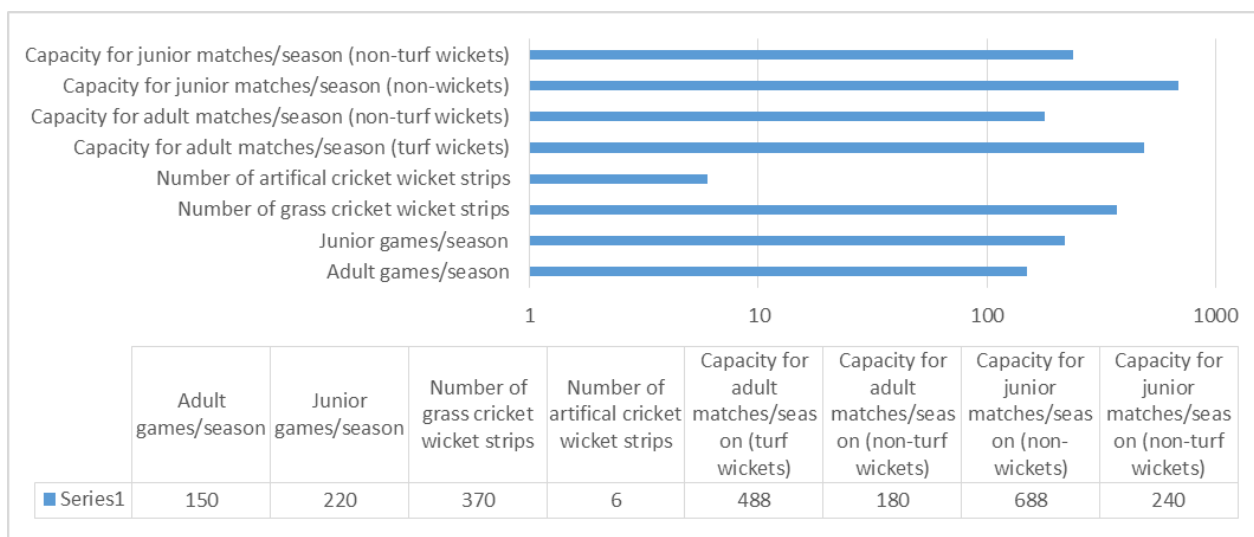
Club	Sub Area	Adult teams	Junior teams (7-18)	Adult cricket Sat	Adult cricket Sun	Adult cricket MW	Junior cricket Sat	Junior cricket Sun	Junior cricket MW	Comments
Longton Cricket Club	S	2	7	2	0	0	1	4	2	The two adult teams play on a Saturday. However, there is unlikely to be a need for access to a second pitch. Although the turf pitches are both likely to be used by adult to less than their notional capacity, there will be an expectation that the older junior teams will also use them. There is no non-turf strip at the site.
Sandyford Cricket Club	N	3	2	2	1	0	1	3	1	Two of the adult teams play on a Saturday, although there is unlikely to be a need for access to a second pitch. The older junior teams might also be expected to play on a grass wicket which will increase the pressure on the turf wickets, but not unacceptably.
Fenton Park/Smithpool Park	S	4	3	2	1	1	0	1	2	The merger of the Fenton and the J&G Meakin clubs, with the latter now also having access to Fenton Park has increased pressure on this site, which does not have an artificial wicket.
The Co-operative Academy of Stoke-on-Trent	N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This school based facility has a turf square, and a non-turf strip with outfield. However, it is not used by community teams, and use by the school appears very limited. Access to site was not available to undertake a quality assessment.
The Norton Cricket Club & Miners' Welfare Institute	N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This appears largely unused for regular cricket currently, but is well-maintained and could accommodate much more use. It is understood that there are plans to play more football at this site, which could compromise its availability for cricket, so it should be protected for cricket
Watery Lane	S	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This site was locked but contains a non-turf wicket and an outfield.
Wedgwood Sports Ground	O	5	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	Although there are 5 adult teams, the junior section is almost non-existent currently.

The City-wide picture

5.63 The following Table 5.6 aggregates the situation at individual sites in a City-wide overview. It shows that, in theory at least, there appears to be spare capacity across the

City to absorb extra play (disregarding for the moment when pitches might be required). There are clearly some sites that contribute to this 'spare capacity' more than others—with Norton Miners Welfare CC Ground being the principal example. However, the rest of the spare capacity will be spread over a number of sites (as indicated in the previous table).

Figure 5.1: City-wide pitch capacity

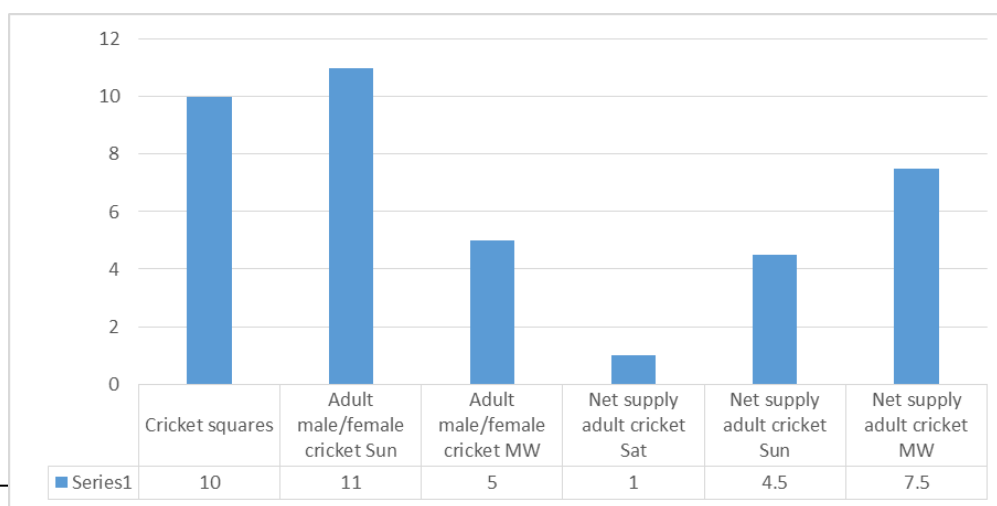


Demand at Peak Time

5.64 As mentioned earlier a second component in assessing whether there are sufficient pitches to meet local needs/demands is whether there are sufficient to meet the requirement for matchplay at times when they are required most (peak-demand). Most adult play takes place on either Saturday or Sunday. Junior play can take place on weekend mornings or weekday evenings.

5.65 Table 5.5 (above) describes the situation regarding each site, and following Figure 4.2 examines the net supply of pitches across the City relative to the *times of demand* for adult cricket.

Figure 5.2: Net supply of pitches at times of peak demand from adult teams



- 5.66 It will be seen from the above that the critical period is on Saturdays, when the spare capacity for pitches is down to just one. In fact, the situation on Saturdays would be worse if it wasn't for 3rd and 4th teams at Hem Heath CC using facilities outside the City at Forsbrook (which have therefore been excluded from this calculation). (NB the 3rd and 4th teams were originally Forsbrook CC's 1st and 2nd teams and therefore already outside the City).
- 5.67 This situation points to the importance of retaining or replacing at least some of the facility stock that is not currently being used to its maximum potential (particularly the Norton Miners Welfare ground, the Cooperative Academy facility and, the former Sneyd CC ground).

Scenarios

a) Natural and population change

- 5.68 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. By applying TGRs to population projections, a future theoretical number of teams that would be generated from population growth can be predicted.
- 5.69 Table 5.6 summarises the current TGRs for cricket and uses them to evaluate the potential impact of projected changes to the population profile on demand. It reveals that population growth and changes to the population profile will result in:
- an increase in the number of people aged between 18-55, generating a likely increase of 4 senior cricket teams; and
 - an increase of around 4 additional junior teams created.

Table 5.6: Impact of Changes to the Population Profile

	2015 AGE GROUPS	2015 TEAMS	2015 TGRs	2026 AGE GROUPS	2026 TEAMS	CHANGE (+/-) by 2026	2033 AGE GROUPS	2033 TEAMS	CHANGE (+/-) by 2033
Junior cricket (7-17 male)	16,091	38	423	17,082	40.4	2.4	17,712	41.9	3.9
Junior cricket (7-17 female)	14,955	2	7,477	15,873	2.1	0.1	16,459	2.2	0.2
Senior cricket (18-55 male)	65,246	40	1,631	69,260	42.5	2.5	71,815	44	4
Senior cricket (18-55 female)	63,113	2	31,556	66,991	2.1	0.1	69,462	2.2	0.2

Based on projections provided by the City of Stoke Council in September 2015, derived from examining a range of scenarios including the 'Cambridge' modelling of 810 dwellings per annum.

- 5.70 The implication of the above changes in population is that there is likely to be a requirement for at least an additional cricket pitch to absorb this additional demand, especially in relation to Saturday play which represents the balance of temporal demand for pitches. Given that the majority players are unlikely to want to travel more than 5 miles to reach their home ground, any increased provision will need to take into account the general location of where natural and planned growth will be greatest.

b) Club development allied to Natural and population change

- 5.71 The club questionnaire returns have not indicated a large appetite to field more teams

beyond current levels- those that have responded with positive plans generally suggest the desire to field more women's and junior teams (many of which will not require access to turf wickets in younger age groups).

- 5.72 To promote growth of cricket, and in recognition of changing lifestyle patterns and the challenges of 50 over cricket, locally and nationally, the England Cricket Board are now seeking to introduce alternative forms of the game, including Last Man Standing and T20. These are similar in format to the midweek and weekend leagues and offer people who are unable to participate in full matches shorter forms of the game. These may place different pressures on the pitch stock in future years as demand grows for midweek games.
- 5.73 In reality some clubs appear to be struggling to retain current numbers of teams, for a variety of reasons, including a lack of volunteers to help run clubs, coaching, and administration. On the other hand, the Staffordshire Cricket Board have suggested that one of the major impediments to the translation of junior teams to adult teams is the lack of natural turf pitches to allow younger teams to convert to playing on dedicated natural turf wickets at the appropriate age (13+ years). It may be that additional mergers and partnerships between existing local clubs will help to provide greater access to turf-wickets to allow aspirational clubs to sustain interest amongst the older junior age groups.

c) Addition of extra pitches to the current stock

- 5.74 If a facility like cricket provision at the Cooperative Academy could be improved (with the provision of a grass cricket square and a refurbished non-turf wicket) and be made fully accessible for use by clubs, it could largely meet the increased likely demand arising from natural and planned population change. Whether it is likely to be in the most appropriate location to field this additional demand depends, as said, on the general location of increased demand emanating from natural and planned population growth. It will be important to raise the issue of the existing (underused) cricket facility with the Academy, as this could make a valuable contribution to local provision. The Academy should be reminded of the legal obligation it is under in respect of community use agreements affecting sports provision on the campus.
- 5.75 The previous playing pitch strategy, made some recommendations for the provision of new cricket facilities, and the re-opening of redundant facilities:
- Ideally develop a further site for cricket development in the East of the City – possibly linked to a school.
 - Secure one further pitch in the North of the City, possibly linked to the schools reorganisation programme
 - Encourage club use of school sites in the South West of the City as opportunities arise.
 - Secure the Sneyd CC site. Potential Community Sports Hub site?
 - Develop one additional cricket site either in, or able to cater for, the west of the City.
- 5.76 As with the Co-op Academy, the development/provision of any one of the above could meet additional demand emanating from both natural and planned population change. This includes any potential asset transfer of the former Sneyd CC ground to an organisation capable of bringing it back into cricket and wider sports and health-related

use.

- 5.77 Some of the existing sites across the City may also offer scope to absorb additional play dependent on the times of play and the age-groups concerned, and the following is a summary based on the site-by-site analysis reported earlier in the section.

Table 5.7: Ability of pitch stock to sustain additional demand

Area	Current Spare Capacity
North	<p>Sandyford CC: There may be scope to field additional adult teams on Sundays, and the wickets are used at a level below notional capacity.</p> <p>Bagnall Norton CC: probably limited scope for fielding additional teams, other than younger juniors.</p> <p>Norton Miners Welfare Club: Substantial scope for expansion in use on all days and by all age groups.</p> <p>Former Sneyd CC ground: Considerable potential, but needs major investment. Scope for asset transfer, or replacement</p> <p>The Co-op Academy: A major opportunity for community use- perhaps as a 3rd/4th Saturday team ground.</p>
Central	<p>Burslem CC: There appears to be scope for additional use away from Saturdays, and the wickets appear to be used less than their notional capacity.</p> <p>J&G Meakin CC: Little or no scope for additional use.</p>
South	<p>Caverswall CC: There may be scope for more adult play on Sundays, as well as junior play.</p> <p>Hanford CC: Scope for some additional adult and junior play away from Saturdays.</p> <p>Hem Heath CC: Little or no scope for additional use.</p> <p>Smithpool/Fenton Park: With the merger of two clubs pressure will build on this public facility, which is likely to have limited space capacity to absorb play.</p> <p>Longton CC: Some spare capacity away from Saturday for both adults and juniors.</p> <p>Wedgwood CC: No scope for additional adult teams, but room for additional juniors.</p>

- 5.78 New provision (or links with other clubs that do have capacity) will therefore be essential if these goals are to be achieved.
- 5.79 In Section 3 the value of unused education playing fields was discussed as a potential contribution to meeting the future needs of football, and this could also be the case for cricket, and especially if such sites are likely to be located in areas where there is likely to be significant planned growth.

Summary of recommendations and progress from the previous strategy (2009-2016)¹¹

5.80 The previous strategy (produced using former Sport England guidance) was part of a wider Sport & Physical Activity Strategy prepared in 2009. It offered the following recommendations in respect of cricket, and the comments record the current situation:

Recommendation	Comment
A standard of provision for Cricket of 0.17 hectares per 1000 persons to be used for planning purposes.	Unclear whether this has ever been pursued and adopted- in any event it might need to be reviewed.
Protect, maintain and improve the existing pitches.	An important recommendation, which should be pursued.
Secure the J&G Meakin Cricket Club site.	Achieved
Support J&G Meakin and Norton CC to develop their junior sections.	Achieved for J&G Meakin, but changed circumstances for the Norton CC club due to club merger.
Ideally develop a further site for cricket development in the East of the City – possibly linked to a school.	Not achieved, but continued relevance should be reviewed
Secure one further pitch in the North of the City, possibly linked to the schools reorganisation programme	Not achieved, but continued relevance should be reviewed
Maximise Sandon Business and Arts College as a specialist indoor cricket centre to support sports development, particularly junior cricket.	This needs examining, with regard to use and status of any existing community use agreement.
Encourage club use of school sites in the South West of the City as opportunities arise.	Not achieved, but continued relevance should be reviewed
Secure the Sneyd CC site.	Not achieved, yet, but potential asset transfer.
Develop one additional cricket site in the West of the City, or as close to it as possible.	Not achieved, but continued relevance should be reviewed
Support sports development work at Brownhills school to strengthen junior cricket in this area.	Not achieved, but continued relevance should be reviewed

5.81 Many of the above recommendations require review- the geographic effect of natural and planned growth across the City needs to be better understood before area- specific proposals for new facilities can be recommended. The local evidence has suggested that players should be located no more than 5 miles from their home grounds, and it will therefore be important to bear this in mind. This affords some flexibility in respect of where new or improved facilities are provided in order to meet this additional demand. Facilities in the north of the City (Norton Miners, the Cooperative Academy, and the former Sneyd

¹¹ Stoke-on-Trent Page Sport & Physical Activity Strategy 2009-2016

CC) all may offer potential to meet additional future demand, subject to being sufficiently near to future allocated housing development.

5.82 What is clear is that the two clubs that are under most pressure in respect of limited supply capacity are J&G Meakin, and Hem Heath, and this is despite them both having access to second grounds.

Summary and key issues

5.83 A City-wide assessment shows that there is spare capacity across the City to absorb extra play, but that some sites contribute to this 'spare capacity' more than others- with Norton Miners Welfare CC Ground being the principal example. However, the rest of the spare capacity will be spread over a number of sites (as indicated in the previous table).

5.84 Planned population change is calculated to result in an increase in the number of teams: 4 extra junior teams; and 4 extra adult teams.

5.85 The implication of the above changes in population is that there is likely to be a requirement for an additional cricket pitch to absorb this additional demand, especially in relation to Saturday play which represents the balance of temporal demand for pitches.

5.86 In addition, the following are specific issues to be addressed:

- There does appear to be a demand for informal cricket amongst certain Black and Minority Ethnic communities, and provision should also take into account the demographics of local communities in this regard. This comment is particularly relevant with regard to informal park cricket. There is a good geographical spread of informal park-based venues relative to the appropriate ethnic communities, and there is scope to exploit this opportunity for further encouraging a popular recreational activity amongst this section of the local community.
- J&G Meakin and Hem Heath Clubs (the former in particular) may require extra sites if they wish to expand.
- The Co-operative Academy may offer potential to meet additional demand resulting from planned and natural population change, depending on the geographical location of this growth. It may also help in meeting the overspill needs of existing local growth clubs. There could be the opportunity for providing additional indoor facilities at this site, so that it becomes a hub site for local cricket.
- As with football, there is also the potential to use certain unused education playing fields on which to provide new facilities, and especially if these relate well to areas of planned population growth.
- The growth of cricket at the Norton Miners Welfare club needs to be encouraged given its currently under-utilised status. It may help in meeting the overspill needs of existing local growth clubs. However, there is a concern that this site's value for cricket may be compromised by increasing footballing activity.
- The overall stock of conventional cricket facilities is of a standard to good quality, and there is a good geographical spread across the City, under current circumstances.
- Although University cricket activity is presently quite limited, and does not currently

justify its own ground, this largely mid-week activity will place a limited amount of additional wear and tear on existing (primarily club) venues in the City. The University's needs for cricket should therefore be kept under review (along with the potential for these and other teams arising from population change) to use existing unused and underused sites.

Introduction

- 6.1 A summary of key issues for hockey is contained at the end of this section.
- 6.2 This section evaluates the adequacy of pitches for hockey and provides:
- The findings of the previous assessments of AGPs for hockey
 - an overview of the supply of AGPs that are suitable for hockey
 - an outline of demand for hockey pitches across Stoke-on-Trent
 - an understanding of activity at individual sites in the City
 - a picture of the adequacy of current provision; and
 - the future picture of provision for hockey across Stoke-on-Trent.

Findings of Previous Playing Pitch Strategy

- 6.3 The previous Stoke on Trent City Council Playing Pitch Strategy did not consider demand for hockey, instead placing the requirement for AGPs within the Built Facility Strategy.
- 6.4 The Sport across Staffordshire Sports Facilities Framework represents the most up to date analysis of AGPs in the area, but does not make any recommendations relating to AGPs for hockey within the City.

Hockey in Stoke-on-Trent – An Overview

Pitch Supply

- 6.5 Hockey is almost exclusively played on AGPs. Guidance on AGPs (Sport England 2010) indicates the following surfaces to be suitable for hockey:
- Water Based (suitable for high level hockey)
 - Sand Filled (acceptable surface for hockey)
 - Sand Dressed (preferred surface for hockey)
 - Short Pile 3G (acceptable surface for hockey at low standards).
- 6.6 Table 6.1 therefore summarises the large artificial pitch facilities available within Stoke-on-Trent City and provides a summary of their suitability for hockey. It includes only pitches over 300m² (half sized pitch). It also provides an understanding of the quality of the existing facility and any issues identified. Due to the more strategic nature of AGPs and the wider catchment that these facilities serve, demand and supply has been considered on a City wide basis.

Table 6.1: Suitability of Full Sized AGPs for Hockey (all sites are floodlit)- see also Map 3.2 in Section 3

Site Name	Surface	Dimensions (m)	Size (m2)	Suitability for Hockey	Pitch Quality Rating	Principal uses	Quality Issues Identified
The Excel Academy	Sand Filled	100 x 60	6000	Suitable	Standard	Curriculum; hockey; football	Old facility circa 15 years old, heavily used for football as well as hockey. Acts as overspill from adjacent goals site and is showing wear and tear, particularly due to football usage.
Co-Operative Academy	Desso Forte Needle punched synthetic grass	102 x 63	6426	Suitable	Standard	Curriculum; football	Relatively new surface, marked for football, 5v5 and hockey. Netting too low and balls go over top (Pitch on roof). Surface is of good quality and was only built in 2013 so little evidence of wear and tear. FIH approved surface for hockey.
Dimensions Leisure Centre	3G	102 x 65	6426.	Not suitable (Football surface).		Football	
Northwood Stadium	3G	100 x 65	6500	Not suitable (Football Surface)		Football	
Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy	3G	100 x 60	6000	Not suitable (Football Surface)		Curriculum; football	
Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre	3G	103 x 70	7245	Not suitable (Football Surface)		Curriculum; football; hockey	Resurfaced in 2014 from sand based to 3G. occasionally used for hockey currently as longer pile
St Peters Academy	3G		6760	Not suitable for hockey		Curriculum; football	
The Discovery Academy	3G	106 x 71	7526	Not suitable for hockey		Curriculum; football	

Site Name	Surface	Dimensions (m)	Size (m ²)	Suitability for Hockey	Pitch Quality Rating	Principal uses	Quality Issues Identified
Ormiston Horizon Academy	Sand based	51.5 x 100	5150	Surface suitable for hockey, but dimensions of pitch too small for competitive activity. Sufficiently large for some training activity	Good	Curriculum; football	Pitch is turquoise. Site only built in 2013 and therefore currently high quality facility. School does not currently have goals for hockey although the pitch is marked out for hockey. There is also a requirement for improved safety netting around the pitch as well as issues with access to changing facilities.

- 6.7 Table 6.1 demonstrates that of the nine AGPs that are over 5000m², three (33%) have a surface that is suitable for hockey. Crucially, of these, only two are full size and suitable to accommodate competitive hockey play - the Excel Academy and the Co op Academy. The Excel Academy has a sand based surface approved by England Hockey, while the pitch at the Co Op Academy is a Desso Forte Multi Pitch. The FIH Quality programme for hockey turf (licensed manufacturers and their approved products) indicates that this surface is ranked national category (suitable for lower level national, regional and community hockey). In addition to the pitches listed there is sand-based AGP at the former St Peter's School campus at Penkhull. This site is now closed as part of the schools' capital programme of recent years. The pitch itself does not have the dimensions to meet the needs of competitive hockey, and non-curriculum use was largely football.
- 6.8 Although the pitch at Ormiston Academy is also sand based, this pitch is marginally too small for competitive activity (with a width of 51.5m when a hockey pitch requires 55m, excluding run off) although it can be used for training and the school is in discussions with North Staffordshire HC to base its community programmes there.
- 6.9 The remainder of pitches are all 3G and are unsuitable for competitive hockey. The pitch at Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre has recently been refurbished from sand to 3G but the pile length means that it is only suitable for low grade recreational hockey. In effect the previous hockey usage has been lost.
- 6.10 There are also numerous AGPs below 5000m² in size. The small pitches at Hanley Park, YMCA and St Josephs Catholic Primary School are the only facilities that have a surface that can be used for hockey training should small sided play be desired, but are too small to accommodate competitive play.
- 6.11 Map 6.1 illustrates the location of sand based pitches both within the City and near to the boundaries. It indicates that within the City, all the existing facilities are located in more northern areas, with the Excel College in Sneyd Green and the Ormiston Horizon Academy and the Coop Academy both in Tunstall.
- 6.12 There are facilities around the City in all directions, with pitches in Alsager to the North West and the pitch in Leek to the North East. Facilities in Newcastle under Lyme are in close proximity to the more southerly areas of Stoke on Trent City.

Planned Facilities

- 6.13 A planning application has recently been submitted for a new full sized sand filled pitch at Haywood Engineering College. If constructed this would add to the hockey infrastructure within the City. This facility would also be located in the north of the City, in Burslem. The demand for this facility will be returned to later.
- 6.14 The Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Playing Pitch Strategy also highlights aspirations for Newcastle under Lyme School to develop an additional sand based AGP and this is a key component of the action plan. While at early stages of discussion and financial viability modelling, the proximity of this to Stoke on Trent may impact on demand for Stoke on Trent.
- 6.15 In addition to the above, there are other potential schemes. For example, Thistley Hough School is understood to have aspirations to develop an AGP for curriculum use, although the status of this project is currently unclear. In addition, as a result of campus redevelopment, Staffordshire University may have facility needs that have yet to be fully expressed.

Demand

Current Participation

6.16 There are no community hockey clubs based entirely within Stoke on Trent City. Two however play some of their existing fixtures within the City, although their first choice grounds are outside of the City boundaries. There are also two teams run by Staffordshire University playing within the City. All hockey activity is summarised in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Hockey Teams in Stoke-on-Trent

Club	Teams	Location	Competition	Training
North Stafford Hockey Club	5 male, 3 ladies and junior section (U16, U10 and U12).	Club based in Newcastle under Lyme at Newcastle-under-Lyme School. Use ancillary facilities at 45 Club. Excel Academy used as secondary venue along with Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre (3G pitch)	NUL School - 5 - 6 hours per week (3 to 4 matches) Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre (1 match ad hoc weeks - 1.5 hours male team) Excel Academy - 5 matches during season (1.5 hours)	Newcastle Under Lyme School - 5 hours
Leek Hockey Club	7 male, 4 ladies, 2 badgers and 2 veterans, 5 junior boys and 4 junior girls	Club based at Leek High School (Club pitch). Excel Academy used as secondary venue	Leek Hockey Club - fully booked with 4 - 5 matches per week Excel Academy - 3 hours (2 matches)	Leek High School - 6 hours Excel Academy (3 hours - two male team training on Thursday and Goalkeeper training on Friday)
Staffordshire University Hockey Club	1 male, 1 female	Based at Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre 3G pitch	Sir Stanley Matthews - 1 match per week (off peak)	Sir Stanley Matthews - 5 hours Monday, Tuesday, Thursday)

6.17 Table 6.2 reveals that;

- Of the two suitable pitches, the Excel Academy is the only site that currently accommodates hockey. This is an important overspill venue for both Leek Hockey Club and North Staffs Hockey Club, although both clubs consider their home grounds to be outside the City (Leek and Newcastle Under Lyme respectively). The pitch at the Excel Academy is primarily used for competitive fixtures although it does also accommodate some training for Leek Hockey Club. This is the only training activity for community clubs that takes place in Stoke on Trent, suggesting that there are limited opportunities for City residents to take up hockey;
- There is no hockey usage of the pitch at the Co - op Academy currently, despite its suitability for hockey;
- The only teams based and playing exclusively within the City are the university teams. These teams are based at the Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre, which is a

3G pitch and not the preferred surface for hockey. This pitch was also used by North Staffs Hockey Club last year due to a lack of perceived available facilities. The club are currently seeking alternative venues however as the surface is not appropriate.

6.18 Consultation with clubs reveals that;

- North Staffs Hockey Club - the club are currently based in Newcastle under Lyme and are looking to establish a second pitch to accommodate their needs at Newcastle under Lyme High School. This is in early stages of development and no financial viability modelling etc has yet taken place. The club are however also looking to expand into Stoke on Trent and are seeking to forge links with schools in the City and to grow participation numbers. Even if a second pitch was developed in NUL, they would hope to continue to have a presence in the City and are in the early stages of producing a club development plan to firm up aspirations. The club are keen to work with England Hockey and Stoke on Trent City Council in order to determine how their goals are best achieved;
- Staffordshire University play on a 3G pitch as they have no viable alternative. The pitch at the sports centre was converted to 3G due to higher demand for this surface than sand based, but the university have recently lost second teams for both male and females due to a lack of capacity in the City to accommodate their needs. The location of sand based pitches in the City on school sites means that there are no appropriate available for use at the time (Wednesday afternoon) that the university require them for competitive play. The club also wish to train during peak hours on Monday and Tuesday and face competition from other sports and clubs for this. The pitches at Co - Op Academy and Ormiston Academy are also considered to be too far from the university campus to be a viable option
- Leek Hockey Club are primarily based in Leek (Staffordshire Moorlands) but a high number of teams means that an overspill venue is required. The club long term aspiration is a second pitch within Leek, however there are many obstacles to overcome if this is to be delivered. In the short term, the club have recently refurbished their clubhouse on their home ground. The lack of options for an overspill venue means that the club are likely to continue use of pitches in Stoke on Trent for the foreseeable future.

6.19 Analysis of club demand therefore presents a mixed picture. While there are no clubs based entirely within Stoke on Trent, there is some activity (and aspirations for growth of this activity) as a result of clubs based outside the City using local pitches. There is also an existing facility suitable for competitive hockey that is not used, and a University club looking for a pitch to use for midweek matches.

Educational Demand

6.20 School use of AGPs takes place outside of peak hours and there is therefore no impact upon the availability of the facilities for community hockey (as the artificial surface means that AGPs are not impacted upon by levels of use in the same way that grass pitches are).

6.21 As outlined above, the university does however require pitches outside peak time (Wednesday afternoon). As the only sand based pitch is on a school site, the club must instead use a 3G pitch for their fixtures due to a lack of availability at other facilities.

Single System

6.22 There is no use of pitches in Stoke on Trent for the single system for hockey. The nearest Junior Development Centre (JDC) takes place at Leek High School (North Staffs Development Centre) with others in Stafford, Cannock and Lichfield. The Academy Centres all currently take place in Lichfield, where the club has two pitches.

Assessing the Supply and Demand Information and Views

6.23 The adequacy of AGPs to accommodate demand for hockey, taking into account both training and competitive fixtures is discussed below. Use of sand based facilities for football is also considered as while hockey teams cannot use facilities designed for football (3G pitches), sand based surfaces are acceptable for football training and hockey clubs can face extensive competition in accessing pitches.

6.24 Supply and demand of AGPs is measured by considering;

- the amount of play that a site is able to sustain (based upon the number of hours that the pitch is accessible to the community during peak periods up to a maximum of 34 hours per week). Peak periods have been deemed to be Monday to Thursday 17:00 to 21:00; Friday 17:00 to 19:00 and Saturday and Sunday 09:00 to 17:00;
- the amount of play that takes place (measured in hours);
- whether there is any spare capacity at the site based upon a comparison between the capacity of the site and the actual usage; and
- any other key issues relating to the site which have arisen through consultation.

6.25 Table 6.3 therefore provides a summary of activity at the two sites suitable for competitive hockey.

Table 6.3: Site Specific Usage

Site	Pitch Quality	Current Carrying Capacity for Community Use	Current Community Use	Difference	Comparison	Total Extent of any Spare Capacity for Community Use	Peak Period for the Pitch Type	Extent of any Spare Capacity for Community Use During the Peak Period for hockey	Key Issues and Views
Excel Academy	Standard	6pm - 10 pm midweek - 14 peak hours. 16 peak hours at weekend (Hockey use 3 hours midweek. 4. 5 at weekend (Saturday). Remainder of usage football - Total	0 hours midweek 8 hours weekend	Played to the level site can sustain	0 hours midweek Circa 8 hours Sunday - awaiting confirmation	Sat PM	2.5 hours not used for hockey at weekends. Often taken up with football activity	Site is used for hockey at the weekend and on Thursday / Friday evenings, but outside this time hockey must compete with football (and overspill with Goals). Facility is heavily used and ageing - circa 15 years old. Heavy usage will ensure surface replacement is required in the relative short term.
Coop Academy	Standard	6pm - 10 pm midweek - 14 peak hours. 16 peak hours at weekend	No existing hockey use - Current availability taking into account football 3 hours midweek (full pitch)	3 hours midweek 16 hours weekend	Able to sustain additional play	3 hours midweek 16 hours weekend	Sat PM	16 hours available Saturday / Sunday	Quality of pitch good although site is on roof of school and there are issues with the loss of balls. The main existing use of the facility is 5 v5 football.

Current Picture of Provision

- 6.26 Table 6.3 indicates that there is some spare capacity at the two pitches that are suitable for hockey. There is currently only 3 hours hockey activity on sand based facilities (all Excel Academy) per week and up to 6 hours at weekends for hockey.
- 6.27 The remainder of time at the sand based facilities is taken up with football and informal recreational play. On both full sized pitches, the main activity is recreational football.
- 6.28 While Excel Academy is at capacity during the week, there is some ad hoc spare capacity midweek at Co-op Academy (and further outside of peak times between 9pm and 10pm, as well as all evening on a Friday. In total therefore, spare capacity at peak periods during the week amounts to 3 hours. This suggests that there is little scope to increase training activity within the existing facility infrastructure.
- 6.29 The use of the sand based pitches is lower at weekends due to a lack of competition from football and there is greater spare capacity and therefore an ability to accommodate competitive play. Spare capacity equates to approximately 24 hours.
- 6.30 Neither facility is open during afternoons, meaning that they are not accessible for Staffordshire University.
- 6.31 There is also capacity at the Ormiston Horizon Academy which is a large pitch but not full size. Again there is no existing hockey use of this site and the only current use is football.

Use at Peak time

- 6.32 England Hockey guidance suggests that no AGP should be considered able to sustain more than 4 games on any one day. The existing use of venues in Stoke on Trent primarily as overspill for other clubs means that Saturday afternoon is peak time and this is when demand is at its highest.
- 6.33 Table 6.4 provides a further detailed picture of capacity on a Saturday. It indicates that there is little remaining capacity at Excel Academy (used as overspill by two clubs) but that four further matches could be accommodated at the Co-Op Academy, which is not currently used.
- 6.34 The lack of spare capacity at the Excel Academy is reflected in the use of the 3G pitch at Stanley Matthews Sports Centre last season by North Staffordshire Hockey Club. This pitch is not the preferred surface for hockey and use is the result of a lack of other suitable appropriate facilities. The club are currently investigating opportunities to use other facilities and having previously approached Ormiston Horizon Academy, may now liaise with Schools Plus, who manage the facilities at the Co Op Academy.

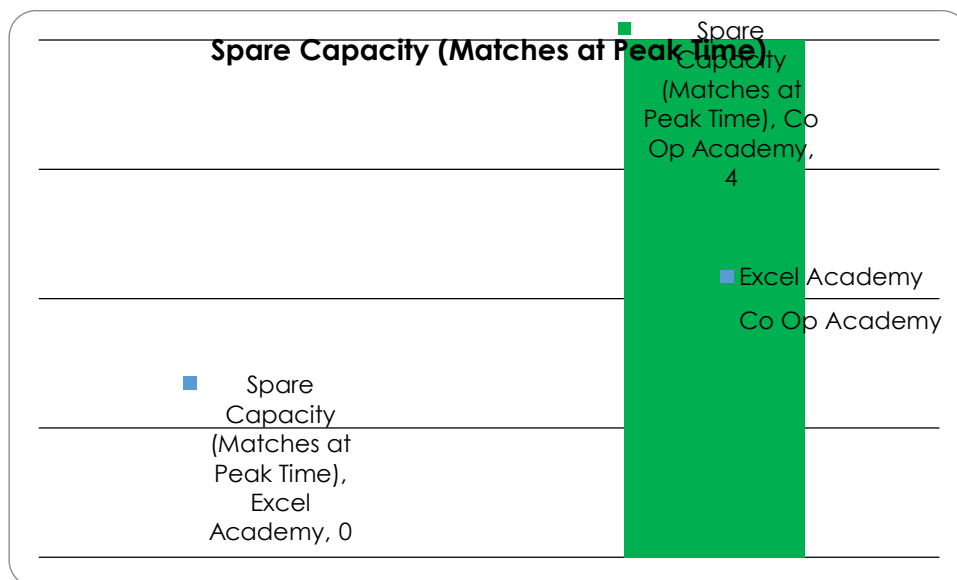
Table 6.4: Use of AGPs that are suitable for Hockey

Pitch Name	Saturday PM use for Hockey	Capacity
Excel Academy	4.5 hours - equivalent to 3 matches per weekend	Potential capacity for one further match, although site already accommodates overspill for 2 clubs and further use at peak time would require significant coordination. The relocation of the match that was played at Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre to this venue would see Excel Academy at capacity
Ormiston Horizon Academy	N/a	None - site not suitable for competitive activity
Sir Stanley Matthews Sports Centre	1.5 hours - 1 match per weekend	Site not of preferred surface. Use of 3G pitch reflects perceived lack of capacity at other sites
Co Op Academy	N/a	Site suitable and available for use. Scope to accommodate up to 4 matches on a Saturday afternoon

6.35 As Table 6.4 reveals, while there is minimal capacity at the Excel Academy, there is scope to significantly increase the amount of hockey played in the City through the use of the Co Op Academy.

6.36 As peak time demand is currently equivalent to 4 match equivalents, there is the equivalent of 4 match equivalents remaining if all pitches used were to meet England Hockey Standards. This is illustrated graphically in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2: Spare Capacity at AGPs suitable for Competitive Hockey (Saturday PM)



6.37 The above issues however disguise the lack of capacity for Staffordshire University, which arises from their requirement to access a facility during school hours (Wednesday afternoon) as well as at peak time on a Monday and Tuesday when there is no spare capacity.

6.38 Analysis of activity by the clubs that are travelling in to use facilities in the City indicates that:

- The pitch at Leek Hockey Club is at capacity on a Saturday and the club therefore have no option but to use other sites. Any growth in Leek Hockey Club is therefore likely to have a knock on impact on demand in Stoke on Trent
- Similarly, the pitch at Newcastle Under Lyme High School is also at capacity on a Saturday, meaning that North Staffs HC must use other venues and further growth of the club is likely to impact on Stoke on Trent (as are the clubs development and expansion aspirations).

Latent Demand

6.39 The hockey clubs in close proximity to the City are both large expanding clubs. The lack of training sessions or development activities within the City however means that there is likely to be a degree of latent demand for hockey within Stoke on Trent. North Staffordshire Hockey Club identifies this latent demand as an area that they are keen to explore, through improved relationships with both local schools and the wider community.

FPM Modelling

6.40 Analysis of the actual usage of pitches for hockey can be compared with findings of the Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM). This is taken from the Stoke City AGP assessment which is part of the 2013 Staffordshire County assessment of supply and demand for AGP's for hockey. It is therefore a 2013 evidence base. The findings from the fpm assessment are set out below as context for the work undertaken for the PPS in 2014 - 15. It should be noted that although the supply of AGPs as a whole within the City of Stoke and its environs has changed to a degree since the FPM modelling of 2013, the number of pitches within the City that are suited to the needs of competitive hockey, has not changed (see below).

- The total supply of pitches which have a sand filled-surface and therefore most suitable for hockey in Stoke on Trent is 3 pitches. These are: the Co – operative Academy (110m x 60m); Holden lane High School (110m x 60m); and Sir Stanley Mathews Centre (104x 70m). All pitches are floodlit. There are 3 sand-filled floodlit pitches in Newcastle under Lyme. Together they represent 28% of the total sand based pitches within Staffordshire County. There are in addition two water-based pitches in the County, at Cannock Cricket and Hockey Club.
- Supply of pitches per 10,000 population is lowest in Stoke and it is 0.16 pitches, in Newcastle under Lyme, Staffordshire County and for England wide it is 0.24 pitches per 10,000 population
- Total demand in Stoke on Trent is equivalent to 1,325 visits per week in the peak period, equivalent to 1.78 AGPs. In Newcastle Under Lyme, demand is less, at 622 visits per week and this equates to a total demand for 0.8 hockey pitches overall. Demand across Staffordshire County rises to 3,948 visits per week, equivalent to demand for 5.3 pitches across Staffordshire County as a whole. These broad figures indicate that while the amount of pitches provided in Stoke on Trent is below what may be expected, in most areas, there are more than enough sand-based pitches to accommodate the anticipated number of visits per week
- Taking into account the amount of hours that pitches are available for community use, and the demand for these pitches, the FPM reveals a supply and demand balance of - 0.7 of a pitch in Stoke, -0.2 of a pitch in Newcastle under Lyme and +1 pitch across Staffordshire County. While there are more pitches in Newcastle under

Lyme, the reduced hours that facilities are available also means that there is also a small deficit. (Note: Supply and demand balance is a closed assessment and based on sending all the demand in each authority to the pitches in the same authority. It recognises this does not happen in reality but it is presented to show how much of one authority's demand can be met by its own supply)

- Satisfied demand measures how much of the total demand for pitches can be met and is based on the catchment area of pitches and across local authority boundaries. The analysis demonstrates that in Stoke on Trent, 91% of the total demand is satisfied, in Newcastle under Lyme it is 93% and across Staffordshire County it is 90%. The reason for such high levels in Stoke is because the model estimates that Stoke is exporting 52% of its hockey demand and this is being met at pitches in neighbouring authorities.
- On balance, the model therefore reveals that 9% of the total demand in Stoke on Trent is not met. This is equivalent to 0.16 pitches, which is a low level. Unmet demand is split almost evenly at 49% because of lack of pitch capacity and 51% because of demand being located outside the catchment area of a pitch. In Newcastle under Lyme, where the unmet demand (0.6 pitches) some 60% is because of lack of capacity and 40% from location of demand. Reflecting the unmet demand, the model reveals that both areas have existing facilities that are operating at capacity.

6.41 The conclusions of the modelling undertaken by Sport England therefore suggest that:

- the existing stock of AGP's most suitable for hockey are at capacity;
- there is some unmet demand within Stoke City for sand-based pitches for hockey and a high amount of demand currently exported to nearby areas; and,
- there is a need to consider supplementing the existing stock of facilities.

6.42 The FPM therefore indicates there is a significant degree of exported demand for hockey in Stoke on Trent. There are no hockey clubs based primarily within Stoke on Trent City itself and all hockey activity that does take place arises as a result of a lack of capacity in other areas, meaning that teams are displaced into the City where there is spare capacity.

6.43 While in terms of teams therefore there is no evidence of displaced demand in the City, the lack of clubs based primarily within the City means that any residents wishing to play hockey are very likely to have to travel out of the City and therefore export their demand.

Future Picture of Provision - Scenarios

Population Change

6.44 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. By applying TGRs to population projections, it is possible to project the theoretical number of teams that would be generated from population growth and gain an understanding of future demand.

6.45 The lack of existing teams for hockey in Stoke on Trent (with North Staffs HC based in Newcastle under Lyme and Leek HC in Staffordshire Moorlands), and just Staffordshire University within the City, means that population growth alone is unlikely to produce an

increase in demand for hockey.

Changes in Participation Trends

- 6.46 While population growth will have limited impact on participation, England Hockey are seeking to build participation nationally, with a particular focus placed upon retention of existing players as well as an increase in the number of players aged 14+. In addition to the traditional form of the game, new forms of hockey have also recently been introduced, including Rush Hockey. These forms do not require formal facilities and can be played on any facility. The impact of their introduction and the rate of transfer to club hockey is not yet known.
- 6.47 England Hockey has identified Stoke on Trent as a key priority for hockey development and are keen to establish activity in the City. England Hockey also believe that there are strong foundations for the development of hockey, with the PL4 Sport Scheme run through Stoke City FC providing an introduction to hockey for young people.
- 6.48 Added to this, clubs in nearby areas have experienced a recent increase in participation. North Staffordshire Hockey Club in particular are committed to expanding the club and growing a participation base within Stoke City.
- 6.49 Currently within the City, there is spare capacity at the Co - Op Academy both at peak time (Saturday PM), on a Sunday and during the week (3 hours). There is also scope to increase the amount of hockey that takes place at the Excel Academy on a Sunday.
- 6.50 This suggests that an increase in the level of hockey played in the City would not necessarily require a new facility, assuming that an appropriate commercial arrangement can be agreed with the Co Op Academy and that the location is deemed appropriate for a new hockey base. The spare capacity at this site would enable up to 8 additional teams (4 match equivalents per week) at peak time to be based in the City as well as junior teams playing on a Sunday.
- 6.51 It should however be noted that there is more limited spare capacity for training, with just 3 hours available midweek at peak times. This is more limiting for hockey development, with activity initially likely to be focused upon training, but may be resolved through the reduction of football usage of existing sites (or prioritisation of hockey use on sand based pitches). Midweek capacity for hockey is therefore currently more restrictive than weekend. There is a need for these issues to be considered in conjunction with football with respect to access to and use of AGP facilities for training and matchplay. The more appropriate 3G surfaces that exist for football to use, the less reliance the sport might have on sand-based AGPs. Conversely, diminishing use of sand-based AGPs by football could lead to an undermining of the 'business models' of some sand-based AGPs. The consequence of all this might be that hockey activity will be expected to take on a lead role in replacing the lost revenue from football, through using the facilities longer, and/or perhaps paying higher fees for use.
- 6.52 While there is sufficient provision to accommodate additional play, Staffordshire University are currently unable to access facilities at the right time or in the right place (Wednesday PM, near to the campus) and indicate that they expect the number of teams to increase, due to the relocation of the Stafford Campus to Stoke on Trent, importing circa 3000 students.
- 6.53 Evaluation of the current and projected future provision therefore indicates that there is theoretical capacity to increase the amount of hockey played without further pitch provision at weekends, although it will be necessary to determine how demands from Staffordshire University are to be met (both current and in future years) as well as how an

increase in midweek training needs would be accommodated.

Impact of Future Changes to the Pitch Stock

6.54 There are several potential scenarios relating to new facility provision that may impact on the above need for provision in Stoke on Trent however as follows.

- **The provision of further 3G pitches to address needs for football** (if unmet demand is identified during winter sports assessment) may reduce demand from football clubs on the existing sand based pitches, freeing up additional midweek capacity for hockey. This would depend upon the location of any new facilities (nearby to Co Op Academy / Excel Academy would have greatest impact) as well as the attractiveness of these facilities to those currently using the sand based pitches. This would still not address the issues experienced by Staffordshire University (day time access to facilities);
- **The creation of a second pitch at the Newcastle under Lyme (NUL) High School site** to support North Staffs HC is identified as a key priority in the Newcastle under Lyme Playing Pitch Strategy and by England Hockey. At the time of preparing this report, the status of this project and its outcome had yet to be confirmed. If the project goes ahead, teams from the club currently playing within the City from North Staffs HC will be relocated - this might see a reduction in demand by circa 3 hours per week at peak time, further creating capacity at weekends. The club indicate that they would however be keen to retain a presence in Stoke on Trent, although it is unclear of the extent of this, as this would depend upon the success of growth aspirations and development work undertaken in the interim period. While quantities are unknown, it is clear therefore that the creation of a second pitch at NUL would see a reduction in demand in Stoke on Trent. This would still not address the issues experienced by Staffordshire University, which requires access to pitches for matchplay midweek- unless guaranteed access to the Club was assured for the requisite period and times, the University Club's needs would still not be met;
- **Leek HC have had aspirations for a long term for the development of a new pitch** If a new pitch was created in Leek, this would have greater implications for capacity in Stoke on Trent, with 2 further match equivalents available on a Saturday afternoon as the club would no longer use the Excel Academy as overspill. This is however unlikely to happen in the short term
- **The provision of a new pitch at Haywood Academy would add further capacity** to the infrastructure for hockey in Stoke. The existing pitches are however already underused for hockey both midweek at and weekends (with capacity being taken by football clubs). While a new pitch would be beneficial in terms of providing further midweek capacity for training the amount of unmet hockey demand (Staffordshire University) may be insufficient to make a facility sustainable alone, and the site is also not conveniently located for the university. The provision of further sand based facilities may also not be the most appropriate solution, as the use of the sand based facilities for football midweek remains the key issue (and may therefore be better addressed by providing further opportunities for football. The new pitch at Haywood Academy would however improve the infrastructure for hockey if it was available for the university to access on a Wednesday afternoon, although questions around sustainability, due to the small level of demand, would remain.

Summary and Key Issues – AGPs for Hockey

6.55 Table 6.5 summarises the adequacy of provision and the potential implications of each scenario considered on demand for new facilities.

Table 6.5: Key supply issues for hockey

Scenario	Adequacy of Provision / Impact on Adequacy of Provision
Current Position	<p>There is little existing hockey taking place in the City, with most activity as a result of displacement from other local authority areas rather than successful hockey development programmes in the City. There is therefore latent demand within the City and an opportunity to increase participation. Low levels of existing participation mean that demand is unlikely to change without proactive intervention.</p> <p>Despite a lack of activity, there is limited spare capacity on sand based pitches for midweek training (3 hours at Co Op Academy). This is primarily due to the use of these facilities for football rather than hockey. There is however a further pitch that at Ormiston Horizon Academy that is too narrow for competitive play, but has capacity to accommodate training. Access to facilities for training will be the key barrier to the growth of hockey in the City. Hockey clubs are currently struggling to access more training hours with both Staffordshire University and North Staffs HC currently in discussion with venues</p> <p>There is significant spare capacity to accommodate further play at a weekend without additional provision, as the Co - Op Academy is both available and has a surface suitable for hockey.</p> <p>There is a lack of capacity for Staffordshire University Hockey teams, due to the poor availability of facilities during school hours.</p> <p>While the pitch at the Coop Academy is new, the facility at Excel Academy is beginning to show signs of wear and tear and may soon require a replacement surface.</p>
Impact of Population Growth	<p>Low levels of hockey participation mean that population growth alone will have no impact - demand will only increase with proactive intervention</p>
Impact of Hockey Development / Club growth	<p>Existing infrastructure is likely to remain sufficient at peak time (scope to increase demand by 8 adult teams) as well as for junior competitive activity. The facilities for training are more however restrictive unless hockey can be prioritised at sand based facilities and / or additional capacity is added</p>
Additional pitches created outside City	<p>Additional pitches created outside of the City (Leek / NUL) are likely to free up capacity on a Saturday afternoon (when there is already spare capacity available) but will have less impact midweek, where the greatest issues arise.</p>
Creation of a new pitch within the City	<p>Would add to the existing infrastructure and provide additional capacity for midweek training, although existing unmet demand is very limited. Significant growth in hockey would be needed to sustain further facilities. No demand for additional hockey usage at weekends.</p>

Summary

- Ensure the retention of hockey matchplay appropriate sand-based surfaces at Excel Academy (important existing facility for hockey) and Co-op Academy (site offering potential to grow the game)
- Given the closure of the school campus at the former St. Peter's School in Penkhull, and its inappropriateness for competitive hockey the future of this venue is not

critical to hockey

- Work with North Staffs HC to create and implement a club development plan seeking to establish club activity on Stoke on Trent, as well as to create links with local schools
- Work with Co Op Academy to develop hockey usage at this site - there is a small amount of capacity midweek (and potential for ongoing activity to be scheduled into weekly programming) and no existing use at weekends
- Support Staffordshire University and work with them to identify a solution providing them with access to a site on a Wednesday afternoon. There is limited evidence to support a new facility and so initial discussions should focus on access to existing facilities, such as the Co-op Academy.

7: Tennis

Introduction

7.1 A summary of key issues for tennis is contained at the end of this section.

7.2 This section evaluates the adequacy of facilities for tennis and:

- considers the supply of courts and demand for these courts;
- considers the adequacy of courts to meet demand; and,
- summarises key issues to address.

Supply

Courts

7.3 34 tennis courts or former tennis courts were identified in Stoke-on-Trent. 22 of these can be considered active. This excludes provision on education sites (considered shortly).

7.4 All of the tennis courts identified across the City are summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Tennis Courts (non-education) across Stoke-on-Trent

Site Name	Status	Management	Total Courts	Floodlit	Comments
Beaufort Road	Derelict	Council	4	No	Bowlers want to use derelict courts for parking
Anchor Road Park	No longer used for tennis	Council	1	No	Tennis court is now Basketball/MUGA (multi use games area)
Bucknall Park	Active	Council	3	No	Require re-colourising.
Burslem Park	Active	Council	2	No	Require re-colourising
Fenton Park	Active	Council	2	No	Require colourising, localised fencing repairs and access improvements/tarmac repairs
Florence Tennis and Bowls Club	Active	Club	4	Yes	
Hanley Park	Active	Council	4	Yes	Require re-colourising.
Hanford Park	No longer used for tennis	Council	1	No	Tennis court markings on MUGA. No equipment.
Mount Pleasant Park	Active	Council	2	No	Surface reasonable but ending life-span.
New Stoke Park	Derelict	Council	3	No	Weeds in the tarmac. No equipment
Northwood Park	Derelict currently	Council	1	No	Being brought back into use in 2017
Queens Park/Longton Park	Active	Council	3	No	Courts all require re-colourising

Victoria Park Tunstall	Active	Council	4	No	2 courts next to MUGA have no equipment. Need re-colourising and new nets.
Former St. Peters School, Penkhull	No longer used for tennis	N.A.	3	No	See comments under paragraph 7.5

7.5 Table 7.1 indicates that Florence Tennis and Bowls Club is the only non-council managed site: this, with Hanley Park, are the only sites in the City with floodlit facilities.

7.6 In addition to the courts listed in Table 7.1, several secondary school sites contain tennis courts. These are primarily multifunctional, doubling as netball courts / playground areas during the winter months. There is no known community use of these tennis courts currently, but some potential for them to be opened for public use if demand was identified. There are courts at the following operational school sites:

- Thistley Hough High School
- Trentham High School
- Ormiston Stanley Matthews Academy
- St Peters Academy

N.B. St Peter's Academy is a new school, opened in 2013. It is the amalgam between St Peter's High School, Penkhull and others. The former High School was the home venue of Penkhull Tennis Club which has since folded. The new Academy intends to have post sockets in place for Spring 2016 to provide 3 tennis courts. The possibility remains of a club reforming. The existing courts at the former campus in Penkhull are still in a potentially useable state, but are now no longer actively managed, following closure of the school and disbanding of the club. In addition, since the last strategy, the publicly available floodlit tennis courts at Berryhill High School have closed and been demolished

Participation

7.7 Sport England Active People and Market Segmentation analysis indicates that nationally, the proportion of residents playing tennis is declining. More locally, the key findings from Active People and Market Segmentation analysis are that:

- between 1.1% and 2.6% of adult residents play tennis in the City.;
- participation in tennis across the market segments is more varied than for many other sports as all of the 19 Sport England Market Segments have a tennis participation profile. This indicates that tennis is played across both sexes and the adult age spectrum, that the age of participants covers a wider range than for most other sports considered; and,
- an estimated 3,238 people across the City play tennis, and participation is highest by Jamie (557 participants), Philip (391), Ben (263) and Tim (241). The most dominant female segments are: Leanne (189 participants), Jackie (169), Elaine (167) and Paula (161). While the dominant participants therefore fall into the same groups as others playing tennis, it is clear that tennis provides an effective way of engaging residents who do not participate in other sports considered within this report. The more widespread participation profile also suggests that the impact of the ageing population will be less noticeable on participation in tennis than many other sports.

Existing Participation – Clubs

7.8 There is just the one tennis club currently operating within the Stoke-on-Trent City boundary; Florence Tennis and Bowls Club. The previously mentioned Penkhull Tennis Club folded in recent years when its home venue closed. It was mentioned in consultation that historically, there were clubs based at some of the municipal parks in the City.

7.9 Notable tennis clubs outside the City boundary include: the previously mentioned Draycott Tennis Club (Staffordshire Moorlands), Westlands Lawn Tennis Club (Newcastle-under-Lyme), Basford Lawn Tennis Club (Newcastle-under-Lyme) and Endon Tennis Club (Staffordshire Moorlands). The extent to which these clubs may cater for Stoke-on-Trent residents is unknown. Not included in the table below is the recently disbanded club that used to be based at the (now closed) St. Peter's School at Penkhull. It is understood that the Club disbanded as a result of the school closing.

Table 7.2: Tennis Club Activity in Stoke-on-Trent

Club Name	Activities Available	Membership Numbers	Participation Trends
Florence Tennis and Bowls Club	Competitive and casual play, coaching, mini tennis and cardio tennis. Club offers a full coaching programme and also plays in the National Veterans League	145	Club is vibrant and has increased its membership within both adult and junior sections over the past 3 years. Club has actively sought to increase membership by offering L.T.A. Open Weekends, word of mouth, special membership offers, contacting local schools and Universities plus leafleting sessions. Club has successfully worked with Sportivate and Sport Unlimited initiatives. Club has recently invested in 4 new floodlit courts, new changing facilities with showers and storage areas plus new toilets and an accessible toilet.

Quality of Provision:

7.10 The quality of existing playing and ancillary facilities was investigated by site inspections and also informed by consultations. It reveals a significant difference in the quality of the club based facility at Florence Tennis and Bowls Club with the public facilities (perhaps highlighting a reason for the increasing membership at the club site). Table 7.3 summarises the key issues identified through consultation and site visits.

Table 7.3: Quality of Tennis Courts in Stoke-on-Trent

Site	Number of Courts	Surface	Site Visit Quality Score	Comments
Bucknall Park	3	Tarmac	50%	The courts are tidy but clearly past their best.
Burslem Park	2	Tarmac	53%	2 courts in relatively poor state. The courts are tidy but clearly past their best.
Fenton Park	2	Tarmac	62%	Tennis courts in obscure area of park, isolated. Reasonable condition. Poor access. Courts do not appear to sustain much use. Court surface fragmenting.

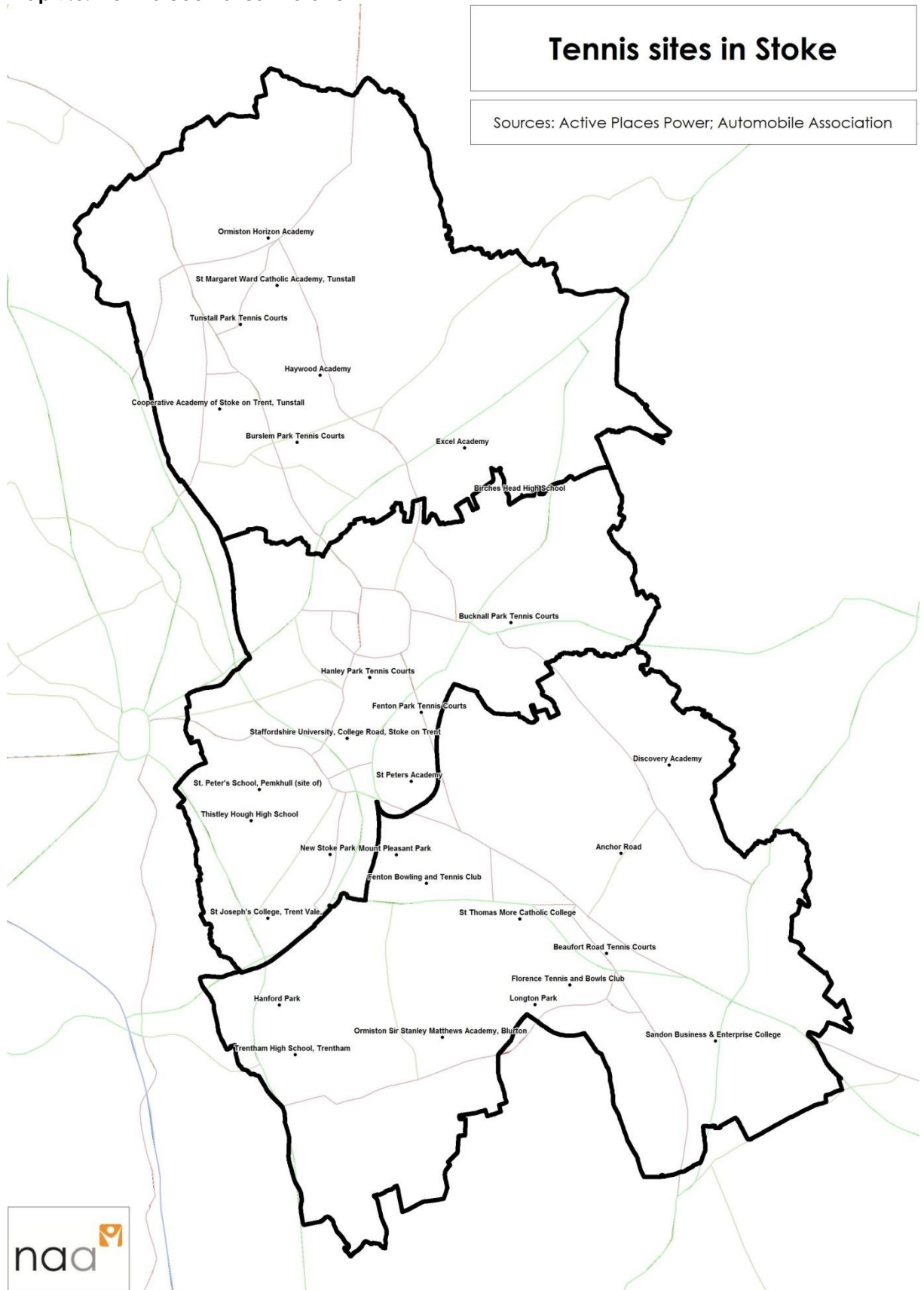
Site	Number of Courts	Surface	Site Visit Quality Score	Comments
Florence Tennis and Bowls Club	4	Savanna carpet	89%	Floodlit courts in good condition. Club consider all aspects of courts and ancillary facilities to be good other than clubhouse and car parking which is acceptable.
Hanley Park	4	Acrylic painted tarmac	71%	Courts are in need of re-colourisation, but are of a reasonable standard. Site will benefit from large Heritage Lottery funded works programme.
Mount Pleasant Park/Smithpool Park	2	Tarmac	56%	Tired facility in public park. Borders housing. Surface starting to fragment.
Queens Park/Longton Park	3	Acrylic painted tarmac	65%	Access to courts up steps within large park – courts and park in reasonable condition overall. Wheelchair access exists.
Victoria Park Tunstall	4	Acrylic painted tarmac	68%	2x2 courts in separate areas of park. Courts next to MUGA have no posts nor equipment – hence no tennis. Courts are of average quality. There is debris on all courts.

Other Club Issues

- 7.11 Florence Tennis and Bowls Club indicated that they have capacity to accommodate additional players within their existing facility stock and they have actively sought to increase their membership through marketing and promotion and offering LTA Open Weekends.
- 7.12 The designation of Stoke-on-Trent as European City of Sport in 2016 (EcoS 16) offers exciting potential for the Club to engage with the LTA in offering high profile initiatives to increase participation. In addition, it is understood that the Lawn Tennis Association has recently approached Both the City and Newcastle under Lyme Councils, with a view to initiating a parks tennis scheme.
- 7.13 The club considers the poor quality of public courts to be detrimental in developing the sport in the City. They also quote the lack of indoor provision as being restrictive to the development of tennis.
- 7.14 As Florence Tennis and Bowls Club is the only club within the City, all those wishing to play competitive tennis must travel to the club, or outside of the City. It might therefore be considered surprising that the club draws approximately 60% of its members from a radius of more than 3 miles: however, this might be a reflection of the flourishing nature of the club, making it attractive to join.
- 7.15 Map 7.1 illustrates the location of all sites where tennis courts were located. It includes all known tennis facilities (other than in private gardens), enabling consideration of the

opportunities that could be provided if facilities that are not currently used by the public were made available.

Map 7.3: Tennis court sites in Stoke



National Governing Body Perspective – Lawn Tennis Association (see also the section of ‘Changing Ethos’ (below))

7.16 The current formal LTA National facility strategy is set out in Places to Play. The facility element of the LTA places to play strategy focuses on:

- **improving facilities at high quality places to play:** Enhancing facility provision at performance venues and Tennis Clubmark accredited places to play;
- **tennis in community settings:** Beacon sites - supporting LAs to bring back into use existing community tennis facilities and working with them to develop affordable quality tennis programmes; and
- **sustainability:** Advising places to play to ring fence funding to ensure existing facilities can be upgraded or replaced when they get to the end of their life.

7.17 The strategy aims to increase opportunities for people to participate in tennis on a regular basis at a venue close to their home that provides high quality opportunities on safe and well maintained facilities. It sets out:

- the overall vision for places to play;
- how LTA will grow regular participation by supporting places to play to develop and deliver the right programmes;
- how LTA will make capital investment decisions to ensure investment in the right facilities to grow the sport; and,
- how LTA will support performance programmes in the right locations.

7.18 It seeks to ensure that as far as practicably possible, the British population has access to and is aware of the location of high quality tennis opportunities in their local area. In brief:

- access for everyone to well-maintained high quality tennis facilities which are either free or pay as you play;
- a Clubmark accredited place to play within a 10-minute drive of their home;
- indoor courts within a 20-minute drive time of their home;
- a mini tennis (10 and under) performance programme within a 20-minute drive of their home (Performance Centres);
- a performance programme for 11 - 15 year olds within a 45-minute drive time of their home (High Performance Centre); and
- a limited number of internationally orientated programmes strategically spread for players 16+ with an international programme (International High Performance Centres).

7.19 LTA research reveals that many successful places to play are unable to grow or maximise their potential and their tennis programme due to site restrictions e.g.

- courts are at capacity and there is no space to expand further; and,

- planning restrictions preventing the installation of floodlights or indoor courts.

7.20 The LTA want to work with venues who want to grow and develop, by supporting them to explore the opportunity of merging with other venues (tennis clubs or others sports clubs) in their locality or relocating to a new site.

Changing Ethos

7.21 Following recent reviews of the tennis landscape and local and national participation levels, the LTA is however changing emphasis and looking to promote tennis through more casual play in parks and public venues, as well as through the more traditional club environment and the opportunities set out in Places to Play. The facility implications of this will be set out in a new facility strategy which is currently being prepared.

7.22 Reflecting this change in emphasis, recent research undertaken by the LTA indicates that 65% of those that play tennis for 7 months of the year (summer) play at community venues rather than club venues, while for those playing all year round, the split is 50% club and 50% community. This highlights the role of community facilities and the value that they can bring in terms of increasing participation and provides an understanding of the rationale behind the changing focus in tennis development. The LTA is also keen to develop disability tennis e.g. for wheelchair users and the visually impaired.

7.23 The new strategy will therefore consider innovative ways of designing and managing public tennis facilities to ensure that they deliver in terms of increasing participation and providing accessible local tennis opportunities, but remain sustainable. Such innovations may include the use of key fobs and different ways of programming these facilities. These public venues will seek to support and complement an effective and sustainable network of tennis clubs.

Adequacy of Current Provision and Meeting Future Demand

7.24 As is also the case with bowls (dealt with in a separate section), the assessment of tennis facilities does not lend itself to the estimation of demand used in other sports or the use of Team Generation Rates. It is however possible to evaluate the adequacy of provision drawing upon the tools available and the information outlined in this section as well as the targets set by the LTA.

7.25 Active People surveys reveal that across Stoke-on-Trent, 3,238 people currently participate in tennis and a further 4,077 people would like to play. This latent demand is spread across different population groups and both genders (unlike most other sports). The fact that the number of people that would like to play is higher than the number of current participants suggest that there is some latent demand. Active People therefore suggests that there is an overall potential tennis playing population of 7,315 in the City.

7.26 The LTA have not set formal quantity standards to evaluate the amount of provision, instead focusing upon an evaluation of accessibility as well as site by site issues. They have however derived indicative standards relating to the capacity of a court (of one court per 45 participants and 1 court per 60 participants if floodlit) to evaluate the number of courts required. It is emphasised however that these parameters are considered to provide an indication only, and other elements should be taken into account including tennis development, club structure and sustainability when considering the requirement for additional courts.

7.27 These broad figures can however be applied (drawing firstly upon data collated as part of the Active People Programme) to the estimated tennis playing population (taking into

account latent demand) to give an indication of the adequacy of provision. It can be calculated that;

- based upon an assumed standard of 1 court per 45 participants (not floodlit) and 1 court per 60 players (floodlit), the existing stock of active outdoor courts that are available for community use will serve 1,050 players. According to Active People, there are 3,238 existing players meaning that the stock of facilities is well below the levels required to meet demand
- if latent demand (according to Active People) was to be realized, provision would fall further below the levels required. Given that the existing facilities serve 1,050 players, a total playing population of 7,315 people would theoretically require in the region of 50 additional courts (depending upon the provision of floodlights).

7.28 This is a significant amount of additional provision. It should also be noted that there are several sites containing former tennis courts, all of which have fallen into disrepair: this may in part be due to a perceived lack of usage, but also to recent changes in the urban fabric leaving some courts without a significant user catchment. However, the lack of usage might also have been due in part to the lack of proactive management of such facilities. A local authority cannot be expected to manage and promote the use of facilities in the same way as an active in situ club might be able to achieve.

7.29 Reinforcing this further, actual playing membership of the existing, vibrant club accounts for a much lower number of players than that suggested by Active People. With the knowledge that a lot of public provision (where usage is not monitored) is now derelict and unplayable, this suggests that the Active People Survey could well be over estimating the number of regular tennis players that exist in the City, or that residents are travelling outside the City to play at other facilities. Given that it is known through consultation with the LTA that many nearby clubs are also struggling for membership, it would therefore appear that actual levels of play are lower than those estimated through Active People Survey.

7.30 Table 7.4 therefore uses known club membership numbers to evaluate existing participation and the adequacy of provision. It uses the LTA parameters as a basis for this evaluation.

Table 7.4: Club capacity

Site Name	Court Capacity - Floodlit	Court Capacity - Non Floodlit	Membership	Comment
Florence Tennis and Bowls Club	240	0	145	Space to accommodate new members

7.31 Most notably however, membership of the club is only 4% of the amount of people recorded by the Active People Survey as playing tennis in Stoke-on-Trent.

7.32 It is clear however that while there are enough courts for existing players, participation is lower than may be expected and there is significant potential to increase these levels. As outlined earlier in this section, the LTA believe community play to equate to broadly 50% of participation that occurs all year round and 65% of that that takes place in the

summer. The low levels of perceived capacity on public courts in Stoke-on-Trent mean there appears to be more than adequate supply for the current level of demand.

- 7.33 Population growth alone is likely to see a slight increase in demand for tennis courts. Based upon current Active People participation levels (1.28% of total population) this would result in an additional 318 players in total by 2033, which could be accommodated within the existing club and public infrastructure.
- 7.34 Several facilities located at school sites that are not currently available to the public have already been identified, as well as courts that have fallen into disrepair. Generally, tennis courts on school sites have not proved conducive to community use because:
- frequently multi sport marking, not always clear for tennis.
 - restricted access to school (and now academy) sites and availability of convenient time slots.
- 7.35 It becomes apparent that the sustained support and future development of tennis in Stoke-on-Trent is primarily dependent upon sports development initiatives to increase participation and values-based social marketing: Allied to this should be an improvement in the quality of facilities and maintenance at key locations in public parks, which will often be the 'entry point' into tennis for young people.

Summary

- 7.36 Whilst the number of local clubs and the use of courts has declined, there is evidence to suggest that a latent demand exists to play tennis.
- 7.37 The LTA believe that a good way of encouraging new participants is (initially) through 'park tennis', which uses municipal courts that are easy to access.
- 7.38 The key issues and recommendations to be addressed in the Strategy and Action Plan:
- Encouraging participation through park tennis using municipal courts;
 - Initiating/developing club use of public courts and seeking opportunities for asset transfers; and,
 - Finding viable alternative functions for some municipal courts which, because of their scale, quality, or location are unsuited for the above.

Generally, before considering new court provision, renovating existing courts and floodlighting them where appropriate should be encouraged- especially if this will help to increase evening use throughout the year.

Introduction

8.1 A summary of key issues for bowls is contained at the end of this section.

8.2 This section evaluates the adequacy of facilities for bowls and considers:

- The supply of greens and demand for these greens
- The adequacy of greens
- Summary and Issues to address

Supply

8.3 The outdoor bowling greens in Stoke-on-Trent as per the PPS audit conducted in 2015/16 are set out in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Bowling greens in Stoke-on-Trent

Site	Ownership / Management	Number of Greens
Anchor Road	Council	1
Baddeley Green	Club	1
Beaufort Road Bowling Green	Council	1
Birches Head Gardeners Bowls Club (CLOSED)	Club	See below comment
Birches Head Hotel	Club	1
Bucknall ESM Club	Club	1
Bucknall Park	Council	2
Bucknall Private	Club	1
Burslem Cricket & Bowls Club	Club	1
Burslem Park	Council	1 (reduced from 2 in 2016)
Etruria Park	Club- self-management	1
Fegg Hayes Sports and Social Club*	Club	1
Fenton Park	Council	2
Fenton Private	Club	1
Florence Colliery Sports and Social Club	Club	1
Florence Tennis and Bowls Club	Club	2
Goldenhill WMC	Club	1
Hanley Park	Council	1
Hem Heath (Longton CC)	Club	1
Queens Park*	Council	3
Mace Street Park (Trent Vale)	Council	1
Meir 45 Club (CLOSED)	Club	1
Middleport Park	Council	2
Milton Bowling Green	Club	1
Mount Pleasant	Council	1
New Stoke Park	Council	1
Northwood Park	Council	1
Norton Central Bowls Club	Club	1
Oakhill Bowls Club	Club	1
Pittshill Victory WMC	Club	1
Victoria Park (Tunstall Park)	Council	2

8.4 Site visits and clubs' surveys revealed recent changes to the inventory, namely:

- Birches Head Gardeners Bowls Club - Club and bowling green was sold in July 2015, and is no longer a recognisable bowling green.
- Fegg Hayes Sports and Social Club - Club boarded up and now derelict - green to rear no longer in use.
- Queens Park – Whilst the greens are still being cut, no teams identified as playing here. Some limited casual use.
- Meir 45 Club – Clubhouse appears abandoned and derelict. Green disused. Bowls club now plays outside City in Newcastle.

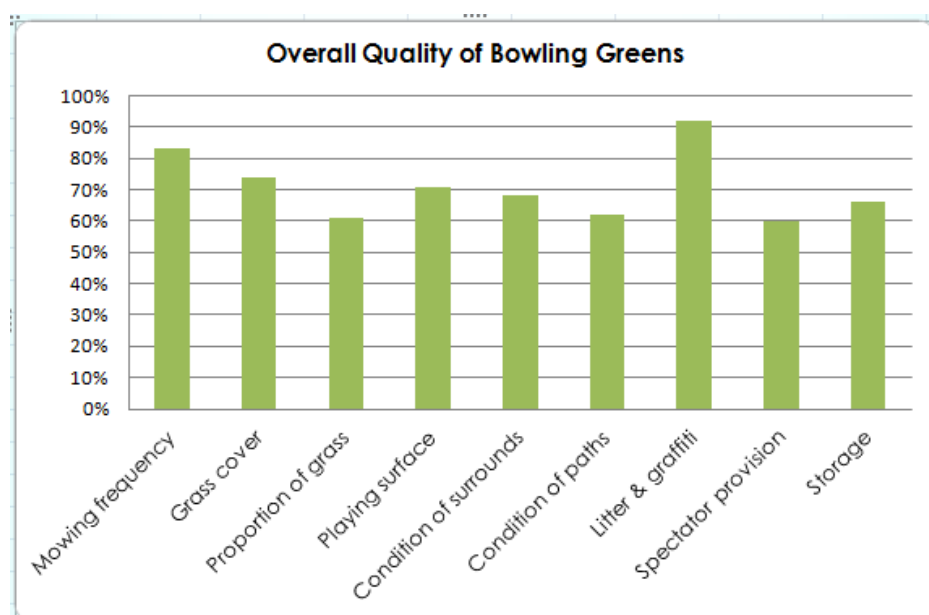
8.5 The current stock of bowling greens in the City therefore is 33 greens on 27 sites. The study has not been informed by any information of relevance relating to provision of greens at pub venues which, in some parts of the country, is a significant form of provision as evident in Table 8.1, the split between private ownership (listed as 'Club') and greens owned and managed by Stoke-on-Trent City Council is roughly 50:50. When compared with other studies, this represents a disproportionately high reliance on the public sector for bowls provision.

Green Quality

8.6 Figure 8.1 summarises the quality scores achieved through site visits. It indicates that the quality of greens is relatively consistent across most criteria, with proportion of grass, condition of paths and spectator provision being the key areas for improvement.

8.7 Many bowling greens in the City have a pavilion, although these are of varying quality and less than 20% of greens are floodlit, offering opportunities for evening bowling in addition to activity during daylight hours.

Figure 8.1: Quality Scores for Bowling Greens



8.8 As can be seen from Chart 8.1, most greens in Stoke-on-Trent were described as being in good condition. Certain greens had their own particular issues and these are dealt with later on in this chapter, under site specific issues.

8.9 For those sites that were rated more poorly, the key areas of concern were;

- Overgrown surrounds
- Poor paths
- More limited pavilions
- Vandalism and graffiti.

Demand

8.10 The Sport England Active People Survey and Market Segmentation analysis enables evaluation of the proportion of the population that currently play bowls and the amount of people that would like to play, and also provides an indication as to how this varies across the authority.

8.11 The key messages arising are:

- the profile of participants in bowls in Stoke-on-Trent is much focused towards older segments of the population than all other sports considered. The key participants are Elsie and Arnold and Frank and to a lower extent, Roger & Joy and Terry; and,
- participation is consistent across the majority of the City, however it is clear that there are areas where fewer residents play bowls currently. These areas (the central western fringe and parts of the south east) correspond directly with the distribution of the population set out previously, which revealed that while Elsie and Arnold are the dominant population group in most areas, in these two parts of the City, the profile of the population is dominated by Kev, who does not have a strong propensity to play bowls.

8.12 Unlike current participation, evaluation of the proportion of people wanting to participate in bowls across the City suggests that, spatially, potential demand is consistent.

8.13 Active People and Market Segmentation analysis reveals however that latent demand for bowls is lower than most other sports - 81% of the total potential bowls participants (those that currently play and those that express an interest in playing but do not currently do so) already play. The small amount of latent demand is made up of residents in the same market segments that already do play (211 in total).

Current Participation

- 8.14 There are bowling clubs located at most active greens in the City, with the only identified exceptions being Queens Park and Burslem Park greens. There are a multitude of leagues covering the area and most clubs have teams in more than one league.
- 8.15 Most of the clubs in the City play in the Stoke-on-Trent and District Bowling League. Other prominent leagues in the area are: The Oakhill Jubilee League, British Parks CGBA Leagues and The Industries League. League matches take place every day of the week other than Sundays.
- 8.16 Neighbouring areas also host leagues in which Stoke teams play, notably the Congleton League and the Newcastle League.

User Views and Feedback

- 8.17 Membership trends of bowling clubs vary considerably, but overall indicates a decline. From the questionnaire survey, to which 17 out of 28 clubs responded, 8 said their membership has decreased over the past 3 years, 4 said it had increased and 5 remained static.
- Clubs that have increased in membership indicate that they have proactively sought new members through recruitment drives and offering better coaching. Clubs that are increasing in membership are primarily the larger clubs that have a wider membership base and offer a variety of sporting and social activities. It is also evident that there is a degree of inter club movement, with clubs indicating that they lose members to clubs who play at a higher standard and to clubs with better facilities. Clubs believe that the quality of facilities is key to attracting new players.
 - Reasons given for decreasing membership include: people getting older, wishing to play at a higher standard, little or no response to advertising, competition from other clubs and site specific issues such as lack of parking and toilet facilities. There are few junior members and most clubs struggle to attract junior players.
- 8.18 All clubs responding to consultation indicated that they have capacity for new members.

Site Specific Issues

- 8.19 Building upon both the consultation and the site visits undertaken, Table 8.2 summarises the site specific issues identified for bowling greens within Stoke-on-Trent. Several clubs highlighted the importance of quality of facilities and many indicated that the quality of greens is one of the key reasons for losing or gaining players.

Table 8.2: Site Specific Quality Issues

Facility	Quality Comments
Anchor Road	Grass coverage quite sparse and too long in places.
Baddeley Green	The pavilion is tidy but relatively old. Well maintained. The gutters are UPVC boarded and geotextile lined, the boards need attention.
Beaufort Road Bowling Green	Area run down but the club is vibrant, even if shabby and tired. The boards need attention. Pleasant green in run down area.
Birches Head Hotel	The green has recently been scarified to improve the quality. The green is in good condition but the scarification has left bare

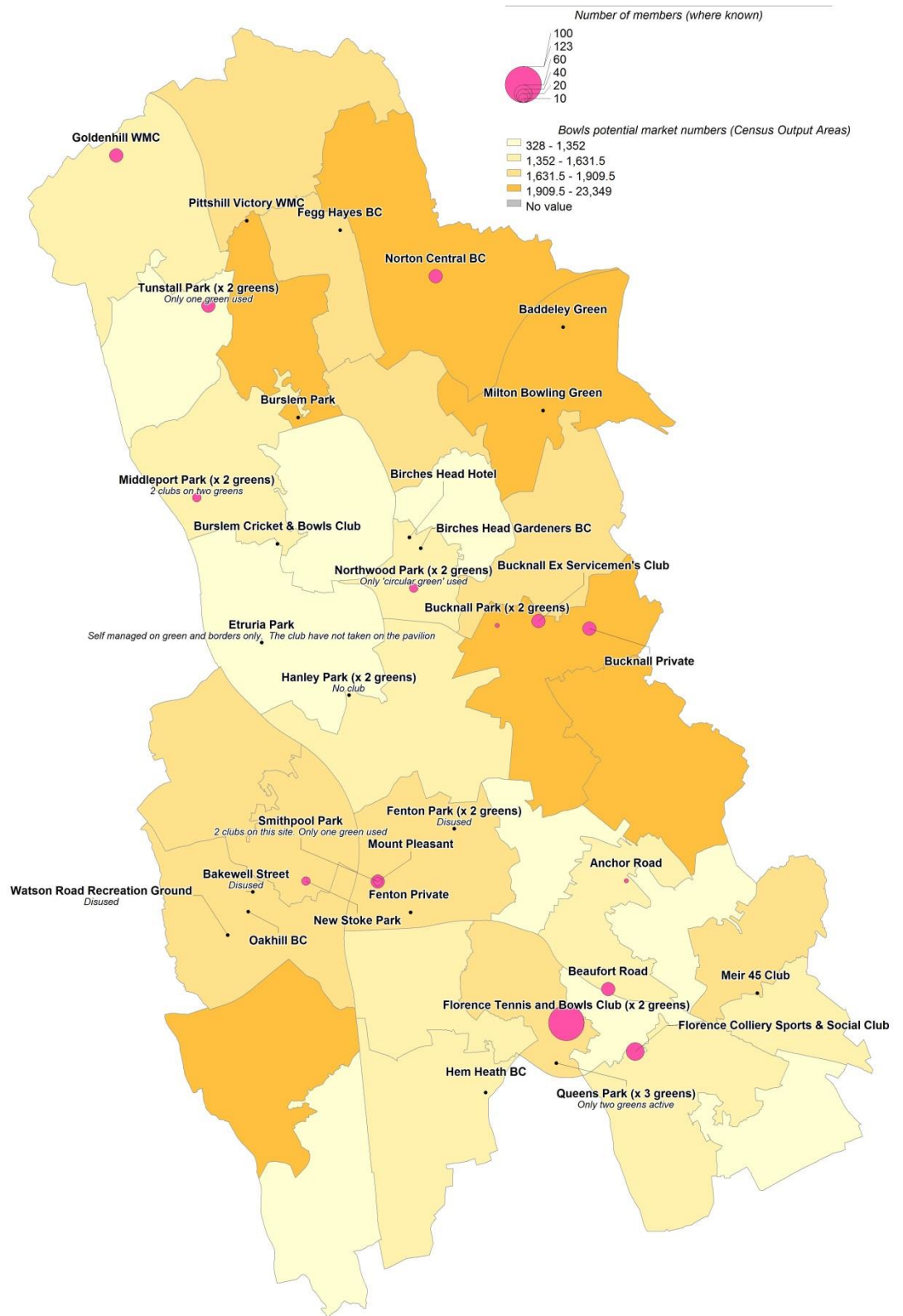
Facility	Quality Comments
	patches,
Bucknall Park (Green 1: enclosed by hoop top fencing)	Graffiti in chalk on the side of the building. The green needs some maintenance to improve its quality fertiliser and weedkill. Green is in poor condition with lack of maintenance and little or no money spent to improve over the last 5 years. Club unable to attract new members due to poor condition of the green.
Bucknall Park (Green 2 no fencing)	Green has suffered some damage - circular marks and evidence of scuffing, the gutters are earth with no edges, tidy but need attention to the sward fertiliser and weed kill. Tired park.
Burslem Park	The green has a lot of vegetation debris on it - not sure if in use. The pavilion is now a cafe.
Etruria Park	Difficult stepped access. The surrounds are well kept flower beds looked after by the bowlers the green is now maintained by the resident club.
Fenton Private	Bowling greens in good condition. Excellent club in residential area, obviously well supported.
Fenton Park	The pavilion and surrounding planting in good condition. Gutters are overgrown. Derelict air to the place and the pavilion boarded up. Two greens, both appear abandoned but could be brought back into play by tidying up and some maintenance. There is alternative provision nearby at Smithpool, Mount Pleasant and at Fenton private bowling club. Improvements to these facilities could help to cater for offset demand from Fenton Park. So the Fenton Park greens could be decommissioned.
Florence Colliery Sports and Social club	Well supported club - lots of new features. Surrounds well cared for. Also caters for juniors and vulnerable people in the community.
Florence Tennis and Bowls Club (Green 1)	Busy club. Large pavilion and parking on tarmac the gutters are astro and in good condition. Green considered to be overused. In process of having an irrigation system fitted. Floodlights need replacing.
Florence Tennis and Bowls Club (Green 2)	This green not a conventional shape. Gutters are sand but slightly messy and some of the boards need attention
Goldenhill WMC	Clubhouse acts as the pavilion. The green is well maintained by the club but needs fertiliser and weedkill to improve the sward. The site is adequate but shabby.
Hanley Park	The pavilion next to the greens is flat roofed and only used for public toilets at present. The park is sad at the moment but the grounds maintenance is good. Lottery funded work on the park will start shortly.
Hem Heath (Longton CC)	Bowling green in good tidy condition. Well supported club use

Facility	Quality Comments
	the large facilities provided by the cricket club when open.
Mace Street Park (Trent Vale)	Bowling green is in terrible condition no grass - may be weather/soil related. Needs remedial works to ensure that the green is retained. Boards need repair.
Middleport Park 1 and 2	There are two greens neither are in excellent condition and there is evidence of animal damage and litter in the gutters. The grass to the edges has been long and the long cuttings are in the gutters. The greens need work to improve them; fertiliser and weedkill and additional seeding to alleviate the bare patches.
Milton Bowling Green	The green is relatively well cared for and the pavilion is the clubhouse. The area is tidy but cluttered. Weldmesh fence surrounding the green is in excellent condition and is obviously quite new. Tranquil feel to the site. No toilet facilities, so fewer cup matches and no county matches due to having to hire a portaloos.
Mount Pleasant	The pavilion and surrounding planting in good condition. Boards need attention. Gets waterlogged very easily due to bad drainage.
New stoke Park	Green in tidy condition. Adjacent tennis courts have weeds.
Northwood Park	Nice facility in public park. Steep steps to the pavilion. No disabled toilets. Access to green is OK.
Norton Central Bowls Club	The green is relatively well cared for but there are some bare patches. Adequate but shabby. The boards need some attention. The green needs some improvement weedkill and fertiliser would help. Club would like floodlights.
Oakhill Bowls Club	Green is only cut not verticut or any further operations undertaken. The club help to maintain it and the surrounds are very good.
Pittshill Victory WMC	Small, tidy but aged pavilion in good condition. The green needs fertiliser and some weedkill to improve the sward. The site is adequate but shabby.
Queens Park (Greens 1,2 and 3)	Greens kept cut - derelict air about the pavilion, gutters sand no boards. Appear not to be in use.
Victoria Park (Tunstall Park) (Greens 1 and 2)	One green undulates. Shuttered pavilion. Greens would benefit from some intensive maintenance - fertiliser and weed killer would improve the greens. Overall green quality considered poor.

Accessibility

- 8.20 The age profile of participants in bowls means that access may be more important than for other sports and many may expect local facilities and greens that are accessible by public transport. Accessibility to greens is vital for some types of physical disabilities.
- 8.21 Consultation with bowls clubs showed that the smaller the clubs' membership, the more local their catchment area is. For larger clubs, with membership greater than 50, 30% of bowlers travel more than 3 miles to their home green.
- 8.22 **Map 8.1** shows the location of bowling greens within the City relative to the areas of population most likely to play bowls according to the Sport England Market Segmentation data.
- 8.23 Also shown on the map are membership numbers for resident clubs (where this information has been made available through the club survey). An interesting point to note about this map is that the location of facilities and clubs does not have an especially strong and positive correlation with where the 'potential market' is largest. It might be speculated that if some of the facilities (and investment) were to be reassigned to such areas, it could be to the benefit of participation and green usage.

Map 8.1: Bowling Greens and Membership in Stoke-on-Trent



Meeting Current and Future Demand

- 8.24 There are no supply and demand models for bowling greens and it is therefore not appropriate to assess demand by applying the methodology used by other sports or by the use of team generation rates (TGRs).
- 8.25 Adoption of an historic Sports Council standard of 10 greens per 60,000 people (Planning for Sport, 1970) would give a requirement of circa 42 greens across Stoke-on-Trent with a population of 254,000. Existing provision is below this standard suggesting that there is a requirement for further facilities. Consultation has shown however, that there is no evidence based upon current participation that there is demand for additional facilities indeed levels of usage suggest that some existing greens may not be sustainable. This historical standard does not take into account the level of play on existing greens, or the potential to increase participation in coming years.
- 8.26 All responding clubs indicate that they have scope for additional members. It has been noted that there are greens throughout the City not currently in use. Overall club membership is static at best, with smaller clubs experiencing a decline in membership over the past three years.
- 8.27 It should be noted that, as with other outdoor sports facilities, bowling greens can also be in prime locations in respect of potential residential development, and there may sometimes be a temptation on the part of landowners to close facilities, and run them down in anticipation of securing a planning permission for redevelopment in the longer term. It is important to recognise this, as to overlook it can result in not understanding that local declines in the numbers of bowlers can sometimes be as a result of a loss of well-used facilities with no suitable alternatives being provided.
- 8.28 The average playing membership of the 17 clubs responding clubs is only 26 players per green. City Council Parks Services data suggest that for some council-controlled venues the number of active players can be even significantly less than the low end of the above range- even as low as 8 or 9 members per green this is highlighted on map 8.1 above.
- 8.29 Recruitment of new players, as well as retention of existing members is highlighted as a key issue by bowls clubs and sustainability of the club is ranked as the key challenge for bowls clubs moving forwards. Many clubs highlighted the importance of increasing their membership to ensure that membership and bowling fees can remain at an affordable rate for their club members.
- 8.30 The profile of participants in bowls means that the ageing population is potentially likely to influence participation more so than for other sports considered in this document. There will be significant growth in the number of residents falling into the older age groups by 2031. Consequently, the propensity to participate in bowls may grow in future years.
- 8.31 Given the currently low membership levels relative to green capacity, even if participation rises it is likely to be absorbed within existing capacity. Higher levels of membership are likely to be a key way of maximising the sustainability of clubs as increased numbers of members will bring with it higher levels of income, which will be required to support the management and maintenance of greens. It should be noted however that due to the mobility of the older population, most choose to play at their local green. The varying membership at club sites means that some have more capacity than others to sustain additional growth.

- 8.32 Bowls is only likely to grow significantly if a more pro-active approach to recruitment is taken by clubs and governing bodies. Most clubs do little marketing of existing opportunities outside of word of mouth and the local press and there has been little growth in the sport, with some who have been involved in the sport in the area for years expressing concerns about the decline in the number of members, and in the number of teams entered into league and cup fixtures. Active People suggests that 80% of those that wish to play are currently doing so and that latent demand is focused in the same market segments as those that are already playing. There is also a potential market amongst disabled people and groups if greens and ancillary facilities are accessible.
- 8.33 Stoke City Council has won Coca Cola Parklives and Spirit of 2012 Get Out Get Active funding and has recently been awarded a bowls 'Hot Spot' status for 2016 by the Bowls Development Alliance. This extra funding is intended to promote and encourage participation from potential bowlers of all ages and abilities.

Summary and issues

- 8.34 As is the case nationally, the overall trend in participation in bowls in the City has been downward, although there are some clubs that are more active than others in promoting themselves and therefore encouraging new membership.
- 8.35 When marketing and promotion is coupled to the successful funding bids, latent demand and participation increases can be realised; demand would then increase.
- 8.36 Many assumptions and forecasts have been used in making the above projections; the stark reality remains however, that the future of bowls will be difficult unless the current rate of participation increases.
- 8.37 Any relevant external funding available should be used to promote the development of clubs structures with a wider demographic attraction- including family membership. This might help to widen the popularity of the sport.
- 8.38 There are grounds for concluding that some bowls facilities may not be in the optimal locations to benefit from proximity to the communities that would be most likely to use such facilities.
- 8.39 There are some examples of successful and thriving clubs, but other are struggling to retain sufficient numbers to retain viability. A case can be for the closure and re-use of some existing bowls facilities, but this should be very much on a case-by-case basis. A primary consideration will be where membership/green activity has sunk to unsustainably low levels, and there is no clear likelihood of it recovering as a part of a realistic scenario. As a concomitant, it may be appropriate to review the strategic location of facilities relative to the geographical areas of greatest potential demand. This is considered further in the Action Plan.
- 8.40 There is an on-going risk of greens at social clubs etc under threat due owners seeing the potential for speculative development.
- 8.41 Given the relatively high cost of maintaining bowls facilities where municipal greens are seen to be unsustainable and close considered this should be seen as an opportunity to reallocate maintenance resources and enhance the quality of the remaining facilities as this should help increase the attractiveness of these facilities to potential users.