

Oxford City Council

Playing Pitch &  
Outdoor Sports  
Strategy

2012-2026

## **Executive Summary**

The Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy has been developed during 2011 using best practice guidance from Sport England. It assesses current and future demand over the next 14 years, and provides a robust framework for resource prioritisation and informed planning decisions.

The strategy has been developed through consultation with Sport England, National Governing Bodies of Sport, sports clubs, league associations, schools, universities, colleges and council employees. It has been informed by a review of the pavilions and reviewing our sports provision.

While there are some links with the City's Green Spaces Strategy, there are also a number of key differences; on supply and demand for sports facilities, producing a robust planning document and also evidencing the need for developer contributions.

The number of outdoor areas used for sport and physical activity that are accessible to the public include: 117 playing pitches, 12 Synthetic Turf Pitches, 58 tennis courts and 14 Multi Use Games Areas. The playing pitches are used for a number of different sports including football, cricket, rugby and hockey.

The objectives of the strategy are:

1. To gather the best available supply and demand data on playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.
2. To assess the supply and demand data in line with available national guidance and identified good practice.
3. To ensure a good level of consultation with key parties throughout the development of the strategy.
4. To provide a robust evidence base, which can be used by a range of Council departments and other parties to help protect and improve the provision of playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.
5. To establish a clear prioritised list of actions, which will help to maintain and increase participation levels in sport and physical activity in the city and ensure the efficient use of resources.
6. To establish clear prioritised infrastructure requirements, including where new facilities are required and existing facilities should be enhanced, including ancillary facilities e.g. pavilions.
7. To identify and promote good practice regarding the provision, management and maintenance of playing pitches in the city.
8. To establish a process to ensure the regular review and update of the strategy and the information on which it is based.

These objectives support the corporate plan outcome of Strong and Active Communities; helping to achieve the far reaching cross societal health, wellbeing and community benefits enabled by taking part in sport and physical activity.

The strategy incorporates all sectors, including local authority, education (both schools and universities), private sports grounds, and develops its recommendations based on facilities that are accessible to the community.

The main conclusion from the strategy is that there is currently a shortage of playing pitch provision in Oxford that has secured community use; this is especially prevalent in cricket. Given this shortfall the assessment suggests that all provision within the city should be protected. The strategy does not necessarily suggest that additional new pitches are required to meet the shortfall, as once you add back in those, unsecured, pitches that have community use, there appears to be adequate provision for all sports. However the provision of youth and mini football is an exception, but this shortfall in the main, can be addressed by the spare capacity in other pitch provision. The aim of the Council should be to continue to look to secure community access against other providers playing pitches in key strategic areas.

It is important to note that any loss of provision would place greater pressure on the other remaining facilities. Where development which would adversely affect pitch provision may be proposed, then adequate replacement (equivalent or improved) should be secured in line with government policy guidance for the protection of playing field land. However, given the land restrictions in the city, the opportunities available to secure replacement playing pitch provision are limited.

The pitches within the city are generally of good quality and this needs to be maintained to ensure no reduction in their capacity. However, the assessment has indicated that there are some issues of poor quality with ancillary facilities, such as pavilions, that need to be addressed through a phased program of improvements.

Based on Sport England recommendations, the new developments at Court Place Farm, Banbury Road North and The Oxford Academy, have now addressed the previous undersupply of full size astroturf pitches. It is important that any new astroturf type facilities demonstrate need, innovation or that they specifically target an area of the market where demand has not fully met yet, for example in regards to a small sided facility.

There has been a significant drop in participation in bowls in the city, and this should be closely monitored and reviewed in relation to participation and value for money. Within the strategy, other sports facilities, such as Multi-Use Games Areas, tennis courts and athletics have also been looked at with the key actions to ensure that there is a funded improvement and maintenance program for them.

To ensure that Oxford continues its recent trend of increasing participation in sport and physical activity, it is important that the action plan is implemented and that the strategy is updated on an annual basis and refreshed every five years.

Sport England has supplied the following quote:

*“Sport England believes that the best way to protect and enhance playing fields is for all local authorities to have a robust and up to date Playing Pitch Strategy in place for their area, backed by appropriate management and maintenance arrangements. We are, therefore, pleased to be working with Oxford City Council to assess the adequacy of playing pitch provision in the City and to support the development of a strategy. The commitment of the Leisure team to leading this work and developing the consultation draft document has been impressive.”*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 The purpose of the document**

- 1.1.1 The overriding purpose of this document is to help ensure the city has a good supply of well-managed, maintained and efficient playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities. Having this sporting infrastructure in place will ensure that identified needs are met, and residents are encouraged to maintain and increase their participation in sport and active recreation.
- 1.1.2 The document will provide direction for all involved in the provision of playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities within the city and enable well-informed decisions to be made.

### **1.2 The drivers behind the document**

- 1.2.1 A number of drivers led the City Council to embark on the development of this document, these being:

- The desire to:
  - Maintain Oxford's position as one of the top performing local authorities in terms of participation in sport as measured by Sport England's Active People Survey;
  - Ensure that the benefits of providing sport and active recreation are recognised and where possible maximised to support the wider aims and objectives of the Council and partners (e.g. improving health and well-being);
  - Enhance the strategic approach taken by the Council and partners to playing pitches and other outdoor sports facility provision; focussing on areas of greatest sporting need within the city, including areas of deprivation such as Blackbird Leys and Barton;
  - Ensure that there is a greater joined-up approach to the provision of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities within the city, bringing together key providers including Schools, Universities, Local Authorities and National Governing Bodies (NGBs);
  - Ensure staff development by undertaking the strategy in house.

The need to:

- Provide robust and up-to-date evidence on the provision of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities to support the development and implementation of planning policy, and inform assessments of individual planning applications;
- Assess whether efficiency improvements can be made regarding the provision, management and maintenance of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities, while maintaining and seeking to improve participation rates;
- Update and refresh the out-of-date 2004 Playing Pitches Strategy;
- Address the known poor quality of ancillary provision, namely pavilions, supporting the Council's own playing pitch provision.

### 1.3 The benefits of developing the work

#### 1.3.1 The benefits of producing this local playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities strategy are considerable and include the following:

##### *Corporate and Strategic:*

- It ensures a strategic approach within the city to outdoor sport provision, providing direction and assisting with determining priorities in times of austerity.
- It provides robust evidence to assist the City Council in directing capital and revenue funding for both sports facility and ancillary facility improvements such as pavilions.
- It helps deliver local and Government policies in relation to increasing participation in sport/physical activity and improving the nation's health and wellbeing.
- It helps demonstrate the value of the Leisure and Parks service, particularly during times of increasing scrutiny of non-statutory services.
- It encourages best practice and continuous improvement, through consultation, benchmarking, auditing and monitoring.

##### *Planning:*

- It provides a basis to inform infrastructure delivery planning and the requirements that will arise from new housing developments, such as the proposed wider housing scheme in Barton.
- There are competing priorities within the city, and developing a strategy for sports facilities provision is one of the best tools to ensure the protection of provision which may be threatened by increasing development pressures.
- It provides a holistic approach to improvement and protection of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities, which links into Oxford's emerging Green Spaces Strategy.

##### *Operational:*

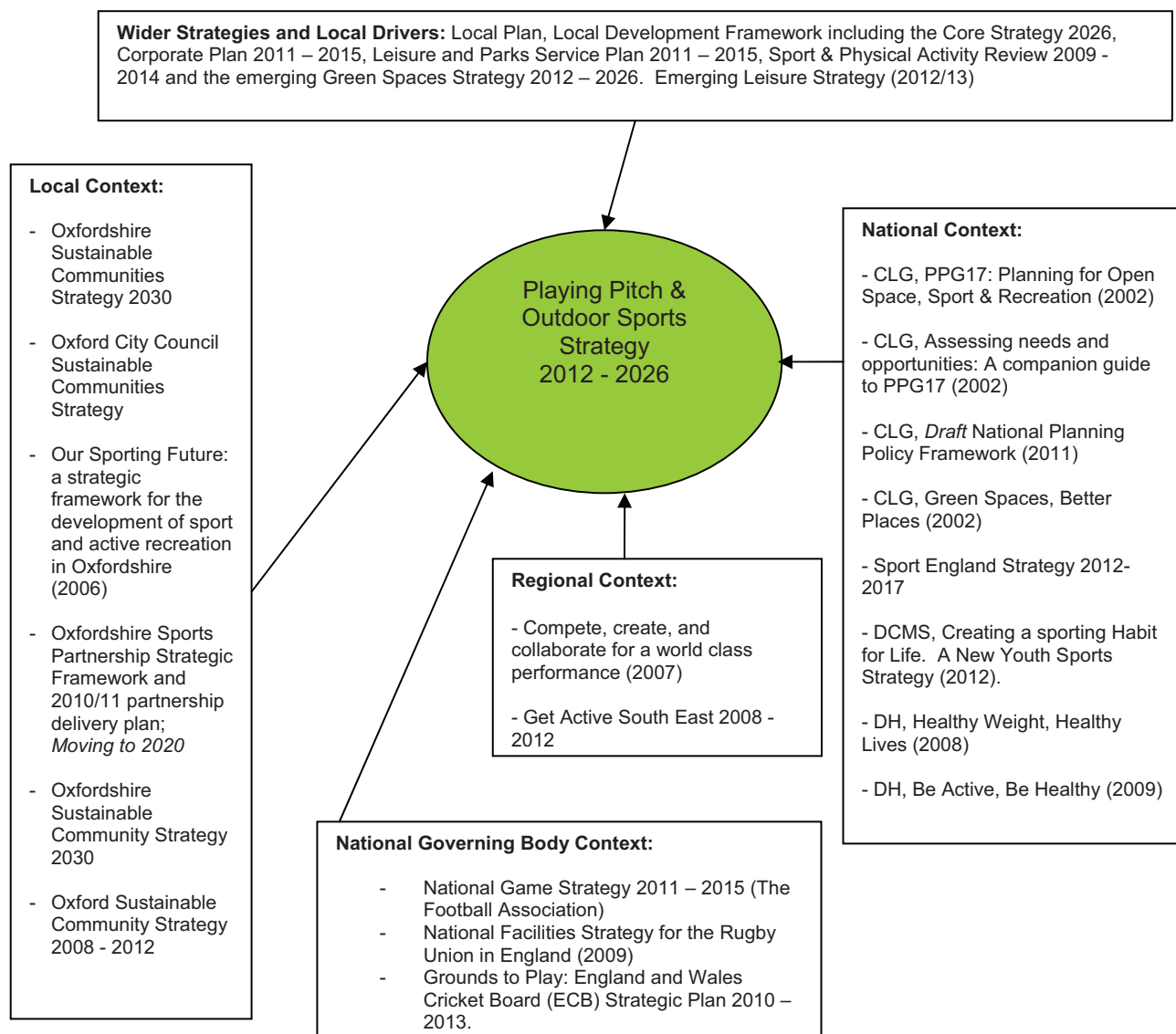
- It will help improve Oxford City Council's asset management by ensuring that there is more efficient use of resources and reduced subsidy per resident.
- It highlights locations within the city where the quality of provision could be enhanced.
- It highlights where the management and operation of facilities could be improved to meet identified needs.

##### *Sports Development:*

- It provides up-to-date, accurate and consistent information on sports clubs that operate within the city and their needs.
- It promotes sports development, and helps identify and unlock latent demand by identifying where there is a need for new or enhanced facilities, or improved access to existing facilities.
- There are key other providers within the city such as schools and higher education sites and it helps identify where community use of these facilities may be required or enhanced.
- It helps further enhance local relationships with all parties involved in the provision and use of playing pitches in the city, which can help develop a partnership approach to improve provision and participation rates.

## 1.4 Links to other strategies

1.4.1 Whilst it is a stand alone document, the diagram below provides a summary of the links this playing pitch and outdoor sports facility strategy has to a range of other national and local strategies and plans.



1.4.2 All of the strategies and plans identified in the diagram above support the development of this document. The links are two way, with these strategies and plans providing further context, rationale and drivers behind the need to develop a locally derived strategy for playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities. In turn, the development and implementation of this document will help to achieve the aims and objectives of these wider strategies and plans. The importance and key elements of some of these strategies and plans have been identified below:

1.4.3 **Sport England Strategy 2012 – 2017**<sup>1</sup> describes how Sport England will invest over £1billion of National Lottery and Exchequer funding over five years into four main areas of work, including;

1. National Governing Body Funding - young people (14 – 25) will benefit from 60% of the £450 million funding.
2. Facilities – building on the success of the People Places Play initiative, new funding streams will be available for mid-range facilities, facility improvements and new facilities.
3. Local Investment - investment will include a new community sport activation fund, and a Door Step Clubs programme to create sustainable clubs for young people in the most deprived areas.
4. School Games – Sport England will be funding the school games until 2015.

**DCMS, Creating a sporting habit for life: A new youth sports strategy (2012)**<sup>2</sup> sets out achievable goals to transform sport in England so it becomes a habit for life for more people and a regular choice for the majority. In addition to seeing a year on year increase in the number of people playing sport once a week for at least 30 minutes (particularly those aged 14 – 25 years) the strategy pledges to:

- See more people taking on and keeping a sporting habit for life;
- Create more opportunities for young people;
- Nurture and develop talent;
- Provide the right facilities in the right location;
- Support local authorities and unlock local funding;
- Ensure real opportunities for communities.

These objectives are set out to be achieved through the measures identified within the Sport England Strategy 2012 -2017.

**The Oxfordshire Sustainable Communities Strategy 2030** sets out a long term vision for Oxfordshire's future.

The main strategic objectives are:

1. A world class economy
2. Healthy and thriving communities
3. Climate change
4. Reducing inequalities and breaking the cycle of deprivation

There is a pledge to promote healthy lifestyles; with an identified challenge of valuing culture, sport, recreation and leisure to maintain a good quality of life. This has been reflected in the delivery plan for the strategy in the form of National Indicator 8 (NI8), which is a measure of the increase in participation in sports amongst adults.

Oxford City Council has its own Sustainable Communities Strategy (2008 – 2012), which includes local priorities that link into Sport, Active Recreation & Physical Activity. It also details the following important outcomes:

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<sup>1</sup> Sport England Strategy 2012 – 2017

[http://www.sportengland.org/about\\_us/what\\_we\\_do.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/about_us/what_we_do.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> DCMS, Creating a sporting habit for life: A new youth sports strategy (2012)

[http://www.sportengland.org/about\\_us/what\\_we\\_do.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/about_us/what_we_do.aspx)



- A thriving place to live and visit
- Improve life chances and life expectancy
- Community Cohesion
- Raising the level of adult participation by 4% linked into NI8.

### **Leisure and Parks Service Transformation Plan (2012 – 2015) and the Oxford City Council Corporate Plan (2012 – 2015)**

A clear 'golden thread' has been identified in respect to how the Leisure and Parks Service Transformation Plan (2011 – 2015) compliments and achieves those objectives identified within the Councils Corporate Plan (2011 – 2015). Section 1.3 above displays how the development of a playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities strategy for Oxford supports the delivery of these overarching objectives.

### **Oxford City Council's Local Plan, 2001 - 2016**

Section 11.0 of the Local Plan identifies the City Council's planning policy towards sport, outdoor recreation and community facilities, which is based on three principles:

1. Seeking to protect existing facilities, as very little land is available for replacement facilities.
2. Wherever possible seeking to provide, or encourage others to create, new recreational facilities.
3. Improving access to such facilities, in terms of geography, social inclusion, disability and income.

### **Core Strategy 2026**

Oxford City Council's Core Strategy 2026 sets out the spatial planning framework for the development of Oxford up to 2026. The development of a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy for Oxford would support Policy C21 'Green Spaces, Leisure and Sport', highlighting the need to safeguard sports pitches and outdoor sports facilities. The playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities strategy will also help implement the following Core Strategy policies:

- Policy CS3 – Areas earmarked for regeneration within Oxford
- Policy CS4 – Green Belt; 'development would not result in the loss of land in active recreational use'.
- Policy CS7 - Land at Barton
- Policy CS17 – Infrastructure and developer contributions.
- Policy CS21 – Green spaces, leisure and sport.

### **Sport and Physical Activity Review (2009)**

The Sport and Physical Activity Review (2009) highlights the Council's key focus and priority sports and has therefore helped to inform the facility types included within this document. The playing pitch and outdoor sports strategy will also provide further support to help crystallise the council's role in providing a sport and physical activity offer, look to maintain and increase sports participation and highlight the need to deliver key associated ancillary projects.



## **Oxford Green Spaces Strategy 2012 – 2026**

The Green Spaces Strategy for Oxford (2012 – 2026) is a key document to show how and why Oxford's open spaces will be preserved, protected and enhanced over the years to come. The main vision of the strategy is; "To provide world class parks and open spaces to enhance the quality of life of everyone living, visiting or working in Oxford." There are of course clear links with the findings and actions of this document. However, there are also many interdependencies which make the documents distinct in their own right, but the two documents clearly compliment one another.

### **1.5 Objectives of the work**

1.5.1 The Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy supports the delivery of three objectives in the Council's corporate plan:

- Strong and Active Communities
- Cleaner, Greener Oxford
- An Efficient and Effective Council

It also clearly links into the Leisure and Parks service areas objectives of:

- Support the Physical Regeneration of Oxford through the delivery of key projects
- Support the Social Regeneration of Oxford

Within these objectives, it clearly references the need to increase participation in sport and to improve health and inequalities.

1.5.2 Setting out the purpose of the document, along with the key drivers and the potential benefits, led to the identification of a number of specific objectives for the work. The objectives, set out below, helped to guide the development of the work and will ensure that the document is fit for purpose.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Objective</b>
1	To gather the best available supply and demand data on playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities in Oxford.
2	To assess the supply and demand data in line with available national guidance and identified good practice.
3	To ensure a good level of consultation with key parties throughout the development of the strategy.
4	To provide a robust evidence base, which can be used by a range of Council departments and other parties to help protect and improve the provision of playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.
5	To establish a clear prioritised list of actions which will help to maintain and increase participation levels in sport and physical activity within the city and ensure the efficient use of resources.
6	To identify clear prioritised infrastructure requirements, including where new facilities are required and existing facilities should be enhanced, including ancillary facilities e.g. especially pavilions.
7	To identify and promote good practice regarding the provision, management and maintenance of pitches within the city.
8	To establish a process to ensure the regular review and update of the strategy and the information on which it is based.

## **1.6 Project management**

- 1.6.1 In order to ensure a partnership approach to developing the playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities strategy, a steering group was set up in October 2010 to oversee the management of the work. The group included representatives from Council services, including Leisure and Parks (Sports Development and Parks Officers), City Development (Planning Officers), Sport England and the County Sports Partnership.
- 1.6.2 The development of the work has been led on a day to day basis by Oxford City Council's Sports Development team. However, the steering group have met regularly throughout each stage of the work to review progress and help shape the next steps.
- 1.6.3 In addition to the regular meetings with the steering group, meetings were held with relevant NGBs of Sport at various stages of the data collection and assessment work. These meetings enabled the NGBs to feed in their knowledge and available data and help shape, check and challenge the work, as it progressed along with its findings, recommendations and actions.
- 1.6.4 The development of the work has also been reported on a monthly basis to Oxford City Council's Leisure Delivery Board. This board consists of officers from different service areas in the Council, including Finance, Corporate Assets, Legal and Leisure & Parks.

## **1.7. Scope of the document**

1.7.1 This document covers the following types of sports pitches and outdoor sports facilities:

- Natural grass playing pitches for Football, Rugby Union and Cricket.
- Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) for Hockey and other uses (e.g. training sessions for other pitch sports).
- Tennis Courts
- Athletics Tracks
- Bowling Greens
- Golf Courses
- Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs).

1.7.2 The rationale for the inclusion of these facilities was led by the facilities used by those sports that are classified as 'Focus' or 'Priority' sports within the Council's Sport and Physical Activity Review (2009) e.g. Football, Rugby and Cricket. To enable a full picture of natural grass playing pitch provision and needs to be identified, the strategy also picks up the requirements of smaller pitch sports where they are known to be active within the city e.g. Gaelic Football and Baseball.

1.7.3 AGPs were included due to their importance to Hockey, for both competitive and training activity, as a training facility for other sports i.e. football, and given the recent development of new facilities in the city.

1.7.4 The steering group agreed that information on other selected 'Non Playing Pitch Sports' would also be collected. The facilities chosen are typically those where the Council has ownership of assets such as tennis and netball courts, MUGAs and athletics facilities, or where secured community use agreements exist for sites under other ownerships. Golf courses have also been included due to the amount of land necessary to accommodate the sport.

1.7.5 It is envisaged that the list of facilities included along with the level of information and assessment provided for each facility type will be reviewed annually in line with the overall monitoring and review procedures set out in section 6.1. Depending on resources, drivers behind the work, trends in participation and known issues, additional facilities may be added.

## **1.8 Assessment methodology**

1.8.1 In developing the strategy, the Council and the Steering Group have primarily been guided by:

- the Government's Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' (2002) and its companion guide (2002), and
- Sport England's guide to developing a Playing Pitch Strategy 'Towards a Level Playing Field' (TLPF) (2003).

Sport England's 'Fit for Purpose' assessment frameworks for Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies have also been used to help direct, check and challenge the development of the work.

1.8.2 While guided by the above documents, the approach taken for the various facility types does differ due to the level of information, guidance and tools available, along with the level of resource that could be dedicated to the work. The document is therefore separated into two parts, with the first comprising of an assessment of playing pitch provision, and the second an assessment of other outdoor sports facilities in Oxford.

1.8.3 The playing pitch work follows Sport England's guidance and methodology and covers both natural and artificial grass pitches. Less information and resource are available to assess the provision of the other outdoor sports facilities. Nevertheless, the document does present very useful details to help guide the future provision of these facilities. The specific approach taken for each facility type is outlined at the beginning of the relevant section of the document.

## **2 SPORTS PARTICIPATION IN OXFORD**

### **2.1 Overall participation rates in sport**

- 2.1.1 Participation rates for sport and physical activity in Oxford are currently high in comparison to other local authorities, and have been increasing over the past few years. Sport England's Active People survey<sup>3</sup> indicates that during the 2008/10 period 27.6% of adult residents (16+) took part in 3 x 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and physical activity a week (the former NI8 indicator). This level of participation fared favourably with the South-East (22.9%) and England (21.3%) averages and placed Oxford within the top 25% of authorities in the country. This figure of 27.6% for Oxford was a rise from the figure of 20.7% recorded by the Active People survey for the 2005/2006 period. In line with the national and regional figures for both periods, participation in Oxford was higher for male adults than for females.
- 2.1.2 At the other end of the scale 34.9%, of residents were recorded as not undertaking any participation during the 2008/10 period. As with the higher measure, this figure also compares favourably with the South-East (44.6%) and England (47.8%) figures, albeit it still represents a significant proportion of the population. The figure for Oxford reduced from 43.2% during the 2005/06 period.
- 2.1.3 While participation rates are comparatively high, the Active People survey suggests that, based on a number of demographic factors, the increase between the two periods has resulted in bringing the rates up to, and slightly above, what would be expected for the city.
- 2.1.4 Due to the sample size, the results of the Active People survey regarding overall participation rates across the city are statistically significant at a local authority level. Whilst information is also collected around individual sports, this sample size starts to get too low for most sports to be really meaningful when analysed individually at a local authority level. Nevertheless, sport specific information can be collated by looking at the population of the 'active age group' for some of the pitch sports and Sport England's market segmentation tool, details of which are provided below. In addition, information has been gathered at the local level including input from the NGBs of sport.

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<sup>3</sup> Active People Survey is an annual survey undertaken by Sport England, which measures adult (16+) participation in sport and physical activity, in addition to other elements, including satisfaction, volunteering etc. Web link: [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org) > Research > Active People Survey

## **2.2 Population information and pitch sport active age groups**

- 2.2.1 Using the Greater London Authority Intelligence Unit<sup>4</sup> (GLA) methodology, the 2011 total population of Oxford is estimated at 147,200. It projects an increase to 156,600 by 2026; an increase of 6%.
- 2.2.2 The population has been forecasted using ward-based projections commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council from the GLA. Unlike the projections produced by the Office for National Statistics, the GLA method takes into account completed and planned housing development. These give a useful view of where housing growth and therefore population growth has taken place and will take place in the future, and can therefore be used to forecast demand for service and facilities such as schools, GP's, playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities. The projections do however rely on the accuracy of average household size estimates and forecasts, and do not take into account increases in communal establishments (over 1,000 units of student accommodation have been built since 2001).
- 2.2.3 For natural grass playing pitches, the Sport England guidance used in the development of this document is based on the relevant 'active age group' for the pitch sports. While the age groups differ per sport and are broken down to different age ranges, the overall active age group used is 6 to 55 year olds. This active age group is estimated to total approximately 109,900 people in the city, in 2011, which equates to 74% of the total population. This is projected to increase to approximately 117,900 people in 2026, equating to 75% of the total population. The rise of around 7,000 people represents a 6% increase, which is in line with the total percentage increase of the population outlined above. This suggests that the relative demand for pitch sports in Oxford will increase in line with the increase in population, as opposed to, for example, other areas which may see a decline in the proportion of the population within the active age group due to an aging population.
- 2.2.4 However, the percentage increase for those under 16 appears to be far higher than for the over 16 age groups. For example, the under 16 age groups all record increases of between 14 and 23% for the ten year period between 2011 and 2021. In contrast, the over 16 age groups for the same period record percentage increases of between 3 and 5%. This clearly suggests that the increase in demand for pitch sport resulting from the increase in population alone will predominantly be for junior play.

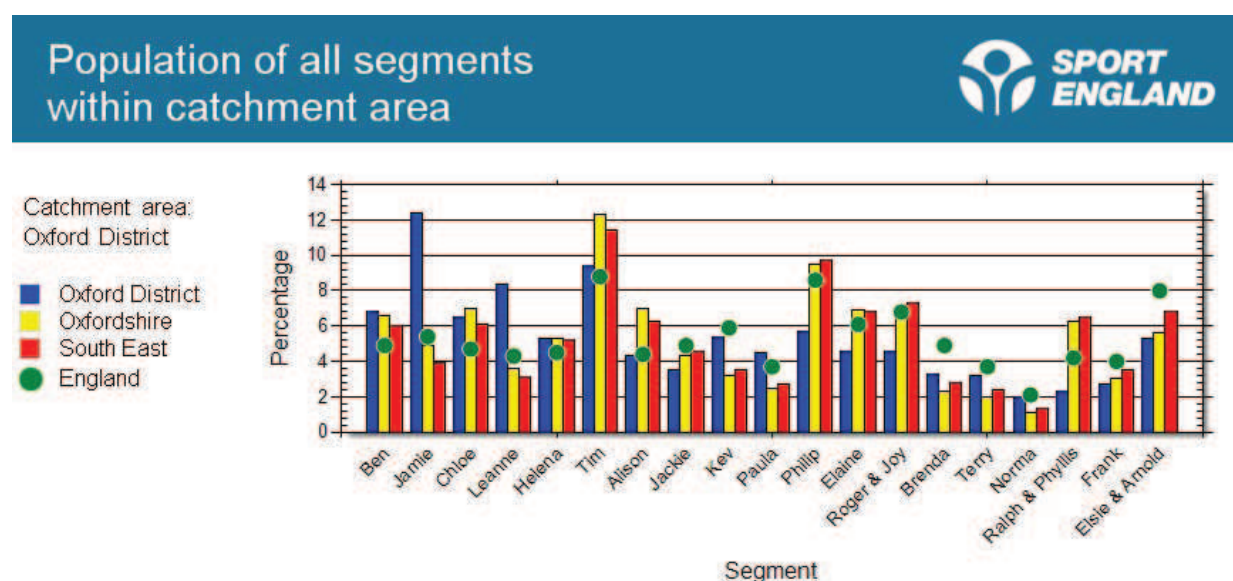
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<sup>4</sup> Greater London Authority Intelligence Unit  
[http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/public/ODO/data/themes/population/2010\\_forecasts/GLAOxon\\_popn\\_method\\_report\\_2010.pdf](http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/public/ODO/data/themes/population/2010_forecasts/GLAOxon_popn_method_report_2010.pdf)

## 2.3 Market Segmentation

- 2.3.1 Following on from the Active People survey information, Sport England has developed nineteen sporting market segments<sup>5</sup>. These segments can be used to help understand the nations' attitude to sport along with their motivation for taking part in sport and barriers which may hinder their participation.
- 2.3.2 The dominant market segments in Oxford are Jamie (Sports Team Drinkers), Tim (Settling Down Males) and Leanne (Supportive Singles). Figure 1 below shows the breakdown of the segments for Oxford compared to the county, regional and national averages. It is clear from figure 1 that Oxford has a significantly higher proportion of Jamie's and Leanne's than the county, regional and national averages. Jamie's make up approximately 12.4% of the population of the city, and the sports they are most likely to participate in are football and keep fit/gym. Tim's are the second most dominant segment totalling 9.4% of the population of the city. While on par with the figure for England, this percentage is below the county and regional averages. The sports that Tim's find most attractive are likely to be cycling and keep fit. In terms of playing pitch sports, football ranks fourth in terms of sports Tim's are likely to participate in. The sports that Leanne's are most likely to participate in are keep fit and swimming, with football fifth on her list.

**Figure 1: Market Segments in Oxford**



- 2.3.3 The dominant segments within each ward can also be presented at ward level as shown in Table 1 below and the Market Segmentation Map in Appendix 1.

<sup>5</sup> [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org) > Research > Market Segmentation



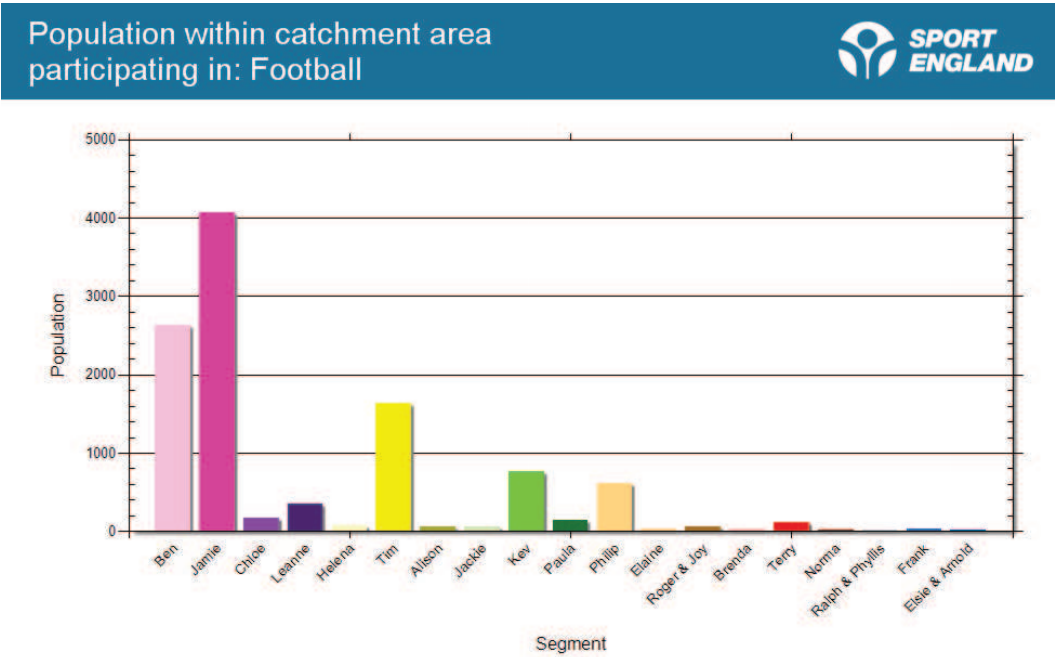
**Table 1: Dominant sporting market segments in Oxford**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Dominant Market Segments</b>
Wolvercote	Tim & Ben
Summertown	Ben & Tim
St Margaret's	Ben & Jamie
North	Jamie & Ben
Marston	Tim
Headington Hill and Northway	Tim
Headington	Tim
Barton and Sandhills	Tim & Alison
Quarry and Risinghurst	Tim
Churchill	Jamie & Kev
Cowley Marsh	Tim & Elsie
Lye Valley	Elsie
Cowley	Elsie, Tim & Helena
Northfield Brooke	Tim, Paula & Kev
Blackbird Leys	Kev & Paula
Littlemore	Tim, Helena & Elsie
Rose Hill & Iffley	Tim & Kev
Hinksey Park	Tim & Jamie
Jericho & Osney	Tim
Carfax	Jamie & Helena
Holywell	Jamie
St Clements	Jamie
St Mary's	Jamie
Iffley Fields	Jamie

2.3.4 In respect of playing pitch sports, the market segmentation work can also be used to identify what segments are most likely to participate in sports. It is clear from the graphs below that for participation in the natural grass pitch sports (Football, Rugby and Cricket) Jamie, Tim and Ben are the most active segments in the city. Table 1 above indicates where these segments are most dominant in the city and therefore where the greatest concentration of demand for natural grass pitches provision may be.

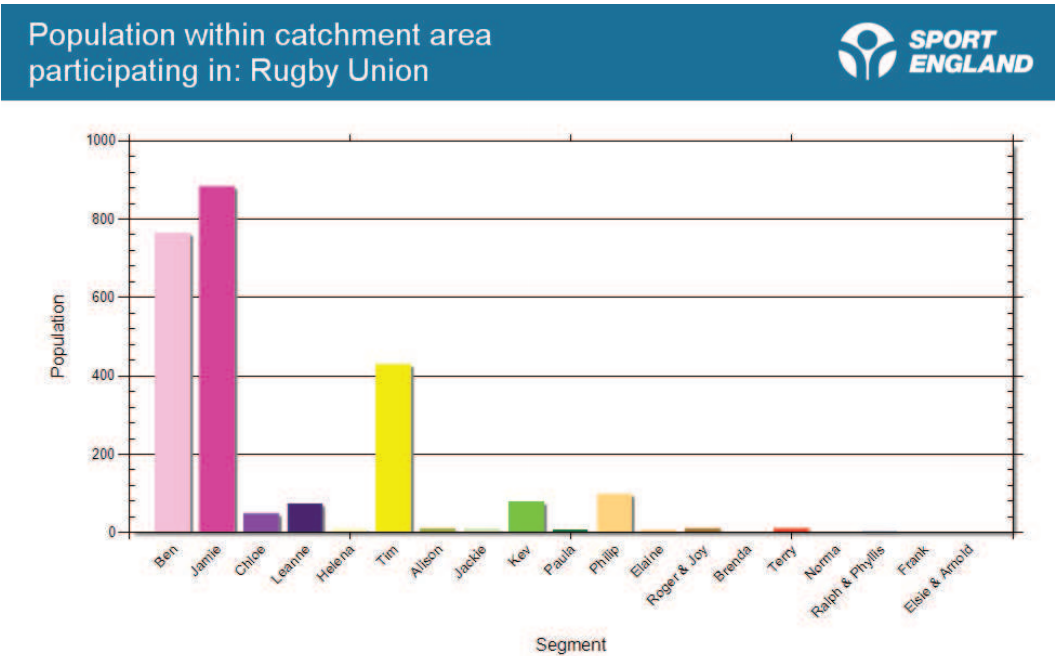
2.3.5 Football

The graph below identifies that Jamie, Tim and Ben are the most active segment in the city in respect of participation in football.



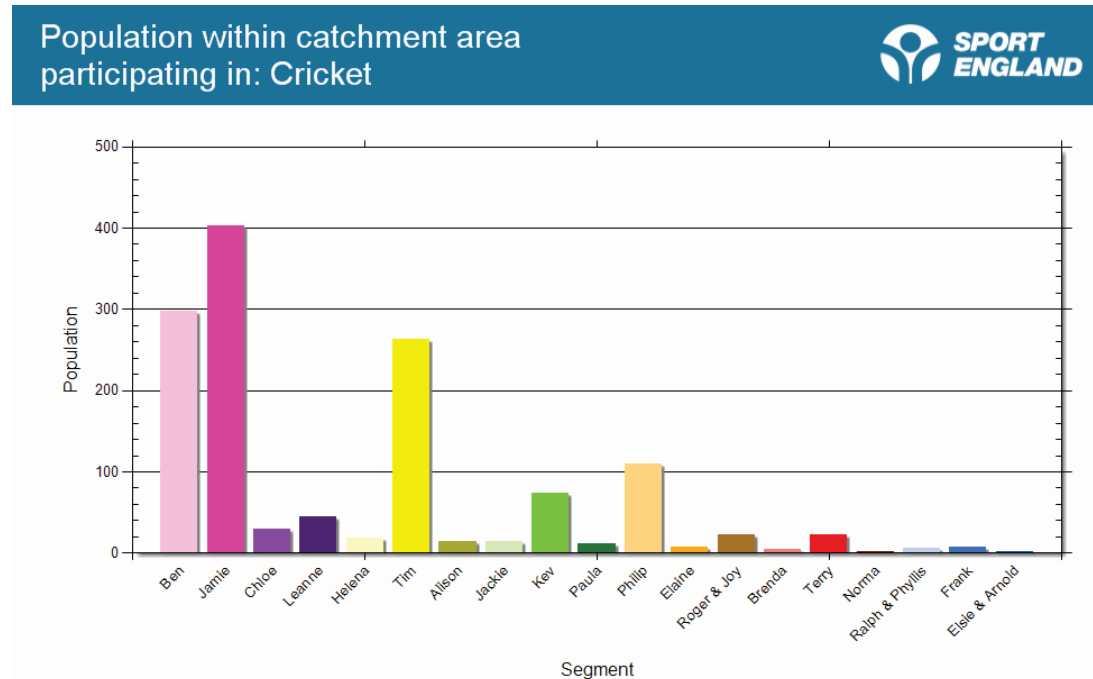
2.3.6 Rugby Union

The graph below identifies that Jamie, Tim and Ben are the most active segment in the city in respect of participation in ruby union.



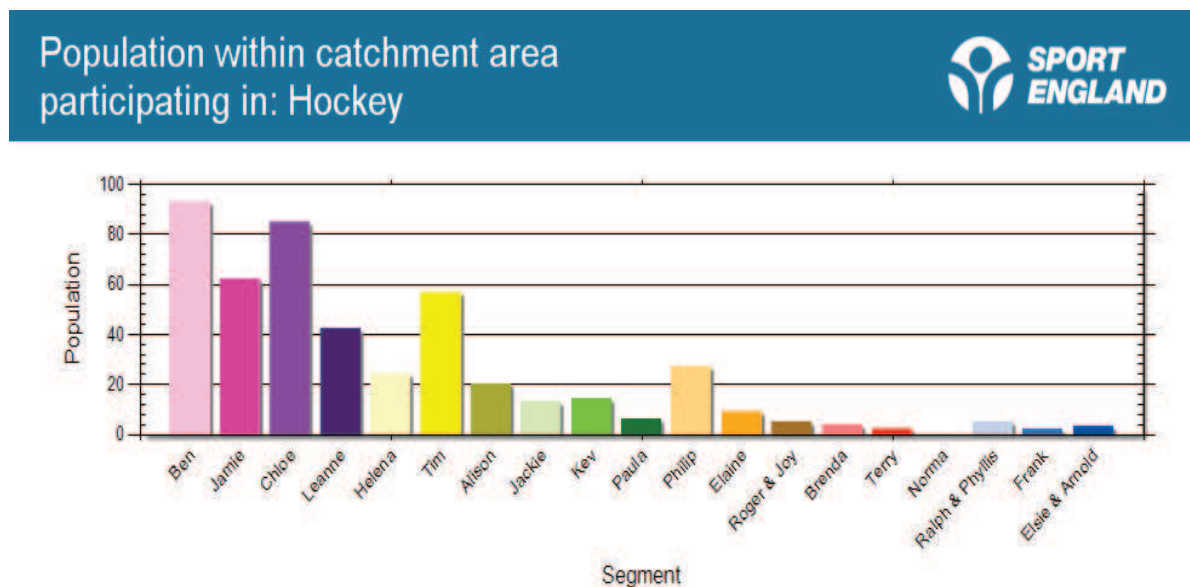
### 2.3.7 Cricket

The graph below identifies that Jamie, Tim and Ben are the most active segment in the city in respect of participation in cricket.



### Hockey

2.3.8 In addition to the natural grass pitch sports, it is clear that the segments in the city most likely to take part in Hockey, and therefore generate hockey demand for artificial grass pitches, are again Ben, Jamie and Tim, but also Chloe and Leanne. While Table 1 above indicates that the Chloe and Leanne segments are not dominant in any one ward, the relevant maps in Appendix 1 do set out where any concentrations of these segments are located.



2.3.9 Finally, the Active People data also provides an indication of any latent demand. Latent demand is based on all respondents of the survey, who indicated that they would like to play more sport. The survey asked these people which one sport they would like to play more of. For all the above pitch sports the data suggests that there is some latent demand, the breakdown of which is fairly consistent with the spread across the segments that currently play the sports. The data indicates that within Oxford the following approximate amount of people would like to play more of each pitch sport;

- Hockey 300 people,
- Rugby Union 550 people,
- Cricket 750 people
- Football 2,100 people.

### 3 PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

#### 3.1 Natural grass playing pitch methodology

- 3.1.1 This strategy uses the definition of a playing pitch as set out in the Government's statutory instrument 2010/2184<sup>6</sup> which states that playing pitch is:

"a delineated area which, together with any run off area, is of 0.2 hectares or more, and which is used for association football, American football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo."

The minimum and maximum dimensions for a pitch will differ for each sport and these are set out in Sport England Comparative Sizes document (2011).<sup>7</sup>

- 3.1.2 Sport England, within their 'Towards a Level Playing Field' [TLPF] (2003) publication, provide guidance and a recommended methodology for developing playing pitch strategies. This guidance reflects key priorities and the approach to locally derived assessments recommended by the *Government's Planning Policy Guidance 17 (2002): Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17)* and its companion guide 'Assessing needs and opportunities' (2002).
- 3.1.3 The TLPF guide provides a recommended methodology and specific criteria to measure and assess the quality, quantity, capacity and accessibility of playing pitches and their ancillary facilities. As such, following the guidance allows the adequacy of provision for these facilities to be determined by assessing local demand against the quality, quantity and accessibility of current supply.
- 3.1.4 A key element of the TLPF guidance is the use of the 'Playing Pitch Model' which consists of eight stages:
1. Identifying teams and team equivalents
  2. Calculating home games per team, per week
  3. Assessing total home games per week
  4. Establishing temporal demand for games
  5. Defining pitches used/required on each day
  6. Establishing pitches available
  7. Assessing the findings
  8. Identifying policy options and solutions.
- 3.1.5 Stages one to six involve numerical calculations, which help to provide an indication of the adequacy of provision to meet current and future demand. Stages seven and eight help to ensure that the calculations and their findings are fully assessed, and options and solutions to address them are developed. The Playing Pitch Model, which focuses on assessing the adequacy of provision to meet demand at peak times, can initially be used to:

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.sportengland.org/facilities\\_planning/playing\\_field\\_3.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/playing_field_3.aspx)

<sup>7</sup> Sport England Comparative sizes document  
[http://www.sportengland.org/facilities\\_planning/design\\_and\\_cost\\_guidance/natural\\_turf.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/design_and_cost_guidance/natural_turf.aspx)

- Reflect the current situation, using data on existing teams and pitches.
  - Test the adequacy of current provision to meet the future need for pitches, by incorporating population and participation projections.
- 3.1.6 An 'electronic toolkit' accompanies the Towards a Level Playing Field guidance, which provides useful resources to help collate and assess the information required by the stages of the model.
- 3.1.7 Sport England's guidance suggests that it is crucial to identify and gather information on all pitches irrespective of ownership as part of the audit process. However, Sport England makes it clear within their guidance that the assessment, upon which the key findings of the strategy in terms of the supply and demand balance are based, should only include those pitches which have secured community use. It is only these sites that offer the necessary certainty regarding current and future use by the community and therefore, enable an appropriate assessment to be undertaken. While other sites may provide some degree of community use unless this is secured, for example through a community use agreement, then there can be no certainty that this use will continue.
- 3.1.8 Depending on the results of the assessment work, based only on those sites with secured community use, additional scenarios could then be run through the Playing Pitch Model. These additional scenarios can help to test the impact of possible solutions to meeting any deficiencies identified by the assessment. The results of these scenarios, which for example may start to look at sites which do not currently have secured community use and/or improving the quality of some sites, should only, be used to help test and identify possible solutions and therefore feed into the strategy recommendations and action plan. The results of the Playing Pitch Model for these additional scenarios should not be used in place of those from the main assessment when drawing conclusions as to the adequacy of current provision to meet existing and future demand. The additional scenarios simply provide an indication of the situation should the possible solution tested within the scenario be implemented. Therefore, the results of these additional scenarios must be treated with caution.
- 3.1.9 The Steering Group decided that given the level of provision within the education sector in Oxford, including the Universities and Colleges, it would be useful to look at this in more detail once the results of the assessment based on secured community use sites are known. Educational provision which already provides secured community use has been included within the assessment. However, in addition to this provision there are a number of sites which do provide some degree of community use albeit on an unsecured basis. While these sites currently provide no certainty that this community use will continue they, along with any private sites, may well be vital to the ability of the city to meet its current and future needs for playing pitch provision.
- 3.1.10 As set out below, the development of this strategy has therefore used the Playing Pitch Model to carry out an assessment of the adequacy of provision within the city based on sites with secured community use. The model has then also been used to help test the impact of two scenarios which factor in additional provision that currently provides community use but on an unsecured basis:

**The Assessment of Supply and Demand** - includes those pitches which provide secured community use, including those owned by Oxford City Council and others, where for example, a 'Community Use Agreement' exists.

**Scenario 1** - includes those pitches with secured community use together with pitches that are accessible to the community but where this use is unsecured. These pitches are typically owned by the independent and community schools/academies in the city.

**Scenario 2** - includes pitches in scenario one together with those pitches that are accessible to the community on a very restricted 'ad hoc' basis. These pitches are typically owned by the University/Colleges.

3.1.11 The assessment and two scenarios have looked at both the current and future situation. In order to assess the future situation the strategy is aligned with the Core Strategy for Oxford (2011 – 2026) and an assessment using the Playing Pitch Model has been undertaken using the following periods:

- 2011 - 2016
- 2011 – 2021
- 2011 – 2026.

3.1.12 Sport England's guidance suggests using the concept of Team Generation Rates (TGRs), alongside appropriate projected changes in the population and participation rates in pitch sports, to help provide an indication of the likely future level of demand. TGRs indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate a team. Therefore, once accurate population and team data has been collated, the population in an appropriate age band can be divided by the current number of teams in the area within the age band to give a TGR figure (e.g. 1 senior football team for every 500 males aged 16-45). The current TGR figures can then be used alongside the projected level and nature of the future population, and any projected increases in participation rates. This will provide an indication of the potential number of teams and therefore the level of demand that may be generated in a future year.

3.1.13 Whilst this modelling has been undertaken across the three time periods, the results from the 2011 – 2016 modelling will be analysed in depth. Results from the modelling of the other periods will be used as a 'guideline' because population projections and future team and participation projections will become less accurate and more unpredictable the further forward the work projects. These projections shall be kept under review as part of the proposed annual monitoring and update of the strategy.

## **3.2 Collating the supply and demand data**

3.2.1 The success of the TLPM methodology depends on obtaining accurate and up to date information on the supply and demand for playing pitches. To achieve this, a full audit of clubs and teams, along with other likely users of playing pitches, was undertaken alongside a full audit of playing pitch provision in the city.

3.2.2 Identification of the supply of playing pitches included:



- A review of the information held on Active Places Power<sup>8</sup>
- Discussion with the Oxford City Council Parks team in respect of Council owned provision.
- Web research (including reviewing local maps).
- Discussions with staff at Oxford Brookes University, Oxford University and the individual Colleges to identify the provision at these sites.
- Discussions with schools and the Partnership Development Manager (PDM), of the School Sports Partnership.
- Site visits

### 3.2.3 Identification of clubs, teams and other users included:

- Discussion with NGBs of sport.
- A review of NGB and County Association data and reports i.e. the Oxfordshire Football Association's Local Area Data (LAD) reports.
- Extensive internet research in respect of league fixtures/results and team/club websites.
- Discussion with the Oxford City Council Parks team in respect of users of council owned provision.

3.2.4 To ensure that the information collated from the above sources was accurate, questionnaires (an example can be found in Appendix 2), were sent to NGBs of sport, League Secretaries, Schools and Colleges, along with all playing pitch sports clubs. The distribution of the questionnaires formed part of the consultation process which is described in further detail in section 3.3 below.

3.2.5 As indicated in paragraphs 3.1.7 to 3.1.10, whilst undertaking the audit of playing pitches in the city, the following categories were used to define their level of accessibility to the community:

- **Secured Community Use** – including those pitches/sites owned by Oxford City Council and others where community use is secured e.g. through a community use agreement.
- **Community Use (not secured)** – this includes those pitches/sites that are accessible to the community but where use is unsecured.
- **Adhoc** – this includes those pitches/sites that offer very occasional use to the community; these facilities are typically Oxford University College and/or within schools.
- **None** – those pitches/sites that are not accessible to the community and therefore deemed private.

## 3.3 Consultation

3.3.1 As presented paragraph 3.2.4 above and Table 2 below, questionnaires were widely distributed to help collate as accurate a picture as possible for the number of clubs, teams and other users of playing pitches, along with the level and nature of pitches in the city.

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<sup>8</sup> Active Places Power is a planning tool developed by Sport England for sports facilities. It is designed to assist in investment decisions and the development of infrastructure improvement strategies for sport.

- 3.3.2 This method of consultation also helped to gather an extensive amount of qualitative research in respect of pitch and pavilion quality, accessibility, development plans, recent and potential participation increases and projects in the pipeline; etc.
- 3.3.3 The questionnaires were developed in line with examples provided within the TLPF Electronic Toolkit and adapted to ensure that they were more sport specific rather than a generic template. Table 2 below provides a summary of those identified as a key consultees, response rates to the questionnaire consultation and the initial methods of consultation used.

**Table 2: Questionnaire Consultation**

Consultee	Questionnaire Responses		Questionnaire and other methods of consultation
	Consultee's identified	% Response	
Football Clubs*	60 (Representing 203 teams)	27% (Representing 45% of all teams)	Electronic/Postal Questionnaire & Telephone Interviews Football Forum Meeting
Rugby Clubs*	9 (Representing 35 teams)	38% (Representing 60% of all teams)	Electronic Questionnaire
Cricket* Clubs	13 (Representing 35 teams)	23% (Representing 77% of all teams)	Electronic Questionnaire One to on meetings with clubs
Hockey* Clubs	7 (Representing 85 teams)	40% (Representing 48% of all teams)	Electronic Questionnaire
Schools (including independent)	41	73%	Electronic Questionnaire via the SSP and direct to independent schools.
League Secretaries across all sports	22	23%	Electronic Questionnaire
National Governing Bodies	5	100%	Electronic Questionnaire Telephone Interview Meetings

*\* In Oxford it is typical of the Universities/Colleges to field their own sports teams. This can result in some level of difficulty in reaching the right individuals, as roles and responsibilities vary across them. In respect of this, a decision was taken to gain information from the person responsible for coordinating fixtures etc, and also to seek information from Oxford University's Director of Sport.*

- 3.3.4 As identified above, a variety of consultation methods were used alongside the questionnaires, including;
- sport specific meetings,
  - telephone discussions,
  - informal discussions during site visits.

- 3.3.5 To ensure that consultation was effective with sports clubs and teams, the NGBs of sport were asked to approach their Oxford registered clubs and league secretaries. This method was also used via the School Sports Partnership when approaching the community schools and academies. It was felt that using this method of contact would increase the response rate as the questionnaire would be coming from a familiar source.
- 3.3.6 To enhance the response rate, two reminders were sent out and the window for consultation was extended as long as feasibly possible to ensure all parties could respond to the questionnaire. It was difficult to engage all of the football clubs in the city and the league secretaries for football. To help in some part to address this, questions regarding pitches and pavilions were also raised at the city's Football forum, which included 14 clubs, the Oxfordshire Football Association (OFA), league representatives and the Referees Association.
- 3.3.7 Whilst the response rate from the initial survey of football clubs was 27%, it is important to note that many of the larger clubs (those that field a number of teams) completed and returned the questionnaire. Six of the 'Charter Standard' clubs were represented within this response rate. As such, when looking at the response from teams, the response represents 45% of the city's teams that are registered with the OFA.
- 3.3.8 There was a positive response from the other sports clubs in the city, with in excess of 60% of the rugby and cricket teams represented. The responses received back from hockey clubs represented 48% of all hockey teams. Similar to football, all the larger hockey, cricket and rugby clubs that field a number of teams provided a response.
- 3.3.9 Along with providing their own response, the relevant NGB officers for the main pitch sports were asked to check and challenge the club responses, and to look at whether feedback was consistent with their views, future plans and priorities. This added another valuable layer to the consultation process.
- 3.3.10 With regard to hockey, it should be noted that the information received from the England Hockey Board, that feeds into the Artificial Grass Pitch section of this document, section 4.6, is derived from their recent consultation with all Oxford based clubs. The information from the questionnaire responses therefore supplements the information obtained from the England Hockey Board.
- 3.3.11 Consultation on the draft strategy has been carried out with NGB's, sports clubs, pitch providers including; schools, private sports clubs, universities, colleges, and with the wider general public. Colleagues within the Council were also invited to comment on the draft strategy. The consultation opened on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and closed on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012. Consultation was carried out via invitation to comment through the Council's E-consult system (on-line consultation software), letter, email and focus group meetings with NGBs of sport and clubs. The strategy was updated in lines with comments/feedback received.

### **3.4 Qualitative assessment**

- 3.4.1 A qualitative assessment of playing pitches and ancillary facilities was undertaken in two stages. The first stage involved undertaking a Non Visual Technical Quality Assessment (NVTQA) of each site and pitch, using the form provided within the TLPF toolkit. To align with best practice, as suggested in the TLPF guidance, these assessments were carried out between January and March 2011 by the Development Officer from the Oxford Sports Development Team. The Council's grounds maintenance staff also assisted with the assessments of Council owned pitches, and site specific staff assisted with the assessments of external pitches i.e. those owned by universities, colleges and private sports clubs.
- 3.4.2 The NVTQA enables a rating to be allocated for each pitch based on various aspects of its quality, from grass cover to the evenness of the ground. Through the inclusion of additional information such as pitch bookings and cancellations, a percentage score is given to each pitch which relates to an overall qualitative rating. The quality scale differs slightly between pitch and ancillary facilities:

#### **Pitch Quality Rating Scale**

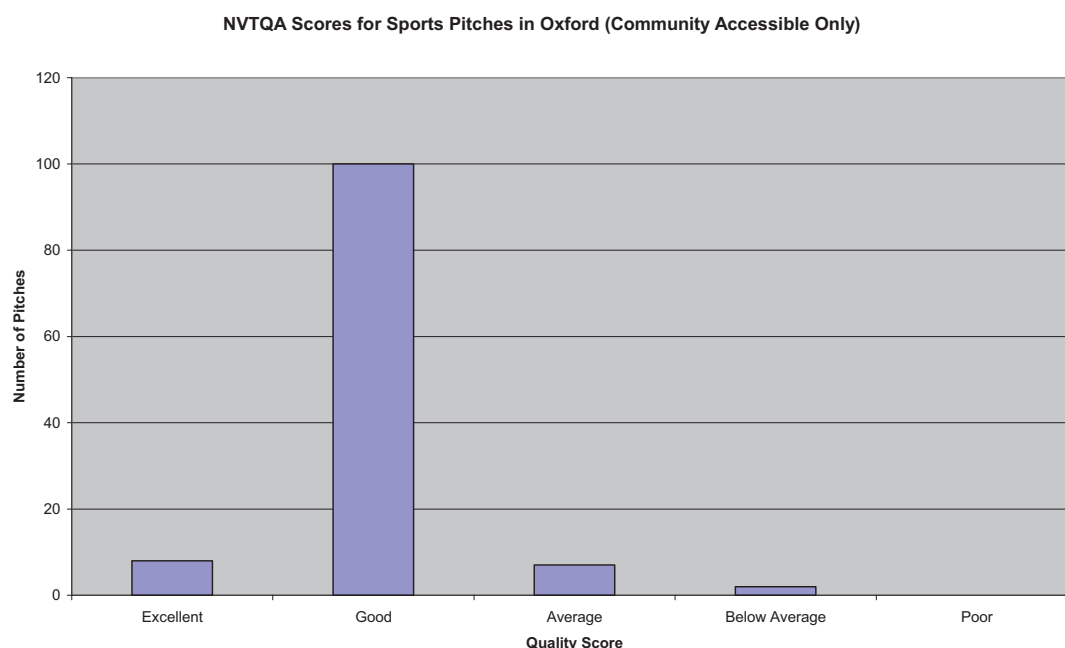
Over 90% = Excellent  
64 – 90% = Good  
55 – 64% = Average  
30 – 54% = Below Average  
Less than 30% = Poor

#### **Ancillary Facility Quality Rating Scale**

Over 90% = Excellent  
60 – 89% = Good  
40 – 59% = Average  
30 – 39% = Poor  
Less than 30% = Very Poor

An example of the assessment templates for pitches and ancillary facilities can be found in Appendices 3 and 4. Figure 2 below shows the NVTQA overall ratings for all accessible pitches in the city (secured and unsecured). The overall ratings for each individual pitch are provided in the separate sport sections of this document.

**Figure 2: Overall pitch quality scores (for secured and non secured community accessible pitches)**



- 3.4.3 A separate NVQTA was used to assess ancillary facilities at each site such as pavilions, and includes elements ranging from the condition of showers and toilets to security. The scores recorded for the ancillary provision identified that most of the pavilions in the city (the majority of which are of external ownership) were rated as 'Good', however the majority of Council owned pavilions received a 'Poor' rating.
- 3.4.4 To ensure that the assessment scores provided an accurate reflection of the quality of pitches and ancillary provision, they were, wherever possible, undertaken with relevant grounds staff. There were a small number of sites outside the ownership of Oxford City Council where access to the site was restricted. In these cases an informed assumption has been made regarding their quality based on local knowledge, feedback from clubs that may play on the site, discussions with grounds staff and the proximity of the site to other playing pitches that have been assessed. This accounted for 12 sites (of 48) with pitches accessible to the community at some degree (hosting a mixture of football, rugby union and cricket pitches), which were typically within the ownership of community schools/academies, university and colleges.
- 3.4.5 The second stage comprised of checking and challenging the overall rating given for each pitch and ancillary provision. This included checking the ratings against feedback from the consultation, e.g. from sports clubs and league secretaries. The NGB's of Sport and grounds staff, including Oxford City Council Parks department, were then also asked to look through and check and challenge the ratings. Those sites where an informed assumption on their quality was made were also checked and challenged using the above process.

### 3.5 Carrying Capacity

- 3.5.1 The number of matches a pitch can accommodate will vary depending on many factors, including pitch quality, drainage and the maintenance regime. The TLPF guidance emphasises the importance of taking these factors into consideration in order to determine the 'true' carrying capacity of a pitch. The guidance suggests including a pitch equivalent concept into the overall assessment based on the estimated carrying capacity of each pitch. The pitch equivalent figure can then be used in the modelling to ensure that it reflects the capacity and quality of each pitch, as opposed to treating every pitch the same. This therefore allows for the fact that some pitches, due to their quality and capacity, may not be available for use in any given week.
- 3.5.2 All of the City Council owned pitches are currently maintained to a specification allowing four matches or match equivalent sessions per week. This figure, which includes matches and training along with other uses, e.g. educational and casual use, has been used as a benchmark for determining the carrying capacity where a capacity of four sessions per week equals 1 pitch. Depending on the capacity of a pitch, its pitch equivalent figure is adjusted accordingly in line with the scale in Table 3 below.

**Table 3 Carrying Capacity Scale**

Sessions per week (this includes training and matches)	Pitch Equivalent
1	0.25 of a pitch
2	0.50 of a pitch
3	0.75 of a pitch
4	1 pitch
5	1.25 of a pitch

- 3.5.3 To arrive at a pitch equivalent score for each pitch, information on actual pitch usage was analysed alongside a range of factors which influence the quality and accessibility of a pitch, including poor drainage. This information was attained through sports booking records, feedback from consultation including the questionnaires, discussions with grounds staff and local knowledge; together with the quality rating assigned to each pitch from the qualitative assessment set out in section 3.4 above. Similar to the qualitative ratings, where information was unavailable, an informed assumption has been made based on similar pitches (University/Colleges), and discussions with those that have good knowledge of the pitches such as the School Sports Partnership for school pitches. Table 4 below identifies the number of pitches in the city by sport and the pitch equivalent score based on the above scale.

**Table 4: Calculated Carrying Capacity**

Pitch Type	Number of Pitches	Pitch Equivalent
Senior Football	54	50.30
Junior Football	7	7
Mini Football	13	13
Senior Rugby Union	26 (this figure includes 3 pitches outside of the city that meet the displaced demand)	22.80 (this figure also includes the 3 pitches outside of the city that meet the displaced demand, which equates to 2.25 pitch equivalents).
Senior Cricket	20	19.3

3.5.4 Although there are a number of pitches with some degree of community access within the educational sector the majority of their use is by the educational establishments themselves. However, examples of their use by the community are two rugby pitches at Cherwell School that are used by Oxford Harlequins RFC (juniors and minis) and the rugby pitch at the Oxford Academy used by Littlemore RFC. Another example is East Oxford Cricket Club and Oxenford Cricket Club, who use the cricket pitch at Jesus College Sports ground. Therefore, when determining the carrying capacity of these sites for community use the following pitch equivalent figures have been used, which take into consideration the quality ratings local knowledge and other factors i.e. drainage:

- Football (per pitch) = 1 pitch equivalent
- Rugby (per pitch) = 1 pitch equivalent (with the exception of two pitches that are used by the Oxford Harlequins RFC (junior and minis) at Cherwell School as these are of a poor quality and therefore each are equivalent to 0.5 of a pitch)
- Cricket = 0.75 pitch equivalent. A slightly lower equivalent was given to cricket pitches. This score was informed through discussions with the PDM of the School Sports Partnership who noted that, typically, school cricket pitches tend to be at a lower standard in comparison to other pitches due to the level of maintenance they require.

Scores for these pitches have been included above in Table 4.

3.5.5 In line with the TLPF guidance, the pitch equivalent figures have been used within the playing pitch model to assess the adequacy of provision in the city to meet peak time demand. Following the process set out in 3.4.5 the pitch equivalent figures given were checked and challenged before being used in the assessment.

### **3.6 Catchment Analysis**

3.6.1 It is important that an assessment of provision is undertaken at an appropriate geographical level that reflects the nature of how the relevant sports are played in the city. Following discussion with the NGBs for each sport it was agreed that:



- Football would be assessed in line with the city's Area Committee boundaries (now known as Area Forums) to reflect the relatively localised nature of play i.e. the high number and pattern of clubs and the catchment from which their players reside.
- The remainder of the natural grass pitch sports, rugby and cricket, would be analysed at a city-wide level. This is due to the smaller number of clubs and teams, which while focused within specific areas of the city, have a wide geographical catchment of players.

### **3.7 Sport Specific Sections**

- 3.7.1 The following sections of this document provide information on the approach taken, and the resulting assessment for football, rugby union and cricket. The approach follows the TLPF guidance, and the detail provided within this section, along with building in some sport specific issues.

## **4. ASSESSMENT OF NATURAL GRASS PLAYING PITCHES**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 Sections 4.2 to 4.4 set out the assessment of natural grass playing pitches following Sport England's TLPF guidance and the detail within section 3. The assessment is separated into sport-specific sections, and then the overall conclusions and recommendations are set out in section 4.5. The sport specific sections summarise the information collated and assessed through the following areas:

- Governance and participation
- Supply of pitches
- Quality of provision and ancillary facilities
- Sport development
- Facility development
- Sport specific methodology
- Team Generation Rates and latent demand
- Other identified latent demand
- Displaced demand
- Trends and participation targets
- Peak demand for pitches
- Results and findings from assessments (including local issues)
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

## 4.2 Football in Oxford

### Governance and participation

- 4.2.1 Football in Oxford is primarily governed by the Oxfordshire Football Association (OFA), who are supported at a local level by Oxford City Council. The OFA's mission is to "establish safe and structured football opportunities for the benefit of all concerned, irrespective of age, colour, gender and disability" [www.oxfordshirefa.com](http://www.oxfordshirefa.com)
- 4.2.2 The City Council's Sport and Physical Activity Review (2009) identified football as a 'Focus Sport' for the sports development team in Oxford. The Council has therefore worked closely with the OFA to achieve its objectives for the city and deliver the previous National Game Strategy 2007 – 2012 and will continue to do so in relation to the FA's new 2011-2015 strategy. The pyramid league structure for male football (shown in blue), and female football (shown in red), is as follows working down to the regional and Oxford specific tiers:



4.2.3 There are a total of 125 football clubs in Oxford, which between them field 348 teams (this figure includes OFA registered teams and those teams represented by universities/colleges) and represent 23 leagues, in addition to social leagues/tournaments. Without the inclusion of university/college teams, the club to team ratio is 1:2.8, i.e. each club on average fields 2.8 teams. This is slightly lower than the national average of 1:2.9 and the regional team ratio of 1.3.3<sup>9</sup>. Table 5 below provides a summary of the club and team structure in Oxford. The team count in the Table includes 11 disabled teams that play in the Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (BOBI) League. These teams stem from five individual clubs and Oxford City Football Club.

**Table 5: Football clubs and teams in Oxford**

<b>Clubs</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% of total clubs</b>	<b>Teams</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% of total teams</b>
FA registered	60	48%	FA registered	203	58%
University teams (including colleges)	65	52%	University teams (including colleges)	145	42%

4.2.4 There are 16 Charter Standard<sup>10</sup> clubs in Oxford including:

- 6 Charter Standard Basic clubs: Bullingdon Boy's FC, Greater Leys Youth FC, Hinksey Park FC, Northway Boys FC, Oxford Bluebirds FC and Oxford Blackbird Boys FC.
- 2 Charter Standard Development clubs: Horspath Youth FC and Marston Saints FC.
- 3 Community clubs: Oxford United, Oxford City FC, and Summertown Stars FC.
- 5 Adult Charter Standard clubs: Oxford Brookes University Ladies FC, Oxford Coasters FC, The Faithfuls, Oxford Clinic and FC Streets Revolution.

## **Supply of Pitches**

### **Quantity and Accessibility**

4.2.5 There are a total of 109 football pitches in the city, of which 74 (68%) are deemed to be available for community use to some extent. Table 6 below provides a summary of those football pitches available for community use along with the number of teams by analysis area.

<sup>9</sup> National and Regional football team ratio's have been taken from the Football Association's; Local Area Data Report for Oxford (2010/11).

<sup>10</sup> The FA Charter Standard award is a national kite mark recognising those clubs that are providing quality football opportunities in a safe environment. The program is accessible to both junior and adult clubs and can be achieved by clubs who run only one team or those with numerous teams.

**Table 6: Number of pitches with community access (secured and unsecured) and teams**

Analysis Area (Area Committee)	Number of football pitches available for community use			Number of teams (excluding university teams <u>not</u> registered with the OFA)						
	Senior	Youth	Mini	Senior Men's	Senior Women's	Youth Boys	Youth Girls	Mini	Disability	Total
Cowley	12	-	3	22	4	17	3	12	-	<b>58</b>
East	-	-	-	5	-	2	-	1	2	<b>10</b>
North	11	2	4	7	-	7	2	7	-	<b>23</b>
North East	11	4	2	17	5	23	-	14	6	<b>65</b>
South East	9	1	1	5	-	9	8	8	-	<b>30</b>
Central South & West	11	-	3	3	2	5	-	4	-	<b>14</b>
Displaced <sup>11</sup>				-	-	-	-	-	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>203</b>

4.2.6 Table 6 above, identifies that Oxford's football clubs and teams are well distributed across the city. As shown in Figure 3, a similar level of distribution can be seen for the provision of pitches with some degree of community access. The East area of Oxford does not have any pitches with secured community access; however, there is provision owned by the University that is not currently accessible by the community, and pitches within other areas are in short proximity. Similarly, pitches that were historically marked out on Donnington Recreation Ground could be brought back in to play should there be a demonstrated need. Although the Central, South and West area have 14 pitches accessible to for community use all of the senior pitch provision is reliant on those college sites that are accessible, albeit not secured.

4.2.7 Appendix 5 provides a summary of the hierarchy of provision of football pitches (typically those owned by Oxford City Council) in relation to the league structure for Oxford. A hierarchy of pitches is important to ensure that teams can progress up the league table.

4.2.8 Whilst 74 football pitches have some degree of community access, the nature and therefore certainty of this access varies. Table 7 provides a summary of the nature of community access to the 74 football pitches.

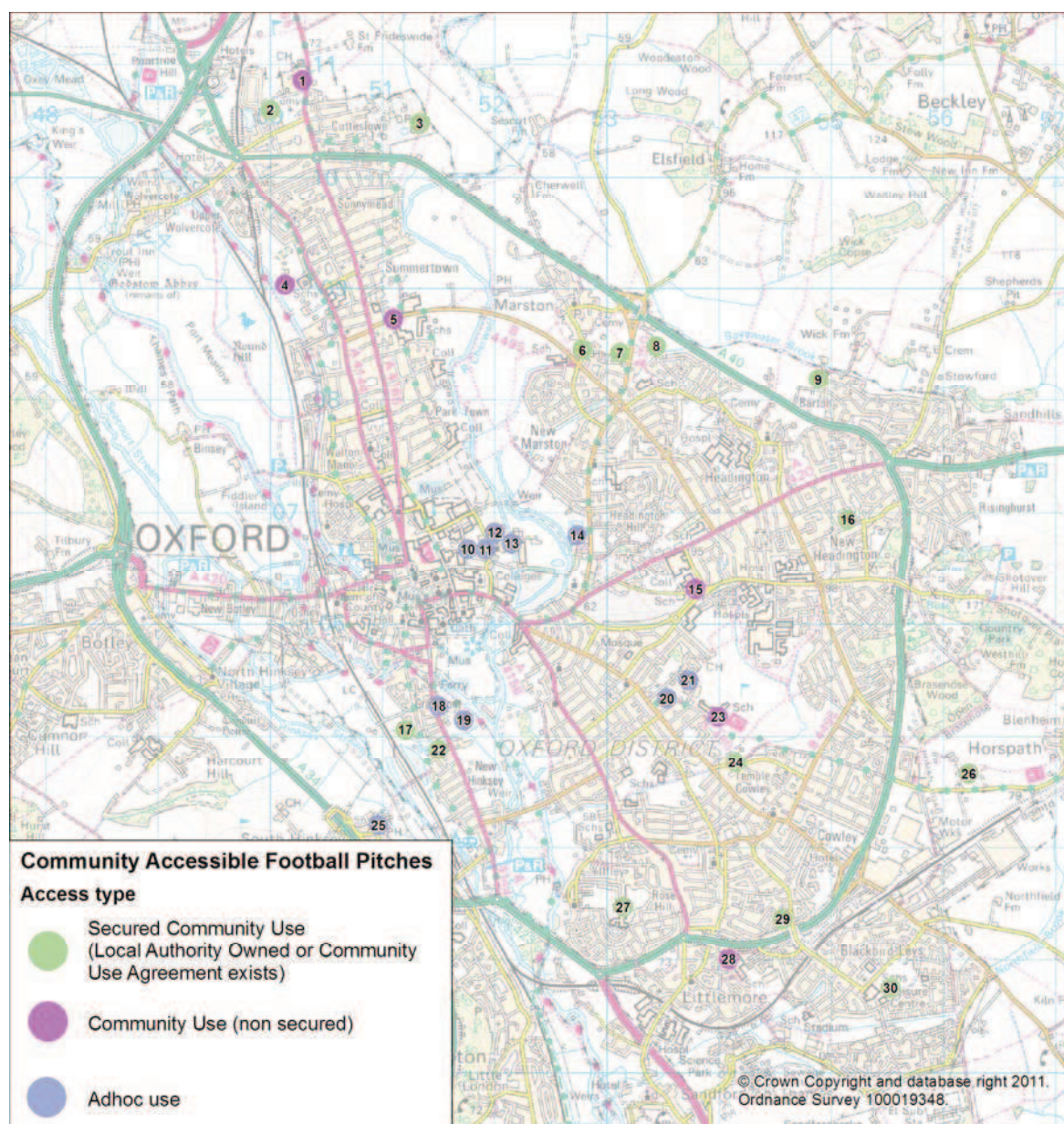
**Table 7: Access levels of community accessible football pitches in Oxford.**

Access Type	Senior pitches	Youth pitches	Mini pitches
Secured Community Use	21	8	17
Community Use (not secured)	14	-	-
Adhoc use	14	-	-

<sup>11</sup> Displaced Teams can be described as Oxford registered teams that use pitches outside of the City for their home fixtures, either by choice or no other option.



**Figure 3: Map showing the distribution of football pitches with community access (secured and non secured) in Oxford.**



Map ID	Site Name	Number of senior football pitches	Number of junior football pitches	Number of mini pitches	Number of designated training pitches	Quality of pitches	Quality of ancillary facilities	Floodlit	Ownership	Management	Access Type	Ward	Area Committee
1	Oxford University Press Sports Ground (Jordan Hill)	1	-	-	-	Good	Good	N	University	Sport Club	Community Access (not secured)	Wolvercote	North
2	Five Mile Drive Recreation Ground	1	1	-	-	Good	Very Poor	N	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Access	Wolvercote	North
3	Cotteslowe Park	3	1	4	-	Good	Average Poor	N	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Access	Wolvercote	North
4	St Edwards School	2	-	-	-	Good	Good	N	Independent School	Independent School	Adhoc use	Summertown	North
5	Cherwell School	4	-	-	-	Good	Average	N	Community School	Community School	Community Access (not secured)	Marston	North-East
6	Boults Lane Recreation Ground	1	2	-	-	Good	Average	N	Marston Parish Council	Marston Parish Council	Secured Community Access	Marston	North-East
7	Court Place Farm	2	1* (over marked pitch)	2* (1 pitch over marked)	-	Good	Average	N	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Access	Marston	North-East
	Community Arena	1 stadium				Good		Y		Oxford City Football Club			
8	Northway Recreation Ground	2	-	2 (over marked)	-	Good	Average	N	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Access	Headington Hill & Northway	North-East
9	Barton Recreation Ground	1	1	1* (over marked)	-	Good	Very Poor	N	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Access	Barton & Sandhills	North-East
10	Oxford University Club	1	-	-	-	Good	Good	N	University	University	Adhoc use	Holywell	Central, South & West
11	Balliol College Sports Ground	1	-	-	-	Good	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Holywell	Central, South & West
12	New College Sports Ground	2	-	-	-	Good	N/a	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Holywell	Central, South & West
13	Merton College Sports Ground	1	-	-	-	Good	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Holywell	Central, South & West
14	Magdalen College Sports Ground	2	-	-	1	Good	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Marston	North-East
15	Cheney School	1	-	-	-	Good	Good	N	Community School	Community School	Community Use (not secured)	Churchill	North-East
16	Quarry Recreation Ground	1	1	1	-	Good	Very Poor	N	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Quarry & Risinghurst	North-East



17	Grandpont Recreation Ground	1	-	-	2	-	Good	N/a	N	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
18	Brasenose College Sports Ground	2	-	-	-	-	Good	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
19	The Queens College Sports Ground	1	-	-	-	-	Good	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
20	Lincoln College Sports Ground	1	-	-	-	-	Good	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Cowley Marsh	Cowley
21	Jesus College Sports Ground	1	-	-	-	-	Good	Excellent	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Cowley Marsh	Cowley
22	Hinksey Park	-	-	-	1	-	Good	N/a		Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
23	Oxford Spire Academy	4	-	-	-	-	Good	Poor	N	Academy (community school)	Academy (community school)	Community Use (not secured)	Cowley Marsh	Cowley
24	Cowley Marsh	2	1	1	1	-	Good	Good	Y	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Cowley Marsh	Cowley
25	Pembroke College Sports Ground	2	-	-	-	-	Good	Good	Y	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
26	Horspath Sports Ground	3	2	2	-	1	Good	Average	Y (training pitch only)	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Lye Valley	Cowley
27	Rose Hill Recreation Ground	1	-	-	-	1	Good	Poor	Y (training pitch only)	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Rose Hill & Ifley	South-East
28	The Oxford Academy	2	-	-	-	-	Good	Excellent	N	Academy (community school)	Academy (community school)	Community Use (not secured)	Littlemore	South-East
29	Sandy Lane Recreation Ground	2	-	-	1* (over marked pitch)	-	Good	Very Poor	N	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Blackbird Leys	South-East
30	Blackbird Leys Recreation Ground	4	-	-	3* (2 over marked pitches)	-	Good	Average	N	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Blackbird Leys	South-East

N.B. As noted in paragraph 3.4, those highlighted cells indicate where an assumption on the overall quality of the pitch(es) and ancillary facilities have been made.

- 4.2.9 In addition to the 74 pitches that have some degree of community access, there are a further 35 football pitches in the city that are not available for community use. These pitches are typically within the independent schools and universities/colleges in Oxford, and have therefore been excluded from the supply and demand analysis. Table 8 provides a summary of these pitches by analysis area and a map of these pitches/sites can be found in Appendix 6a.

**Table 8: Football pitches with no community use**

Analysis Area (Area Committee)	Number of pitches NOT available for community use		
	Senior	Youth	Mini
Cowley	5	1	1
East	3	-	-
North	4	7	-
North-East	7	-	-
South-East	1	1	-
Central South & West	5	-	-
<b>Oxford</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>

- 4.2.10 Ownership of the pitches identified in Table 8 is as follows:

- 57% Higher Education (Oxford University/Colleges)
- 20% Private Sports Clubs
- 20% Independent Schools
- 3% Community Special Schools

Whilst these pitches are currently unavailable for community use, they could, depending on their capacity, provide a potential option to increase the supply of pitch provision available to the community should the current supply not meet existing and future demands.

- 4.2.11 Historically, Oxford City Council had additional football pitches at a number of sites across the city (as shown in Table 9 below). However, due to a variety of reasons, these are not currently marked out. Depending on the works required to bring the land back into use, these pitches could potentially be reinstated should demand for pitches exceed supply.

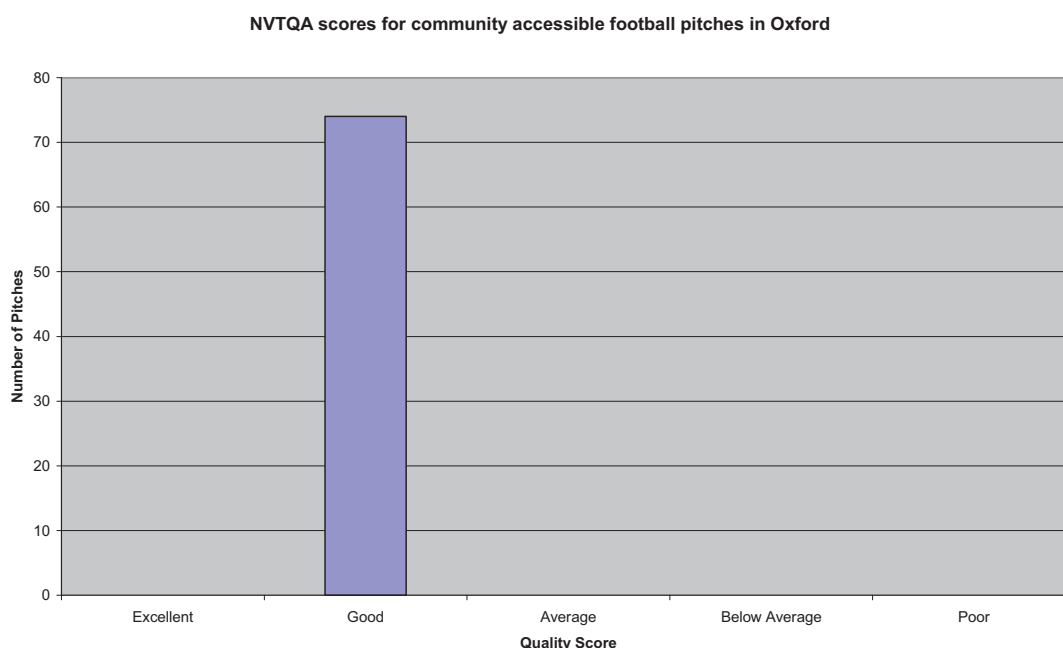
**Table 9: Historic football pitches, no longer in play**

Analysis Area (Area Committee)	Site Name	Number of pitches		
		Senior	Youth	Mini
Central, South & West	Botley Park	1	-	-
Central, South & West	Hinksey Park	-	1	-
Cowley	Bullington (Peat Moors)	-	1	-
North-East	Croft Road	2	-	-
North-East	South Park	1	-	-
East	Donnington Recreation Ground	2	1	-
South-East	Spindleberry Park	-	-	1

#### **Quality of provision and ancillary facilities**

4.2.12 As set out in section 3.4, an assessment of the quality of community accessible football pitches in Oxford has been undertaken. Figure 4 below shows the quality ratings for those football pitches that are deemed to have some degree of community access, across the three scenarios. Results of the assessments identify that 100% of the accessible pitches are rated as 'Good', with the remainder of the pitches receiving an 'Excellent' rating.

**Figure 4: Non Visual Technical Quality Scores for community accessible (secured and non secured) football pitches in Oxford.**



4.2.13 Qualitative assessments were also undertaken for the ancillary facilities supporting pitch provision on the accessible sites. While the mean score across all sites was good (63%), the mean score for the City Council owned sites was poor (37%). The quality of the ancillary provision, and in particular the pavilions on City Council sites, was raised by many clubs within the consultation. The City Council has undertaken a comprehensive review of its pavilion stock, which is currently being drawn in to a phased improvement programme for the Council's pavilions.

4.2.14 The key strategic sites for football in regard to the location of pitches, number of teams and the level of use are:

- Blackbird Leys Park (South-East)
- Cutteslowe Park (North)
- Court Place Farm (North-East)
- Horspath (Cowley)

Upon analysis of the results from the quality assessments, all the pitches at these sites received a 'Good' rating. Through consultation, the clubs that use these sites did report that they felt they were at capacity and this was supported by the City Council's parks team who are responsible for the maintenance of these pitches.

## **Football Development**

- 4.2.15 The Oxfordshire Football Association have indicated that there has been a recent decline in the number of registered senior football teams in Oxford. This has been supported through feedback of clubs who have noted the demise of Sunday league football in Oxford. The OFA are therefore looking to focus on sustaining current senior participation up to 2026 and this is expected to be a focus within the FA's refreshed strategy (2011 – 2015). The OFA indicate that youth football has also experienced a decline in recent years, but following a review by the FA, they will be implementing a 9v9 and 5v5 version of the game in 2013. This shift will require some change in the nature of pitch layouts within the city, with potentially smaller pitches than the conventional 'senior pitch', as well as specific goal posts.
- 4.2.16 Unlike senior and youth football, mini football has experienced significant growth in the city over recent years, which continues to increase. Feedback from consultation with the clubs has identified that many of the clubs that already field a number of mini teams are keen to grow the number of teams i.e. Oxford Blackbird Boys FC, Oxford City FC, Summertown Stars FC and Hinksey Park FC.

## **Facility Developments**

- 4.2.17 Prior to the development of this strategy, the City Council had no plans in the pipeline to make any improvements to the natural grass playing pitches within their ownership. This position will be reviewed alongside the action plan set out in section 7 and closely monitored in line with the annual review of the strategy. However, set out below are a number of recent or current developments that will affect the provision of facilities available to football, and in turn may affect the supply of and demand for natural grass playing pitches.

### The Community Arena

Oxford City Council has worked closely with Oxford City FC to develop a third generation pitch<sup>12</sup>, commonly known as a 3G pitch, at Court Place Farm, Marston. The new development includes an artificial grass pitch with floodlights, offering a year round, and all weather facility for football. In addition to the 3G pitch, six new netball courts have also been provided (netball is discussed further in section 5.7).

While Oxford City Football Club and the city's netball clubs are the main beneficiaries of the new £2 million development, the new sports facility has a secured community use agreement, creating enhanced sporting opportunities to the city residents and visiting teams.

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<sup>12</sup> Third Generation (3G) pitches, represent a new development in synthetic turf. The pitch itself looks like natural grass with similar playing characteristics, non-abrasive and can be used with rubber studs. Their design is primarily designed for contact sport training.

### The Oxford Academy

The Oxford Academy has developed a covered 3G pitch, which has formed part of a redevelopment programme to improve the sporting provision within the school. The development also included an artificial grass pitch for the purpose of hockey. The facilities opened for community use in September 2011.

### Commercially Funded Artificial Grass Pitches

Oxford City Council has been approached by a number of operators looking to develop a small sided football facility in the city. An options appraisal has been developed which focused on eight potential sites. Out of these sites, Sandy Lane and Rose Hill were identified as potential opportunities for a facility of this nature. Further consultation is planned with clubs, stakeholders and operators to ascertain if any of the proposed sites are feasible and a tender process will then be conducted in respect of this opportunity.

### Pavilions

As previously noted, a review of the pavilion provision in the city has been undertaken. The review analyses the quality of the pavilions, through the use of Sport England's NVTQA tool and provides an estimated cost for capital investment. To coincide with the review, and as part of a long standing project, Barton Pavilion has recently been replaced with a modular design building, which meets relevant guidance and will benefit the whole community. A phased improvement program for the Council's pavilions is currently being drawn together.

## **Sport Specific Assessment Methodology**

4.2.18 To analyse football in Oxford, in respect of teams and the demand for pitches, the TLPF methodology was adopted. To make the methodology more specific to football and to capture Oxford's uniqueness, the following approach was also taken when using Sport England's Playing Pitch Model:

1. An assessment has taken place at both a citywide and Area Committee level.
2. There is some over-marking of football pitches within the city i.e. an adult pitch with a mini/junior pitch marked inside. Whilst this operates as two separate pitches, to avoid double counting of pitch areas within the assessment, these are counted as adult only pitches. This results in a reduction of six mini pitches and one junior pitch from those currently marked out.
3. Training pitches, where they exist, have not been included. However, for the purpose of this strategy the Oxford City Council owned training pitch at Rose Hill Recreation Ground has been included and classified as a senior pitch because of its dimensions and significance to the local football clubs for training and matches. This pitch is regularly used, and is one of the few floodlit grass football pitches remaining in the city; as such there was an importance for this to be included within the modelling.

4. Oxford University teams, including college teams, have not been included within the modelling as they only play on the college or university facilities and do not use any other pitches in the city. Any comments/feedback received from these teams however, will be fed in to the conclusions, recommendations and action plan. Where university/college pitches are available for community access, these have been included within the modelling as discussed in section 3.2.
5. Oxford United fields a total of 27 teams through their main club, ladies section, academy and the centre of excellence which is focused on youth football. In addition to the club's home pitch 'The Kassam Stadium', the club has recently secured sole use of the pitches at 'Rover Sports and Social Club'. Feedback suggests that there is very little likelihood that any additional pitches will be needed by the club, and therefore these teams have not been included within the modelling or audit of community teams.

Similarly, the pitches on site at the Rover Sports and Social Club have not been included within the modelling as there is no longer community access. This is a direct result of the recent arrangement with Oxford United FC. The draft Sites and Housing document for Oxford (2011) has identified the Rover Sports and Social Club site for potential development, however, a condition of the policy recognises a direct replacement of this facility elsewhere. Whilst this facility is not accessible to the community, loss of the site would result in displacement of the Oxford United teams (along with Oxford Cricket Club) and would therefore place greater pressures on the existing community accessible stock.

Going forward, the Council needs to ensure that dialogue remains open with Oxford United, and that as part of the strategy review process, regular consultation is undertaken with the club to review their need for additional pitches.

6. Due to the adhoc playing pattern of the 11 registered disabled teams within the city, these teams have not been included within the modelling. However, to ensure that these teams and their usage on the city pitches (4 out of 12 fixtures played at Court Place Farm) is accounted for, and that pitches will be available for use when required, their demand has been factored in to the requirement to allow for a strategic reserve of pitches within the modelling.



## Football Team Generation Rates and Latent Demand

4.2.19 Table 10 below sets out the Team Generation Rates for football based on the community teams identified (not including the 27 teams at Oxford United). The TGRs are presented at a city-wide and area committee level for 2011.

**Table 10: Football TGR for Oxford and area committee's 2011**

<b>Analysis Areas (Area Committee)</b>	<b>Senior Men (16-45)</b>	<b>Senior Women (16-45)</b>	<b>Junior Boys (10-15)</b>	<b>Junior Girls (10-15)</b>	<b>Mini Soccer (6-9) mixed</b>
Cowley	1:282	-	1:53	-	1:111
East	1:1,241	-	1:121	-	1:425
North	1:947	-	1:104	1:358	1:127
North East	1:573	1:1,939	1:45	1:108	1:105
South East	1:113	-	1:94	-	1:184
Central, South & West	1:2,705	1:3,859	1:56	-	1:109
<b>Oxford</b>	<b>1:752</b>	<b>1:5,905</b>	<b>1:66</b>	<b>1:340</b>	<b>1:134</b>
Welwyn Hatfield	1:239	1:4134	1:68	1:722	1:187
Southampton	1:529	1:42,846	1:159	-	1:644

*N.B. Where no TGR is shown, no teams operate in that area within the specific age group.*

4.2.20 As set out in section 3.1.10, the TGRs can be used within the modelling to help estimate the future demand for playing pitches. TGRs can also be compared with those for other areas to help provide an indication of the relative level of participation and also whether any latent demand may exist. The TGRs for Oxford have been benchmarked against those for some other local authorities (see Appendix 7), that have recently developed a playing pitch strategy. However, it should be noted that there are unfortunately a number of authorities within our benchmarking group that do not have an up to date playing pitch strategy and therefore TGR data for these authorities is not available. The most similar areas to Oxford whose authorities do have a strategy in place are Welwyn and Hatfield and Southampton. The TGR's for these areas are presented alongside the results for Oxford in Table 10 above.

4.2.21 In comparison to the benchmarked local authorities, Oxford records a relatively low TGR for senior male football. This suggests that there may be the potential to increase participation levels within adult male football as there may well be some latent demand. However, the TGRs may also suggest that there are barriers to adult male participation which need addressing, and this may include access to good quality playing pitches and ancillary provision. The TGRs do differ significantly within the city, with the South-East, North-East and Cowley areas recording relatively high rates below the Oxford average. In contrast, the East and North areas along with Central, South West record low TGRs.

- 4.2.22 When looking at the remainder of the gender and age group TGRs for football in Oxford alongside the TGR's for the benchmarked authorities, there appears to be less latent (unmet) demand. However, the TGRs for junior boys are notable higher in the East, North and South-East and for mini football, are significantly higher in the East.

#### **Other identified latent demand**

- 4.2.23 Senior football is relatively strong in the city compared with other adult pitch sports. However, despite approximately 2,100 more people wanting to play the sport in Oxford (as set out in 2.3.9) over recent years the number of senior clubs registered has seen a downward turn.<sup>13</sup> There are no reported reasons why senior football (particularly Sunday league) has declined in Oxford, other than clubs being unable to survive the economic downturn. While football is expected to see a growth in the city, comments from the consultation suggested that some of the teams are already outgrowing the facilities they currently use. Therefore, without access to additional provision or increased capacity, their growth (amongst senior, youth and mini teams) may be hindered. These clubs include Oxford City FC, Summertown Stars FC, Hinksey Park FC and Headington Amateurs FC. Feedback regarding the oversubscription of training facilities was also raised within the consultation.
- 4.2.24 Comments received back from the league secretaries for football suggests that there are no teams that are currently waiting for pitches in the city. However, the secretary for the Oxford Mail Boys league stated that the lack of pitches, (which we can assume is youth and mini pitches) would have an impact on the teams growing further. It was also argued that the proposed parking charges for the parks and those already introduced may deter the use of pitches.
- 4.2.25 It was noted by the OFA, that Oxford University have commented that they have issues with accommodating all of their teams on the pitches they currently have. The development of women's football within the universities has also suffered to some degree in this respect. If this trend continues it could mean that there is a demand from the university for pitches amongst other sectors within the city, i.e. those owned by Oxford City Council. However, if Oxford University were to stick to the status quo, typically, they will not use pitches outside of their own grounds/ownership. The demand for pitches by the University therefore needs close monitoring and should be a key area reviewed as part of the first annual update of this strategy.

#### **Displaced Demand**

- 4.2.26 Three of the 11 BOBI league registered teams have been categorised as 'displaced teams', as the majority of their fixtures are played outside of the city. Feedback from the teams, and discussions with the OFA Football Development Officer, suggest that due to the team's adhoc fixtures and nomadic nature they are currently content with playing outside of the city.

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<sup>13</sup> As reported by the annual Local Area Data reports produced by the Oxfordshire Football Association.

## Trends and participation targets

- 4.2.27 As identified above, following recent trends and the 9v9 initiative, the OFA expects to see an increase in both mini and youth football. The OFA are also looking to currently sustain participation in senior football. In light of these predictions the participation increases in Table 11 have been agreed with the OFA to be applied within the assessment to help estimate the future demand for each analysis period:

**Table 11: OFA predicted participation increases for football 2011 - 2026**

Analysis period	Football	Mini soccer
2011 – 2016	0%	13%
2016 – 2021	1%	2%
2021 - 2026	1%	1%

N.B. The Playing Pitch Model allows for a projected increase in participation to be added into the modelling for football (senior and youth) and mini soccer. As this element of the model puts senior and youth play together we have used the predicted increases in senior play shown in the table to ensure any projected increase in senior play is not over estimated. However, it should be noted the conversely this is likely to underestimate to a degree the projected demand for youth play.

## Peak demand for football pitches

- 4.2.28 Consultation and analysis of sports booking records and league fixtures, indicates that the peak demand periods for football for senior, youth and mini games are as follows:

- Senior – Saturday Afternoon (PM)
- Youth – Sunday Morning (AM)
- Mini – Sunday Morning (AM)

The amount of current play across a week is recorded within the modelling. From this information, and the above peak times, the amount of play in the peak period for each age group can be calculated. This calculation within the modelling ensures the assessment and resulting findings are based on the ability of the supply to meet the periods of peak demand.

## Results

- 4.2.29 The results of the calculation stages of the modelling can be found in Appendices 8a to 11. Appendix 8a provides an example of the calculation stages for the football assessment using the 2011-2016 reporting period.

Appendix 9 shows the full results from the Playing Pitch Model for the assessment and the two additional scenarios for the current reporting period, 2011 – 2016. Appendix 10 shows the city-wide results for the additional reporting periods, 2011 – 2021 and 2011 – 2026.

Appendix 11 shows the results for the assessment and two additional scenarios at Area Committee level for the current reporting period, 2011 - 2016.

4.2.30 It is important to note that a 10% strategic reserve has been applied to the results from the Playing Pitch Model shown in Appendix 9 and 10. A strategic reserve has not been added to Appendix 11 as the results would not be significant at ward level. The need to add a strategic reserve is in line with Sport England's guidance as it enables the following elements to be considered within the modelling and allowances to be made for them:

- informal use of pitches
- drainage issues
- the need to rest and move pitches around to help overcome wear and tear
- to reflect that some pitches will be used on an adhoc basis, e.g. by those teams within the BOBI league, casual 'non league' teams and those teams that are very nomadic.
- 'non league' teams and those teams that are very nomadic.

## **Findings**

### **Senior Football Pitch Provision - Citywide**

4.2.31 For the current reporting period of 2011 – 2016 the calculation stages of the modelling suggest that there is some spare capacity within the provision of senior football pitches with secured community use in the city. Currently, and also in 2016, this spare capacity equates to approximately 11 pitches. As set out in paragraph 3.1.7 the results of the modelling and key findings should only be based on those pitches with secured community use. However, it is useful to note that there are a number of additional senior pitches in the city that are only currently available on an unsecured and/or adhoc basis. If community use of these pitches were to be secured then the scenario testing carried out would suggest that the level of spare capacity within the senior pitch provision would rise to approximately 25 pitches in scenario 1 and 35 pitches in scenario 2. However, as stated in paragraph 3.1.7 these figures must be treated with caution as they only provide an indication of the situation should community use be secured at all of these additional sites

4.2.32 Projecting ahead using the other reporting periods (2016 – 2021 and 2021 – 2026) the spare capacity remains stable in line with population and participation changes built in to the modelling.

4.2.33 Along with the OFA seeing a downward trend in the number of adult teams affiliated in Oxford, the consultation undertaken with the football clubs suggested that there was no demonstrated desire for additional senior football pitches, or wide ranging issues of perceived quality of pitches. It was however identified through consultation and through a recent Facilities Improvement Service<sup>14</sup> (recently worked through with Sport England), that there was a demonstrated need for additional floodlit football training facilities in the city.

The new facilities at the Oxford Academy and Court Place Farm should be able to meet this demonstrated need, alongside those existing training

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<sup>14</sup> The Sport England 'Facility Improvement Service' is a programme designed to offer support for local authorities to strategically plan for sports facilities.

facilities at Banbury Road North, Rose Hill Recreation Ground and East Oxford Astro turf. A review of this situation will be required in the monitoring and annual update of this strategy.

### **Latent Demand**

- 4.2.34 Although the current aim of the OFA is to maintain current levels of play for senior football in the city, the TGRs in Table 10, and the market segmentation information in section 2.3 suggest that there may be some latent demand for senior football. However, it is likely that the spare capacity identified in the assessment would be able to cater for this latent demand.

### **Senior Football Pitches within the old Area Committee areas (now Area Forums)**

- 4.2.35 When looking at the results of the assessment at an Area Committee level for the current reporting period (2011 – 2016) there appears to be some spare capacity of pitches in four of the six sub areas of the city, ranging between approximately 1 pitch in Cowley to 6 pitches in the South-East. However, the East area has no accessible pitches so records a deficiency of 2.1 pitches. Whilst there are five registered adult teams in the East these teams have to currently play at other sites across the city. As there are no accessible pitches in the East this deficiency would remain even if community use of the additional pitches included in scenarios one and two were secured. In addition, the Central, South and West area records a deficiency of approximately 1 pitch. This deficiency would only be addressed if some of the sites which allow adhoc unsecured use by the community were to provide secured community on a weekly basis (scenario 2).

### **Senior Football Pitch - Local Issues**

- 4.2.36 The assessment using the playing pitch model provides an overview of the adequacy of provision across a certain geographical area. The modelling suggests that when looking at the city as a whole there is an adequate supply of senior football pitches with secured community use in Oxford to meet current and future demand. However, along with the deficiencies highlighted by the modelling in the East and Central, South and West areas, there are a number of identified local issues that have been picked up during the consultation and development of the strategy. These include:

#### **Court Place Farm**

Consultation with Oxford City Football Club (the main users of the site) along with other clubs that use the pitches and the Oxford City Council grounds maintenance team identified that drainage is an issue on the pitches and would benefit from improvements. Similarly, the 'Stadium' on site is prone to flooding at the lower end and as a result a number of games were cancelled in the 09/10 season. Without improvements, the quality of these pitches would be likely to reduce over time and be prone to an increasing amount of cancellations. This may affect the capacity of the site and therefore reduce the overall capacity of pitches with secured community use in the city.

### Grandpont Recreation Ground

Consultation with Hinksey Park FC, who are the main users of the site, noted that despite maintenance of the pitches, dry summers and burrowing animals have resulted in the pitches becoming rutted. A further concern was raised by the club regarding car parking provision for their teams.

### Barton Recreation Ground

This site is a key within the city and there are currently proposals for a housing scheme in the area of up to 900 houses. The development would impact directly on the recreation ground as it may be moved to accommodate for the new housing. In respect of this, it is important to ensure that not only are the existing facilities re-provided but that they are brought up to the required standards for an increase in population of this size. In addition, feedback through the consultation with the Headington Amateurs football club who use the site, suggests that the adult pitch on the site and ancillary facilities, apart from the recently completed pavilion, do not currently meet the grading guidance for the Hellenic Premier League Division (step 5). This is therefore preventing the club from pursuing their ambition of progressing up the league who are currently at step 6; Hellenic League (although due to the ground grading they should be at step 7, but have been given dispensation by the league). Although the Kassam Stadium and the stadium at Court Place Farm go above and beyond meeting step 5 of the ground grading hierarchy, the Kassam Stadium is unavailable for community use and Court Place farm is already at capacity in terms of use. Development of the pitch and ancillary facilities at Barton Recreation Ground to meet step 5, is therefore important to ensure that there is a hierarchy of pitches to enable teams to progress up the leagues.

### **Youth & Mini Football Pitch Provision – city-wide**

- 4.2.37 The audit work supporting this strategy suggests that Oxford City Council and the Parish Councils are the only providers of accessible youth and mini pitches in the City. Within the current reporting period (2011 – 2016) the assessment indicates that there is an undersupply of approximately 12 youth pitches and 15 mini pitches. Projecting forward to 2016 the modelling indicates that this deficiency of provision increases to approximately 13 youth pitches and 20 mini pitches. As there are no junior or mini pitches within other ownership types, the two additional scenarios included for senior football are not relevant for youth provision when looking at current pitch configurations.
- 4.2.38 Projecting ahead using the other reporting periods, 2016 – 2021 and 2021 – 2026, the demand for youth pitches remains stable, and mini increases at a lesser rate.
- 4.2.39 As stated in paragraph 4.2.18 some youth and mini pitches are marked within adult pitches (over-marked pitches). If these pitches were also included within the assessment then they would help towards partly addressing the undersupply of pitches; providing an additional six mini pitches and one youth pitch. This would reduce the undersupply in the North-East and South-East areas of the city. Nevertheless, even with these pitches included a shortfall in provision will remain within the city of approximately 11 youth pitches and 13 mini pitches (2016 position). Whilst over-marking of pitches works well for the



city, it may be better to have dedicated youth and mini pitches. This will be especially important given the proposed changes to youth football by the FA and the expected introduction of the 9v9 game with set pitch and goal sizes. This will be monitored closely with the OFA in line with the Youth Review and the annual review of the strategy.

### **Youth & Mini Pitch Provision – Local issues**

4.2.40 The city-wide modelling is useful to provide an overview of the adequacy of provision across the city. However, perhaps more importantly, especially for youth and mini pitch provision, is to assess supply and demand at a more localised level. The following paragraphs present the findings from the assessment for each analysis area, some key issues raised from the consultation and possible solutions to improve the adequacy of playing pitch provision.

#### **4.2.41 Cowley Area:**

There is a slight amount of spare capacity of youth pitches in this part of the city by 1 pitch, but an undersupply of mini pitches by approximately one pitch (2016 position). This undersupply could have implications on the two clubs in this area of the city that field six mini teams between them; Florence Park Boys FC & Horspath Youth FC. Unfortunately these clubs did not respond to the consultation, therefore we have no reported issues at present or any idea if they have any aspirations to grow their mini/youth teams. To ease the pressure on the lack of mini pitches in the Cowley area, if the clubs advise that they are in need of additional pitches there could be scope to do the following at the sites referenced below:

Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground – There is no potential for a designated mini pitch, however, there is scope to over-mark a mini pitch on to a senior pitch on site, resulting in the pitch becoming dual-use.

Horspath Sports Ground – There is scope to fit a further designated mini pitch on site.

Once the above has been completed then if there was still a strong demonstrated demand within the area the feasibility of bringing back into use the Bullingdon recreation ground could be examined. This need will be reviewed as part of the monitoring and annual update of the strategy.

#### **4.2.42 Central, South & West Area:**

The assessment suggests that this area of the city has an undersupply of approximately 3 youth and 2 mini pitches (2016 position). There is only one club in this part of the city that fields youth and mini teams: Hinksey Park FC: 5 youth teams and 4 mini teams. Through consultation, the club indicated that there is increasing pressure on the youth pitches at their home site: Grandpont Recreation Ground. The Sports Development Team will regularly liaise with the club and OFA to monitor pressures and look to provide additional pitches with secured community use. This could include securing community use at sites that currently offer unsecured, adhoc or no community use, along with exploring the feasibility of bringing land back into use at Botley Recreation Ground and/or Hinksey Park.

The development of further teams could also be hindered, as the site the club use (Grandpont Recreation Ground) does not have a pavilion, and the club



has indicated a need for such a facility since 2009. As part of the review of pavilions, the Council will explore the feasibility of installing a pavilion in the Grandpont area.

#### 4.2.43 *East Area:*

There are no youth or mini pitches in the East of the city. Oxford Irish FC is the only team registered within this area of the city and they field two youth and one mini team. The club currently play in the Cowley area placing greater pressure on the provision in this area. The club are currently content with the pitches they use but note that team growth is limited due to the pitches being almost at capacity.

Given the lack of pitches in the East of the city any actual and latent demand from this club, along with any new clubs wanting to play in this area needs close monitoring. This is of particular importance as the TGRs (Table 10) for youth boy's football are notably higher in this area and is expected to increase further with population projections. Regular contact will be kept with the club to ensure this monitoring, which could result in the feasibility of bringing pitch provision back into use at Donnington Recreation ground being explored. Unfortunately there are no other youth or mini pitch providers within this area of the city.

#### 4.2.44 *North:*

There is a slight undersupply of approximately 1 youth and 1 mini pitch (2016 position) in this part of the city. This area is home to Summertown Stars FC and Summertown Stars Girls FC, who between them field 7 mini & 9 youth teams. Through the consultation exercise the club noted that they were very keen to increase their membership and number of teams they field. Further consultation has continued with the clubs and two new mini pitches have since been added to Cutteslowe Park to meet some of this identified demand. Feedback from the club has identified that the addition of these two pitches has helped satisfy demand.

Despite this action there is likely to still be a need to provide additional provision within to meet current and future demand from the population of this area and the established clubs. However, unfortunately, at present there does not appear to be any scope for additional designated pitches in this part of the city. The demand for further pitches within this area or in close proximity will need to be monitored closely through regular consultation with the clubs and the annual update of the strategy.

#### 4.2.45 *North-East Area:*

The assessment suggests that this area of the city has a significant undersupply of pitches, with a deficit of approximately 5 youth and 9 mini pitches (2016 position). This undersupply is coupled with the largest number of teams in any of the analysis areas, who between them field a total of 31 youth teams and 14 mini teams. Through consultation with the clubs, it is apparent that there are already pressures on the pitches in this area. One of the larger clubs, Oxford City FC, noted in particular that the club has outgrown its current facilities at Court Place Farm and there is congestion on the pitches particularly during training sessions. All clubs who responded to the consultation from this area reported a desire to grow the number of members and teams, which would result in increased pressures on the pitches. Additional pressures may also stem from the fact that this area of the

city has notably higher TGRs for youth boy's football (Table 10), and is expected to increase further with population projections.

With the potential for approximately 900 new houses as part of the Barton Housing Scheme, there will be added pressure in regards to pitch facilities in an area that is already underprovided for youth and mini pitches. There is an opportunity to secure a community use agreement at the proposed new school and this should be explored to help cope with this potential demand.

To start easing the pressure of the lack of mini pitches within the North-East area of the city, the Council has recently provided one additional mini pitch at Court Place Farm. The development of the Community Arena (housing a 3G pitch for football training) will also go some way to meeting this demand and its impact should be assessed in the monitoring and review of the strategy.

There is no scope for a designated mini pitch at Quarry Recreation Ground, however, the senior pitch on site could be over-marked with a mini pitch, which would result in the pitch becoming dual-use, providing additional mini pitch provision.

An alternative option could be to explore the feasibility of bringing Croft Road Recreation Ground back in to use.

To ensure that the demand for youth and mini pitches can be met within the North-East area, the council will maintain regular dialogue with the clubs in this part of the city.

#### 4.2.46 *South-East Area:*

This area of the city shows an undersupply of approximately 4 youth pitches and a significant undersupply of approximately 7 mini pitches. There are 9 youth teams and 8 mini teams fielded by two clubs registered within this part of the city, these being Greater Leys Youth FC and Oxford Blackbirds Boys FC. Feedback from the consultation identified that both clubs are keen to grow their memberships and teams, which would result in increased demand on the pitches. Again, this area of the city also has notably high TGRs for youth boy's football (Table 10), which may result in an increased demand for pitches. To ease the pressure of the lack of mini pitches within the South-East area of Oxford there could be scope to do the following:

Rose Hill Recreation Ground – There is space on site to mark out a designated mini pitch. Historically there was a youth pitch on site, however, due to a perceived lack of demand this was removed 5 years ago. The sockets for this pitch are still on site and this could therefore be reinstated.

Blackbird Leys Park – A mini pitch has already recently been added to the site, which has been a result of ongoing dialogue with the clubs since the start of developing this strategy.

The potential to secure community use at additional sites which currently offer unsecured, adhoc or no community use should also be explored along with the feasibility of bringing the mini pitch in Spindleberry Park back in to use.

## **Latent demand**

4.2.47 In line with population projections in section 2.2, TGRs in Table 10 and consultation with the clubs, the need for additional youth and mini pitches within the city is supported. A number of clubs have expressed a desire to grow and indicated that the lack of provision or pressures on the current capacity, are limiting this potential growth. This need was also supported by the league secretary of the Oxford Mail Boys League who noted that the absence of and pressure on existing pitches may prevent clubs and teams from forming.

## **Football Conclusions**

4.2.48 The assessment has indicated that there is some spare capacity in the provision of senior pitches with secured community use within the city. This situation is supported by the consultation with clubs, the league and OFA which did not raise issues with the quantity of provision. The issues raised were more directed to the quality of ancillary facilities (especially pavilions) and the quality of pitches at particular sites i.e. Court Place Farm and Grandpont Recreation Ground.

4.2.49 However, the assessment and the consultation have indicated that there is a clear deficiency in the provision of both youth and mini pitches with secured community use within the city. While the deficiency is city wide it appears to be most acute in the North-East and South-East sub areas.

4.2.50 This deficiency may in part be currently met by youth teams using senior pitches, which may not be of the recommended size for their age group. However, whilst there is some identified spare capacity in senior pitches this would only go some way to meeting the deficiency in youth and mini provision and will require appropriate over-marking/re-designation of senior pitches where possible. Whilst this potential should be investigated, included in the action plan and kept under regular review it suggests that together the current provision of football pitches with secured community use in the city is at best close to being on balance. Therefore, the assessment and consultation do not suggest that there is currently any real surplus of football pitch provision available to the community.

4.2.51 The two additional scenarios included do suggest that the level of provision could be enhanced by bringing into use provision which does not currently provide secured community use. This potential should be explored further and any additional secured community use provision should be included in the assessment as part of the monitoring and annual review of the strategy.

4.2.52 Given the above it is important to ensure the below items are taken into consideration:

- The need to maintain and improve the current provision of pitches with secured community use throughout the city.
- The need to explore the potential to over-mark/re-designate some senior pitch provision to youth and mini pitches, or provide new youth and mini pitches on existing sites where a need is demonstrated. This arrangement is already in place on a number of sites in Oxford and has proven to work favourably.

- The issue with meeting the demand for both youth and mini pitches provides support in safeguarding the current senior pitch provision. The potential to reinstate those 'historical' pitches identified in Table 9 should be explored.
  - As the assessment and consultation has not identified any real surplus of provision with secured community use, those sites which do not currently offer such use should also be protected. The potential of securing community use at these sites should be explored as they could provide a valuable resource to help improve the overall provision of pitches with secured community use and address identified deficiencies. The Council should therefore engage with the owners of these sites, which include schools, private clubs, and the university and colleges, to investigate the potential of securing community use agreements. Any sites where such use has been secured should be fed into the monitoring and annual update of the strategy.
  - Due to the pitch pressures in the North-East area, it is important that the wider Barton Housing Scheme provides adequate additional space on site to meet the demand it will generate. The assessment and consultation suggests that community use of the new school for pitch and associated changing room facilities is secured. This requirement and the pressure on pitch provision in the North-East area will be monitored closely through regular consultation with clubs/teams, the OFA and league secretaries.
- 4.2.53 Taking in to account the location of demand and restrictions on land supply, the Oxford City Council owned football pitches are adequately located. The key strategic sites in regards to their location and the number of football teams within the city are: Blackbird Leys Park, Court Place Farm, Horspath Road, Grandpont and Cutteslowe Park. If you were starting from scratch and there was adequate green space then it might have been a potential option to look at four key multi-sport hub facilities spaced across the city, catering for a city-wide market.
- 4.2.54 In general, the football clubs were satisfied with the overall quality of the football pitches in the city. The main concerns of the clubs were regarding the standard of pavilion provision and this was re-affirmed at the football forum held in September 2011. A phased improvement programme for improvements to the city's pavilions is being developed, and should capital funding or developer contributions become available then it is important that this is earmarked against the pavilion facilities.
- 4.2.55 Aligning with the scores of the NVTQA, and feedback from the clubs, it is imperative that the 'Good' quality standard of the Oxford City Council owned football pitches is maintained to safeguard them against significant wear and tear and to protect their current capacity. Failure to do so would be likely to reduce their capacity and therefore reduce the overall supply of provision in the city. As there is currently no clear surplus of provision identified, any reduction in capacity due to a reduction in the quality of provision would potentially exacerbate the issues identified above.

## **Recommendations**

### **4.2.56 City-wide**

1. That the Council continues its needs led evidence based approach to football pitch provision and that this is reviewed on an annual basis. The annual review, including consultation with relevant parties, should include and assess the impact of any changes to the supply and demand for provision. This should include whether secured community use has been established at any sites which do not currently provide such use and look at issues such as the potential re-designation/over-marking of pitches between senior, junior and mini play.
2. That there is a phased improvement program for the Council's pavilions, and that future sports related developer contributions are allocated towards improvements and maintenance.
3. That all existing football pitches are protected, or where development may be proposed then adequate replacement provision is secured in line with the needs identified within this strategy.
4. That the Council's pitches are continued to be maintained to the same standard in line with the approved maintenance specification document.
5. That other provision is also protected and the Council explores the potential to secure community use at those sites which currently provide unsecured, ad hoc or no such community use. When seeking to secure such community use the focus should be on providing designated youth and mini provision in the area of greatest need. This recommendation may also be a way forward to address the shortfall of senior pitches in the East area of the city.

### **4.2.57 Area Based**

#### **North-East**

1. Explore the opportunity to secure community use of the playing fields and associated changing facilities, outside of school times at the proposed new primary school in Barton.
2. Explore various funding opportunities to assist with the hierarchy of provision in the city i.e. assist with upgrading the ground facilities at Barton Recreation Ground in line with Hellenic Premier Division (Step 5) standards.
3. That the quality and drainage of pitches at Court Place Farm are improved and external funding is explored.
4. Continue to consult with clubs in the North-East area (particularly those that use Court Place Farm) to assess the demand for youth and mini pitches and explore the over-marking/markings of pitches in line with identified need.

#### Central South & West

5. That the opportunity and cost of improving the quality of pitches at Grandpont Recreation Ground is examined, and external funding is explored.
6. Work with Oxfordshire County Council and Hinksey Park FC to investigate longer term parking arrangements for the team on match days.
7. Continue to consult with Hinksey Park FC to assess demand for youth and mini pitches, and explore over-marking/markings of pitches in line with identified need.

#### East

8. Look to secure community access of pitches in the East area to help address the shortfall in senior pitch provision.
9. Continue to consult with Oxford Irish FC to assess demand for youth and mini pitches, and explore the feasibility of reinstating the pitches at Donnington Recreation Ground in line with identified need.

#### Cowley

10. Continue to consult with the clubs in the Cowley area to assess demand for youth and mini pitches, and explore the over-marking/markings of pitches in line with identified need.

#### North

11. Continue to consult with Summertown Stars FC to assess the need for mini and youth pitches.

#### South-East

12. Continue to consult with clubs in the North-East area to assess the demand for youth and mini pitches and explore the over-marking/markings of pitches in line with identified need.

### **4.3 Rugby in Oxford**

#### **Governance and Participation**

- 4.3.1 There are two constituting bodies for rugby in Oxford; Oxfordshire Rugby Football Union (ORFU) that are responsible for the development of rugby in Oxford, and Oxford University, who field 32 teams (this also includes college teams).
- 4.3.2 The ORFU's vision is to grow the community game for players, coaches, referees and volunteers and to strengthen the school and club structure, to ensure all can enjoy the game of rugby union. Rugby has been identified through Oxford City Council's Sports and Physical Activity Review (2009) as a 'Priority Sport'.
- 4.3.3 There are four ORFU registered clubs in Oxford, who between them field 40 teams (some of which are social/non league), representing six leagues:
- Littlemore RFC,
  - Oxford Harlequins RFC (seniors)
  - Oxford Harlequins RFC (juniors and minis)
  - Oxford RFC, who play in the Vale of White Horse, but are registered as a city team as the majority of their members are Oxford residents.
- 4.3.4 Two of the rugby clubs, Oxford RFC and Oxford Harlequins (seniors), have recently merged to host a Colts (Under 16 - 19) team, but have continued to host separate adult, junior and mini teams.
- 4.3.5 Two senior teams from Alchester RFC, who originate from Bicester (in the Cherwell district), play their matches on the pitches at Cherwell School every Saturday.
- 4.3.6 In addition to these clubs, there are three adult social/non league teams:
- Oxford Fire Service
  - Thames Valley Police
  - St Edwards Maters
- 4.3.7 Due to the adhoc nature of games played by these teams, it was agreed with the Oxfordshire RFU that they would be included within the audit but not within the modelling stages. These teams do however add weight for the need to include a strategic reserve of pitches within the modelling, see section 4.3.22.
- 4.3.8 The location of clubs and teams appear to be focused within the East, North-East and South-East areas of the city. There are also a number of teams that play on the periphery of the city, in the Vale of White Horse District, for Oxford RFC. As this is an Oxford registered club, but play outside of the city they, and the demand they represent has been termed as 'displaced' within the audit.



## Supply of pitches

- 4.3.9 There are a total of 50 rugby union pitches in the city, of which 23 (46%), are deemed to be available to the community to some extent. Table 12 below provides a summary of those rugby union pitches available for community use and teams by analysis area:

**Table 12: Number of rugby union pitches with community access (secured and non secured) and teams**

Analysis area	Number of rugby union pitches available for community use			Number of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior Men (18-45)	Senior Women (18-45)	Junior Boys (13-17)	Junior Girls (13-17)	Mini Rugby (8-12) mixed
Cowley	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
East	1	-	-	3	3			
North	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
North-East	5	-	-	2	-	5	-	10
South-East	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	--
Central, South & West	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Displaced <sup>15</sup>	3 (Vale of White Horse district)	-	-	7	1	3	-	12
Total	26	-	-	14	4	8	-	22

- 4.3.10 The summary above suggests that there are no dedicated mini or junior pitches in Oxford. Nonetheless, as advised by the NGB, smaller sided games are typically played across senior pitches. There appears to be a relatively good spread of pitches across the city, with the majority being in the North and North-East areas. The East area has no community accessible pitch provision. Christchurch College Sports Ground is the only other provider of rugby pitches in this area (albeit unsecured), however use of these pitches would be very unlikely as they already heavily used.

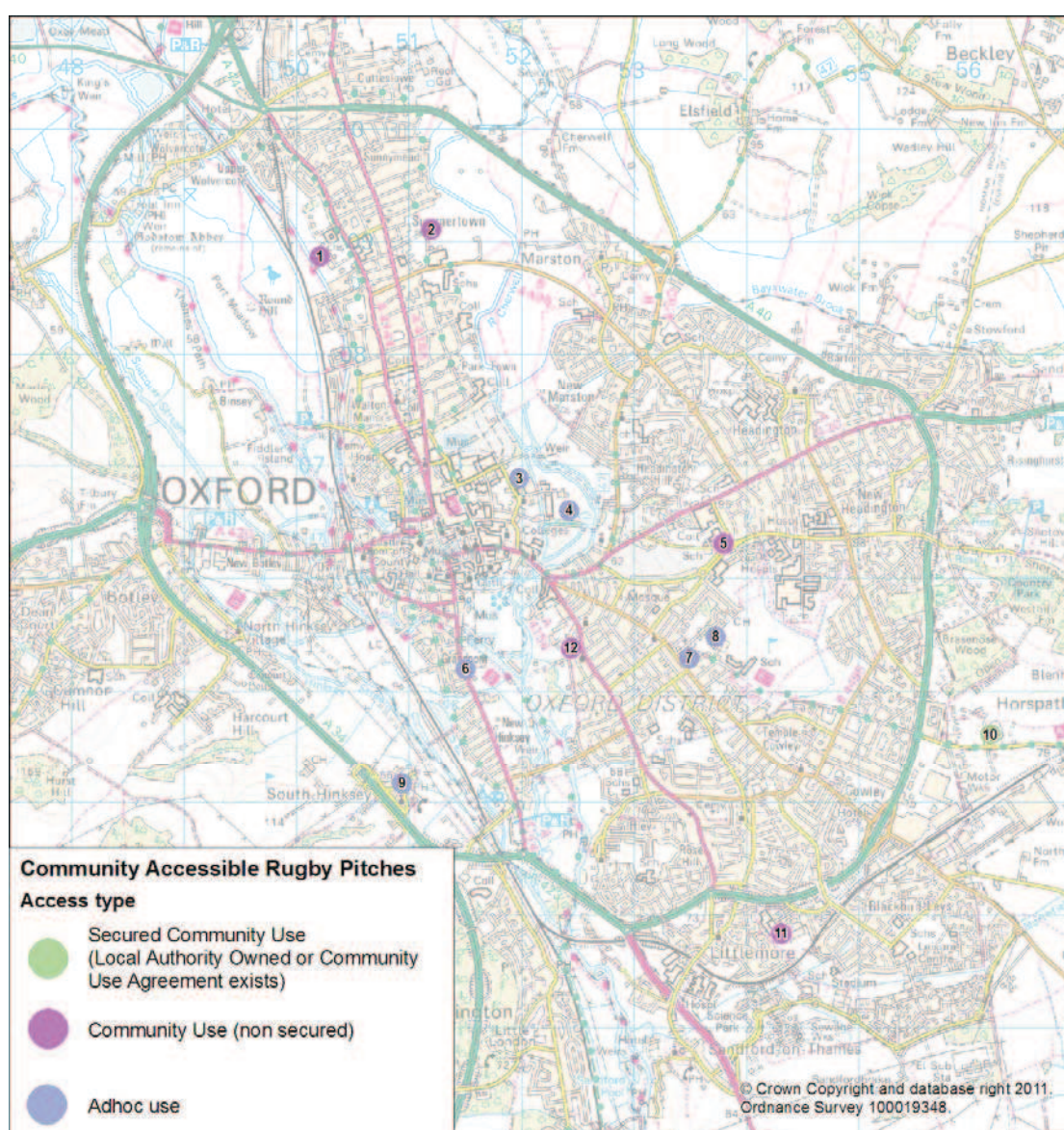
- 4.3.11 Whilst 23 pitches in the city have some degree of community access, the nature and therefore certainty of this access varies. Table 13 below provides a summary of the nature of community access to the 23 pitches.

<sup>15</sup> Displaced Teams can be described as Oxford registered teams that use pitches outside of the city for their home fixtures, either by choice or no other option

**Table 13: Access levels of community accessible (secured and non secured) rugby union pitches in Oxford.**

Access Type	Number of accessible pitches
Secured Community Use	3
Community Use (not secured)	14
Adhoc use	6

**Figure 5: Map showing the distribution of rugby union pitches with community access (secured and non secured) in Oxford.**



**Key to map of community accessible (secured and non secured) rugby union pitches in Oxford**

Map ID	Site Name	Number of senior rugby union pitches	Quality of pitches	Quality of ancillary facilities	Floodlit	Ownership	Management	Access Type	Ward	Area Committee
1	St Edwards School	8	Good	Good	N	Independent School	Independent School	Community Use (not secured)	Summertown	North
2	Cherwell School	4	2 pitches used by Oxford Harlequins RFC = Below Average 2 pitches used by the school = Good	Average	N	Community School	Community School	Community Use (not secured)	Marston	North-East
3	New College Sports Ground	1	Good	Good	N	University (College)	University (College)	Adhoc use	Holywell	Central, South & West
4	Merton College Sports Ground	1	Good	Good	N	University (College)	University (College)	Adhoc use	Holywell	Central, South & West
5	Cheney School	1	Good	Good	N	Community School	Community School	Community Use (not secured)	Churchill	North-East
6	Brasenose College Sports Ground	1	Good	Good	N	University (College)	University (College)	Adhoc use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
7	Lincoln College Sports Ground	1	Good	Good	N	University (College)	University (College)	Adhoc use	Cowley Marsh	Cowley
8	Jesus College Sports Ground	1	Good	Excellent	N	University (College)	University (College)	Adhoc use	Cowley Marsh	Cowley
9	Pembroke College Sports Ground	1	Good	Good	Y	University (College)	University (College)	Adhoc use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
10	Horspath Sports Ground	1	Good	Average	N	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Lye Valley	Cowley
11	Oxford Academy	2	Good	Excellent	N	Academy (community school)	Academy (community school)	Community Use (not secured)	Littlemore	South-East
12	Oxford University RFC	1	Good	Excellent	Y	University	University	Community Use (not secured)	St Mary's	East

N.B. As noted in paragraph 3.4, those highlighted cells indicate where an assumption on the overall quality of the pitch(es) and ancillary facilities have been made.

4.3.12 In addition to the 23 pitches that have some degree of community access, there are a further 27 rugby union pitches in Oxford that are not currently accessible to the community. These are typically owned by the University and colleges (52%) and the city's independent schools (48%), and have been excluded from the supply and demand analysis. Table 14 provides a summary of these pitches by analysis area and a map of these pitches/sites can be found in Appendix 6b.

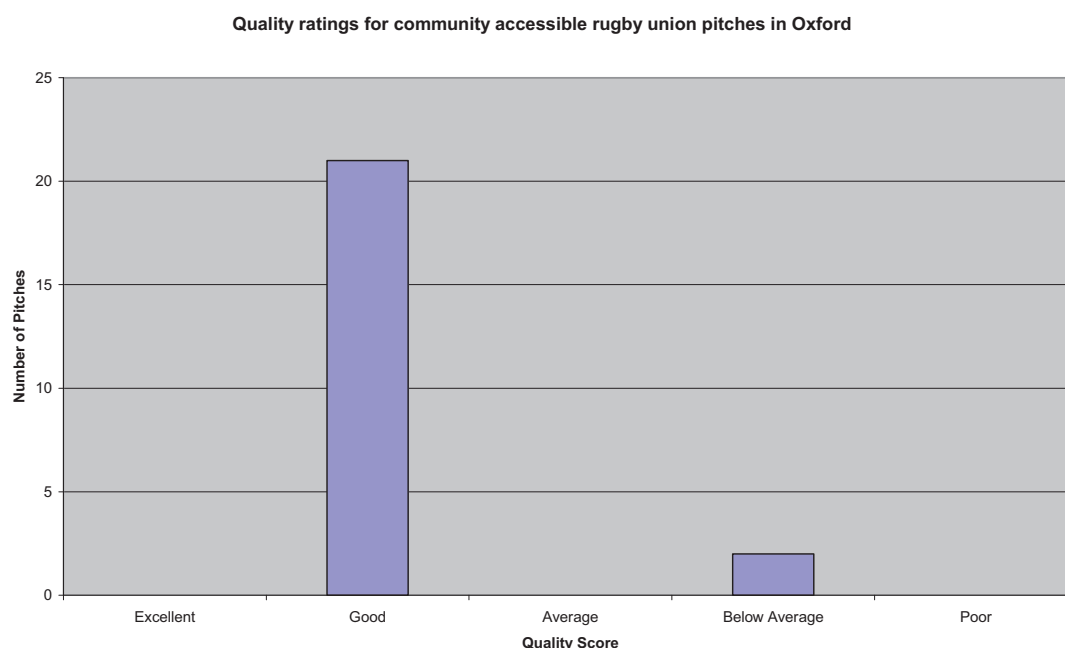
**Table 14: Rugby union pitches with no community use**

Analysis Area (Area Committee)	Number of pitches NOT available for community use	
	Senior	Junior
Cowley	1	-
East	1	-
North	2	7
North-East	5	-
South-East	-	-
Central South & West	11	-
<b>Oxford</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>-</b>

#### **Quality of provision and ancillary facilities**

4.3.13 As set out in section 3.4, assessments of the quality of community accessible rugby union pitches in Oxford has been undertaken. Figure 6 below shows the quality ratings for those pitches that are deemed to have some degree of community access. Results from the assessments demonstrate that 21 (91%) of the community accessible pitches in Oxford are rated as 'Good', with the remaining 2 pitches (9%) rated as 'Below Average'.

**Figure 6: Non Visual Technical Quality Scores for community accessible (secured and non secured) rugby union pitches in Oxford:**



4.3.14 The key sites for rugby in regard to the location of pitches, the number of teams and the level of use are:

- Cherwell School; home to the Oxford Harlequins RFC juniors and mini's. This site also hosts Alchester RFC senior teams on a Saturday for matches.
- Oxford Academy; home to Littlemore RFC

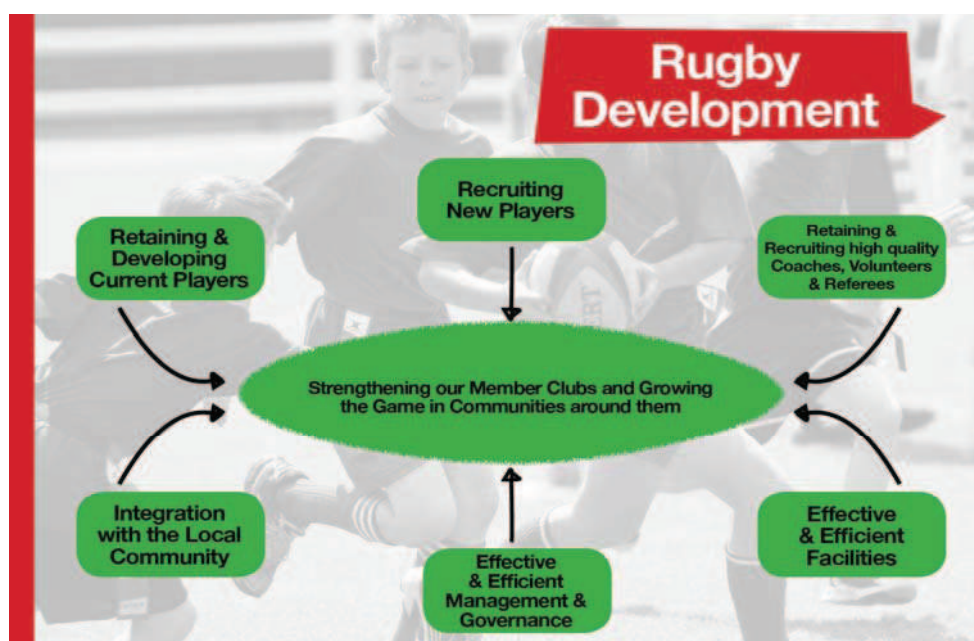
New Hinksey (home to Oxford RFC and Oxford Harlequins senior teams), which is located outside of the city in the neighbouring district of the Vale of White Horse, has also been identified as a key site for the delivery of rugby for residents of Oxford. However, as it is outside of the city, the site has been classified as an external facility meeting displaced demand for the purpose of this strategy.

4.3.15 The results from the quality assessments revealed that the two pitches at Cherwell School that are used by Oxford Harlequins RFC (mini's and juniors) and Alchester RFC, received a 'below average' quality rating. This was supported by an independent ground report undertaken by the RFU and feedback from the club and NGB. The pitches at the Oxford Academy scored a 'Good' quality rating. Both of these sites have been identified as potential sites for facility developments within the next Oxfordshire Facilities Strategy for rugby.



## Rugby Development

- 4.3.16 Following the 2007 Rugby World Cup, as expected, the RFU experienced an increase in the number of people participating in rugby in England. Since these events, the ORFU reported that Oxford has experienced a decline in the number of people playing rugby, particularly within the 16+ age group, and this is mainly due to poor club/team retention rates. This has recently led to Oxford RFC and Oxford Harlequins RFC, merging their senior teams to enable them to sustain membership. The demographic profile of the city (with its two universities) means that a proportion of rugby team members consist of students. As a result of the transient population in the city, rugby clubs/teams experience a significant fluctuation in members.
- 4.3.17 As part of the RFU strategic plan for the delivery of rugby across the constituent body areas, the planning funding and reporting documents have been devised to ensure accountability and monitoring of county programmes, matching financial investment. These plans work off 6 key themes, which include the following areas:



- 4.3.18 To address the issue of falling senior membership, the RFU are also introducing recreational forms of rugby i.e. Touch Rugby, with a view to establish player pathways into local clubs. Examples include; the 'Choose Rugby'<sup>16</sup> initiative, which is to replace the current 'Go Play'<sup>17</sup> programme. Despite the expected increase in participation through this initiative, it is not anticipated that there will be an increased demand for additional formal rugby pitches within the city, as 'formal', marked out pitches are not required; a coned area would suffice. However, if this activity takes place on an existing pitch, it would then add to the use of the pitch, and therefore add to its wear

<sup>16</sup> 'Choose Rugby' is the new programme developed by the RFU to help clubs increase/retain their memberships through recreational forms of rugby i.e. touch rugby.

<sup>17</sup> 'Go Play' is the RFU's programme to get ex rugby players/those who have drifted away from the sport, back in to the game to provide a solid base for the sport.

and tear. Even if the activity takes place away from a marked out pitch, it will still require an area of playing field land. This activity therefore adds weight to ensure an adequate strategic reserve is added to the assessment of the adequacy of pitch provision and/or ensure that all rugby pitch sites have adequate additional non marked out playing pitch land for such activities.

- 4.3.19 The development of the Oxford Rugby Academy, which comprises of the Oxford RFC and Oxford Harlequins RFC junior teams (under 16's – 19's), has led to an increase in youth participation in the city.
- 4.3.20 As a direct result of the Rugby World Cup in 2011, the RFU are expecting a national increase in the number of people playing rugby at the grass roots level. Following historic trends from past events, the RFU reported that it is expected that retention of these participants will decrease over time; however, participation will experience a significant peak after the 2015 World Cup, which is being hosted in England. Whilst these trends in participation are expected, the RFU's priorities look to sustain the predicted increases in participation as high as possible.

### **Facility Developments**

- 4.3.21 The ORFU 'Facilities Strategy' identified areas of investment to improve the standard of playing pitches and ancillary facilities. Within this strategy, there is planned development of the pitches and clubhouse at Oxford RFC (New Hinksey site within the Vale of White Horse district). Once complete, this site will become a hub for talent development. It is anticipated that the refreshed facilities strategy will identify investment in those pitches and facilities at The Oxford Academy and Cherwell School.

### **Sport Specific Assessment Methodology**

- 4.3.22 To analyse rugby in Oxford, in respect of teams and the demand for pitches, the TLPF methodology was adopted. To make the methodology more specific to rugby and to capture Oxford's uniqueness, the following approach was also taken when using Sport England's Playing Pitch Model:
1. The assessment has taken place at a city-wide level but with local and site specific issues highlighted.
  2. Training for rugby takes place on the main pitch; therefore, it is not required to include any designated training pitches. However given that training takes place on main pitches, the impact of training has been assessed.
  3. Oxford University teams, including college teams, have not been included within the modelling as they typically play on the college facilities and do not use any other pitches in the city. However, where university/college pitches are available for community use, these have been included in the modelling as discussed in section 3.2.
  4. 23 of the city registered teams play on the periphery of Oxford at the New Hinksey site in the Vale of White Horse District. For the purpose of the modelling these teams have been added as 'displaced' teams. Given the proximity of the site to the city these teams have indicated, through the consultation for this strategy that they are 'happy' with



their playing facilities and are not looking to move to a site within the City boundaries. To reflect this demand within the modelling, the three pitches on this site have been included. Following the quality and carrying capacity outlined in section 3.5 this level of provision equates to 2.25 pitch equivalents.

5. To accompany the TLPF guidance the RFU has developed a briefing note specifically for the assessment of rugby. It suggests the following methodology, which has been adopted for the modelling:

- *All rugby teams U13 and upwards should be treated in the Playing Pitch Model as a senior team as they play 15 a-side rugby and use a full pitch.*
- *All rugby club mini/midi teams (U7-12) should be entered as a senior team equivalent (as the Playing Pitch Model does not recognise mini/midi team data) at 0.25 of a team as they play across adult pitches.*

As all play takes place on senior pitches, these adjustments allow for an assessment of the total supply and demand for senior pitches to meet the needs of all age groups.

- 4.3.23 Taking into account the above adjustments, the team summary to be used in the modelling for Oxford is amended to the figures shown in Table 15.

**Table 15: Calculated senior rugby union team equivalents**

Analysis area	Number of senior team equivalents
Cowley	-
East	-
North	-
North-East	9.5
South-East	2
Central, South & West	-
Displaced	14
<b>Total Senior Team Equivalents</b>	<b>25.5</b>

- 4.3.24 The RFU briefing note also suggests a number of scenarios that could be run through the playing pitch model to test the adequacy of provision. Consideration has been given to this note in carrying out the Oxford specific assessment and a number of aspects covered in the note are included within the assessment and additional scenarios. An example of this is the exclusion

of the provision at Cherwell School in the assessment as the site does not have secure community use and the pitch provision is related below average. The potential impact of securing the use of this site and others is then looked at within the two scenarios. The need to test any additional scenarios should be kept under review in consultation with the RFU and following the implementation of the strategy action plan.

## Rugby Team Generation Rates and Latent Demand

4.3.25 Table 16 below sets out the Team Generation Rates (TGRs) for rugby at a city-wide level for 2011, and also benchmarks these rates against those for other local authorities who have a current playing pitch strategy in place.

**Table 16: Rugby TGRs for Oxford 2011**

Analysis Areas (Area Committee)	Senior Men (18–45)	Senior Women (18-45)	Junior Boys (13-17)	Junior Girls (13-17)	Mini Rugby (8-12) mixed
<b>Oxford</b>	1:1,633	1:39,954	-	-	-
Welwyn Hatfield	1:1,370	1:6,503	1;473	1:1580	1:1042
Southampton	1;7,233	1:39,789	-	-	-

*N.B. Where no TGR is shown, no teams operate in that area within the specific age group.*

4.3.26 As set out in section 3.1.10, the TGRs can be used within the modelling to help estimate the future demand for playing pitches. TGRs can also be used to compare with those for other areas to help provide an indication of the relative level of participation and also whether any latent demand may exist. The TGRs for Oxford have been benchmarked against those for some other local authorities (see Appendix 7) that have recently developed a playing pitch strategy. However, it should be noted that unfortunately a number of authorities within our benchmarking group do not have an up to date playing pitch strategy in place and therefore TGR data for these authorities is not available. The most similar areas to Oxford whose authorities do have a strategy in place are Welwyn and Hatfield Borough Council and Southampton City Council. The TGR's for these areas are presented alongside the results for Oxford in Table 16 above.

4.3.27 Through analysis of the benchmarked authorities, Southampton City Council followed a similar methodology to Oxford in applying the RFU briefing note to the modelling stages. As such, it would not be sensible to compare TGR's with those recorded for Welwyn Hatfield. Southampton recorded a lower senior male TGR than Oxford which suggests that it takes less people to generate a team in Oxford and therefore the residents of Oxford may have a greater propensity to participate. This may suggest that there is little latent demand in the city although this is only in comparison with the one authority area. It is noticeable that the TGR for senior women in Oxford is on par with that recorded for Southampton.

### **Other identified latent demand**

- 4.3.28 Following consultation with the rugby development officer for the ORFU, and feedback direct from the clubs, there are no teams currently waiting for pitches. However through further consultation, Oxford Harlequins (juniors and minis) indicated that their home site at Cherwell School is at capacity and cannot deal with the growing club membership.
- 4.3.29 The consultation work suggests that there is no reported unmet demand within the schools, universities or colleges. However, the market segmentation work set out in paragraph 2.3.9 does indicate that there may be residents who would like to play more rugby. Therefore, it is paramount that dialogue is maintained with the clubs in the City, the RFU and the educational establishments as part of the annual review process in order to continually assess latent demand

### **Displaced demand**

- 4.3.30 Feedback from Oxford RFC suggests that its teams are happy to play at the new Hinksey site and have no current desire to play within the city itself. In order to adequately reflect this within the modelling, both the teams and pitches located at this site have been included.

### **Trends and participation targets**

- 4.3.31 To coincide with the RFUs initiatives, such as Touch Rugby, the expected increase generated through the World Cup's and the local developments i.e. Oxford Rugby Academy and Talent Development Hub, it can be predicted that there will be an increase in participation at the grassroots level in Oxford. Following guidance from the ORFU the following participation increases have been projected within the Playing Pitch Model:

- 2011 – 2016 = 10% increase
- 2016 – 2021 = 8% increase
- 2021 – 2026 = 10% increase

- 4.3.32 The 10% increase reported above is expected off the back of the Rugby World Cups in 2015 and 2023. The lower 8% increase in 2016-2021, is a result of the expected lower level of participation increase over this period following the 2015 World Cup due to natural wastage and club retention issues

### **Peak demand for rugby union pitches**

- 4.3.33 Consultation and analysis of sports booking records and league fixtures, indicates the following patterns of play for rugby union:

Senior Male Rugby – Saturday PM  
Under 13-18 Rugby – Sunday AM  
Mini/Midi Rugby – Sunday AM  
Women and Girls Rugby – Sunday PM

Taking into account the RFU's recommendations regarding senior team equivalents, as set out in paragraph 4.3.22, the peak demand for rugby union games in Oxford is a Sunday Morning.

- 4.3.34 The amount of current play across a week is recorded within the modelling. From this information and the peak playing times, the amount of play in the peak period for each age group can be calculated. This calculation within the modelling ensures the assessment and resulting findings are based on the ability of the supply to meet the periods of peak demand.

## **Results**

- 4.3.35 The results of the calculation stages of the modelling can be found in Appendices 8b to 10. Appendix 9 shows the full results from the Playing Pitch Model for the assessment and the two additional scenarios for the current reporting period, 2011 – 2016. Appendix 10 shows the full results for the additional reporting periods of 2011 – 2021 and 2011 – 2026

- 4.3.36 It is important to note that a 10% strategic reserve has been applied to the results from the Playing Pitch Model shown in Appendix 9 and 10. The need to add a strategic reserve is in line with Sport England's guidance as it enables the following elements to be considered within the modelling and allowances to be made for them:

- informal use of pitches
- drainage issues
- the need to rest and move pitches around to help overcome wear and tear
- to reflect that some pitches will be used on an adhoc basis e.g. by teams that need temporary provision due to issues with their 'home' pitches. The strategic reserve can also allow for and help the assessment to reflect the demand from those 'friendly' teams that only play a few times per year or use of pitches for recreational versions of the game, e.g. Touch Rugby.

## **Findings**

- 4.3.37 For the current reporting period of 2011-2016 the calculation stages of the modelling suggest that there is an undersupply of rugby pitch provision with secured community use of approximately 3 pitches in 2011 and 4 pitches in 2016. This situation remains fairly stable within the other reporting periods with similar levels of undersupply. The assessment includes one pitch with secured community use at Horspath Sports Ground, the two pitches at the Oxford Academy that are used by Littlemore RFC and the 3 pitches at the New Hinksey site in the Vale of White Horse district used by Oxford RFC and Oxford Harlequins seniors.

- 4.3.38 As set out in paragraph 3.1.7 the results of the modelling and key findings should only be based on those pitches with secured community use. However, it is useful to note that there are a number of additional rugby pitches in the city that are only currently available to the community on an unsecured or adhoc basis. If community use of these pitches were to be secured then the scenario testing carried out would suggest that the undersupply of provision would be addressed and there would be some spare capacity within rugby pitch provision. However, as stated in paragraph 3.1.7 the use of these scenarios must be treated with caution as they only provide

an indication of the situation should community use be secured at all of these additional pitches.

- 4.3.39 Unlike football, rugby rarely has designated areas for training and many teams train on the pitches of which their matches are played on. Given the impact of training, training requirements within the city were provided by the NGB and the Rugby Development Officer for Oxford University, which were factored in to the assessment of supply and demand. As expected, including training requirements, alongside clubs/teams places an increased demand on pitches within the city. This adds further importance to ensuring that community access is secured to pitches and that sites/pitches are protected.

### **Rugby Union Pitches – Local Issues**

- 4.3.40 The assessment using the playing pitch model provides an overview of the adequacy of provision across a certain geographical area. The modelling suggests that when looking at the city as a whole there is a deficiency of rugby pitches with secured community use to meet current and future demand. Below this city wide assessment there are a number of identified local issues that have been picked up during the consultation and development of the strategy. These include:

#### Horspath Athletics Ground

Oxford City Council own one rugby pitch at Horspath Athletics Ground, which is also a multi-use pitch with Gaelic Football. Over recent years this has seen very little use for rugby with three bookings for rugby training in the last 12 months. It is known that the pitch does have some informal play if the Oxford Harlequins RFC (junior and mini) pitches at Cherwell School are waterlogged. The pitch is also used by a local youth football team on average of two times per week during the season. The middle of the athletics track at Horspath Athletics Ground has recently been used by the ORFU under 18's team for rugby training on average twice per week.

There are no reported issues with the quality of facilities on this site, however we know through feedback from other pitch sports clubs and findings from the assessment of pavilions that the pavilion on site is only of an 'Average' standard.

#### Oxford Academy

Littlemore RFC has secured access to the pitches at the Oxford Academy and have not reported issues or concerns with their facilities.

#### Cherwell School

Oxford Harlequins RFC (junior's and minis) only have a short-term rolling lease for the two rugby pitches on the site of Cherwell School. Through consultation with the club and NGB, and reviewing independent pitch reports, there are serious concerns with the poor and deteriorating quality of the pitches on site. The pitches are very low-lying and therefore prone to becoming waterlogged, forcing them to use the pitch at Horspath Sports

Ground. Additionally, the area under the floodlights (which is also in need of replacement) is heavily used and subsequently becomes unplayable in wet weather. It is anticipated that improvements to these facilities will be a priority within the next facilities strategy for Oxfordshire. There is also a need to address the short term rolling nature of the lease, as this does not provide the necessary certainty regarding long term secured use of this provision by the community. Through further consultation, the club requested additional space to accommodate the growing number of players/teams.

#### Pitches Outside of the City: New Hinksey

The recent merger with Oxford RFC has resulted in the senior teams from Oxford Harlequins RFC now playing at New Hinksey. This has placed significant pressures on the pitches at the New Hinksey site, particularly for matches. Whilst there are no current reported issues with the quality of pitches, significant investment is required by the RFU to bring the ancillary facilities on site up to expected standards. This has been identified within the Oxfordshire RFU 'Facility Development Strategy' and once complete will create a hub for talent development. Given the importance of this site for meeting rugby demand from Oxford's residents, it is important that the quality and capacity of pitches is kept under regular review with the clubs, ORFU and Vale of White Horse District.

#### **Rugby Conclusions**

- 4.3.41 The assessment has indicated that there is a deficiency of rugby union pitches with secured community use in the city. The only pitches with secured community use are the one pitch available for hire at Horspath Sports Ground and the two pitches used by Littlemore RFC at the Oxford Academy. There is secured use for the pitches at the New Hinksey site in the Vale of White Horse; however, this is primarily for club use. The assessment has indicated that there is a need for additional secured community use provision within the city. Whilst Littlemore RFC currently has an agreement to use the pitches on site at the Oxford Academy, this needs to be kept under review to ensure that it is working for the club and that their continued use of the site is secure.
- 4.3.42 The two scenarios included alongside the assessment do suggest that the identified deficiency could be met by securing community use at sites which currently offer unsecured, ad hoc or no community use. This potential should be explored further and any additional secured community use provision included in the assessment as part of the monitoring and annual review of the strategy. Given the strong club based nature of Rugby the potential to secure use at additional sites should be undertaken in close consultation with the clubs and the ORFU.
- 4.3.43 Securing long term community use and ideally security of tenure of the provision used by Oxford Harlequins at Cherwell School should be a priority. It is important to note that the club only have a short term rolling lease for use of the pitches which does not provide long term security.
- 4.3.44 It is also important to note that there are localised issues with pitch provision at some of the key sites in the city. For example, even if community use of the provision at Cherwell School can be secured their use of the site may be



limited as the pitches are below average quality. Without appropriate works the condition of these pitches may deteriorate further limiting their availability. It is important that the RFU, Cherwell School, Oxford Harlequins and Oxford City Council work together to not only secure community use but also improve the quality of pitches at this site.

4.3.45 The key strategic sites for rugby are Cherwell School (home to Oxford Harlequins RFC juniors and minis) and The Oxford Academy (home to Littlemore RFC). Although New Hinksey is outside of the city boundary, it is also used significantly by city residents and the 'displaced' teams.

4.3.46 Whilst there are very few designated 'training facilities' for rugby, the RFU has had a recent shift towards training being held on 3G pitches. The development of such pitches at the Oxford Academy may help to address any future training demand however this is to be certified by the International Rugby Board (IRB) before club use. There is also a demand from Littlemore RFC for floodlights on the grass pitches at the Academy.

## **Recommendations**

### **4.3.47 City-wide**

1. That the Council continues its needs led evidence based approach to rugby pitch provision and that this is reviewed on an annual basis. The annual review, including consultation with relevant parties, should include and assess the impact of any changes to the supply and demand for provision. This should include whether secured community use has been established at any sites which do not currently provide such use and any qualitative improvements to the existing supply.
2. That Oxford City Council's playing pitch provision for rugby is maintained at the current level and that flexibility is given to alternate between Gaelic Football and Rugby in line with demand from the local clubs.
3. That all existing rugby pitches are protected, or where development may be proposed then adequate replacement provision is secured in line with the needs identified within this strategy.
4. That Oxford City Council explores the potential to secure community use at those sites which currently provide unsecured, ad hoc or no such community use. When seeking to secure community use consultation with the clubs and the ORFU should be undertaken to ensure the potential sites are suitable to meet their needs.

### **4.3.48 Area Based**

5. That the Council works with the ORFU, Oxford Harlequins (juniors and minis) and Cherwell School to examine opportunities around making improvements to the quality of pitches at the site.
6. That the Council work with the ORFU, Cherwell School and Oxford Harlequins (juniors and minis) in their aim of securing community use and long term security of tenure at Cherwell School.



7. That together with the ORFU, the Council work with Oxford Harlequins (juniors and minis) to identify a suitable site to accommodate additional matches/training.
8. That the Council work with the ORFU and Littlemore RFC in their aim of establishing floodlights for their training facilities.
9. That the Council work with the ORFU, clubs and the Vale of White Horse district to regularly review the quality and capacity of pitches at the New Hinksey site.

## **4.4 Cricket in Oxford**

### **Governance and participation**

4.4.1 The Oxfordshire Cricket Board (OCB) is responsible for the development of Cricket in Oxford and has the following objectives:

- The promotion of community participation at all levels in the sport of cricket, and in particular, but without imposing any restriction, for the benefit of the residents of Oxfordshire.
- The promotion of the sport of cricket by the provision of facilities, and the advancement of education, training and the knowledge of cricket in particular, but without imposing any restriction in Oxfordshire.

4.4.2 Cricket has been identified as a 'Priority Sport' for the Sports Development team in the Oxford City Council Sport and Physical Activity Review 2009.

4.4.3 Within Oxford there are 20 cricket pitches that are accessible to the community and 13 clubs, who between them field 35 teams, and represent seven leagues. In addition there are a handful of non league (friendly) and Twenty20 teams.

4.4.4 Oxford Cricket Club is the only OCB 'Focus club'<sup>18</sup> in the city that has been identified as a key club for development and youth provision.

4.4.5 Whilst there are 13 registered clubs within Oxford, four of these, representing five teams, now play outside of the city in neighbouring Oxfordshire districts. The main reason for them playing outside of the city is a result of the pitches not meeting requirements i.e. concerns over perceived overall quality of pitches and quality of ancillary facilities. These have been referenced as displaced teams in Table 17 below.

### **Supply of pitches**

4.4.6 There are a total of 40 cricket pitches in the city, of which 20 (50%) are deemed to be available to the community to some extent. Table 17 below provides a summary of those cricket pitches available for community use and teams by analysis area:

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<sup>18</sup> Definition of a OCB Focus Club can be found at <http://www.oxoncb.com/clubs/focus>

**Table 17: Number of cricket pitches with community access(secured and unsecured) and teams**

Analysis Area	Number of cricket pitches available for community use			Number of teams					
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior Men	Senior Women	Twenty20 & Friendly teams	Junior Boys	Junior Girls	Mini
Cowley	8	-	-	10	1	2	5	1	3
East	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
North	3	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	-
North-East	3	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
South-East	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Central, South & West	6	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Displaced				3	-	2	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	20	-	-	19	1	6	5	1	3

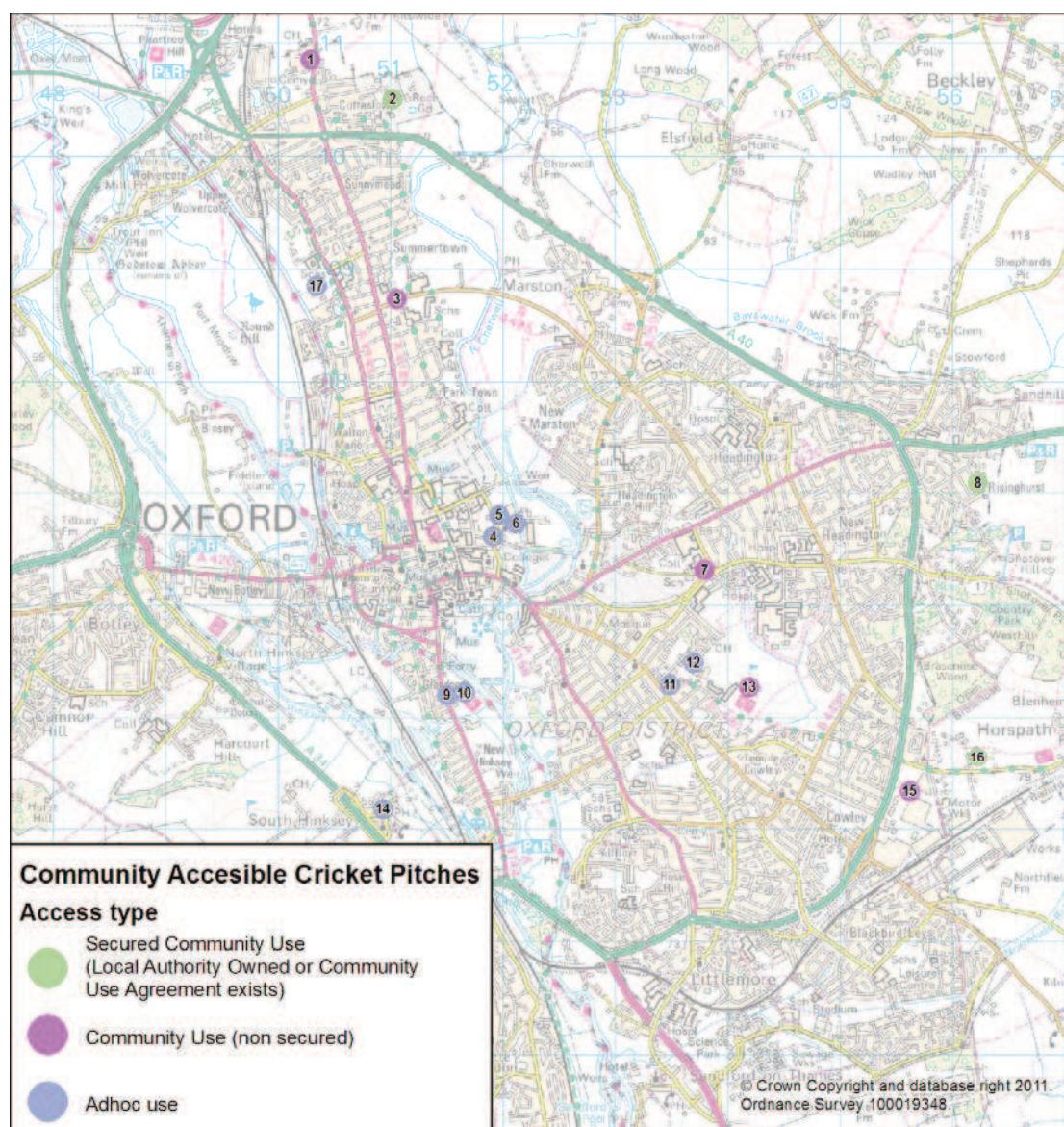
- i. The summary above suggests that there is no provision of mini or junior pitches in Oxford, however junior cricket is played on an adult pitch and mini cricket is typically played on the outfield in the form of Kwik cricket.<sup>19</sup>
- ii. The East & South-East area's of the city has no accessible cricket pitch provision. There are no facilities in these areas of the city to explore access via community use agreements either. Therefore the sites/pitches in the neighbouring areas would need to be explored, which could potentially create further pressures on pitch availability/capacity.
- iii. Whilst there are 20 pitches in the city that have some degree of community access, the nature and therefore certainty of this access varies. Table 18 below provides a summary of the nature of community access to these pitches.

**Table 18: Access levels of community accessible (secured and unsecured) cricket pitches in Oxford.**

Access Type	Number of accessible pitches
Secured Community Use - local authority owned or secured community use agreement in place	4
Community Use (not secured) - this includes school pitches/private facilities	7
Adhoc use - this includes college pitches where access is very occasional	9
None	20

<sup>19</sup> Kwik Cricket is a simple game of cricket for boys and girls aged 5 years and upwards, designed to provide children with an introduction to cricket.

**Figure 7: Map showing the distribution of cricket pitches with community access (secured and unsecured) in Oxford.**



**Key to map of community accessible (secured and non secured) cricket pitches in Oxford**

Map ID	Site Name	Number of senior cricket pitches	Quality of pitches	Quality of ancillary facilities	Floodlit	Ownership	Management	Access Type	Ward	Area Committee
1	Oxford University Press Sports Ground(Jordan Hill)	1	Excellent	Good	N	University	Sport Club	Community Use (not secured)	Wolvercote	North
2	Cuttleslowe Park	1	Good	Poor Average	N	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Wolvercote	North
3	Cherwell School	1	Average	Average	N	Community School	Community School	Community Use (not secured)	Marston	North-East
4	Balliol College Sports Ground	1	Excellent	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc Use	Holywell	Central, South & West
5	New College Sports Ground	1	Excellent	N/a	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Holywell	Central, South & West
6	Merton College Sports Ground	1	Average	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)y	Adhoc use	Holywell	Central, South & West
294	Cheney School	1	Average	Good	N	Community School	Community School	Community Use (not secured)	Churchill	North-East
8	Risinghurst Sports Ground	1	Average	Average	N	Risinghurst Parish Council	Risinghurst Parish Council	Secured Community Use	Quarry & Risinghurst	North-East
9	Brasenose College Sports Ground	1	Excellent	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West

10	The Queens College Sports Ground	1	Excellent	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
11	Lincoln College Sports Ground	1	Excellent	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Cowley Marsh	Cowley
12	Jesus College Sports Ground	1	Excellent	Excellent	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Cowley Marsh	Cowley
13	Oxford Spire Academy	2	Average	Poor	N	Academy (community school)	Academy (community school)	Community Use (not secured)	Cowley Marsh	Cowley
14	Pembroke College Sports Ground	1	Average	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
15	Rover Sports Ground	2	Good	Good	N	Sport Club	Sport Club	Community Use (not secured)	Lye Valley	Cowley
16	Horspath Sports Ground	2	Good	Average	N	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Lye Valley	Cowley
17	Keble College Sports Ground	1	Excellent	Good	N	University (college)	University (college)	Adhoc Use	Summertown	North

N.B. As noted in paragraph 3.4, those highlighted cells indicate where an assumption on the overall quality of the pitch(es) and ancillary facilities have been made.



- 4.4.7 In addition to the 20 pitches which have some degree of community access, there are a further 20 cricket pitches that are not currently accessible by the community. These are typically owned by the University and Colleges (75%) and the city's independent schools (25%) and are displayed in Table 19 below and a map of these pitches/sites can be found in Appendix 6c.

**Table 19: Cricket pitches with no community use**

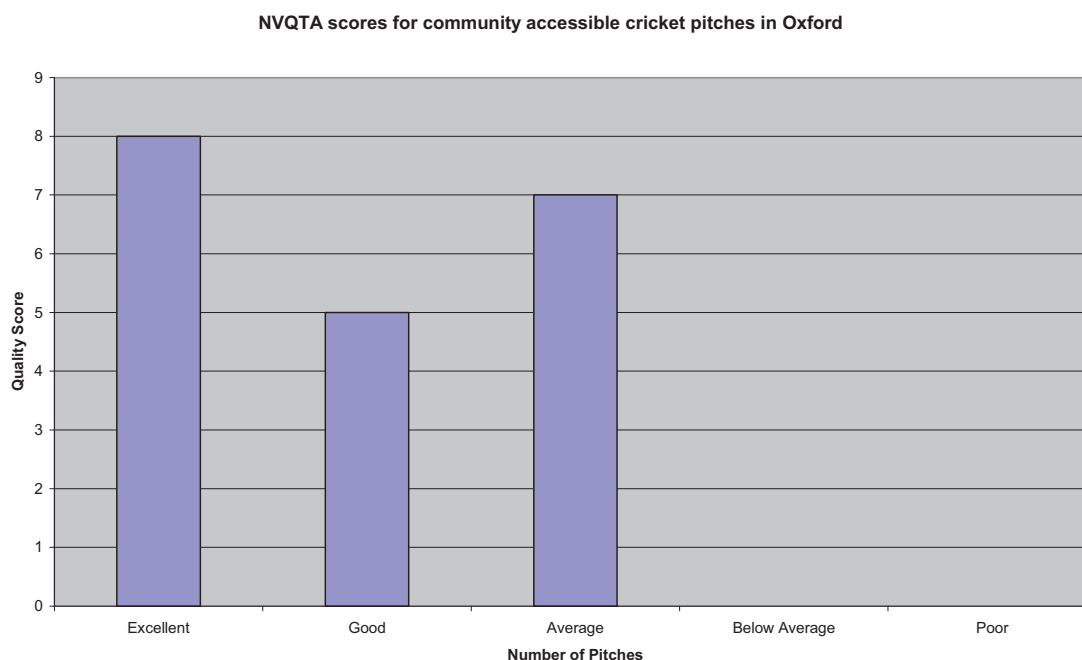
Analysis Area (Area Committee)	Number of pitches NOT available for community use
	Senior
Cowley	1
East	-
North	8
North-East	5
South-East	-
Central South & West	6
<b>Oxford</b>	<b>20</b>

#### **Quality of provision and ancillary facilities**

- 4.4.8 As set out in section 3.4, quality an assessment of the community accessible cricket pitches in Oxford has been undertaken. Figure 8 below shows the overall quality rating for those cricket pitches that are deemed to have some degree of community access. Results of the assessments demonstrate that 8 (40%) of the community accessible cricket pitches are rated as 'Excellent', 5 (25%) are rated as 'Good' with the remaining 7 pitches (35%) rated as 'Average'.
- 4.4.9 Whilst quality assessments have been carried out using the Sport England NVTQA tool, it is important to note that the assessment doesn't currently separate the outfield and cricket wicket. We have recognised that this is a limitation within the assessment tool and Sport England is currently working with the English Cricket Board (ECB) to explore a more suitable assessment tool for the revised Towards a Level Playing Field Methodology.



**Figure 8: Non Visual Technical Quality Scores for community accessible (secured and non secured) cricket pitches in Oxford:**



4.4.10 The Rover Sports and Social Club is the key strategic site for cricket as this is home to Oxford Cricket Club, who are the largest club in the city, fielding a high number of teams.

4.4.11 The cricket pitches at Horspath Sports Ground and Cutteslowe Park, which are owned by Oxford City Council, also play a big part in accommodating cricket in the city.

4.4.12 Upon analysis of the results from the NVTQA, the pitches at Rover Sports and Social Club both received a 'Good' quality score. Those pitches owned by Oxford City Council at Horspath Sports Ground and Cutteslowe Park also received a 'Good' quality score, however it is important to note that Pitch 2 at Horspath has been reported by clubs and the NGB as being of a poorer quality in comparison to Pitch 1. Since consultation of the draft strategy, Pitch 2 no longer meets the requirements of the Oxfordshire Cricket Association (OCA) league.

4.4.13 To ensure that an accurate assessment of Pitch 2 at Horspath Sports Ground can be attained, it would be recommended that an independent pitch assessment is undertaken, which will help inform the level of maintenance required to bring the pitch up to the OCA league standard.

4.4.14 While the quality of pitches was commented on by the clubs, league secretaries and the OCB, the main area for concern appeared to be around the quality of changing facilities. This has been addressed within the Council's review of its pavilions and a phased improvement program is being drawn up.

## Cricket Development

- 4.4.15 Similar to football and rugby, the Cricket Development Officer from the OCB reported that cricket in Oxford has experienced a decrease in the number of people playing the game, particularly amongst adults (post 16 years). Local issues within Oxford may have exacerbated this decline, mainly due to the limited capacity of clubs to grow the number of teams they field, and/or develop youth sections. The scope for clubs to grow their teams/members has also been influenced by access to quality pitches and the cost to hire facilities.
- 4.4.16 Many, if not all of the 'community accessible' pitches, particularly those owned by Oxford City Council, do not provide the equipment, or have the standard of facilities, to enable cricket higher than the OCA league to be played. Whilst those accessible facilities within the University/colleges meet the team's requirements, their use is often unsecured or on an adhoc basis and prices are often too high for the club to subsidise without passing on increases to the players. These issues combined have resulted in Oxford Cricket Club reducing the number of its senior teams from six to four and has also limited the development of their youth cricket programme.
- 4.4.17 The adhoc nature/time of year facilities at the colleges/university are accessible, can also preclude certain teams from meeting the Cherwell League criteria.
- 4.4.18 In addition to the reduction in teams, of the four displaced teams (those who play outside of Oxford), one has a strong desire to play in the city (Warneford Cricket Club). However there is currently no facility suitable for them, as their ambition is to secure a lease on a site where they could be responsible for the maintenance of the pitch etc.
- 4.4.19 Despite the decrease in participation in the conventional game, Oxford has experienced an increase in Twenty20 cricket, with regular teams playing in the city.
- 4.4.20 For the purpose of this strategy, and to coincide with the ECB most recent initiative 'Last Man Stands'<sup>20</sup>, (currently being explored for Oxford), the OCB have requested that a slight increase (1%) in senior and junior cricket is factored in to the modelling for each reporting period. This equates to a 3% increase between, 2011 - 2026.

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<sup>20</sup> Last Man Stands is the widest reaching amateur cricket league in the world, bringing together like minded individuals from all walks of life to play great social outdoor 8-a-side T20 cricket <http://www.lastmanstands.com/aboutlastmanstands>

## **Facility Developments**

- 4.4.21 The Oxfordshire Cricket Facilities Strategy, 2009 - 2013, provides an overview of the current scope and quality of cricket provision within the County, identifying where standards need to be raised and to assess where gaps need to be addressed.
- 4.4.22 The OCB and representatives of Oxford University's Sports Department held discussions about working in partnership to develop and extend the existing two lane indoor facility at Oxford University; Iffley Road Sports Complex. The University is still exploring this possibility.
- 4.4.23 The strategy identified major potential value projects for the OCB in respect of the cricket provision as:
- Development of a new ground, 2/3 squares, and indoor nets at Rover Sports and Social Club, which is home to Oxford Cricket Club.
- 4.4.24 The refreshed strategy for Oxfordshire is expected to focus on the development of Non Turf Pitches (NTP) and ancillary facilities, in addition to fine turf grass pitches. Use of NTPs is particularly important for youth cricket and recreational versions of the game i.e. Last Man Stands.
- 4.4.25 Whilst there is no secured community access to the pitches at Oxford University Press (OUP) Sports Ground in the North of the city, or Lincoln College Sports Ground in the Cowley area, these sites have been earmarked as potential sites for development within Oxford City Council's Sites and Housing Development Plan Document.
- 4.4.26 Within the document, the policy for OUP Sports Ground and Lincoln College Sports Ground looks to retain the cricket facilities. Where this is not possible, then there needs to be a replacement at an equivalent or improved standard, with community access.

## **Sport Specific Assessment methodology**

- 4.4.27 To analyse cricket in Oxford, in respect of teams and the demand for pitches, the TLPF methodology was adopted. To make the methodology more specific to cricket and to capture Oxford's uniqueness, the following approach was also taken when using Sport England's Playing Pitch Model:
1. The assessment has taken place at a city-wide level but with local and site specific issues highlighted.
  2. Practice nets, NTPs and/or designated training areas have not been included within the modelling.
  3. Oxford University teams, including college teams, have not been included within the modelling as they typically play on the college facilities and do not use any other pitches in the city. Where University/College pitches are available for community access, these have been included within the modelling as discussed in section 3.2.
  4. Five of the city registered teams play within the neighbouring districts to Oxford. For the purpose of the modelling these teams have been added as 'displaced' teams, however, as this

arrangement is 'not by choice' the pitches they play on outside of the city are not included.

5. The small number of cricket teams that have been identified under the age of 11 have not been included within the modelling as the playing pitch model is not set up for these lower age groups in cricket (*this is equivalent to three teams*). The impact of these teams is looked at alongside the need for a strategic reserve of pitches to in part cater for such 'other uses'.

### Cricket Team Generation Rates and Latent Demand

- 4.4.28 Table 20 below sets out the Team Generation Rates (TGRs) for cricket at a city-wide level for 2011 and also benchmarks these rates against those for other local authorities who have a current playing pitch strategy in place.

**Table 20: Cricket TGRs for Oxford 2011**

Analysis Areas (Area Committee)	Senior Men (18–55)	Senior Women (18–55)	Junior Boys (11–17)	Junior Girls (11–17)
<b>Oxford</b>	1,2,054	1:47,032	1:848	1:4,212
Welwyn Hatfield	1:873	-	1:673	1:1,377
Southampton	1:20,996	-	-	-

*N.B. Where no TGR is shown, no teams operate in that area within the specific age group.*

- 4.4.29 As set out in section 3.1.10, the TGRs can be used within the modelling to help estimate the future demand for playing pitches. TGRs can also be used to compare with those for other areas to help provide an indication of the relative level of participation and also whether any latent demand may exist. The TGRs for Oxford have been benchmarked against those for some other local authorities (see Appendix 7) that have recently developed a playing pitch strategy. However, it should be noted that unfortunately there are a number of authorities within our benchmarking group that do not have an up-to-date playing pitch strategy in place and therefore TGR data for these authorities is not available. The most similar area to Oxford whose authorities do have a strategy in place are Welwyn and Hatfield Borough Council and Southampton City Council. The TGR's for these areas are presented alongside the results for Oxford in Table 20 above.
- 4.4.30 Through analysis of the benchmarking data, the city records a high TGR for senior male cricket when compared to Southampton Council and Welwyn Hatfield suggesting that there may be some latent demand for cricket in the city. There is no available data to benchmark with senior female cricket. Data for junior boy's and girl's cricket is only available for Welwyn Hatfield. In comparison Oxford records a lower team generation rate for both categories and especially junior girls which may suggest that some latent demand exists.

### **Other identified latent demand**

- 4.4.31 Following consultation with the cricket development officer for the OCB, and feedback direct from the clubs, there are no teams currently waiting for pitches and no indication of other latent demand within the city. However, it was raised by a number of the clubs that development of youth/senior teams and league progression is limited by the accessibility to pitches, cost to hire pitches (particularly colleges) and the lack of equipment. These factors could therefore be restricting those residents that indicated they would like to play more cricket (as set out in paragraph 2.3.9). Therefore, it is paramount that dialogue is maintained with the clubs, the OCB and the educational establishments as part of the review process to continually assess latent demand.
- 4.4.32 The consultation work also suggests that there is no reported unmet demand within the city's schools, universities or colleges.

### **Displaced demand**

- 4.4.33 As mentioned, there are five teams registered within Oxford who play on pitches outside of the city. These have been termed displaced teams.
- 4.4.34 Feedback from consultation with the clubs and the cricket development officer identified that many of the clubs were currently content with playing outside of the city as they preferred the facilities. However, if facilities within the city were improved, or they could secure a lease on a site, a handful of them would migrate back into the city. There is one friendly team that would also like to play in the city (Warneford Cricket Club) but they are unable to as the land presently available either owned by Oxford City Council or other parties, cannot meet the clubs requirements for a long term lease and for the club to undertake their own maintenance.

### **Trends and participation targets**

- 4.4.35 Over recent years Oxford has experienced a decrease in the number of cricket teams fielded. However, despite this decrease in teams, as set out in paragraph 4.4.20 the OCB recommended that a slight increase of 1% in participation is factored into the modelling stages across each of the periods; this equates to a 3% increase from 2011 – 2026. The need for an increase to be factored in is consistent with the clubs desire to increase their memberships. It also needs to reflect that the decrease experienced over recent years may not have resulted from a lack of willing participants, but in part, due to the issues picked up in the consultation such as, the lack of access to and the cost of hiring some pitches within the city.

### **Peak demand for cricket pitches**

- 4.4.36 Consultation and analysis of sports booking records and league fixtures, indicates that the peak demand for cricket games in Oxford are as follows:
- Senior – Saturday afternoon.
  - Junior – there is an even spread between Sunday mornings and midweek evening games.
- 4.4.37 The amount of current play across a week is recorded within the modelling. From this information, and the above peak times, the amount of play in the peak period for each age group can be calculated. This calculation within the modelling ensures the assessment and resulting findings are based on the ability of the supply to meet the periods of peak demand.

### **Results**

- 4.4.38 The results of the calculation stages of the modelling can be found in Appendices 8c to 10. Appendix 9 shows the results from the Playing Pitches Model for the assessment and the two additional scenarios for the current reporting period, 2011 – 2016.
- 4.4.39 Appendix 10 shows the results for the additional reporting periods of 2011 – 2021 and 2011 – 2026.
- 4.4.40 It is important to note that a 10% strategic reserve has been applied to the results from the Playing Pitch Model shown in Appendix 9 and 10. The need to add a strategic reserve is in line with Sport England's guidance, as it enables the following elements to be considered within the modelling and allowances to be made for them.
- informal use of pitches
  - drainage issues
  - the need to rest and move pitches around to help overcome wear and tear
  - to reflect that some pitches will be used on an adhoc basis
  - to reflect the pitch use by the under 11 teams

### **Findings**

#### **Senior cricket pitch provision in Oxford and local issues**

- 4.4.41 For the current reporting period the calculation stages of the playing pitch model suggest that there is a significant undersupply of pitches with secured community use. This undersupply equates to approximately 10 pitches in 2011 and 11 in 2016. This situation does not change significantly in the other reporting periods of 2011 – 2021 and 2011 - 2026. The assessment, based only on those pitches with secured community use, includes three Oxford City Council owned pitches and one pitch owned by Risinghurst Parish Council.

- 4.4.42 As set out in paragraph 3.17 the results of the modelling and key findings should only be based on those pitches with secured community use. However, it is useful to note that there are a number of additional cricket pitches in the city that are only currently available to the community on an unsecured or adhoc basis. If community use of the pitches that currently only offer unsecured use was to be secured then this would provide an additional seven pitches. However, even with these pitches added (scenario 1) the modelling still suggests that there would be a shortfall in provision of approximately 5 pitches in 2011 and 6 pitches in 2016.
- 4.4.43 If community use was also secured of those pitches which only currently offer adhoc use then the modelling suggests that the undersupply of pitches would be addressed. The modelling suggests that this situation (scenario 2) would result in there being some spare capacity equating to approximately 6 pitches in 2011 and 5 pitches in 2016. However, as stated in paragraph 3.17 the use of these scenarios must be treated with caution as they only provide an indication of the situation should community use be secured at all of these additional pitches. In addition, the consultation has also raised concerns with the cost of accessing provision. Therefore, even if the principle of community use was secured at these additional sites if the cost of hiring the pitches was prohibitive to local clubs then it would be difficult to define them as having secured community use.
- 4.4.44 Due to the shortage of community accessible cricket pitches in the city, it is therefore important that all cricket pitches in the city are protected, supporting the need to protect the pitch provision at Oxford University Press and Lincoln College Sports Ground (as set out in paragraph 4.4.25 and 4.4.26). The loss of any college/university sites in particular will result in the displacement of two community clubs and teams.
- 4.4.45 It is worth noting that even if those 'displaced' teams did not migrate back into the city, a shortfall in provision within both the assessment and scenario one would remain.

#### **Cricket – Local Issues**

- 4.4.46 The assessment using the playing pitch model provides an overview of the adequacy of provision across a certain geographical area. The modelling suggests that when looking at the city as a whole there is a significant deficiency of senior cricket pitches with secured community use to meet current and future demand. Below this city wide assessment there are a number of identified local issues that have been raised by the OCB along with the cricket clubs and the league secretaries that responded to the consultation. These include:

##### Horspath Athletics Ground

There are two cricket pitches available for community use at this site; Pitch 1 and Pitch 2. The site is primarily used by the Oxford Caribbean's Cricket Club, with occasional use from East Oxford Cricket Club and the junior teams from Oxford Cricket Club.

Pitch 1 is by far the most popular pitch on site and is used by the above clubs. Pitch 2 has recently been removed from the OCA league pitch listing, as this



no longer meets league standards. Further to feedback during the consultation work it would be useful for a full independent professional assessment to be undertaken in the development of this strategy. The Council should therefore look to work with the OCB to carry out a performance quality assessment, to understand the quality of the site in more detail and what works could be undertaken to improve Pitch 2.

Despite the quality assessment scores, use of Pitch 1 has fallen over recent years with only 14 bookings in the 2010 cricket season. To increase usage of Pitch 2, Oxford City Council has reduced the hire fee, which would hopefully encourage more usage, even if this was on an informal basis.

The issue of poor quality ancillary facilities on this site was also raised within the consultation. This is something that the Council is looking to address, together with the remainder of the councils pavilion stock, through a phased improvement programme.

#### Cotteslowe Park – Cricket Pitch

The cricket pitch within Cotteslowe Park is primarily used by Wolvercote Cricket Club for their home matches and received an overall 'Good' quality rating.

However, feedback from the consultation was negative with regard to the ancillary facilities for this site, and this is been supported by the 'Average' quality score achieved through the NVTQA undertaken as part of the review of the Council owned pavilions.

#### Cowley Marsh

Historically there used to be cricket wicket provision at Cowley Marsh, however, this was taken out due to concerns regarding the safety, maintenance and standard of the wicket. Although there is some demand from clubs to play cricket within the area, this would entail clubs moving from one facility to another at significant cost and pressure to the site.

The consultation also identified that there are a lack of training facilities/practice nets on the site. Since consultation with the clubs, practice nets have been installed at Cowley Marsh, an area of the city where cricket is in demand.

#### Cost of provision and secured community use

- 4.4.47 There was a general consensus from the clubs that the cost for hiring pitches is too expensive, particularly amongst the university/colleges. However, Oxford City Council have no control on the fee's and charges applied for those 'external' pitches that provide either unsecured or ad hoc community use. As set out in the findings section above for pitches to be truly defined as having secure community use their cost must not be prohibitive to users. Prices set to hire the three City Council pitches are benchmarked with neighbouring/similar local authorities to ensure an equitable pricing structure.

#### Equipment

- 4.4.48 The issue of the lack of equipment (i.e. sight screens, score boards etc) was raised by a number of clubs through the consultation. Absence of this equipment means that no league higher than the OCA league can be played on any of the pitches with secured community use. None of the teams that use the Council owned pitches that responded to the consultation currently have any aspirations to progress to this league. However, it must be noted that this may in part be due to the limiting factors present at the grounds rather than an overall lack of aspiration.

#### **Junior cricket pitch provision in Oxford**

- 4.4.49 Using the methodology that junior cricket is played on an adult size pitch, the assessment suggests there is a small amount of spare capacity to meet this demand equating to approximately 1 pitch in both 2011 and 2016. This situation remains fairly static throughout the other reporting periods. The spare capacity in relation to meeting the needs of junior play increases to approximately 6 pitches when sites with unsecured community use are included (scenario 1) and to approximately 17 pitches when those providing adhoc use are also included. However, as stated above and in paragraph 3.1.7 the results from the two scenarios must be treated with caution. In addition, it should be noted that these results relate to the peak time for junior play and as established above there is a significant undersupply of provision for senior play.

## **Cricket conclusions**

- 4.4.50 The assessment undertaken suggests that there is a clear need for additional cricket pitches in the city with secured community use along with enhanced ancillary facilities and equipment to support their use.
- 4.4.51 The assessment, based on sites with secured community use, demonstrates a significant undersupply of provision. Therefore, cricket in the city currently has a strong reliance on pitches with unsecured community use and/or adhoc community use. This provides a great deal of uncertainty as to the long term provision available to cricket within the city. Along with the Council, key providers are Rover Sports and Social Club, Oxford University and its individual colleges. Even with pitches that allow community access, albeit unsecured, factored into the assessment, there appears to be a shortfall of provision. It is only when the pitches in scenario two, which allow very adhoc community use are factored in, that an element of 'spare capacity' exists.
- 4.4.52 The assessment and scenarios therefore suggest that the undersupply of provision could be addressed in part by securing community use at sites in the city that currently offer unsecured, ad hoc or no community use. These sites therefore represent a potential key opportunity to help address the undersupply identified.
- 4.4.53 However, it may be that it will not be possible to secure community use at a number of those sites which currently provide unsecured, ad hoc or no community use. It will therefore also be important to ensure that additional provision is provided to address the undersupply of secured community use sites. Along with any potential new provision, the assessment and consultation suggests that qualitative improvements should be made to existing secured community use pitches and ancillary provision in order to maximise their potential use. Although the quality of the pitches are generally of a good standard, Pitch 2 at Horspath is not to the same standard as Pitch 1 and falls below the requirements for the OCA league. Therefore a full independent detailed assessment is recommended to understand its quality and set out a programme of works to improve the pitch. It is also clear through the consultation that the level of cricket played on OCC pitches is likely to be affected and limited by the lack of ancillary facilities such as screens and scoreboards.

### **4.4.54 Recommendations**

1. That the Council continues its needs led evidence based approach to cricket pitch provision and that this is reviewed on an annual basis. The annual review, including consultation with relevant parties, should include and assess the impact of any changes to the supply of, and demand for, provision. This should include whether secured community use has been established at any sites which do not currently provide such use and any qualitative improvements to the existing supply.
2. That all existing cricket pitches are protected, or where development may be proposed then adequate replacement provision is secured in line with the needs identified within this strategy.

3. That an independent performance quality assessment is undertaken at the Horspath site in consultation with the OCB, to understand the quality of pitch 2 in more detail, and what works could be undertaken to improve the pitch for current and potential users. This work should also establish the type and level of on-going maintenance required.
4. That options are explored to secure community use to those sites that currently offer unsecured, ad hoc or no community use (e.g. those amongst the University and colleges). When seeking to secure community use consultation with the clubs and the OCB should be undertaken to ensure the potential sites are suitable to meet their needs.
5. That the sports development team work with the OCB and local clubs to identify external funding opportunities for ancillary facilities and equipment such as screens and scoreboards.
6. That in line with the PPG17 default and policy recommendations, the cricket facilities at Oxford University Press Sports Ground and Lincoln College Sports Ground (earmarked in the Councils Sites and Housing Development Documents) are retained or replaced at an equivalent or improved standard, with community access.

## **4.5 Overall Conclusions for Natural Grass Playing Pitch Sports**

4.5.1 The main conclusion from the assessment is that there is currently a shortage of playing pitch provision within Oxford that has secured community use. Taking into account those sites with secured community use, and therefore certainty regarding their long term availability to the community the assessment suggests that at times of peak demand there is:

- spare capacity to meet the needs of senior football and junior cricket, but;
- a shortage of pitches to meet the needs of youth football, mini football, rugby union and senior cricket.

4.5.2 The spare capacity of senior football provision could in theory help towards meeting the identified shortfall in junior and mini football. However, even where this may be practically possible, an overall shortfall of playing pitches with secured community use will remain.

4.5.3 The assessment does not necessarily suggest that additional new pitches are required to meet the identified shortfall. Once all pitches that offer some form of community use/potential community use are factored into the assessment, there could be adequate provision for all sports, with the exception of youth and mini football. This adds weight to ensure all pitch provision in the city is protected.

4.5.4 Depending on a number of issues, it may be possible for the shortfall in youth and mini football to be met by spare capacity in other pitch provision. It is important to note that spare capacity only exists for senior cricket once those pitches that are only available on a very adhoc basis are factored in. However, for a number of pitches there is no long term security/certainty that they will be available for community use. The strong reliance on such unsecured sites is a key issue, and it is recognised by the long term aim of the Council's leisure service to open up other providers sporting facilities for community use. The assessment highlights the importance of this, if there is to be certainty that demand can be adequately met. Meeting demand through such sites is important in ensuring that the city has a world-class leisure and sport offer. In this regard, securing community use agreements are a key way forward on this. Along with securing the principle of community use at these sites, any necessary works to enable, and overcome any concerns with, community use should be identified and undertaken. This may include improving the quality of the pitches to enhance their capacity and providing new or enhanced ancillary provision.

4.5.5 In the first instance, secured community use should be sought at sites that currently offer such use on an unsecured basis. The assessment also suggests that options should be explored in regard to securing community use at those sites that offer adhoc use, and also other private sites, particularly those that help meet the needs for cricket. Through securing community use it will be important to ensure that there is a good match between the nature of the use offered and the needs of the clubs that could practically benefit from use of the particular sites. Formal agreements should be established which set out the principle of this use and details of its implementation. Given the concerns raised by clubs during the consultation these agreements should ensure that the cost of hiring pitches is not prohibitive to potential users. In working towards securing such regard should

be had to Sport England's template community use agreements and guidance on opening up school sports facilities<sup>21</sup>

- 4.5.6 Given the current shortfall of pitches with secured community use, the assessment suggests that all provision in the city should be protected. As no overall surplus of playing pitch land has been identified any proposed development which would adversely affect pitch provision should meet the policy requirements of the Governments relevant planning policy guidance for the protection of playing field land and Core Strategy Policy SR2. Prior to the imminent publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework the relevant Government guidance is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (paragraph 15). Any proposed loss of playing field land should therefore provide adequate replacement provision in line with the needs identified in this strategy. Given the land restrictions in Oxford the opportunities available to secure replacement playing pitch provision may be limited. As Sport England is a statutory consultee on any planning application affecting playing field land regard should also be had to their adopted playing fields policy.<sup>22</sup>
- 4.5.7 Any loss of provision with secured community use would place greater pressure on the remaining facilities and exacerbate the current shortfall. In addition, the loss of any site currently without such secured use would also place greater undue pressure on other provision and restrict the potential to address the identified shortfall in sites with secured community use.
- 4.5.8 In addition to protecting provision and providing additional community use pitches, the assessment suggests that the focus should also be placed on enhancing the capacity and attractiveness of existing sites through qualitative improvements to the pitches and ancillary facilities. Generally, the quality of pitches throughout the city is good and this needs to be maintained to ensure that there is no reduction in their capacity. However, the assessment has indicated that there are a number of sites with particular issues regarding their quality. These sites have been highlighted in the sport specific sections of this document and relevant site specific measures have been set out in the action plan in section 7. Another common issue across the assessment for all pitch sports has been the poor quality of ancillary provision, in particular the pavilions owned by the City Council.

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<sup>21</sup>[http://www.sportengland.org/facilities\\_planning/planning\\_applications/securing\\_community\\_use.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/planning_applications/securing_community_use.aspx)

<sup>22</sup> [www.sportengland.org/planningapplications](http://www.sportengland.org/planningapplications)



## **4.6 Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)<sup>23</sup>**

### **AGP Methodology**

4.6.1 While Sport England's playing pitch strategy guidance does provide some detail on AGPs their nature and use has developed significantly since its publication. Sport England has also recently developed its Facilities Planning Model (FPM) to include AGPs. Consequently, the following approach has been taken by the City Council to build the picture of the supply and demand for AGPs within Oxford:

1. Undertake an audit of existing AGP provision and survey of local clubs.
2. Identify the key findings for AGP provision in the city from Sport England's Facilities Planning Model.
3. Present information available on the supply and demand from the relevant National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), especially England Hockey Board, and highlight key issues.
4. Present additional local knowledge and survey results, including known facility developments.
5. Present the conclusions from the above information with regards to the adequacy of provision, and set out key recommendations and actions.

### **AGP provision in Oxford**

4.6.2 As shown by the map and its accompanying key (Figure 9), there are 12 AGPs within Oxford, which are accessible to the community at varying levels. The AGP at East Oxford is not a suitable size for hockey and can only accommodate five aside football matches; however, the remaining 11 AGPs can accommodate hockey use.

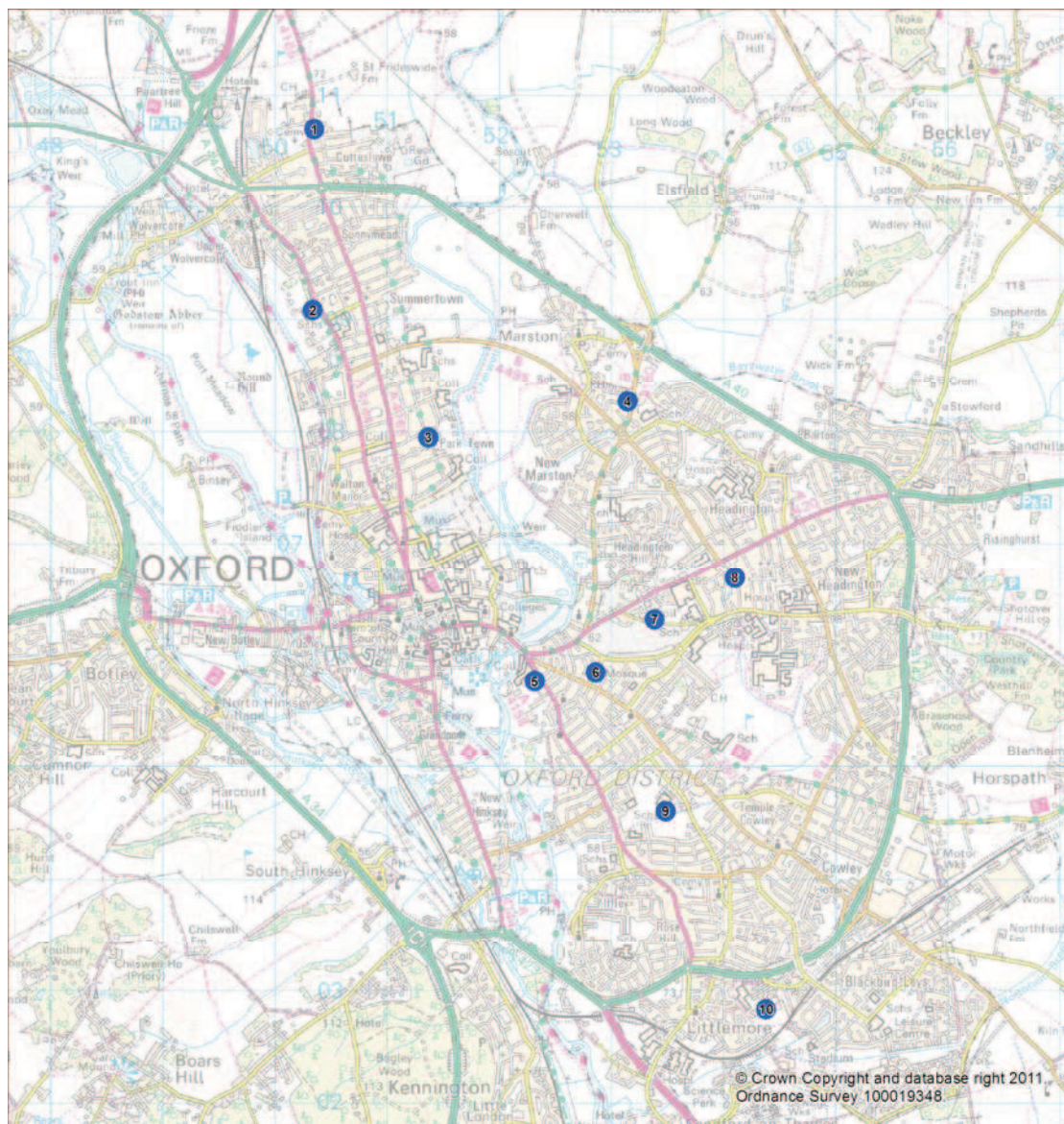
4.6.3 The surface of the 3G pitches available at Oxford Academy and Court Place Farm, make them unsuitable for competitive hockey and are not the preferred option for hockey training. These facilities are more suited to football training depending on their spec. Once IRB certified, the 3G pitch at The Oxford Academy will also be suitable for rugby training. The remainder of the AGPs are all suitable for hockey matches and training and football training and matches where permitted by the leagues.

4.6.4 Figure 9 shows that the distribution of accessible AGP provision is relatively concentrated within the North, North-East and East of the city. Historically, there was little provision within the South-East, however, this has recently been addressed through the development of a sand based AGP and indoor 3G pitch at the Oxford Academy, Littlemore.

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<sup>23</sup> An Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) is made from synthetic fibres, and replicates a natural grass pitch; resisting heavy use from sports that are normally or were originally played on natural grass.

**Figure 9: Map showing the distribution of Artificial Grass Pitches in Oxford.**



## Key to map of Artificial Grass Pitches in Oxford

Map ID	Site Name	Number of AGPs	Type	Floodlit	Year built	Year resurfaced	Ownership	Management	Access Type	Ward	Area Committee
1	Banbury Road North	2	Sand	Y	1990 Completed 2011	2001	Oxford City Council	Sport Club	Secured Community Use	Wolvercote	North
2	St Edwards School	2	Sand	Y	2000 1994	N/a N/a	Independent School	Independent School	Community Use (not secured)	Summertown	North
3	The Dragon School	2	Sand	Y	2006	N/a	Independent School	Independent School	Adhoc Use	North	North
4	Community Arena - Court Place Farm	1	3G	Y	2011	N/a	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Football Club	Secured Community Use	Marston	North-East
5	Iffley Road Sports Complex	1	Water	Y	1998	2009	University	University	Secured Community Use	St Mary's	North
6	East Oxford	1	Sand	Y	1988	2006	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	St Clements	East
7	Oxford Brookes University	1	Sand	Y	1995	2003	University	University	Secured Community Use	Headington Hill & Northway	North East
8	Headington School	1	Sand	Y	1915	Recently resurfaced, date unrecorded	Independent School	Independent School	Community Use (not secured)	Headington Hill & Northway	North East
9	St Gregory the Great School	1	Sand	Y	2005	N/a	Community School	Community School	Community Use (not secured)	Iffley Fields	East
10	Oxford Academy	1	Sand	Y	Completed 2011	2011	Academy (community school)	Academy (community school)	Community Use (not secured <i>at present</i> )	Littlemore	South-East
10	Oxford Academy	1	3G	Indoor	Completed 2011	2011	Academy (community school)	Academy (community school)	Community Use (not secured <i>at present</i> )	Littlemore	South-East

## Sport England's Facilities Planning Model

4.6.5 The FPM provides an objective assessment of the strategic provision of community sports facilities. The model has been developed as a means of:

- Assessing requirements for different types of community sports facilities on a local, regional or national scale;
- Helping local authorities determine an adequate level of sports facility provision to meet their local needs; and
- Testing 'what if' scenarios in provision and changes in demand. This includes testing the impact of opening, relocating and closing facilities and the impact population changes would have on the need for sports facilities.

4.6.6 The FPM works by converting demand, people, and supply of facilities, into a single comparable unit. This unit is 'visits per week in the peak period,' and once converted, the demand and supply can then be compared.

4.6.7 The FPM uses a set of parameters to define how facilities are used and by whom. These parameters are primarily derived from a combination of data from actual user surveys at a range of sites across the country within areas of good supply, together with other participation survey data. These surveys provide core information on the profile of users, such as their age and gender, how often they visit, the distance travelled, and the duration of stay; and on the facilities themselves, such as programming, peak times of use, and the capacity of facilities.

4.6.8 It is important to note that the FPM only includes full size AGPs available for community use. The FPM is a spatial tool which analyses the location of demand against the location of facilities, allowing for cross boundary movement of visits. Additional details on the FPM are available via Sport England's website<sup>24</sup>.

4.6.9 Every year Sport England undertakes a national run of the model, from which details per local authority area can be extracted. For AGPs the national runs of the model can be split down to hockey and football use. Based on the assumptions built into the model for the use of AGPs for hockey, Sport England's 2011 national run suggests that:

- Oxford has a higher level of satisfied demand for hockey AGP provision when compared to the England, South-East and County averages;
- There is very little unmet demand for hockey provision and the small amount that does exist is from residents living outside the catchment of a facility as opposed to a lack of capacity;
- Based on the supply and demand for hockey use alone, the FPM does not suggest that there is any need for additional provision;
- The FPM suggests that the hours that AGPs are available for hockey use are well used, with an overall used capacity during these hours for Oxford higher than the South-East and County averages. While the FPM suggests that there may be a small amount of spare capacity, there is little variation in the used capacity of all sites, with no sites particularly under or overused compared to one another;

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<sup>24</sup> . [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org) > Facilities and Planning > Planning Tools and Guidance > Facilities Planning Model



- Oxford imports a far greater share of demand for hockey AGPs than it exports. The FPM suggests that imported demand accounts for approximately 40% of the used capacity;
- Residents have a higher share of AGP provision than the national average, on par with the average for the South-East but below the County average. The share available is fairly consistent across the city.

4.6.10 Based on the assumptions built into the model for football, the 2011 national run suggests that:

- Oxford has a slightly lower level of satisfied demand for football AGP provision when compared to the England, South-East and County averages;
- There is some unmet demand, which equates to the equivalent of approximately 1 ½ pitches. The vast majority of this unmet demand is due to a lack of capacity, with some a result of residents living outside the catchment of a facility;
- Whilst the unmet demand is spread across the city, there are concentrations to the centre and South-East.
- Based on the supply and demand for football, suitable AGPs within Oxford, and within its catchment (taking into account cross boundary movement) the FPM suggests that there is sufficient unmet demand to warrant an additional AGP at any location within the city.
- However, the FPM suggests that a location in the southern half of the city would meet the greatest amount of unmet demand. Such a location would be able to meet unmet demand up to the equivalent of approximately 2 ½ additional pitches.
- As there is only unmet demand for the equivalent of approximately 1 ½ pitches, additional provision in this location would also help to meet unmet demand from neighbouring areas.
- Based on the hours the FPM suggests the AGPs are available for football use, there is no spare capacity at any of the pitches.
- Oxford exports a far greater amount of football demand for AGPs than it imports. The FPM suggests that Oxford exports approximately 35% of its demand to AGP provision in neighbouring areas;
- Residents have a significantly lower share of AGP provision for football use than the national regional and county averages. The share varies across the city, with the Central and East areas recording a share up to 50% below the national average.

4.6.11 It should be noted that the 2011 national run of the FPM is based on a January 2011 data cut of Sport England's Active Places database. The above findings do not therefore include the facility developments set out in section 4.6.24 below. However, the FPM does provide a useful start in developing the picture of the supply of, and demand for, provision in the city. It is important that the above findings from the FPM are overlaid with, and checked and challenged by, information available from the relevant NGBs and locally.

## National Governing Body Information

### England Hockey Board

4.6.12 Information from England Hockey Board's 2011 facility audit indicates that there are five hockey clubs within the city with over 1,290 participants, which is over a third of the total hockey population within Oxfordshire. The five clubs are listed in Table 21, alongside their usage details.

**Table 21: Oxford Hockey Club information**

Club	Club first accredited	Participants			Sites Used (% of the clubs total use of AGP provision and hours per week activity per site)
		Total	18yrs and under	Over 18yrs	
Oxford Brookes University		120	0	120	Oxford Brookes University (100%, 11-15hrs)
Oxford Hawks	✓	500	330	170	Banbury Road North (100%)
Oxford University		100	0	100	Oxford University Sports Complex (100%, 11-15hrs)
Rover Oxford*	✓	265	119	146	Oxford Brookes University (50%, 6-10hrs) Oxford University Sports Complex (50%, 6-10hrs)
City of Oxford*		305	127	178	Headington School (15%, 1-5hrs) Oxford Brookes University (80%, 11-15hrs) St. Gregory the Great School (5%, 1-5hrs)

*\* Please note - since the development of this strategy, the City of Oxford Hockey Club and Rover Oxford Hockey Club have merged to form Oxford Hockey Club, and has approximately 250 adult and 250 under 18 members.*

4.6.13 In addition to the clubs identified in Table 21 above, Adastral and Great Milton Hockey Club (who both field a social team) are also located within the city, with Adastral playing at Banbury Road North and Great Milton playing at Oxford Brookes University.

4.6.14 Average club sizes are larger than the national average, and clubs are accessing a higher number of hours as a result. The performance level of play is high, requiring more access to training hours.

4.6.15 England Hockey Board has sought views from the clubs on the condition of the pitches they use. All pitches are considered to be of good quality, with the exception of the Oxford Brookes University AGP, which was recorded as poor quality and in need of resurfacing in the next five years.

4.6.16 England Hockey Board regards Oxford as key for facilitating its single system, with the Banbury Road North site one of only 12 nationally used for Junior Regional Performance Centre (JRPC) activity; with Junior Development Centre (JDC) and Junior Academy Centre (JAC) also hosted. This site is used by Oxford Hawks Hockey Club, with 330 out of its 500 participants being ages 18 years or younger.

4.6.17 The main findings presented by England Hockey Board from their facility audit information are:



- Oxford is a high density hockey area, with large historical growth that is expected to continue.
- There is not a demand across the city at present for any new build full sized AGPs. However, there may be a need to provide small sided areas for training.
- The area also needs reprogramming to maximise pitch usage working alongside football requirements.
- The Oxford Brookes AGP is used by three clubs and subsequently a high number of participants. The facility was built in 1998 and refurbished in 2009. The surface is aging and all three clubs that use the pitch have indicated that the surface needs replacing.

#### Oxfordshire Football Association

- 4.6.18 Feedback from consultation with the football clubs has identified that two teams use the AGP at St Gregory the Great School and Summertown Stars FC reported that they use the AGPs at the Dragon School for training. The AGP at Oxford University is typically used for hockey, however a handful of the teams, particularly those who represent the BOBI league, use the facility on an adhoc basis. There are also a number of teams that use facilities outside of the city, supporting the findings from the FPM.
- 4.6.19 As identified, there are a handful of teams that make use of the AGP provision in Oxford; however, due to cost and demand, usage is adhoc, as much of the provision is widely used by hockey. The facility at East Oxford is an exception, as the dimensions are not suitable for hockey and more suited to 5 a-side football
- 4.6.20 The recently opened 3G pitch at the Oxford Academy is much sought after and accommodates regular training sessions for Oxford United.
- 4.6.21 The Hellenic League and the Oxford Mail Boys, and Oxford Mail Girls Leagues, are the only leagues that can currently play matches/league fixtures on an AGP. The other leagues represented by the city's teams are yet to adopt this.

#### **Local knowledge**

- 4.6.22 As identified in Figure 9, a high number of the AGP provision is provided by the education sector (schools, Universities) and these are widely used by those clubs identified in Table 21. In addition to club use, the AGPs within schools, particularly at Headington School, are regularly used by the pupils.

#### **Hockey Development**

- 4.6.23 A survey questionnaire was sent out to all of the hockey clubs, and those that responded had a desire to grow the number of members they currently have (Rover Oxford Hockey Club and Oxford Hawks Hockey Club). A further increase is expected in hockey through the introduction of small sided hockey, recent initiatives such as; 'Quick Sticks'<sup>25</sup> and 'Rush Hockey'<sup>26</sup> and

<sup>25</sup> Quick Sticks (England Hockey) [http://www.playquicksticks.co.uk/?cat\\_id=35&level=1](http://www.playquicksticks.co.uk/?cat_id=35&level=1)

<sup>26</sup> Rush Hockey [www.rushhockey.co.uk](http://www.rushhockey.co.uk)

the Hockey Associations Back to Hockey programme (supported by Oxford Hockey Club).

## Facility Developments

4.6.24 2011 has seen a significant amount of developments regarding the supply of APG provision in Oxford. A number of AGP developments have been recently completed, these being:

1. Banbury Road North

In line with the importance placed upon the Banbury Road North site, its existing AGP has recently been resurfaced. The pitch had previously been resurfaced in 2001 and was therefore nearing the end of its surface life. Works at this site have also included the development of a second sand based AGP, which is of international standard and includes floodlights. The project was successfully completed in March 2011 and has 'Junior Regional Performance Centre<sup>27</sup>' status.

2. The Oxford Academy

The Oxford Academy has provision of a new full sized sand based, floodlit AGP and a smaller sized covered 3G AGP. The new pitches were opened in September 2011 and are available for secured community use.

3. The Community Arena at Court Place Farm

Oxford City Council has worked closely with Oxford City FC to develop a third generation pitch<sup>28</sup>, commonly known as a 3G pitch, at Court Place Farm, Marston. The new development includes an artificial grass pitch with floodlights, offering a year round all weather facility for football. In addition to the 3G pitch, six new netball courts have been provided (netball has been discussed further in section 5.7).

Whilst Oxford City Football Club and the city's netball clubs are the main beneficiaries of the development, the new sports facilities are also accessible to the community. A secured community use agreement is in place, creating enhanced sporting opportunities to those living in the city and from a wider catchment.

4.6.25 In addition, the City Council has been approached by a number of operators looking to develop a small sided football facility within the city. An options appraisal has been developed which focused on eight potential sites. Out of these sights, those at Sandy Lane and Blackbird Leys scored the highest.

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<sup>27</sup> Junior Regional Performance Centre (JRPC) is a training centre for the U15, U16, U17 and U18 age groups, which from 2009/10 has been open to anyone who has successfully come through assessment from a Junior Academy Centre (JAC) or who has previously been involved in National Age Group Squads (NAGS) activity.

<sup>28</sup> Third Generation (3G) pitches represent a new development in synthetic turf. The pitch itself looks like natural grass with similar playing characteristics, is non-abrasive and can be used with rubber studs. Their design is primarily designed for contact sport training.

Further consultation is planned with clubs, stakeholders and operators to see if these sites are feasible.

### **AGP Quality**

- 4.6.26 Unlike for natural grass pitch sports, Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy guidance does not provide a quality assessment tool for AGP provision. Therefore, the City Council has undertaken an initial assessment of quality based on age, feedback from the club surveys, and by comparing the pitches to one another.
- 4.6.27 As much of the AGP provision in the city is relatively new and/or recently been developed/resurfaced, the majority of the facilities are of a 'Good' condition. However, the facilities at Oxford Brookes University and St Gregory the Great School are nearing the end of their 'surface life' and this was noted within their 'Average' quality score. The Oxford City Council owned AGP at East Oxford is heavily used for small sided football/football training and is also nearing the end of its surface life. This was reflected by its 'Poor' quality score.

### **Accessibility and Demand**

- 4.6.28 The majority of the AGP provision in Oxford is accessible to the community and approximately 50% of this use is secured. However, the clubs that responded to the survey indicated that many of the AGPs are at capacity and used without rest on both weekends and weekday evenings. However, it must be noted that the consultation pre-dated the completion of the facilities at Banbury Road North and Oxford Academy.
- 4.6.29 There are no known clubs or teams that have indicated that they would like to see additional AGP provision within the city.

### **Conclusions**

- 4.6.30 AGP provision within the city is well-used, and participation in hockey, which relies on such facilities, is strong. All existing AGPs should therefore be protected and maintained to a good standard. The surface of the AGP at Oxford Brookes University is coming towards the end of its operational life. Therefore it is important that relevant bodies, including the local authority and NGB's, work with Oxford Brookes University to try and ensure a suitable replacement.
- 4.6.31 Whilst participation in hockey within the city is likely to increase further this does not equate to a need for a full additional pitch (with the exception of a new surface at Oxford Brookes University). This is due to the recent resurfacing of the original pitch, and the development of second pitch at Banbury Road North, along with the new pitch at the Oxford Academy site. However, where space allows, options to increase alternative training provision alongside existing pitches should be investigated.
- 4.6.32 Unlike hockey, there is some evidence that there may be current unmet demand for football use of AGPs. However, as with hockey use, it may be that the very recent developments at the Oxford Academy and Court Place Farm, will over time, go some way to meeting this unmet demand.

- 4.6.33 In addition, the commercially funded football based facility as has been proposed may be a realistic option to meet any unmet demand for football use of AGPs. However, to ensure such provision complements rather than competes with existing provision, it is recommended that a full consultation process is undertaken to ascertain stakeholder views.
- 4.6.34 As all of the AGPs appear to be heavily used, there is a need to ensure that this use is effectively managed, allowing all potential users a fair share of the pitch capacity. The recent developments in the AGP stock across the city may aid overall flexibility and availability for users.
- 4.6.35 Given the above, it is currently too early to know the real impact of the recent AGP developments in the city. Therefore, there is a clear need to monitor the use of all AGPs to measure the impact of increased provision, and then subsequently review and update this assessment.
- 4.6.36 Along with helping to meet any further increase in hockey use and any unmet demand in football, the development of the facilities themselves may start to generate additional demand for such provision. The development of 3G surface provision may also now meet and generate demand for rugby training, especially the new facility at the Oxford Academy given its location to Littlemore Rugby Club (once IRB certified).
- 4.6.37 This monitoring should also apply to the non full-sized East Oxford facility. The Council owned pitch is well-used for football and is an area identified by the FPM as having significant unmet demand for football and a very low relative share of provision. However, its surface will need replacing in the next 5 to 10 years, and as part of the process the Council may need to look into alternative management and replacement options. The affect on this facility from the new provision should therefore be monitored to see if usage falls or remains high due to demand over and above, which can be met at other sites.
- 4.6.38 Without the AGPs at schools and the universities there would be a shortfall of provision. Therefore, while these facilities are available for community use, and used by clubs, the security of these arrangements need to be assessed. Where possible, this use should be formally secured ideally through an appropriate community use agreement.
- 4.6.39 To help carry out a review of this assessment, it should be ensured that the recent changes and additions to the AGP stock in the city are fed back through to Sport England's Active Places database. This will allow for the changes to be included in the data cut on which their national runs of the Facilities Planning Model will be based.

#### 4.6.40 **Recommendations**

1. That the Council continues its needs led evidence based approach to the provision of AGPs and that this is reviewed on an annual basis. The annual review, including consultation with relevant parties, should include and assess the impact of any changes to the supply of, and demand for, provision.

2. That all existing AGPs are protected, or where development may be proposed then adequate replacement provision is secured in line with the needs identified within this strategy.
3. Work with Oxford Brookes University, alongside NGB's and other relevant bodies, to try and ensure the suitable replacement of the surface of the AGP, which is coming towards the end of its operational life.
4. Carry out consultation to ascertain views on the need and potential location for a commercially funded football based AGP provision, and if feasible conduct a tender process in respect of this opportunity.
5. Monitor the impact of the recent changes and additions to the AGP stock in the city on all existing and new AGPs in line with the strategy review process.
6. Use the monitoring information to further understand the current and future use of the non full sized East Oxford AGP provision, and explore possible management, resurfacing and replacement options
7. Ensure that community use of educational provision is secured through formal agreements
8. Work with the England Hockey and the Hockey Clubs in the city to investigate options to increase alternative training provision alongside existing pitches.
9. Ensure that Sport England's active places database is accurate and up-to- date given the recent changes and additions to AGP provision in the city.

## **5 Outdoor Sports Facilities**

### **Purpose**

5.1.1 To compliment the Playing Pitch Strategy, as identified in section 1.7, it was agreed by the steering group that a assessment of 'Non Playing Pitch Sports' should be undertaken. It was further agreed that information should also be gathered relating to other 'Non Playing Pitch' facilities as follows:

- Bowling Greens
- Tennis Courts
- Athletics Tracks
- Golf Facilities
- Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)

5.1.2 The rational for including these facilities is discussed in section 1.7.4.

### **Methodology**

5.1.3 Unlike the Playing Pitch Strategy, the TLPF guidance and the associated tools, which assist with undertaking a robust analysis of the supply and demand for playing pitches, is not available for other outdoor sports facilities (non pitch sports).

5.1.4 While guided by the companion guide to PPG17 no specific tools are available to assist with an assessment of these facilities. The exception to this is Sport England's Active Places Power website which does provide some information for Athletic Tracks and Golf Courses. This work has therefore sought to gather and present available information for these facilities, along with the results from consultation with various parties, to help highlight issues and guide future provision. This has been undertaken by looking at the following:

- the structure and governance of each sport ;
- results from a survey of local clubs and teams;
- an analysis of current provision and accessibility;
- the quality of provision;
- the demand for facilities;
- information from the relevant sports national governing bodies including initiatives and priorities in respect of development of the sport;

5.1.5 This information has been used to present some conclusions with regards to the adequacy of provision and set out key recommendations and actions where required. The details gathered for these facility types should be reviewed as part of the annual review of this document building in any further available or easily accessible information.



## **Collating supply and demand data**

- 5.1.6 To ensure that accurate information was collated for each sport, the identification of outdoor sport facilities and clubs, teams and other users, involved those steps taken in section 3.2.

## **Consultation**

- 5.1.7 As per the consultation process for the Playing Pitch Strategy, section 3.3, the same method of consultation was undertaken with sports clubs to help collate and affirm the information gathered in respect of sports facility provision, clubs and teams. The consultation process also helped to gather qualitative research regarding facility quality, accessibility and development plans, participation increases and projects in the pipeline, amongst other things.
- 5.1.8 Table 22 below provides a summary of those parties identified as key consultee's, response rates to the questionnaire consultation and the initial methods of consultation used.

**Table 22: Questionnaire consultation**

<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Consultation Responses</b>		<b>Method of consultation</b>
	<b>Consultee's identified</b>	<b>% Response</b>	
Tennis Clubs	3	67%	Electronic Questionnaire/Meeting
Athletics Clubs	2	50%	Electronic Questionnaire
Bowls Clubs	8	38%	Postal/Electronic Questionnaires
National Governing Bodies	3	100%	Electronic Questionnaire/Telephone Interview/Meeting

## **Assessment of outdoor sports facility quality**

- 5.1.9 Unlike for natural grass pitch sports Sport England's playing pitch strategy guidance does not include quality assessment templates that can be used to assess these other outdoor sports facilities. Therefore, the assessments of quality were based on site visits, local knowledge along with feedback from clubs and the NGBs of sport through the consultation process.

## **Catchment analysis**

- 5.1.10 It is important that an assessment of provision is undertaken at an appropriate level that reflects the nature of how the relevant sports are played within the city. As such, each of the sports identified above will be analysed at a city-wide level. This is due to the smaller number of clubs/teams, which while focussed within specific areas of the city, have a wide geographical catchment of members, and the distribution of each sport facility provision. MUGAs have been analysed at a citywide level as a result of their geographical distribution.

## **5.2 Bowls Greens**

- 5.2.1 Bowls England is the governing body responsible for the development of flat green outdoor bowls, which is administered within the County by Bowls Oxfordshire (BO). The Bowls England Development Officer holds a national remit, however was contacted during the consultation process, for his views/feedback in respect of Oxford.

### **Participation in Bowls within Oxford**

- 5.2.2 There are eight bowls clubs in the city and the majority of them represent the Oxford and District Bowls League. Short mat indoor leagues are also represented by those clubs that have indoor provision:

- Blackbird Leys Bowls Club\*
- Florence Park Bowls Club\*
- Headington Bowls Club
- Oxford City and County Bowls Club
- Oxford University Press Bowls Club; *indoor and outdoor provision*
- Rover Bowls Club
- South Oxford Bowls Club\*
- West Oxford Bowls Club\*
- Oxford and District Bowls Club; *indoor provision only*

*\* Oxford City Council owned bowls greens that are leased to the bowls clubs*

### **Current provision and accessibility**

- 5.2.3 There are ten outdoor bowls greens within the city. Figure 10 below shows that the distribution of provision is relatively well spread.

**Figure 10: Map showing the distribution of bowls greens in Oxford.**



**Key to map of bowls greens in Oxford**

Map ID	Site Name	Number of greens	Ownership	Management	Access Type	Ward	Area Committee
1	Oxford University Press (Jordan Hill)	1	University	Sport Club	None - members only	Wolvercote	North
2	Oxford City and County Bowls Club	2	Sport Club	Sport Club	None - members only	Marston	North East
3	West Oxford Bowls Club	1	Oxford City Council	Sport Club	None - members only	Jericho and Osney	Central South & West
4	Headington Bowls Club	1	Sport Club	Sport Club	None - members only	Headington Hill & Northway	North East
5	South Oxford Bowls Club	2	Oxford City Council	Sport Club	None - members only	Hinksey Park	Central South & West
6	Florence Park Bowls Club	1	Oxford City Council	Sport Club/Oxford City Council	Members and pay and play access	Cowley	Cowley
7	Oxford Sports Club (Rover Sports & Social Club)	1	Sports Club	Sport Club	None - members only	Lye Valley	Cowley
8	Blackbird Leys Bowls Club	1	Oxford City Council	Sport Club	None - members only	Blackbird Leys	South East

- 5.2.4 The four Oxford City Council owned bowls greens, with the exception of Florence Park, are all leased to a club with no general community access, as access is limited to the clubs. The green at Florence Park has been leased to Florence Park Bowls Club, but has an element of community access when the club are not using the facility. The remaining four bowls greens in the city are owned and managed by private bowls clubs.

### **Quality**

- 5.2.5 As the TLPP methodology and qualitative surveys used for pitch sports are not designed to assess the quality of bowls greens, each facility was given an initial quality score based on comparison.
- 5.2.6 Those greens owned by Oxford City Council received a 'Good' quality score and those that belonged to private bowls clubs all received an 'Excellent' quality score.
- 5.2.7 These scores were then checked against feedback from the consultation work e.g. from the clubs. Feedback from the bowls clubs highlighted that overall they were happy with the standard of the greens, however, particularly for those Oxford City Council owned facilities; issues were raised around the quality of the ancillary/club house facilities. Many of the clubs expressed a desire to undertake maintenance works on their club house, but due to limited funds this was not seen as being currently viable.

### **Accessibility and demand**

- 5.2.8 As identified in Figure 10, there appears to be adequate access to bowls facilities in the city at club level. However, there is only one 'pay and play' bowls green, which is located in Florence Park. Despite the decrease in 'pay and play' facilities in Oxford over recent years, there is no apparent demand as booking records for the green at Florence Park indicate that this has only been used on two occasions within the last year (however it is still used regularly by Florence Park bowls club). This trend was similar for those greens that have recently been decommissioned in the city for other uses.
- 5.2.9 Feedback from clubs indicates that the current level of provision of bowls greens is sufficient to meet demand both now and in the future.
- 5.2.10 Any additional future demand generated through local or national initiatives to increase participation/club memberships, is not anticipated to result in the need for new provision.

### **Bowls development**

- 5.2.11 Feedback from consultation with the clubs and the NGB suggested that participation in outdoor bowls is declining in the city, particularly as indoor bowls is becoming more attractive. Those bowls clubs consulted with, noted that they have experienced a drop in memberships, mainly through natural wastage, and have failed to recruit new members for those lost.

5.2.12 Bowls England, together with the relevant NGB's for indoor, short mat and crown green bowls, has formed the Bowls Development Alliance (BDA). The BDA are in receipt of funding from Sport England to increase participation amongst people aged 65 and above, and to maintain current satisfaction levels amongst participants.

5.2.13 To address the decrease in participation, the Bowls Development Officer is keen to encourage the city clubs to consider alternative formats to introduce new people to the sport and make bowls more appealing. This could be achieved through community open days and/or links with schools to develop a youth section.

### **Conclusions**

5.2.14 As identified above, it is clear that there is an adequate supply of bowls greens within Oxford and there is no predicted future demand that will result in the need for additional provision.

5.2.15 Sports Development Officers will continue to support the development of bowls, by assisting the city's clubs and the BDA/Bowls England to raise the profile of the sport.

### **5.2.16 Recommendations**

1. That Oxford City Council bowls provision is maintained, but reviewed on the basis of participation and value for money on an annual basis.

2. That Sports Development Officers assist the NGB with the promotion of the sport within the city and alternative formats of the game.



### **5.3 Tennis Courts**

- 5.3.1 The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is responsible for the governance of tennis in England at a national level. The Oxfordshire Tennis Association is responsible for the administration and development within Oxford.

#### **Participation in tennis within Oxford**

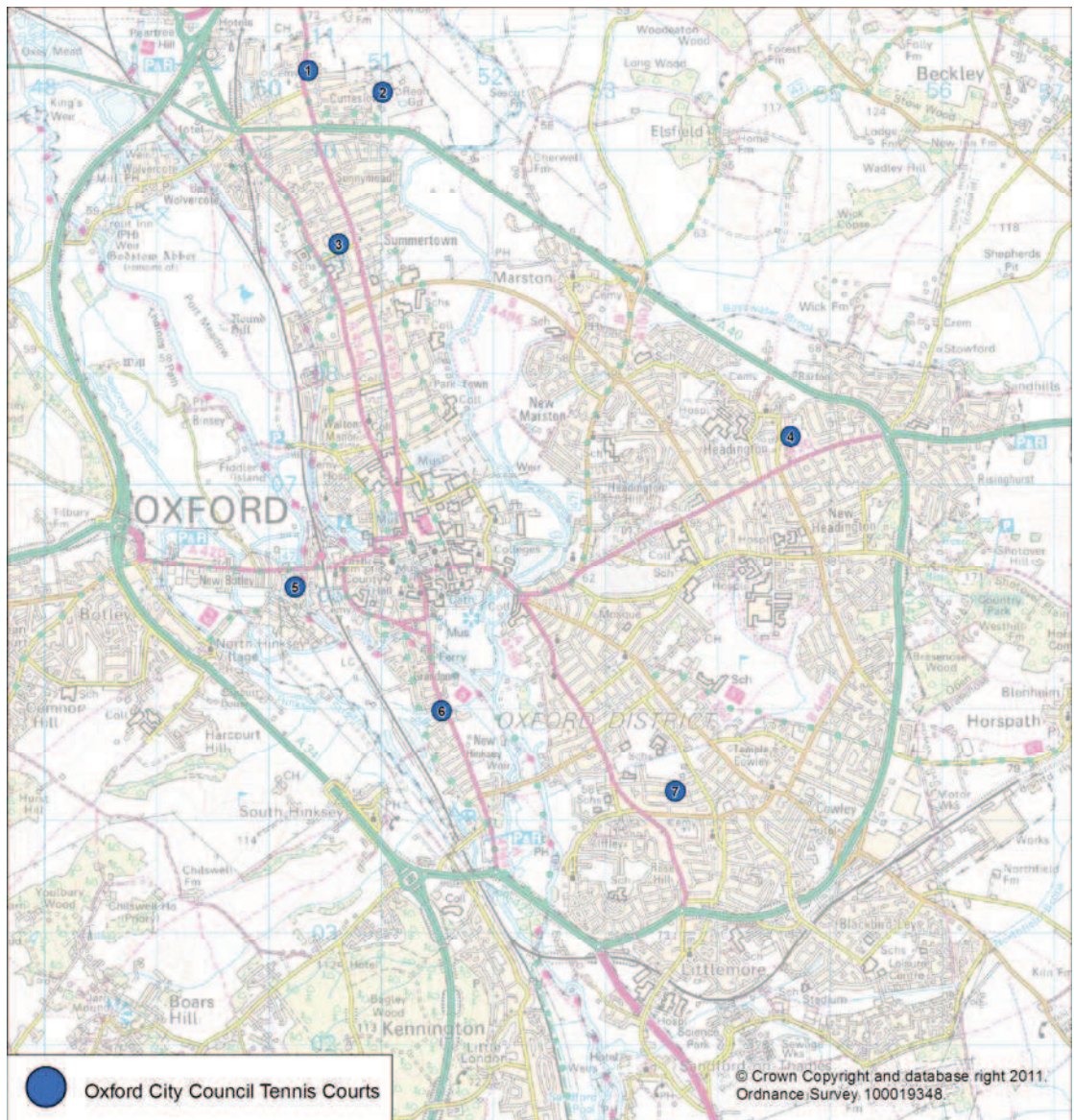
- 5.3.2 There are five affiliated tennis clubs within the city

- Norham Gardens Lawn Tennis Club; *Tennis Clubmark*
- North Oxford Lawn Tennis Club
- Oxford City Tennis Club
- David Lloyd Club; *Tennis Clubmark*
- Esporta Oxfordshire Health & Rackets Club; *Tennis Clubmark*

#### **Current provision and accessibility**

- 5.3.3 There are a total of 240 outdoor tennis courts in the city. 58 of the courts identified within the audit are owned by Oxford City Council, made up of 24 grass courts and 34 tarmac/hard courts.
- 5.3.4 Figure 11 displays the distribution of the council owned tennis courts. Due to the concentration and distribution of courts under external ownership (university, colleges and schools), these have not all been included.

**Figure 11: Map showing the distribution of Oxford City Council Tennis Courts**



**Key to map of Oxford City Council owned tennis courts**

Map ID	Site Name	Number of hard courts	Number of grass courts	Ownership	Management	Access Type	Ward	Area Committee
1	Banbury Road North (North Oxford Tennis Club)	9	10	Oxford City Council	Sport Club	Secured Community Use	Wolvercote	North
2	Cuttislowe Park	4	-	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Wolvercote	North
3	Alexandra Courts	6	14	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Summertown	North
4	Bury Knowle Park	4	-	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Headington	North
5	Botley Recreation Ground	2	-	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Jericho & Osney	Central South & West
6	Hinksey Park	4	-	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
7	Florence Park	5	-	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Cowley	Cowley

## **Conclusion**

- 5.3.5 An extensive review of tennis within Oxford was undertaken by the Sports Development team in October 2010 (Tennis Review and Action Plan). The review identified the current provision in respect of participation trends, club development and initiatives in the pipeline from the LTA and the Tennis Foundation. Through the review of the current provision, recommendations were made and an action plan for the development of tennis in Oxford was developed.
- 5.3.6 In summary, the review identified that there is no current need for additional tennis facilities in Oxford. However, it is important that the assets in the ownership of Oxford City Council are sweated to maximise the development of the game wherever possible.
- 5.3.7 There is a varying level of quality demonstrated across the tennis facilities owned by Oxford City Council. Some of these are now in a poor condition, with no maintenance plan or capital fund allocated for improvements

### **5.3.8 Recommendations**

1. That a capital programme of improvements is explored for the Council's tennis court facilities and that developer contributions are allocated as they arise to help maintain and improve the facilities.
2. That the actions identified within the Tennis Review and Action Plan continue to be completed.

## **5.4 Athletics tracks**

- 5.4.1 Athletics is primarily governed by England Athletics, however, on a local level the development and governance of athletics within Oxford is overseen by the Oxfordshire Athletics Network. The network is a local partnership of athletics clubs and other sporting organisations in and around Oxfordshire. The purpose of the Oxfordshire Athletics Network is to drive up the quality of athletics provision delivered within clubs, schools and other environments, by improving the quality of coaching, clubs and competition opportunities at a local level.

### **Participation in athletics within Oxford**

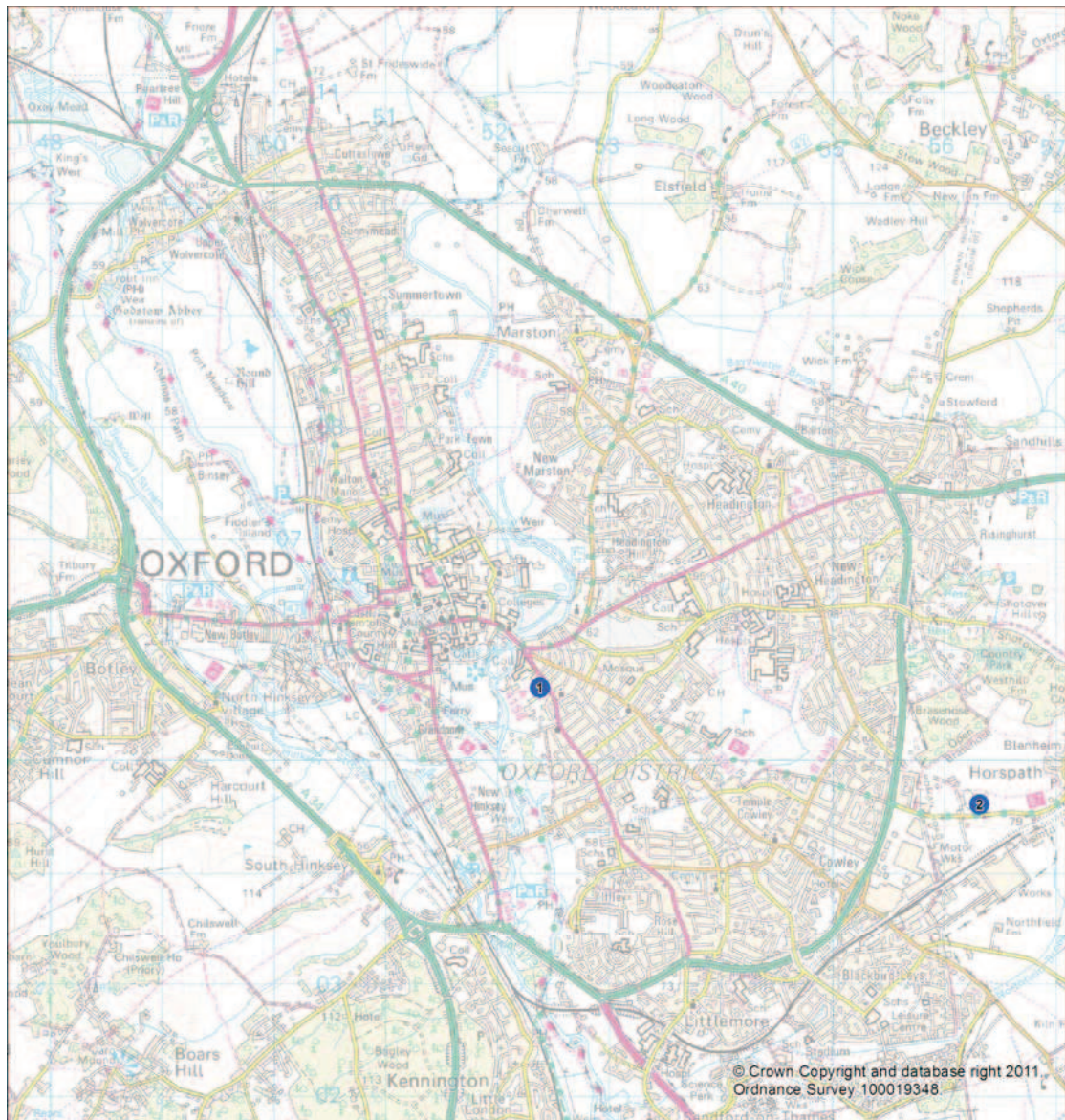
- 5.4.2 Oxford City Athletic Club (OCAC) is the biggest club within the city which field senior men's, senior women's and youth sections. Oxford University also field an athletics club. In addition to athletics clubs, there is one road running club: Headington Road Runners.

### **Current provision and accessibility**

- 5.4.3 There are two facilities that host provision for athletics including a running track, throwing cage and sand pit; these are:
- Oxford University Athletics Track - Iffley Road Sports Complex; home to Oxford University Athletic Club.
  - Horspath Sports Ground; home to Oxford City Athletic Club.
- 5.4.4 The athletics provision at Horspath Sports Ground is owned by Oxford City Council. Despite the location of this facility, which falls within the South Oxfordshire district boundary, for the purpose of this strategy it is classed as a city facility within the Cowley area committee.



**Figure 12: Map showing the distribution of athletics tracks in Oxford.**





***Key to map of athletics tracks in Oxford***

<b>Map ID</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Floodlit</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Access Type</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Area Committee</b>
1	Iffley Road Sports Complex	Y	University	University	Secured Community Use	St Mary's	East
2	Horspath Sports Ground	Y	Oxford City Council	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Lye Valley	Cowley

## **Quality**

- 5.4.5 As the TLPF methodology and qualitative surveys used for pitch sports are not designed to assess the quality of athletic tracks, each facility was given an initial quality score based on comparison.
- 5.4.6 The athletics track at Oxford University Iffley Road Sports Complex received a 'Very Good' quality score and the track at Horspath Sports Ground received a 'Good' quality score. These ratings were then checked against the feedback from the consultation work. The rating given to the track at Horspath Sports Ground appears to be generally consistent with feedback from OCAC. However, amongst a number of questions that were asked in respect of the satisfaction with the quality of the facility, the club rated disabled access, line markings and overall track quality as 'Poor'. The remainder of the aspects scored 'Good'.
- 5.4.7 The club rated the ancillary facilities (changing rooms and showers) as acceptable, which is consistent with the 'Average' score that the clubhouse received through the NVTQA. As identified above, the quality of the council's pavilion stock has been reviewed and a phased plan for improvements is being developed.

## **Accessibility and demand**

- 5.4.8 The athletics provision at the Iffley Road Sports Complex and Horspath Sports Ground are accessible to the public, however, as these sites are also home to the city's athletic clubs access can be limited at times.
- 5.4.9 A formal agreement is currently being drafted to outline OCAC's use of the facility at Horspath Sports Ground. Through an existing agreement the club's training session is held every Monday evening and they have first refusal on track bookings. Open 'pay and play' sessions are available on site on a Tuesday and Wednesday for senior training sessions, and Thursday evenings for junior training sessions. Outside these designated training times the facility is available for use on a 'pay and play' arrangement.
- 5.4.10 Unfortunately, due to the location of the Horspath facility, it is difficult to police, and as such there is a high degree of unofficial (un-booked) use on site, particularly on the running track.
- 5.4.11 Through consultation with OCAC, the club reported no issues with accessing facilities for competition or training purposes. Despite accessibility to both facilities within the city, the Club and Coach Support Officer (England Athletics) noted that the cost associated with using the facilities at the Iffley Road Sports Complex, and the limited times that the facility is accessible at Horspath Sports Ground, can be problematic for those people who want to use the facilities to train, particularly those that don't belong to a club.
- 5.4.12 In terms of geographical access to facilities Sport England's Active Places Power website indicates that all residents of the City are within a 15 minute drive (by car) of a track. Given the nature of provision it may be unlikely to expect a significant amount of the population to be in a reasonable walking distance of a track. However, the location of the Horspath facility on the eastern periphery of the city does limit accessibility by foot.

### **Athletics development**

- 5.4.13 Feedback from the Club and Coach Support Officer suggests that there has been no significant increase in participation in athletics; however, participation in road running has seen a slight upwards shift. Despite participation remaining static, consultation with OCAC, has revealed their membership over the last five years has increased and that half of their members live outside of Oxford.
- 5.4.14 To coincide with the 2012 Olympics, it is expected that there will be an increase in participation in athletics, though it is not anticipated that demand will outgrow the available provision in Oxford. The Club and Coach Support Officer is currently working with OCAC to ensure they are in a position to take new members after the 2012 games.

### **Conclusions**

- 5.4.15 There are no clubs in Oxford that are awaiting athletics facilities or seeking additional provision, which aligns with feedback received from the consultation in respect of growth in participation and there is no demand for additional athletics provision.
- 5.4.16 To ensure that the athletics track at Horspath Sports Ground is fit for purpose and meets industry standards, Oxford City Council may want to consider resurfacing the track within the next 5 years; and in order to fully sweat this asset should explore best practice management options for the site.

### **5.4.17 Recommendations**

1. Explore funding and potential options to replace the track at Horspath Sports Ground and to bring the facility up to the relevant industry standards.
2. That the management arrangements for the Horspath facility are reviewed.

## 5.5 Golf Facilities

- 5.5.1 Golf in Oxfordshire is governed by the Berks, Bucks and Oxon (BBO) Golf Partnership<sup>29</sup>, who are responsible for delivering and implementing the 'Whole Sport Plan for Golf, 2009 – 2013'. The partnership's main focus is the 'Start' and 'Stay' elements of the plan.

### Current provision and accessibility

- 5.5.2 There is one golf club in the city, Southfields, which is accessible to members, and a 9 hole golf facility at St Edwards School, which has no community access. Neither of these facilities are owned by Oxford City Council.

**Figure 13: Map showing the distribution of golf facilities in Oxford.**



<sup>29</sup> <http://www.bbogolffpartnership.com/partnership/origins.asp>

***Key to map of golf facilities in Oxford***

Map ID	Site Name	Number of holes	Ownership	Management	Access Type	Ward	Area Committee
1	St Edwards School	9	Independent School	Independent School	None	Summertown	North
2	Southfields Golf Club	18	Sport Club	Sport Club	Accessible to members	Cowley	Cowley

- 5.5.3 There is also additional golf provision on the periphery of the city. The North Oxford Golf Club within the Cherwell District has one 18 hole course. Provision just over the border in the Vale of White Horse includes the Hinksey Heights Golf Club, which has one 18 hole course, two 9 hole courses (one par 3) and a driving range, and the Westminster Sports Centre which has a nine hole par 3 course. According to Active Places Power, all of these sites are available for community access on a pay and play basis. Taking these facilities into account alongside the provision within the city, Active Places power suggests that all residents of the city are within a 15 minute drive (by car) of three facilities.

#### **Accessibility and demand**

- 5.5.4 The County Development Officer for the BBO Partnership noted that there has been a decrease in participation trends in golf nationally. This has been significant within the South-East of England, with many of the Oxfordshire based clubs reporting that they had lost members in the past year.
- 5.5.5 The County Development Officer also noted that the facilities at Southfields Golf Club are currently under used, particularly during the week and there is no apparent demand for additional facilities in the city.

#### **Conclusions**

- 5.5.6 Aligning with current trends and feedback from the County Development Officer, it is unlikely that there will be a demand for additional golf facilities in the near future.

#### **5.5.7 Recommendation**

1. Explore sports development links with Southfield golf club.
2. Delivery of 'extreme golf' in the leisure centres.



## **5.6 Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA) Outdoor Gyms and Hard Court areas in Oxford**

- 5.6.1 A Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is a facility that is typically an enclosed hard court area that can accommodate a variety of sports, including football, basketball, hockey etc.

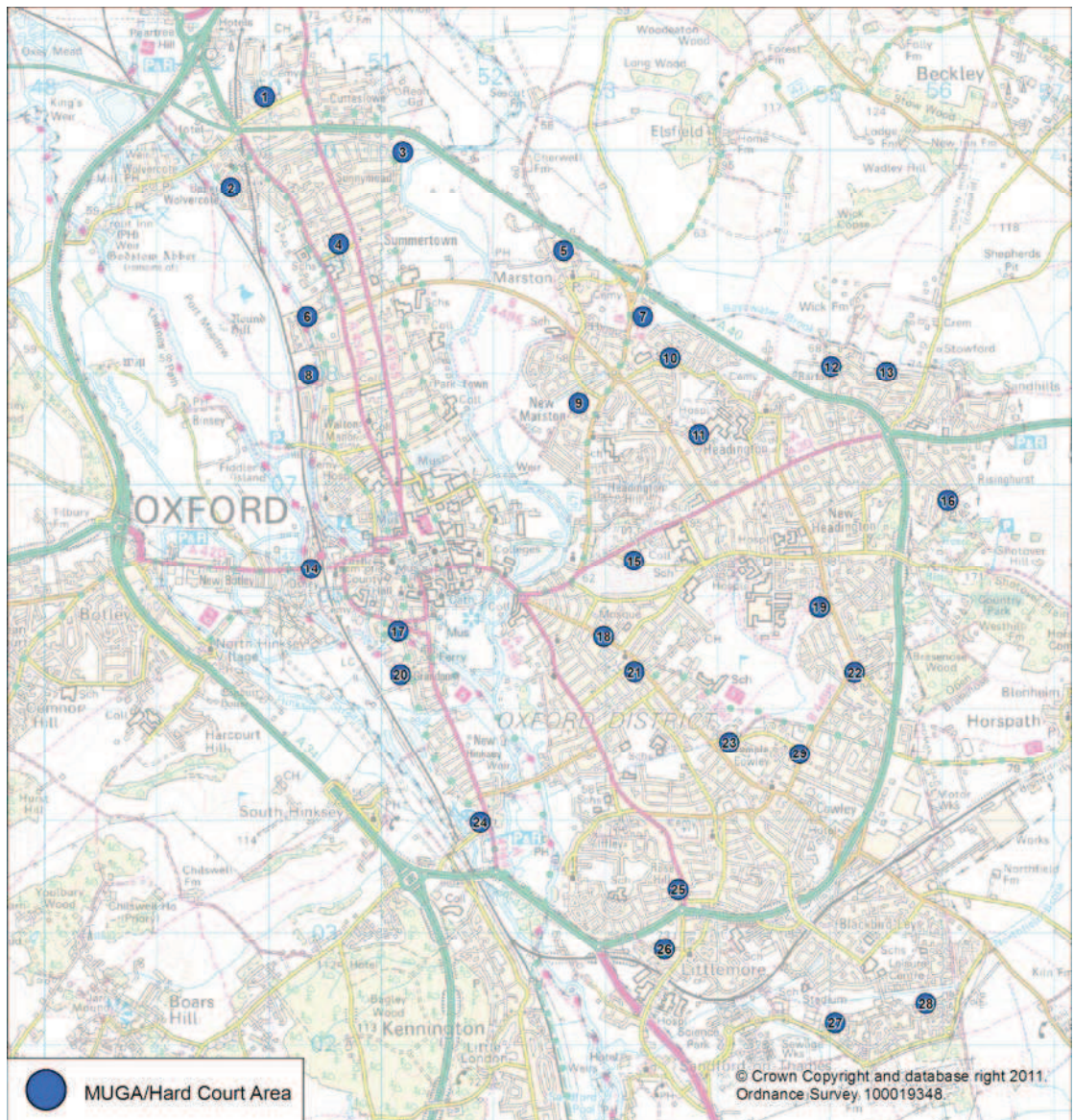
### **Current provision and accessibility**

- 5.6.2 There are fourteen MUGAs within the city that are owned by Oxford City Council and are primarily used to deliver the councils Street Sports programme and provide free casual access to the public.
- 5.6.3 For the purpose of this strategy, fifteen hard court areas, commonly known as 'kick about' or basketball areas, and one adiZone<sup>30</sup> at Court Place Farm, have been included in the audit. These facilities are also owned by Oxford City Council and accessible to the community at no charge.

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<sup>30</sup> An adizone is a permanent installation in the shape of the London 2012 logo, and includes sporting facilities inspired by Olympic and Paralympic sports that include a basketball, football and tennis area, a climbing wall, an outdoor gym and an open area to encourage dance, aerobics and gymnastics.

**Figure 14: Map showing the distribution of MUGAs (including hard court areas and adizone's) in Oxford.**



**Key to map of MUGA's, adIZones and hard court areas in Oxford**

Map ID	Site Name	Type	Ownership/ Management	Access Type	Ward	Area Committee
1	Five Mile Drive	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Wolvercote	North
2	Pixey Place	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Wolvercote	North
3	Sunnymede Park	MUGA & Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Wolvercote	North
4	Alexandra Park	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Summertown	North
5	Wood Farm Green	MUGA	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Quarry & Risinghurst	North-East
6	Elizabeth Jennings Close	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	St Margaret's	North
7	Court Place Farm	Adizone	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Marston	North-East
8	Aristotle Lane	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	North	North
9	Marston Recreation Ground	MUGA	Marston Parish Council	Secured Community Use	Marston	North-East
10	Northway Recreation Ground	MUGA	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Headington Hill & Northway	North-East
11	Radcliffe	MUGA	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Headington Hill & Northway	North East
12	Barton Recreation Ground	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Barton & Sandhills	North-East
13	Taggs Gate (Barton)	MUGA	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Barton & Sandhills	North-East
14	Botley Recreation Ground	MUGA	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Jericho & Osney	Central, South & West
15	South Park	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	St Clements	East
16	Richards Way	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Headington Hill & Northway	North-East
17	Friars Wharf	MUGA	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
18	Manzil Gardens	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	St Clements	East
19	Bullingdon (Peat Moors)	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Lye Valley	Cowley
20	Grandpont Rec	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
21	Regal (Ridgefield Road)	MUGA	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Cowley Marsh	Cowley
22	Holloway/100 Acre Park	MUGA	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Lye Valley	Cowley

23	Cowley Marsh Park	MUGA	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Cowley Marsh	Cowley
24	Bertie Place	MUGA	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Hinksey Park	Central, South & West
25	Rose Hill	MUGA	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Rose Hill & Iffley	South-East
26	Oxford Road Recreation Ground	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Littlemore	South-East
27	Frys Hill	MUGA	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Blackbird Leys	South-East
28	Blacksmith Meadow	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Northfield Brooke	South-East
29	Crescent Road	Hard Court Area	Oxford City Council	Secured Community Use	Cowley Marsh	Cowley

- 5.6.4 Figure 14 identifies that there is a relatively good geographical distribution of MUGAs across the city, with the majority of facilities concentrated in the North-East area, followed by an equal provision within the Central South and West and Cowley area committees. The East area committee has no provision of MUGA or hard court provision and it may be an opportunity to investigate if there are any suitable sites for a similar type of facility in the area.

#### **Quality**

- 5.6.5 In respect of quality, the majority of the MUGAs fare 'Good' to 'Average' and are only in need of minor improvements caused by wear and tear i.e. new line markings. There are a few exceptions, and these include the MUGA at the Regal facility, the basketball court at Alexandra Courts, and the MUGA at Rose Hill, which has recently been vandalised.

#### **5.6.6 Recommendations**

1. That a maintenance programme is detailed to address the key issues at the identified MUGA sites, and capital and developer funding allocated to deliver this.
2. Examine the feasibility of a MUGA in the East Area.
3. Identify parks and green spaces that may be suitable for green gyms or fitness trails.

## **5.7 Additional Sports in Oxford**

- 5.7.1 In addition to the 'Pitch' and 'Non Pitch' sports identified above, Oxford also has a presence of baseball and softball, netball and Gaelic football clubs/teams. Each sport will be taken in turn, providing a summary of its structure and any concerns/comments picked up through the consultation process with clubs, league secretaries and NGBs as identified in section 3.

### **Baseball**

- 5.7.2 There are two baseball and softball clubs in the city, and two key sites that have the appropriate facilities to accommodate the game:
- Oxford Kings who play at Horspath Sports Ground.
  - Oxford Softball League who play at Rover Sports and Social Club.
- 5.7.3 Feedback from the clubs suggested that they were happy with the facilities they use. However, through discussion with the NGB it was evident that there was a desire to secure access to school sites that have baseball provision. The only known site in Oxford is the Dragon School, which is an independent school, which does not currently offer any community access.
- 5.7.4 The national governing body agreed that the baseball provision owned by Oxford City Council at Horspath Sports Ground was adequate, however, there would be scope for Baseball Softball UK (governing body for the sport) to match fund the development of the backstop and dugout if they could secure a 20 year lease on site.

### **Netball**

- 5.7.5 Netball is organised in Oxfordshire by the Oxfordshire Netball Development Board. There are six netball clubs in the city, who between them field 29 teams. Netball is typically played on school sites with the key strategic sites being:
- John Radcliffe Hospital
  - Cheney School
  - Rye St Antony School
  - Headington School
  - Oxford Spires Academy
  - Recently developed community arena at Court Place Farm.
- 5.7.6 Feedback from the clubs suggested that whilst there were no problems with accessing the school facilities for home matches, many of the facilities were used at capacity. Many of the clubs expressed a desire to grow the number of teams they field/grow their membership, but with the demand on facilities there were concerns that this could become problematic in the future. This, however, will be addressed by the development of the Community Arena at Court Place Farm. The new facility houses six new floodlit netball courts, and has a formal community use agreement in place. The new facility aspires to further develop participation in Netball, by delivering the England Netball initiative; 'Back to Netball'. There are also plans for a Learning Disability Group, Corporate League and potential for mixed netball.



- 5.7.7 Through further consultation, it was noted that there are sometimes difficulties with parking when football matches are held within the stadium at the Community Arena. To alleviate these pressures, 'Green' travel options to the facility will be explored.

### **Gaelic Football**

- 5.7.8 There is one Gaelic Football club in the city; Eire Org, that play on the Oxford City Council owned Gaelic football pitch at Horspath Sports Ground. This pitch is dual-use with the rugby union pitch. The pitch is used for both home matches and training, with an average of 15 bookings made per year.
- 5.7.9 Consultation with the club suggested there are no issues with the accessibility or quality of the pitch at Horspath. However, the NGB felt that the site was difficult to access without a car, and use of the pitch and changing facilities was difficult when a cricket match was being played. The NGB has been in discussion with St Gregory the Great school to explore marking out an additional pitch on site.

### **Conclusions**

- 5.7.10 Although Baseball, Netball and Gaelic Football are minority sports in Oxford, it was felt that there was a need to consult and succinctly review the structure of these sports, and supply and demand for the facilities they use. Looking ahead, we will ensure that dialogue remains open with the clubs and NGBs and that these sports are reviewed in line with the annual review of the strategy.

## **6.1 Monitoring and Maintaining the Strategy**

- 6.1.1 It is important that there is good governance in place to ensure that the recommendations and action plan are implemented. The Leisure and Parks service area will monitor this through its Sports Development meetings and also report on a quarterly basis to the Community Sports Network (CSN). Key stakeholders will also be regularly updated.
- 6.1.2 It is proposed that the strategy will be updated on an annual basis to keep the data accurate, with a full refresh each 5 years in 2016.
- 6.1.3 The approach to the annual update will consist of inviting the key stakeholders, such as Sport England, NGBs, Planning Officers, Leisure and Park Officers and the County Sports Partnership, to agree the terms of reference of the review. The steering group will also look to include a representative of Oxford Brookes University, Oxford University and its colleges and the Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association. The update will look to pick up only those areas where there has been, or will be, significant change; for example, proposed new housing schemes over 100 units, new provision of improvements secured to existing provision, any potential loss of provision, significant changes in NGB priorities or significant club/team changes.
- 6.1.4 The approach to the full review in 2016 will be in line with Sport England's playing pitch strategy guidance (TLPF or its equivalent at the time).

## **6.2 Developer Contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)<sup>31</sup>**

- 6.2.1 It is important that the recommendations and action plan of the playing pitch strategy are used to feed into wider infrastructure planning within the city. This should ensure that maximum benefit is achieved from any new developer contributions or from the community infrastructure levy (CIL). To ensure effective infrastructure planning for sport, it is important that any plans and investment decisions take account of the evidence provided within this strategy and are allocated in line with the strategic priorities. In doing so it will be critical to ensure effective communication and consultation with both planning and finance officers along with relevant external parties. As an initial guide the various projects within the action plan have had an indicative priority rating added to them.

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<sup>31</sup> Community Infrastructure Levy  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/communityinfrastructurelevy/>

## 7 Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy Action Plan 2012 - 2026

Key action	Council Priority	Timescale	Developer Contribution Rank and CIL (High, Medium, Low)	Cost	Lead Officer
<b>Football</b>					
Work with the OFA and football clubs to identify pitches that can be converted, or sites that can be marked out for 9v9 initiative, in line with the FA's Youth Review and local need.	Strong and Active Communities	Aug 2013	Medium	Officer Time	Focus Sports Development Officer
Develop and publish a phased improvement program for the Council's pavilions.	Strong and Active Communities	2012 - 2015	High	£2.6 Million (Internal and external funding)	Head of Service / Development Manager
Investigate the feasibility of bringing back football pitch provision at those sites identified in Table 9, in line with local need.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Low	Officer Time	Focus Sports Development Officer
Explore the feasibility of installing a pavilion in the Grandpont area.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	High	Officer Time	Development Manager
Explore the opportunity to secure community use of the playing fields and associated changing facilities, outside of school times at the proposed new primary school in Barton.	Strong and Active Communities	April 2013	High	Officer Time	Development Manager

Explore various funding opportunities to assist with the hierarchy of provision in the city i.e. assist with upgrading the ground facilities at Barton Recreation Ground in line with Hellenic Premier Division (Step 5) standards.	Strong and Active Communities	Dec 2014	Medium	Officer Time/ Developer Contribution	Focus Sports Development Officer
Improve the drainage of pitches at Court Place Farm and explore external funding to assist improvements.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Medium	£25K (Internal and external funding)	Focus Sports Development Officer
Explore the opportunity and cost of improving the quality of pitches at Grandpont Recreation Ground and explore external funding to assist improvements	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Medium	£10k (External Funding)	Focus Sports Development Officer
Work with Oxfordshire County Council and Hinksey Park FC to investigate longer term parking arrangements.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Low	Officer Time	Focus Sports Development Officer
<b>Rugby</b>					
Work with the ORFU, Oxford Harlequins (juniors and minis) and Cherwell School to examine opportunities around making improvements to the quality of pitches at Cherwell School.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Medium	£20K (External Funding)	Focus Sports Development Officer
Together with the ORFU, the Council work with Oxford Harlequins (juniors and minis) to identify a suitable site to accommodate additional matches/training.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Low	Officer Time	Focus Sports Development Officer
Work with the ORFU and Cherwell School to help the Oxford Harlequins RFC (junior's and mini's) to gain security of tenure of the pitches at Cherwell school.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2014	Medium	Officer Time	Development Manager/Development Officer
Work with the ORFU to help Littlemore RFC in their aim of establishing floodlights for their training facilities at the Oxford Academy.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2014	Low	Officer Time	Focus Sports Development Officer

Work with the ORFU, clubs and the Vale of White Horse district to regularly review the quality and capacity of pitches at the New Hinksey site.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Low	Officer Time	Focus Sports Development Officer
<b>Cricket</b>					
That cricket pitches are identified for community use, where there is currently no use, or unsecured use, in line with local need.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2014	High	Officer Time	Development Manager/Development Officer
In consultation with the OCB, undertake an independent performance quality assessment of Pitch 2 at Horspath road and bring up to OCA League standards (as a minimum).	Strong and Active Communities	Dec 2013	High	£10K (External Funding)	Focus Sports Development Officer
Identify external funding for ancillary facilities at Horspath and Cutteslowe such as screens and scoreboards	Strong and Active Communities	Oct 2012	Medium	£10K (External Funding)	Focus Sports Development Officer
<b>Hockey and Artificial Grass Pitches</b>					
Work with Oxford Brookes University, alongside NGB's and other relevant bodies, to try and ensure the suitable replacement of the surface of the AGP, which is coming towards the end of its operational life.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	High	£300K (External Funding)	Development Officer
Review the management arrangements and replacement options for East Oxford.	Strong and Active Communities	Dec 2015	Low	Officer Time	Development Manager / Focus Sports Development Officer
That consultation is undertaken in regard to a potential commercially funded Astro turf pitch, and if feasible a tender process is conducted in respect of this opportunity.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Medium	Officer Time	Development Manager
Identify AGPs that can be secured for community access with a formal agreement.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2014	Low	Officer Time	Development Manager/Development Officer

Ensure that Sport England's active places database is accurate and up to date given the recent changes and additions to AGP provision in the city.	Strong and Active Communities	Dec 2012	Low	Officer Time	Development Officer
<b>Bowls</b>					
That the OCC provision of bowls facilities is reviewed on an annual basis in regard to value for money and participation	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Low	Officer Time	Development Officer
That Sports Development Officers assist the NGB with the promotion of the sport within the city and alternative formats of the game.	Strong and Active Communities	April 2013	Medium	Officer Time	Development Officer
<b>Tennis</b>					
Identify the necessary works to bring the Council's Tennis Courts up to a good standard and a maintenance plan to retain them at this level.	Strong and Active Communities	Dec 2012	High	£248k (3 year plan)	Development Manager
That the actions identified within the Tennis review and action plan are continued to be completed including exploring the management options for the Councils courts.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Medium	Officer Time	Development Officer
<b>Athletics</b>					
That the necessary capital funding to replace the track and bring the facility up to the relevant industry standards is identified	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	High	£300k (Internal and External)	Development Manager/ Parks Operational Manager
That the on-going management arrangement for the facility are explored	Strong and Active Communities	Dec 2017	Medium	Officer Time	Leisure Manager
<b>Golf</b>					
Explore sports development links with Southfield golf club and the delivery of 'extreme golf' in the leisure centres.	Strong and Active Communities	Sep 2012	Low	Officer Time	Fusion / GO-Active



<b>MUGAS</b>					
Identify the necessary works to bring the Council's MUGAs up to a good standard and a maintenance plan to retain them at this level.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Medium	Officer Time	Development Manager / Focus Sports Development Officer
Identify potential funding to implement the improvements and also to maintain the facilities on an on-going basis.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Medium	£284,000 (3 year plan)	Development Manager / Focus Sports Development Officer
Investigate the feasibility of a MUGA in the East area.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Low	Officer Time	Focus Sports Development Officer
<b>Netball</b>					
Explore 'Green' travel options to the Community Arena.	Cleaner, Greener Oxford	March 2013	Medium	Officer Time	Sports and Parks Development Officers
<b>Generic</b>					
Ensure that Developer Contributions / the Community Infrastructure Levy items are allocated in line with the priorities identified in the strategy.	Strong and Active Communities	Dec 2012	High	Officer Time	Development Manager
Explore securing community use of those sites, which currently offer unsecured or no such use. Work with clubs and providers to prioritise sites to meet identified needs.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2014	High	Officer Time	Development Manager/Development Officer
Investigate a formal community use agreement with Keble College Sports Ground.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2014	Medium	Officer Time	Development Manager/Development Officer
Review and benchmark fees and charges for sports pitch provision in the city a on an annual basis	Strong and Active Communities	Dec 2012	Medium	Officer Time	Development Manager / Parks and Open Spaces Manager
Work with National Governing Bodies of sport to identify any funding opportunities for the various projects within the action plan.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Medium	Officer Time	Development Officer/Focus Sports Development Officer

Ensure that all Council playing pitches are maintained to at least their current standard of quality.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Medium	Officer Time	Parks and Open Spaces Manager
Investigate how we can protect playing pitch provision in line with QE II Fields and similar initiatives.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Low	Officer Time	Parks and Sports Development Officers.
Investigate opportunities around biodiversity within playing pitch areas.	Cleaner, Green Oxford	March 2014	Low	Officer Time	Parks Development Officer
Identify parks and green spaces that may be suitable for green gyms / fitness trails	Strong and Active Communities	June 2013	Medium	Officer Time	Development Officers / GO-Active
<b>Monitoring &amp; Review of the Strategy</b>					
Update the strategy in line with section 6 and consider the inclusion of other outdoor sporting facilities.	Efficient and Effective Council	March 2013	Low	Officer Time	Development Manager / Development Officer
Work with the OFA to review the demand and supply of 9v9, as a result of the FA's Youth Review.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	High	Officer Time	Focus Sports Development Officer.
Monitor the effectiveness of junior and mini pitches that have been over-marked on existing adult pitches, in regard to quality and capacity.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Medium	Officer Time	Focus Sports Development Officer
Maintain dialogue with universities and colleges with regard to their requirements, needs and accessibility to pitches.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Low	Officer Time	Development Officer
Maintain dialogue with all sports teams regarding their requirements and latent demand.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Low	Officer Time	Focus Sports Development Officer/Development Officer
Monitor the impact of the recent changes and additions to the AGP stock in the city on all existing and new AGPs.	Strong and Active Communities	March 2013	Low	Officer Time	Development Officer

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