



KNOWSLEY COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

MAY 2021

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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ABBREVIATIONS

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
CC	Cricket Club
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FF	Football Foundation
FC	Football Club
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
GMA	Grounds Maintenance Association
HC	Hockey Club
LCF	Lancashire Cricket Foundation
LFFP	Local Football Facility Plan
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
KMBP	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
LMS	Last Man Stands
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NTP	Non turf pitch
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
PQS	Performance Quality Standard
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RUFC	Rugby Union Football Club
S106	Section 106 Agreement
TGR	Team Generation Rate
U	Under

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1: Introduction

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd (KKP) was appointed by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC) to undertake an assessment of all formal playing field across the authority to assist in strategically planning for the future.

The Core Strategy element of the Local Plan will set the strategic framework for the growth and development of Knowsley up to 2028 and beyond. The PPS will form a key element of the evidence base to support local policy and the Local Plan as a whole, ensuring that it is compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

This is the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) Assessment Report for Knowsley. It presents a supply and demand assessment of playing pitches in the area in accordance with Sport England's PPS Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a PPS. The guidance details a stepped approach that is separated into five distinct stages:

- ◀ Stage A: Preparation
 - ◀ Step 1: Clarify why the PPS is being developed
 - ◀ Step 2: Set up the management arrangements
 - ◀ Step 3: Tailor the approach
- ◀ Stage B: Information Gathering
 - ◀ Step 4: Develop an audit of playing pitches
 - ◀ Step 5: Develop a picture of demand
- ◀ Stage C: Assessment
 - ◀ Step 6: Understand how each site is being used
 - ◀ Step 7: Develop the current picture of provision
 - ◀ Step 8: Carry out scenario testing
- ◀ Stage D: Key Findings & Issues
 - ◀ Step 9: Identify key findings & issues
 - ◀ Step 10: Check and challenge key findings & issues
- ◀ Stage E: Strategy Development & Implementation
 - ◀ Step 11: Develop conclusions & recommendations
 - ◀ Step 12: Develop an action & implementation plan
 - ◀ Step 13: Adopt, monitor and review the PPS

Stages A to C are covered in this report, with Stage D and Stage E covered in the subsequent strategy document. This Assessment and subsequent Strategy will run from 2021-2028, in line with the Local Plan, subject to annual monitoring and review taking place. If no review has taken place three years from the date of the baseline data being collated, then the PPS will no longer be considered up to date or robust.

Covid-19

The PPS has been undertaken during the Covid-19 global pandemic, which has resulted in England entering into unprecedented restrictions that have fluctuated over the course of the last 12-months. At various points in time, grassroots sport has been halted, leading to truncated seasons and changes to way leagues have been run and fixtures scheduled. This has had a direct consequence on the supply of and demand for playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities, which, if considered in isolation, would not present an accurate representation of levels of activity or provision.

Given the above, this study presents information based on what supply and demand would have been like had there not been any restrictions in place, although consideration is given to

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the impact of Covid-19 and the issues clubs, teams and users face as a consequence. The approach taken is further explained within each section of the report, where appropriate.

It is currently unknown what impact the pandemic and enforced restrictions will have on participation and provision moving forward. Therefore, this should form a key aspect of the Stage E process, with the review of the documents ensuring that any recommendations made remain accurate as the effect of Covid-19 becomes clearer.

As part of Stage E, the PPS should be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the Steering Group. A review will not only help keep the work up to date but it will also assist in maintaining the momentum and commitment built up during its development.

1.2: Local context

The Knowsley Local Plan

The Core Strategy part of the Local Plan will set the strategic framework for the growth and development of Knowsley up to 2028 and beyond. It sets out how and where new development and regeneration should take place and will therefore promote, guide and manage the future development of the borough. The Core Strategy will also shape the investment plans of the Council and other public, voluntary and private sector organisations.

Knowsley Playing Pitch Strategy 2017

The previous Knowsley PPS was completed in 2017 by KKP. This Assessment and forthcoming Strategy & Action Plan will supersede that document as being the most current evidence base for playing pitch provision for the Knowsley administrative area.

Knowsley 2030: A long term strategy for Knowsley

Knowsley 2030 presents the Council's vision for the Borough and has five priorities to make Knowsley:

- ◀ A place with welcoming, vibrant, well-connected neighbourhoods and town centres;
- ◀ A place with a thriving, inclusive economy, with opportunities for people and business;
- ◀ A place where people are active and healthy, and have access to the support they need;
- ◀ A place where people of all ages are confident and can achieve their full potential; and,
- ◀ A place where strong and safe communities can shape their future

Knowsley Council Corporate Plan 2017-2020

The Council's corporate plan, which expired in 2020, has been extended with a one-year plan for 2020-2021 with five priorities:

- ◀ Maximise the Council's contribution to education in Knowsley
- ◀ Maximise the Council's contribution to the health & wellbeing of Knowsley residents
- ◀ Provide high quality and sustainable adult social care
- ◀ Accelerate business growth, new jobs and new housing
- ◀ Create a sustainable Borough

Knowsley Climate Emergency Action Plan

In January 2020, Knowsley Council declared a Climate Emergency and made a commitment to develop a Climate Emergency Action plan with the aim of achieving net zero carbon emissions from the Council's estates and services by 2040.

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A further commitment was made to work with partner agencies across Liverpool City Region to reduce carbon emissions across the borough.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan identified key areas for action where carbon emissions can be reduced as far as possible and 10 key themes have been identified, one of which is Theme 1 – Green Spaces for Carbon Offsetting and Climate Resilience. Projects such as completing existing tree planting, identifying new opportunities for tree planting and protecting designated parks and green spaces from future development all come under this Theme.

Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025

Knowsley Council is set to launch a joint health and wellbeing strategy in Spring 2021. This strategy will have two priorities:

- ◀ Reducing health inequalities
- ◀ Improving mental health and wellbeing and reducing social isolation

Knowsley Older People's Strategy 2018-2021:

The Council's older people's strategy aims to tackle health and wellbeing, crime and personal safety, loneliness and social isolation, transport, and finance.

Healthy Weight Plan for Knowsley 2018-2021

The Council's older people's strategy aims to support people who live and work in Knowsley to address factors affecting lifestyle behaviours that impact on achieving/ maintaining a healthy weight across the life course, particularly for individuals and families most in need, in the early years and during school.

Children and Families Plan 2021-2024

This plan has three key aims:

- ◀ Prevention – to give children the best start in life;
- ◀ Education – to improve life chances;
- ◀ and Family – supporting families to thrive.

Knowsley Social Value Framework

This social value framework will support the vision, priorities and actions of the Council's corporate plan to make Knowsley the "Borough of Choice" and support the outcomes the Council wants to deliver:

- ◀ Maximise the Council's Contribution to Education in Knowsley
- ◀ Maximise the Council's Contribution to the Health and Wellbeing of Knowsley Residents
- ◀ Provide High Quality and Sustainable Adult Social Care
- ◀ Accelerate Business Growth, New Jobs and New Housing
- ◀ Create a Sustainable Borough

Prescot Town Centre Masterplan 2016 – 2028

The management and development of Brown's Field is set in a context of wider regeneration works covering the centre of Prescot. By 2028, Prescot Town Centre will offer a distinctive mix of uses including new cultural and leisure facilities.

1.3 Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach

Management arrangements

A project team from the Council has worked with KKP to ensure that all relevant information is readily available and to support the consultants as necessary to ensure that project stages and milestones are delivered on time, and to the required quality standard to meet Sport England guidance.

Further to this, a Steering Group is, and will continue to be responsible for the direction of the PPS from a strategic perspective and for supporting, checking and challenging the work of the project team. The Steering Group is made up of representatives from Knowsley Council, Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs).

It will be important for the Steering Group to continue once the PPS has been finalised for several reasons, including a continuing responsibility to:

- ◀ Be a champion for playing pitch provision in the area and promote the value and importance of the PPS.
- ◀ Ensure implementation of the PPS's recommendations and action plan.
- ◀ Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the PPS.
- ◀ Ensure that the PPS is kept up to date and refreshed.

Why the PPS is being developed

The rationale for undertaking this study is to update current levels of provision across the public, private, education, voluntary and commercial sectors and to compare this with current and likely future levels of demand.

Its primary purpose is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of outdoor sports facilities meet local and community needs of existing and future residents. The strategies will be produced in accordance with national planning guidance and provide robust and objective justification for future sporting provision.

One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Paragraph 98 discusses the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation that can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

Paragraphs 98 and 99 discuss assessments and the protection of "existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields". Paragraph 99 and 100 also promote the identification of important green spaces by local communities and the protection of these facilities. Such spaces may include playing fields.

This PPS will act as a further evidence base and will update the existing evidence to take account of changes in provision, planned development and the local needs of the community and changes to planning policy context.

This may provide opportunities to develop new playing pitches or improve the quality of existing playing pitches in response to housing development that creates additional demand

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for pitches (as well as the accompanying ancillary offer) by use of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator¹.

Where possible, this will be aligned to existing community sport clubs, which play an integral part in providing sport and physical activities to the local community.

Scope

The scope of the PPS focuses geographically on all local provision, regardless of ownership and management arrangements. Provision included within the project is as follows:

- ◀ Football pitches (including 3G pitches)
- ◀ Cricket pitches
- ◀ Hockey pitches (sand/water based AGPs)

Please note that there is no rugby league or rugby union supply or demand in Knowsley and therefore these sports are not accounted for in the above scope.

Pitch sports (i.e. football and cricket) will be assessed using the guidance set out in Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy. In addition, any other grass sport pitches identified during the project will also be included.

With regards to each sport, the PPS will specifically consider the number of pitches/facilities and will take into account the size, quality, location, accessibility and capacity of the provision as well as accompanying ancillary facilities such as changing accommodation, toilets and car parking.

Study area

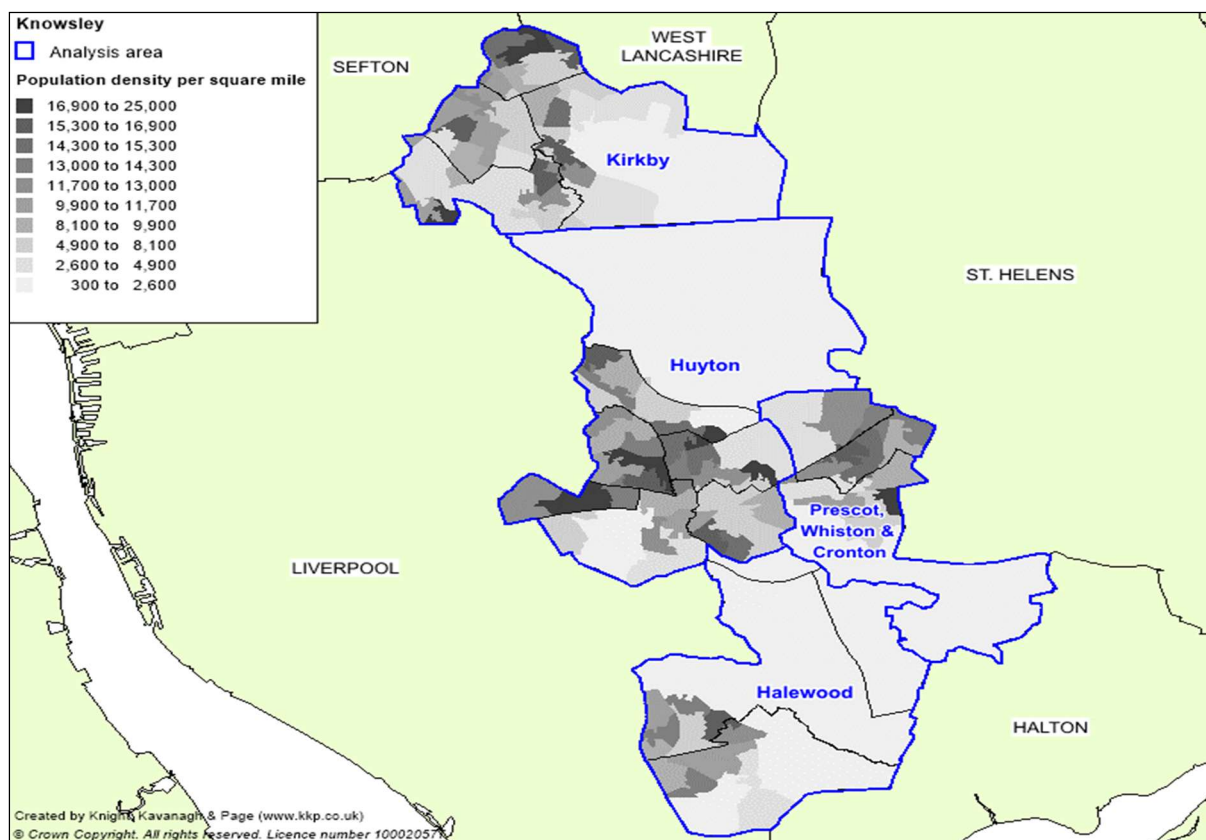
Analysis areas have been created for reporting purposes. Sports catchment areas do not naturally fall into defined administrative areas and that needs to be taken into account when assessing current and future provision for pitch sports. The agreed analysis areas are:

- ◀ Kirkby
- ◀ Prescott, Whiston and Cronton
- ◀ Huyton
- ◀ Halewood

¹ <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/playing-pitch-calculator>

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Figure 1.1: Knowsley analysis area map



1.4 Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision

A clear picture of supply and demand for outdoor sports facilities needs to be provided to include an accurate assessment of quantity and quality. This is achieved through consultation with key stakeholders to ensure that they inform the subsequent strategy. It informs current demand, adequacy, usage, future demand and strategies for maintenance and investment for outdoor sports facilities.

Gather supply information and views – an audit of playing pitches

Sport England's PPS guidance uses the following definitions of a playing pitch and playing field. These definitions are set out by the Government in the 2015 'Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order'.²

- ◀ ***Playing pitch*** – a delineated area which together with any run off area is of 0.2ha or more; and is used for association football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, American football, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.
- ◀ ***Playing field*** – the whole of a site of which encompasses at least one playing pitch.

Although the statutory definition of a pitch is one that meets a minimum of 0.2ha, this PPS takes into account smaller sized site that contribute to the supply side, for example, a site containing a mini 5v5 football pitch. This PPS counts individual grass pitches (as a delineated area) as the basic unit of supply. The definition of a playing pitch also includes artificial grass pitches (AGPs).

² www.sportengland.org>Facilities and Planning> Planning Applications

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As far as possible the assessment report aims to capture all of the outdoor sports facilities; however, there may be instances, for example, on school or private sites, where access was not possible and has led to omissions within the report. Where playing fields or pitches have not been recorded within the report they remain as pitches and for planning purposes continue to be so. Furthermore, exclusions of a playing field or pitch do not mean that it is not required from a supply and demand point of view.

Quantity

Where known, all outdoor sports facilities are included irrespective of ownership, management and use. Sites were initially identified using Sport England's Active Places web based database, with the Council and NGBs supporting the process by checking and updating this initial data. This was also verified against club information supplied by local leagues.

For each site, the following details were recorded in the project database (which will be supplied upon completion of the project as an electronic file):

- ◀ Site name, address (including postcode) and location
- ◀ Ownership and management type
- ◀ Security of tenure
- ◀ Total number, type and quality of outdoor sports facilities

Accessibility

Not all outdoor sports facilities offer the same level of access to the community. The ownership and accessibility of provision also influences actual availability for community use. Each site is assigned a level of community use as follows:

- ◀ **Community use** - facilities in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire and currently in use by teams playing in community leagues.
- ◀ **Available but unused** - facilities that are available for hire but are not currently used by teams which play in community leagues; this most often applies to school sites but can also apply to sites which are expensive to hire.
- ◀ **No community use** - facilities which as a matter of policy or practice are not available for hire or used by teams playing in community leagues. This should include professional club pitches along with some semi-professional club pitches, where play is restricted to the first or second team.
- ◀ **Not available as disused** - Any sites where pitches were once, but are no longer, marked out and remain undeveloped

Disused sites provide the opportunity to help address deficiencies in pitch sport if brought back into use or replaced in a more sustainable location to meet need. The sites below will be assessed to establish whether they need to be retained and protected for future use or need to be replaced in accordance with paragraph 99 of the NPPF.

The lawful use of a disused playing field is still that of a playing field until such time as it is developed for a non pitch sport use or its use is formally changed through the planning system. There is no positive obligation, under planning law, for a playing field to be actively used as such.

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Disused sites

The following are identified as being disused playing field sites.

Table 1.1: Summary of disused sites

Site name	Postcode	Comment
Alt Park	L36 3UH	Disused playing field site which has formerly contained both rugby union and football provision. The site has not been used for formal sport for over 15 years.
Pool Hey Playing Fields	L28 4ER	The site is leased to Knowsley Town Council and was last used as formal playing pitches in 2016/17 season. The site can accommodate four adult and two youth pitches. The pitches became disused due to poor quality as they drain poorly.
Charlottes Pagsy	L33 1EE	Disused playing field site. Previously contained an adult football pitch for two years (based on Google Earth evidence).
Manor Farm/Cowper Way	L36 6JG	Disused playing pitch field site which contained one adult football pitches. No ancillary provision on site.
Huyton Cricket Club	L36 7XE	Former home of Huyton Cricket Club. The Club folded over ten years ago. Site used for affiliated football up until 2019. Now disused.
Mill Lane Playing Fields	L34 0JN	The site is leased to Knowsley Town Council and has previously accommodated one adult football pitch but is disused due to poor quality. There is no changing room provision on site.
Roby Playing Fields	L36 4LE	This is a disused playing field site that has not been used for many years for formal football.

Quality

The capacity of provision to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by their quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of provision affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of a sport. In extreme circumstances it can result in a facility being unable to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.

It is not just the quality itself which has an effect on its capacity but also the quality, standard and range of ancillary facilities. The quality of both the outdoor sports facility and ancillary facilities will determine whether provision is able to contribute to meeting demand from various groups and for different levels and types of play.

The quality of all outdoor sports facilities identified in the audit and the ancillary facilities supporting them are assessed regardless of ownership, management or availability. Along with capturing any details specific to the individual facilities and sites, a quality rating is also recorded within the audit for each. These ratings are used to help estimate the capacity to accommodate competitive and other play within the supply and demand assessment.

In addition to undertaking non-technical assessments (using the templates provided within the guidance and as determined by NGBs), users and providers were also consulted on the quality and in some instances the quality rating was adjusted to reflect this.

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Gather demand information and views

Presenting an accurate picture of current demand for outdoor sports facilities (i.e. recording how and when provision is used) is important when undertaking a supply and demand assessment.

Demand for outdoor sports facilities in Knowsley tends to fall within the following categories:

- ◀ Organised competitive play
- ◀ Organised training
- ◀ Informal play

Current and future demand for outdoor sports facilities is presented on a sport by sport basis within the relevant sections of this report.

In addition, unmet, latent, imported and exported demand for provision is also identified within each section. Unmet demand is known to currently exist and latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision, whereas exported and imported demand refers to those sports users who are playing outside of their local authority of choice.

A variety of consultation methods were used to collate such demand information. Firstly, virtual consultation was undertaken with each relevant NGB to understand what changes to the supply and demand balance has changed since the previous PPS in 2017. This was followed by consultation with Volair and local sports club identified for consultation through the respective NGBs.

Local sports development officers, county associations and regional governing body officers advised which of the clubs to include in the face to face consultation and Sport England was also included within the consultation process prior to the project commencing. Issues identified by clubs returning questionnaires were followed up by telephone or face to face interviews. As key providers and users of outdoor sports facilities, educational establishments were also consulted. This involved face to face meetings with secondary schools and colleges and an online survey being sent to primary schools.

Future demand

Alongside current demand, it is important for a PPS to assess whether the future demand for playing pitches can be met. Using ONS population projections, as well as likely participation growth informed through consultation, an estimate can be made of the likely future demand for playing pitches.

Team generation rates are used to provide an indication of how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group) in order to help estimate the change in demand for pitch sports that may arise from any population change. Future demand for pitches is calculated by adding the percentage increases to the population increases in each analysis area. This figure is then applied to the team generation rates and is presented on a sport by sport basis. Other information sources that were used to help identify future demand, especially for non-pitch sports (where team generation rates are not applicable) include:

- ◀ Recent trends in the participation.
- ◀ The nature of the current and likely future population and their propensity to participate.
- ◀ Feedback from clubs on their plans to develop additional teams/attract additional members.
- ◀ Any local and NGB specific sports development targets (e.g. increase in participation).

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Population growth

The current resident population in Knowsley is 150,862 (2019 MYE). By 2028 (the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand, in line with the Local Plan period) the population is projected to increase to 156,732³ representing an increase of 5,870 (or equivalent to a percentage increase of 3.8%) according to ONS data.

As ONS figures are available by individual age brackets (to reflect team growth) this is considered the most accurate data set to apply to team generation rates (as identified above) to calculate likely future demand within the Assessment Report.

1.5 Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views

Supply and demand information gathered is used to assess the adequacy of playing pitch provision in Knowsley. It focuses on how much use each site could potentially accommodate (on an area by area basis) compared to how much use is currently taking place.

Understand the situation at individual sites

Qualitative pitch ratings are linked to a pitch capacity rating derived from NGB guidance and tailored to suit a local area. The quality and use of each pitch is assessed against the recommended pitch capacity to indicate how many match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket) a pitch could accommodate.

This is compared to the number of matches actually taking place and categorised as follows, to identify:

Potential spare capacity: Play is below the level the site could sustain.	
At capacity: Play is at a level the site can sustain.	
Overused: Play exceeds the level the site can sustain.	

As a guide, the FA and the ECB have set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its quality.

Table 1.2: Capacity of playing pitches

Sport	Pitch type	No. of match equivalent sessions		
		Good	Standard	Poor
Football	Adult pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Youth pitches	4 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Mini pitches	6 per week	4 per week	2 per week
Cricket	One grass wicket	5 per season	4 per season	0 per season
	One synthetic wicket	60 per season	60 per season	0 per season

Develop the current picture of provision

Once capacity is determined on a site-by-site basis, the level of actual spare capacity and/or shortfall is calculated on a sport-by-sport and an area-by-area basis via further interrogation of peak time demand. Although spare capacity may be identified in some instances, this does not necessarily mean that there is surplus provision. For example, spare capacity may not be available when it is needed or the site may be retained as a 'strategic reserve' to enable pitch rotation and to reduce wear and tear.

³ Source: ONS 2018-based projections

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Capacity ratings assist in the identification of sites for improvement/development, rationalisation, decommissioning and disposal.

Identify the key findings and issues

By completing Steps 1-5 it is possible to identify several findings and issues relating to the supply, demand and adequacy of outdoor sports provision in Knowsley. This report seeks to identify and present the key findings and issues prior to development of the Strategy and Action Plan for Knowsley.

Develop the future picture of provision (scenario testing)

Modelling scenarios to assess whether existing provision can cater for unmet, latent, exported and future demand is made after the capacity analysis. This will also include, for example, removing sites with unsecured community use to demonstrate the impact this would have if these sites were to be decommissioned in the future.

The scenario testing generally occurs in the Strategy report that proceeds this document and therefore does not form part of the Assessment Report.

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PART 2: FOOTBALL

2.1: Introduction

The organisation primarily responsible for the development of football in Knowsley is Liverpool County FA. It is also responsible for the administration, in terms of discipline, rules and regulations, cup competitions and representative matches, development of clubs and facilities, volunteers, referees, coaching courses and delivering national football schemes.

This section of the report focuses on the supply and demand for grass football pitches. Part 3 captures supply and demand for third generation pitches (3G pitches) which are the preferred AGP (artificial grass pitch) surface type for football. In future, it is anticipated that there will be a growing demand for the use of 3G pitches for competitive football fixtures, especially to accommodate mini and youth football.

Local Football Facility Plans (LFFPs)

To support in delivery of both the current and superseding FA National Game Strategy (NGS), the FA commissioned a nationwide consultancy project. A Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) has now been produced for every local authority across England. Each plan is unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation.

The LFFP is strategically aligned to the National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS); a 10-year plan to change the landscape of football facilities in England. The NFFS represents a major funding commitment from the national funding partners (The FA, Premier League, DCMS, Football Foundation) to inform and direct an estimated one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next ten years.

Each LFFP builds upon PPS findings (where present and current) regarding the formal and affiliated game, to also include strategic priorities for investment across small sided football (recreational and informal including indoors). The LFFP also incorporates consultation with groups outside of formal football, as well as underrepresented communities. This could include those which may be key partners with regards to football for behavioural change and groups which may be key drivers of FA NGS priorities around participation in the likes of women and girls' football, disability football and futsal.

LFFPs identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all national football investment through the funding partners will be identified via LFFPs.

It is important to recognise that a LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a PPS and is not an accepted evidence base for site change of use or disposal. A LFFP will however build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

The LFFP for Knowsley identifies ten sites for targeted pitch improvements. Prioritisation of these sites was based on a rationale of selecting sites with large numbers of pitches which are in poor condition; thus optimising impact on capacity.

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The ten selected sites are:

- ◀ Lord Derby Academy
- ◀ Arncliffe Sports & Community Centre
- ◀ Windy Arbor Road
- ◀ Halewood Town Junior Football Academy
- ◀ Jubilee Park
- ◀ Lord Derby Playing Field
- ◀ King George V Playing Fields, Prescott (Browns Field)
- ◀ Fredrick Lunt Playing Field
- ◀ KGV Huyton
- ◀ St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic School

The forthcoming Strategy & Action Plan will determine if the list of priority sites in the LFFP requires amendment (following potential changes to match demand since 2017) and whether there is a case to include new sites into the plan or remove sites based on assessed demand.

Consultation

There are 68 clubs identified as playing football locally within Knowsley which collectively generate demand equating to 259 teams. Consultation with clubs was initially undertaken in 2017 as part of the Knowsley Playing Pitch Strategy and then this was revisited in 2019 as part of the Local Football Facility Plan consultation with key clubs in the area. The response rate to the 2017 PPS consultation equated to a club response rate of 70% and a team response rate of 91%.

As agreed with Football Foundation and Liverpool CFA, several clubs were also consulted in 2021. The remaining clubs in Knowsley were not consulted in order to avoid consultation fatigue, as they were consulted in 2017 and 2019. The following clubs were identified by Liverpool CFA based on them having an updated position since 2017:

- ◀ Berkeley Juniors FC
- ◀ Halewood Town Juniors FC
- ◀ FC Kirby FC
- ◀ City of Liverpool FC

2.2: Supply

The audit identifies a current total of 119 grass football pitches within Knowsley across 41 sites. Of these pitches, 79 are available for community use across 26 sites, as presented in the table below. In the main, pitches which are unavailable for community use are located at professional either professional football club training grounds or education sites.

This is an increase of four pitches from 2017 in which 117 pitches were identified across 39 sites. The increase of supply is attributed to two former disused sites coming back online (Park Brow Playing Field and Two Butt Lane) and one pitch being formally identified at St Lawrence Primary School.

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

Analysis area	Available for community use					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Halewood	5	2	4	2	3	16
Huyton	10	4	7	6	5	31
Kirkby	10	-	2	-	-	12
Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	7	3	3	3	4	20
Knowsley	32	8	16	11	12	79

Most community available pitches in the area (40%) are adult sized which is, in part, due to youth 11v11 teams playing on adult pitches. This is not ideal for youth players at U13-U16 and is not in line with the recent FA Youth Review.

Just 10 available pitches are youth 11v11 sized representing 13% of the available supply, which is low in relation to the proportion of youth teams (51 teams – 18% of all teams) which should be playing matches on this sized pitch.

In accordance with the FA Youth Review, U17 and U18 teams can play on adult pitches. The FA's recommended pitch size for adult football is 100x64 metres. Please refer to the table overleaf for more detail.

Table 2.2: FA recommended grass/3G pitch sizes

Age group	Playing format	Recommended pitch dimensions (metres excluding run offs)	Recommended pitch dimensions (metres including run offs)
Mini-Soccer U7/U8	5v5	37x27	43x33
Mini-Soccer U9/U10	7v7	55x37	61x43
Youth U11/U12	9v9	73x46	79x52
Youth U13/U14	11v11	82x50	88x56
Youth U15/U16	11v11	91x55	97x61
Youth U17/U18	11v11	100x64	106x70
Over 18/Adult	11v11	100x64	106x70

Changes to supply

Since the initial PPS data was captured in 2017, there has been several changes to the available supply of pitches to community users in Knowsley. The most major change was the loss of four adult football pitches at Eddie McArdle Playing Field. The site lost this provision due to the expansion of the Liverpool FC training ground (which sits adjacent to the site). A suitable mitigation package was agreed which saw pitch improvements and a new changing pavilion developed on the remainder of Eddie McArdle Playing Field.

Further to above, two disused football sites have now been brought back in to use to satisfy local community club demand. Both Park Brow Playing Field (Broad Lane) and Two Butt Playing Field are now actively used playing field sites for football.

Huyton Cricket Club playing field, in more recent years, has been the home venue for local football club, Berkeley Juniors. The Club has now relocated to King George V Playing Fields, Prescot (Browns Field) and it is now likely that the playing field will fall out of use for accessible sport over the coming years. The playing field is now disused.

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Future supply

City of Liverpool FC aspires to develop a new stadia site within the area. This could be in Liverpool or Knowsley and it is very much dependent on available land. The Club compete within the NLS (Non-League System) and require a stadia site for first team matches. It is currently ground sharing with Vauxhall Motors Sports & Social Club in Ellesmere Port to play fixtures. It is interested in exploring opportunities on sites which are currently disused within Knowsley as these may provide easier opportunities for development. The Club is hoping to work with the relevant Council officers in the future to explore this further.

Pitch quality

The quality of football pitches was assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the FA) in 2017.

As part of the 2021 PPS, site assessments have been undertaken by KKP at sites which have had quality improvements undertaken since 2017 (and which also offer community use) as advised by Liverpool County FA and the Football Foundation. The sites which were assessed in 2021 are as follows:

- ◀ Jubilee Park – Standard quality
- ◀ Lord Derby Playing Field – Standard quality
- ◀ Eddie Mcardle Playing Field – 2 x good pitches and the remaining three pitches poor
- ◀ Prescott KGV – Two standard pitches and two poor pitches
- ◀ Leathers Lane (Halewood Juniors Academy) – Standard quality

Since 2017, the only major change in pitch quality has come from improvements at Eddie McArdle Playing Field. The remaining pitches are of a consistent quality of 2017. However, it is likely that those sites listed above will improve in quality in the coming seasons as a result of receiving funding through the Football Foundation for improvement work. This should be monitored as part of the PPS Stage E process.

The assessment criteria are based on the non-technical audit findings and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows: Good (>80%), Standard (50-80%), Poor (<50%).

Pitch quality primarily influences the carrying capacity of a site; often pitches lack the drainage and maintenance necessary to sustain levels of use. Pitches that receive little to no ongoing repair or post-season remedial work are likely to be assessed as poor, therefore limiting the number of games they can accommodate each week without it having a detrimental effect on quality.

Conversely, well maintained pitches that are tended to regularly are likely to be of a higher standard and capable of taking a number of matches without a significant reduction in surface quality.

The table below summarises the quality of pitches that are available for community use. In total, three pitches are assessed as good quality, 48 as standard quality and 30 as poor quality.
Table 2.3: Pitch quality assessments (community use pitches)

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Analysis area	Adult pitches			Youth pitches			Mini pitches		
	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor
Halewood	-	2	3	-	6	-	-	5	-
Huyton	-	8	2	-	8	2	-	2	9
Kirkby	2	3	5	-	1	1	-	-	-
Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	1	2	4	-	4	2	-	5	2
Knowsley	3	15	14	0	19	5	0	12	11

Pitches with poor quality scores were identified at the following sites:

- ◀ Halewood Academy
- ◀ Lord Derby Academy
- ◀ St Edmunds Arrowsmith
- ◀ The Prescot School
- ◀ Eddie McArdle Playing Fields
- ◀ Kirkby High School
- ◀ Hilton Grace Recreation Ground (The Hollies)

Following the 2017 PPS, quality improvements have been undertaken at three sites which have resulted in an improved quality playing surface on pitches. Improvements have been undertaken at Lord Derby Memorial Playing Field, All Saints School and Eddie McArdle Playing Field.

Improvements at Eddie McArdle were undertaken by Liverpool FC as mitigation for the overall loss of community playing field as part of the expansion of its training ground. There are now five adult pitches remaining on the site of which two have been improved to a good standard. The remaining three pitches on the site have not been improved as part of the mitigation package and consultation with FC Kirby (2021) highlights that quality is broadly the same as it was in 2017 and that all three pitches suffer from drainage issues and significant informal use from nearby residents which includes the use of quad bikes, motorbikes, and high footfall from dog walkers.

All secondary school sites in Knowsley receive a basic level of maintenance which consists of basic cutting and lining as well as annual fertilisation. In combination with a general high demand due to both curricular use and external community use, levels of demand on the sites are high and therefore pitches do not have much of a 'resting period'.

Most open access sites managed by the Council receive a basic level of maintenance, with clubs that utilise such provision highlighting that general pitch quality is poor. Maintenance of pitches at club and private sites varies, some hire dedicated ground staff such as Prescot Cables FC, whilst others depend on remedial work by volunteers that is often limited by cost and a lack of specialised equipment.

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The FA's Pitch Improvement Strategy

The FA has a general pitch improvement strategy which has been developed in partnership with the Grounds Management Association (GMA) to develop a grass pitch maintenance service that can be utilised by grassroots clubs with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and therefore the quality of pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide clubs with advice/practical solutions in a range of areas, with the simple aim of improving playing surfaces. The programme is designed to help clubs on sites that they themselves manage and maintain but can also be used to advise council-maintained sites.

In addition, the FA's Strategy also aims to focus on developing improved maintenance with local authorities that can be utilised at local authority-maintained sites.

Further to the above, the Football Foundation and the FA have recently developed a new pitch maintenance grant fund that allows clubs and sports organisations to apply for funding for maintenance assistance, consumables and/or equipment. Local authorities are currently ineligible applicants through this fund; however, clubs, leagues and or charitable organisations using local authority sites can apply provided they have security of tenure and/or a proforma is in place.

FA Pitch Improvement Programme (PIP)

With quality of grass pitches becoming one of the biggest influences on participation in football, the FA has made it a priority to work towards improving quality of grass pitches across the country. This has resulted in the creation of the FA Pitch Improvement Programme. As part of this, grass pitches identified as having quality issues undergo a pitch inspection from a member of the Grounds Management Association (GMA, formerly Institute of Groundsmanship).

The FA in partnership with the Grounds Management Association (GMA) has developed a Grass Pitch Improvement and Maintenance Programme that can be utilised by grassroots football clubs, organisations and local authorities with the simple aim of improving the quality of grass pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide members of the programme with advice/practical solutions via a Grass Pitch Assessment Report which will also identify the key enhanced maintenance works required along with machinery requirements.

Following a Grass Pitch Assessment Report, clubs can work towards the recommended dedicated maintenance regime identified in order to improve the quality of their pitches. Clubs can also utilise the report as an evidence base to acquire potential funding streams to obtain the relevant maintenance equipment.

If a site is categorised as 'poor' or 'basic' on the Grass Pitch Assessment Report they are then eligible to apply for Grass Pitch Funding through the Football Foundation through the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund⁴, a fund offering six-year tapered grants to help clubs enhance or sustain the quality of their grass pitches. The fund is a key part of the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Improvement Programme - an ambition to deliver 20,000 quality grass pitches by 2030.

All applicants must have the required security of tenure and have received a PitchPower Pitch Assessment Report, with the fund currently open to football clubs, leagues, National League System Clubs at Steps 1-6 and charities (with an annual turnover of under £500,000).

Ancillary facilities

⁴ <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/grant/grass-pitch-maintenance-fund>

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Similar to football pitches, the quality of ancillary facilities has been assessed via a combination of site visits and user consultation.

Ancillary facility rating is primarily influenced by the type of amenities which are available on a site accompanied by their quality, such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, showering provision, car parking, dedicated official and spectator facilities and boundary fencing.

The findings of the non-technical audit (in 2017) identified sites that needed refurbishment, replacement or needed new build facilities. All of these were subsequently included in the Knowsley LFFP. The sites identified in 2017 are as follows:

- ◀ Lord Derby Playing Field
- ◀ King George V Playing Fields, Prescot (Browns Field)
- ◀ Eddie Mcardle Playing Field
- ◀ Windy Arbor Road
- ◀ Leathers Lane
- ◀ Hilton Grace Recreation Ground (The Hollies)

Since 2017, the ancillary provision at both Lord Derby Memorial Playing Field and Eddie McArdle Playing Field have been replaced and new provision created. In turn, ancillary facilities at both sites are now good quality and expected to service users for the foreseeable future.

The remaining sites have not been improved or replaced and there remains a need for future investment into these sites to ensure football has enough suitable infrastructure to be sustained and developed in the future.

In 2017, Huyton Juniors FC aspired to develop its home site of Jubilee Park in partnership with KMBC. The Club wanted to develop a community hub on the site which would include changing facilities, and an improved kitchen/toilet and adequate social space to accommodate parents and groups for midweek uses. To date this has not been achieved and it likely remains an aspiration for delivery.

Lastly, City of Liverpool FC has taken over the lease of the community hub at KGV Huyton. The hub services the on site football pitches and artificial pitches and provides a total of 13 changing rooms. The Club aspires to re-design this internal modelling to provide greater opportunities for a larger sports hall and gym. It states that the changing facilities are seldom used and the space is underutilised. It states a need to increase footfall and revenue generation to increase the long term sustainability of the centre.

Security of tenure

Tenure arrangements are generally secure for clubs. Nearly all clubs either have long term lease arrangements, such as Kirby FC, or alternatively have long standing rental arrangements in place with the Council or local town councils. Where pitches are operated by the Council and/or by town councils there is a guarantee that pitches will continue to be provided over the next three years, and therefore these are secure. An exception to this is found at schools and academies that have their own policies and are more likely to restrict levels of community use.

The following is a full list of schools that have grass football pitches but do not allow community use:

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- ◀ Millbrook Primary School
- ◀ St Joseph's Catholic School
- ◀ St Marks Catholic Primary School
- ◀ Halsnead Primary School
- ◀ St Michael and All Angels Primary
- ◀ Halewood CofE Primary School
- ◀ St Aloysius Primary School
- ◀ Evelyn Primary School
- ◀ Saint Peter and Paul Catholic School
- ◀ Whiston Willis School

In comparison, seven schools are identified as allowing community use of their facilities. These are mostly managed by Volair with the exception of St Margaret's Catholic Junior School which operates lettings in house, although this site is currently unused by any club for football.

Most notably since 2017, City of Liverpool has signed a two year lease on the community hub at KGV Huyton from Liverpool Housing (which was the remainder of the contract it had remaining with the Council). It aspires to take the facility on through a 25 year lease following the completion of its current two year lease.

FC Kirkby has also signed a two year lease on the new pitches and pavilion at Eddie McCardle Playing Field. It is close to agreeing a 25 year agreement on the site which will see it as the anchor tenant for the foreseeable future. Likewise, Halewood Juniors FC has also signed a 25 year following the completion of the 2017 PPS. This has 22 years remaining.

Football pyramid demand

The football pyramid is a series of interconnected leagues for adult men's football clubs in England. It begins below the Football League (the National League) and comprises of six steps and a regional feeder league, there are with various leagues at each level and more leagues lower down the pyramid than at the top. The step system has a hierarchical format with promotion and relegation between the steps, allowing even the smallest club the theoretical possibility of rising to the top of the system.

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Clubs playing within the National League System (NLS) must adhere to ground grading requirements set out by the FA. The higher the level of football being played the higher the requirements. Clubs cannot progress into the league above if the ground grading requirements do not meet the correct specifications. Ground grading assesses grounds from A to H, with 'A' being the requirement for Step 1 clubs and H being the requirement for Step 6 clubs. Please refer to the FA website⁵ for the full specifications for each.

In Knowsley, only Prescott Cables FC compete in the NLS; The Club compete in the Northern Premier League (Step 4). There are also no clubs competing in the Liverpool County Football League Premier which is the highest division of regional grassroots football and is known as the Regional Feeder League. Regional Feeder Leagues was previously known as Step 7 in the NLS.

The general principle for clubs in the football pyramid is that they must achieve the appropriate ground grade by March 31st of their first season after promotion, which therefore allows a short grace period for facilities to be brought up to standard.

Notwithstanding the above, City of Liverpool FC (Northern Premier Division One West) is a Step 5 club which is exploring land availability opportunities to develop a new stadia site to call its home. Since its formation in 2015 it has struggled to identify a home venue and has been renting grounds from other established clubs across Merseyside. It was formerly playing at Bootle FC but has since relocated to Vauxhall Motors FC for the upcoming 2021—2022.

It had planned to share at Prescott Cables FC, but this was later abandoned due to Prescott Cables deciding to play its reserves team at the site instead. The Club formerly had an exclusivity agreement on a parcel of land in Fazakerley (managed by Liverpool City Council), but it has failed to establish any formal development of the land. It is interested in any available playing field in Knowsley (which borders on to the fringes of Liverpool) for the view of potential development of a stadia site.

Women's National League System

Correspondingly there is a Women's National League System (WNLS) similar to the adult men's system which provides structure to the women's game. As seen in the table below this ranges from Tier 1 to Tier 7 with each tier requiring differing ground grading requirements.

There are no identified community clubs competing at any level of the WNLS in Knowsley.

Table 2.4: Summary of ground grading for women's football

Level	League	Grading category
Tier 1	FA Women's Super League	Step S1
Tier 2	FA Women's Championship	Step S2
Tier 3	FA Women's National League Premier Division (Northern and Southern)	Step W1
Tier 4	FA Women's National League Division 1 North / Midlands / South East / South West	Step W2
Tier 5	Regional Premier Division	Step W3
Tier 6	Regional Division One	-
Tier 7	County Leagues	-

⁵ <http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/player/ground-grading>

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2.3: Demand

Through the audit and assessment, 259 teams from within 68 clubs are identified as playing in Knowsley. This consists of 37 adult men's, two adult women's, 91 youth boys', three youth girls' and 126 mini mixed teams. The Huyton Analysis Area provides for the highest number of teams, with 110. The analysis area with the fewest number of teams is Kirby, with 24 teams provided.

Please note that demand is based on the number of teams each club planned to field during the 2020/2021 season (as identified through consultation and/or via affiliation data). This is by means of taking into account what play would have taken place had there not been a pandemic, rather than what actually took place, with Covid-19 and subsequent restrictions limiting activity.

Table 2.5: Summary of competitive teams currently playing in Knowsley

Analysis area	Number of teams					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Halewood	6	10	5	5	9	35
Huyton	19	33	14	23	21	110
Kirkby	7	8	5	3	1	24
Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	7	5	14	36	28	90
Knowsley	39	56	38	67	59	259

Youth 11v11 football is the most prominent format of play, whilst youth 9v9 is the least common.

This total number of teams is 16 fewer than the previous 2017 audit. However, there has not been a net loss of affiliated teams and it is known by Liverpool County FA that the more established clubs in the area have grown. Since the previous audit, the central venue location of Parklife Hubs in Liverpool have emerged.

Women's and girls' demand

There are five dedicated women/girls' teams playing in the Knowsley, representing just under 2% of the total number of teams. Four of the five teams are provided by Everton FC Women with these playing matches at Finch Farm Training Ground. The remaining team is Maghull Ladies FC which play at Eddie McArdle Playing Field. This figure for women's and girls' demand is low, but it does not account for the local women's and girls' league (Liverpool Women's & Youth League) being held at a central venue at the Heron Eccles Hub in Liverpool. The majority of all women's and girls' activity within Knowsley is based there.

The FA currently has a drive to increase women's and girls' participation by 50%. As such, it is imperative that sufficient facilities become suitable for female access, particularly in relation to toilets and appropriate changing facilities. As participation for women's and girls' football in Knowsley is so low, it is expected that Liverpool County FA will be working hard to increase participation levels with core charter clubs across the area.

Exported demand/imported

Imported demand is demand from neighbouring authorities accessing pitches to play competitive matches, within Knowsley. There is only one case of imported demand in Knowsley, that is from Maghull Ladies FC which play at Eddie McArdle Playing Fields.

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Exported demand refers to teams that are currently accessing pitches for home fixtures outside of the study area. There is a higher level of exported demand from clubs locally to compete in central venue league competitions in the Liverpool area. The Heron Eccles Hub is the home to the Liverpool Women's and Youth League and the Belle Vale Junior League takes place at Caldwell Playing Fields in Liverpool. The latter of these leagues has high level of participation from both Kingsthorpe FC and Quarry Green Juniors FC. To that end, exported equates to circa 20 teams from Knowsley into Liverpool. As this is for central venue match play, this is not considered an issue into the supply vs demand balance of provision.

Unmet demand

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to pitches. It is usually expressed, for example, when a team is already training but is unable to access a match pitch, or when a league has a waiting list due to a lack of pitch provision, which in turn is hindering the growth of the league. There was no identified unmet demand in 2017 and based on refreshed consultation, this remains the case.

Future demand

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and by using population forecasts.

Participation increases/latent demand

Latent demand refers to potential demand; clubs that would like to field more teams but currently do not do so. This can be for a variety of reasons including a lack pitches, appropriate facilities and qualified coaches.

Demand aspirations set out below are a mixture of identified aspirations from 2017 and 2021 (relative to when consultation with clubs was undertaken). Two clubs which were consulted in 2021, Berkeley Juniors and FC Kirby both report future demand aspirations and the remaining clubs' aspirations have been checked and challenged with Liverpool CFA against any future growth achieved since 2017.

2.6: Potential team increases identified by clubs

Club	Analysis area	Future demand	Pitch type	Match equivalent sessions ⁶
Knowsley South FC	Huyton	1 x Adult	Adult	0.5
		1 x youth 11v11	11v11	0.5
		1 x youth 9v9	9v9	1
Rosemont FC	Halewood	1 x adult	Adult	0.5
		1 x youth 11v11	11v11	0.5
		1 x mini 7v7	7v7	0.5
Rovers Community FC	Huyton	2 x mini 7v7	7v7	1
Berkeley Juniors FC	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	1 x Adult	Adult	0.5
FC Kirby	Kirby	1 x Mini 5v5	5v5	0.5
		1 x Mini 7v7	7v7	0.5
		1 x Youth 9v9	9v9	0.5

⁶ Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, 0.5 pitches can therefore be seen in the table where there is latent demand for one team.

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Club	Analysis area	Future demand	Pitch type	Match equivalent sessions ⁶
		1 x Youth 11v11	11v11	0.5
Huyton Juniors	Huyton	3x mini 5v5	5v5	1.5

The total future demand expressed amounts to eight match equivalent sessions, with most demand aspirations split between the Halewood, Huyton and Kirby analysis areas.

Table 2.7: Future demand by analysis area

Analysis area	Future demand (match equivalent sessions)					
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Halewood	0.5	0.5	-	1.5	-	2.5
Huyton	0.5	0.5	0.5	-	1.5	3
Kirkby	-	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	2
Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	0.5	-	-	-	-	0.5
Knowsley	1.5	1.5	1	2	2	8

Population increases

Team generation rates (TGRs) are used to provide an indication of how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group), in order to help estimate the change in demand for pitch sports that may arise from any population change in the study area. ONS population growth is applied to the TGRs to identify a predicted number of teams that will be generated. As such, TGRs are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth up to 2028⁷.

Table 2.8: Team generation rates (2028)

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams ⁸	Team Generation Rate (TGR)	Future population within age group	Predicted future number of teams (2028)	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Men's (16-45)	24,565	37	1:664	25,759	38	1
Senior Women (16-45)	27,387	2	1:13694	28,882	2	0
Youth Boys (12-15)	5,184	54	1:81	5,194	64	0
Youth Girls (12-15)	5,062	2	1:2531	6,011	2	0
Youth Boys (10-11)	1,832	37	1:50	2,114	42	5
Youth Girls (10-11)	1,783	1	1:1783	2,013	1	0
Mini-Soccer Mixed (8-9)	3,935	67	1:59	3,933	67	0
Mini-Soccer Mixed (6-7)	3,873	59	1:66	3,927	59	0

Application of TGRs forecast that there will be a potential increase of six teams. This equates to the potential growth of one adult men's teams and five youth 9v9 teams. However, once TGRs are applied to individual analysis areas a more detailed representation of where exactly the predicated growth will occur emerges. In this case, it is anticipated that there will be the

⁷ TGRs are based on population forecasts which are in line with the Local Plan Timeline.

⁸ Age group team numbers differ from Table 2.6 as forecasts are based on age rather than playing format. U17 and U18 teams affiliate to their respective County FA as juniors, however, are generally considered to play on and require adult pitches and are considered by age boundaries to be in the adult age group

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growth of four junior boys' teams only. Projections forecast the growth of two youth 9v9 teams in the Huyton Analysis Area and two in the Prescot, Whiston & Cronton Analysis Area.

Notwithstanding the above, it must be noted that team generation rates are based exclusively on future population forecasts and do not account for societal factors or changes in the way people may wish to play sport. Similarly, they cannot account for specific targeted development work within certain areas or focused towards certain groups, such as NGB initiatives or coaching within schools. For example, there is a focus on developing female participation within the Liverpool City Region and nationally which, as mentioned previously, is likely to lead to more women's and girls' teams in the future and therefore increase demand for pitches.

FA Wildcats centres

FA Wildcats centres work with County FA qualified coaches to deliver local weekly sessions, which provide opportunities for girls aged five to 11 to develop fundamental skills and experience football in a safe and fun environment. There are already 200 established centres which delivered the Wildcats pilot in 2017, with a further 800 centres to be in place for 2018. As part of the expansion process, organisations extending beyond affiliated clubs to include other providers or community groups were invited to apply in late 2017 to become one of the new centres.

All organisations delivering Wildcats centres receive a £600 start-up grant and 30 branded footballs in their first year of running the programme to help develop and increase girl's participation, organisations receive a secondary grant of £300 in the secondary year of operation to help sessions run sustainably.

Locally, five organisations operate Wildcat Centres. These did not operate in 2020 due to Covid-19 but are expected to be operational again for the 2021/2022 football season. The five centres are located at the following sites:

- ◀ St Annes Rovers – Twickenham Drive Playing Field
- ◀ Prescot Cables – KGV Huyton
- ◀ St Barts – Prescot Soccer Centre
- ◀ Halewood Town Junior Football Academy – Leathers Lane
- ◀ FPA – FPA Sports Hub (Hale)

In light of both FA aspirations to double female participation in football through its Game Changer strategy and the establishment and foreseen future effect of the Wildcats programme, it is likely that the growth in affiliated women's and girls' teams may exceed that shown through population growth, however, at present to what extent is not quantifiable. It is further noted that due to the nature of women's and girls' football being largely operated on a central venue basis in Liverpool, that only limited demand for match access will be attributed to pitches in Knowsley.

Future demand summary

On balance, it has been determined that total future demand should account for population and participation increases added together and as such, these are the figures applied in the supply and demand conclusions tables. This equates to a total growth of 20 teams. Of these, 16 are identified through club aspirations and four through population projections.

The Strategy Report will contain a Housing Growth Scenario that will estimate the additional demand for football arising from housing development.

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2.4: Capacity analysis

The capacity for pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment. In extreme circumstances, it can result in the inability of a pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off peak times. As a guide, The FA has set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without it adversely affecting its quality.

The following capacity ratings were used in Knowsley:

Adult pitches		Youth pitches		Mini pitches	
Pitch quality	Matches per week	Pitch quality	Matches per week	Pitch quality	Matches per week
Good	3	Good	4	Good	6
Standard	2	Standard	2	Standard	4
Poor	1	Poor	1	Poor	2

Table 2.9 overleaf applies the above pitch ratings against the actual level of weekly play to determine a capacity rating as follows:

Potential capacity	Play is below the level the site could sustain
At capacity	Play matches the level the site can sustain
Overused	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

Education sites

To account for curricular/extra-curricular use, one match equivalent session of demand has been attributed per pitch to account for curricular and extra-curricular demand. This is based on consultation (from 2017) and the discovery that all pitches are in use, as well as from experience of how school sites use pitches from other strategies in the locality and nationally.

In some cases, where there is no identified community use, there is little capacity to accommodate further play. Internal usage often exceeds recommended pitch capacity, which is further exacerbated by basic maintenance regimes that may not extend beyond grass cutting and line marking.

Informal use

Most football pitches in the area are located within open access sites. As such, these pitches are subject to informal use in the form of dog walkers, unorganised games of football and exercise groups. It must be noted, however, that informal use of these sites is not recorded and it is therefore difficult to quantify on a site-by-site basis.

Peak time

Spare capacity can only be considered as actual spare capacity if pitches are available at peak time. In Knowsley, peak time is Saturday AM for all mini and youth pitch types as most teams across all age groups play at this time. For adult pitches, peak time is Saturday PM.

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Please note that, on occasions, spare capacity in the peak period is identified despite the pitch being played to capacity, overplayed or having more spare capacity identified in the peak period than what exists overall. This is because most of the use on those particular pitches occurs outside of the peak period; therefore, the identified spare capacity at peak time should not be utilised over and above overall capacity unless quality improvements are made that increases overall capacity.

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Table 2.9: Football pitch capacity analysis

Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Type of tenure ⁹	Management	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Site capacity ¹⁰ (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (/) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Pitches available in peak period	Comments
1	All Saints High School	Yes	Secure	Commercial	Kirkby	Adult		Standard	1	2	2	-	-	Pitch at capacity.
4	Arncliffe Sports & Community Centre	Yes-unused	Secure	Town Council	Halewood	Adult		Standard	1	1	2	1	0.5	Spare capacity in the peak period
4	Arncliffe Sports & Community Centre	Yes	Secure	Town Council	Halewood	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	2	-	-	No spare capacity in the peak period.
4	Arncliffe Sports & Community Centre	Yes	Secure	Town Council	Halewood	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	4.5	8	3.5	1.5	Spare capacity in the peak period
4	Arncliffe Sports & Community Centre	Yes	Secure	Town Council	Halewood	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	2	8	6	2	Spare capacity in the peak period
4	Arncliffe Sports & Community Centre	Yes	Secure	Town Council	Halewood	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	2	2	-	-	Pitches at capacity.
6	Park Brow Playing Field (Broad Lane)	Yes	Secure	Council	Kirby	Adult		Standard	2	0.5	1	1.5	1.5	Spare capacity in the peak period
7	King George V Playing Fields, Prescott (Browns Field)	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	1	2	1	-	No capacity in the peak period.
7	King George V Playing Fields, Prescott (Browns Field)	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	No capacity in the peak period.
7	King George V Playing Fields, Prescott (Browns Field)	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	No capacity in the peak period.
7	King George V Playing Fields, Prescott (Browns Field)	Yes	Secure	Parish Council	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	No capacity in the peak period.
10	Eddie McArdle Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Kirkby	Adult		Good	2	4	6	2	1	Spare capacity in the peak period
10	Eddie McArdle Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Kirkby	Adult		Poor	3	1	3	2	-	Spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
12	Frederick Lunt Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Town Council	Halewood	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1	2	1	-	Spare capacity in the peak period
12	Frederick Lunt Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Town Council	Halewood	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	1	2	1	-	Spare capacity in the peak period
13	Halewood Academy	Yes	Secure	Commercial	Halewood	Adult		Poor	1	1	1	-	-	Pitch at capacity.
15	Halewood Town Junior Football Academy	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Halewood	Adult		Poor	1	0.5	1	0.5	-	Spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
15	Halewood Town Junior Football Academy	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Halewood	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	2	1	4	3	2	Spare capacity in the peak period
15	Halewood Town Junior Football Academy	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Halewood	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	1	4	3	1	Spare capacity in the peak period

⁹ Unless local information suggests otherwise it can be assumed that the availability of all pitches in Council, town and parish council and sports club ownership will be secure.

¹⁰ Based on pitch quality The FA recommends a maximum number of match sessions to be accommodate per pitch type. Please refer to Section 2.4 for the full breakdown.

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Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Type of tenure ⁹	Management	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Site capacity ¹⁰ (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (/) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Pitches available in peak period	Comments
18	Huyton Cricket Club	Yes	Unsecure	Sports Club	Huyton	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	-	2	2	-	Capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality and unsecure tenure.
18	Huyton Cricket Club	Yes	Unsecure	Sports Club	Huyton	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	-	2	2	-	Capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality and unsecure tenure.
18	Huyton Cricket Club	Yes	Unsecure	Sports Club	Huyton	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	-	1	1	-	Capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality and unsecure tenure.
19	Jubilee Park	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Huyton	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	2	8	6	0.5	Spare capacity in the peak period
19	Jubilee Park	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Huyton	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	1.5	8	6.5	1	Spare capacity in the peak period
19	Jubilee Park	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Huyton	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	2	2	4	2	0.5	Spare capacity in the peak period
19	Jubilee Park	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Huyton	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	2	8	4	4	-	Overplayed.
20	King George V Sports Complex	Yes	Secure	Community Organisation	Huyton	Adult		Standard	3	2.5	6	3.5	1.5	Spare capacity in the peak period
20	King George V Sports Complex	Yes	Secure	Community Organisation	Huyton	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	2	4.5	8	3.5	-	No capacity in the peak period.
20	King George V Sports Complex	Yes	Secure	Community Organisation	Huyton	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	4	4	-	-	No capacity in the peak period.
20	King George V Sports Complex	Yes	Secure	Community Organisation	Huyton	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	3	2	1	-	Pitch overplayed.
20	King George V Sports Complex	Yes	Secure	Community Organisation	Huyton	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2.5	2	0.5	-	Pitch overplayed.
21	Kirkby High School	Yes	Secure	Commercial	Kirkby	Adult		Poor	2	1.5	2	0.5	-	Spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
21	Kirkby High School	Yes	Secure	Commercial	Kirkby	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	1	-	-	Spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
25	Knowsley Recreation Ground	Yes	Secure	Council	Huyton	Adult		Standard	1	-	2	2	1	Spare capacity in the peak period.
27	Lord Derby Academy	Yes	Secure	Commercial	Huyton	Adult		Poor	2	3	2	1	-	Pitch overplayed.
27	Lord Derby Academy	Yes	Secure	Commercial	Huyton	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	1	-	-	Pitch at capacity.
28	Lord Derby's Memorial Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Huyton	Adult		Standard	3	5	6	1	1	Spare capacity in the peak period
28	Lord Derby's Memorial Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Huyton	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	2.5	4	1.5	-	No capacity in the peak period.
28	Lord Derby's Memorial Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Huyton	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	2.5	4	1.5	-	No capacity in the peak period.
28	Lord Derby's Memorial Playing Fields	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Huyton	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1.5	2	0.5	-	No capacity in the peak period.
34	Parklands Sports Club	Yes	Secure	Commercial	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Adult		Standard	1	2.5	2	0.5	-	Pitch overplayed,
34	Parklands Sports Club	Yes	Secure	Commercial	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Mini	5v5	Standard	1	0.5	4	3.5	0.5	Spare capacity in the peak period

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Site ID	Site name	Available for community use?	Type of tenure ⁹	Management	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Site capacity ¹⁰ (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (/) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Pitches available in peak period	Comments
43	St Edmunds Arrowsmith Catholic Centre for Learning	Yes	Secure	Commercial	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Adult		Poor	3	3	3	-	-	Pitches at capacity with curricular use.
43	St Edmunds Arrowsmith Catholic Centre for Learning	Yes	Secure	Commercial	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	2	2	2	-	-	Pitches at capacity with curricular use.
45	St Laurence Primary School	Yes	Unsecure	School	Kirkby	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	2	2	-	-	At capacity with curricular and community use.
49	Hilton Grace Recreation Ground (The Hollies)	Yes	Secure	Town Council	Halewood	Adult		Poor	2	-	2	2	-	Capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.
50	The Pasture	Yes	Secure	Council	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Adult		Standard	1	-	2	2	1	Spare capacity in the peak period
50	The Pasture	Yes	Secure	Council	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	-	2	2	1	Spare capacity in the peak period
51	The Prescot School	Yes	Secure	Commercial	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Adult		Poor	1	1	1	-	-	Pitches at capacity with curricular use.
52	Twickenham Drive Playing Field	Yes-unused	Secure	School	Huyton	Adult		Standard	1	2	2	-	-	Pitches at capacity.
53	Valerie Park (Prescot Cables FC)	Yes	Secure	Sports Club	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Adult		Good	1	2	3	1	-	Stadia site. No wider community access permitted.
55	Windy Arbor Road	Yes	Secure	Council	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Youth	(11v11)	Standard	1	2	2	-	-	Pitches at capacity.
55	Windy Arbor Road	Yes	Secure	Council	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Mini	7v7	Standard	1	2	4	2	-	Pitches at capacity.
55	Windy Arbor Road	Yes	Secure	Council	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Mini	5v5	Standard	1	1.5	4	2.5	-	Pitches at capacity.
59	St Margaret's Catholic Junior	Yes-unused	Unsecure	School	Huyton	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1	2	1	-	Capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
70	Two Butt Lane Playing Field	Yes	Secure	Council	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	2	4	2	0.5	Spare capacity in the peak period
70	Two Butt Lane Playing Field	Yes	Secure	Council	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Mini	7v7)	Standard	1	2	4	2	0.5	Spare capacity in the peak period

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Table 2.10: Unavailable football pitches

Site ID	Site name ¹¹	Available for community use?	Type of tenure ¹²	Management	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Site capacity ¹³ (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (/) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Pitches available in peak period	Comments
8	Knowsley Community College	No	Unsecure	School	Huyton	Adult		Standard	1	1	2	1	-	Unavailable for community use.
56	Halewood CoFE Primary	No	Unsecure	School	Halewood	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	1	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
57	St Aloysius Primary	No	Unsecure	School	Huyton	Youth	(9v9)	Poor	1	1	1	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
58	Evelyn Primary School	No	Unsecure	School	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Mini	(7v7)	Poor	1	1	1	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
58	Evelyn Primary School	No	Unsecure	School	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	1	1	-	-	Unavailable for community use.
44	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	No	Unsecure	School	Huyton	Mini	(7v7)	Standard	1	1	4	3	-	Unavailable for community use.
60	Halsnead Primary School	No	Unsecure	School	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	2	8	6	-	Unavailable for community use.
62	St Michael and All Angels Primary	No	Unsecure	School	Kirkby	Mini	(5v5)	Poor	1	1	2	1	-	Unavailable for community use.
61	Saints Peter and Paul Catholic	No	Unsecure	School	Kirkby	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	1	4	3	-	Unavailable for community use.
46	St Mark's Catholic Primary School	No	Unsecure	School	Halewood	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	1	4	3	-	Unavailable for community use.
3	Alt Bridge School	No	Unsecure	School	Huyton	Youth	(9v9)	Standard	1	1	2	1	-	Unavailable for community use.
11	Millbrook Community Primary School	No	Unsecure	School	Kirkby	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	1	4	3	-	Unavailable for community use.
11	Park Brow Community Primary School	No	Unsecure	School	Kirkby	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	1	1	4	3	-	Unavailable for community use.
33	Whiston Willis Primary School	No	Unsecure	School	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Mini	(5v5)	Standard	2	2	8	6	-	Unavailable for community use.
11	Finch Farm Training Ground (Everton FC)	No	Secure	Sports Club	Halewood	Adult		Good	10	-	30	30	-	Unavailable for community use.
11	Finch Farm Training Ground (Everton FC)	No	Secure	Sports Club	Halewood	Youth	(11v11)	Good	1	-	4	4	-	Unavailable for community use.
11	Finch Farm Training Ground (Everton FC)	No	Secure	Sports Club	Halewood	Youth	(9v9)	Good	1	-	4	4	-	Unavailable for community use.
11	Finch Farm Training Ground (Everton FC)	No	Secure	Sports Club	Halewood	Mini	(7v7)	Good	1	-	8	8	-	Unavailable for community use.
11	Finch Farm Training Ground (Everton FC)	No	Secure	Sports Club	Halewood	Mini	(5v5)	Good	1	-	8	8	-	Unavailable for community use.
26	Liverpool FC Academy	No	Secure	Sports Club	Kirkby	Adult		Good	2	-	6	6	-	Unavailable for community use.
26	Liverpool FC Academy	No	Secure	Sports Club	Kirkby	Youth	(11v11)	Good	2	-	8	8	-	Unavailable for community use.
26	Liverpool FC Academy	No	Secure	Sports Club	Kirkby	Mini	(7v7)	Good	2	-	12	12	-	Unavailable for community use.

¹¹ Demand from pro clubs training grounds is unknown and therefore has not been factored into capacity scoring.

¹² Unless local information suggests otherwise it can be assumed that the availability of all pitches in Council, town and parish council and sports club ownership will be secure.

¹³ Based on pitch quality The FA recommends a maximum number of match sessions to be accommodate per pitch type. Please refer to Section 2.4 for the full breakdown.

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Site ID	Site name ¹¹	Available for community use?	Type of tenure ¹²	Management	Analysis area	Pitch type	Pitch size	Agreed quality rating	No. of pitches	Current play (match sessions)	Site capacity ¹³ (match sessions)	Overused (+), At Capacity (/) or Potential to Accommodate additional play (-)	Pitches available in peak period	Comments
26	Liverpool FC Academy	No	Secure	Sports Club	Kirkby	Mini	(5v5)	Good	1	-	6	6	-	Unavailable for community use.

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Spare capacity

To determine 'actual spare capacity', each site with 'potential capacity identified in Table 2.12 has been reviewed. A pitch is only said to have 'actual spare capacity' if it is available for community use and available at the peak time for that format of the game. Any pitch not meeting this criterion has consequently been discounted.

There may also be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

Pitches that are of a poor quality are not deemed to have actual spare capacity due to their already low carrying capacity. Any identified spare capacity should be retained in order to relieve the pitches of use, which in turn, will aid the improvement of pitch quality.

Unless tenure is considered secure through the operator, primary school sites that are currently available for community use but unused are also not considered to have actual spare capacity as the full availability of these pitches cannot be determined. All secondary education sites in the area are managed by Volair and to that end considered to have secure tenure.

Given the above, actual spare capacity equates to 18.5 match equivalent sessions per week. This is provided for across 11 individual sites and across 36 pitches. This has been aggregated up by area and by pitch type.

Table 2.11: Summary of actual spare capacity

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions per week)				
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5
Halewood	0.5	-	2	1.5	3
Huyton	3.5	-	0.5	1	0.5
Kirkby	2.5	-	-	-	-
Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	1	1	-	0.5	1
Knowsley	7.5	1	2.5	3	4.5

In addition to the above, it is worthy of note that four match equivalent sessions of potential spare capacity have been discounted due to either site having unsecure tenure. This includes the former Huyton Cricket Club site which formerly accommodated Berkeley Juniors FC.

Match equivalent sessions (MES)

Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected. As the main usage of pitches is likely to be for matches, it is appropriate for the comparable unit to be match equivalent sessions but may for example include training sessions and informal use.

At this stage, match equivalent sessions do not equate to a number of pitches. This is because an analysis area might show three match equivalent sessions of spare capacity, however, this is likely to be spread across a number of sites. Further to this, minimal spare capacity on one site may be required to accommodate strategic reserve and as such retained.

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If the spare capacity is on one pitch, then it might indicate a need to create a different type of pitch to address a deficiency. This will be fully determined, and recommendations will be made accordingly within the Strategy and Action Plan.

Overplay

Overplay occurs when there is more play accommodated on a site than it can sustain (which can often be due to the low carrying capacity of the pitches). In total, seven pitches across four- sites are overplayed by a combined total of seven match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 2.12: Overplay summary by analysis area

Analysis area	Overplay (match equivalent sessions per week)				
	Adult	Youth (11v11)	Youth (9v9)	Mini (7v7)	Mini (5v5)
Halewood	-	-	-	-	-
Huyton	1	5	0.5	-	-
Kirkby	-	-	-	-	-
Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	0.5	-	-	-	-
Knowsley	1.5	5	0.5	-	-

2.5: Supply and demand analysis

Having considered supply and demand, the tables below identify current demand (i.e. spare capacity taking away overplay and any exported demand) and future demand in each of the analysis areas for each pitch type, based on match equivalent sessions.

Total future demand accounts for population and participation increases added together and as such, these are the figures applied in the tables below.

Adult pitch analysis

Table 2.13: Supply and demand balance of adult pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹⁴	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Halewood	0.5	-	0.5	0.5	-
Huyton	3.5	1	2.5	0.5	2
Kirkby	2.5	-	2.5	-	2.5
Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	-
Knowsley	7.5	1.5	6	1.5	4.5

The table above highlights that there is a sufficient supply of adult football pitches to cater for affiliated football for current and future need. Despite identified overplay, minimal spare capacity is identified on several sites (as identified in Table 2.12) and this is expected to be sufficient to meet current and future demand.

¹⁴ In match equivalent sessions

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Youth 11v11 pitch analysis

Table 2.14: Supply and demand balance of youth 11v11 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹⁵	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Halewood	-	-	-	0.5	0.5
Huyton	-	5	5	0.5	5.5
Kirkby	-	-	-	0.5	0.5
Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	1	-	1	-	1
Knowsley	1	5	4	1.5	5.5

There is a current shortfall of two match equivalent sessions per week across youth 11v11 pitch formats. When accounting for future demand, the shortfall increases to 3.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

It must also be noted that a large number of youth 11v11 teams are playing on adult pitches, meaning shortfalls would greatly exacerbate should these transfer to the correct pitch type.

Youth 9v9 pitch analysis

Table 2.15: Supply and demand balance of youth 9v9 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹⁶	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Halewood	2	-	2	-	2
Huyton	0.5	0.5	-	1.5	1.5
Kirkby	-	-	-	0.5	0.5
Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	-	-	-	1	1
Knowsley	2.5	0.5	2	3	1

The table above shows that there is a sufficient supply of youth 9v9 pitches for current demand. When accounting for future demand, shortfalls emerge in three analysis areas.

Mini 7v7 pitch analysis

Table 2.16: Supply and demand balance of mini 7v7 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹⁷	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Halewood	1.5	-	1.5	1.5	-
Huyton	1	-	1	-	1
Kirkby	-	-	-	0.5	0.5
Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	0.5	-	0.5	-	0.5
Knowsley	3	-	3	2	1

¹⁵ In match equivalent sessions

¹⁶ In match equivalent sessions

¹⁷ In match equivalent sessions

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The table above shows that there is a sufficient supply on mini 7v7 pitches across the area. Anticipated future demand is expected to utilise pockets of spare capacity but there is broadly expected to be sufficient capacity to accommodate demand (despite a small future shortfall being identified in the Kirby Analysis Area).

Mini 5v5 pitch analysis

Table 2.17: Supply and demand balance of mini 5v5 pitches

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹⁸	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Halewood	3	-	3	-	3
Huyton	0.5	-	0.5	1.5	1
Kirky	-	-	-	0.5	0.5
Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	1	-	1	-	1
Knowsley	4.5	-	4.5	2	2.5

There is currently a sufficient supply of mini 5v5 pitches in the area to accommodate for current demand. When accounting for future demand, a small shortfall emerges in the Huyton and Kirby analysis areas, but there is broadly considered to be a sufficient supply to meet current and future demand.

2.6: Conclusions

It is determined that there are current shortfalls on youth 11v11 pitches. When accounting for future demand, shortfalls are expected to be exacerbated for youth 11v11 pitches and a small shortfall emerges for youth 9v9 pitches. There are no other Knowsley wide shortfalls identified on the remaining pitch types but there are localised shortfalls for mini 7v7 and 5v5 pitches.

Table 2.18: Summary of supply and demand in Knowsley

Pitch format	Actual spare capacity ¹⁹	Demand (match equivalent sessions)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Adult	7.5	1.5	6	1.5	4.5
Youth 11v11	-	5	5	0.5	5.5
Youth 9v9	2.5	0.5	2	3	1
Mini 7v7	3	-	3	2	1
Mini 5v5	4.5	-	4.5	2	2.5

In the main, current shortfalls have been created due to concentrated demand at club sites. These are expected to grow in the future aligned to potential growth of affiliated football clubs across the area. It is noted that the football landscape has somewhat changed since the 2017 PPS and that following the opening of the Liverpool Parklife hubs that there is a level of exported demand outside of Knowsley for match play (due to central venue leagues) which has reduced the pressure on the existing pitch stock for match play. To that end, shortfalls are lower than in 2017.

¹⁸ In match equivalent sessions

¹⁹ In match equivalent sessions

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As aforementioned, several clubs are engaged with the FA Pitch Improvement Programme. All of these clubs are at the early stages of the programme and have therefore not had the full benefits of the work. In the future, these club sites will (or should) have better quality pitches which will reduce the already identified overplay.

The proceeding Strategy & Action Plan will explore specific scenarios to alleviate identified shortfalls and explore future for provision based on residential development.

Football – grass pitch summary

- ◀ **Current supply of football pitch provision is broadly sufficient to meet current demand. Small shortfalls are identified on youth 11v11 pitches.**
- ◀ **When considering future demand, shortfalls on youth 11v11 pitches are exacerbated. A new shortfall emerges for youth 9v9 pitches and remaining spare capacity on alternate pitch types is reduced.**
- ◀ **Grass football pitch supply:**
 - ◀ The audit identifies a total of 119 grass football pitches across 41 sites. Of these, 79 are available, at some level, for community use across 26 sites. All unavailable pitches are located at education sites or at private elite football training centres.
- ◀ **Grass football pitch quality:**
 - ◀ Of the 79 pitches which offer community use, three pitches are assessed as good quality, 46 as standard quality and 30 as poor quality.
 - ◀ Five sites are currently involved with the FA improvement programme and it is expected that pitch quality at these sites will improve to either a standard or good quality over the lifespan of the PPS.
- ◀ **Affiliated football demand:**
 - ◀ Through the audit and assessment, 259 teams from within 68 clubs are identified as playing in Knowsley. This consists of 37 adult men's, two adult women's, 91 youth boys', three youth girls' and 126 mini mixed teams.
 - ◀ Future demand equates to equates to the growth of 20 teams (16 identified through participation increases and four through population forecasts).
- ◀ **Supply vs demand analysis conclusions:**
 - ◀ Actual spare capacity equates to 18.5 match equivalent sessions per week. This is provided for across 11 individual sites and across 36 pitches
 - ◀ In total, five pitches across three sites are identified as being overplayed. Total overplay equates to seven match equivalent sessions per week.
 - ◀ There are current shortfalls on youth 9v9 pitches. All remaining pitch types have spare capacity for additional play.
 - ◀ Future demand is expected to mildly reduce spare capacity on adult and mini pitches. The existing shortfall of youth 11v11 pitches is expected to increase and a new shortfall emerges for youth 9v9 pitches.

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PART 3: THIRD GENERATION TURF (3G) PITCHES

3.1: Introduction

Competitive football can take place on 3G artificial grass surfaces that have been FIFA or International Matchball Standard (IMS) tested and approved by the FA for inclusion on the FA pitch register. As such, a growing number of 3G pitches are now used for competitive match play, providing that the performance standard meets FIFA quality (previously FIFA One Star), as well as for training purposes. Football training can take place on sand and water based surfaces but is not the preferred option.

World Rugby produced the 'Performance Specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby', more commonly known as 'Regulation 22' that provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union. The artificial surface standards identified in Regulation 22 allows matches to be played on surfaces that meet the standard, meaning full contact activity, including tackling, rucking, mauling and lineouts, can take place.

England Hockey's (EH) Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy (June 2016) advises that 3G pitches should not be used for hockey matches or training and that they can only be used for lower level hockey (introductory level) as a last resort when no sand-based or water-based AGPs are available.

Table 3.1: 3G type and sport suitability

Surface	Category	Comments
Rubber crumb	Long Pile 3G (60mm with shock pad)	Rugby surface – must comply with World Rugby regulation 22 and/or RFL Community Standard, requires a minimum of 60mm pile.
Rubber crumb	Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)	Preferred football surface. Suitable for non-contact rugby union/league practice or play.
Rubber crumb	Short Pile 3G (40mm)	Acceptable surface for some competitive football, able to be used for low level curricular hockey.

It should be noted that the FA generally refers to 3G pitches as 3G football turf pitches, though this term is not adopted in this PPS as 3G pitches can be theoretically used for other sports including rugby union, rugby league, lacrosse and American football, amongst others.

The FA considers high quality 3G pitches as an essential tool in promoting coach and player development. The pitches can support intensive use and as such are great assets for football use. Primarily, such facilities have been installed for social use and training, however, they are increasingly used for competition, which the FA wholly supports.

3.2: Current provision

A full size 3G pitch is considered by the FA to measure at least 100 x 64 metres (106 x 70 metres including run offs); however, for the purposes of this report, all pitches measuring over 98 x 56 metres (inclusive of run offs) are considered to be full size due to the amount of demand they can accommodate. Nationally, many 3G pitches are slightly undersized due to being converted from sand-based provision (dimensions for hockey are smaller than for football).

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There are eight full size 3G pitches in Knowsley which fully comply with the above specification, with at least one pitch in each of the four analysis areas. Of the eight, five are available for community use and three are unavailable for community use. All unavailable pitches are located at professional football club training grounds.

Table 3.2: Full size 3G pitches in Knowsley

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	Sports lighting?	Size (metres)
13	Halewood Academy	Halewood	Yes	Yes	99 x 56
14	Halewood Leisure Centre	Halewood	Yes	Yes	100 x 60
22	Kirkby Leisure Centre	Kirkby	Yes	Yes	106 x 70
27	Lord Derby Academy	Huyton	Yes	Yes	102 x 63
38	Prescot Soccer & Leisure Centre	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	Yes	Yes	102 x 63
11	Finch Farm Training Ground (Everton FC)	Halewood	No	Yes	110 x 74
11	Finch Farm Training Ground (Everton FC)	Halewood	No	Yes	104 x 65
26	Liverpool FC Academy	Kirkby	No	Yes	107 x 74

In addition, there are 12 smaller size 3G pitches provided across four sites, with ten of these available for community use across three sites. Such pitches are generally not suitable for adult match play but can be used to accommodate youth and mini matches provided they are FA approved, of an adequate size and with adequate run-off areas.

Table 3.3: Additional supply of 3G pitches

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Community use?	Sports lighting?	Size (metres)
1	All Saints Catholic High School	Kirkby	1	Yes	Yes	80 x 45
4	Arncliffe Sports & Community Centre	Halewood	2	Yes	Yes	60 x 40
38	Prescot Soccer & Leisure Centre	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	7	Yes	Yes	45 x 40
11	Finch Farm Training Ground (Everton FC)	Halewood	2	No	Yes/No	27 x 17

Future provision

The Knowsley LFFP was published in May 2019 and utilised the evidence base collated from the 2017 PPS. The PPS in 2017 identified an existing shortfall of two full size pitches and three full size pitches when accounting for future demand (2028).

Five potential projects were identified in the LFFP, with these being at Jubilee Park, Knowsley Leisure & Culture Park, Knowsley Community College, Prescot Cables FC and St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic School.

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Of these five, two projects are expected to be short listed for development. This is one of the three potential options at Jubilee Park, Knowsley Leisure & Culture Park and Knowsley Community College, with the other to be either at Prescott Cables FC and Sr Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic School.

Since the development of the LFFP, a new 3G pitch has been built at Halewood Leisure Centre. The update of the PPS will allow for the LFFP evidence base to be updated following the completion of this Assessment and forthcoming Strategy & Action Plan. This will also allow an opportunity for the LFFP to be updated based on the findings of the PPS.

FA pitch register

In order for competitive matches to be played on 3G pitches, the pitch should be FIFA or IMS tested and approved and added to the FA pitch register, which can be found at: <http://3g.thefa.me.uk/>.

Pitches undergo testing to become a FIFA Quality pitch (previously FIFA One Star) or a FIFA Quality Pro pitch (previously FIFA Two Star), with pitches commonly constructed, installed and tested in situ to achieve either accreditation. This comes after FIFA announced changes to 3G performance in October 2015 following consultation with member associations and licenced laboratories. The changes are part of FIFA's continued ambition to drive up performance standard in the industry and the implications are that all 3G pitches built through the FA framework will be constructed to meet the new criteria.

The changes from FIFA One Star to FIFA Quality will have minimal impact on the current hours of use guidelines, which suggests that One Star pitches place more emphasis on the product's ability to sustain acceptable performance and can typically be used for 60-85 hours per week with a lifespan of 20,000 cycles. In contrast, pitches built to FIFA Quality Pro performance standards are unlikely to provide the hours of use that some FIFA Two Star products have guaranteed in the past (previously 30-40 hours per week with a lifespan of 5,000 cycles). Typically, a FIFA Quality Pro pitch will be able to accommodate only 20-30 hours per week with appropriate maintenance due to strict performance measurements.

The table below outlines the certification type for each 3G pitch which offers community use in Knowsley.

Table 3.4: 3G certifications (community use pitches only)

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Certification type
13	Halewood Academy	Halewood	FA Approved
14	Halewood Leisure Centre	Halewood	FIFA Approved
22	Kirkby Leisure Centre	Kirkby	FIFA Approved
27	Lord Derby Academy	Huyton	FA Approved
38	Prescot Soccer & Leisure Centre	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	FIFA Approved
1	All Saints Catholic High School	Kirkby	FIFA Approved
4	Arncliffe Sports & Community Centre	Halewood	<i>Not certified for match play</i>
38	Prescot Soccer & Leisure Centre	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	FA Approved

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World Rugby compliant pitches

To enable 3G pitches to host competitive rugby union matches, World Rugby has developed the Rugby Turf Performance Specification. This is to ensure that the surfaces replicate the playing qualities of good quality grass pitches, provide a playing environment that will not increase the risk of injury and are of an adequate durability.

The specification includes a rigorous test programme that assesses ball/surface interaction and player/surface interaction and has been modified to align the standard with that of FIFA. Any 3G pitch used for any form of competitive rugby must comply with this specification and must be tested every two years to retain compliance.

The RFU investment strategy into 3G pitches considers sites where grass rugby pitches are over capacity and where a pitch would support the growth of the game at the host site and for the local rugby partnership, including local clubs and education sites.

Based on there being no substantial rugby union demand in Knowsley, there are no 3G pitches which meet the technical specification required to meet World Rugby compliancy. Unless significant rugby union demand arises in the future, it is likely this will remain the case. The nearest available pitch which meets this compliancy is located at Jericho Lane in Liverpool.

Availability and management

The following table summarises the management and availability of the full size AGPs available for community use in Knowsley. In addition, it records the availability of provision within the peak period. Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) applies an overall peak period for AGPs of 34 hours a week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00).

Table 3.5: Summary of full size 3G pitch availability

Site ID	Site	Hours available during the peak period	Management	Availability
1	All Saints Catholic High School	30	Volair	Reserved for school use until 18:00 during the week then available to the community from 18:00 until 21:00 Monday to Friday and from 09:00 until 18:00 Saturday to Sunday.
4	Arncliffe Sports & Community Centre	34	Sports Centre	Pitches full available from 08:30 - 0 21:00 midweek, 09:30 – 15:30 Saturdays and 10:00 – 13:00 Sundays.
13	Halewood Academy	30	Volair	Reserved for school use until 18:00 during the week then available to the community from 18:00 until 21:00 Monday to Friday and from 09:00 until 18:00 Saturday to Sunday.
14	Halewood Leisure Centre	34	Volair	Pitch fully available from 09:00 – 21:00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 – 18:00 on weekends.

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Site ID	Site	Hours available during the peak period	Management	Availability
22	Kirkby Leisure Centre	30	Volair	Reserved for school use until 18:00 during the week then available to the community from 18:00 until 21:00 Monday to Friday and from 09:00 until 18:00 Saturday to Sunday.
27	Lord Derby Academy	30	Volair	Reserved for school use until 18:00 during the week then available to the community from 18:00 until 21:00 Monday to Friday and from 09:00 until 18:00 Saturday to Sunday.
38	Prescot Soccer & Leisure Centre	34	Volair	Pitch fully available from 09:00 – 21:00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 – 18:00 Saturday and Sunday.

It is essential that the capacity of Artificial Grass Pitches is quantified to help establish whether there is sufficient spare capacity to accommodate unmet and future demand if barriers such as programming, hours available etc are adjusted, or if there is a need for new provision. It is recommended a PPS Steering Group Task and Finish Group is established to look at this issue as part of Stage E (Delivery and Implementation) of the PPS process.

Quality

Depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately ten years and it is the age of the surface, combined with maintenance levels, which most commonly affects quality. It is therefore recommended that sinking funds be put into place by providers to enable long-term sustainability, ongoing repairs, and future refurbishment beyond this period.

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>80%), Standard (60-79%), Poor (<60%). The quality ratings assigned to the sites also consider the user quality ratings gathered from consultation.

A summary of the findings for the community available provision is shown in the table below.

Table 3.6: Age and quality of full size 3G pitches

Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Year installed	Quality
13	Halewood Academy	Halewood	2010	Poor
14	Halewood Leisure Centre	Halewood	2019	Good
22	Kirkby Leisure Centre	Kirkby	2017	Good
27	Lord Derby Academy	Huyton	2009	Poor
38	Prescot Soccer & Leisure Centre	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	2016	Good
1	All Saints Catholic High School	Kirkby	2019	Good
4	Arncliffe Sports & Community Centre	Halewood	2008/2016	Standard

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Site ID	Site	Analysis area	Year installed	Quality
38	Prescot Soccer & Leisure Centre	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	2013	Poor

There are two poor quality full size 3G pitches in the area, located at Halewood Academy and Lord Derby Academy. These pitches were also identified as poor in the 2017 PPS and to that end, it is likely that the quality of these pitches has worsened.

What is notable is that both pitches are certified for match play and are likely to fail future re-certification tests. This will mean that the pitches will no longer be able to be used for match play.

From a small sided pitch perspective, only the pitches at Prescot Soccer & Leisure Centre are poor quality. These are used as a central venue for match play and it is therefore important that quality is monitored to ensure the long term viability of the local league structures for mini and youth football.

Ancillary facilities

All full size 3G pitches are accompanied by ancillary facilities that are considered adequate and no issues were raised during consultation.

3.3: Demand

Current demand

Current usage of the 3G provision in Knowsley is unknown due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions on activity and accessibility. However, in 2017, all pitches were reported to be operating at or close to capacity at peak times midweek, especially during winter months when grass pitches cannot be used for training or recreational demand (due to a lack of sportslighting). However, there was some identified spare capacity to increase weekend usage to accommodate more competitive matches at Lord Derby Academy and Halewood Academy. However, it is recommended the Strategy Report establishes a PPS Steering Group Task and Finish Group as part of Stage E (Delivery and Implementation) to assess the extent of spare capacity of 3G pitches to help inform whether existing 3G pitches can accommodate unmet and future demand, or if new provision is required.

All identified community usage is considered to be football related, with no rugby or other sports having a presence, outside of some isolated curricular and extra-curricular activity. Most capacity is being taken up by clubs for training and match play purposes, although there is also a strong presence of recreational football activity taking place (e.g., via unaffiliated groups). There also some small-sided commercial leagues in operation, such as Elite Sixes at Prescot Soccer & Leisure Centre.

Unmet demand

Based on 2017 consultation (and updated consultation with Berkeley Juniors FC, Halewood Town Juniors FC, FC Kirby and City of Liverpool), 11 clubs (with a combined 158 teams) report that they have demand to increase access to 3G pitches for training, with some of their teams not currently accessing provision or doing so in undesirable circumstances. This includes training outside of ideal booking slots or needing to share booking slots with other teams within their club on quarter spaces of full size pitches. Details of these clubs are identified overleaf.

Table 3.7: Unmet demand for 3G pitches

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Club	Number of teams	Analysis area
Berkeley Junior FC	9	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton
City of Liverpool FC	16	Huyton
Halewood Town JSA	10	Halewood
Huyton Juniors FC	34	Huyton
Mini Huyton Soccer	26	Huyton (15 teams) Prescot, Whiston & Cronton (11 teams)
Kingsthorpe FC	6	Halewood
FC Kirby	2	Kirby
Knowsley South FC	23	Huyton
Prescot Cables JFC	17	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton
Quarry Green FC	4	Kirby
Whiston Juniors	11	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton

The FA's long-term ambition is to provide every affiliated team in England the opportunity to train once per week on a 3G surface, together with priority access for every Charter Standard Community Club through a partnership agreement. As such, it has established a model to calculate the required number of pitches to meet demand, which works out that one full size pitch is required to service every 38 teams within a local authority. This is based on peak time access being Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings (Mondays and Fridays are discounted as it is considered that teams do not want to train in such close proximity to a weekend match, and it also allows for other forms of access such as for commercial leagues and recreational play).

The above can help to assess what level of provision might be required to meet unmet demand. If combined in its entirety, unmet demand would theoretically align to a need for four full size pitches. However, this doesn't take in to account the usage of pitches which clubs already utilise for training, so this broad number of four pitches requires reducing to a more realistic number. This should be determined by the PPS Steering Group as part of the Stage E process.

Match play

In addition, 90 teams are currently identified as using 3G provision for matches. This is made up of 72 teams using Prescot Soccer & Leisure Centre, primarily as part of a central venue format, 11 teams using Kirkby Leisure Centre, four teams using Lord Derby Academy and three teams using All Saints Catholic High School.

No clubs report unmet demand for 3G access for match play purposes.

Latent demand

In addition to the unmet demand suggested above, for training several clubs in Knowsley (in 2017) reported that they could field more teams if they had increased access to 3G provision. The perception of these is that a lack of training availability is preventing them from establishing more teams, although some additionally state that a lack of grass pitches and/or suitable ancillary provision is also preventing growth. The key clubs which raised this are as follows:

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- ◀ City of Liverpool FC
- ◀ Huyton Juniors FC
- ◀ FC Kirby
- ◀ Whiston Juniors

Future demand

Based on population projections to 2028 (in line with Knowsley's Local Plan), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator is able to estimate the likely additional demand for 3G provision that will arise from any growth. This is worked out by converting existing demand to team generation rates (as set out in Part 2 of this report) to calculate future requirements.

The calculator identifies a growth in demand which equates to 11.5 hours of midweek access to full size 3G pitches.

In addition, as also set out in Part 2 of this report, six clubs report future demand to grow by a collective total of 16 teams. If this growth was realised, and if all additional teams wanted to train on 3G provision, it would increase 3G pitch requirements above and beyond what is identified through population growth alone.

3.4: Supply and demand analysis

The existing stock of 3G pitches available for community use (five pitches) is operating at or close to capacity, especially during midweek for training purposes, as emphasised by the suggested unmet and latent demand identified by local clubs. Whilst some of the capacity issues could be overcome through better utilising the existing stock, such as through increasing open hours or consolidating commercial use, the impact of this is likely to be minimal. This is because the availability across the provision is already good, especially on days and at times where clubs prefer to train.

Taking the above into account and coupled with the suggested unmet and latent demand identified by clubs in Knowsley for access to 3G pitches for midweek training activity, it can be determined that there may be an insufficient supply currently. However, it is recommended that the Strategy Report establishes a PPS Steering Group Task and Finish Group as part of Stage E (Delivery and Implementation) to assess the extent of spare capacity of 3G pitches to help inform whether existing 3G pitches can accommodate unmet and future demand or if new provision is required.

This is in addition to the 11.5 hours of demand that may be required to accommodate future demand from population growth.

For match play, existing capacity is considered to be less of an issue as availability remains across the current stock of pitches during weekends. Furthermore, the requirement of pitches for matches should not outweigh the requirement for training as sustainability would become questionable without high levels of midweek usage. Nevertheless, increased use of the 3G stock for matches should still be encouraged in order to help relieve grass pitch shortfalls.

Conclusion

A number of existing 3G pitches are assessed as poor quality and have reached the end of their lifespan (i.e., at Halewood Academy, Lord Derby Academy and Prescott Soccer & Leisure Centre). In this regard, providers will need to have sinking funds in place for replacement and it is also recommended that existing pitches undergo FA testing every three years to remain or become FA approved.

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In addition to above, clubs report there is limited spare capacity on the present supply of 3G pitches when teams require access for training purposes, leading to several clubs reporting a need for increased provision.

The proceeding strategy document will run scenarios to further explore the need for additional 3G pitches if:

- ◀ All teams playing competitive football had access to a full size floodlit 3G pitch to train on once a week.
- ◀ All matches for teams currently playing competitive football on managed natural grass pitches were played on full size floodlit 3G pitches.

It is recommended that the Strategy Report establishes a PPS Steering Group Task and Finish Group as part of Stage E (Delivery and Implementation) to assess the extent of spare capacity of 3G pitches to help inform whether existing 3G pitches can accommodate unmet and future demand or if new provision is required taking into account the training and match play scenarios and housing growth scenarios.

3G summary

Supply:

- ◀ There are eight full size 3G pitches in Knowsley. Five of these are available for community use. Unavailable facilities are based at elite training centre sites owned by professional football clubs.
- ◀ There are also ten small sided pitches provided across three sites. All of these offer community use.
- ◀ All full size pitches offering community use are on the FA register for football match play and therefore be used to accommodate competitive matches.
- ◀ Eight of the ten small sided pitches are also on the FA register for match play.

Quality:

- ◀ Three of the full size 3G pitches are good quality. The remaining two are poor quality. These are located at Halewood Academy and Lord Derby Academy.
- ◀ Seven of the ten small sided pitches are poor quality. These are all located at Prescot Soccer & Leisure Centre. The remaining three pitches are either standard or good quality.

Demand:

- ◀ All identified community usage is considered to be football related, with no rugby or other sports having a presence, outside of some isolated curricular and extra-curricular activity.
- ◀ In addition, 90 teams are currently identified as using 3G provision for matches.
- ◀ 11 clubs with 158 teams report demand for access to 3G pitches.
- ◀ Four clubs in Knowsley also report that they could field more teams if they had increased access to 3G provision.
- ◀ Based on population projections to 2028, a growth in demand equating to the need for 11.5 hours of access to 3G pitches for midweek training is identified.
- ◀ In addition, six clubs report future demand to grow by a collective total of 16 teams, which if realised would increase future 3G requirements.

Supply and demand analysis:

- ◀ The existing stock of 3G pitches is suggested to be operating at or close to capacity, especially during midweek for training purposes.
- ◀ An additional one full size pitch could be required to accommodate unmet demand, in addition to the 11.5 hours of midweek training use that may be required to accommodate future demand from population growth and any additional requirements from club aspirations.
- ◀ Priority should be placed on exploring the need for additional provision and/or increased access to existing 3G pitches with Liverpool County FA and the Football Foundation. It is recommended that the Strategy Report establishes a PPS Steering Group Task and Finish Group as part of Stage E (Delivery and Implementation) to assess the extent of spare capacity of 3G pitches to help inform whether existing 3G pitches can accommodate unmet and future demand or if new provision is required.
- ◀ It is also important to sustain the current pitch stock to ensure that any existing shortfalls are not exacerbated.

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PART 4: CRICKET

4.1: Introduction

Lancashire Cricket Foundation (LCF) serves as the governing and representative body for cricket within Knowsley. Its aim is to promote the game at all levels through partnerships with professional and recreational cricketing clubs, and other appropriate agencies. It is working in partnership with the ECB to deliver its refreshed strategy called “Inspiring Generations” which was announced in January 2019. It builds on the strong foundations laid by Cricket Unleashed and supports the growth of cricket in England and Wales between 2020 and 2024. At the heart of this strategy is a single unifying purpose, which gets to the core of what the game can do for society both on and off the field to ensure that cricket is in an even stronger position than it is in 2019.

This five-year plan for 2020-24 sets six clear priorities of action. These are:

- ◀ Grow and nurture the core
- ◀ Inspire through elite teams
- ◀ Make cricket accessible
- ◀ Engage children and young people
- ◀ Transforming women’s and girl’s cricket
- ◀ Supporting communities

Consultation

There is one affiliated cricket club in Knowsley; Whitefield (Roby) Cricket Club. The Club was consulted with via telephone interview to inform this section of the report in the original PPS, produced in 2017. Updated information has been sourced through information provided through the Lancashire Cricket Foundation.

4.2: Supply

There is one natural turf cricket square in Knowsley located at Court Hey Park, the home ground of Whitefield (Roby) CC. This is the only natural turf provision provided for throughout the area.

Disused provision

Playing fields which have previously accommodated formal pitch provision are categorised as disused. Not available as disused - Any sites where pitches were once, but are no longer, marked out and remain undeveloped.

Huyton Cricket Club formerly accommodated a large, 12 wicket, natural turf cricket square with an accompanying pavilion and changing facilities. Since the site came out of use for cricket more than ten years ago, it has been used to accommodate demand for local football until 2018. The site is now currently unused by any sports teams.

Non-turf pitches (NTPs)

The ECB highlights that NTPs which follow its TS6 guidance on performance standards are suitable for high level, senior play and are considered able to take 60 matches per season, although this may include training sessions via the use of mobile nets.

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In addition to the square at Court Hey Park there are a number of standalone NTPs located at the following school sites:

- ◀ All Saints High School
- ◀ Halewood Academy
- ◀ St Edmund Arrowsmith
- ◀ Kirkby High School
- ◀ Prescott High School

Consultation with Volair (in 2017) stated that use of NTPs at each site is limited to just curricular use, with no community bookings recorded. In general, although adequate quality for their current use, they receive little maintenance and are likely to be unusable for any format of competitive cricket in the future.

Table 4.1: Summary of cricket provision available for community use

Site ID	Site	Management	Analysis area	Number of squares	Community use?	Number of wickets	
						Grass	Non-turf
1	All Saints High School	School	Kirkby	-	Yes	-	1
13	Halewood Academy	School	Halewood	-	Yes	-	1
21	Kirkby High School	School	Kirkby	-	Yes	-	1
43	St Edmund Arrowsmith	School	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	-	Yes	-	1
51	Prescot High School	School	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	-	Yes	-	1
54	Court Hey Park – Whitefield (Roby) CC	Sports Club	Huyton	1	Yes	9	-

Loss of provision

There was a former proposal for the loss of playing field and associated building work at Huyton Cricket Club for the development of a supermarket. The application (Planning Ref:20/00333/HYB) was withdrawn in early 2021 and there are now no plans for the site. It is expected to lay dormant for the foreseeable future.

Future provision

There are no set plans to create new cricket provision in Knowsley. However, LCF has identified an opportunity for South Liverpool CC (currently based in Sefton) to transfer into the area aligned to a club development plan which will see it grow participation in the Huyton Analysis Area. This was based on the development and subsequent mitigation of provision identified above. It is unlikely, in the short term, that this plan for the Club to transfer into Knowsley will be achieved. The ECB also confirm that this is now likely to be a long term plan.

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ECB Ball Strike

Where there is either new cricket provision being put in place, or more commonly a development immediately adjacent to an existing cricket ground, which may prejudice the use of the cricket facility, there is a requirement for a full ball strike risk assessment to be undertaken and appropriate mitigation put in place as part of the development. As such, the ECB recommends that the developers, in consultation with clubs and organisations, seek to have a ball strike risk assessment undertaken; further information can be provided by the ECB.

Security of tenure

Whitefield (Roby) CC has a 30-year lease from the Council and as such, is considered to have secure tenure at Court Hey Park.

Pitch quality

The quality of cricket pitches was assessed in 2017 via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the ECB) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>80%), Standard (50-79%), Poor (<49%).

Maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of cricket; if the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous. As an example, if a square is poor quality, a ball can bounce erratically on a wicket and become a danger to nearby players.

PPS pitch quality ratings determined by non-technical quality assessment and user consultation found natural turf square at Court Hey Park to be standard quality. Consultation with Whitefield (Roby) CC highlights that whilst in general terms, the square is adequate and comparably good to its league opposition.

The Club has a modest maintenance budget for the square and outfield (with all work undertaken on the site done inhouse by volunteers) which consequentially limits both the preparatory work and remedial works which can be undertaken at the site.

To obtain a full technical assessment of wicket and pitches, the ECB recommends a Performance Quality Standard (PQS) assessment. The PQS looks at a cricket square to ascertain whether the pitch meets the Performance Quality Standards, which are benchmarked by the Institute of Groundsman.

Table 4.2: Performance Quality Standard Ratings

Quality rating	Details
Premier (High)	Where the surface is intended for Premier League play, with those within the top quartile capable of holding minor county and 1st class one day matches. May include some of the better schools and university pitches.
Club (Standard)	A Club pitch suitable for league, school and junior cricket.

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Quality rating	Details
Basic	An acceptable level suitable for recreational cricket and where the surface is designed and maintained within tight financial limitations such as local authorities.
Unsuitable	This is where the surface is deemed unfit or unsafe for play.

Clubs can contact the ECB to arrange for a pitch advisor to complete three different reports (comprehensive/mini/verbal) that vary in cost. A fully comprehensive report includes soil testing and guidance on machinery and corrective procedures, a mini report includes guidance on machinery and corrective procedures and a verbal report is a spoken version of a mini report.

Ancillary facilities

Ancillary facility rating is primarily influenced by the type of amenities which are available on a site and their quality, such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, showering provision, car parking, dedicated umpire, spectator facilities and boundary fencing.

Provision at Court Hey Park is of an overall good quality. The site received significant investment in 2015 which resulted in the creation of a new clubhouse and changing facilities. The site has two dedicated changing rooms as well as dedicated umpire provision to cater for competitive teams and a good quality social lounge and kitchen. The site has suitable disability access and dedicated spectator toilets.

Training facilities

Access to training facilities allows structured training to take place throughout the playing season and as such is a vital part of any cricket club. Whitefield (Roby) CC trains at St Edmund Arrowsmith School for its winter training needs. During the summer, the Club trains on site at Court Hey Park utilising its mobile cricket net. The Club did not highlight a need for additional training provision.

4.3: Demand

Whitefield (Roby) CC is the sole club operating in Knowsley. The Club fields two senior men's teams.

All Stars Cricket

In partnership with the ECB and Chance to Shine cricket clubs in the Area can register to become an ECB All Stars Cricket Centre. Once registered, a club can deliver the programme which aims to introduce cricket to children aged from five to eight. Subsequently, this may lead to increased interest and demand for junior cricket at clubs.

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The programme seeks to achieve the following aims:

- ◀ Increase cricket activity for five to eight year olds in the school and club environment
- ◀ Develop consistency of message in both settings to aid transition
- ◀ Improve generic movement skills for children, using cricket as the vehicle
- ◀ Make it easier for new volunteers to support and deliver in the club environment
- ◀ Use fun small sided games to enthuse new children and volunteers to follow and play the game

Whitefield (Roby) CC has recently launched an All Stars programme.

The ECB has launched Dynamos Cricket, a new programme to inspire kids aged 8-11 to play cricket. Dynamos Cricket is the latest launch by the ECB, building on the existing All Stars programme for 5-8-year-olds. Participants will continue to develop their skills and be introduced to a countdown style of cricket match.

Softball cricket

Softball cricket is an ECB initiative aimed at women and girls to increase participation in cricket as a sport. The aim of softball cricket sections is enjoyment and participation; without pads, a hardball, a heavy bat and limited rules. Sessions follow a festival format with each session running for a maximum of two and half hours, shorter than traditional formats. Playing equipment is supplied by festival organisers, with all participants provided with a t-shirt for taking part.

Each match consists of two teams of six to eight people, with everyone having an opportunity to bat and bowl. Each team bats once, with a pair of batters facing two or three overs. Batters are dismissed in traditional ways, but bowling can be either overarm or underarm, depending on the bowler's preference. Each batting team starts with a score of 200 runs, with runs added to this total by running between the wickets or by hitting the ball to a boundary. Two runs are added to the total for each wide ball; whilst five runs are removed when a batter is out.

There are no specific Softball cricket opportunities in Knowsley.

Cricket Playing Survey

The ECB's most recent Cricket Playing Survey (2019²⁰) identified:

- ◀ A 1.2% increase in player numbers between 2018 and 2019.
- ◀ Of the 822,000 players nationally, 229,000 are 'core' players (playing at least 12 weeks per season), 353,000 are 'occasional' players (playing between three and 11 weeks per season) and 238,000 are 'cameo' players (playing once or two weeks per season).
- ◀ 81.4% of completed fixtures were played in 2019, 5.4% of completed fixtures were abandoned and 7.5% of completed fixtures were cancelled.
- ◀ Compared to 2018, conceded fixtures decreased by 15% to 5.7% of completed fixtures and short sided games also decreased by 11% in 2019 v 2018 to 11.7% of completed fixtures.

²⁰ The source of the above data is Play-Cricket.com and reflects club and league cricket only (for example doesn't include Women's Soft Ball Cricket, or junior cricket).

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Exported/Imported demand

Exported demand refers to Knowsley registered teams that are currently accessing pitches outside of the local authority for their home fixtures, normally because their pitch requirements cannot be met. Similarly, imported demand refers to teams registered outside of the Knowsley area that access pitches within Knowsley. There are no instances of either exported/imported demand in Knowsley. However, if LCF's aspirations for South Liverpool CC progress in the future, the Club (which currently operates as a senior men's team) will be then based in the area,

Latent demand

Latent demand is defined as the number of additional teams that could be fielded if access to a sufficient number of outdoor sports facilities (and ancillary provision) was available, whereas exported and imported demand refers to those that are playing outside of their local authority area.

There is no formal identified latent demand expressed by Whitefield Roby CC. However, LCF indicates that Knowsley currently has the highest person to club ratio within Lancashire at 150,862:1. In comparison, the next highest is the City of Manchester with a person to club ratio of 110,572:1 and average across LCF local authority areas is 31,000:1. In surrounding areas, Liverpool has a person to club ratio of 49,800:1, Sefton has 25,000:1, West Lancashire has 11,500:1 and St Helens has a person to club ratio of 22,500:1.

Similarly, Knowsley also has the highest school to club ratios across Lancashire at 64:1. The next highest is Manchester with 41:1 whilst the average across Lancashire is 12:1. In surrounding areas, Liverpool has a school to club ratio of 19:1, Sefton has 10:1, West Lancashire has 8:1 and St Helens has a school: club ratio of 9:1.

Therefore, these figures indicate that a high level of latent demand exists within Knowsley which could be activated through increased school and community engagement.

Last Man Stands

Last Man Stands (LMS) is a social outdoor eight-a-side T20 cricket game is played midweek, lasts approximately two hours and is generally played on non-turf wickets. All eight wickets are required to bowl a team out so when the seventh wicket falls, the 'Last Man Stands' on his own. This shorter format of the game has encouraged more people to participate in the sport and is increasing in popularity.

There are currently no Last Man Stands (LMS) leagues in Knowsley, however, there is an alternative midweek cricket offering provided by the Liverpool Business Houses League. This is considered to be popular with clubs in both Merseyside and, as such, no demand for LMS is identified.

Future demand

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts.

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The ECB's strategy, Inspiring Generations (2019) has six key priorities and activities including transforming women's and girls' cricket to increase the representation of women in every level of cricket by:

- ◀ Growing and nurture the core
- ◀ Inspiring through elite teams
- ◀ Making cricket accessible
- ◀ Engaging children and young people
- ◀ Transforming women's and girl's cricket
- ◀ Supporting communities

Based on existing demand, population growth is not expected to create any additional cricket teams in Knowsley. However, Whitefield (Roby) CC aspires to implement a new midweek team which will play around five home fixtures per season.

Please note that due to limited women's or girls' teams currently existing in the Borough, team generation rates automatically predict that none will be created in the future as it takes current participation as a baseline.

It is important to acknowledge that whilst team generation rates project team growth as a factor of population and existing teams, there are plans and strategies to increase the number of teams at some formats beyond what current trends suggest, due to a desire to change such trends. For example, female growth at women's and girls' age groups is relatively small, however, there are planned increases in activity around female participation through both All Stars Cricket which are likely to reflect in growth above levels shown through team generation rates.

Peak time demand

Peak time for cricket in Knowsley is Saturday.

4.4: Capacity analysis

Capacity analysis for cricket is measured on a seasonal rather than weekly basis. This is due to playability (i.e. only one match is generally played per square per day at weekends or weekday evening). Wickets are rotated throughout the season to reduce wear and allow repair. Therefore, it is more accurate to assess capacity seasonally rather than weekly. The capacity of a square to accommodate matches is driven by the number and quality of wickets. This section presents the current square stock available for cricket and illustrates the number of competitive matches per season per square.

As a guide, The ECB has set a standard number of matches that each grass wicket pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its current quality (pitch capacity). Taking into consideration the guidelines on capacity the following was concluded:

Adult wickets		Junior wickets	
Pitch quality	Matches per week	Pitch quality	Matches per week
Good	5	Good	7
Standard	4	Standard	4
Poor	0	Poor	0

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To help calculate square capacity, the ECB suggests that a good quality natural turf wicket should be able to take five matches per season per natural turf wicket (adults). This information is used to allocate capacity ratings as follows:

Potential capacity	Play is below the level the site could sustain
At capacity	Play matches the level the site can sustain
Overused	Play exceeds the level the site can sustain

On the basis that Court Hey Park contains nine natural turf wickets; it has a seasonal playing capacity of 45 matches per season. Play Cricket data from 2019 (2020 figures have not been taken due to the truncated cricket season not presenting realistic demand numbers) identified that the Club played 20 home matches over the season. Therefore, the site has potential to accommodate a further 25 matches per season.

Spare capacity

A square is only considered to have actual spare capacity if it is available for further usage at peak time. For senior cricket, peak time is Saturday as this is when most demand exists. As only one match can be played on each square per day, only two Saturday teams can be assigned to play home matches on one square (based on matches being played on an alternate home and away basis). As such, if a square has two Saturday teams already playing home fixtures on it, no actual spare capacity is perceived to exist for additional senior usage. If one or no teams are playing on a square on a Saturday, and it has overall capacity, actual spare capacity for senior demand is generally identified.

Court Hey Park has 25 match equivalent sessions per season of potential capacity. Given that peak time for senior cricket in Knowsley is Saturday, there is no actual spare capacity at the site, as the square is used every week by the Club in the peak period. As such, the capacity at the site can be utilised outside of the peak period i.e. midweek or on Sundays.

Additionally, it is noted that each of the five standalone NTPs has spare capacity during the peak period and midweek, therefore, each has the potential to accommodate cricket demand, if it was to arise. That being said, this is on the basis that maintenance of these is increased to ensure quality remains adequate for any planned use.

Overplay

There is no identified overplay on the natural turf cricket square at Court Hey Park.

4.4 Conclusions

Consideration must be given to the extent in which current provision can accommodate current and future demand.

As it stands presently, Whitefield (Roby) CC is able to operate within its recommended capacity and still have potential capacity remaining for additional play, outside of the peak period. When taking into account future demand aspirations of a midweek team, this demand can still be adequately accommodated on the square.

Although there is no anticipated growth of junior teams, it is worth noting that junior teams can play on non-turf wickets and generally play mid-week on a variety of days; consequently, spare capacity is considered to exist for junior matches both now and in the future at Whitefield (Roby) CC and school sites. As the square is not overplayed it is thought to have spare capacity for an increase in mid-week demand and no NTPs are at capacity or overplayed.

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Cricket summary

- ◀ **There is a sufficient supply of cricket provision in Knowsley to accommodate current levels of peak time cricket demand.**
- ◀ **There is a sufficient capacity to accommodate any potential future growth for Sunday senior cricket or junior midweek cricket.**
- ◀ **Cricket square supply:**
 - ◀ There is a one natural turf square provided in Knowsley located at Court Hey Park. There are also five standalone NTPs located at local education sites.
 - ◀ There is one disused cricket square provided at Huyton Cricket Club. It has not been used for cricket for over ten years.
- ◀ **Cricket quality:**
 - ◀ The cricket square at Court Hey Park is standard quality. The standalone NTPs are mostly poor quality having had minimal use or maintenance since their development.
- ◀ **Affiliated demand:**
 - ◀ There are two senior men's teams provided by Whitefield (Roby) CC. The Club has also begun operating a junior participation programme which is likely to lead into the development of midweek junior teams.
 - ◀ LCF has identified that Knowsley has the highest club to population ratio in the whole of Lancashire. It anticipates that there is significant latent demand for the sport which could be generated through work and development with education providers.
 - ◀ South Liverpool CC aspires to relocate from Sefton into Knowsley to develop a home facility. It is currently renting facilities in Sefton from Northern CC.
- ◀ **Supply vs demand analysis conclusions:**
 - ◀ In conclusion, based on current demand levels, there is sufficient capacity to accommodate current levels of demand for peak time senior cricket.
 - ◀ Future demand utilises all spare capacity and creates shortfalls for all formats of senior and junior cricket.

PART 5: HOCKEY ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES (AGPS)

5.1: Introduction

Hockey in England is governed by England Hockey (EH) and is administered locally by the Lancashire Hockey Association.

Competitive league hockey matches and training can only be played on sand filled, sand dressed or water based artificial grass pitches (AGPs). Adult and junior club training cannot take place on third generation turf pitches (3G), 40mm pitches may be suitable for introductory level hockey, such as school curriculum low level hockey.

A typical artificial grass pitches pitch is constructed from a free draining, frost free sub-base, one or two tarmac layers, a 15mm shock pad and an artificial grass carpet, either sand filled, sand dressed or water based²¹. Below is a brief summary of each type.

Sand filled artificial grass

On sand filled artificial grass the artificial grass fibres are infilled with sand. This is a low density durable carpet with sand infill to just below the pile for stability, these pitches are recommended for lower league hockey and more of a multi sports use rather than higher competitive hockey use.

Sand dressed artificial grass

The fibres on sand dressed artificial grass are much denser and therefore requires less sand to support the pile of the carpet and create stability. It is the most commonly used surface for hockey up to and including at a National level.

Water-based artificial grass

A very high density carpet with no sand infill which requires irrigation via a sprinkler system to maintain a layer of water on the pitch. The water provides low slide resistance and reduces the risk of abrasions caused by coarse sand.

Gen 2 artificial surfaces²²

England Hockey, the International Hockey Federation, European Hockey Federation, England Netball, the International Tennis Association and the Lawn Tennis Association partnered with Notts Sport to create a true multi-sport surface known as Gen 2. This pitch type offers a compromise on design specification as to suitably accommodate various sports such as tennis, netball, futsal and lacrosse in turn, allowing multi-sport use leading to greater sustainability.

For senior hockey teams, a full size pitch for competitive matches must measure at least 91.4 x 55 metres excluding surrounding run off areas which must be a minimum of two metres at the sides & three metres at the ends. EH preference is for four metre side and five metre end run offs, with a preferred overall area of 101.4 x 63 metres though a minimum overall area of 97.4 x 59 metres is accepted.

²¹ For more detail, please refer to: [EH artificial pitch guidance.pdf](#)

²² <http://www.englandhockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=2596§ionTitle=Gen+2+Playing+Surface>

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5.2: Supply

There are three full size hockey suitable pitches as well as five small sided pitches provided across three sites in Knowsley.

Table 5.1: Hockey suitable provision in Knowsley

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	No. of pitches	Surface type	Pitch size	Community use?
8	Knowsley Community College	Huyton	1	Sand Filled	100 X 60	Yes
21	Kirkby High School	Kirkby	1	Sand Dressed	100 x 63	Yes
43	St Edmunds Arrowsmith	Prescot, Whiston & Cronton	1	Sand Filled	100 X 60	Yes
20	King George V Sports Complex	Huyton	2	Sand Filled	34 x 23	Yes
22	Kirkby Leisure Centre	Kirkby	2	Sand Filled	30 x 30	Yes
39	Ravenscroft Community School	Kirkby	1	Sand Filled	80 x 48	Yes

Availability and management

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model applies an overall peak period for artificial grass pitches of 34 hours per week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00).

Using the above model, all pitches (except for Ravenscroft Community School) are available for more than 30 hours per week. The opening hours of the pitch at Ravenscroft School are unknown. Most of the above provision, notwithstanding provision at Kings George V Sports Complex and Ravenscroft School are managed by Volair and therefore fully available for the full 34 hour period. The pitches at KGV Huyton are also available for the 34 hours peak period as the site is managed by City of Liverpool FC.

Quality

The quality of hockey suitable artificial grass was assessed in 2017 via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by EH) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>80%), Standard (60-79%), Poor (<60%). The quality ratings assigned to the sites also consider the user quality ratings gathered from consultation.

Depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately ten years and it is the age of the surface, together with maintenance levels, that most commonly affects quality. An issue for hockey nationally is that many providers did not financially plan to replace the carpet when first installed.

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Based on the above criteria, there are two poor quality full size pitches in Knowsley located at Kirby High School and St Edmunds Arrowsmith School and one standard quality pitch located at Knowsley Community College. All small sided provision is assessed as poor quality.

Table 5.2: Quality summary

Site ID	Site name	Surface type	Quality	Year installed
8	Knowsley Community College	Sand Filled	Standard	2009
21	Kirkby High School	Sand Dressed	Poor	2009
43	St Edmunds Arrowsmith	Sand Filled	Poor	2009
20	King George V Sports Complex	Sand Filled	Poor	2002
22	Kirkby Leisure Centre	Sand Filled	Poor	2007
39	Ravenscoft Community School	Sand Filled	Poor	2006

5.3: Demand

There is no identified demand for hockey in Knowsley. Prescott HC previously played within Knowsley but has since relocated to St Helens to better accommodate its playing teams after losing its secondary AGP at Prescott Leisure Centre during its refurbishment in 2013.

Latent demand

Latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or suitable provision. There is no identified latent demand and the nearest club offering competitive and recreational hockey opportunities for Knowsley residents is Prescott HC. As most local provision is poor quality it is unlikely demand will emerge due to a lack of opportunity to do so.

Converting sand-based AGPs to 3G

Since the introduction of 3G pitches and given their popularity for football, providers have seen this as a way of replacing their tired sand-based carpet and generating money from hiring out a 3G pitch to football clubs and commercial football providers. This has come at the expense of hockey, with players now travelling further distances to gain access to a suitable pitch and many teams being displaced from their preferred geographical area.

Due to its impact on hockey, it is appropriate to ensure that sufficient sand-based AGPs are retained for the playing development of hockey. To that end, a change of surface will require planning permission, as the works constitute development and, as part of that, the applicants will have to show that there is sufficient provision available for hockey in the locality. Advice from Sport England and EH should therefore be sought prior to any planning application being submitted.

It should also be noted that, if a surface is changed, it could require the footprint to be increased to meet football/rugby dimensions, the existing sports lighting and drainage to be changed and, in some instances, noise attenuation measures may need to be put in place.

Based on existing demand for football in the area, aligned to the 3G pitch shortages earlier identified in this report. Both the pitches at Knowsley Community College and St Edmund Arrowsmith could be considered for theoretical conversion to 3G to service football demand. This is subject to consultation with Sport England and England Hockey.

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5.4: Conclusion

There is a clear need to improve the quality of hockey suitable pitches in Knowsley if the sport is to generate demand in the future. As there is currently no identified demand, and no active participation programmes, it is unlikely anything substantial will be generated within the locality. Any demand from Knowsley residents is likely to be exported outside of the area to either Prescott HC or one of several clubs in operation in Liverpool.

Hockey summary

◀ **Supply:**

- ◀ There are three full size pitches and five small sided pitches which are hockey suitable in Knowsley.

◀ **Quality:**

- ◀ There is one standard quality full size pitch and two poor quality full size pitches. Further to this, there are five poor quality small sided pitches.

◀ **Demand:**

- ◀ There is no identified demand for formal or recreational community hockey in Knowsley.

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APPENDIX 1: SPORTING CONTEXT

The following section outlines a series of national, regional and local policies pertaining to the study and which will have an important influence on the Strategy.

National context

The provision of high quality and accessible community outdoor sports facilities at a local level is a key requirement for achieving the targets set out by the Government and Sport England. It is vital that this strategy is cognisant of and works towards these targets in addition to local priorities and plans.

Department of Media Culture and Sport Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation (2015)

The Government published its strategy for sport in December 2015. This strategy confirms the recognition and understanding that sport makes a positive difference through broader means and that it will help the sector to deliver five simple but fundamental outcomes: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of 23 performance indicators under nine key headings, as follows:

- ◀ More people taking part in sport and physical activity.
- ◀ More people volunteering in sport.
- ◀ More people experiencing live sport.
- ◀ Maximising international sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ A more productive sport sector.
- ◀ A more financially and organisationally sustainable sport sector.
- ◀ A more responsible sport sector.

Sport England: Uniting the Movement 2021

Sport and physical activity has a big role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society for all. From this notion, Sport England has recently released its new strategy, Uniting the Movement, its 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.

It seeks to tackle the inequalities long seen in sport and physical activity. Providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity, has never been more important.

There are three key objectives to the Strategy:

- ◀ Advocating for movement, sport and physical activity.
- ◀ Joining forces on five big issues
- ◀ Creating the catalyst for change

In particular, the five big issues are identified where the greatest potential is seen for preventing and tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity. Each one is a building block that, on its own, would make a difference, but together, could change things profoundly:

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Recover and reinvent: Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation 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.

The specific impact of the Strategy will be captured through programmes funded, interventions made, and partnerships forged. For each specific area of action, a set of key performance indicators will be developed. This hybrid approach will help evidence the overall progress being made by all those involved in supporting sport and physical activity.

National Planning Policy Framework (updated 2021)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

The NPPF states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

The 'promoting healthy communities' theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies or surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

As a prerequisite the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

In order for planning policies to be 'sound' local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities.

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The FA National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)

The Football Association's (FA) National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a ten-year period.

The Strategy sets out shared aims and objectives it aims to deliver on in conjunction with The Premier League, Sport England and the Government, to be delivered with support of the Football Foundation.

These stakeholders have clearly identified the aspirations for football to contribute directly to nationally important social and health priorities. Alongside this, the strategy is clear that traditional, affiliated football remains an important priority and a core component of the game, whilst recognising and supporting the more informal environments used for the community and recreational game.

Its vision is: *"Within 10 years we aim to deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed"*

£1.3 billion has been spent by football and Government since 2000 to enhance existing football facilities and build new ones. However, more is needed if football and Government's shared objectives for participation, individual well-being and community cohesion are to be achieved. Nationally, direct investment will be increased – initially to £69 million per annum from football and Government (a 15% increase on recent years).

The NFFS investment priorities can be broadly grouped into six areas, recognising the need to grow the game, support existing players and better understand the different football environments:

- ◀ **Improve 20,000 Natural Turf pitches**, with a focus on addressing drop off due to a poor playing experience;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 3G AGP 'equivalents'** (mix of full size and small sided provision, including MUGAs - small sided facilities are likely to have a key role in smaller / rural communities and encouraging multi-sport offers), enhancing the quality of playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 changing pavilions/clubhouses**, linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development;
Support access to flexible indoor spaces, including equipment and court markings, to support growth in futsal, walking football and to support the education and skills outcomes, exploiting opportunities for football to positively impact on personal and social outcomes for young people in particular;
- ◀ **Refurbish existing stock to maintain current provision**, recognising the need to address historic under-investment and issues with refurbishment of existing facilities;
- ◀ **Support testing of technology and innovation**, building on customer insight to deliver hubs for innovation, testing and development of the game.

Local Football Facility Plans

To support in delivery of the NFFS, The FA has developed a Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) for every local authority across England. Each plan is unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation, including currently underrepresented communities.

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Identifying strategic priorities for football facilities across the formal, recreational and informal game, LFFPs establish a ten-year plan identifies key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all funding will be identified via LFFPs. LFFPs will guide the allocation of 90% of national football investment (The FA, Premier League and DCMS) and forge stronger partnerships with local stakeholders to develop key sites. This, together with local match-funding will deliver over one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next 10-years.

The Knowsley LFFP was developed in 2019 and utilised the evidence base collated in the 2017 Knowsley PPS.

The FA: National Game Strategy (2018-2021)

The FA launched its new National Game Strategy in July 2018 which aims to inspire a life-long journey in football for all. To achieve this, the strategy will focus on five key aspects of the game:

- ◀ A high quality introduction to football
- ◀ Developing clubs and leagues
- ◀ Embrace all formats of football and engage all participants
- ◀ Recruit, develop and support the workforce
- ◀ Develop sustainable facilities

Through these five pillars, The FA's objectives are to:

- ◀ Increase the number of male affiliated and recreational players by 10%.
- ◀ Double the number of female affiliated and recreational players via a growth of 75%.
- ◀ Increase the number of disability affiliated and recreational players by 30%.
- ◀ Ensure affiliated Futsal is available across the country in order to increase the number of Futsal affiliated and recreational players.

The sustainable football facilities should provide support to an agreed portfolio of priority projects that meet National Football Facility Strategy (NFFS) investment priorities.

The sustainable football facilities should provide support to an agreed portfolio of priority projects that meet National Football Facility Strategy (NFFS) investment priorities.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Inspiring Generations (2019-2024)

"Inspiring Generations" is the new ECB participation strategy which was announced in January 2019. It builds on the strong foundations laid by Cricket Unleashed and supports the growth of cricket in England and Wales between 2020 and 2024. At the heart of this strategy is a single unifying purpose, which gets to the core of what the game can do for society both on and off the field to ensure that cricket is in an even stronger position that it is in 2019.

Inspire Generations has six key priorities and activities including transforming women's and girls' cricket to increase the representation of women in every level of cricket by:

- ◀ Growing and nurture the core
- ◀ Inspiring through elite teams
- ◀ Making cricket accessible
- ◀ Engaging children and young people
- ◀ Transforming women's and girl's cricket
- ◀ Supporting communities

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The Rugby Football Union Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

The RFU has released its new strategic vision for rugby in England. The strategy is based on four main elements which are; Protect, Engage, Grow and Win. It covers all elements of rugby union ranging from elite rugby to grassroots, although the general relevancy to the PPS is centred around growing the game.

The RFU exists to promote and develop rugby union in England and ensure the long-term sustainability of clubs by growing player numbers and retaining them across all age groups. Responding to wider market influences, work will continue on developing new ways to take part in all forms of the game, without comprising the sports traditions. This will ensure a lasting legacy from elite success by attracting new players and encouraging current male and female adult players to play.

The four key aims to ensure long term sustainability are to:

- ◀ Improve player transition from age grade to adult 15-a-side rugby
- ◀ Expand places to play through Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)
- ◀ Engage new communities in rugby
- ◀ Create a community 7's offering

England Hockey Strategy

England Hockey's Facilities Strategy can be found [here](http://www.englishockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=2075§ionTitle=Facilities+Strategy).
<http://www.englishockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=2075§ionTitle=Facilities+Strategy>

Vision: For every hockey club in England to have appropriate and sustainable facilities that provide excellent experiences for players.

Mission: More, Better, Happier Players with access to appropriate and sustainable facilities

The 3 main objectives of the facilities strategy are:

1. PROTECT: To conserve the existing hockey provision

- There are currently over 800 pitches that are used by hockey clubs (club, school, universities) across the country. It is important to retain the current provision where appropriate to ensure that hockey is maintained across the country.

2. IMPROVE: To improve the existing facilities stock (physically and administratively)

- The current facilities stock is ageing and there needs to be strategic investment into refurbishing the pitches and ancillary facilities. England Hockey works to provide more support for clubs to obtain better agreements with facilities providers & education around owning an asset.

3. DEVELOP: To strategically build new hockey facilities where there is an identified need and ability to deliver and maintain. This might include consolidating hockey provision in a local area where appropriate.

England Hockey has identified key areas across the country where there is a lack of suitable hockey provision and there is a need for additional pitches, suitable for hockey. There is an identified demand for multi pitches in the right places to consolidate hockey and allow clubs to have all of their provision catered for at one site.