



Newcastle-under-Lyme Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan – Stage E Report

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Strategic Context – PPS Stage E review	3
3	Football Grass Pitches – PPS Stage E review - 2020/21 PPS Position	5
4	3G Pitches – PPS Stage E review	10
5	PPS Cricket Stage E review	12
6	Bowls – PPS stage E review	15
7	Golf – PPS Stage E review	16
8	Hockey – PPS Stage E review	18
9	Netball – PPS Stage E review	20
10	Tennis – PPS stage E review	22
11	Rugby Union Grass Pitches – PPS stage E review	24
12	PPS Stage E – Update on progress made against the 2020/21 Action Plan	26
13	Stage E – PPS conclusions.	27

1 [Introduction](#)

- 1.1 This is the Playing Pitch Strategy (“PPS”) Stage E Review 2024 for Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council.
- 1.2 This report serves to identify key changes that have occurred, and actions undertaken, since the adoption of the Strategy & Action Plan in 2020/21.
- 1.3 The evidence base for the Strategy was initially produced through the Assessment Report undertaken in 2020/21 and was produced in accordance with Sport England’s Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance document.
- 1.4 Whilst this review highlights and updates major demand changes, as well as known changes to quantity or quality of pitch supply, it does not represent a renewed capacity analysis.
- 1.5 The Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance note details a stepped approach to developing a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). These steps are separated into five distinct sections, with Stages A through to D constituting the undertaking of a new PPS. This PPS review forms part of the Stage E monitoring and evaluation process (Stage E – “Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date”) whereby the PPS should be regularly updated in order to maintain its validity as a robust evidence base.
- 1.6 The nature of the supply and in particular the demand for playing pitches will likely to have changed over the years. Therefore, without any form of review and update within this time period it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.
- 1.7 As outlined within the Stage E PPS Guidance note, this review seeks to identify the following:
 - How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others).
 - How the PPS has been applied and the lessons learnt.
 - Any changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs in the area (e.g. the most used or high quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues.
 - Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport.
 - Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

2 Strategic Context – PPS Stage E review

- 2.1 The following section outlines a series of local regional and national policies which relates to the delivery of the PPS.

National Context

- 2.2 The provision of high quality and accessible outdoor community sports facilities at a local level is a key requirement for achieving targets set out by central government and Sport England. It is important that the PPS recognises these national priorities and works towards these aspirations as well as local priorities and plans.

Department of Culture Media and Sport Get Active – A strategy for Sport and physical activity 2023.

- 2.3 In August 2023, the Government published their new strategy for sport and physical activity. The strategy sets out the government's blueprint to improve the nation's health and fitness, enhance corporate governance in the sport sector and make it more resilient to future challenges at elite and grassroots level.
- 2.4 While the strategy sets out the blueprint it is not supported by any new or additional funding to support local areas to implement the changes
- 2.5 The strategy has a strong focus on council's needing to be flexible and innovative to responding to changing participation habits and securing investment through new partnerships with private businesses, the outdoor activity sector and looking at active travel opportunities. It also seeks to increase the number of impactful volunteering opportunities to help increase participation and tackle inactivity.
- 2.6 It is important that council's develop well evidenced facilities plans and to integrate public leisure provision within the council's wider strategic plans for health, wellbeing, place, climate etc.

Sport England Uniting the Movement 2021

- 2.7 In 2021, Sport England launched their new ten year strategy with a vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. It aims to tackle long standing inequalities in sports participation, with a focus on providing opportunities for hard to reach communities, removing barriers to participation through three key objectives:
- Advocating for movement, sport and physical activity.
 - Joining forces on five big issues.
 - Creating a catalyst for change.
- 2.8 Sport England believes that there are five key areas to focus on, which will provide the greatest opportunity for reducing physical inequalities:
- **Recover and Reinvent:** Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation (COVID 19) and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people.

- **Connecting Communities:** Focusing on sport and physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together.
- **Positive experiences for children and young people:** Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life.
- **Connecting with health and wellbeing:** Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.
- **Active Environments:** Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

3 Football Grass Pitches – PPS Stage E review - 2020/21 PPS Position

- 3.1 It is important that council's develop well evidenced facilities plans and to integrate public leisure provision within the council's wider strategic plans for health, wellbeing, place, climate etc.
- 3.2 In 2020/21, the PPS identified the following when taking into account the different standards of football pitches and the categorisation of the size of pitch that was used by age categories of participants:
- Adult Pitches – there was sufficient capacity on adult pitches to cater for demand apart from the Kidsgrove Analysis Area. When future latent demand was taken into account the Kidsgrove and Urban Newcastle North South & Central (UNNS&C) areas became over played.
 - Youth 11v11 pitches – It was identified that this size of pitch was over played in the rural south and UNNS&C areas, with the rural north at capacity and rural south area having spare capacity. When taking into account future latent demand, the rural central and Keele, rural south and UNNS&C areas become overplayed, Kidsgrove analysis area is at capacity and rural south has spare capacity.
 - 9v9 Pitches – There was spare capacity in all analysis areas apart from the Kidsgrove area, which was overplayed. When taking into account future latent demand all areas became over played apart from the Rural North.
 - 7v7 Pitches – There was spare capacity on mini 7v7 pitches in the rural central and Kidsgrove analysis areas, where all other analysis area's where at capacity. This position stayed the same when considering future demand.
 - 5v5 Pitches – It as noted that he was spare city in the UNNS&C analysis area where all remaining areas were are capacity. When taking into account future demand Kidsgrove and Rural north areas were at capacity with the remaining area's becoming over played.

Stage E review

- 3.3 Since 2020/21 it is likely that the supply/demand for grass pitches in the Borough may have changed considerably since the initial assessment report and therefore would need reviewing again in twelve months' time.
- 3.4 In terms of supply there have been minimal changes since the PPS. They have included:
- Newcastle Town taking on a lease for the Whammy pitches and Cotswold Avenue, and it is therefore likely pitch quality will improve over future years, and a new changing provision is anticipated to be completed in 2024.
 - Crackley Bank Pitch has been bought back into use and is no longer a lapsed site.
- 3.5 An assessment of quality of pitches and usage are set out in paragraphs 3.7 – 3.11 below.
- 3.6 In addition to the above, a number of sites have received funding through a variety of football foundation funding grants totalling £1,742,699.00 as shown in table 1 below since 2020/21. This grants would have inevitably improved the quality of the grass pitches and or the associated ancillary facilities that support grass roots football.

Table 1: Football Foundation Funding Grants

Site name	Analysis area	Grant Type	Grant Amount
Audley & District FC	Rural Central and Keele	Clubhouse refurb	£20,231.00
		Small Grant - Fencing and Goalposts	£11,640.00
		Small Grant - Machinery	£24,750.00
		Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (GPMF)	£19,488.00
Birchenwood Playing Fields	Kidsgrove	Small Grants - Goalposts	£4,688.00
		Small Grants - Goalposts	£6,840.00
		EGPM	£81,400.00
Bradwell Community Centre	UNNS&C	Small Grant - Machinery	£13,776.00
		GPMF	£3,000.00
Chester Road Playing Fields - Kidsgrove	Kidsgrove	Small Grant - Goalposts	£2,160.00
Holditch Miners Club	UNNS&C	Small Grant - Clubhouse Refurbishment	£7,950.00
		Small Grant - Machinery	£3,043.00
		GPMF	£10,000.00
Kents Lane Community Building	UNNS&C	Small Grants - Goalposts	£1,875.00
		Small Grants - Goalposts	£1,080.00
		Small Grants - Goalposts	£900.00
Lower Milehouse (Cotswold Avenue Playing Field)	UNNS&C	GPMF	£64,000.00
Manor Road Playing Fields (Madeley White Star FC)	Rural Central and Keele	Small Grants - Goalposts	£2,880.00
		Modular Changing Rooms	£231,658.00
		Small Grants - Goalposts	£3,240.00
		Small Grants - Fencing	£11,605.00
		EGPM	£48,232.00
Pool Dam Play Fields	UNNS&C	GPMF	£38,488.00
Red Industries Lyme Valley Stadium	UNNS&C	FSIF Delegated - Relocation and replacement of	£10,360.00

		existing spectator refreshment facilities	
		FSIF Delegated - Removal and replacement of the existing floodlight system	£17,815.00
		FSIF Delegated - Refurbishment of spectator toilets	£11,620.00
		Refurbishment of clubhouse	£47,228.00
Red Street Community Centre	UNNS&C	Small Grant - Goalposts	£1,440.00
Redgate Clayton Football Club	UNNS&C	FSIF Delegated - Reconfiguration and extension of existing changing pavilion to provide two officials rooms	£41,840.00
		GPMF	£10,080.00
Roe Lane Playing Fields	UNNS&C	GPMF	£38,600.00
The Wammy	UNNS&C	Clubhouse	£250,000.00
Whisper Lane		GPMF	£61,204.00

- 3.7 In 2020 football funding partners (Premier League, The Football Association, Sport England, the Football Foundation and The Department for Culture, Media and Sport), launched the Pitch Power App. The app was a new digital self-assessment tool for use by local authorities or clubs, to support improvements to the quality of their pitches, via enhanced maintenance support and grants opportunities where applicable. The sites that undertook this assessment and showing any changes from the original PPS strategy in 2020/21 are as follows:

Table 2: Pitch Power App Outcomes

Site	PPS rating 2020/21	Power Pitch rating
Audley and District FC	Standard	Good November 23
Birchenwood Playing Fields	Standard	Good to Advanced April 23
Holditch Miners Club	Standard	Good April 23
Kent's lane	Standard	Poor March 23
Manor Road playing Fields	Standard	Good Jan 23
Pool Dam Playing Fields	Standard	Good to Advanced Nov 23
Redgate Clayton	Poor	Poor February 22
Red Industries Lyme Valley Stadium	Good	Advanced June 23
Redstreet	Good	Good
Roe Lane	Good	Good to Advanced Oct 23
The Gordon Banks Centre	Standard	Advanced Nov 23

- 3.8 Taking the above on board with engaged maintenance and grant allocations across all of the analysis areas, there appears to have been improvements in key/strategic stays in pitch quality which will enable a greater number of teams to maximise the use of these facilities.
- 3.9 A challenge across the Borough is accessibility to school/education sites to increase grass pitch capacity as more and more schools have migrated over to academy status.

Demand for Grass Pitches.

- 3.10 The differences between the team affiliation data from 2020 to 2024 for the Borough are shown in the table below:

Table 3: Team affiliation data

Age Group	Sub Area										Local Authority Area	
	Kidsgrove		Rural Central & Keele		Rural North		Rural South		UNNS&C			
	2020	2024	2020	2024	2020	2024	2020	2024	2020	2024	2020	2024
Adult	3	4	10	14	3	7	5	3	32	40	53	68
Youth 11 v 11	12	7	6	11	0	15	9	9	35	47	62	89
Youth 9 v 9	7	6	2	6	1	8	2	6	19	25	31	51
Mini 7 v 7	5	2	7	11	0	9	2	8	26	25	40	55
Mini 5 v 5	5	5	2	10	0	6	2	3	12	19	21	43
Total	32	24	27	52	4	45	20	29	124	156	207	306

- 3.11 It can be identified that during this time period that the number of teams affiliated in the Borough has increased, with growth across all age groups. Given this change there may be the need to update the supply demand data to understand fully the impact of the growth in demand for football along with the improvements to the pitches that have been made.

Recommendations

- 3.12 The following are recommendations in respect of grass pitches:
- Ensure that there is sufficient level of grass pitch provisions is retained to meet future and current demand.
 - Work with education providers to secure access to football pitches through the use of community use agreements.
 - Encourage the use of pitch power across also sites including these managed by Local Authorities.
 - Sustain pitch quality and seek improvements where necessary via utilisation of the FA's Pitch Improvement Programme.
 - Work to accommodate future demand at sites which are not operating at capacity or at sites not currently available for community use that could be moving forward.
 - Improve ancillary facilities where this is a clear need to do so.

- Ensure clubs playing within, or with aspirations to play within, the football pyramid can progress by being compliant to FA ground grading regulations.
- Explore the creation of a within grass pitch hub site in the UNNS&C Analysis Area in order to provide clubs better quality ancillary and pitch provision in order to address shortfalls.
- Determine the most economically advantageous pitches to invest in and prioritise these subject to available funding.
- Explore opportunities for some Council sites to become available for self-management via lease agreements with local football clubs.
- Explore opportunities to support the funding of further grass pitches to meet the latent demand through section 106 monies linked to housing developments etc.

4 3G Pitches – PPS Stage E review

2020/21 PPS Position

- 4.1 In 2020/21, the PPS identified that there was an overall shortfall of 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated demand for football in the Borough. Based on the assessment report and to satisfy the current football demand (based on the Football Associations model of one 3G pitch being able to cater for 38 teams) there was the need for three full size pitches to meet demand in 2020/21 one in Kidsgrove, Rural South, and UNNS&C analysis areas to accommodate training demand. However taking into account future demand there is a requirement to provide two additional 3 G pitches in the UNNS&C analysis area.

Stage E review

- 4.2 Since 2020, there has been a growth which has meant an increase in the need for 3G pitches to accommodate training and match play needs which is identified in table 4 below.

Table 4: AGP Assessment

Analysis area	Number of Teams		Requirement of AGPs		Number AGPs Available		Shortfall of AGPs	
	2020	2024	2020	2024	2020	2024	2020	2024
Kidsgrove	32	24	0.84	0.63	0	0	0.84	0.63
Rural Central & Keele	27	52	0.71	1.37	1	1	0.71	0.37
Rural North	4	45	0.11	1.18	0	0	0.11	1.18
Rural South	20	29	0.52	0.76	0	0	0.52	0.76
UNNS&C	124	156	3.26	4.1	2	3	1.26	1.1
Total	207	306	5.44	8	3	4	1.92	4

- 4.3 Despite a new full size 3G pitch being built at Roe Lane, in 2023, with investment from the Football Foundation and red industries, recent analysis shows that there is still a requirement to provide a further four 3G pitches, one in each of the following analysis areas Kidsgrove, Rural South, Rural North and UNNS&C to accommodate current and future training demand.

Recommendations

- 4.4 The following our recommendations in respect of 3G pitches:-
- Protect the current stock of 3G pitches.
 - Create four additional full size 3G pitches to alleviate all current shortfalls with one each in the Kidsgrove, Rural South and two in the UNNS&C analysis areas.
 - Ensure that any new 3G pitches have community use agreements in place.
 - Ensure all current and future providers have in place a pitch replacement fund to ensure long-term sustainability.
 - Ensure that all new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA / World Rugby recommended dimensions and quality performance standards.
 - Ensure the pitch at The Gordon Banks Sports Centre is refurbished and put on the FA register with regular relevant testing.
 - Encourage more match play demand to transfer to 3G pitches and ensure that pitches remain suitable to accommodate such demand through appropriate certification when it is required.

- Ensure that any new 3G pitches are priced competitively against the cost of hiring a grass pitches and are aimed at local grassroots clubs.
- Explore opportunities to support the funding of further 3G pitches to meet the latent demand through section 106 monies linked to housing developments etc

5 PPS Cricket Stage E review

2020/21 PPS Position

- 5.1 In 2020/21 there was an insufficient supply of cricket provision to cater for current/future demand for adult cricket across Newcastle under Lyme, and when factoring in future latent demand for junior cricket makes the position even worse for adult cricket.

Stage E review

- 5.2 The overall supply and demand balance for cricket in Newcastle under Lyme remains unchanged since the previous strategy was carried out with the exception in the growth in girl's cricket specifically at Porthill and Whitmore Cricket Clubs.
- 5.3 In order to prevent the over play of cricket squares, Cricket clubs in the Borough have been asked to consider installing Non Turf Pitch at their grounds, in particular for use by junior teams. This has been met with some reluctance from the committees of the clubs as it would not protect the outfield should further matches take place throughout the week.
- 5.4 Since the 2020/21 PPS, there has been limited investment into the local cricket clubs from the County Cricket boards grant allocation scheme totalling £26,000 across four clubs. This money in the main has been used to make minor improvement to clubhouse facilities and toilets etc.
- 5.5 All cricket clubs who operate their own grounds under lease arrangements have not reported a significant changes to the quality of their cricket squares and or outfield.

England Cricket Board priorities (ECB)

- 5.6 The ECB's current strategic plan aims to connect communities and improve lives by inspiring individuals to discover and share their passion for cricket. The plans sets out six important priorities and activities, these are:

GROW AND NURTURE THE CORE

- Create an Infrastructure Investment Fund for FCCs
- Introduce a new Community Investment Fund for FCCs and CCBs
- Invest in club facilities
- Develop the role of National Counties Cricket (formerly Minor Counties)
- Further invest in county competitions
- Drive governance reform across the whole game

INSPIRE THROUGH ELITE TEAMS

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

MAKE CRICKET ACCESSIBLE

- Broaden cricket's appeal through the New Competition

- Create a new digital community for cricket
- Install non-traditional playing facilities in urban areas
- Continue to deliver the South Asian Action Plan
- Launch a new participation product, linked to the New Competition

ENGAGE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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

TRANSFORM WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' CRICKET

- Grow the base through participation and facilities investment
- Launch centres of excellence and a new elite domestic structure
- Invest in girls' county age group cricket
- Deliver a girls' secondary school programme

SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITIES

- Double the number of volunteers in the game
- Create a game-wide approach to Trusts and Foundations through the cricket network
- Develop a new wave of officials and community coaches
- Increase participation in disability cricket

Recommendations

5.7 The recommendations for Cricket are set out below:-

- Protect all cricket squares in current use.
- Work with clubs and grounds staff to review quality issues on squares to ensure appropriate quality is achieved at sites assessed as standard and sustained at sites assessed as good.
- Look to sustain minimal levels of overplay at Newcastle and Hartshill Cricket Club and Porthill Park Cricket Club through dedicated levels of enhanced maintenance and monitor future levels of demand.
- Examine the feasibility of installing an NTP at Scot Hay Cricket Club in order to alleviate overplay.
- Explore options to accommodate expressed future demand through the provision of additional grass cricket squares to the installation of NTPs.
- Support Audley CC to provide a second square closer to its existing home venue.
- Ensure security of tenure for all clubs with lease arrangements in place by ensuring agreements have over 25 years remaining.
- Support pavilion developments where it is required.
- Explore options to provide large clubs without practice nets with suitable provision at their home ground/s.
- Any new cricket provision created should have a ball strike assessment carried out as a matter of due course. Where new housing or building developments are under consideration within proximity to existing facilities a ball strike risk assessment should be undertaken. In addition, any clubs which could be potentially affected by this issue should be signposted to the ECB.
- Deliver National Programmes, disability cricket and W&G's programmes and seek to increase junior and female participation as a result.
- Work to increase women and girls' participation in line with the emerging Inspiring Generations ECB Strategy and protect existing provision so that women and girls

have a suitable place to practice and play – growth at Porthill Park and Whitmore specifically increasing demand on existing facilities.

- Consider underplay scenario of cricket facility at Keele University outside of student use to support local club demand. Ancillary provision at university site may need improvement to support match/league play.
- Explore opportunities to support the funding to improve cricket grounds/ancillary facilities or enhance capacity to meet the latent demand through section 106 monies linked to housing developments etc

6 Bowls – PPS stage E review

2020/21 PPS Position

- 6.1 In 2020/21, the PPS identified that all clubs had capacity to accept new members. As such, it is considered that anyone within Newcastle-under-Lyme that would like to start participating could do so at the clubs and greens already in existence. This means there is enough supply of greens within the Authority. Where bowling green's were identified as being in a poor condition it was recommended that improvements to these greens would improve capacity and support any increased levels of demand.

Stage E review

- 6.2 The overall position for Bowling Green's has slightly fallen with Knutton and has remained unchanged from that identified in the 2020/21 PPS for the Borough. Provision has remained static with twelve bowling greens located across ten sites with the management of these greens being equally Split between the Council and other providers.

Bowls England (priorities)

- 6.3 In 2021 Bowls England launched their new strategy "Fit for the Future 2021-26" The strategy set out the vision for sport, and clearly identify five priorities to encourage and retain individuals playing bowls:
- **Building the brand of bowls** by increasing focus on international & top domestic bowls, and utilizing opportunities such as Birmingham 2022 to achieve larger media coverage;
 - **Ensuring the sport is truly accessible** to all by offering different formats of the game which suit all time constraints, as well as driving more people to clubs in new ways;
 - **Creating positive playing experiences for everyone** who steps on the green, both for casual and competitive players, as well as growing our events calendar and introducing a Performance Pathway
 - **Putting volunteers first**, as the lifeblood of our sport, by increasing our support for clubs in order to empower them to thrive;
 - **Leading the sport with purpose** by developing our Governance structures, diversifying our revenue streams, and work collaboratively with all the sport's key stakeholders.

Recommendations

- 6.4 The following recommendations are made with respect of Bowls:-
- Improvements of standard quality greens to good quality through and enhanced maintenance regime is required at Wolstanton Park and Wolstanton High Street Club
 - Assist clubs, where possible, with any future ancillary provision improvements
 - Support clubs with plans to increase membership so that growth can be maximised.
 - Work collaboratively to transfer bowling greens and associated facilities to clubs on a long term lease or via an asset transfer
 - Retain existing quantity of greens.

7 Golf – PPS Stage E review

2020/21 PPS Position

- 7.1 2020/21, the PPS considered that the current supply of golf course and facilities in Newcastle under Lyme was sufficient to meet current and future demand. The emphasis of 2020/21 PPS was on ensuring that the golf course in the Borough are able to retain their membership base and society golf users as well as assisting the courses to capitalise on any untapped or future demand. The PPS recognised the importance that Keele driving range plays to support golf participation with Newcastle under Lyme and the surrounding area

Stage E review

- 7.2 Since the production of the PPS Strategy in 2020/21, the overall position for golf remains unchanged in the Borough. The three golf courses at Newcastle, Wolstanton, and Onnerley still remain within private ownership and operate eighteenhole golf courses. Whilst the golf clubs still rely on annual membership fees their income is supported by visitors to their golf course through society days as well as pay and play green fees.
- 7.3 Keele Driving range is in private ownership and the owners lease the land, car park and associated facilities from the Council. This is the only golf driving range in the Borough and accommodates demand from within the Authority, Keele University, as well as neighbouring local authorities such as Stoke on Trent, Cheshire and Shropshire.

Golf England (priorities)

- 7.4 In 2022, Golf England's launched their new strategic framework "Together in golf". This identified Golf England's priorities which centre on making the sport more inclusive and relevant in a modern society. The strategic framework is aligned to four key principles
- **Lead through strong governance and integrity:** We strengthen governance in all aspects of our sport, we deliver safeguarding throughout the golfing community, we utilise data and technology to enhance decision-making and we drive equality and equity in everything we do
 - **We energise and support the golf community.** We support golf clubs with member recruitment and retention, we connect and engage with all golfers, we inspire and educate golf's network of volunteers, we increase golf's influence within local communities and we advocate and inform on all elements of sustainability.
 - **We deliver a more inclusive and accessible sport.** We drive diversity at all levels of golf, we create more opportunities for juniors and young adults, we promote the health and wellbeing benefits of golf, we inspire more women and girls to play golf and we develop greater access for disabled people
 - **We inspire current and future generations.** We enthuse all golfers through relatable role models, we communicate a positive perception change for golf, we deliver an excellent talent pathway from regional to national squad level and we host over 50 best-in-class competitions for all golfers

Recommendations

- 7.5 The following recommendations are made with respect of Golf:-

- Retain all current golf courses.
- Sustain course quality and seek improvements where necessary through implementation of appropriate maintenance regimes.
- Support clubs in membership retention and potential growth.
- Encourage clubs and providers to work more collaboratively in terms of creating pathways for existing and new players.

8 Hockey – PPS Stage E review

2020/21 PPS Position

- 8.1 In 2020/21, the PPS identified that there was the need for two full size artificial Grass Pitches (AGP's) hockey pitches to all current and future demand. However it was noted that there were only three AGP's in the borough and two of these were of a poor quality. Therefore in order to provide sufficient future capacity to meet demand, there was the need to improve one of the two poor quality pitches to ensure continued use for competitive hockey.

Stage E review

- 8.2 Since the production of the PPS Strategy in 2020/21, the overall position for hockey remains unchanged in the Borough. However there have been some positive changes which could influence more individual's participation in Hockey.
- 8.3 The AGP at Keele University pitch is due to complete its refurbishment in the spring of 2024 which is assist in maintaining capacity to maintain current and future latent demand for Hockey.
- 8.4 In 2022, Trentham High School (Stoke on Trent), submitted plans to replace their outdated redgra pitch with a flood lit hockey turf pitch, including a spectator area and is due to be completed by the Summer of 2024. This additional provision within close proximity of the Borough's boundary would support increased demand from the Borough in the future. This new pitch may negate the aspirations of the school and North Staffs Hockey Club to build a further hockey pitch at Newcastle under Lyme High School but this would be subject to a full feasibility study being undertaken.
- 8.5 The pitch at Clayton Hall School still requires refurbishment and this should be a priority for future investment into hockey in the Borough to ensure current and future capacity.

England Hockey (priorities)

- 8.6 In October 2023, England Hockey launched their new five year Strategy "Creating A Future for Our Game Together" With a view to making the sport more visible, relevant, and accessible. This new five-year strategy seeks to engage and re-engage with the hockey community to share the love of the game and bring new people into the sport in the future.
- 8.7 The five objectives in the strategy are to:
- **Lead Positive Change:** to create and champion positive change within the community by broadening and widening the engagement of the sport and making it more ethnically and culturally diverse.
 - **Meaningful Growth:** to make sure that our sport thrives and grows into the future, we want to nurture a love of hockey within a more diverse group of young players and communities to reflect society.
 - **Drive Visible Impact:** to produce and release high-quality, engaging content that shares the love of the game, captures the passion, builds a deep connection and amplifies the voices of the hockey community with new and existing participants.

- **Responsible Leadership:** to provide forward thinking, compassionate and inclusive leadership. Leadership that fosters trust within physically and psychologically safe environments and which puts players, the community and sustainability at heart of every decision.
- **Inspirational International Success:** inspirational club and national teams delivering podium success in Europe and on the world stage, underpinned by a thriving talent system and domestic game.

Club Sport

- 8.8 North Stafford Hockey Club is the main club that use sand based AGPs in the Borough. Since 2021, there has been no increase in the number of teams playing hockey three female teams and six male teams. In terms of participants they has been a slight decline in male and female adults but marginal growth in female and male juniors. The club uses the AGP at Newcastle High School and Clayton High School, however given the development of the new pitch at Trentham High School it is envisaged that some of this demand may be exported into the City of Stoke on Trent.

Recommendations

- 8.9 The following recommendations are made with respect of Hockey:-
- Protect all existing full size sand-based AGPs for hockey use.
 - Prioritise the refurbishment of the AGP the pitch at Clayton Hall Academy, however, this does not currently accommodate hockey demand.
 - Explore the feasibility of creating a second full size hockey suitable AGP at Newcastle-under-Lyme School to better service both club, curricular and extracurricular demand.
 - Ensure that future demand from New England Hockey initiative, Hockey Heroes (aimed at growing participation for under 10s) can be accommodated.
 - When the 3G pitch stock increases, encourage the transfer of football demand from the sand-based AGPs in order to free up increased capacity for hockey activity.

9 Netball – PPS Stage E review

2020/21 PPS Position

- 9.1 In 2020/21, the PPS identified that there was enough outdoor provision in Newcastle under Lyme to meet current and future demand, and therefore the priority should be given to improving court quality to ensure that the capacity of courts was sustainable. All clubs had capacity to accept new members. Whilst slightly outside the scope of the PPS to support growth in the Borough, there was a recognition that a dedicated/larger indoor netball venue was required and Newcastle Town Netball Club should be supported to realise this aspiration at Newcastle High School.

Stage E review

- 9.2 The overall position the provision of outdoor tennis courts hasn't changed when compared to the 2020/21 PPS. There is still sufficient capacity outdoor court provision to meet current and future demand. Since the pandemic there is still the aspiration to form closer relationships with educational sites to support growth in netball participation and ensure all courts are of at least a standard quality. In relation to Newcastle Town's aspirations to secure a dedicated indoor Netball venue at the Newcastle High School this came to fruition in 2022.

England Netball (priorities)

- 9.3 In November 2021 England Netball launched its new ten year Adventure Strategy to increase participation in netball at every stage of life through six core priorities (Game Changers)
- **A game for life** – we will enrich our approach to growing the game ensuring that netball is a sport available at every stage of life
 - **A world leading game** - we will set new standards for netball, showcasing inspiring performances by outstanding players in international tournaments and domestic leagues and tournaments.
 - **A visible presence**: we will elevate our sport to a new place of prominence achieving landmark visibility, drawing new audiences to the game, whilst evolving our identity, and taking the sport to uncharted territory.
 - **A resonant voice** – we will amplify our voice, inform and ignite positive change.
 - **A thriving collective** – we will untie people and partners behind our purpose, nurturing and unlocking potential and achieving common goals.
 - **An extraordinary experience** – we will transform the way our sport is consumed, tailoring every touchpoint, to provide an exceptional experience at every step of the journey

Club Netball

- 9.4 Newcastle town are the only club in the area and are developing the sport. They have over 250 members and offer netball for under 9's, under 11's, Under 12's, Under 14's, Under 16's and senior teams. They also offer a community back to netball session each week.

Recommendations

- 9.5 The following recommendations are made with respect of Hockey:-
- Protect quantity of courts.

- Seek to improve poor quality courts quality through resurfacing or improved maintenance at Newcastle Academy, Sir Thomas Boughy High School and Wolstanton High School's
- Look to continue and expand the use of courts for England Netball initiatives such as Back to Netball and Walking Netball.
- Support improved engagement between England Netball and schools.

10 Tennis – PPS stage E review

2020/21 PPS Position

- 10.1 In 2020, there was a sufficient supply of tennis courts to meet club based demand. There is also spare capacity existing on non-club courts, meaning the focus should be on improving quality and encouraging further usage.

Stage E review

- 10.2 The overall position for tennis remains unchanged to that identified in the 2020/21 PPS for the Borough. Increasing the quality of courts and improving access to parks based tennis opportunities remains a high priority for the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA).
- 10.3 In October 2021 the Government and the LTA announced a funding opportunity for investment into public tennis courts. The investment was to be made primarily into parks tennis courts which were assessed as being a poor or unplayable quality, with any investment granted to applicants being used to bring the courts back to the quality that will benefit communities subject to their being sufficient latent demand to warrant any investment.
- 10.4 Working closely with the LTA, the council submitted a funding application for Wolstanton Park, Westlands Tennis Centre and in 2022 these courts were refurbished totalling an investment of £116,782 across both sites. In late 2023, the Council submitted a further application to refurbish the tennis Courts at Clough Hall Park at a cost of £48,779, which was successful and work commenced on these courts in January 2024 and is due to be completed in the spring of 2024. Despite this high level of investment, the Council took a decision to continue to make recreational tennis participation free of charge to support the Councils Health and Well-being agenda.
- 10.5 On the back of the investment across the three sites the Council was keen to maximise the opportunity and address issues around the high latent demand as well as making enhancing users customer journeys. The following LTA initiatives were therefore implemented at the three sites:
- Club Spark to improve the booking process.
 - Rally – which allows users to create a personal profiles and manage their bookings online, as mentioned recreational tennis would be provided free of charge.
 - Gate access to allow customers manage their own entry and exit from the courts at a time they stipulated.
 - The appointment of 'We Do Tennis' to deliver a robust tennis coaching programme for their residents of the Borough in accordance with the LTA's core programmes including but not limited to;
 - Lawn Tennis Associations Initiatives (Tennis Leagues, Cardio Tennis etc, Free tennis offer), and coaching pathways, provide a varied coaching programme covering all ages and abilities at an appropriate price point benchmarked across north Staffordshire.

- Provide specific coaching sessions for under 16's, adults, over 50's and women including free tennis sessions.
- Follow/introduce initiatives such as the LTA youth start programme to encourage residents under the age of eleven to get involved in tennis.

LTA's (priorities)

- 10.6 The LTA's Vision 2019-2023 to grow participation in tennis focuses around four seven key themes:
- **1 VISIBILITY** Broaden relevance and increase visibility of tennis all year round to build engagement and participation with fans and players.
 - **2 INNOVATION** Innovate in the delivery of tennis to widen its appeal
 - **3 INVESTMENT** Support community facilities and schools to increase the opportunities to play
 - **4 ACCESSIBILITY** Make the customer journey to playing tennis easier and more accessible for anyone.
 - **5 ENGAGEMENT** Engage and collaborate with everyone involved in delivering tennis in Britain, particularly coaches and volunteers, to attract and maintain more people in the game.
 - **6 PERFORMANCE** Create a pathway for British champions that nurtures a diverse team of players, people and leaders.
 - **7 LEADERSHIP** Lead tennis in Britain to the highest standard so it is a safe, welcoming, well-run sport

Club Tennis

- 10.7 Club tennis within the Borough has remained static since the 2020 PPS, with Basford Lawn tennis club being the only one affiliated to the LTA. The club/LTA reports that membership has stayed static.
- 10.8 The club still has aspirations to resurface two of its four tennis courts as soon within the next two years. Moving forwards it is an aspiration to develop a club that uses the Westlands Tennis centre as its home venue.

Recommendations

- 10.9 The following recommendations are made with respect of Tennis:-
- Support Basford TC with its aspiration to resurface two of the courts on site in the next few years.
 - Retain and sustain quality of club courts for competitive play through implementation of appropriate maintenance regimes, following significant investment in parks tennis.
 - Explore opportunities for other funding improvements to other tennis in Silverdale. review the need for tennis courts at Chesterton and Bradwell Lodge following the investment in 16 courts across the Borough
- Continue to work with WE do Tennis to two tennis participation at Wolstanton, Westlands, and Clough Hall Park
- Be committed to continuing with of ClubSpark, Rally and Gate Access schemes at appropriate sites to enhance available provision for informal tennis.
 - Work with the LTA to develop their free parks programme and the engagement of volunteer Activators

11 Rugby Union Grass Pitches – PPS stage E review

2020 PPS Position

- 11.1 In 2020 there was a shortfall of 4.5 match equivalent sessions per week on senior rugby union pitches to meet demand. This was further exacerbated when considering future demand, resulting in a shortfall of six match equivalent sessions.

Stage E review

- 11.2 The overall position for rugby union remains unchanged in the Borough. Following on from pandemic there has been no significant change in men's Team Generation rates with the Rugby Football Union (RFU) confirming the 2023/24 team affiliation rates below:

Club	Mixed U7-U12	Boys U13-U18	Mens	Womens	Girls U12-U18
Linley & Kids Grove	0	0	1	0	0
Newcastle (Staffs)	5	5	3	0	0

- 11.3 The RFU has identified that Newcastle Rugby clubs has aspirations to develop girls rugby and it is envisaged that there will be two three teams playing competitive rugby within the next two years.

RFU (priorities)

- 11.4 Newcastle RFU and the Home of Linley Rugby Club Bathpool Park and Clough Hall Park are still the only rugby union sites in the Borough that are considered to have secure tenure. Given that there is a shortfall of 4.5 sessions per week on senior pitches then the focus should be maintained on improving pitch quality and maintenance in particular at Clough Hall Park and Bathpool Park to increase pitch capacity
- 11.5 In 2023 Newcastle town have made a planning application to install floodlights on a piece of land they use for training adjacent to their first team pitch. If the planning permission is implemented, it would be able to transfer training demand off its main pitch to a training area alleviating demand. The Clubs training demand equates to five match equivalent sessions per week. Therefore the provision of a training area for the club would alleviate the over play on the main pitch.

PPS Stage E Recommendations

- 11.6 The following recommendations remain unchanged from the 2020/21 PPS and are as follows:
- Existing quantity of rugby union pitches to be protected or be fully mitigated to meet National Planning Policy.
 - Improve pitch quality at secure sites to alleviate overplay and create actual spare capacity.

- Support Newcastle RUFC in its ambition to create a training area adjacent to its first team pitch.
- Work with Linley & Kidsgrove to improve poor quality changing provision at Bathpool County Park.
- Secure both clubs to long term agreements for respective home venues, providing each with security of tenure.
- Continue to develop strong relationships between rugby clubs and schools through curricular and extracurricular programmes in order to increase levels of mini and junior participation.

12 [PPS Stage E – Update on progress made against the 2020/21 Action Plan](#)

12.1 The information below highlights significant improvements to outdoor sports in the following analysis area's since 2020/21.

Kidsgrove Analysis Area

- Site - ID 105 Clough Hall Park – Following a successful Grant to the Lawn tennis Association (LTA) the four courts are in the process of being refurbished and are due to open in Late Spring/early summer 2024 following the completion of the works.
- 105 ID - Kings School – the Hockey AGP was refurbished in 2022, and is available for both educational and community use.

Rural Central/Keele Analysis Area

- Site ID -24 - Keele University – The Hockey AGP has been refurbished and is due to open in the spring/summer 2024 which will be available for both University and educational use.
- Site ID 112- Keele Driving Range – The site is to remain in situ as there are no plans to include this for development as part of the councils emerging Local Plan.

Urban Newcastle North, South & Central Analysis Area

- Site ID 38 – Newcastle RUFC – a training area has now been created to alleviate over play from match pitches.
- Site ID 45 – Roe Lane - A 3G pitch was opened in June 2023.
- Site ID's 30/58 – The Whammy and Lower Mile House Pitches - Newcastle Town FC have now taken a lease on these sites for twenty five years. A new pavilion/community hub is being developed on the Whammy site and is due to be completed in the Autumn of 2024 supporting this to be a multi hub site.
- Site ID 28 – Westlands Tennis Centre – Ten tennis courts were refurbished and opened July 2023 and are available to book via club spark.
- Site ID 80 – Wolstanton Park - Four tennis courts were refurbished and opened July 2023 and are available to book via club spark.

13 Stage E – PPS conclusions.

- There have been changes to supply and demand for a number of sports identified in the PPS since 2020/21 and it may be necessary, in 2025, to update the football/cricket supply demand analysis to understand the full impact of this.
- There has been a significant growth in the number of football teams in the Borough a rise of more than 100 since the original PPS. This has meant additional 3G pitches may be required to meet future demand despite one new pitch being built in the Borough at Roe Lane.
- Since 2020/21 it is likely that the supply/demand for grass pitches in the Borough have changed considerably since insisted assessment report and therefore would need reviewing again through the preparation of a new Playing Pitch Strategy in twelve months' time (in 2025).
- There has been significant investment made in Tennis during 2023/24 at three keys sites within the Borough. This has significantly improved the standard of public tennis courts, which will undoubtedly see participation numbers increase in the future.
- There has been investment on Hockey, with Keele University refurbishing the sand based AGP due to be completed in the spring of 2024. Investment in a dedicated sand based AGP at Trentham high school may see some demand being exported outside of the Borough form North Staffs Hockey Club, and may need further analysis.
- Participation in cricket has remained static. That said demand still out strips supply and the focus should be on trying to access sites on educational establishments such as Keele University to meet demand.
- The supply and demand position for bowls/golf has remained static since the original PPS.
- Any refresh of the PPS if required should take into account new population growth figures in the emerging local plan, to identify whether or not this significantly alters supply and demand analysis for outdoor sports covered in the PPS. That being said, the playing pitch strategy assumed a potential increase in the population of 7.9% over the period up to 2037. Evidence in support of the Borough First Draft Local Plan (Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, Turleys 2023) proposed a population growth of circa 7% up to 2040.
- It is considered that the Council commit to prepare a new Playing Pitch Strategy. The assessment should start to be prepared to start in 12 months' time (in 2025) with a particular focus on football and cricket matters.