



STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AUGUST 2025

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd
Company No: 9145032 (England)

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Registered Office: 1-2 Frecheville Court, off Knowsley Street, Bury BL9 0UF
T: 0161 764 7040 E: mail@kcp.co.uk www.kcp.co.uk



Cert Num: 6543-QMS-001

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	1
PART 1: INTRODUCTION	2
PART 2: VISION	9
PART 3: AIMS.....	10
PART 4: SPORT SPECIFIC ISSUES SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	11
4.1: Football – grass pitches	11
4.2: Third generation turf (3G) pitches.....	25
4.3: Rugby union - grass pitches	31
4.4: Hockey pitches (sand/water-based AGPs)	38
4.5: Cricket pitches	41
4.6: Tennis courts	45
4.7: Netball courts	47
4.8: Athletics	49
4.9: Lawn bowls	51
4.10: Golf	52
4.11: Other sports	53
PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS	54
PART 6: ACTION PLAN.....	69
PART 7: HOUSING GROWTH SCENARIOS	91
PART 8: DELIVER THE STRATEGY AND KEEP IT ROBUST AND UP-TO-DATE	105
APPENDIX ONE: SPORTING CONTEXT	109

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

ABBREVIATIONS

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
ANOG	Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance
AP	Active Partnership
BC	Bowls Club
BCGBA	British Crown Green Bowling Association
CC	Cricket Club
CFA	County Football Association
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FE	Further Education
FF	Football Foundation
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GMA	Grounds Management Association
HE	Higher Education
HC	Hockey Club
HCCC	Hertfordshire County Cricket Club
IRB	International Rugby Board
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LFFP	Local Football Facility Plan
LMS	Last Man Stands
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
LP	Local Plan
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
PPOSS	Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RFL	Rugby Football League
RUFC	Rugby Union Football Club
S106	Section 106 agreement
SBC	Stevenage Borough Council
TC	Tennis Club
TGR	Team Generation Rate
U	Under
WR	World Rugby

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) has been jointly commissioned by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC), East Hertfordshire Council (EHC) and North Hertfordshire Council (NHC) to develop a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) for each individual local authority area. Covering all formal playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities across the authority to assist it to strategically plan for the future.

Building upon the preceding Assessment Report, this Strategy and Action Plan for Stevenage provides a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing playing pitch and accompanying ancillary facilities up to 2043. It has been developed to provide:

- ◀ A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities.
- ◀ A number of aims to help deliver the recommendations and actions.
- ◀ A series of strategic recommendations which provide a strategic framework for the improvement, maintenance, development and, as appropriate, rationalisation of the playing pitch and outdoor sport facility stock.
- ◀ A series of sport-by-sport recommendations which provide a strategic framework for sport led improvements to provision.
- ◀ A prioritised area-by-area Action Plan to address key issues on a site-by-site basis.

The Strategy is delivered in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) Guidance (for playing pitch sports) and Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (for "non-pitch" sports). Sport England's PPS Guidance details a stepped approach, separated into five distinct sections:

- ◀ Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach.
- ◀ Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision.
- ◀ Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views.
- ◀ Stage D: Develop the Strategy.
- ◀ Stage E: Deliver the Strategy and keep it robust and up-to-date.

This report represents Stage D of the process, with stages A-C covered in the preceding Assessment Report and Stage E ongoing once the study is complete. The lifespan of a PPS is considered to be three years, although this can be increased if it is reviewed and updated.

A PPS delivers the evidence required to ensure that sufficient land is available to meet existing and projected future outdoor sport requirements. Its robust evidence base should inform and be implemented into planning policy and other relevant corporate strategies to enable local policies, planning and sport development criteria to work efficiently and effectively. It is capable of:

- ◀ Providing evidence of need for capital funding. As well as proving the need for developer contributions towards pitch and facilities.
- ◀ Providing a clear strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities.
- ◀ Informing land use decisions in respect of future use of existing outdoor sports areas and playing fields across the Borough.
- ◀ Providing guidance for the provision and management of outdoor sports across the borough.
- ◀ Supporting external funding bids to maximise support for outdoor sports facilities.
- ◀ Ensure sufficient management and on-going maintenance of playing pitch provision with significant budget pressures.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

- ◀ Providing the basis for on-going monitoring and review of the use, distribution, function, quality and accessibility of outdoor sport for all.
- ◀ Improving the health and wellbeing of residents in the Borough.
- ◀ Utilising outdoor playing fields to deliver specialised / targeted interventions to support healthier lifestyles and address the stark health inequalities that exist across the Borough.
- ◀ Exploring new ways sports clubs can effectively share facilities to maximise usage and opportunities via a Sports Hub Model.
- ◀ Exploring new user groups which may utilise SBC playing pitch provision and / or ancillary facilities to maximise usage.
- ◀ Establishing a purpose for every underutilised or abandoned pitch.

The Action Plan (Part 6) recommends a number of priority projects relating to sports provision which should be realised over the Local Plan period. It provides a framework for improvement and, although resources may not currently be in place to implement it, potential partners and possible sources of external funding.

Partner organisations in Stevenage have a vested interest in ensuring that existing playing pitches and ancillary provision are protected and enhanced. As such, many of the objectives and actions within this document need to be delivered and implemented by a wide range of bodies such as national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), sports organisations and education establishments. In many instances, SBC will not be the organisation which delivers these actions or recommendations as the PPOSS is not solely just for the Local Authority to act upon. It applies to/for all the stakeholders and partners involved.

Scope

Most sports facilities within Stevenage are owned by the SBC or sports clubs/organisations. The PPOSS includes all outdoor sports facilities owned and operated by public, private and third sector organisations are within the scope:

The scope of the PPOSS includes all outdoor sports facilities owned and operated by public, private and third sector organisations:

- ◀ Athletics.
- ◀ Climbing.
- ◀ Cricket.
- ◀ Football.
- ◀ Football (3G pitches).
- ◀ Hockey (AGPs).
- ◀ Lawn bowls.
- ◀ Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs).
- ◀ Netball
- ◀ Rugby league.
- ◀ Rugby union.
- ◀ Tennis.
- ◀ Water sports.

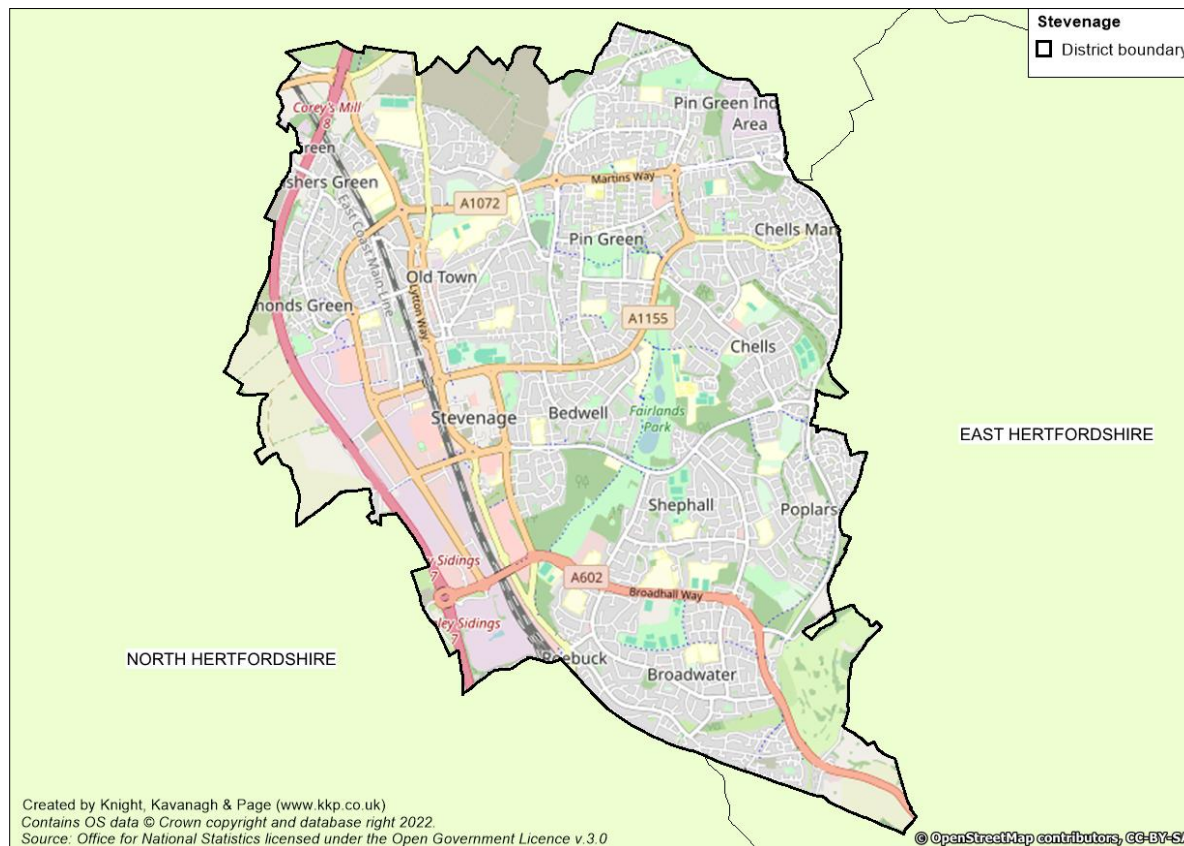
Extent of the study area

The study area is the Stevenage Borough Council administrative area as seen in Figure 1.1 overleaf. Due to the relatively compact size of the Authority, it has been determined by the Steering Group that there is no requirement for further sub-division of the Borough into analysis areas.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Given that several sports have just one club playing within the Borough travel times to access provision are generally within the boundaries.

Figure 1.1: Map of the Authority



Local Plan context

The Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan was adopted in 2019 and outlines the basis for the regeneration of our town centre, which includes plans for new homes, shops, offices, coffee bars, restaurants.

Maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan, will ensure that the allocations and policies applied continue to be appropriate, up-to-date and effective. Stevenage Borough Council confirms it is preparing a partial review of the 2019 Local Plan to take into consideration the changes to the planning system.

The PPOSS will be an evidence base document for the Local Plan and will ensure that existing facilities are the most appropriate in terms of quantity, quality and location and consider how best to meet the additional needs generated by the planned housing and economic growth. Infrastructure priorities for the Local Plan are identified through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

National context

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.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Section eight of the NPPF deals specifically with the topic of healthy communities, with Paragraph 103 stating that “planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.”

Paragraph 104 sets three criterion that ensures existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

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

Paragraphs 105, 106, and 107 set the parameters for the designation of Local Green Space. Such spaces may include playing fields and outdoor sport facilities.

An up-to-date PPOSS will form a key element of Local Authority’s evidence base to support its emerging health and well-being policies and the Local Plan as a whole.

This may provide opportunities to develop new playing pitches or improve the quality of existing playing pitches in Stevenage in response to housing developments that create additional demand for pitches (as well as the accompanying ancillary offer). Any requirement would be calculated by using the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator¹. Where possible, this will be aligned to existing community sport clubs in Stevenage which already play an integral part in providing sport and physical activities to the local community.

Headline findings

Table 1.1 below highlights the quantitative headline findings identified for all pitch and outdoor sports included within the scope of the preceding Assessment Report. MES stands for match equivalent sessions and has been used as the comparable unit for natural grass pitches. Converting both the amount of play a site can accommodate (its carrying capacity) and how much play takes place there (its current use) into the same unit of demand enables a comparison to be undertaken.

The current population figure used within the future demand calculations is 88,610. By 2043 the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand, the Stevenage population is projected to increase to 91,875. Both figures have been derived from the same source for consistency purposes (ONS 2018-based projections 2018-2043).

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

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

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Based on how they tend to be played, this unit for football and rugby union pitches relates to a typical week within the season for each sport. For cricket pitches it is appropriate to look at the number of match equivalent sessions over the course of a season. How much play a cricket pitch can accommodate is primarily determined by the number and quality of wickets on a pitch. Only one match is generally played per pitch per day.

However, play is rotated across the wickets to reduce wear and allow for repair. Each wicket can accommodate a certain amount of play per season as opposed to a week.

The Sport England PPS guidance does not advocate the conversion of MES to pitches as there is not always a case for providing pitches to meet the demand/shortfalls expressed. For example, improving the quality of pitches can also increase the capacity of existing pitches to accommodate such demand. For qualitative findings and site-specific findings, please see Part 4: Sport Specific Recommendations and Scenarios, and Part 6: Action Plan.

For artificial surfaces (AGPs/3G pitches), how much play can be accommodated is primarily determined by availability, rather than how much play it can accommodate before its quality is adversely affected as with natural grass pitches. Therefore, whole pitches are used as the comparable unit.

Future demand in the Assessment Report has been determined by using Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator which looks at population change over a predetermined period. For Stevenage this has been set to forecasted population rates in 2043 in line with the SBC Local Plan.

Table 1.1: Quantitative headline findings (pitch sports)

Sport	Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES ^[1]	Future capacity total in MES (2043)
Football (grass)	Adult	Shortfall of 1	Shortfall of 1.5
Football (grass)	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 3.5	Shortfall of 4.5
Football (grass)	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 1.5	Shortfall of 2
Football (grass)	Mini 7v7	Actual spare capacity of 0.5	At capacity
Football (grass)	Mini 5v5	At capacity	Shortfall of 0.5
Football (3G)	11v11, floodlit	Shortfall of 3	Shortfall of 3
Rugby union	Senior	At capacity	At capacity
Cricket	Saturday	At capacity	At capacity
Cricket	Sunday	Spare capacity of 16	Spare capacity of 16
Cricket	Midweek	Spare capacity of 20	Spare capacity of 20
Hockey (sand AGPs)	Full size, floodlit	Adequate provision to accommodate current supply.	Pitch quality at The Nobel School is deteriorating in quality, Potential need of a replacement surface during the lifespan of the PPOSS.

^[1] MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 1.2: Quantitative headline findings (non-pitch sports)

Sport	Current picture	Future picture
Tennis (Recreational)	The overall supply of non-club tennis provision in Stevenage is sufficient to meet demand.	The picture is expected to be the same over the lifespan of the PPOSS.
Tennis (Club tennis)	The courts at Lister Tennis Club are currently meeting demand with potential spare capacity. The Club expresses no ambitions to expand its current members. Lister Tennis Club has a lease from a private landowner with 10 years remaining.	Lister Tennis Club can accommodate future demand with no shortfalls. There is a need to monitor the club's security of tenure over the lifespan of the PPOSS and beyond to ensure the future use of its site.
Tennis (Padel)	There is an identified need to support Padel developments across the Authority, with potential development at King George V Playing Fields to install padel courts on the disused courts.	Potential shortfall unless provision has been developed.
Netball	Demand for outdoor netball is accommodated at Marriotts Sport Centre, where a Play Netball League is hosted twice a week. There are several netball courts at education sites which service curricular demand.	Demand expected to be met at this site. The courts at Marriotts Sport Centre should look to be resurfaced during the lifespan of the PPOSS to support demand from the Stevenage Play Netball League.
Lawn bowls	Both sites within the Authority provide good quality greens, with no capacity issues known.	ONS projections identify there is a continuous increase in the numbers of persons aged 65. This could put additional pressure on greens and should be monitored through Stage E.
Athletics	Demand is currently being met at the Ridlins Wood Athletic Track. The quality of the track is beginning to deteriorate and will need to be considered for improvement over the lifespan of the PPOSS.	Demand met by the existing track. Given the age of the surface SBC should work with the relevant stakeholders to improve the quality.
Golf	With one golf course in Stevenage, which operates as a standard 18-hole course as well as a 9-hole par-3 course and providing a covered driving range, there is adequate provision to accommodate all types of golfers.	Clubs should look to further increase in membership figures in reflection of the increasing population rates and England Golf's goal of increasing in members.

Conclusions

The existing position for all sports is that there is mixture of shortfalls and areas of sufficient capacity. The future position shows the exacerbation of current shortfalls and the creation of shortfalls for some sports and in some areas where demand is currently being met.

There is a shortfall of three 11v11 3G pitches in Stevenage. There is also the need to address match play shortfalls identified for adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 football (grass pitches).

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

There are no rugby union shortfalls, as the sole club, Stevenage Town RUFC, has access to two senior, sports-lit pitches. This ensures the Club can comfortably meet the demand for both training and competitive matches. The steering group should monitor the club's ambitions and whether it does look to relocate to a new site or remain at its current site. If it is to relocate a new site should have two senior sports lit pitches and an ancillary provision with four changing rooms and a social space.

Hockey demand within Stevenage is adequately catered for. The pitch used by Stevenage HC is of an acceptable condition at present, but it will likely need replacement during the lifespan of the PPOSS. As The Nobel School pitch was last resurfaced in 2012 preparations should be made towards a sink fund to resurface the pitch when required.

Cricket has no shortfalls for Saturday and Sunday demand across the Authority. There is spare capacity to accommodate current and future demand across Stevenage. Efforts should be made to develop a new site tied to the Stevenage West development with a new square and ancillary provision. This will give Stevenage Cricket Club another useable facility for its fifth senior mens team and any future growth.

From a non-pitch perspective, in general, current and future demand is being met across Stevenage. There is one tennis club in Stevenage, it has identified spare capacity: at Lister Tennis Club. It has a ten-year lease on its site. Netball demand is being accommodated at Marriotts Sport Centre.

Athletics is currently adequately meeting demand through the 400m track at Ridlins Wood Athletic Track. There could be a need to improve the surface quality of the track over the lifespan of the PPOSS. Demand for lawn bowls is being accommodated for across two sites with no capacity issues raised. There is adequate provision to accommodate all types of golfers within Stevenage.

Where demand is being met, this does not equate to a surplus of provision, with any spare capacity instead considered a potential solution to overcoming shortfalls. As such, there is a clear need to protect all existing provision until all demand is met, or there is a requirement to replace provision to an equal or better quantity and quality before it is lost, in line with NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. In addition, there remain some area and site-specific issues that need resolving despite no overall capacity issues, such as those relating to quality and security of tenure.

Where shortfalls are present, for the most part, they can be met by better utilising current provision, such as through improving quality, installing additional sports lighting, improving ancillary facilities, and enabling access to existing unused provision, such as at unavailable council sites. However, there is an overall shortfall of 11v11 3G pitches identified across Stevenage, and these shortfalls cannot be addressed unless this type of pitch is approved and constructed.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

PART 2: VISION

Vision

A vision has been set out to provide a clear focus with desired outcomes for the PPOSS.

“Stevenage Borough Council will develop a thorough evidenced based strategy that aligns with the Authorities corporate policies to increase participation for all and provide good quality, accessible, affordable sports provision and to improve the health and wellbeing of residents.”

To achieve this vision the PPOSS will deliver the following objectives:

- ◀ Ensure that there are enough facilities in the right place to meet current and projected future demand.
- ◀ Promote a sustainable approach to the provision of playing pitches and management of sports clubs.
- ◀ Ensure planned housing growth makes commensurate provision of new or improved outdoor sports facilities to meet the needs of its residents.
- ◀ Support the Council’s ambition to reduce health inequalities through providing better access to physical activity opportunities.
- ◀ Ensure that all clubs have access to facilities of appropriate quality to meet current needs and longer-term aspirations.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

PART 3: AIMS

The following overarching aims are based on the three Sport England planning objectives. It is recommended that they are adopted by Local Authority's and partners to enable delivery of the overall PPOSS vision and Sport England planning objectives.

AIM 1

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

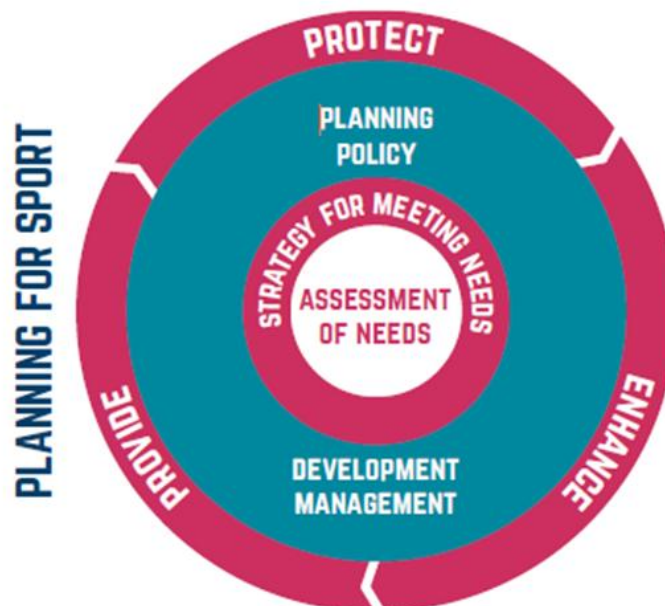
AIM 2

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

AIM 3

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

Figure 3.1: Sport England planning objectives



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

PART 4: SPORT SPECIFIC ISSUES SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, in order to help develop recommendations and actions for each sport, and to understand their potential impact, a number of relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues identified in the preceding Assessment Report for each sport. This then informs sport specific recommendations.

4.1: Football – grass pitches

Assessment Report summary

Football – grass pitch summary

- ◀ The current supply of football provision is insufficient in accommodating football demand on adult, youth 11v11, and youth 9v9 pitches.
- ◀ Comparatively, mini 5v5 pitches are showing no actual spare capacity or overplay and are currently sufficiently meeting demand.
- ◀ There is sufficient supply on mini 7v7 pitches to accommodate current and future levels of demand.
- ◀ Future demand through team generation rates creates a further three match sessions of demand which exacerbates existing shortfalls on adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches and creates shortfalls on mini 5v5 pitches.

Grass football pitch supply:

- ◀ The audit identifies a total of 84 grass football pitches across 35 sites. Of these, 60 are available, at some level, for community use across 19 sites.

Grass football pitch quality:

- ◀ Of the 60 pitches which offer community use, three pitches are assessed as good quality, 35 as standard quality and 22 as poor quality. Pitch quality ratings have been further evidenced by PitchPower assessments that have taken place at three sites.

Affiliated football demand:

- ◀ Through the audit and assessment, 176 teams from 17 clubs are identified as playing in Stevenage. This consists of 12 adult men's, one adult women's, 80 youth boys', 17 youth girls' and 66 mini mixed teams.
- ◀ 14 teams are identified as exporting demand outside the Borough into neighbouring authorities, due to lack of grass and 3G provision. Four teams are currently importing demand into Stevenage from East Hertfordshire.
- ◀ Future demand equates to the growth of one adult men's, three youth boys, and two mixed mini teams. Club growth ambitions of nine teams have been discounted.
- ◀ The PPOSS Strategy & Action Plan contains a housing growth scenario that will estimate the additional demand for football arising from housing development.

Supply vs demand analysis conclusions:

- ◀ There is insufficient supply of provision in Stevenage to accommodate demand on adult, youth 11v11, and youth 9v9.
- ◀ Future demand creates new shortfalls for mini 5v5 pitches.
- ◀ There is sufficient supply on mini 7v7 pitches in Stevenage to accommodate current and future levels of demand.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Scenarios

Alleviating overplay/improving pitch quality

In total there are six pitches overplayed in Stevenage across four sites, equating to six match equivalent sessions per week. Improving quality of these pitches (i.e., through increased maintenance or improved drainage) will increase capacity at the sites and consequently reduce both current and future shortfalls.

To illustrate the above, Table 4.1 highlights the current levels of overplay that would be alleviated if quality improved to good at each site. As a reminder, the capacity rating for each type and quality rating as detailed in the table below.

Adult pitch quality	Adult matches per week	Youth pitch quality	Youth matches per week	Mini pitch quality	Mini matches per week
Good	3	Good	4	Good	6
Standard	2	Standard	2	Standard	4
Poor	1	Poor	1	Poor	2

Table 4.1: Impact if all overplayed pitches were good quality

Site ID	Site name	Current quality	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Capacity rating (MES)	Good quality rating (MES)
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Standard	Adult	1	1	-
18	Marriotts School	Standard	Youth 11v11	1	0.5	1.5
18	Marriotts School	Standard	Youth 9v9	1	1.5	0.5
26	Shephalbury Park	Poor	Youth 11v11	2	0.5	5.5
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Standard	Youth 11v11	1	2.5	0.5

The impact of improving overplayed pitches to good quality is shown in the table above.

If pitches were improved, overplay would be alleviated at all sites, with spare capacity created on all pitches except for King George V Playing Field (Stevenage), which would be played to capacity. This is because the quality at the site is already standard, and improvements won't provide enough of a theoretical benefit to create spare capacity due to demand on current pitch. The overall impact of this results in overplay being reduced from six match equivalent sessions per week to zero.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 4.2: Impact of improving pitch quality on overall supply and demand (in match equivalent sessions per week)

Pitch type	Current actual spare capacity	Current overplay	Current total	Potential overplay	Potential total if improvements are undertaken
Adult	-	1	1	-	-
Youth 11v11	-	3.5	3.5	-	-
Youth 9v9	-	1.5	1.5	-	-
Mini 7v7	0.5	-	0.5	-	0.5
Mini 5v5	-	-	-	-	-

As seen in the table above, if quality was improved to good, overplay would be removed from all pitch types. Mini 7v7 pitches would provide 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week of actual spare capacity. It is important to note that the table above focuses on improving pitch quality to alleviate overplay. It does not reflect actual spare capacity based on peak-time usage.

Table 4.3 below analyses how the future demand capacity balance would be impacted if all overplayed pitches were to be improved to good quality.

Future demand from population projections (2043) equates to three match equivalent session per week across all pitch types. As can be seen, if all overplayed pitches improved to good quality, shortfalls would be reduced from adult, youth 11v11, and youth 9v9. Mini 7v7 pitches would provide 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week of actual spare capacity. Whereas mini 5v5 pitches would still have a shortfall of 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 4.3: Impact of improving pitch quality on overall future supply and demand (in match equivalent sessions per week)

Pitch type	Current capacity balance	Future demand	Future demand capacity balance	Potential overplay	Potential total if improvements are undertaken
Adult	-	0.5	1.5	-	0.5
Youth 11v11	-	1	4.5	-	1
Youth 9v9	-	0.5	2	-	0.5
Mini 7v7	0.5	0.5	-	-	0.5
Mini 5v5	-	0.5	0.5	-	0.5

Future demand through club ambitions

This scenario considers the impact that future demand derived from club ambitions which have been identified via consultation with clubs throughout the Borough. Please note that the Assessment Report only considered future demand derived from population projection growth.

Table 4.4: Summary of participation growth by pitch type (in match equivalent sessions)

Stevenage	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Totals
Total	-	1.5	1.5	1.5	-	4.5

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Future demand from club ambitions totals nine teams from one club and the table below shows the potential impact on the supply/demand balance. However, it is important to note that most clubs consulted with suggest there is a lack of grass and 3G pitches available to accommodate future demand. Therefore, clubs may not express aspirations to increase, due to a lack of grass pitches available to accommodate this growth. Bedwell Ranger currently has a waiting list of 1,000 players, as the Club are unable to accommodate these players due to a lack of provision.

Table 4.5: Impact of future demand from clubs (in match equivalent sessions)

Pitch type	Current supply/demand balance	Potential future demand (club aspirations)	Potential future supply/demand balance
Adult	1	-	1
Youth 11v11	3.5	1.5	5
Youth 9v9	1.5	1.5	3
Mini 7v7	0.5	1.5	1
Mini 5v5	-	-	-

The impact of growth, via club aspiration, equates to exacerbated shortfalls on youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches. Spare capacity on mini 7v7 is removed and a shortfall emerges. Adult and mini 5v5 pitches remain unchanged.

To further illustrate projected growth, an analysis combining population growth and club aspirations has been undertaken to estimate potential future demand. This assessment indicates that an additional 15 football teams are expected to be created. Details of this projected growth are presented in the table below.

Table 4.6: Impact of future demand from clubs (in match equivalent sessions)

Pitch type	Current supply/demand balance	Potential future demand (club aspirations and population growth)	Potential future supply/demand balance
Adult	1	0.5	1.5
Youth 11v11	3.5	2.5	6
Youth 9v9	1.5	2	3.5
Mini 7v7	0.5	2	1.5
Mini 5v5	-	0.5	0.5

As shown in the table above, the impact of growth based on both population growth and club aspirations, creates exacerbated shortfalls on adult, youth 11v11, and youth 9v9 pitch types. On mini 7v7 pitches, spare capacity is removed, and a short fall is created. A new shortfall emerges on mini 5v5 pitches.

Following the consultation process that has informed the Assessment Report, Hertfordshire FA has stated that in the 2025/26 season Bedwell Rangers FC now has a waiting list for 71 new teams at an average of 14 players per team. This is noticeably higher than the growth of nine teams from club ambitions expressed by all clubs during the consultation phase of the PPS. If this growth is to be achieved, it would generate 35.5 MES of demand which would significantly worsen the capacity balance for grass pitches. The growth of Bedwell Rangers FC should be monitored throughout the lifespan of the PPOSS.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Priority sites for improved pitch quality

As improving the quality of all overplayed sites may not be feasible from an investment point of view, an alternative approach is to focus on improving specific strategic sites. To that end, the below tables identify five sites for grass pitch improvements that need investment and that are key to the development of football across Stevenage.

The selected sites have been chosen as they accommodate a variety of pitch types and support the larger teams within Stevenage. These clubs include Fairlands Youth FC, Stevenage Borough Juniors, Bedwell Rangers, AFC Walkern, and Stevenage Starlets FC.

It is important to note that Peartree Park, a site managed by SBC, has not been included in this scenario. The site currently offers three pitches of poor quality, experiences no overplay and accommodates only limited demand. However, there is potential to enhance pitch quality through the implementation of a maintenance programme, which could contribute to increasing the number of good quality pitches available within Stevenage.

Table 4.7: Impact of quality improvements to chosen priority sites

Site ID	Site name	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Quality	Current capacity rating (MES)	Good quality capacity rating (MES)	Peak time
2	Barclay Academy	Adult	2	Standard	3	5	1
2	Barclay Academy	Mini 5v5	1	Standard	1	3	-
2	Barclay Academy	Mini 7v7	2	Standard	5.5	9.5	-
2	Barclay Academy	Youth 11v11	1	Standard	0.5	2.5	0.5
2	Barclay Academy	Youth 9v9	2	Standard	2	6	-
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Adult	1	Standard	1	-	-
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Mini 5v5	2	Standard	4	8	-
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Mini 7v7	2	Standard	6.5	10.5	0.5
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	-	2	-
18	Marriotts School	Adult	2	Standard	2	4	-
18	Marriotts School	Mini 7v7	1	Standard	2	10	-
18	Marriotts School	Youth 11v11	1	Standard	0.5	1.5	-
18	Marriotts School	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	1.5	0.5	0.5
25	Ridlins Wood Playing Field	Adult	1	Poor	1	3	1
25	Ridlins Wood Playing Field	Mini 7v7	2	Poor	2	10	-
25	Ridlins Wood Playing Field	Youth 11v11	1	Poor	0.5	3.5	0.5

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Site ID	Site name	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Quality	Current capacity rating (MES)	Good quality capacity rating (MES)	Peak time
25	Ridlins Wood Playing Field	Youth 9v9	1	Poor	0.5	3.5	0.5
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Mini 5v5	1	Standard	3	5	-
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Mini 7v7	1	Poor	1	5	-
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Youth 11v11	1	Poor	2.5	0.5	0.5
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Youth 9v9	2	Standard	3	7	1

Improving quality as set out in the table above would create three match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity during peak times. In addition, the overplay of 5.5 match equivalent sessions per week across the five sites would be removed.

Peak time capacity at education sites has been discounted due to those sites providing unsecure tenure and are not highlighted in the table above. This highlights the importance of schools have community use agreements in place to ensure football clubs can operate under with long term tenure.

The impact improvements would have on the overall supply and demand balance is shown in the following table. Note the table below is presented on a peak time model, and therefore, improving sites in the table above, may not necessarily generate capacity within the peak periods, albeit it will create an improved quality experience for users.

Table 4.8: Impact on current supply and demand if quality improved at chosen sites (in match equivalent sessions per week)

Pitch type	Current capacity	Potential capacity with improvements
Adult	1	-
Youth 11v11	3.5	3
Youth 9v9	1.5	0.5
Mini 7v7	0.5	1.5
Mini 5v5	-	-

Current demand with improved pitch quality would see a reduction in current shortfalls, with shortfalls removed on adult pitch formats. Alongside further actual spare capacity created on mini 7v7 pitches.

The impact is similar when factoring in future demand projections, as can be seen in the table overleaf.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 4.9: Impact on future supply and demand if quality improved at chosen sites (in match equivalent sessions per week)

Pitch type	Future capacity	Potential capacity with improvements
Adult	1.5	0.5
Youth 11v11	4.5	4
Youth 9v9	2	1.5
Mini 7v7	-	0.5
Mini 5v5	0.5	0.5

Future demand with improved pitch quality would see a significant reduction on shortfalls but they would still be apparent in small quantities across most pitch formats.

Loss of tenure at education sites

As highlighted in the Assessment Report, most community accessible pitches in Stevenage are managed by education providers. The table below outlines the 12 education sites which are accessed by community clubs.

Table 4.10: Demand taking place on grass pitches at education sites

School	Club	Teams
Ashtree Primary School	Stevenage Borough Juniors	2 teams
Barclay Academy	Down and Under FC Fairlands Youth Niche FC	20 teams
Barnwell School (Middle)	Stevenage Borough Juniors	8 teams
Barnwell School (Upper)	Stevenage Borough Juniors	4 teams
Featherstone Wood Primary School	Shephall United FC	4 teams
Giles Junior School	Bedwell Rangers	4 teams
John Henry Newman School	Stevenage Borough Juniors	8 teams
Marriotts School	Bedwell Rangers	20 teams
Moss Bury Primary School And Nursery	AFC Walkern	2 teams
The Nobel School	Bedwell Rangers	8 teams
The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Stevenage Starlets FC	13 teams
Woolenwick Junior School	Bedwell Rangers	6 teams

In instances where clubs do not have formal tenure agreements in place, clubs could theoretically be asked to vacate at any time which would result in each requiring alternate provision to service existing levels of demand.

There are 99 teams from eight clubs accessing 12 education sites. The impact of community access being removed is highlighted in the table below. Please note the total does not include teams accessing 3G pitches at these sites.

Barnwell School (Middle & Upper) and The Nobel School both have community use agreements in place, therefore the 20 teams accessing these sites have secure tenure and has been discounted from table 4.11.

The Table below illustrates the importance of securing long term access to provision at the remaining education sites. If lost, shortfalls would be large across all pitch formats.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 4.11: Impact of loss of access to sites without secure tenure on supply and demand balance

Pitch format	Actual spare capacity ²	Overplay	Current total	Current total if education sites become unavailable
Adult	-	1	1	5.5
Youth 11v11	-	3.5	3.5	14.5
Youth 9v9	-	1.5	1.5	11.5
Mini 7v7	0.5	-	0.5	8
Mini 5v5	-	-	-	7

Re-introducing disused and unused provision

In Stevenage, there is 21 unused football pitches and two which are disused. The scenario below examines the impact reintroducing these pitches would have on current and future supply.

Table 4.12: Unused/disused provision

Site name	Type	Pitch type	Number of pitches	Potential MES impact
Canterbury Park	Unused	Adult	2	2
Canterbury Park	Unused	Youth 11v11	2	2
Canterbury Park	Unused	Mini 7v7	1	1
Chells Park	Unused	Adult	2	2
Chells Park	Unused	Youth 11v11	2	2
Hampson Park	Unused	Youth 11v11	2	2
Hampson Park	Unused	Youth 9v9	1	1
Hampson Park	Unused	Mini 7v7	2	2
St Nicholas Park	Unused	Adult	1	1
St Nicholas Park	Unused	Youth 11v11	2	2
St Nicholas Park	Unused	Mini 7v7	1	1
Paul Mallaghan Playing Fields	Unused	Mini 5v5	3	3
Barnwell East School	Disused	Youth 11v11	2	2
Former British Aerospace Sports Ground	Disused	-	-	-

The former British Aerospace Sports Ground, located between the A602 and Stevenage FC's Training Ground, formerly provided grass pitches for community use but has not been in active playing field use since 1998. The site is allocated for residential development under the HO4 allocation in the Local Plan. While the pitches are not proposed to be reinstated as part of the current supply of playing fields, it is important to acknowledge their historical contribution to local pitch provision.

Reinstating provision at the sites listed in Table 4.13 would noticeably impact the supply and demand analysis across the Borough, creating further match equivalent sessions per week of spare capacity.

² In match equivalent sessions

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Given the Assessment Report identifies five clubs as expressing the need for additional match pitches, the reinstating of unused pitches could be explored as a means of providing the Borough with more provision to address shortfalls.

Table 4.13: Impact on current supply and demand through reinstating unused pitches

Pitch type	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)	
	Current total	Potential total
Adult	1	4
Youth 11v11	3.5	6.5
Youth 9v9	1.5	0.5
Mini 7v7	0.5	4.5
Mini 5v5	-	3

Bringing these back into use to accommodate football demand will reduce shortfalls in youth 9v9 pitch types and create additional capacity of 23 match equivalent sessions per week at adult, youth 11v11, 7v7 mini and 5v5 mini pitch types. It should be noted that the analysis is based on the previous configuration of pitches at these sites. Exploring alternative pitch configurations, such as reconfiguring youth 11v11 pitches to youth 9v9, could offer a more optimal solution for addressing current shortfalls and better aligning provision with local demand.

Priority sites for improved pitch quality and re-introducing disused and unused provision

This scenario explores the combined impact of improving pitch quality at identified priority sites (see scenario above for further details) and reinstating currently unused pitches. The aim is to assess whether these enhancements can address both current and future shortfalls in pitch provision without the need to develop new sites. This approach reflects a practical strategy that the Council and its key partners may adopt, focusing on enhancing existing assets and bringing unused facilities back into use to meet local football demand.

The currently unused and disused sites have been assigned a quality rating of poor due to their status as open parks or being entirely out of use. However, the table below illustrates the potential capacity these sites could offer if upgraded to good quality pitches, supported by a structured maintenance programme.

The table overleaf shows the impact of quality improvements to chosen priority sites and reintroducing unused and disused sites.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Table 4.14 Impact of quality improvements to chosen priority sites and reintroducing unused and disused sites.

Site ID	Site name	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Quality	Current capacity rating (MES)	Good quality capacity rating (MES)	Peak time
2	Barclay Academy	Adult	2	Standard	3	5	1
2	Barclay Academy	Mini 5v5	1	Standard	1	3	-
2	Barclay Academy	Mini 7v7	2	Standard	5.5	9.5	-
2	Barclay Academy	Youth 11v11	1	Standard	0.5	2.5	0.5
2	Barclay Academy	Youth 9v9	2	Standard	2	6	-
7	Canterbury Park	Adult (unused)	2	Poor	-	6	2
7	Canterbury Park	Youth 11v11 (unused)	2	Poor	-	8	2
7	Canterbury Park	Mini 7v7 (unused)	1	Poor	-	6	1
8	Chells Park	Adult (unused)	2	Poor	-	6	2
8	Chells Park	Youth 11v11 (unused)	2	Poor	-	8	2
12	Hampson Park	Youth 11v11 (unused)	2	Poor	-	8	2
12	Hampson Park	Youth 9v9 (unused)	1	Poor	-	4	1
12	Hampson Park	Mini 7v7 (unused)	2	Poor	-	12	2
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Adult	1	Standard	1	-	-
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Mini 5v5	2	Standard	4	8	-
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Mini 7v7	2	Standard	6.5	10.5	0.5
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	-	2	-
18	Marriotts School	Adult	2	Standard	2	4	-
18	Marriotts School	Mini 7v7	1	Standard	2	10	-
18	Marriotts School	Youth 11v11	1	Standard	0.5	1.5	-
18	Marriotts School	Youth 9v9	1	Standard	1.5	0.5	0.5

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Site ID	Site name	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Quality	Current capacity rating (MES)	Good quality capacity rating (MES)	Peak time
25	Ridlins Wood Playing Field	Adult	1	Poor	1	3	1
25	Ridlins Wood Playing Field	Mini 7v7	2	Poor	2	10	-
25	Ridlins Wood Playing Field	Youth 11v11	1	Poor	0.5	3.5	0.5
25	Ridlins Wood Playing Field	Youth 9v9	1	Poor	0.5	3.5	0.5
30	St Nicholas Park	Adult (unused)	1	Poor	-	3	1
30	St Nicholas Park	Youth 11v11 (unused)	2	Poor	-	8	2
30	St Nicholas Park	Mini 7v7 (unused)	2	Poor	-	12	2
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Mini 5v5	1	Standard	3	5	-
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Mini 7v7	1	Poor	1	5	-
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Youth 11v11	1	Poor	2.5	0.5	0.5
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Youth 9v9	2	Standard	3	7	1
-	Paul Mallaghan Playing Fields	Mini 5v5 (unused)	3	Poor	-	18	3
-	Barnwell East School	Youth 11v11 (disused)	2	Poor	-	8	2

Improving quality as set out in the table above would create 27 match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity during peak times. In addition, the overplay of 5.5 match equivalent sessions per week across the five sites would be removed.

Peak time capacity at education sites has been discounted due to those sites providing unsecure tenure and are not highlighted in the table above. This highlights the importance of schools have community use agreements in place to ensure football clubs can operate under with long term tenure.

Peak time capacity at the current unused and disused sites is providing actual spare capacity, based on the assumption that the sites, and the potential clubs accessing them will be provided with secure tenure through a lease or formal agreement. This highlights the importance of ensuring that, if these sites are to be reinstated, clubs are supported with an appropriate form of tenure.

The impact improvements would have on the overall supply and demand balance is shown in the following table. Note the table below is presented on a peak time model, and therefore,

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

improving sites in the table above, may not necessarily generate capacity within the peak periods, albeit it will create an improved quality experience for users.

Table 4.15: Impact on current supply and demand if quality improved at chosen sites (in match equivalent sessions per week)

Pitch type	Current capacity	Potential capacity with improvements
Adult	1	5
Youth 11v11	3.5	7
Youth 9v9	1.5	0.5
Mini 7v7	0.5	6
Mini 5v5	-	3

Current demand with improved pitch quality and reinstated unused and disused sites would see an all shortfalls removed, with actual spare capacity being created on all pitch formats. The impact is similar when factoring in future demand projections, as can be seen in the table below.

Table 4.16: Impact on future supply and demand if quality improved at chosen sites (in match equivalent sessions per week)

Pitch type	Future capacity	Potential capacity with improvements
Adult	1.5	4.5
Youth 11v11	4.5	6
Youth 9v9	2	-
Mini 7v7	-	5.5
Mini 5v5	0.5	2.5

Future demand with improved pitch quality and reinstated unused and disused sites would see an all shortfalls removed, with actual spare capacity being created on all pitch formats besides youth 9v9 which will be at capacity.

However as previously mentioned within the disused an unused section, it should be noted that the analysis is based on the previous configuration of pitches at these sites. Exploring alternative pitch configurations, such as reconfiguring youth 11v11 pitches to youth 9v9, could offer a more optimal solution for addressing current shortfalls and better aligning provision with local demand.

Overall, this scenario demonstrates that by reintroducing unused and disused sites alongside improving pitch quality at priority sites, there will be sufficient supply to accommodate both current and future demand. Additionally, it will provide sufficient actual spare capacity to support team growth and long-term aspirations.

Improving ancillary facilities

Two sites in the Stevenage LFFP have been identified for ancillary improvements. These include:

- ◀ King George V Playing Field (Stevenage) (41 teams accessing).
- ◀ Shephalbury Park (13 teams accessing).

King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage) has four grass pitches and a poor quality ancillary provision. The site is accessed by Stevenage Borough JFC (41 teams, 1* England Accredited). Site visits and consultations confirms the changing rooms and kitchen are in need of enhancement to improve the user experience at the site. The site also has a cricket

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

square that is accessed by Stevenage Cricket Club which fields seven senior men and five junior boys' teams.

The Football Foundation confirms that the tennis courts at the site are in the process of being converted into a PlayZone. SBC also confirmed there is potential to install padel provision on site. See section 4.6 Tennis courts for further details.

Given the identified need, the scale of the site, the multi-sport benefit and the level of demand within Stevenage Borough JFC the site is identified for ancillary provision enhancement.

Shephalbury Park has five grass pitches and is serviced by a poor quality ancillary provision. The site has two joint metal conditioners, providing poor changing and toilet provision. SBC confirm the temporary ancillary provision has been decommissioned. The site is accessed by AFC Walkern (8 teams, 1* England Accredited) and Shephall Utd FC (5 teams). Given the scale of the site and the identified need it is listed as a priority project for a new build ancillary provision.

As mentioned above within the re-introducing disused and un-used provision, four out of the seven sites offer some form of facility. The current ancillary provision at these sites can be seen in the table below.

Table 4.17 Summary of unused and disused sites ancillary provision

Site ID	Site name	Type	Ancillary provision
7	Canterbury Park	Unused	Previously provided a small pavilion, but this was demolished in 2020, and the site now has no ancillary provision.
8	Chells Park	Unused	Currently has an old brick building on site, which is being accessed by Noah's Ark Nursery under a long-term lease with SBC.
12	Hampson Park	Unused	Provides a brick building, which is operated as the Hampson Park Community Centre.
30	St Nicholas Park	Unused	The site has an old building that is also operated and open as a community centre.
-	Paul Mallaghan Playing Fields	Unused	The site has a small brick building on site; however, its availability is currently unknown.
-	Barnwell East School	Disused	No ancillary provision on site.
-	Former British Aerospace Sports Ground	Disused	No ancillary provision on site.

As shown in the table above, Chells Park, Hampson Park, St Nicholas Park, and Paul Mallaghan Playing Fields are all serviced by ancillary provision. However, Canterbury Park, Barnwell East School, and the Former British Aerospace Sports Ground, if it were to be reintroduced, would require additional support to develop new ancillary provision to service the grass pitches.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect the existing quantity of pitches (unless replacement provision meets NPPF and Sport England Playing Field Policy requirements and is agreed upon and provided).
- ◀ Where pitches are overplayed and assessed as poor or standard quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality.
- ◀ Continue to utilise the Football Foundation's PitchPower app to assist in the improvement and ongoing maintenance of provision.
- ◀ Look at reintroducing unused provision at council owned sites such as Canterbury Park and Chells Park to help to alleviate identified overplay (where demand justifies it).
- ◀ Consider at unused and disused sites, ancillary provision development needed to reintroduce facilities.
- ◀ At unused sites, consideration should be given to whether there are any sites where some assets transfer to clubs may be feasible to support with management and operations.
- ◀ Seek to formally secure community use of unsecure sites where there is community football activity.
- ◀ Work to provide long term security of tenure at education sites.
- ◀ Ensure SBC maintain sufficient management of provision to meet the needs of both individual teams hiring pitches and larger clubs using the sites as home.
- ◀ Improve ancillary facilities where there is a demand to do so and where it can benefit the wider footballing offer, such as King George V Playing Fields and Shephalbury Park.
- ◀ Where possible look to move demand from grass pitches to 3G provision as a means of reducing grass pitch overplay.

4.2: Third generation turf (3G) pitches

Assessment Report summary

3G pitch summary

Supply:

- ▶ Stevenage only has three 11v11 3G pitches, and supply of Valley Sports Academy has been discounted due to a forthcoming management change, leaving two 11v11 3G pitches available for community use in Stevenage. These are located at Marriotts Sports Centre and John Henry Newman School. Both pitches are serviced by sports lights and open to community use.
- ▶ There are an additional nine small size sports lit 3G pitches located at three sites, all of which are open to community use, however, only eight are sports lit. These pitches have also been discounted from the overall supply due to community use and match play restrictions.
- ▶ One of the three 11v11 size 3G pitches are on the FA 3G Pitch Register meaning only Marriott Sport Centre can accommodate competitive matches. However, John Henry Newman 11v11 3G pitch will be accessible for match play once it's 3G pitch inspection is complete.
- ▶ John Henry Newman School was converted in May 2025 from a sand filled AGP to a 3G surface.
- ▶ There is no World Rugby compliant 3G pitch provision in Stevenage. However, no demand is identified either.

Quality:

- ▶ The 11v11 size 3G pitches at Marriot Sport Centre and John Henry Newman are of a good quality, whilst Valley Sports Academy is of a poor quality, which requires a resurface.
- ▶ The seven small-sided pitch at Stevenage FC Academy are of a good quality whilst the pitch at Barnwell School (Middle) is of a standard quality. The small-sided pitch at Larwood School is of a poor quality.
- ▶ The ancillary provision at Marriott Sport Centre is of a standard quality, John Henry Newman School provides standard quality provision and Valley Sport Academy has poor ancillary provision, however, Stevenage FC will take over management at the end of the 2024/25 season, with plans to enhance the facilities. Stevenage FC Academy has good quality ancillary provision. Barnwell School (Middle) provides standard quality facilities.

Supply vs demand analysis:

- ▶ With 176 football teams from Stevenage affiliated clubs, there is a need for five 11v11 size 3G pitch equivalents to service current levels of demand. Accounting for future demand from population projections, the need remains the same.
- ▶ With two 3G pitches within Stevenage, there is the need for an additional three full size pitch equivalent to be built.
- ▶ The current shortfall of three full-size 3G pitch in Stevenage, includes discounting Valley Sport Academy pitch from supply due to the management change to Stevenage FC for the 2025/26 season. Alongside discounting all small sided 3G provision. However, the supply accounts for the recent conversion of John Henry Newman School's AGP to a 3G surface.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Scenarios

Accommodating football training demand

The table below shows the inclusion of supply of 3G pitches in Stevenage. Within Stevenage there is currently two 11v11 3G pitches used included within the 1:38 model.

Table 4.18: 3G pitch supply inclusion rationale

Site ID	Site	Quantity of small-sided pitches	Pitch size	Contribution towards total 11v11 3G pitch supply
3	Barnwell School (Middle)	1	40m x 30m	0
13	John Henry Newman School	1	100m x 60m	1
15	Larwood School	1	30m x 16m	0
19	Marriotts Sports Centre	1	90m x 52m	1
33	Stevenage FC Academy	4	30m x 20m	0
33	Stevenage FC Academy	3	40m x 23m	0
41	Valley Sports Academy	1	106m x 72m	0

In order to satisfy current football training demand (based on the FA's scenario of one 11v11 3G pitch equivalent being able to cater for 38 community football teams) there is a theoretical need for five 11v11 equivalent 3G pitches to accommodate all training demand in Stevenage as seen below.

Table 4.19: Current demand for 11v11 size 3G pitches in Stevenage

Stevenage	Current number of teams	11v11 size 3G requirement	Current number of 3G pitches	Theoretical shortfall
Total	176	5	2	3

With 176 teams affiliated to clubs based in Stevenage there is an overall need for five 11v11 size 3G pitches. With two pitches currently provided and contributing to community use need, this leaves a shortfall of three pitches.

The current shortfall of three full-size 3G pitch in Stevenage, includes discounting Valley Sport Academy pitch from supply due to the management change to Stevenage FC for the 2025/26 season. Alongside discounting all small sided 3G provision. However, the supply accounts for the recent conversion of John Henry Newman School's AGP to a 3G surface.

As such there is the need to develop additional 11v11 pitches to better support the training needs of clubs across Stevenage.

Future demand through club ambitions

The Assessment Report explores the impact of future demand through population growth (through applying team generation rates) upon need for 3G pitches. Population projections predict a further six football teams will be created which does not increase the shortfall of 11v11 size 3G pitches.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Future demand ambitions expressed by one club equates to the growth of nine football teams. If this club ambition growth was to be achieved there would be a total of 185 teams playing within the borough. This also leads to no increase in the shortfall of 11v11 size 3G pitches.

Table 4.20: Future demand for 3G pitches in Stevenage (based on 38 teams per pitch)

Stevenage	Future number of teams by club ambitions ³	11v11 size 3G requirement ⁴	Current number of 3G pitches	Theoretical shortfall
Total	185	5	2	3

However, as previously discussed in the football – grass pitches section, it is important to note that most clubs consulted with suggest there is a lack of grass and 3G pitches available to accommodate future demand. Therefore, clubs may not express aspirations to increase, due to a lack of grass pitches available to accommodate this growth. Bedwell Ranger currently has a waiting list of 1,000 players, as the Club are unable to accommodate these players due to a lack of provision.

To further illustrate projected growth, an analysis combining population increases and club aspirations has been undertaken to estimate future demand. This assessment indicates that an additional 15 football teams are expected to be created. Details of this projected growth are presented in the table below.

Table 4.21: Future demand for 3G pitches in Stevenage (based on 38 teams per pitch)

Stevenage	Future number of teams by population growth and club ambitions ⁵	11v11 size 3G requirement ⁶	Current number of 3G pitches	Theoretical shortfall
Total	191	5	2	3

As shown in the table above, there is no change to the existing shortfall in 11v11 size 3G pitches. A theoretical shortfall of three 11v11 3G pitches remains in Stevenage to meet both current and projected future demand, based on anticipated population growth and club aspirations.

Following the consultation process that has informed the Assessment Report, Hertfordshire FA has stated that in the 2025/26 season Bedwell Rangers FC now has a waiting list for 71 new teams at an average of 14 players per team. This is noticeably higher than the growth of nine teams from club ambitions expressed by all clubs during the consultation phase of the PPS. If this growth is to be achieved this will result in the need for two new 11v11 3G pitches. Therefore, the growth of Bedwell Rangers FC should be monitored during the lifespan of the PPOSS.

The FA has seen unprecedented growth over the last five years, particularly in the youth and women & girls game. Overall, participation is estimated to grow year on year, equating to an additional 99 teams in the local authority by 2030, of which 47 will come from women and girls. This could represent the equivalent of up to three additional 11v11 3G pitch equivalents.

³ Future demand based on Club ambitions.

⁴ Figure rounded up to the nearest 0.25.

⁵ Future demand based on Club ambitions.

⁶ Figure rounded up to the nearest 0.25.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

New site options

As there is a current shortfall of three 11v11 3G pitches, there is a clear need for additional pitches to be delivered to meet the training demand across the Authority. Any site identified to potentially accommodate new 3G provision will require a full feasibility to be undertaken to determine if they are suitable to meet the need.

Such a feasibility should include a range of matters including site characteristics, sports, financial, planning and other issues. This should be done in consultation with Hertfordshire FA, RFU and the Football Foundation as well as Sport England and other relevant NGBs. It is crucial to recognise that this list is a starting point for discussion and should be updated as part of the Stage – E process.

Four potential sites have been identified in the Stevenage LFFP (2025) which could, in theory, be suitable for future development to meet shortfalls for 3G pitches. These are:

- ◀ Barclay Academy.
- ◀ Barnwell School (Upper).
- ◀ Barnwell School (Middle).
- ◀ The Thomas Allenye Academy Playing Fields.

Moving football mini match play demand to 3G pitches (based on minimum dimension of 91 x 55m)

To further the use of 3G pitches for matches, the FA is particularly keen to work with local authorities and providers within local authorities to understand the potential demand for 11v11 sports lit 3G pitches to cater for different formats of match play.

The FA has an ambition to transfer 50% of mini play on to 3G pitches nationally. Thus, a programme of play has been created for Stevenage to determine how many 3G pitches would be required to accommodate this, given that peak time for both mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 football is Sunday mornings.

Table 4.22: Moving all mini matches to 3G pitches

Time	AGP	Total games/teams
9.30am – 10.30am	4 x 5v5	4/8
10.30am – 11.30am	2 x 7v7	2/4
11.30am – 12.30pm	2 x 7v7	2/4
12.30pm – 1.30pm	2 x 7v7	2/4

Based on the above programming and separate start times for mini 5v5 and mini 7v7 matches, the overall need is for three 11v11 3G pitches to accommodate all current mini match play demand. This is calculated based on 26 teams playing 5v5 football and 32 teams playing 7v7 football at peak time.

Below tests a similar scenario for youth 9v9 football.

Table 4.23: Moving all 9v9 matches to 3G pitches

Time	AGP	Total games/teams
10am – Noon	1 x 9v9	1/2
Noon – 2pm	1 x 9v9	1/2
2pm – 4pm	1 x 9v9	1/2

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

This demand could be accommodated using 1.5 11v11 pitches based on 14 teams currently playing this format within Stevenage at peak time.

Given the identified shortfalls of 3G pitches for training and the shortfall of grass pitches presented in the Assessment Report, there is the potential evidence to support the development of additional 3G provision within Stevenage.

World Rugby (WR) compliant 3G pitches

WR 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 RFU generally support the development of 3G pitches which support rugby union 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 establishments.

There is no WR 3G provision within Stevenage, and Stevenage Town RUFC expressed no ambition or demand to access one. The Club currently accesses two senior pitches serviced by sports lighting. These pitches can accommodate both training and match demand, with neither pitch has been identified as showing any overplay. Therefore, there is no need for a WR 3G within Stevenage.

Future 3G need generated through housing growth

Part 7 of the report presents housing growth scenarios exploring the potential growth from various housing developments. The largest scenario that has been explored is a 2000 dwelling development which has resulted in the need for 0.25 of a 3G pitch. The combined demand generated from all four housing scenarios results in the need for 0.59 of a 3G pitch. Therefore, additional 3G provision should look to be delivered in line with the housing developments taking place during the lifespan of the PPOSS and particularly the delivery of the SG1 Regeneration Area development.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect current stock of 3G pitches.
- ◀ Prioritise the resurfacing of poor and deteriorating standard quality 3G pitches which are exceeding or approaching surface lifespan, to ensure there is not a loss of supply which would increase the shortfall of 3G pitches for affiliated football team training.
- ◀ Work with relevant partners to deliver additional 3G pitches to alleviate known shortfalls and better cater for football training demand.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches have community use agreements in place and secure use for key partner clubs in the analysis area to ensure they meet local demand.
- ◀ Ensure that all 3G pitches remain on the FA 3G Pitch Register and are re-tested every three years to sustain certification. Explore reaccrediting Stevenage FC Academy seven 3G pitches on the FA register.
- ◀ Ensure all current and future providers have in place a pitch replacement fund for future repairs, remedial works and eventual surface replacement to ensure long-term sustainability.
- ◀ With the recent conversion of John Henry Newman School to a 3G surface and look to maximise usage of the site as to best support football demand and increase revenue.
- ◀ Once Stevenage FC assumes management of Valley Sport Academy, it is essential to establish arrangements for community access and ensure that any clubs currently using the site are offered appropriate alternative facilities if the site will not be available for community use for the 2025/26 season.
- ◀ Ensure that all new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA 3G pitch guidance.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

4.3: Rugby union - grass pitches

Assessment Report summary

<p>Rugby union summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is sufficient level of senior rugby union provision in Stevenage to accommodate current and future demand. <p>Pitch supply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a total of four rugby union pitches in Stevenage across three sites. All pitches across three sites are open to community use. There is no WR compliant 3G pitch located within Stevenage. <p>Pitch quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of quality of pitches, there is no good quality, three standard quality and one poor quality pitches which are available for community use. Stevenage Town RUFC provides two standard quality floodlit pitches, whereas the other two pitches are on educational sites and are not floodlit. <p>Ancillary provision quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stevenage Town RUFC is the only site to provide changing facilities. The two senior pitches are serviced by poor quality ancillary provision. The site provides two changing rooms, each with a communal shower area, as well as an official's changing room and a customer toilet. The facilities also include a kitchen, bar, clubroom, and storage containers. The Club has ambition to upgrade the facilities to be more fit for purpose subject to funding. <p>Demand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Stevenage there is only one rugby union club, Stevenage Town RUFC. The Club has four teams, this consists of one veteran men's, one senior men's, one under 14s boys, and one mixed under sevens teams. Future demand from club ambitions equates to one adult men's, one adult women's, and one mixed age grade team. Future demand through population projections did not result in any growth in teams. <p>Supply and demand analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an overall sufficient supply of provision to cater for both current and future demand.

Scenarios

Improving pitch maintenance and drainage

Maintenance and drainage solutions are an integral method in improving pitch quality at rugby union sites, ensuring that pitches can accommodate demand throughout the season. Locally, there are four sites which are identified as being overplayed and the following scenario explores what impact improving both the level of maintenance and installation of drainage solutions would have on the capacity of provision.

The table below illustrates the RFU pitch quality scoring methodology which ascertains the capacity of pitches based on the scoring criteria.

Table 4.24: Pitch capacity (matches per week) based on quality assessments

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

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

The table below looks at what capacity benefits would be ascertained through improvement of both maintenance and drainage solutions in one increment on the above technical criteria. It further looks at the benefit of maximum improvements to both drainage and maintenance to explore maximum benefits.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Table 4.25: Improving maintenance on all sites pitches by one increment (based on RFU technical criteria)

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Current technical score	Quality	Sports lighting?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Training equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical score	Improved quality score	Improved capacity rating
35	Stevenage Town RUFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	Yes (fully sports lit)	1	1	2	-	M2/D1	Good	1
35	Stevenage Town RUFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	Yes (fully sports lit)	0.75	0.75	2	0.5	M2/D1	Good	1.5
36	The Nobel School	1	M1/D1	Standard	No	-	-	2	2	M2/D1	Good	3
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Field	1	M1/D0	Poor	No	-	-	1.5	1.5	M2/D0	Standard	2

The improvement of the maintenance by one increment would increase capacity rating at all sites. At Stevenage RUFC, one of the senior pitches was previously used to capacity; however, with improved maintenance, this pitch would be able to accommodate additional use, creating spare capacity at the site.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Table 4.26: Improving drainage on all sites pitches by one increment (based on RFU technical criteria)

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Current technical score	Quality	Sports lighting?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Training equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical score	Improved quality score	Improved capacity rating
35	Stevenage Town RUFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	Yes (fully sports lit)	1	1	2	-	M1/D2	Standard	0.5
35	Stevenage Town RUFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	Yes (fully sports lit)	0.75	0.75	2	0.5	M1/D2	Standard	1
36	The Nobel School	1	M1/D1	Standard	No	-	-	2	2	M1/D2	Standard	2.5
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Field	1	M1/D0	Poor	No	-	-	1.5	1.5	M1/D1	Standard	2

A similar approach to improving maintenance has been undertaken in the table above for drainage installation (through improvement to pitches by one increment on the RFU technical criteria). Installing pipe drainage to all pitches would creating further spare capacity at the sites. The RFU states that unless quality improvements result in potential spare capacity then there is not a theoretical capacity benefit as pitches will become overplayed by any amount of further use.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Table 4.27: Improving both maintenance and drainage to M2/D3 at all sites pitches (based on RFU technical criteria)

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Current technical score	Quality	Floodlit?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Training equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical score	Improved quality score	Improved capacity rating
35	Stevenage Town RUFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	Yes (fully sports lit)	1	1	2	-	M2/D3	Good	1.5
35	Stevenage Town RUFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	Yes (fully sports lit)	0.75	0.75	2	0.5	M2/D3	Good	2
36	The Nobel School	1	M1/D1	Standard	No	-	-	2	2	M2/D3	Good	3.5
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Field	1	M1/D0	Poor	No	-	-	1.5	1.5	M2/D3	Good	3.5

This table above illustrates the position if all pitches in Stevenage, were improved to an M2/D3 quality. This is the highest threshold a pitch can score based on the RFU technical criteria. As can be seen this would further increase current spare capacity.

Given that there is no identified overplay on senior rugby pitches within the authority and with only one rugby union club operating in Stevenage, it is not considered a priority to introduce additional pitches or for targeted pitch improvements. Stevenage Town RUFC has access to two pitches: one is played to capacity, while the other maintains spare capacity. Improving the quality of these pitches, particularly through maintenance and drainage upgrades, would support the club in better accommodating both training and match demands while ensuring consistent playing conditions throughout the season.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Use of provision at education sites

The PPOSS notes that The Nobel School and The Thomas Alleyne Academy provide community-accessible rugby union facilities. However, neither currently hosts any club-level rugby activity. Therefore, the potential loss of access to these pitches would have minimal impact on Stevenage Town RUFC, the only rugby club within the local authority.

Ancillary provision improvements

Stevenage Town RUFC has access to poor quality ancillary provision. The Club has two changing rooms, each with a communal shower area, as well as an official's changing room and a spectator toilet. The facilities also include a kitchen, bar, clubroom, and storage containers.

The Club highlights that the showers are outdated and not fit for purpose. It lacks separate changing spaces for women and girls and is of overall poor quality. Additionally, the changing rooms have no heating, which causes issues during the winter months. Its main priority is to upgrade the changing facilities.

Stakeholder support should be provided to the Club in enhancing the ancillary provision offered at their site. This will greatly improve the club's ability to generate revenue through social spending to give a club stronger financial stability to help fund their own developments. Alongside ensure the changing facilities are fit for purpose to accommodate junior and senior competitive matches.

The Club is understood to not have a formal community use agreement in place for its site. This issue should be resolved ahead of any investment being directed into the site.

The current site has been identified as a potential location for housing development leading to the Club possibly relocating (further discussed below). Therefore, it is essential to determine its intentions regarding the future on the site. If the Club plans to relocate in the near future, significant investment in ancillary provision will not be necessary. However, if the Club intends to remain on-site for the foreseeable future, then enhancing ancillary facilities should be a priority.

The need for World Rugby (WR) 3G pitches in Stevenage

There is no WR 3G provision within Stevenage, and Stevenage Town RUFC expressed no ambition or demand to access one. The Club currently accesses two senior pitches serviced by sports lighting. These pitches can accommodate both training and match demand, with neither pitch has been identified as showing any overplay. Therefore, there is no need for a WR 3G within Stevenage.

Relocation of Stevenage Town RUFC

Stevenage Town RUFC has an informal user / provider agreement with Stevenage Sports Club Limited, the owner of its site. The Club has no formal lease or long-term arrangement in place.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Club has been considering relocation options for several years. The current site has been identified as a potential location for housing development. However, suitable alternative facilities must be provided for the sports clubs currently using the site before any development can proceed. If Stevenage Town RUFC were to relocate to a new site it would need to meet the clubs' current requirements. There would be the need to provide two senior sports lit pitches and a new build ancillary provision with four changing rooms and a form of social space with a kitchen and bar. Two sites have been historically considered; Ridlins Wood Playing Field and Jack Hill (North Hertfordshire).

As noted in the ancillary provision section above, it is important to establish a clear timescale regarding the Club's potential relocation. If it intends to relocate in the near future, investment in ancillary facilities should not be prioritised. However, if it prefers to remain on-site and focus on enhancing existing ancillary provision, SBC and relevant stakeholders should actively support the Club in this development.

This potential development needs to be monitored through the PPOSS Stage E process. Any development needs to be compliant with Sport England Playing Field Policy and NPPF.

Future demand through Club ambitions and housing growth

The Assessment Report presents that Stevenage Town RFC has ambitions to gain one senior men's team, one senior women's team and one mixed age grade team. If this were to be achieved this would cause Stevenage Town RUFC to be overplayed by 0.75 MES.

Part 7 of the report presents the potential demand generated from housing developments outlined for the Authority. The largest scenario that has been tested is a 2000 dwelling development. The Playing Pitch Calculator presents that this will result in additional demand of 0.09 of a team if delivered, meaning there will not be any new teams generated.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect existing pitches in line with national (i.e. the NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy) and local planning policy.
- ◀ Support Stevenage Town RUFC to improve its ancillary offer subject to relocation plans.
- ◀ Support Stevenage Town RUFC in taking part in the GMA pitch advisory service to explore technical requirements to improve pitch quality to address overplay.
- ◀ Support Stevenage Town RUFC in installing pipe and slit drainage to the two senior pitches as a means of improving the pitch quality.
- ◀ Monitor Stevenage Town RUFC progress in enhancing its ancillary provision and relocation plans. Provide further stakeholder support should it be necessary. Explore the Club creating a secure formal agreement, to create actual spare capacity.
- ◀ If Stevenage Town RUFC is to relocate ensure its new site provides two senior pitches and an ancillary provision with four changing rooms and accompanying social space.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

4.4: Hockey pitches (sand/water-based AGPs)

Assessment Report summary

Hockey summary

- There is sufficient access to hockey suitable provision within Stevenage to support current demand. However, the AGP at The Nobel School is standard quality and deteriorating and will need improvement soon.
- Stevenage HC report no future demand due to struggling to currently fill four senior men's teams and had a decline in teams over the last few years. However, the Club has ambitions to gain an additional ten junior members to participate in its junior training sessions.

Pitch supply:

- There is one full size hockey suitable AGP in Stevenage.
- The Nobel School is available for community use and has sports lighting.
- There are also two small sided AGPs provided at Barclay Academy and Giles Junior School. However, neither site accommodates any hockey usage, only football demand.
- Both sites are open to community use, however, only Barclays Academy AGP is sports lit.

Pitch quality:

- The full-size pitch at The Nobel School is of a standard quality, however, is beginning to deteriorate in quality due to last being resurfaced in 2012. The AGP pitch at John Henry Newman is of poor quality, however, currently only accommodates football demand.

Affiliated demand:

- There is one hockey club currently playing within Stevenage, being Stevenage HC.
- Stevenage HC has four senior men's and five senior women's. The Club also features a junior section consisting of 30 members across a range of ages which focus exclusively on training, without participating in competitive games.

Supply and demand analysis conclusions:

- Based on current levels of demand, there is a sufficient supply of provision to accommodate existing demand.
- While there is sufficient provision for hockey, it's crucial to protect The Nobel Schools pitch due to the loss of provision at John Henry Newman and deteriorating pitch quality at The Nobel School.
- With no future demand expressed there is the need to protect all provision to ensure the long-term sustainability of hockey in the Authority.

Scenarios

Meeting hockey demand

The PPOSS Guidance suggests that a pitch with sports lighting can accommodate four match equivalent sessions on a Saturday. With teams playing on a home and away format, this equates to one AGP being able to cater for eight 'home' teams (one team requires 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week on its 'home' AGP).

Stevenage HC is the only club operating within the local authority and accessing the only full-sized hockey provision at The Nobel School. The Club fields nine senior teams during peak periods. While this exceeds the guideline of eight teams per AGP, the site can comfortably host up to five fixtures on a Saturday without operational issues. As a result, the AGP has not been classified as overplayed and is at full capacity.

The Club has not expressed any future demand ambitions; however, it is actively recruiting junior members for its training only session which take place on Sundays. This growth in junior members could organically lead to additional need for access to pitch space during peak time for senior hockey, as members mature.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Accounting for the above, over the lifespan of the PPOSS, additional provision may be required to support the Club. It is therefore important to monitor the club's growth and provide support as needed. This should be monitored through Stage E.

Table 4.28: Hockey usage and spare capacity

Site ID	Site name	Site user	Current use in peak period (MES)	Spare capacity?
36	The Nobel School	Stevenage HC	4.5	No

Security of tenure

Security of tenure refers to the rights of occupation on playing field and infrastructure. Clubs generally fall into the bracket of owner-occupier, tenant or licensee. In most cases in the Authority, clubs are tenants at education sites as opposed to asset holding clubs with freehold of provision.

Stevenage HC uses The Nobel School site for both matches and training. While the Club does not have formal long-term tenure, it has accessed the facility for several years and maintains a positive relationship with the school staff. Importantly, The Nobel School has a Community Use Agreement in place, which helps to safeguard continued access.

Improving quality

The table below outlines the quality ratings of the pitch at The Nobel School.

Table 4.29: Summary of quality

Site ID	Site name	Surface type	User	Quality rating	Built/resurfaced
36	The Nobel School	Sand dressed	Stevenage HC	Standard	1994 / 2012

The pitch is assessed as standard quality but is has passed its recommend life expectancy. Given the high level of usage due to already exceeding peak demand and the expected decline in pitch quality, it is essential to protect and improve this facility. However, The Nobel School confirms it does not have a sinking fund in place to resurface the AGP.

Strategic need for additional hockey provision across Stevenage, North Hertfordshire, and East Hertfordshire

Stevenage Hockey Club currently fields nine senior teams, all of which are accommodated at a single site, The Nobel School. While the existing provision is sufficient to meet current demand, the facility is operating at full capacity during peak times, leaving no room for future growth or additional usage.

Similarly, the PPOSS for both North Hertfordshire and East Hertfordshire present a comparable picture, with accessible sport lit hockey facilities also operating at or near capacity. This indicates a broader regional issue, where existing provision across the three authorities is insufficient to support future growth in hockey participation.

Given this context, there is a clear strategic need for the development of an additional hockey pitch across the three authorities. It is recommended that one new sport lit pitch be delivered within either of the three authorities, positioned to serve the combined demand from Stevenage, North Hertfordshire, and East Hertfordshire.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Barnwell East School is a proposed new educational site set to be developed as part of the Local Plan. As part of its development, this could be a potential location to install a hockey AGP to support both the school and hockey demand.

This will require appropriate stakeholder involvement which could be support through the Active Partnership. As the North Hertfordshire PPOSS has proposed the need for a new full sized AGP to meet the need for Royston Hockey Club, the new pitch being proposed in this scenario to service the wider need across Stevenage, North Hertfordshire, and East Hertfordshire should be delivered in addition to developing a pitch for Royston HC.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect the provision at The Nobel School as is the only full sized AGP within the authority.
- ◀ Ensure the existing pitch at The Nobel School is provided with a replacement surface during the lifespan of the PPOSS to enhance pitch quality, due to its deteriorating surface.
- ◀ Ensure all hockey suitable AGPs have a sink fund in place for their eventual refurbishment/replacement.
- ◀ Collaborate with all three local authorities and strategic partners, including England Hockey, to identify and secure an additional site for a AGP that addresses the cumulative demand across the districts and aligns with regional strategic needs.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

4.5: Cricket pitches

Assessment Report summary

Cricket – supply and demand summary

- ◀ The broad position in Stevenage is there is an insufficient stock of supply for peak time senior cricket. This is due to Stevenage Cricket Club having to export its fifth Saturday mens team to North Hertfordshire due to the lack of available squares within Stevenage.
- ◀ There is no overplay at either site within Stevenage.
- ◀ Sunday and Midweek demand continues to display actual spare capacity.

Cricket – supply summary

- ◀ In total, there are two active grass wicket squares in Stevenage both of which are open to community use.
- ◀ There are six standalone NTPs identified, all of which are at school sites and are not available for community use.
- ◀ Stevenage CC has a lease agreement in place with Stevenage Borough Council for its home site and rents its secondary site Kings George V Playing Field, however, reports no concerns regarding its continued access to the square.
- ◀ The audit of community available grass wicket cricket squares found Stevenage Cricket Club to be good quality, and Kings George V Playing Field (Stevenage) to be standard quality.
- ◀ Stevenage Cricket Club has good quality ancillary provision with a recent refurbishment, whereas Kings Goerge V Playing Field is serviced by poor quality ancillary provision.
- ◀ Stevenage Cricket Club has suffienct training facilities with access to a four lane fixed practice net, which has an adequate surface.

Cricket – demand summary

- ◀ There is one club in Stevenage providing 11 teams across senior and junior cricket. When broken down this equates to seven senior men's and six junior boys' teams.
- ◀ Stevenage CC offers the All-Stars programme, with 39 participants, however, no Dynamos sessions.
- ◀ Within the Borough there are no women or girls' teams.
- ◀ Club aspirations equate to the potential growth of one junior boy's and one junior girls' team.
- ◀ The only instance of exported demand for competitive fixtures is Stevenage CC which uses the cricket square at Graveley Cricket Club throughout the season, located in the North Hertfordshire District.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Scenarios

Improving square quality

There are two cricket sites in Stevenage, neither site has been identified as being overplayed. The square at King George V Playing Field square is standard quality compared to Stevenage Cricket Club square which is of good quality. Both sites are accessed by Stevenage CC.

The scenario below looks at the impacts of quality improvement of King George V Playing Fields square. As a reminder, for good quality squares, capacity is five matches per grass wicket per season, whilst for a standard quality square, capacity is four matches per wicket per season. For poor quality squares, no capacity is considered to exist as such provision is not deemed safe for play.

Table 4.30: Impact of squares improved to good quality

Site ID	Site name	Club	No. of squares	Square quality	No. of wickets	Capacity rating (matches per season)	Potential position (matches per season)
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Stevenage CC	1	Standard	9	16	25

As seen in the table above, improving the quality to good, provides the site with a further nine matches per season of spare capacity. Enhancing the site's quality will also contribute to an overall better playing experience. It would not create capacity within peak periods.

Hybrid wickets

Although not readily available within grassroots cricket, there may be potential in the future to address overplay or create further spare capacity through the installation of hybrid wicket/s on competitive senior squares. The ECB has been working with SIS Pitches on the installation of hybrid cricket wickets at county cricket clubs (2019) and more recently recreational squares such as Perry Hall Park in Birmingham (2021) and Didsbury Cricket Club in Manchester (2022).

A hybrid wicket combines natural turf grass with less the 5% of uniquely engineered, soft polyethylene yarn, which has already been used to improve golf tees, tennis courts and pitch surrounds. These wickets are to offer a greater capacity in addition to reducing time on repair works with a faster recovery time.

Although it is difficult at this stage to understand what impact hybrid wickets could have on each site's capacity, it is suggested that it could potentially improve the carrying capacity of the squares at King George V Playing Fields and Stevenage Cricket Club. This assumes that more senior demand can take place on the hybrid wickets allowing for the outer senior wickets to be used/converted for junior demand. It should also be noted that this approach is currently a rather expensive means of reducing overplay and increasing spare capacity.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Accommodating future demand

The current population figure used within the future demand calculations is 88,610. By 2043 the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand, the Stevenage population is projected to increase to 91,875. There is no anticipated future growth through population growth projections.

Calculating future demand through club ambitions, Stevenage CC outlines its ambition to expand by introducing two additional teams, an under 15 junior boys' team and a junior girls' team.

As King George V Playing Fields currently accommodates no junior demand, there is capacity to host up to four junior teams (based on existing spare capacity). Stevenage CC has five junior teams at its home site and has the capacity to accommodate one additional junior team.

Therefore, when considering future demand based on club ambitions, both sites together can meet the club's aspirations, accommodating additional team growth and causing no capacity issues.

Improving ancillary provision

Stevenage Cricket Club has seven senior and five junior teams, utilising both the Stevenage Cricket Club ground and the King George V Playing Fields squares for competitive matches.

While the club benefits from good quality ancillary facilities at its own site, those at King George V Playing Field are poor. The site is a multi-sport offer which includes football and plans for Padel provision and a PlayZone. This site has also been identified in the Stevenage LFFP (2025) as a key location for enhancing ancillary provision.

Introducing cricket provision as part of West Stevenage housing development

New cricket provision has been proposed within the West of Stevenage housing development. Initially the site is outlined to develop an NTP and a new pavilion designed to accommodate cricket. The project has been designed to allow a grass wicket square longer term if there is sufficient demand.

The table below explores the potential capacity resulting from the installation of a new cricket square at the site and assesses its impact on existing provision and overall capacity. For the proposed site, the scenario assumes the creation of a standard quality nine-wicket cricket square. However, the exact number of wickets has not yet been confirmed and may be subject to change as the development progresses.

Table 4.31: Potential capacity balance of Stevenage West (new site)

Site name	Proposed no. of squares	Proposed Square quality	Proposed No. of wickets	Potential capacity (MES per season)
New Site Stevenage West Development	1	Standard	9	36

Stevenage CC currently accesses cricket provision at both King George V Playing Fields and Stevenage Cricket Club. King George V Playing Fields has the capacity to accommodate two Sunday teams and four junior teams' midweek. Stevenage Cricket Club can only accommodate one junior team midweek.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Neither site has spare capacity to meet senior cricket demand on Saturdays. As a result, Stevenage CC also utilises the cricket square at Graveley Cricket Club (North Hertfordshire) throughout the season for its fifth Saturday team.

If the proposed cricket square were developed, it would create additional capacity to accommodate senior cricket demand on Saturdays. This could potentially eliminate the need for Stevenage CC to export demand to North Hertfordshire, allowing the club to access provision within Stevenage. It would also support the growth of the club's senior teams and help meet additional demand on Sundays and midweek.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of cricket squares.
- ◀ Improve square quality King George V Playing Field and sustain square quality at Stevenage CC.
- ◀ Look to deliver the new cricket facility tied to the Stevenage West housing development to give Stevenage CC another useable facility.
- ◀ Look to formalise a longer-term tenure agreement for Stevenage CC and the Council to protect the clubs access to King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage).
- ◀ Look to improve the ancillary provisions provided at King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage).
- ◀ Consider options to increase and improve stock of suitable practice facilities.
- ◀ Continue to support ECB initiatives such as All Stars and Dynamos and ensure unaffiliated demand and recreational cricket is provided for.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

4.6: Tennis courts

Assessment Report summary

Tennis – supply and demand summary

- ◀ For club-based tennis, Lister Tennis Club currently has spare capacity for 280 members. Due to the Club having no ambitions to expand members, the future capacity is also 280 members.
- ◀ Away from clubs, although no courts are identified as having any capacity issues, precedence should be placed on improving the supply in ways that can attract and better accommodate more users.

Tennis – supply summary

- ◀ There are 36 tennis courts identified in Stevenage across eight sites. Of these, 25 courts are available to community use, while 11 courts are unavailable for community use.
- ◀ Most available tennis courts in Stevenage are educational sites (26) the rest are split between SBC sites (5) or sports club sites (5). It's important to note 11 courts are unavailable for community use at education sites.
- ◀ The most common court surface is macadam, with 31 (86%) courts identified across seven sites, followed by a polymeric surface of which there are five (14%) courts at one site.
- ◀ In total, 13 of the 36 tennis courts is serviced by sports lighting, representing 36% of the provision.
- ◀ In total, 10 courts are assessed as good quality (28% of all provision), 18 as standard quality (50%) and eight as poor quality (22%).
- ◀ There is air dome provision at Lister Tennis Club, which facilitates two standard quality indoor courts.
- ◀ Lister Tennis Club accesses a standard quality dedicated ancillary provision.
- ◀ Lister Tennis Club has a lease agreement with a private landlord. The Club would like to extend its current agreement and raises concerns about the long-term access of its site.

Tennis – demand summary

- ◀ There is one tennis club in Stevenage, Lister Tennis Club reports that it has a total of 100 members. As a breakdown, this equates to 30 senior and 70 junior members.
- ◀ Lister Tennis Club has expressed satisfaction with its current membership level and has no current ambitions to grow members.
- ◀ Away from clubs, it is considered that all local authority courts available for community use in Stevenage have spare capacity for a growth in demand, although this is difficult to quantify as use is not always recorded due to the open access nature of many sites.
- ◀ Lister Tennis Club and Shephalbury Park utilise ClubSpark.
- ◀ LTA Youth can be found at Lister Tennis Club which hosts all five stages of the program.
- ◀ There are currently no padel tennis courts within Stevenage.

Scenarios

Meeting demand for informal tennis

The LTA has developed a package of support for LAs to grow the use of park tennis courts by removing key barriers to participation. The three products are ClubSpark, Rally and Gate Access and can be used individually or in combination. The products are used to provide a remote booking and access system.

Instead of providing free access, some local authorities are now securing their courts as per a membership scheme that allows members access through the use of a fob system following payment of a small yearly fee.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Not only does this deter unofficial use of courts but it also allows official use to be tracked, thus providing data on how well and how often courts are being accessed. In addition, it provides income generation that can go towards ongoing maintenance of the courts.

Within Stevenage, Shephalbury Park and Lister Tennis Club both currently utilise ClubSpark booking system, however all other tennis courts are located on educational sites. Therefore, there is no sites available where the LTA could prioritise development of informal tennis within the authority.

Access to sports lighting significantly enhances a site's capacity by extending operational hours and enabling it to meet increased demand. SBC has identified the installation of sports lighting at Shephalbury Park as a key ambition. This investment is particularly important, as Shephalbury Park is the only council-owned tennis site in the Borough that allows for informal community access. The addition of sports lighting would increase the site's usability during evening hours, helping to maximise its potential and better meet local demand for informal tennis opportunities.

Relocation of Lister Tennis Club to new sports ground as part of the new housing development

Lister TC operates under a lease agreement with a private landlord, with approximately ten years remaining. The Club is hoping to extend this lease to secure its future at the current site. However, the site owner has historically had aspiration plans to develop the site for residential housing.

This potential development needs to be monitored through the PPOSS Stage E process. Any development needs to be compliant with Sport England Playing Field Policy and NPPF.

Padel

A padel court is 20m long and 10m wide with a combination of glass and weld mesh rebound wall and fence panels supported of steel posts fixed to a concrete foundation with a synthetic turf playing surface.

As of the end of 2023, 129,000 people reportedly play padel more than once a year in England, which represents a significant increase compared to 2021 data when the number was 15,000. This exemplifies the continued growth of the sport and the need to ensure that such demand is being adequately catered for. One of the LTAs key strategies is to find new ways to grow participation and padel is an innovative format of tennis that is fun, flexible, easy to play and extremely sociable.

The LTA Padel Provision Calculator indicates a demand for seven padel courts within Stevenage to meet local needs. However, there are currently no padel facilities within the authority, with the nearest courts located a 20-minute drive away in neighbouring authorities.

The Council are in the early stages of considering Padel court provision on the site of the disused tennis courts at King George V Playing Fields alongside the PlayZone development.

Given the rapid growth of padel as a sport and the identified demand, strategic investment in padel provision should be considered to enhance local access and support Stevenage residents' participation in this emerging sport.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

If padel courts are to be installed at King George V Playing Fields, as outlined in the cricket section, it is essential that improvements to the existing poor-quality ancillary provision are considered. Enhancing these facilities would not only support the additional demand from new sports such as padel and the proposed PlayZone but also significantly improve the overall user experience and enable the site to better serve a broader cross-section of the community.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of courts.
- ◀ Improve court quality at sites assessed as poor or standard quality and sustain quality at sites assessed as good.
- ◀ At Lister Tennis Club monitor the progress of the landlords housing development plans and the club's relocation plans. Provide further support should it be necessary.
- ◀ Explore installing sports lighting on courts at Shephalbury Park.
- ◀ Explore options to further improve the recreational tennis offer via utilisation of technology provided by the LTA (e.g., ClubSpark) to support the customer journey and through investment into facilities and accompanying ancillary provision.
- ◀ Ensure sinking funds are put into place by providers for long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Improve the ancillary provision at sites such as Lister Tennis Club, King George V Playing Fields or Shephalbury Park.
- ◀ Further explore the opportunities to establish padel provision within the Borough as this is a growing area of demand. Support the development of the proposed development of padel courts at Kings George V Playing Fields.
- ◀ Explore improving the ancillary provision at King George V Playing Fields.

4.7: Netball courts

Assessment Report summary

Netball – supply and demand summary

- ◀ It is determined that there is an adequate supply of outdoor netball provision in Stevenage.
- ◀ The Authority should consider installing sports lights to accessible non-sports lit courts as a means of providing suitable training facilities to clubs.

Netball – Supply summary:

- ◀ In total, there are 26 outdoor netball courts located across seven sites in Stevenage. Of this total provision, 15 courts across six sites are community accessible.
- ◀ Of the 15 available courts, three are good quality, eight are standard and four are poor quality.
- ◀ Marriotts Sport Centre three sport lit standard quality courts are accessed by Play Netball League.

Netball – Demand summary:

- ◀ There is one netball club, Stevenage Storm Netball Club, which competes in the Herts Netball Association Senior & Junior League and holds club nights at Marriotts Sports Centre on Wednesday evenings.
- ◀ Outdoor demand for netball within Stevenage takes place in the Play Netball Stevenage League.
- ◀ The Play Netball Stevenage league operates with two separate divisions and accesses the three outdoor sports lit courts at Marriotts Sports Centre.
- ◀ There are also two indoor leagues operating within the Authority, those being the Stevenage Netball League at John Henry Newman School and the Herts Indoor Netball League at Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre.
- ◀ England Netball, and Sport England's Segmentation Tool outlines that there are somewhat low levels of unmet demand for Stevenage with only 0.28% of the Borough identified as wanting to participate but not currently doing so.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Scenarios

Stevenage Play Netball League

Demand for netball takes place in the Stevenage Indoor Netball League, the Herts Indoor Netball League and the Play Netball Stevenage League. Only the Play Netball Stevenage League takes place on outdoor courts, as the Herts Indoor Netball League and the Stevenage Netball League take place on indoor courts.

The Stevenage Play Netball League is based on Monday and Tuesday evenings from 19:00-21:00 at Marriotts Sports Centre. The site provides five standard quality outdoor sports lit courts, with three courts open to community use. A consultation with the school staff confirmed the courts were last resurfaced 13 years ago and they are slippery due to the fallen leaves from the overhanging trees.

The courts are currently of standard quality, to protect the Play Netball League and sustain the quality of the courts enhancing the court quality should be a priority. This could help provide improved netball provision and could increase demand to participate within the league.

Improving existing provision

Marriotts Sports Centre has three standard quality sports lit courts and is the only site in the Authority accommodating outdoor netball demand. The courts are used by the Stevenage Play Netball league. The sports centre staff confirm the courts were last resurfaced 13 years ago and are now very slippery. As such the courts should be resurfaced during the lifespan of the PPS to improve the quality and support Netball demand within Stevenage.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect quantity of courts.
- ◀ Seek to improve poor quality courts quality through resurfacing or improved maintenance, such as the courts at Barnwell School (Upper).
- ◀ Look to increasingly use courts for England Netball initiatives such as Back to Netball and Walking Netball.
- ◀ Look to resurface the courts at Marriotts Sports Centre to improve the Play Netball demand in the Authority.
- ◀ Facilitate improved engagement between England Netball and schools.
- ◀ Protect Play Netball League at Marriotts Sports Centre, as only outdoor netball league operating within the authority.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

4.8: Athletics

Assessment Report summary

Athletics – supply and demand summary

- ◀ The supply of dedicated athletics facilities is sufficient to meet current demand.
- ◀ Stevenage and North Herts Athletic Club has a waiting list of 40 individuals and plans to increase its membership by an additional 50 members, future demand may surpass existing capacity.
- ◀ Ridlins Wood Athletics Track estimated end of lifespan is in 2025, therefore it's crucial the track is continued to be maintained and a resurface is further investigated to ensure the track continues to meet the current demand of usage.

Athletics – supply summary

- ◀ There is one purpose-built athletics track in Stevenage, provided at Ridlins Wood Athletics Track.
- ◀ Ridlins Wood Athletics Track provides a fully sports-lit, community accessible eight lane 400-metre track, featuring facilities equipped for all Track & Field throwing and jumping events. The stadium is fully accessible.
- ◀ The Ridlins Wood Athletics Track was last resurfaced in 2010 and has now reached end of life and will require resurfacing during the lifespan of the PPOSS. It is serviced by good quality ancillary facilities.
- ◀ A TrackMark assessment of the track during 2025 will give a clearer insight into the need to condition of the track and its remaining lifespan.

Athletics – demand summary

- ◀ There are two athletics clubs in Stevenage, of which both participated in the consultation through an online survey.
- ◀ Stevenage and North Herts Athletic Club currently has a 40 people on a waiting list to join the Club.
- ◀ The Couch to 5K programme is delivered in Stevenage by the staff at Stevenage Striders running group deliver at Hampson Park.
- ◀ There are two Park Run events held each week at as many venues across Stevenage.
- ◀ The Ridlins Wood Athletics Track is predominantly accessed by Stevenage and North Herts Athletic Club. It is also accessed by Fairlands Valley Spartans for two hours a week and is open for pay and play for two hours a week.

Scenarios

Meeting demand for athletics

The 400m sports lit community accessible track at Ridlins Wood Athletic Track provides the Borough with an adequate amount of formal athletic provision to cater for its current demand. However, the track is at end of life and is standard quality with it last being resurfaced 15 years ago in 2010.

England Athletics recommends resurfacing the track to maintain standards and reassess Ridlins Wood Athletic Track TrackMark accreditation in October 2025. A TrackMark assessment is scheduled in 2025 which will provide an up-to-date assessment of the surface and lifecycle.

There is no dedicated athletic track provision in North Hertfordshire, local clubs within that authority rely on Ridlins Wood to meet training and competition requirements. As a result, the facility plays a crucial role in supporting demand across both authorities.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Given the demand from both authorities, protecting the provision and ongoing maintenance is essential to ensure the site continues to meet current demand effectively. Further investigation into the resurfacing requirements will be crucial to support sustained usage and accessibility.

Following the TrackMark inspection in 2025 there will be a clear understanding of the remaining lifespan of the track and an up to date position on hosting competitions. This position should be reviewed/updated as part of Stage E of the PPOSS.

England Athletics' latest approach to facility planning includes the play track, compact track, mini track and active track which present more affordable means of installing new athletics provision⁷. These facility offers cater for a more recreational and informal offer for athletics and general health and wellbeing opportunities.

Of these, an 'active track' may be most appropriate for consideration in Stevenage (in addition to retaining/improving Ridlins Wood), particularly in relation to strategic housing allocations to provide a health and wellbeing offer on site. It is a macadam surface or synthetic loop with no fixed shape or distance (similar to a formula one circuit), in which a track is drawn to fit its natural surroundings such as an existing park or school field. Therefore, an Active Track attracts users of all ages and abilities across a wide variety of activities (runners, joggers, walkers (particularly the elderly), cyclists, wheelchair users).

However, the priority for the Authority should be to preserve the quality of the Ridlins Wood Athletics Track to service the residents of Stevenage and align to the England Athletics goal of all local authorities being serviced by a 400m track.

To help accommodate waiting lists and future demand, opportunities should also be explored for improving and increasing play and pay at Ridlins Wood Athletics Track which key partners including England Athletics, the Council and Everyone Active are committed to working together to achieve.

Recommendations

- ◀ Ensure the track and supporting facilities at the Ridlins Wood Athletic Track are protected and that quality is improved as a priority to ensure its long-term future.
- ◀ Undertake a TrackMark accreditation assessment of the track to determine the remaining lifespan of the surface (scheduled for 2025) and review this position as part of the PPOSS Stage E.
- ◀ Prioritise the investigation of resurfacing options at Ridlins Wood Athletic Track to ensure continued usability.
- ◀ Key partners including England Athletics, the Council and Everyone Active to work together to explore opportunities to improve and increase pay and play.
- ◀ Support clubs, running groups, events and England Athletics initiatives such as Park Run and pursue increased participation, where possible.
- ◀ Continue to increase participation both within affiliated clubs and the wider running market, building on the success of Parkrun and looking to increase other initiatives such as Run Together groups and/or Coach to 5k.
- ◀ Consider the need to include 'Active Tracks' within strategic housing allocations to provide a health and wellbeing offer on site.

⁷ <https://www.englandathletics.org/clubs-and-facilities/facilities/newgen-tracks/>

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

4.9: Lawn bowls

Assessment Report summary

Bowls – supply and demand summary

- Three Horseshoes Bowls Club reports no capacity issues. The current capacity of Stevenage Town Bowls Club is unknown. However, both greens are assessed as good quality and with a disused bowling green at Saint Nicholas Park, it is likely that current supply is sufficient to meet demand.

Bowls – supply summary

- There are three bowling greens in Stevenage provided across two sites, with two greens provided at Stevenage Town Bowls Club.
- There is one disused bowling green within Stevenage, at Saint Nicholas Park, which is now used as a dog training area.
- Three Horseshoes Bowls Club is deemed to have security of tenure; Stevenage Town Bowls Club current tenure is unknown due to it being unresponsive to consultation.
- There are no greens in Stevenage that are serviced by sports lighting.
- Of the bowling greens in active use, all three are assessed as good quality.
- Ancillary provision across both sites in Stevenage are assessed as good quality.

Bowls – demand summary

- There are two bowls clubs in Stevenage.
- Three Horseshoes Bowls Club total membership equates to 40 members, with all being senior members.
- Due to a predicted increase in persons aged 65 and over (to 2033), demand is likely to increase for greens over the coming years.
- Three Horseshoes Bowls Club states its always looking to grow members but didn't provide a specific figure.
- Three Horseshoes Bowls Club report that existing memberships can be accommodated for on the current level of provision and that no potential members are being turned away, suggesting that there is no latent or unmet demand

Scenarios

N/A

Recommendations

- Protect existing quantity of currently used greens and, as a minimum, sustain quality.
- Ensure that any proposed development of currently used greens is mitigated in line with NPPF.
- Assist clubs, where possible, with any future ancillary provision improvements.
- Support clubs with plans to increase membership so that growth can be maximised.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

4.10: Golf

Golf – supply and demand summary

- ◀ Stevenage has insufficient supply of provision due to only being one golf course to accommodate the identified levels of golf demand within the Authority.
- ◀ In Stevenage, golf remains slightly more popular than both the national and regional averages. In 2023, 14.6% of the local population took part in the sport, reflecting a nearly 5% increase over the previous two years. While Stevenage has historically seen strong participation in golf, the current rate is the highest recorded for the authority since 2019.

Golf – supply summary

- ◀ There is currently one golf site in Stevenage.
- ◀ This facility offers a standard 18-hole course as well as a 9-hole par-3 course.
- ◀ Stevenage Golf Club provides a 22 undercover, floodlit driving range.
- ◀ In Stevenage, the golf club is a municipal run site.
- ◀ In terms of quality, it is relatively good in Stevenage with a range of facilities available for players of differing abilities.

Golf – demand summary

- ◀ Stevenage Golf Club membership figures are not available.
- ◀ No unmet demand in Stevenage is present due to having no waiting list at the golf club.
- ◀ Pay and play usage is unknown but the golf club in Stevenage provides green fee rates and pay and play is available at the site's driving rate

Scenarios

N/A

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect and retain all existing golf provision unless separate needs assessments are completed that evidence that a facility can be lost or reduced without it impacting upon demand.
- ◀ Sustain course and ancillary facility quality and seek improvements where necessary.
- ◀ Support clubs in membership retention and potential growth and encourage clubs and providers to work more collaboratively in terms of creating pathways for players.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

4.11: Other sports

Assessment Report summary

Rugby league

- There are no rugby league pitches provided within the Borough.

Climbing

- The audit identified the Fairlands Valley Park site which offers a six-metre vertical climbing wall with four routes alongside all necessary for residents of Stevenage to access.

Water sports

- Fairlands Valley Park in Stevenage features a large reservoir managed by Stevenage Borough Council, offering activities like fishing, sailing, windsurfing, kayaking, and an Aqua Parcs obstacle course.
- The park also includes a splash park open in summer, kayak and boat storage, a Cycle Hub, a Model Boat Club, a café, toilets, and a studio space for meetings.

Cycling

- St Nicholas Park provides a bike pump track that is openly accessible to the general public. The space is fairly small and offers good beginners experience to BMX pump tracks.
- Stevenage has limited dedicated cycling facilities, with St Nicholas Park being the main site, but it benefits from an excellent network of leisure cycle routes and strong Council support through the Cycling Hub and 2018 Cycle Strategy.

Recommendations

- Retain all existing provision.
- Support the development of emerging sports within the authority by providing access to current provision which is underutilised/not accessed.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategic recommendations for the Strategy have been developed via the combination of information gathered during consultation, site visits and analysis which culminated in the production of an assessment report, as well as key drivers identified for the Strategy. They reflect overarching and common areas to be addressed, which apply across playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities and may not be specific to just one sport.

AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities where it is needed for meeting current and future needs.

Recommendations:

- a. Ensure, through the use of the PPOSS, that outdoor sport facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy and development management decisions.
- b. Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.
- c. Maximise community use of education facilities where needed.

Recommendation (a) – Ensure, through the use of the PPOSS, that outdoor sport facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy and development management decisions.

The PPOSS shows that all existing playing field and outdoor sport sites cannot be deemed surplus to requirements because of shortfalls now and in the future. As such, all provision requires protection and enhancement until all identified shortfalls have been overcome. This includes disused (including any which may not have been identified in this document) underused and poor quality sites as there is a requirement for such provision to help meet and alleviate the identified shortfalls.

When shortfalls are evident, provision can only be permanently lost when the current picture changes to the extent that the site in question is no longer needed as a result of no shortfalls existing, or unless appropriate mitigation is provided and agreed upon by all stakeholders, in line with national planning policy. NPPF paragraph 104 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

The PPOSS should be used to help inform development management decisions that affect existing or new playing pitch provision and accompanying ancillary facilities. All applications are assessed by the Local Planning Authority on a case-by-case basis taking into account site specific factors.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

In addition, Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications that affect or prejudice the use of playing field used within the last five years. They will use the PPOSS to help assess the planning application against its Playing Fields Policy.

Policy Exception E1:

‘A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated to the satisfaction of Sport England that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport’.

Where the PPOSS cannot demonstrate that the site, or part of a site, is clearly surplus to requirements then replacement of the site, or part of a site, will be required to comply with the remaining Sport England policy exceptions.

Policy Exception E2

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

Policy Exception E3

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

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

It should also be noted that where Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is proposed near to or on playing fields that the above also applies.

Policy Exception E4:

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

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

Policy Exception E5

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

Disused sites should also be protected from development or replaced in accordance with Sport England’s policy exceptions as they currently provide a solution to reducing identified shortfalls.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Any disused playing fields are included within this Action Plan together with a recommendation in relation to bringing the site back into use or to mitigate the loss on a replacement site to address the shortfalls identified.

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

Much like some authorities nationally, there is reliance on the education sector to provide for most of the demand for playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities. However, where this is the case, particularly for the likes of hockey, it is imperative that future opportunities to secure tenure for clubs is explored and progressed where possible. The following schools provide community use to clubs.

Table 5.1: Known use of education sites

School	Club	Sport
Ashtree Primary School	Stevenage Borough Juniors	Football
Barclay Academy	Down and Under FC Fairlands Youth Niche FC IMI Football Academy Stevenage Starlets FC	Football Football (AGP)
Barnwell School (Middle)	Stevenage Borough Juniors AFC Walkern	Football Football (3G)
Barnwell School (Upper)	Stevenage Borough Juniors	Football
Featherstone Wood Primary School	Shephall United FC	Football
Giles Junior School	Bedwell Rangers	Football
John Henry Newman School	Stevenage Borough Juniors	Football
Marriotts School	Bedwell Rangers Stevenage Borough Juniors Watton Youth	Football Football (3G)
Moss Bury Primary School And Nursery	AFC Walkern	Football (3G)
The Nobel School	AFC Walkern Bedwell Rangers Stevenage HC	Football Football (AGP) Hockey
The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Stevenage Starlets FC	Football
Woolenwick Junior School	Bedwell Rangers	Football

Not having fully formalised usage presents a risk for those clubs using these sites as community use could technically be terminated at any time. Barnwell School (Middle & Upper) and The Nobel School have community use agreements in place to guarantee the long-term access of the playing pitches provided.

No other schools have been identified as having similar agreements in place. All other clubs using council-owned sites do so on a seasonal or weekly hire basis, without any tenure agreements tied to specific locations.

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

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

It is increasingly important for councils to work with voluntary sector organisations to enable them to take greater levels of ownership and support the wider development and maintenance of facilities.

As discussed in the football scenarios, SBC should ensure it can retain a suitable stock of provision to accommodate the needs of smaller organisations and individual teams that can continue to rent/hire pitches on weekly/season basis. However, this should still be balanced against continuing to work with large clubs to explore funding opportunities to enable groups to gain long term security of tenure of their hired facility to enable them to attract additional funding.

Local sports clubs should continue to be supported by partners including the Local Authority (where relevant) and NGBs to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership work. For example, club development should be supported, and clubs should be encouraged to develop evidence of business and sports development plans to generate income via their facilities.

All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC)⁸. They should also be encouraged to work with partners locally, such as volunteer support agencies or local businesses.

For clubs with lease arrangements already in place, these should be reviewed when fewer than 25 years remain to improve security of tenure and aid the attraction of funding; clubs with fewer than 25 years remaining on a lease agreement are unlikely to be eligible for external funding.

Recommendation (c) - Maximise community use of education facilities where needed

To maximise community use of education facilities more coherent, structured relationship with schools is recommended. The ability to access good facilities within the local community is vital to any sports organisation, yet many clubs struggle to find good quality places to play and train.

A large number of sporting facilities are located on education sites and making these available to sports clubs can offer significant benefits to both the schools and local clubs, as well helping to reduce identified shortfalls. It is, however, common for school provision not to be fully maximised for community use, even on established community use sites. It is known that community use agreements are in place for the provision at Barnwell School (Middle & Upper) and The Nobel School. It is important that these community use agreements are maintained to ensure the continued and long-term use of the provision.

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

Where new schools are provided in major new residential developments, they should be designed to facilitate community access, with opportunities for meeting the community's outdoor sports needs explored at the outset to maximise the potential for facility provision to be made within the developments, if appropriate.

⁸ <http://www.cascinfo.co.uk/cascbenefits>

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

An example of this is ensuring the provision of adult and/or youth 11v11 grass football pitches, 11v11 3G pitches or multi-use provision such as sports lit courts that can accommodate both tennis and netball activity given current shortfalls and their suitability for the playing format of students.

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

AIM 2

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

Recommendations:

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

Recommendation (d) – Improve quality

There are several ways in which it is possible to increase pitch quality, and these are explored below.

Pitch Advisory Service (PAS)

With quality of grass pitches becoming one of the biggest influences on participation, the Pitch Advisory Service (PAS, formerly the Grounds and Natural Turf Improvement Programme) was launched in 2014 and is funded by the GMA and its partners; the Football Foundation, Sport England, FA, ECB, RFU and RFL.

Its aim is to raise the standards of sports surfaces as well as the understanding of sports turf management practices among grassroots clubs across England and Wales. The PAS provides an enhanced network of support and expertise available to those maintaining natural turf pitches, particularly at a local level.

The service can be utilised by grassroots 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 report which will also identify the key enhanced maintenance works required along with machinery requirements.

Pitch providers are encouraged to complete a self-assessment of pitches using the Football Foundation PitchPower app. In August 2022, PitchPower was re-launched, with enhanced capability to support use beyond football pitches and is now accessible for the assessment of natural turf pitches for cricket, rugby league and rugby union.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

In relation to cricket specifically, maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of the sport. If the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and, in some instances, become dangerous. The ECB recommends full technical assessments of wickets and pitches available through a Performance Quality Standard (PQS) assessment. The Performance Quality Standard Assessment assesses a cricket square to ascertain whether it meets the standards that are benchmarked by the Ground Management Association.

Football Foundation PitchPower Assessment

The Premier League, The FA and the Football Foundation are increasing efforts to improve the quality of grass pitches in England with the launch of the PitchPower app. Launched in 2020 alongside the Football Foundation Pitch Preparation Fund, The app is a digital self-assessment tool to allow reports and recommendations to be made more quickly and easily once submitted for review by GMA regional pitch advisors.

The tool across web app and desktop is open to access by all providers, for example clubs, schools and local authorities. Following a PitchPower Assessment Report, organisations can work towards the recommended dedicated maintenance regime identified to improve the quality of their pitches.

In addition to non-technical assessments, clubs and education sites across Stevenage continue to undertake PitchPower assessments as a means of improving the quality of provision. Consequently, it should be recommended through the PPOSS process for the local authority to support delivering any improvement to new sites that undertake PitchPower assessments.

Football Foundation Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (GPMF)

Eligible clubs and organisations can also utilise a PitchPower report as an evidence base to acquire potential funding streams, for example, to obtain the required maintenance equipment. If a PitchPower assessment categorises pitches as 'poor' or 'basic', eligible organisations are then able to apply for funding through the Football Foundation through the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund⁹, a fund offering six-year tapered grants to help organisations 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 good quality grass pitches by 2030. Those with good or standard quality pitches can also apply for a lower level of funding to improve and sustain quality.

Applicants are not required to have security of tenure to secure GPMF. If the applicant is not the freeholder or long-term lease holder, the organisation requires the landlord's permission. The applicant must have received a PitchPower Pitch Assessment Report for the relevant site, with the fund currently open to football clubs, leagues, town and parish councils, education sites, community organisations and charities. Local authorities are not currently eligible applicants, however eligible organisations using local authority sites can apply provided they have permission from the landowner such as Stevenage Borough Juniors at King George V Playing Fields.

The Local Authority can undertake technical assessment of pitches using the PitchPower app. Opportunities to access the fund to support presently Local Authority managed sites include establishment of a service level agreement with a resident club for maintenance responsibilities, or transfer of long-term management to the club/organisation through leasehold or CAT, both enabling the club/organisation to apply to the fund.

⁹ <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/grant/grass-pitch-maintenance-fund>

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Furthermore, the Football Foundation also launched a Groundskeeping Community online platform in 2019 which provides a resource of expert advice for grounds staff, enabling them to connect with peers, discover new tips and tricks and share advice on best industry practice. Users can seek guidance from the GMA regional pitch advisors, who are available to answer questions and update members on changes to industry standards.

Addressing overplay

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

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

Table 5.2: Capacity of pitches

Sport	Pitch type	No. of matches (Good quality)	No. of matches (Standard quality)	No. of matches (Poor quality)
Football	Adult pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
Football	Youth pitches	4 per week	2 per week	1 per week
Football	Mini pitches	6 per week	4 per week	2 per week
Rugby union	Natural Inadequate (D0)	2 per week	1.5 per week	0.5 per week
Rugby union	Natural Adequate (D1)	3 per week	2 per week	1.5 per week
Rugby union	Pipe Drained (D2)	3.25 per week	2.5 per week	1.75 per week
Rugby union	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	3.5 per week	3 per week	2 per week
Cricket	1 grass wicket 1 synthetic wicket	5 per season 60 per season	4 per season	0 per season
Hockey	Full size AGP	4 per day	4 per day	4 per day

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

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

For rugby union, overplay can be reduced but not resolved through improvements to pitch maintenance or via capital drainage solutions.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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

Improving changing provision

There is a need to address changing provision at some sites in Stevenage, these are generally centred at either club or Local Authority managed sites.

Sites which predominantly accommodate adult and/or older junior age group sports should be prioritised for improvements, whilst there is a trend for younger junior age groups (particularly for football) not to require use of changing provision, with suitable male and female toilet provision for players and spectators considered to be of greater importance. Priority should also be put towards clubs which are key to the growth of multi-team clubs at club led sites, and those which are key to the growth of women's and girls' participation.

The following sites are identified locally as ones where improvements are needed:

- ◀ King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage).
- ◀ Marriotts School.
- ◀ Shephalbury Park.
- ◀ Stevenage Town RUFC.

It is worthy of note that providing dedicated facilities for one team clubs, unless competing at a high competitive level is less likely to deliver substantially on key football outcomes due to the limited demand taking place.

As noted in the football grass pitches section, if unused provision is brought back into use, there may also be a need to upgrade ancillary facilities on these sites. Additionally, many clubs using Council-owned sites have reported issues accessing existing ancillary provision. Therefore, alongside improving facilities, it is recommended that opportunities to enhance club access to these facilities are also explored.

Table 4.17 outlines the ancillary provision for all disused and un-used football sites in the Authority. If all seven sites were re-introduced, Canterbury Park, Barnwell East School and Former British Aerospace Sports Ground will require new build ancillary provisions to service the grass pitches. Chells Park, Hampson Park, St Nicholas Park and Paul Mallaghan Playing Fields are all serviced by some form of ancillary provision.

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

To allow for facility developments to be programmed on a phased basis the Local Authority should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of outdoor sport sites and associated facilities. Please refer to Part 6: Action Plan for the proposed hierarchy.

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

Partners should ensure that appropriate funding secured for improved sports provision is directed to areas of need, underpinned by a robust strategy for improvement in outdoor sport provision and accompanying ancillary facilities.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

To address community need a coordinated approach to strategic investment is required. In delivering this recommendation, the Local Authority should maintain a regular dialogue with local partners through the PPOSS Steering Group.

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

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

Recommendation (g) –Secure developer contributions

It is important that this strategy informs policies and supplementary planning documents by setting out the approach to securing sport and recreational facilities through new housing development contributions.

For playing pitches, it is recommended the Local Authority continues to use Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator as a tool for helping to determine the additional demand for pitches and to estimate the likely developer contribution required linking to sites within the locality. Local Authorities should also use Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator to estimate the growth in demand for tennis from housing developments. This should form part of the Local Authority working with Sport England to develop a process and guidance for obtaining developer contributions.

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

The PPOSS should be used to help determine the likely impact of a new development on demand and the capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity of existing provision or if new provision is required.

Where a development is located within access of existing high-quality provision, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further provision or improvement to existing provision, as additional demand arising from the development is likely to result in increased usage (which can result in overplay or quality deterioration).

Where it is determined that new provision is required to accompany a development, priority should be placed on providing facilities that contribute towards alleviating existing shortfalls within the locality. To determine what supply of provision is provided, it is imperative that the PPOSS findings are taken into consideration and that for particularly large developments consultation takes place with the relevant NGBs and Sport England.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

This is due to the importance of ensuring that the stock of facilities provided is correct to avoid provision becoming unsustainable and unused. The preference is for multi-pitch and potentially multi-sport sites to be developed, supported by a clubhouse and adequate parking facilities which consider the potential for future AGP development. This is because single-pitch facilities are more likely to become under-used (or unused), unviable and unsustainable.

It is recognised that consultation cannot take place with NGBs for every development due to resource restrictions.

Instead, it is recommended that such discussions take place within PPOSS Steering Group meetings, which should take place regularly following adoption of the study as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation process. It is recommended that these take place every 6-12 months and inform the annual review/update (see Part 8 for further information). The guidance should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to include provision and/or enhancement of appropriate provision and subsequent maintenance. S106 contributions could also be used to improve the condition and of the pitches in order to increase pitch capacity to accommodate more matches.

Sport England recommends that a number of objectives should be implemented to enable the above to be delivered:

- ◀ Planning consent should include appropriate conditions and/or be subject to specific planning obligations. Where developer contributions are applicable, a S106 agreement or equivalent must be completed that should specify, when applied, the amount that will be linked to Sport England's Building Cost Information Service from the date of the permission and timing of the contribution/s to be made.
- ◀ Contributions should also be secured towards the first ten years of maintenance on new pitches (lifecycle costs), the cost of which is indicated by the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator. NGBs and Sport England can provide further and up-to-date information on the associated costs.
- ◀ External funding should be sought/secured to achieve maximum benefit from the investment into appropriate facility enhancement, alongside other open space provision, and its subsequent maintenance.
- ◀ Where new provision is provided, appropriate changing rooms and associated car parking should be located on site.
- ◀ All new or improved outdoor sports facilities on school sites should be subject to community use agreements.

AIM 3

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

Recommendations:

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

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Developer contributions - step by step guide

For any application warranting a developer contribution the following processes should be followed in order to help inform the potential needs a new housing development may require and/or should look to consider. In accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance, contributions should not be sought from developments of 10 units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of no more than 1,000 square metres (gross internal area).

Any obligations sought should be based on a tailored approach to each development, considering the population derived from the development, determining if the demand can be met by existing facilities and identifying the project/s that any required contribution will be used towards. All of this should be carried out using the robust evidence base provided as part of the PPOSS to help with clearly justifying the needs arising and how they are to be met.

Step 1	Determine the playing pitch requirement resulting from the development
---------------	---

The main tool for determining this is Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator, which is a Sport England tool provided on completion of the Strategy. The calculator will be pre-populated with the current population of the local authority and the current demand data from the PPOSS. Until this requires updating, to determine the playing pitch requirement resulting from a development, all that is required is the input of the new population that will derive from a proposal.

The calculator provides an estimation of the number of new pitches that would be required to meet the match equivalent sessions that will derive from the development. The associated costs for providing these new pitches are also identified (although please note that these are indicative costs only and appropriate local work should be undertaken to determine the true costs involved).

Step 2	Determine whether new provision is required and whether this should be on or off site
---------------	--

For large-scale developments that generate high levels of demand, new pitch provision may be required to meet the population growth. This is particularly the case when the calculator identifies a need for multiple pitches and across multiple sports.

When on site provision is required, priority should be placed on the creation of multi-pitch and multi-sport sites with appropriate ancillary facilities such as a clubhouse and adequate car parking, as well as ensuring the provision contributes towards reducing current shortfalls. This will ensure that the provision is sustainable and attractive to potential users. Emphasis should also be on ensuring the site can accommodate an AGP given current sporting trends.

Other useful questions when deciding on new provision include:

- ◀ Are there any teams/clubs playing outside of the local area (displaced demand) which could utilise provision at the site?
- ◀ Do any local clubs identify existing plans/demand for access to new provision?
- ◀ Are there any overplayed sites in the local area where existing demand could be transferred to a new site?
- ◀ Do any local clubs identify any latent demand (i.e. if they had access to more pitches they could they field more teams?)

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

To further help determine the sustainability of establishing new provision, consideration should be given to the potential management opportunities which may be available onsite:

- ◀ Is the local authority (or town/parish council) in a position to take on further outdoor sports facilities from a financial point of view?
- ◀ Is an education establishment to be provided as part of the development which offers a potential management option of outdoor sports facilities?
- ◀ Is there a leisure trust in place which has the capacity to take on the management of outdoor sports facilities?
- ◀ Is there an opportunity for a trust based model of management, for example, by formation of a Community Interest Company (CIC) or Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)?
- ◀ Is there an existing sports club that has the capacity to take on the management of another site?

Where the calculator does not create demand for a whole pitch, which is often the case for smaller sized developments, it is recommended to make a contribution to increasing the capacity of an existing site to meet demand generated from the development. When identifying a site for off-site contributions, the proximity and location of existing playing pitch sites should be considered and whether they could help serve the new development – this could be informed by identifying the analysis area in which the development sits and if there are any hub sites or key centres within the locality. Initially, a one-mile radius could be drawn around the site in order to help identify the nearest priority sites, which may require consultation with neighbouring authorities when the development sites to close to the boundary.

The off-site decision should be based on the potential to improve existing facilities within an appropriate catchment of a development to create additional capacity, and how realistic it is given the nature of the local area to provide new provision. For example, there may be some poor quality playing fields that could potentially be improved with additional drainage and long-term maintenance works, along with enhanced changing provision, to enable use to be increased, thereby creating additional capacity to meet the increased demand generated from the development.

Discussions should be held with relevant parties (e.g. NGBs, landowners, facility operators and user groups), and any further necessary evidence gathered (e.g. a feasibility study) to help identify the specific works that are required, and to ensure they will provide the necessary additional capacity to meet the needs. It will also be important to demonstrate that the specific works can be delivered within an appropriate timescale in relation to the occupation of the development site.

Step 3	Determine the other pitch and non-pitch requirements resulting from the development
---------------	--

The Sports Facility Calculator now calculates tennis demand so this can therefore be used to inform tennis requirements; however, neither this nor the Playing Pitch Calculator determine needs for any other sports. That being said, the PPOSS identifies (where relevant) current and future demand requirements and can therefore still be used to determine if contributions are required towards these sports or if new provision is required, in conjunction with NGB discussions.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Where there is no identified shortfall in provision or future demand for new provision within an area relevant to the development (e.g. an analysis area or settlement), consideration should be given to the nearest site to the development containing that type of provision. If this could accommodate the increased demand from the development, no action is required; if it could not accommodate the demand, consider if the site could benefit from a contribution towards increasing capacity to meet likely need. For example, this could include increasing quality and/or addition of ancillary facilities such as floodlighting, changing rooms or car parking. The PPOSS Action Plan should be used as a starting point to identify site by site recommendations.

Where there is an identified shortfall that could not be overcome through contributions, new provision may be required within or nearby to the development as part a multi-sport development.

Step 4 Consider design principles for new provision

The exact nature and location of provision associated with onsite developments should be fully determined in partnership with each relevant NGB. Further to this, each pitch sport NGB provides national guidance in relation to provision of new pitches.

There is also a need to ensure that the location of outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities are appropriately located in the context of indoor sports provision (if also being provided onsite) to ensure a cohesive approach to the whole sporting offer.

Step 5 Calculate the financial contribution required

After using the Playing Pitch Calculator and the PPOSS as a starting point, the local cost of provision should be fully determined in order to calculate the financial contributions required.

A clear and transparent methodology for calculating up to date costs for the specific works, including appropriate ancillary provision, should be presented. Where appropriate, depending on how the needs are to be met, the cost of any required land purchase should be included in the financial contribution. If an obligation will be directed to an off-site project it should be ensured the costs are limited to meet the needs of the individual development.

Along with any capital costs for the works, an obligation should ensure an appropriate level of lifecycle costs towards the new or enhanced provision. This is required to cover the day to day maintenance for an agreed long-term period and to help ensure a sinking fund exists for any major replacement work, e.g. the future resurfacing of an artificial grass pitch. Wherever possible, specific local costs should be used, especially if the works are to improve the existing quality of a site to increase capacity as there may be a number of site specifics to consider. Sport England does provide indicative costs for new provision: <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>

For all developments community use agreements between providers and users would ensure that such demand continues to be provided for in the long-term.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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

The Local Authority and its partners should work to rectify identified inadequacies and meet identified shortfalls as outlined in the preceding Assessment Report and the sport-by-sport specific recommendations (Part 4) as well as the following Action Plan (Part 6).

It is important that the current levels of provision are protected, maintained and enhanced to secure provision both for now and in the future. Maximising use of existing provision through a combination of the following will help to reduce shortfalls and accommodate future demand:

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

Unmet demand, changes in sport participation and trends, and proposed housing growth should be recognised and factored into future facility planning. Assuming an increase in participation and housing growth occurs, it will impact on the future need for certain types of sports facilities. Sports development work also approximates unmet demand which cannot currently be quantified (i.e. it is not being suppressed by a lack of facilities) but is likely to occur. The following table highlights the main development trends in each sport and their likely impact on facilities. However, it is important to note that these may be subject to change.

Furthermore, retaining some spare capacity allows some pitches to be rested to protect overall pitch quality in the long-term. Therefore, whilst in some instances it may be appropriate to redesignate a senior pitch where there is low demand identified a holistic approach should be taken to re-designation for the reasons cited. The site-by-site action planning will seek to provide further clarification on where re-designation is suitable.

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

Recommendation (i) - Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand

The Steering Group should use and regularly update the Action Plan within this Strategy. The Action Plan lists recommendations for each site, focused upon both qualitative and quantitative improvements, which if delivered will lessen the need for new provision. Linked to the above and as evidenced in Part 4, although there are identified shortfalls of match equivalent sessions, most current and future demand is currently being met and most shortfalls for football, cricket and hockey can be addressed via quality improvements and/or improved access to sites that are presently used minimally or that are currently unavailable. Adding to the current stock, particularly in the short term, is therefore not recommended as a priority, except for 3G pitches and the shortfall for which cannot be reduced without new stock.

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

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

For housing developments, as outlined in Recommendation (g), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator can be used as a guide to inform requirements. See Part 7 for further information.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

PART 6: ACTION PLAN

The site-by-site action plan seeks to address key issues identified in the preceding Assessment Report. It provides recommendations based on current levels of usage, quality and future demand, as well as the potential of each site for enhancement. It is organised by Analysis Area and includes information pertaining to the sub sections below.

Site hierarchy

The Local Authority should make it a high priority to work with NGBs and other partners to comprise a priority list of actions based on local priorities, NGB priorities and available funding. As stated in Recommendation (e), to allow for facility developments to be programmed within a phased approach, the Local Authority should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of playing pitch sites and associated facilities.

The identification of sites is based on their strategic importance in a regional context i.e., they accommodate the majority of demand, or the recommended action has the greatest impact on addressing shortfalls identified either on a sport-by-sport basis or across the Local Authority area as a whole.

Table 6.1: Proposed tiered site criteria

Criteria	Hub sites	Key centres	Local sites
Site location	Strategically located in the Authority. Priority sites for NGBs.	Strategically located within the analysis area.	Serves the local community.
Site layout	Accommodates three or more grass pitches, generally including provision of an AGP (or with the potential).	Accommodates two or more grass pitches.	Accommodates one or two pitches.
Type of sport	Multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision.	Generally single sport provision but may cater for two.
Management	Management control allows for wide community use, i.e., through the local authority, a leisure operator or a school with a community use agreement.	Management control generally allows for wide community use but may include sites that are owned or leased by clubs/other organisations.	Management control can be via the local authority, schools and clubs.
Maintenance regime	Maintenance regime aligns or could align with NGB guidelines.	Maintenance regime aligns or could align with NGB guidelines.	Standard maintenance regime or an in-house maintenance contract.
Ancillary facilities	Good quality ancillary facilities on site (or potential), with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches; may include wider social/function facilities.	Good quality ancillary facility on site (or potential), with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Limited or no changing room access on site.

Hub sites are of an Authority wide importance where users are willing to travel to access the range and high quality of facilities offered and are likely to be multi-sport.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

These have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the issues identified in the assessment.

Key centres are more community focused, although some are still likely to service a wider analysis area (or slightly wider); however, there may be more of a focus on a specific sport i.e., a dedicated site.

It is considered that some financial investment may be necessary to improve the facilities at both hub sites and key sites. This could be to improve the provision, create additional provision (e.g., a 3G pitch) or to enhance the ancillary facilities in terms of access, flexibility (i.e., single-sex changing if necessary) and quality as well as ensuring that they meet the rules and regulations of local competitions.

Local sites refer to those sites offering minimal provision or that are of minimal value to the wider community. Primarily they are sites with one pitch/facility or a low number of pitches/facilities that service just one or two sports (e.g., bowling green sites).

For local sites, consideration should be given, on a site-by-site basis, to the feasibility of a club taking on a long-term lease (if not already present), in order that external funding can be sought. Such sites will require some level of investment, either to the outdoor sport facilities or ancillary facilities and is it anticipated that one of the conditions of offering a hire/lease is that the Club would be in a position to source external funding to improve/extend the provision.

Other sites considered in this tier may be primary school sites or secondary school sites that are not widely used by the community or that do not offer community availability.

Partners

The column indicating partners in the Action Plans below refers to the main organisations that the Local Authority (or the relevant provider) would look to work with to support delivery of the actions.

Given the extent of potential actions, it is reasonable to assume that partners will not necessarily be able to support all the actions identified but where the action is a priority and resource is available the partner will endeavour to assist.

As all sites sit within the local authority area, the Local Authority is considered to be a partner for each identified action (as the column indicates partners for the Local Authority) and is therefore not included. However, it is acknowledged that it will take on more of a leading role for some specific sites and some specific actions (e.g., at Local Authority venues).

Priority

Although hub sites are mostly likely to have a **high** level actions, as they have wide importance, high priority sites have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the key issues identified in the assessment. Therefore, some key centres and local sites are also identified as having a high priority level. It is these projects/sites which should generally, if possible, be addressed within the short term (1-2 years).

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The majority of key centres have **medium** priority actions. These have analysis area importance and are identified on the basis of the impact that they will have on addressing the issues identified in the assessment, although not to the same extent as high priority actions. The **low** priority actions tend to be for single pitch or single sport sites and often club or education sites with local specific importance but that may also contribute to addressing the issues identified in the assessment for specific users. Whilst low priority, there may be opportunities to action some of the recommendations made against such sites relatively quickly e.g., through S106 funding.

Costs

The strategic actions have also been ranked as low, medium, or high based on cost. The brackets are:

- ◀ (L) - Low - less than £150k.
- ◀ (M) - Medium - £150k-£750k.
- ◀ (H) - High £750k and above.

These are based on Sport England's estimated facility costs which can be found at: [Facility cost guidance | Sport England](#)

Timescales

The Action Plan has been created to be delivered over a ten-year period and the information within the Assessment Report, Strategy and Action Plan will require updating as developments occur. The indicative timescales relate to delivery times and are not priority based:

- ◀ (S) -Short (1-2 years).
- ◀ (M) - Medium (3-5 years).
- ◀ (L) - Long (6+ years).

Aim

Each action seeks to meet at least one of the three Sport England aims of the Strategy; **Enhance, Provide, Protect.**

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

STEVENAGE

Summary pitch sports (Stevenage)

Sport	Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES ^[1]	Future capacity total in MES (2043)
Football (grass)	Adult	Shortfall of 1	Shortfall of 1.5
Football (grass)	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 3.5	Shortfall of 4.5
Football (grass)	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 1.5	Shortfall of 2
Football (grass)	Mini 7v7	Actual spare capacity of 0.5	At capacity
Football (grass)	Mini 5v5	At capacity	Shortfall of 0.5
Football (3G)	11v11, floodlit	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 2
Rugby union	Senior	At capacity	At capacity
Cricket	Saturday	At capacity	At capacity
Cricket	Sunday	Spare capacity of 16	Spare capacity of 16
Cricket	Midweek	Spare capacity of 20	Spare capacity of 20
Hockey (sand AGPs)	Full size, floodlit	Adequate provision to accommodate current supply.	Pitch quality at The Nobel School is deteriorating in quality, provide a replacement surface during the lifespan of the PPOSS to accommodate current supply. Ensure a sink fund is financially prepared at The Nobel School.

^[1] MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Summary of non-pitch sports (Stevenage)

Sport	Current picture	Future picture
Tennis (Recreational)	The overall supply of non-club tennis provision in Stevenage is sufficient to meet demand.	The picture is expected to be the same over the lifespan of the PPOSS.
Tennis (Club tennis)	The courts at Lister Tennis Club are currently meeting demand with potential spare capacity. The Club expresses no ambitions to expand its current members. Lister Tennis Club has a lease with 10 years remaining but faces potential relocation due to the landlord's interest in redeveloping the site for housing. While the Club prefers to stay, it is also exploring alternative locations.	Lister Tennis Club can accommodate future demand with no shortfalls. Monitor the progress of the landlords housing development plans and the club's relocation plans. Provide further support should it be necessary.
Tennis (Padel)	There is an identified need to support Padel developments across the Authority, with potential development at King George V Playing Fields to install padel courts on the disused courts.	Potential shortfall unless provision has been developed.
Netball	Demand for outdoor netball is accommodated at Marriott Sport Centre, where a Play Netball League is hosted twice a week. There is a healthy supply of netball courts at education sites which service curricular demand.	Demand expected to be met at this site. Quality will need to be sustained and improved when needed.
Lawn bowls	Both sites within the authority provide good quality greens, with no capacity issues known.	ONS projections (2018-2031), identify there is a continuous increase in the numbers of persons aged 65+. There was an increase of +8.4% (+1,160) in the first period and numbers will continue to rise to +23.5% (+3,136) between 2018 and 2031. While the age group represented 15.2% of Stevenage's population in 2018 it is projected to be 18.4% of the total by 2031 - almost one fifth of the population. This could put additional pressure on greens and should be monitored through Stage E.
Athletics	Demand is currently being met at the Ridlins Wood Athletic Track. The quality of the track is beginning to deteriorate and will need to be considered for improvement over the lifespan of the PPOSS.	Demand met by the existing track. Given the age of the surface SBC should work with the relevant stakeholders to improve the track.
Golf	With one golf course in Stevenage, which operates as a standard 18-hole course as well as a 9-hole par-3 course and providing a covered driving range, there is adequate provision to accommodate all types of golfers.	Clubs should look to further increase in membership figures in reflection of the increasing population rates and England Golf's goal of increasing in members.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Area recommendations

Sport	Priority recommendations
Football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Protect provision. ◀ Improve pitch quality especially at key, poor quality and/or overplayed sites such as Ridlins Wood Playing Field, Peartree Park, King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage) and The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields. ◀ Explore improving the ancillary provision at relevant sites such King George V Playing Fields and Shephalbury Park. ◀ Utilise actual spare capacity. ◀ Explore reconfiguring pitch layouts of sites as a means of reducing overplay and creating actual spare capacity. ◀ Look at schools providing Community Use Agreements to utilise actual spare capacity and protect clubs access to grass pitches on school sites. ◀ Look at reintroducing unused provision at council owned sites at Canterbury Park, Chells Park, Hampson Park, St Nicholas Park and Paul Mallaghan Playing Fields to help to alleviate identified overplay, alongside improve and provide ancillary provision at the sites.
3G pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Protect provision. ◀ Look to increase the total supply of provision to reduce the shortfall of two 11v11 pitches. ◀ Explore potential site projects identified in Stevenage LFFP (2025) for an installation for a 11v11 3G. ◀ Ensure all future pitches have a pitch replacement funds in place. ◀ Ensure all future pitches look to be placed on the FA register to host competitive matches. ◀ Ensure all current FA accredited pitches have the necessary tests to remain on the FA register. ◀ Explore reaccrediting Stevenage FC Academy seven 3G pitches on the FA register. ◀ Ensure the existing pitches have pitch replacement funds in place to ensure the long-term use of the site. ◀ Ensure use of the John Henry Newman School 3G pitch is maximised to support the 3G training need in the Authority. ◀ Once Stevenage FC assumes management of Valley Sport Academy, it is essential to establish arrangements for community access and ensure that any clubs currently using the site are offered appropriate alternative facilities if the site will not be available for community use for the 2025/26 season.
Rugby union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Protect provision. ◀ Monitor Stevenage Town RUFC and its potential place to relocate outside of the Authority. If the Club is to relocate ensure the new site has two senior pitches and an ancillary provision with four changing rooms. ◀ If Stevenage Town RUFC is to remain at its current site improvements should be made to the poor quality ancillary provision provided. ◀ Explore the Club creating a secure formal agreement, to create actual spare capacity.
Hockey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Protect provision. ◀ Protect the provision at The Nobel School as is the only full sized AGP within the authority. ◀ Ensure the existing pitch at The Nobel School is provided with a replacement surface during the lifespan of the PPOSS to enhance pitch quality, due to its deteriorating surface. ◀ Look to identify a suitable site within Stevenage for a new full sized AGP to service hockey demand within Stevenage, North Hertfordshire and East Hertfordshire.
Cricket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Protect provision. ◀ Utilise spare capacity. ◀ Look to improve the ancillary provisions provided at King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage).

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Sport	Priority recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Look to formalise a longer-term tenure agreement for Stevenage CC and the Council to protect the clubs access to King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage). ◀ Look to deliver the new cricket facility tied to the Stevenage West housing development to give Stevenage Cricket Club another useable facility.
Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Protect provision. ◀ Monitor Lister TC and any future relocation plans. ◀ Explore installing sports lighting on courts at Shepalbury Park. ◀ Explore improving the ancillary provision at King George V Playing Fields, alongside the development of the padel courts.
Netball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Protect provision. ◀ Protect Play Netball League at Marriotts Sports Centre, as only outdoor netball league operating within the authority. ◀ Look to resurface the courts at Marriotts Sports Centre to improve the Play Netball League.
Lawn bowls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Protect provision.
Athletics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Protect provision. ◀ Explore options to improve the quality of surface of the athletics track at Ridlings Wood Athletics Track. ◀ Consider the installation of play, mini, compact and active tracks as to provide the Analysis Area with athletics provision.
Golf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Protect provision.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

STEVENAGE HIGH PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹⁰	Cost ¹¹	Aim
2	Barclay Academy	Football	School	Two adult, one youth 11v11, two youth 9v9, two mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 all standard quality. The pitches are accessed by Down and Under FC, Niche FC and Fairlands Youth. All pitches have actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. Site has been identified as a potential project for 11v11 3G pitch in the Stevenage LFFP.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to reduce overplay. Explore possibility of installing an 11v11 3G pitch at site.	School HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide
3	Barnwell School (Middle)	3G	School	One small sized (40m x 30m) 3G, FA approved pitch that is open to community use. The pitch was installed in 2020 and is of standard quality. AFC Walkern recently funded the installation of sports lighting, giving the Club exclusive access for midweek training during the winter period. The 3G pitch is only accessible midweek between 18:00 to 19:00 due to a planning agreement for noise restrictions with the neighbouring houses. Site has been identified as a potential project for 11v11 3G pitch in the Stevenage LFFP.	Look to maximise usage of the site as to best support football demand and increase revenue. Explore, if possible, to extend opening times under a new planning agreement. Ensure a future sink fund is in place for carpet replacements when required. Explore possibility of installing 11v11 3G pitch at site.	School HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect Enhance Provide
4	Barnwell School (Upper)	Football	School	Two adult pitches both of poor quality, that is accessed by Stevenage Borough Juniors. The adult pitches are played at capacity. Site has been identified as a potential project for 11v11 3G pitch in the Stevenage LFFP.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Explore possibility of installing 11v11 3G pitch at site.	School HFA, FF	Local	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Football	Local Authority	One adult, one youth 9v9 pitches, two mini 7v7 and two mini 5v5 pitches all of standard quality accessed by Stevenage Borough Juniors. The adult pitch is overplayed by 1 MES. The youth 9v9 pitch is used at capacity. The mini 7v7 pitches has actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES. Finally, the mini 5v5 pitches has no actual spare capacity. Stevenage Borough Juniors invested in improved maintenance, including verti-draining and aeration. Public use and firework debris have impacted conditions. Maintenance is shared with the Council cuts the grass, while the Club marks pitches and owns the goals. Ancillary provision is of a poor quality. Stevenage Borough Juniors notes that changing facilities are used for storage and toilets are inaccessible. Site has been identified in the Stevenage LFFP for ancillary improvements.	Utilise actual spare capacity. Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to reduce overplay. Explore providing the Club access to ancillary provision and improving quality. Enhancing the ancillary provision is essential alongside the planned development of padel courts and a PlayZone. Upgrading facility quality would significantly enhance the overall user experience and enable the site to better accommodate and engage a wider community base.	Local Authority HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide

¹⁰ (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

¹¹ (L) -Low - less than £150k; (M) -Medium - £150k-£750k; (H) -High £750k and above

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹⁰	Cost ¹¹	Aim
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Tennis	Local Authority	Courts are currently disused due to being damaged. The FA and FF are planning to install a PlayZone on the disused courts. SBC are also considering installing padel provision on the courts alongside the PlayZone. Stevenage LFFP for ancillary improvements.	Ensure PlayZone is completed and maintained to sufficient standard. Explore installing padel courts as is currently no provision within the authority. Enhance ancillary provision.	Local Authority LTA, FA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide
16	Lister Tennis Club	Tennis	Sports Club	Two good and one standard quality sports lit outdoor polymeric courts that are open to community use. Alongside two standard quality sports lit polymeric courts covered by an air dome. The courts are serviced by standard quality ancillary provision. The Club holds a lease with around 10 years remaining. There has been an historical aspiration by the site owner to develop the site and relocate the Club. This is due to the fact the site has been identified for potential housing development. The Club has spare capacity for 280 members, however express no ambitions for any future growth.	Utilise spare capacity. Sustain court quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime. Monitor the tenure position of the Club and any developments in regard to a re-location.	Sports club LTA	Key Centre	H	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide
25	Ridlins Wood Playing Field	Football	Local Authority	One adult, one youth 11v11, one youth 9v9 and two mini 7v7 all of which are of poor quality, accessed by AFC Walkern, Broadhall Youth, and IMI Football Academy. All pitches have actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality. The site has a good ancillary provision located by the athletics track, but clubs can't access it. AFC Walkern reports the pitches are poorly maintained, with incorrect goal and line placements.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to create actual spare capacity. Explore providing the clubs with access to the ancillary facilities to accommodate the youth teams.	Local Authority HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide
24	Ridlins Wood Athletics Track	Athletics	Local Authority	Site has a standard quality 400m sports lit track that is open to community use and accessed Stevenage and North Herts Athletic Club, Fairlands Valley Spartans, and North Herts Runners. The track was last resurfaced in 2010. The site is a key facility serving the athletic needs of both Stevenage and North Hertfordshire, where no dedicated track exists. The site provisions good quality ancillary provision. England Athletics will reassess Ridlins Wood Athletic Track TrackMark accreditation in October 2025, which is same year the estimated resurface is predicted.	Work to improve the surface of the athletics track. Consider the development of additional track provisions, such as play, compact, mini, or active tracks, to enhance accessibility and participation in athletics.	Local Authority EA	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide
26	Shephalbury Park	Football	Local Authority	Two youth 11v11 both are of poor quality, accessed by AFC Walkern and Shephal	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to reduce overplay.	Local Authority HFA, FF	Local	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹⁰	Cost ¹¹	Aim
				<p>United FC. Pitches are overlaid by 0.5 MES.</p> <p>The site has a poor ancillary provision. AFC Walkern has no access to onsite facilities, causing the girls' team to move to a site with toilets and changing rooms.</p> <p>SBC confirm the temporary ancillary provision has been decommissioned.</p> <p>The site has been identified for ancillary improvement in the Stevenage LFFP.</p> <p>AFC Walkern reports pitch issues, including uneven cutting, surface holes, poor drainage, and worn goal mouths.</p>	<p>Explore providing the clubs with access to the ancillary facilities to accommodate the youth teams. Alongside improving the quality of the facilities, in line with the Stevenage LFFP.</p>						
26	Shephalbury Park	Tennis	Local Authority	<p>Five good quality macadam courts that are open to community use and non-sports lit. The Council have ambitions to install sports lighting on each court.</p> <p>The site provides no ancillary provision.</p> <p>The courts are bookable through the online ClubSpark.</p>	<p>Sustain court quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime.</p> <p>Explore installation of sports lighting.</p>	Local Authority LTA	Local	H	S	L	Protect Enhance Provide
35	Stevenage Town RUFC	Rugby Union	Sports Club	<p>Two senior rugby pitches of standard quality (M1/D1). Both pitches are serviced by sports lighting.</p> <p>The site has poor ancillary facilities and has had issues with vandalism in the past. There are no separate changing spaces for women and girls. Upgrading these is the Club's main priority.</p> <p>The Club has unsecure tenure due to no formal lease agreement being in place.</p> <p>The Club has historically considered relocations options, but these have not materialised.</p> <p>The site has been identified for potential housing development.</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.</p> <p>Look to source developer contributions to fit pipe and slit drainage to the two senior pitches as a means of improving pitch quality.</p> <p>Monitor the clubs ambitions to either remain at its current site or relocate to a new site.</p> <p>If the Club is to remain at its current site investment should be made to improve the poor-quality ancillary provision and improve the maintenance and drainage of the playing pitches.</p> <p>If the Club is to relocate to a new site it must have two senior pitches and be serviced by an ancillary provision with four changing rooms and a form of social space.</p> <p>Consider formalising a longer term tenure agreement with the Club and the landowner.</p>	Sports club RFU	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide
36	The Nobel School	AGP	School	<p>One standard quality, full sized (102m x 63m) AGP that is sports lit and open to community use. The site is accessed by Stevenage HC for games and training.</p> <p>The pitch was last resurfaced in 2012, and the quality is beginning to deteriorate.</p> <p>The site also experiences football demand for training from AFC Walkern and Bedwell Rangers.</p> <p>The pitch is used to capacity by hockey on a Saturday but there is potential spare capacity on a Sunday for junior fixtures to be</p>	<p>Look to maximise usage of the site as to best support hockey demand and increase revenue.</p> <p>Given the pitch is 13 years old and deteriorating in quality, provide a replacement surface during the lifespan of the PPOSS to enhance pitch quality.</p> <p>Ensure a future sink fund is in place for carpet replacements when required.</p> <p>With the loss of John Henry Newman AGP to a 3G surface, protect this site for</p>	School EH, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹⁰	Cost ¹¹	Aim
				accommodated instead of training and for some additional usage. The site is managed by the school.	hockey use as is only provision in the authority.						
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Football	School	One youth 11v11, two youth 9v9, one mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitches. The youth 11v11 and mini 7v7 are of poor quality, whereas the youth 9v9 and mini 5v5 pitches are of standard quality. The youth 11v11 pitch is overplayed by 2.5 MES and is overmarked with a senior rugby pitch. The youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 have no actual space capacity due to unsecure tenure. The site had an PitchPower assessment in 2024 as the school are aiming to secure support for improving the surface and drainage. The site is accessed by Stevenage Starlets FC. The Club report the site provides access to toilets but no changing facilities. Site has been identified as a potential project for 11v11 3G pitch in the Stevenage LFFP.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to reduce overplay. Explore possibility of installing 11v11 3G pitch at site.	School HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide
-	Stevenage West Development (new site)	Cricket	Local Authority	As part of the Stevenage West housing development the delivery of a new NTP and pavilion has been outlined. This will then look to be enhanced to a grass wicket square further into the delivery of the housing development. Once delivered this will provide Stevenage Cricket Club with another useable facility and remove the clubs need to access Graveley Cricket Club.	Ensure a new NTP and ancillary provision is delivered as part of the Stevenage West development to provide Stevenage Cricket Club with a new site. Once the NTP and ancillary provision has been delivered look to fit grass wickets to accompany the NTP to give the Club another useable grass wicket square.	Local Authority ECB, HCCC, SE	Local	H	M	H	Provide
-	New site	AGP	Local Authority	The Stevenage, East Hertfordshire and North Hertfordshire 2025 Playing Pitch Strategies have identified the need for a new AGP.	Work with the necessary stakeholders to develop a new AGP to support the need across Stevenage, East Hertfordshire and North Hertfordshire. If possible this should be in a location to allow it to service demand from all three Authorities.	Local Authority EH, SE, NHDC, SBC	Key Centre	H	L	H	Provide

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

STEVENAGE ACTION PLAN

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim
1	Ashtree Primary School	Football	School	One youth 9v9 and one mini 7v7 pitches both of poor quality, that is accessed by Stevenage Borough Juniors. Both pitches have actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality for current use. Explore options to improve in the future.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide
2	Barclay Academy	Football	School	Two adult, one youth 11v11, two youth 9v9, 2 mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 all standard quality. The pitches are accessed by Down and Under FC, Niche FC and Fairlands Youth. All pitches have actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. Site has been identified as a potential project for 11v11 3G pitch in the Stevenage LFFP.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to reduce overplay. Explore possibility of installing an 11v11 3G pitch at site.	School HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide
2	Barclay Academy	AGP	School	One standard quality, sports lit, small sized (59m x 37m) AGP that is open to community use and accessed by IMI Football Academy and Stevenage Starlets FC. Pitch was last re-surfaced in 2012. The site does not accommodate any hockey usage, only football demand. The site is managed by a commercial operator.	Look to maximise usage of the site as to best support football demand and increase revenue. Explore if Stevenage HC be interest in accessing site to accommodate training demand or junior matches. Given the pitch is 13 years old provide a replacement surface during the lifespan of the PPOSS to enhance pitch quality. Ensure a future sink fund is in place for carpet replacements when required.	School EH, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide
3	Barnwell School (Middle)	Football	School	One youth 11v11 and one mini 7v7 pitches both of standard quality, that is accessed by Stevenage Borough Juniors. All pitches have actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime.	School HFA, FF	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide
3	Barnwell School (Middle)	3G	School	One small sized (40m x 30m) 3G, FA approved pitch that is open to community use. The pitch was installed in 2020 and is of standard quality. AFC Walkern recently funded the installation of sports lighting, giving the Club exclusive access for midweek training during the winter period. The 3G pitch is only accessible midweek between 18:00 to 19:00 due to a planning agreement for noise restrictions with the neighbouring houses. Site has been identified as a potential project for 11v11 3G pitch in the Stevenage LFFP.	Look to maximise usage of the site as to best support football demand and increase revenue. Explore, if possible, to extend opening times under a new planning agreement. Ensure a future sink fund is in place for carpet replacements when required. Explore possibility of installing 11v11 3G pitch at site.	School HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect Enhance Provide
3	Barnwell School (Middle)	Tennis / Netball	School	Three good quality macadam courts that are open for community use. The courts are overmarked with netball markings.	Sustain court quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime.	School LTA, EN	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide
4	Barnwell School (Upper)	Football	School	Two adult pitches both of poor quality, that is accessed by Stevenage Borough Juniors. The adult pitches are played at capacity.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	School HFA, FF	Local	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide

¹² (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

¹³ (L) -Low - less than £150k; (M) -Medium - £150k-£750k; (H) -High £750k and above

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim
				Site has been identified as a potential project for 11v11 3G pitch in the Stevenage LFFP.	Explore possibility of installing 11v11 3G pitch at site.						
4	Barnwell School (Upper)	Tennis / Netball	School	Four poor quality macadam courts that are open for community use. The courts are overmarked with netball markings	Look to resurface courts as to better service community and curricular demand.	School LTA, EN	Local	L	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide
5	Bedwell Primary School	Football	School	One youth 9v9 and one mini 7v7 pitches both of poor quality. The pitches are not open to community use. Site has received a PitchPower report.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
7	Canterbury Park	Football (unused)	Local Authority	Unused provision which formerly provided two adult, two youth 11v11 and one mini 7v7 pitches. Previously provided a small pavilion, but this was demolished in 2020, and the site now has no ancillary provision.	Consider bringing the pitches back into use given shortfalls identified. This will require developing a new ancillary provision to service the site.	Local Authority FA, FF	Local	M	M	H	Protect Provide Enhance
8	Chells Park	Football (unused)	Local Authority	Unused provision which formerly provided two adult and two youth 11v11 pitches. Currently has an old brick building on site which is being accessed by Noah's Ark Nursery under a long-term lease with SBC.	Consider bringing the pitches back into use given shortfalls identified.	Local Authority FA, FF	Local	M	M	M	Protect Provide
9	Fairlands Primary School	Football	School	One youth 9v9 and two mini 5v5 pitches, all of poor quality. The pitches are not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
10	Featherstone Wood Primary School	Football	School	One youth 9v9 and two mini 5v5 pitches, all of standard quality accessed by Shephall United FC. All pitches have actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide
11	Giles Junior School	Football	School	Two youth 9v9 and two mini 5v5 pitches, both of standard quality accessed by Bedwell Rangers. Bedwell Rangers has contributed to improving the pitches. Both pitches have actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide
11	Giles Junior School	AGP	School	One poor quality, small sized (42m x 22m) AGP that is open to community use and accessed by Bedwell Rangers. Pitch was installed in 2000 and is on its original surface. The site does not accommodate any hockey usage, only football demand. The site is managed by the school.	Look to maximise usage of the site as to best support football demand and increase revenue. Explore if Stevenage HC would be interest in accessing site to accommodate training demand or junior matches. Given the pitch is 25 years old and of poor quality, provide a replacement surface during the lifespan of the PPOSS to enhance pitch quality. Ensure a future sink fund is in place for carpet replacements when required. Consider installing sports lighting to increase opening hours to accommodate football demand.	School EH, HFA, FF	Local	M	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim
12	Hampson Park	Football (unused)	Local Authority	Unused provision which formerly provided two youth 11v11, one youth 9v9 and two mini 7v7 pitches. Provides a brick building, which is operated as the Hampson Park Community Centre.	Consider bringing the pitches back into use given shortfalls identified.	Local Authority FA, FF	Local	M	M	M	Protect Provide
13	John Henry Newman School	Football	School	One adult, one youth 11v11 and one youth 9v9 pitches, all of standard quality accessed by Stevenage Borough Juniors. The adult and youth 9v9 pitch has actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. The youth 11v11 pitch is used at capacity. Site has received a PitchPower report.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	School HFA, FF	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide
13	John Henry Newman School	3G	School	Site has a sports lit 11v11 3G that was converted from a full sized AGP in May 2025. The school provides access to toilets but no changing rooms facilities.	Look to maximise usage of the site as to best support football demand and increase revenue. Ensure a future sink fund is in place for carpet replacements when required.	School HFA, FF	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect Provide
13	John Henry Newman School	Cricket	School	Site has two standalone NTP.	Protect for curricular use	School ECB, HCCC	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect
13	John Henry Newman School	Tennis / Netball	School	Five standard quality macadam courts that are serviced by sports lightings and open for community use. The courts are overmarked with netball markings	Sustain pitch quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime.	School LTA, EN	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Cricket	Local Authority	One standard quality square and outfield with poor quality ancillary provision. Site is accessed by Stevenage Cricket Club as a secondary venue; however, the Club has no formal tenure agreement. The Club also access its own clubhouse facilities on the neighbouring site. Potential spare capacity on site for Sunday and midweek cricket.	Improve square quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Utilise spare capacity. Enhancing the ancillary provision is essential alongside the planned development of padel courts and a PlayZone. Upgrading facility quality would significantly enhance the overall user experience and enable the site to better accommodate and engage a wider cross-section of the community. Explore securing formal tenure agreement between the Club and council to access site.	Local Authority ECB, HCCC	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Football	Local Authority	One adult, one youth 9v9 pitches, two mini 7v7 and two mini 5v5 pitches all of standard quality accessed by Stevenage Borough Juniors. The adult pitch is overplayed by 1 MES. The youth 9v9 pitch is used at capacity. The mini 7v7 pitches has actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES. Finally, the mini 5v5 pitches has no actual spare capacity. Stevenage Borough Juniors invested in improved maintenance, including verti-draining and aeration. Public use and firework debris have impacted conditions. Maintenance is shared with the Council cuts the grass, while the Club marks pitches and owns the goals. Ancillary provision is of a poor quality. Stevenage Borough Juniors notes that	Utilise actual spare capacity. Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to reduce overplay. Explore providing the Club access to ancillary provision and improving quality. Enhancing the ancillary provision is essential alongside the planned development of padel courts and a PlayZone. Upgrading facility quality would significantly enhance the overall user experience and enable the site to better accommodate and engage a wider cross-section of the community.	Local Authority HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim
				changing facilities are used for storage and toilets are inaccessible. Site has been identified in the Stevenage LFFP for ancillary improvements.							
14	King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage)	Tennis	Local Authority	Courts are currently disused due to being damaged. The FA and FF are planning to install a PlayZone on the disused courts. SBC are also considering installing padel provision on the courts alongside the PlayZone. Stevenage LFFP for ancillary improvements.	Ensure PlayZone is completed and maintained to sufficient standard. Explore installing padel courts as is currently no provision within the authority. Enhance ancillary provision.	Local Authority LTA, FA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	H	
15	Larwood School	3G	School	One poor quality small sized (30m x 16m) 3G that is open to community use. No clubs consulted with report any usage on the 3G. Pitch is on its original 2008 surface. The site is managed by the school.	Look to maximise usage of the site as to best support football demand and increase revenue. Given the pitch is 17 years old and of poor quality, provide a replacement surface during the lifespan of the PPOSS to enhance pitch quality. Ensure a future sink fund is in place for carpet replacements when required. Consider installing sports lighting to increase opening hours to accommodate football demand.	School HFA, FF	Local	M	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide
15	Larwood School	Cricket	School	Site has one standalone NTP.	Protect for curricular use	School ECB, HCCC	Local	L	L	L	Protect
16	Lister Tennis Club	Tennis	Sports Club	Two good and one standard quality sports lit outdoor polymeric courts that are open to community use. Alongside two standard quality sports lit polymeric courts covered by an air dome. The courts are serviced by standard quality ancillary provision. The Club holds a lease with around 10 years remaining. There has been an historical aspiration by the site owner to develop the site and relocate the Club. This is due to the fact the site has been identified for potential housing development. The Club has spare capacity for 280 members, however express no ambitions for any future growth.	Utilise spare capacity. Sustain court quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime. Monitor the tenure position of the Club and any developments in regard to a re-location.	Sports club LTA	Key Centre	H	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide
17	Longmeadow Primary School	Football	School	One poor quality youth 9v9 pitch, which is not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
18	Marriotts School	Football	School	Two adult, one youth 11v11 and one youth 9v9 pitches, and one mini 7v7 all of standard quality accessed by Bedwell Rangers and Watton Youth. The adult and mini 7v7 pitches has actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. The youth 11v11 pitch is overplayed by 0.5 MES and the youth 9v9 pitch is overplayed by 1.5 MES. The site provides poor quality ancillary provision. With two changing rooms and an official's room. The school states there has	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to reduce overplay. Explore improving ancillary provision on site.	School HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim
				been antisocial behaviour issues causing damage to the pavilion.							
18	Marriotts School	Cricket	School	Site has one standalone NTP.	Protect for curricular use	School ECB, HCCC	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect
19	Marriotts Sports Centre	3G	School	One full sized (90m x 52m) sports lit 3G, FA approved pitch that is open to community use. The pitch was resurfaced in 2023 and is of good quality. The pitch is accessed by Bedwell Rangers, Stevenage Borough Juniors, and Watton Youth. The site is serviced by standard quality ancillary provision. The 3G pitch is managed by the school.	Look to maximise usage of the site as to best support football demand and increase revenue. Sustain 3G quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime. Ensure a future sink fund is in place for carpet replacements when required.	School HFA, FF	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide
19	Marriotts Sports Centre	Tennis / Netball	School	Six standard quality macadam courts across two separate areas. Three courts are serviced by sports lighting and open to community use, the other three are not. The courts are overmarked with netball markings. The Stevenage Play Netball League is based on Monday and Tuesday evenings from 19:00- 21:00 at the site. The site accommodates the only outdoor netball in the Authority.	Sustain court quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime. During the lifespan of the PPS look to resurface the courts at the site to improve the user experience for the Stevenage Play Netball League. Protect Play Netball League, as only outdoor netball league operating within the authority.	School LTA, EN	Key Centre	H	M	M	Protect Enhance Provide
20	Martins Wood Primary School	Football	School	One youth 9v9 pitch, one mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 all of which are of poor quality and not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
21	Meadway Playing Field	Football	Local Authority	Two poor quality adult pitches accessed by AFC Walkern. Both pitches have actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality. The site includes a standard quality bricked building with a changing room and toilet, along with good car parking. The building will be demolished for a new access road, and a new pavilion will be built in its place. However, the club is unable to access the current ancillary provision.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to create actual spare capacity. Provide the Club with access to the new ancillary provisions once completed.	Local Authority HFA, FF	Local	M	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide
22	Moss Bury Primary School And Nursery	Football	School	One mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 both of which are of standard quality, accessed by AFC Walkern. Both pitches have actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide
23	Peartree Park	Football	Local Authority	One youth 11v11 and one youth 9v9 both of which are of poor quality, accessed by Bedwell Rangers FC, Broadhall Youth, and IMI Football Academy. Both pitches have actual spare capacity discounted due poor pitch quality. The site has a standard ancillary provision, but clubs can't access it, which is especially frustrating for the girls' teams. SBC confirm this has been decommissioned due to boiler and water issues.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to create actual spare capacity. Explore providing the clubs with access to the ancillary facilities to accommodate the youth teams.	Local Authority HFA, FF	Local	M	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim
				IMI FA reports poor pitch quality, frequent waterlogging causing cancellations and fixture reversals, and misaligned goals.							
24	Ridlins Wood Athletics Track	Athletics	Local Authority	<p>Site has a standard quality 400m sports lit track that is open to community use and accessed Stevenage and North Herts Athletic Club, Fairlands Valley Spartans, and North Herts Runners. The track was last resurfaced in 2010.</p> <p>The site is a key facility serving the athletics needs of both Stevenage and North Hertfordshire, where no dedicated track exists.</p> <p>The site provisions good quality ancillary provision.</p> <p>England Athletics will reassess Ridlins Wood Athletic Track TrackMark accreditation in October 2025, which is same year the estimated resurface is predicted.</p>	<p>Undertake a TrackMark accreditation assessment of the track to determine the remaining lifespan of the surface.</p> <p>Following this prepare to resurface the track at the suggested time following the TrackMark assessment.</p>	Local Authority EA	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide
25	Ridlins Wood Playing Field	Football	Local Authority	<p>One adult, one youth 11v11, one youth 9v9 and two mini 7v7 all of which are of poor quality, accessed by AFC Walkern, Broadhall Youth, and IMI Football Academy. All pitches have actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.</p> <p>The site has a good ancillary provision located by the athletics track, but clubs can't access it.</p> <p>AFC Walkern reports the pitches are poorly maintained, with incorrect goal and line placements.</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to create actual spare capacity.</p> <p>Explore providing the clubs with access to the ancillary facilities to accommodate the youth teams.</p>	Local Authority HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide
26	Shephalbury Park	Football	Local Authority	<p>Two youth 11v11 both are of poor quality, accessed by AFC Walkern and Shephall United FC. Pitches are overplayed by 0.5 MES.</p> <p>The site has a poor ancillary provision. AFC Walkern has no access to onsite facilities, causing the girls' team to move to a site with toilets and changing rooms.</p> <p>SBC confirm the temporary ancillary provision has been decommissioned.</p> <p>The site has been identified for ancillary improvement in the Stevenage LFFP.</p> <p>AFC Walkern reports pitch issues, including uneven cutting, surface holes, poor drainage, and worn goal mouths.</p>	<p>Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to reduce overplay.</p> <p>Explore providing the clubs with access to the ancillary facilities to accommodate the youth teams. Alongside improving the quality of the facilities, in line with the Stevenage LFFP.</p>	Local Authority HFA, FF	Local	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide
26	Shephalbury Park	Tennis	Local Authority	<p>Five good quality macadam courts that are open to community use and non-sports lit. The Council have ambitions to install sports lighting on each court.</p> <p>The site provides no ancillary provision.</p> <p>The courts are bookable through the online ClubSpark.</p>	<p>Sustain court quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime.</p> <p>Explore installation of sports lighting.</p>	Local Authority LTA	Local	H	S	L	Protect Enhance Provide

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim
27	Shephalbury Park Primary School	Football	School	Two standard quality youth 9v9 pitches that are not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School NFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
28	St Margaret Clitherow Roman Catholic Primary School	Football	School	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitches that is not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
29	St Nicholas CE School & Nursery	Football	School	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch that is not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
30	St Nicholas Park	Football (unused)	Local Authority	Unused provision which formerly provided one adult, two youth 11v11, one mini 7v7 pitches. The site has an old building that is also operated and open as a community centre.	Consider bringing the pitches back into use given shortfalls identified.	Local Authority FA, FF	Local	M	M	M	Protect Provide
31	Stevenage Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports Club	One good quality square and outfield accessed by Stevenage CC. Site also has a good quality ancillary provision. With plans to improve the kitchen. The site provides four fixed practice nets installed in 2008, however are still of a good condition. Potential spare capacity on site for Sunday and midweek cricket.	Sustain square quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime. Monitor improvement of the kitchen and support if needed. Utilise spare capacity.	Sports club ECB, HCCC	Key Centre	M	S	L	Protect Enhance Provide
32	Stevenage FC (The Lamex Stadium)	Football	Professional sports Club	One good quality pitch, accessed by Stevenage FC, competing in English Football League One.	Protect the site for the use of Stevenage FC.	Sports club HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
33	Stevenage FC Academy	Football	Professional sports Club	One good quality pitch, exclusively used by Stevenage FC Youth. The site provides good quality ancillary provision.	Protect the site for the use of Stevenage FC.	Sports club HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
33	Stevenage FC Academy	3G	Professional sports Club	Seven small sized sports lit 3G pitches, that is open to community use. The pitches were resurfaced in 2024, and all are of good quality. FA pitch accreditation expired in 2023. The pitch is accessed by Stevenage Borough Juniors and Stevenage Starlets FC. The site is serviced by good quality ancillary provision.	Sustain 3G quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime. Explore pitches get FA pitch accreditation, following from expiry in 2023.	Sports club HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	S	L	Protect Enhance Provide
34	Stevenage FC Training Ground	Football	Professional sports Club	Site has three good quality adult pitches that are accessed by Stevenage FC which competes in the third tier of English football.	Protect the site for the use of Stevenage FC.	Sports club HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
35	Stevenage Town RUFC	Rugby Union	Sports Club	Two senior rugby pitches of standard quality (M1/D1). Both pitches are serviced by sports lighting. The site has poor ancillary facilities and has had issues with vandalism in the past. There are no separate changing spaces for women and girls. Upgrading these is the Club's main priority. The Club has unsecure tenure due to no formal lease agreement being in place. The Club has historically considered relocations options, but these have not materialised.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Look to source developer contributions to fit pipe and slit drainage to the two senior pitches as a means of improving pitch quality. Monitor the clubs ambitions to either remain at its current site or relocate to a new site. If the Club is to remain at its current site investment should be made to improve the poor-quality ancillary provision and	Sports club RFU	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim
				The site has been identified for potential housing development.	improve the maintenance and drainage of the playing pitches. If the Club is to relocate to a new site it must have two senior pitches and be serviced by an ancillary provision with four changing rooms and a form of social space. Consider formalising a longer term tenure agreement with the Club and the landowner.						
36	The Nobel School	Football	School	One adult and one youth 11v11 pitch both of which are of standard quality, accessed by Bedwell Rangers. Both pitches are used at capacity. The Club report the site provides access to toilets but no changing facilities.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	School HFA, FF	Key Centre	L	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide
36	The Nobel School	AGP	School	One standard quality, full sized (102m x 63m) AGP that is sports lit and open to community use. The site is accessed by Stevenage HC for games and training. The pitch was last resurfaced in 2012, and the quality is beginning to deteriorate. The site also experiences football demand for training from AFC Walkern and Bedwell Rangers. The pitch is used to capacity by hockey on a Saturday but there is potential spare capacity on a Sunday for junior fixtures to be accommodated instead of training and for some additional usage. The site is managed by the school.	Look to maximise usage of the site as to best support hockey demand and increase revenue. Given the pitch is 13 years old and deteriorating in quality, provide a replacement surface during the lifespan of the PPOSS to enhance pitch quality. Ensure a future sink fund is in place for carpet replacements when required. With the loss of John Henry Newman AGP to a 3G surface, protect this site for hockey use as is only provision in the authority.	School EH, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide
36	The Nobel School	Rugby Union	School	Site has one standard quality (M1/D1) senior pitch, open to community use. No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime.	School RFU	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide
36	The Nobel School	Cricket	School	Site has one standalone NTP.	Protect for curricular use	School ECB, HCCC	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect
36	The Nobel School	Tennis / Netball	School	Four standard quality macadam courts that are not open for community use. The courts are overmarked with netball markings.	Protect for curricular use.	School LTA, EN	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect
37	The Thomas Alleyne Academy	Football	School	One poor quality youth 9v9 pitch, which is not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
37	The Thomas Alleyne Academy	Cricket	School	Site has one standalone NTP.	Protect for curricular use	School ECB, HCCC	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
37	The Thomas Alleyne Academy	Tennis / Netball	School	Four poor quality macadam courts that are not open for community use. The courts are overmarked with netball markings	Protect for curricular use.	School LTA, EN	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Football	School	One youth 11v11, two youth 9v9, one mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitches. The youth 11v11 and mini 7v7 are of poor quality, whereas the youth 9v9 and mini 5v5 pitches are of standard quality. The youth 11v11 pitch is overplayed by 2.5 MES and is overmarked with a senior rugby	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to reduce overplay. Explore possibility of installing 11v11 3G pitch at site.	School HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	L	H	Protect Enhance Provide

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim	
				<p>pitch. The youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 have no actual space capacity due to unsecure tenure.</p> <p>The site had an PitchPower assessment in 2024 as the school are aiming to secure support for improving the surface and drainage.</p> <p>The site is accessed by Stevenage Starlets FC.</p> <p>The Club report the site provides access to toilets but no changing facilities.</p> <p>Site has been identified as a potential project for 11v11 3G pitch in the Stevenage LFFP.</p>								
38	The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields	Rugby Union	School	Site has one poor quality (M1/D0) senior pitch, open to community use. No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	School RFU	Key Centre	L	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide	
40	Trotts Hill Primary School And Nursery	Football	School	One poor quality mini 7v7 pitch, which is not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance	
41	Valley Sports Academy	Football	Private	<p>One youth 9v9 and one mini 7v7 both of good quality, accessed by Girl Pro FC. Both pitches have no actual spare capacity due to proposed management change.</p> <p>The site has poor quality ancillary provision.</p> <p>From 2025/26 season, Stevenage FC will manage the 3G and grass pitches at site. Community access will be reviewed after the 2024/25 season.</p>	<p>Sustain pitch quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime.</p> <p>Ensure that the Club retains access to alternative provision should the site no longer remain available for community use once Stevenage FC assumes management at the end of the 2024/25 season.</p>	Sports club HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance	
41	Valley Sports Academy	3G	Private	<p>One full sized (106m x 72m) sports lit 3G. The pitch was installed in 2009 and is of poor quality.</p> <p>The pitch is accessed by Stevenage Starlets FC.</p> <p>The site is serviced by poor quality ancillary provision.</p> <p>From 2025/26, Stevenage FC will manage the 3G and grass pitches at Valley Sports Academy. Plans include growing the women and girls' section, resurfacing the 3G pitch, upgrading facilities and the car park. Community access will be reviewed after the 2024/25 season.</p>	<p>Look to maximise usage of the site as to best support football demand and increase revenue.</p> <p>Given the pitch is 16 years old and of poor quality, provide a replacement surface during the lifespan of the PPOSS to enhance pitch quality.</p> <p>Ensure a future sink fund is in place for carpet replacements when required.</p> <p>Ensure that the Club retains access to alternative provision should the site no longer remain available for community use once Stevenage FC assumes management at the end of the 2024/25 season.</p>	Sports club HFA, FF	Local	M	S	L	Protect Enhance	
42	Woolenwick Junior School	Football	School	One mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 both of poor quality, accessed by Bedwell Rangers. The mini 7v7 is used at capacity, whereas the mini 5v5 has actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	M	Protect Enhance Provide	
44	Stevenage Town Bowls Club	Lawn Bowls	Local Authority	Two good quality green with a good ancillary provision. Site is accessed by Stevenage Town BC.	Sustain green quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime.	Local Authority EB	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide	

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim
45	Three Horseshoes Bowls Club	Lawn Bowls	Local Authority	One good quality green with a good ancillary provision. Site is accessed by Three Horseshoes BC which is operating within sustainable recommended capacity range.	Sustain green quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime.	Local Authority EB	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide
47	Almond Hill Junior School	Football	School	One mini 7v7 of poor quality and is not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
48	Broom Barns Primary School	Football	School	One mini 7v7 of poor quality and is not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
49	Camps Hill Primary School	Football	School	One mini 7v7 of standard quality and is not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
50	Lodge Farm Primary School	Football	School	One mini 5v5 of standard quality and is not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
51	Roebuck Primary School & Nursery	Football	School	One mini 5v5 of poor quality and is not open to community use.	Protect for curricular use.	School HFA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Protect Enhance
-	Stevenage Golf Club	Golf	Local Authority	Within the Stevenage there is one affiliated club operating from a single affiliated facility, the Stevenage Golf & Conference Centre. This facility offers a standard 18-hole course as well as a 9-hole par-3 course.	Sustain golf course quality through a continuation of the current maintenance regime. Protect site as is the only golf provision within the authority and will also accommodate demand from neighbouring authority North Hertfordshire.	Local Authority EG	Key Centre	L	L	L	Protect Enhance Provide
-	Paul Mallaghan Playing Fields	Football (unused)	Local Authority	Unused provision which formerly provided three mini 5v5 pitches. The site has a small brick building on site; however, its availability is currently unknown.	Consider bringing the pitches back into use given shortfalls identified.	Local Authority FA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Provide
-	Barnwell East School	Football (disused)	Local Authority	Disused provision which formerly provided two youth 11v11 pitches. No ancillary provision on site.	Consider bringing the pitches back into use given shortfalls identified. This will require developing a new ancillary provision to service the site.	Local Authority FA, FF	Local	L	L	L	Provide
-	Former British Aerospace Sports Ground	Football (disused)	Local Authority	Disused provision which formerly provided grass pitches. Allocated for residential development and not included in current playing field plans, its historical role in local pitch provision remains noteworthy.	Look to secure financial contributions to be put towards improving existing playing field sites in Stevenage in accordance with the PPOSS to mitigate the loss of the area.	Local Authority FA, FF	Local	M	M	L	Provide
-	Stevenage West Development (new site)	Cricket	Local Authority	As part of the Stevenage West housing development the delivery of a new NTP and pavilion has been outlined. This will then look to be enhanced to a grass wicket square further into the delivery of the housing development. Once delivered this will provide Stevenage Cricket Club with another useable facility and remove the clubs need to access Graveley Cricket Club.	Ensure a new NTP and ancillary provision is delivered as part of the Stevenage West development to provide Stevenage Cricket Club with a new site. Once the NTP and ancillary provision has been delivered look to fit grass wickets to accompany the NTP to give the Club another useable grass wicket square.	Local Authority ECB, HCCC, SE	Local	H	M	H	Provide
-	New site	AGP	Local Authority	The Stevenage, East Hertfordshire and North Hertfordshire 2025 Playing Pitch Strategies have identified the need for a new AGP.	Work with the necessary stakeholders to develop a new AGP to support the need across Stevenage, East Hertfordshire and North Hertfordshire. If possible this should be in a location to allow it to	Local Authority EH, SE, NHDC, SBC	Key Centre	H	L	H	Provide

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹²	Cost ¹³	Aim
					service demand from all three Authorities.						

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

PART 7: HOUSING GROWTH SCENARIOS

The PPS provides an estimate of demand for pitch sports based on population forecasts and club consultation to 2043. This future demand is translated into teams likely to be generated, rather than actual pitch provision required. The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator adds to this, updating the likely demand generated for pitch sports based on housing increases and converts the demand into match equivalent sessions and the number of pitches required. This is achieved via team generation rates in the Assessment Report to determine how many new teams would be generated from an increase in population derived from housing growth and gives the associated costs of supplying the increased pitch provision.

Experience shows that housing sites with 600 dwellings or more are likely to generate demand for new provision to be created. For such large-scale developments, consideration should be given to providing multi-pitch sites with suitable ancillary provision, including appropriate clubhouse/changing facilities and car parking. Single pitch sites which have been provided traditionally by developers are not considered to provide long term sustainable provision for the relevant sports.

Where demand does not warrant new pitch provision, the Action Plan in this document should be consulted to determine whether the additional demand can be accommodated via existing provision (in which case no further action is required). If this is not the case, contributions should be sought to enhance existing provision in the locality to accommodate the increased demand. This can be through, for example, improving quality, or providing new or improved ancillary provision. Consultation with appropriate NGBs should also be used to assist in the selection of suitable sites and suitable enhancements.

The following scenarios are based on theoretical growth options and proposals over the Local Plan period.

- ◀ **Scenario One** – Strategic housing allocation - 1350 dwellings.
- ◀ **Scenario Two** – Strategic housing allocation - 800 dwellings.
- ◀ **Scenario Three**- Housing allocation– 550 dwellings.
- ◀ **Scenario Four**- Housing allocation– 2000 dwellings.
- ◀ **Scenario Five** – Combined need of all four scenarios – 4700 dwellings.

For reference, the indicative figures assume that population growth will average 2.4¹⁴ per dwelling.

7.1: Scenario One – Stevenage West development of 1,350 dwellings

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth from 1,350 dwellings with an occupancy rate of 2.4 per household is 3,240 people. This population increase equates to 3.27 match equivalent sessions of demand per week for grass pitch sports, 0.16 match equivalent sessions on a hockey suitable AGP and 4.01 match equivalent sessions of demand per season for cricket. Training demand equates to 6.41 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and 0.53 hours on a hockey suitable AGP.

¹⁴ The occupancy rate of 2.4 is in line with figures used in recent national census data.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Table 7.1: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 1350 dwellings

Pitch sport	Match demand per week ¹⁵	Training demand ¹⁶
Adult football	0.24	6.41 hours
Youth football	1.77	As above
Mini soccer	1.2	As above
Rugby union	0.06	0.06 match equivalent sessions
Rugby league	0	0 match equivalent sessions
Adult hockey	0.16	0.49 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0	0.04 hours
Cricket	4.01	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifestyle costs.

Table 7.2: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ¹⁷	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ¹⁸	Number of changing rooms	Capital cost
Adult football	0.24	£27,366	£5,391	0.47	£100,757
Youth football	1.77	£176,281	£35,609	2.37	£503,667
Mini soccer	1.2	£37,886	£7,501	0	£0
Rugby union	0.06	£10,575	£1,956	0.12	£25,193
Rugby league	0	£0	£0	0	£0
Cricket	0.09	£33,480	£6,160	0.18	£38,196
Sand based AGPs	0.04	£41,979	£1,091	0.08	£17,437
3G	0.17	£208,238	£5,950	0.34	£71,776
Total	3.57	£535,805	£63,659	3.56	£757,026

Overall, an additional 3.57 pitches would be required to meet additional demand arising from a 1,350 dwelling development. This consist of 7.28 grass pitches and 0.21 of access to artificial pitches. This would require an expected capital cost of £535,805 and a lifecycle cost per annum of £63,658. To facilitate the increased provision, 3.56 changing rooms would need to be provided at a capital cost of £757,026.

A development of this scale does potentially generate the need for on-site provision. To support cricket the Stevenage West development is outlined to have an NTP and new pavilion installed to provide the Authority with another useable cricket site. Plans are also in place to mark youth and mini football pitches on the outfield of the cricket square to increase the number of football pitches. Therefore, contributions towards the delivery of this should be provided.

Alternatively, improvements could be made to existing provision by improving the quality of grass football pitches at sites such as Ridlins Wood Playing Field, Shephalbury Park and The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields.

¹⁵ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

¹⁶ Hours equate to access to a full size sports lit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

¹⁷ [Link to Sport England cost guidance](#)

¹⁸ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012).

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

For rugby union, only a minor capital cost has been generated which could be used to support the ancillary provision enhancement of Stevenage Town RUFC or investment into pitch improvements to the two senior pitches.

For 3G pitches, contributions should be sought to enable the future delivery of projections (preferably in tandem with the Football Foundation) and a further contribution should be sought for the improvement of artificial grass pitches within the locality. Potential sites for new 3G provision to consider would be Barclay Academy, Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields or Barnwell School (Upper).

7.2: Scenario Two – North of Stevenage development of 800 dwellings

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth from 800 dwellings with an occupancy rate of 2.4 per household is 1,920 people. This population increase equates to 1.94 match equivalent sessions of demand per week for grass pitch sports, 0.1 match equivalent sessions on a hockey suitable AGP and 2.38 match equivalent sessions of demand per season for cricket. Training demand equates to 3.8 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and 0.31 hours on a hockey suitable AGP.

Table 7.3: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 800 dwellings

Pitch sport	Match demand per week ¹⁹	Training demand ²⁰
Adult football	0.14	3.8 hours
Youth football	1.05	As above
Mini soccer	0.71	As above
Rugby union	0.04	0.04 match equivalent sessions
Rugby league	0	0 match equivalent sessions
Adult hockey	0.1	0.29 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0	0.02 hours
Cricket	2.38	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifestyle costs.

¹⁹ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

²⁰ Hours equate to access to a full size sports lit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Table 7.4: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ²¹	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ²²	Number of changing rooms	Capital cost
Adult football	0.14	£16,217	£3,195	0.28	£59,706
Youth football	1.05	£104,459	£21,101	1.4	£298,481
Mini soccer	0.71	£22,450	£4,445	0	£0
Rugby union	0.06	£6,267	£1,159	0.07	£14,929
Rugby league	0	£0	£0	0	£0
Cricket	0.05	£19,840	£3,651	0.11	£22,634
Sand based AGPs	0.02	£24,877	£647	0.05	£10,333
3G	0.1	£123,395	£3,526	0.2	£42,532
Total	2.13	£317,505	£37,724	2.11	£448,615

Overall, an additional 2.13 pitches would be required to meet additional demand arising from an 800 dwelling development. This consist of 2.10 grass pitches and 0.03 of access to artificial pitches. This would require an expected capital cost of £317,505 and a lifecycle cost per annum of £37,724. To facilitate the increased provision, 2.11 changing rooms would need to be provided at a capital cost of £448,615.

The PPC does not identify a specific need to develop new playing field as part of this development, a contribution to improving existing provision and increasing the capacity of playing field is most suitable.

Given the local shortfalls, improving the quality of pitches at Ridlins Wood Playing Field, Shephalbury Park and The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields should be considered for offsite contributions.

For rugby union, Stevenage Town RUFC would benefit from pitch improvements to the two senior pitches at its site. Alternatively, contributions towards improving the ancillary provision at Stevenage Town RFC should be considered.

Finally, to support cricket a contribution towards improving quality of the square at King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage) should be considered to support Stevenage Cricket Club when using the site. Alternatively, a contribution towards resurfacing the four lane practice nets at Stevenage Cricket Club which have the same surface since they were installed in 2008 will support the clubs training sessions.

For 3G pitches, contributions should be sought to enable the future delivery of projections (preferably in tandem with the Football Foundation) and a further contribution should be sought for the improvement of artificial grass pitches within the locality. Potential sites for new 3G provision to consider would be Barclay Academy, Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields or Barnwell School (Upper).

²¹ [Link to Sport England cost guidance](#)

²² Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012).

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

7.3: Scenario Three – South East of Stevenage development of 550 dwellings

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth from 550 dwellings with an occupancy rate of 2.4 per household is 1,320 people. This population increase equates to 1.33 match equivalent sessions of demand per week for grass pitch sports, 0.07 match equivalent sessions on a hockey suitable AGP and 1.63 match equivalent sessions of demand per season for cricket. Training demand equates to 2.61 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and 0.21 hours on a hockey suitable AGP.

Table 7.5: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 550 dwellings

Pitch sport	Match demand per week ²³	Training demand ²⁴
Adult football	0.1	2.61 hours
Youth football	0.72	As above
Mini soccer	0.49	As above
Rugby union	0.02	0.03 match equivalent sessions
Rugby league	0	0 match equivalent sessions
Adult hockey	0.07	0.2 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0	0.01 hours
Cricket	1.63	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifestyle costs.

Table 7.6: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ²⁵	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ²⁶	Number of changing rooms	Capital cost
Adult football	0.1	£11,149	£2,196	0.19	£41,048
Youth football	0.72	£71,806	£14,505	0.96	£205,176
Mini soccer	0.49	£15,438	£3,057	0	£0
Rugby union	0.02	£4,308	£797	0.05	£10,263
Rugby league	0	£0	£0	0	£0
Cricket	0.04	£13,641	£2,510	0.07	£15,562
Sand based AGPs	0.02	£17,102	£445	0.03	£7,104
3G	0.07	£84,836	£2,424	0.14	£29,241
Total	1.46	£218,280	£25,934	1.44	£308,394

Overall, an additional 1.46 pitches would be required to meet additional demand arising from a 550 dwelling development. This consist of 1.35 grass pitches and 0.09 of access to artificial pitches. This would require an expected capital cost of £218, 280 and a lifecycle cost per annum of £25,934. To facilitate the increased provision, 1.44 changing rooms would need to be provided at a capital cost of £308,394.

²³ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

²⁴ Hours equate to access to a full size sports lit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

²⁵ [Link to Sport England cost guidance](#)

²⁶ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012).

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The PPC does not identify a specific need to develop new playing field as part of this development, a contribution to improving existing provision and increasing the capacity of playing field is most suitable.

Given the local shortfalls, improving the quality of pitches at Ridlins Wood Playing Field, Shephalbury Park and The Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields should be considered for offsite contributions.

For rugby union, Stevenage Town RUFC would benefit from pitch improvements to the two senior pitches at its site. Alternatively, contributions towards improving the ancillary provision at Stevenage Town RFC should be considered.

Finally, to support cricket a contribution towards resurfacing the four lane practice nets at Stevenage Cricket Club which have the same surface since they were installed in 2008. Improving the quality of the square at King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage) should also be considered to support Stevenage Cricket Club when using the site.

For 3G pitches, contributions should be sought to enable the future delivery of projections (preferably in tandem with the Football Foundation) and a further contribution should be sought for the improvement of artificial grass pitches within the locality. Potential sites for new 3G provision to consider would be Barclay Academy, Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields or Barnwell School (Upper).

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

7.4: Scenario Four – SG1 Regeneration Area development of 2000 dwellings

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth from 2000 dwellings with an occupancy rate of 2.4 per household is 4,800 people. This population increase equates to 4.84 match equivalent sessions of demand per week for grass pitch sports, 0.24 match equivalent sessions on a hockey suitable AGP and 5.94 match equivalent sessions of demand per season for cricket. Training demand equates to 9.5 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and 0.78 hours on a hockey suitable AGP.

Table 7.8: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 2000 dwellings

Pitch sport	Match demand per week ²⁷	Training demand ²⁸
Adult football	0.35	9.5 hours
Youth football	2.62	As above
Mini soccer	1.78	As above
Rugby union	0.09	0.09 match equivalent sessions
Rugby league	0	0 match equivalent sessions
Adult hockey	0.24	0.73 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0	0.05 hours
Cricket	5.94	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifestyle costs.

Table 7.9: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ²⁹	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ³⁰	Number of changing rooms	Capital cost
Adult football	0.35	£40,544	£7,987	0.7	£149,274
Youth football	2.62	£261,150	£52,752	3.51	£746,188
Mini soccer	1.78	£56,132	£11,114	0	£0
Rugby union	0.09	£15,666	£2,898	0.18	£37,323
Rugby league	0	£0	£0	0	£0
Cricket	0.13	£49,601	£9,127	0.27	£56,587
Sand based AGPs	0.06	£62,193	£1,617	0.12	£25,834
3G	0.25	£308,506	£8,814	0.5	£106,336
Total	5.28	£793,792	£94,309	5.28	£1,121,542

Overall, an additional 5.28 pitches would be required to meet additional demand arising from a 2000 dwelling development. This consist of 4.97 grass pitches and 0.31 of access to artificial pitches. This would require an expected capital cost of £793,792 and a lifecycle cost per annum of £94,309. To facilitate the increased provision, 5.28 changing rooms would need to be provided at a capital cost of £1,121,542.

²⁷ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

²⁸ Hours equate to access to a full size sports lit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

²⁹ [Link to Sport England cost guidance](#)

³⁰ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012).

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

A development of this scale would result in the need for new provision to be provided. The most evident need will be a multi pitch football site with accompanying ancillary provision. For the remaining grass pitch sports, developer contributions would be better sought to improving existing provision, particularly at rugby union and cricket sites. Investment towards improving the ancillary provision at Stevenage Town RFC and King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage) to support Stevenage Cricket Club also should be considered. Resurfacing the four lane practice nets at Stevenage Cricket Club would also support cricket demand in the Authority.

For 3G pitches, contributions should be sought to enable the future delivery of projections (preferably in tandem with the Football Foundation) and a further contribution should be sought for the improvement of artificial grass pitches within the locality. Potential sites for new 3G provision to consider would be Barclay Academy, Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields or Barnwell School (Upper).

7.5: Scenario Five – Combined demand of all four housing scenarios 4,700 dwellings

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth from 4700 dwellings with an occupancy rate of 2.4 per household is 11,280 people. This population increase equates to 11.37 match equivalent sessions of demand per week for grass pitch sports, 0.57 match equivalent sessions on a hockey suitable AGP and 13.96 match equivalent sessions of demand per season for cricket. Training demand equates to 22.33 hours of use per week for football on 3G pitches and 1.84 hours on a hockey suitable AGP.

Table 7.10: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 4700 dwellings

Pitch sport	Match demand per week ³¹	Training demand ³²
Adult football	0.82	22.33 hours
Youth football	6.15	As above
Mini soccer	4.19	As above
Rugby union	0.21	0.22 match equivalent sessions
Rugby league	0	0 match equivalent sessions
Adult hockey	0.57	1.71 hours
Junior & mixed hockey	0	0.13 hours
Cricket	13.96	-

The table below translates estimated demand into new pitch provision with associated capital and lifestyle costs.

³¹ As per the PPS Guidance, demand for cricket is considered in terms of match equivalent sessions per season rather than per week.

³² Hours equate to access to a full size sports lit 3G pitch or hockey suitable AGP

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Table 7.11: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision

Pitch type	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ³³	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ³⁴	Number of changing rooms	Capital cost
Adult football	0.82	£95,277	£18,769	1.65	£350,791
Youth football	6.15	£613,277	£123,977	8.25	£1,753,684
Mini soccer	4.19	£131,899	£26,116	0	£0
Rugby union	0.21	£36,817	£6,811	0.41	£87,710
Rugby league	0	£0	£0	0	£0
Cricket	0.31	£116,563	£21,448	0.63	£132,980
Sand based AGPs	0.14	£146,154	£3,800	0.29	£60,710
3G	0.59	£724,993	£20,714	1.18	£249,891
Total	12.41	£1,865,450	£221,635	12.4	£2,635,767

Overall, an additional 12.41 pitches would be required to meet additional demand arising from a 4,700 dwelling development. This consist of 11.68 grass pitches and 0.73 of access to artificial pitches. This would require an expected capital cost of £1,865,450 and a lifecycle cost per annum of £221,635. To facilitate the increased provision, 12.4 changing rooms would need to be provided at a capital cost of £2,635,767.

The PPC suggests a need for a new multi grass pitch football site with accompanying ancillary provision which is suitable to the scale of the site to be. As there is a shortfall of 3G pitches in the Authority, a contribution towards developing a new 11v11 3G pitch should also be considered at Barclay Academy, Thomas Alleyne Academy Playing Fields or Barnwell School (Upper).

For cricket the priority is to support cricket the Stevenage West development outlined for an NTP and new pavilion to provide the Authority with another useable cricket site. Therefore, contributions towards the delivery of this should be provided. Any additional contributions should be put towards enhancing the ancillary provision at King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage) and resurfacing the practice nets at Stevenage Cricket Club.

For rugby union, Stevenage Town RUFC would benefit from pitch improvements to the two senior pitches at its site. Alternatively, contributions towards improving the ancillary provision at Stevenage Town RFC should be considered.

Finally for hockey as The Nobel School AGP was last resurfaced 13 years ago, a financial contribution towards a sink fund to resurface the pitch should be considered to ensure Stevenage Hockey Club can continue to be accommodated within the Authority.

As KKP is also producing the North Hertfordshire report the steering group has agreed to present the housing scenarios in this report to outline any additional imported demand which may take place.

³³ [Link to Sport England cost guidance](#)

³⁴ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012).

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

North Hertfordshire housing scenarios:

Scenario six – 2,800 dwellings North of Baldock (BA1)

The demand generated from housing growth totalling 2,800 dwellings can be seen in the following table. This is based on resultant population increase of 6,720.

Table 7.12: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 2,800 dwellings

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 2,800 dwellings	
	Match demand	Training demand
Adult football	1.46 Match equivalent sessions	17.7 Match equivalent sessions
Youth football	4.34 Match equivalent sessions	
Mini soccer	3.05 Match equivalent sessions	
Rugby union	0.98 Match equivalent sessions	1.09 Match equivalent sessions
Rugby league	0.15 Match equivalent sessions	0.15 Match equivalent sessions
Adult hockey	0.77 Match equivalent sessions	2.31 Match equivalent sessions
Junior hockey	0.52 Match equivalent sessions	0 Match equivalent sessions
Cricket	52.17 Match equivalent sessions	N/A ³⁵

The table below translates the estimated demand into new pitch provision, with associated capital and lifecycle costs. In total, it is set out that 11.75 pitches will be required to meet the demand, with the capital cost of providing this estimated at £2,080,653 in addition to lifecycle costs of £273,967. In addition, 14.66 changing rooms will be needed at a predicted cost of £3,118,035.

Table 7.13: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision (2,800 dwellings)

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number to meet demand	Capital cost ³⁶	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ³⁷	Number	Capital cost
Adult football	1.46	£168,911	£33,275	2.92	£621,898
Youth football	4.34	£432,774	£87,420	5.95	£1,265,144
Mini soccer	3.05	£96,080	£19,024	0	£0
Rugby union	0.98	£174,830	£32,344	1.96	£416,508
Rugby league	0.15	£23,429	£4,334	0.3	£63,259
Cricket	1.11	£413,236	£76,035	2.22	£471,438
Hockey	0.19	£196,649	£5,113	0.38	£81,685
3G	0.47	£574,744	£16,421	0.93	£198,103
Total	11.75	£2,080,653	£273,966	14.66	£3,118,035

As can be seen the North of Baldock development has resulted in a sizeable growth in demand, most notably for grass pitch football. As the development is located 8.7 miles from Stevenage there is the potential that imported demand into Stevenage will take place from this development. As such additional considerations should be made towards servicing the

³⁵No estimate for training demand is currently calculated for cricket as the PPC assumes the use of a pitch is not the primary location for cricket training activity e.g. use of cricket nets and the outfield.

³⁶ Sport England Facilities Costs Third Quarter 2024 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

³⁷ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

need within North Hertfordshire and the need in the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area as well as addressing the issues raised in the Stevenage Strategy Report.

Scenario seven – 2,100 dwellings East of Luton (EL1/EL2/EL3)

The demand generated from housing growth totalling 2,100 dwellings can be seen in the following table. This is based on resultant population increase of 5,040.

Table 7.14: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 2,100 dwellings

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 2,100 dwellings	
	Match demand	Training demand
Adult football	1.1 Match equivalent sessions	13.28 Match equivalent sessions
Youth football	3.25 Match equivalent sessions	
Mini soccer	2.29 Match equivalent sessions	
Rugby union	0.73 Match equivalent sessions	0.82 Match equivalent sessions
Rugby league	0.11 Match equivalent sessions	0.11 Match equivalent sessions
Adult hockey	0.58 Match equivalent sessions	1.73 Match equivalent sessions
Junior hockey	0.39 Match equivalent sessions	0 Match equivalent sessions
Cricket	39.12 Match equivalent sessions	N/A

The table below translates the estimated demand into new pitch provision, with associated capital and lifecycle costs. In total, it is set out that 8.81 pitches will be required to meet the demand, with the capital cost of providing this estimated at £1,560,481 in addition to lifecycle costs of £205,473. In addition, 11 changing rooms will be needed at a predicted cost of £2,338,497.

Table 7.15: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision (2,100 dwellings)

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number to meet demand	Capital cost ³⁸	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ³⁹	Number	Capital cost
Adult football	1.1	£126,684	£24,957	2.19	£466,429
Youth football	3.25	£324,567	£65,562	4.46	£948,831
Mini soccer	2.29	£72,065	£14,269	0	£0
Rugby union	0.73	£131,120	£24,257	1.47	£312,375
Rugby league	0.11	£17,572	£3,251	0.22	£47,443
Cricket	0.83	£309,924	£57,026	1.66	£353,575
Hockey	0.14	£147,489	£3,835	0.29	£61,265
3G	0.35	£431,060	£12,316	0.7	£148,578

³⁸ Sport England Facilities Costs Third Quarter 2024 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

³⁹ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Scenario eight – 900 dwellings North of Letchworth (LG1) and Gravelly (NS1)

The demand generated from housing growth totalling 900 dwellings can be seen in the following table. This is based on resultant population increase of 2,160.

Table 7.16: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 900 dwellings

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 900 dwellings	
	Match demand	Training demand
Adult football	0.47 Match equivalent sessions	5.69 Match equivalent sessions
Youth football	1.39 Match equivalent sessions	
Mini soccer	0.98 Match equivalent sessions	
Rugby union	0.31 Match equivalent sessions	0.35 Match equivalent sessions
Rugby league	0.05 Match equivalent sessions	0.05 Match equivalent sessions
Adult hockey	0.25 Match equivalent sessions	0.74 Match equivalent sessions
Junior hockey	0.17 Match equivalent sessions	0 Match equivalent sessions
Cricket	16.77 Match equivalent sessions	N/A

The table below translates the estimated demand into new pitch provision, with associated capital and lifecycle costs. In total, it is set out that 3.78 pitches will be required to meet the demand, with the capital cost of providing this estimated at £668,751 in addition to lifecycle costs of £88,056. In addition, 4.71 changing rooms will be needed at a predicted cost of £1,002,155.

Table 7.17: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision (900 dwellings)

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ⁴⁰	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ⁴¹	Number	Capital cost
Adult football	0.47	£54,296	£10,696	0.94	£199,907
Youth football	1.39	£139,085	£28,095	1.91	£406,582
Mini soccer	0.98	£30,883	£6,115	0	£0
Rugby union	0.31	£56,194	£10,396	0.63	£133,874
Rugby league	0.05	£7,531	£1,393	0.1	£20,332
Cricket	0.36	£132,823	£24,439	0.71	£151,530
Hockey	0.06	£63,211	£1,643	0.12	£26,257
3G	0.15	£184,728	£5,278	0.3	£63,672

The PPC has identified a limited need for installing new provision for a development of this scale. Therefore, contributions should be put towards improving existing provision or if possible reinstating playing pitches at smaller sites with one or two youth or mini pitches.

Contributions sourced from the North of Letchworth (LG1) development should be put towards improving the grass pitches provided at Letchworth Garden City RUFC. In relation to football, re-instating the grass football pitches at Letchworth Corner Sports Club which formerly provided one adult pitch and one mini 7v7 pitch should be considered.

⁴⁰ Sport England Facilities Costs Third Quarter 2024 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

⁴¹ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Given the shortfall of one 11v11 3G pitch in the Central Analysis Area a partial contribution towards the development of a 3G pitch could be considered.

As the Gravely (NS1) will result in residents importing demand into Stevenage, contributions from this development should be put towards improving the existing grass football pitches at Ridlins Wood Playing Field and Shephalbury Park. In relation to rugby union, a contribution to enhancing the senior pitches provided at Stevenage Town RUFC can be considered.

Scenario nine – 600 dwellings North-East of Great Ashby (GA2)

The demand generated from housing growth totalling 600 dwellings can be seen in the following table. This is based on resultant population increase of 1,440.

Table 7.18: Likely demand for grass pitch sports generated from 600 dwellings

Pitch sport	Estimated demand by sport for 900 dwellings	
	Match demand	Training demand
Adult football	0.31 Match equivalent sessions	3.79 Match equivalent sessions
Youth football	0.93 Match equivalent sessions	
Mini soccer	0.65 Match equivalent sessions	
Rugby union	0.21 Match equivalent sessions	0.23 Match equivalent sessions
Rugby league	0.03 Match equivalent sessions	0.03 Match equivalent sessions
Adult hockey	0.16 Match equivalent sessions	0.49 Match equivalent sessions
Junior hockey	0.11 Match equivalent sessions	0 Match equivalent sessions
Cricket	11.18 Match equivalent sessions	N/A

The table below translates the estimated demand into new pitch provision, with associated capital and lifecycle costs. In total, it is set out that 2.52 pitches will be required to meet the demand, with the capital cost of providing this estimated at £445,859 in addition to lifecycle costs of £58,708. In addition, 3.14 changing rooms will be needed at a predicted cost of £668,160.

Table 7.19: Estimated demand and costs for new pitch provision (600 dwellings)

Pitch type	Estimated demand and costs for new pitches			Changing rooms	
	Number of pitches to meet demand	Capital cost ⁴²	Lifecycle Cost (per annum) ⁴³	Number	Capital cost
Adult football	0.31	£36,196	£7,131	0.63	£133,267
Youth football	0.93	£92,736	£18,733	1.28	£271,097
Mini soccer	0.65	£20,587	£4,076	0	£0
Rugby union	0.21	£37,466	£6,931	0.42	£89,258
Rugby league	0.03	£5,021	£929	0.06	£13,556
Cricket	0.24	£88,555	£16,294	0.48	£101,028
Hockey	0.04	£42,142	£1,096	0.08	£17,505
3G	0.1	£123,156	£3,519	0.2	£42,449

⁴² Sport England Facilities Costs Third Quarter 2024 – (<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>)

⁴³ Lifecycle costs are based on the % of the total project cost per annum as set out in Sport England's Life Cycle Costs Natural Turf Pitches and Artificial Surfaces documents (2012)

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The PPC has identified a limited need for installing new provision for a development of this scale. Therefore, contributions should be put towards improving existing provision.

Given the developments close proximity to Stevenage, any contributions sourced should be allocated towards addressing shortfalls identified in the Stevenage PPOSS. As there is a shortfall of grass football pitches identified, improving the grass football pitches at King George V Playing Fields (Stevenage) and Marriotts School should be considered.

In relation to rugby union, a contribution towards enhancing the ancillary provision at Stevenage Town RUFC is another potential option to consider.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

PART 8: DELIVER THE STRATEGY AND KEEP IT ROBUST AND UP-TO-DATE

The section below is a generalised approach on how to deliver a PPOSS whilst also keeping it robust and up-to-date. However, a more tailored approach should also be considered and designed for the Stevenage based on the requirements and priorities of the Steering Group.

Delivery

The PPOSS seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across Stevenage. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in this Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of the Authority can be satisfied. The Strategy identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and recommends how best to resolve this in the future.

It is important that this document is used in a practical manner, is used to engage with partners and encourages partnerships to be developed, to ensure that outdoor sports facilities are regarded as a vital aspect of community life and which contribute to the achievement of Local Authority priorities.

The creation of this document should be regarded as part of the planning process. The success of this Strategy and the benefits that are gained are dependent upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a strategic approach. Each member of the steering group should take the lead to ensure the PPOSS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence.

To help ensure the PPOSS is well used, it should be regarded as the key document within the study area guiding the improvement and protection of playing pitch and outdoor sport provision. It needs to be the document people regularly turn to for information on the how the current demand is met and what actions are needed to improve the situation and meet future demand. For this to be achieved, the Steering Group needs to have a clear understanding of how the PPOSS can be applied and therefore delivered.

The process of completing the PPOSS will hopefully have already resulted in a number of benefits that will help with its application and delivery. These may include enhanced partnership working across different agendas and organisations, pooling of resources along with strengthening relationships and understanding between different stakeholders and between members of the steering group and the sporting community. The drivers behind the PPOSS and the work to develop the recommendations and action plan will have also highlighted, and helped the steering group to understand, the key areas to which it can be applied and how it can be delivered.

Monitoring and updating

It is important that there is regular monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should continue be led by the local authority and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the Steering Group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPOSS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery. It is possible that in the interim between reviews the Steering Group could also operate as a 'virtual' group; prepared to comment on suggestions and updates electronically when relevant.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

It is agreed that the Local Authority (potentially via consultants e.g., KKP) is responsible for keeping the database and background supply and demand information up-to-date in order that area-by-area action plans can be updated. This should be carried out in consultation with the NGBs, particularly around affiliation time when information is updated.

As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPOSS being signed off by the steering group, then Sport England and the NGBs would consider it and the information on which it is based to be out of date. The nature of the supply and in particular the demand for provision is likely to change year-on-year, meaning that without any form of review and update it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

An annual review should not be regarded as a particularly resource intensive task. However, it should highlight:

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

Alongside regular steering group meetings a good way to keep the strategy up-to-date and maintain relationships is to hold sport specific meetings with the NGBs and other relevant parties. These meetings look to update the key supply and demand information, if necessary amend the assessment work, track progress with implementing the recommendations and action plan and highlight any new issues and opportunities.

These meetings could be timed to fit with the annual affiliation process undertaken by the NGBs which would help to capture any changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area. Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites could be fed into these meetings.

The NGBs are also able to indicate any further performance quality assessments that have been undertaken within the study area.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Checklists

In order for this Strategy to be signed off by the steering group, a Stage D Checklist: Develop the Strategy, is signed off.

Stage D Checklist: Develop the Strategy	Tick ✓	
	Yes	Requires Attention
Step 7: Develop the recommendations and action plan	✓	
1. Have a number of study area specific scenarios been looked at to help explore key issues and findings along with possible recommendations and actions?	✓	
2. Have any recommendations and actions regarding AGP provision taken into account the guidance in the 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface' document and any NGB specific information?	✓	
3. Do the recommendations reflect the drivers, vision and objectives of the work?	✓	
4. Are the recommendations precise enough to enable the development of clear individual area, sport and site specific actions to help achieve them?	✓	
5. Have all relevant parties been engaged with the development of, and are signed up to the delivery of, the recommendations and actions?	✓	
6. Are the recommendations and actions clearly presented?	✓	
7. Has particular attention been paid to the situation at priority sites and those which are being significantly overplayed?	✓	
8. Have area, sport and site specific solutions been proposed to protect, enhance, and provide playing pitch provision to meet the current and future demand?	✓	
9. Has guidance on the future of any sites highlighted as being at risk been provided?	✓	
10. Do the recommendations and actions seek to make the best use of existing pitches?	✓	
11. Has the detriment and benefit of proposals to relocate provision been presented?	✓	
12. Has the level and type of any new playing pitch provision required been presented?	✓	
13. Has the importance of providing appropriate and fit for purpose ancillary facilities been highlighted in order to maximise the potential benefit to sport of any pitches?	✓	
14. Have the recommendations sought to ensure an adequate amount of spare capacity in the provision of accessible pitches with secured community use?	✓	
15. Does the PPS provide a steer as to the future of any spare capacity and any provision that may be genuinely surplus to requirements (paragraphs D12 to D15)?	✓	
16. Does the action plan cover the points listed in paragraph D17?	✓	
17. Does the action plan provide the most appropriate actions to improve provision in the study area rather than just those which the local authority can deliver?	✓	
18. Does the action plan represent an infrastructure plan for playing pitches with deliverable area, sport and site specific actions and projects?	✓	
Step 8: Write and Adopt the Strategy	✓	
1. Does the PPS document provide the reader with a clear understanding of the areas listed in paragraph D20?	✓	

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

2.	Is it clear from the PPS document why the recommendations and actions have been included, how they are to be delivered and what they will achieve?	✓	
3.	Does the PPS document indicate how it should be used and applied in different areas and circumstances along with the benefits of doing so?	✓	
4.	Has the PPS document been subject to appropriate consultation?	✓	
5.	Do all members of the steering group and other relevant parties endorse the PPS and recognise its lead role in guiding the improvement of pitches in the study area?	✓	
6.	Has the PPS document been formally adopted by the local authority and is its status recognised across all relevant departments?	✓	

To help ensure the PPOSS is delivered and is kept robust and up-to-date, the steering group can refer to the new methodology Stage E Checklist: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up-to-date:

Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up-to-date	Tick ✓	
	Yes	Requires Attention
Step 9: Apply and deliver the strategy		
1. Are steering group members clear on how the PPS can be applied across a range of relevant areas?		
2. Is each member of the steering group committed to taking the lead to help ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence?		
3. Has a process been put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered and the PPS is being applied?		
Step 10: Keep the strategy robust and up-to-date		
1. Has a process been put in place to ensure the PPS is kept robust and up-to-date?		
2. Does the process involve an annual update of the PPS?		
3. Is the steering group to be maintained and is it clear of its on-going role?		
4. Is regular liaison with the NGBs and other parties planned?		
5. Has all the supply and demand information been collated and presented in a format (i.e. single document that can be filtered accordingly) that will help people to review it and highlight any changes?		
6. Have any changes made to the Active Places Power data been fed back to Sport England?		

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX ONE: 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 Culture, Media and Sport Get Active: A Strategy for the Future of Sport and Physical Activity (2023)

The Government published its new strategy for sport in August 2023. The 2015 government sport strategy, Sporting Future: A New Strategy for a More Active Nation, was a fundamental re-framing of sport and physical activity in the UK. It set out five outcomes delivered by sport and physical activity:

- ◀ Physical wellbeing
- ◀ Mental wellbeing
- ◀ Individual development
- ◀ Social and community development
- ◀ Sustainable economic development

This new strategy builds on the foundations of Sporting Future and retains these five outcomes at its core. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of three core priorities, with seven indicators to achieve these priorities as follows:

- ◀ **Being unapologetically ambitious in making the nation more active**
 - ◀ Ensuring everyone is focused on increasing physical activity, meaning fewer inactive children, and narrowing the gap on inactivity where groups are not being reached, with visible progress across the country by 2030
 - ◀ Focusing on evidence, data and metrics
 - ◀ Setting the future direction for facilities and spaces where people can be active
- ◀ **Making sport and physical activity more inclusive and welcoming for all that everyone can have confidence that there is a place for them in sport**
 - ◀ Helping the sector to be welcoming to all
 - ◀ Improving how issues and concerns are dealt within the sector
- ◀ **Moving towards a more sustainable sector that is more financially resilient and robust**
 - ◀ Supporting the sector to access additional, alternative forms of investment
 - ◀ Working towards a more environmentally sustainable sector

Delivering against these priorities will help create a more active nation and a more sustainable sport sector. These aims are complementary; greater participation, stronger governance and confidence in the sector will help to drive investment, which in turn helps to attract new audiences. The vision is to make sport and physical activity accessible, resilient, fun and fair, for now and the years to come – for the benefit of individuals and the country.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Sport England Uniting the Movement: Our 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport (2021-2031)

Sport and physical activity makes people happier and healthier, and movement is the lens through which we can make that happen. It does the same thing for our communities, with life-changing, sustainable benefits that have huge economic and social value. That's why Sport England wants sport and physical activity to be recognised as essential to help overcome these national challenges.

The Strategy recognises the need to invest in sport and physical activity through NGBs, other sports bodies and local sports clubs, organisations and community groups to increase engagement for different groups as part of our core purpose. It states that there is now a need to go further in promoting movement in general as the means to unlock sport and activity for some people.

Tackling inequalities

There are deep-rooted inequalities in sport and physical activity, which means that there are people who feel excluded from being active because the right options and opportunities aren't there. These inequalities are at the very core of the Uniting the Movement.

Sport England plans on having a laser focus on tackling inequalities in all that it does, because providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity is vitally important.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

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.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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.

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 11v11 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.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Local Football Facility Plans

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 will build upon PPOSS 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 will also incorporate 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 will 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 PPOSS 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 FA: Inspiring Positive Change Through Football (2024-28)⁴⁴

The FA launched its new Strategy which aims to 'take English football forward, with clear focus on the biggest opportunities and challenges that need to be addressed'.

To achieve this, eight key strategic priorities are identified which include four 'Game Changer' objectives and four 'Drivers' objectives as detailed below. The strategy also outlines how The FA's plans to achieve these objectives.

Game Changers:

- ◀ Win tournaments
 - ◀ Develop pathways
 - ◀ Support elite players
 - ◀ Enhance environments
 - ◀ Collaborate and influence
- ◀ A game free from discrimination
 - ◀ Boost representation
 - ◀ Drive more inclusion
 - ◀ Tackle discrimination
- ◀ Equal opportunities for women & girls
 - ◀ Increase school participation

⁴⁴ [FA Strategy 2024-2028: The Football Association](#)

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

- ◀ Increase club participation
- ◀ Enhance women's competitions
- ◀ Support female coaches and referees
- ◀ Transform the pitch landscape
 - ◀ Sustain and grow high-quality grass pitches
 - ◀ Deliver new 3G pitches
 - ◀ Support inclusivity accessibility and environmental sustainability of facilities

Drivers:

- ◀ Thriving community clubs
 - ◀ Develop club opportunities
 - ◀ Support the current and future generation of club leaders
 - ◀ Equip clubs to add long-term value to local communities
- ◀ World-class FA cups
 - ◀ Broaden commercial appeal
 - ◀ Evolve the Adobe Women's FA Cup format
- ◀ Participant led
 - ◀ Place participants at the centre of decision making
 - ◀ Create flexible models to meet participants needs
 - ◀ Provide digital tools to improve experiences
- ◀ Progressive governance
 - ◀ Support integration of women's and girls' football
 - ◀ Support governance of the NLS
 - ◀ Support our County Football Associations (CFAs)

The FA: Reaching Higher (2024-28)⁴⁵

The FA's 2020-2024 strategy, 'Inspiring Positive Change', coincided with record growth across the sport, with more women and girls playing, coaching, officiating and supporting the flourishing professional game than ever before.

This strategy aims to build on the success achieved to date and strives to continue working to unlock the full potential of the women's and girls' game. The strategy outlines four strategic priorities as seen below.

1. **Build and Protect the Uniqueness of the Women's Game:** Continue to honour the history of women's football and recognise those who have contributed towards making it so unique, whilst ensuring the distinct qualities and unique culture of the women's game are valued and protected.
2. **Win a Major Tournament:** Continue to be world-leaders both on and off the pitch, developing players and building an inclusive talent pathway system to make football more equal and accessible at every level of the game, ensuring the England pathway and teams represent society.
3. **Build Robust, High-Quality Competition:** Create compelling competition structures and support clubs to develop to the appropriate level within the game, while enabling people to grow and develop within The FA's competition structures.
4. **Deliver Equal Opportunities for Women and Girls to Play:** Sustain growth in schools whilst tackling inequalities. Continue to grow the number of female teams and deliver vibrant league offers whilst extending and enhancing the sessional football offer. The ambition is for 90% of schools to deliver equal access for girls to play football in key stages two and three.

⁴⁵ [The FA Womens & Girls Football Strategy 2024-28](#)

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

There are five golden threads which weave through each of the four strategic priorities and across all levels of the women's and girls' game, which will be instrumental for delivering the next phase of growth by 2028:

1. **Female Health and Wellbeing:** Develop the game to support women and girls with their health and wellbeing needs, providing them with environments in which they can thrive.
2. **Safeguarding:** Support the evolution of an ever-safer culture across the women's and girls' game.
3. **Refereeing:** Grow and nurture a new generation of referees who are representative of our society.
4. **Coaching:** Support and develop brilliant coaches capable of unleashing every player's potential in a safe and inclusive game.
5. **Diversity and Inclusion:** Ensure the game is more reflective of our society.

Inspiring Generations – Cricket's Game-wide Strategy (2025 – 28)^[1]

In October 2024 the ECB released its updated Inspiring Generations – Cricket's Game-wide Strategy (2025–28). Cricket in England and Wales has seen transformative growth since the publication of its previous strategy Inspiring Generation (2020-24). Its new strategy represents an evolution of its plans, however, many of its previous themes are still relevant. Its main purpose is to say 'Cricket is a game for me' through its vision:

- ◀ To become the most inclusive team sport
- ◀ To grow and unite the game
- ◀ Lead the game through global transformation

It aims to obtain this vision through six key objectives

- ◀ Make cricket diverse, inclusive and accessible
- ◀ Transform Women's and Girl's cricket
- ◀ Connect communities through play
- ◀ Inspire through winning England teams
- ◀ Support a thriving and sustainable men's and women's professional game
- ◀ Win the battle for attention

Underpinning these six ambitions are a series of enablers that cut-across multiple areas of the game, alongside Cricket's Core Values.

The Rugby Football Union Strategy 2021 Onwards

Through the strategy, the RFU aims to enrich lives, introduce more people to rugby union and develop the sport for future generations. The goal is to achieve this by strengthening and uniting rugby union in England and producing consistently winning England teams.

Eight key strategic priorities are identified with all investment decisions aligned to these. The strategy also outlines the RFU's core activities which form the backbone of its business operations and services to the game.

The priorities include four 'Game Objectives' and four 'Driving Objectives' as detailed below.

^[1]<https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2024/10/22/19a925d7-3c92-4a36-8e7b-f49cb470377f/ECB-Inspiring-Generations-2025-2028.pdf>

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Game Objectives:

- ◀ Enjoyment – enable positive player experiences on and off the field
- ◀ Winning England – create the best possible high-performance system for England Rugby
- ◀ Welfare – enhance player welfare to protect and support the wellbeing of players
- ◀ Flourishing rugby communities – support clubs to sustain and grow themselves and to reflect society

Driving Objectives:

- ◀ Diversity & Inclusion – drive rugby union in England to reflect the diversity of society
- ◀ Understand – build a deep understanding of players, volunteers and fans to shape the future of the game
- ◀ Connect – connect with and grow the rugby community and create exceptional experiences
- ◀ Commercial and operational excellence – ensure a sustainable and efficient business model delivered by an inspired workforce

England Hockey Strategy (2023 – 2028)

England Hockey's Facilities Strategy can be found [here](#).

Aiming to make hockey more noticeable, relevant, and accessible to all, England Hockey have launched their new strategy 'Creating a Future for Our Game Together' on 3rd October.

The new strategy is a continued effort to re-engage with the current hockey community and to reach out to potential newcomers to introduce them to hockey.

Underpinning the strategy and of importance to the hockey community are four values, "collaborate inclusively, care for people and places, play with spirit win with grace and resilient in everything we do".

The strategy is the culmination of two years consultation with various stakeholders across the sport and larger sporting sector. Hockey will be guided by five key objectives over the next five years.

1. Lead Positive Change: to create and champion positive change within the community by broadening and widening the engagement of the sport and making it more ethnically and culturally diverse.
2. Meaningful Growth: to make sure that our sport thrives and grows into the future, we want to nurture a love of hockey within a more diverse group of young players and communities to reflect society.
3. Drive Visible Impact: to produce and release high-quality, engaging content that shares the love of the game, captures the passion, builds a deep connection and amplifies the voices of the hockey community with new and existing participants.
4. Responsible Leadership: to provide forward thinking, compassionate and inclusive leadership. Leadership that fosters trust within physically and psychologically safe environments and which puts players, the community and sustainability at heart of every decision.
5. Inspirational International Success: inspirational club and national teams delivering podium success in Europe and on the world stage, underpinned by a thriving talent system and domestic game.

The strategy aligns with Sport England's 'Uniting the movement' strategy and UK Sport's Powering Success, Inspiring Impact' strategic plan.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Rugby Football League – National Community Facilities Strategy (2024 – 2030)

The RFL has developed a new National Facilities Strategy which will guide investment into the game from 2024 through to 2030. The proposed investment package aligned to the Strategy will not only transform facilities, but also bolster the sport's social impact, reinforcing its position as a vital part of the nation's sporting and social fabric. The four focus areas of the Strategy are:

- ◀ **Security of Tenure** – allowing clubs to plan for the long-term
- ◀ **Accessible and Inclusive Facilities** – providing suitable facilities for all and creating safe spaces for the wider community
- ◀ **Adequate and Appropriate Pitch Provision**– investment both in playing surfaces, and in upskilling a volunteer workforce to maintain them
- ◀ **Sustainability**– both environmental and financial

The Strategy will deliver on the four focus areas by delivering against a set of five recommendations which are set within the Strategy and are detailed below. These recommendations reflect the wider strategic aspirations across the sport and are for the RFL to work to deliver.

- ◀ **Focus Community Clubs**
 - ◀ Ensure the RFL has sufficient capacity and resource to deliver the recommendations identified within this Strategy to support its community clubs.
 - ◀ Ensure all community clubs have the knowledge and resource to provide good quality grass pitches.
 - ◀ Supporting clubs to have good quality changing and social facilities which can support the scale of need at each club. These must be inclusive for all participants and benefit target user groups such as women and girls' participants.
 - ◀ Ensure clubs can accommodate a sustainable operational programme for clubhouses to ensure the longevity of provision.
 - ◀ Work with clubs and key partners to increase the number of clubs with secured tenure of their club facilities.
 - ◀ Develop a dedicated funding programme which is specifically aimed at supporting clubs to gain security of tenure at their respective site.
 - ◀ Highlight success stories and best practices from community clubs to inspire others and showcase the positive impact of these efforts.
- ◀ **Deliver positive social and environmental impact**
 - ◀ Support clubs through training and advice on how to promote facilities for non-rugby league purposes.
 - ◀ Work with Active Partnerships across England to enable higher usage and activation of rugby league assets for non-rugby league activity.
 - ◀ Prioritise clubs for wellbeing hubs which may offer the widest social benefit (relative to local need) – particularly those in high deprivation areas.
 - ◀ Use the activation of club facilities as a prerequisite to capital funding for club house improvements / new development.
 - ◀ Collaborative working with sports partners and key agencies
- ◀ **Collaborative working with sports partners and key agencies**
 - ◀ Ensure continued working with Sport England and National Governing Bodies of other sports to capitalise on shared investment opportunities.
 - ◀ Work with the Football Foundation to maximise Multi-Sport funding opportunities – utilising the framework provided in this Strategy as the baseline of shared investment.
 - ◀ Work closely with Active Partnerships in areas with high club densities to establish opportunities for pitch access via the Open School Facilities programme.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

◀ **Technological solutions**

- ◀ Ensure the RFL gathers greater levels of information from clubs via affiliation. To include (e.g.) security of tenure information and an integrated self-assessment audit of community facilities.
- ◀ Continue expanding the use and application of PitchPower so all clubs can self-assess provision and support clubs to make positive contributions to improving the quality of grass pitches.
- ◀ Promote technological solutions which progress clubs into being more sustainable, energy efficient and ensure their long-term viability as community assets.
- ◀ Create a platform or resource hub where clubs can access information on funding opportunities, facility management, and sustainable operational practices.

◀ **Working with Charitable Community Organisations and Wheelchair Rugby League**

- ◀ Develop an investment package to support the operational delivery of professional club foundation led wheelchair activity focusing on storage and logistical solutions.
- ◀ Prioritise capital investment into community club sites which also accommodate professional club foundations as tenants for community Rugby League activity.
- ◀ Begin work on the feasibility of developing a national wheelchair centre which includes exploring partnership opportunities with other sports to maximise multisport value and return on investment.
- ◀ Consult with professional club foundations, where possible, to understand the need for 3G access and work to ascertain sufficient access hours during peak times of need.

Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership

This is the active partnership area in which Stevenage is located. The Partnership's vision is to 'strategically and collaboratively improve the lives of the people of Hertfordshire, by using the power of sport and physical activity to tackle inequality and disadvantage'. It is one of 43 active partnerships across England and is funded by Sport England to locally deliver the Uniting the Movement Strategy. Key insights which informed its Strategic Plan 2022-2027 are:

- ◀ The need for a joined-up approach between schools and community sport.
- ◀ The Covid-19 Pandemic affecting the most disadvantaged communities.
- ◀ Opportunities to use sport and physical activity to tackle the number of long-term health conditions and wider societal issues.
- ◀ Widening inequality gaps.
- ◀ The need for well-designed spaces to increase physical activity levels and improve mental health.