

# Vale of White Horse District Council

## PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

**2023 - 2041**

Final Draft Version

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Produced for:



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*N.B. Appendices are set out in a separate document*

## Executive Summary

EX1 This Vale of White Horse District Council (VoWHDC) Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) updates and supersedes the previous strategy for pitches. It covers the period between 2023 and 2041 in alignment with the likely planning period to be used for the emerging new Local Plan. The strategy, which is compliant with Sport England guidance, focuses on football, rugby union, cricket and hockey pitches (both grass and artificial surfaces). Lesser played sports have also been considered during the process. The strategy's development has been shaped and overseen by a steering group formed of officers from VoWHDC, sports governing bodies (NGBs) and Sport England, and consultation has been undertaken (with clubs and providers / owners of pitches for which the update has been undertaken) as part of the process.

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### Vision

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*“Vale of White Horse should provide a good supply of well managed and maintained playing pitches and ancillary facilities, which are fit for purpose, meet identified needs and encourage all residents to take part in sport and physical activity.*

*There will be a positive reaction to the impacts of climate change through sports provision, seeking to contribute to opportunities for the community to access playing pitches and ancillary facilities without the need to use unsustainable forms of transport and support access to the facilities through active travel means. The strategy will support the Councils' vision to become carbon neutral by 2030 and to reduce emissions across the district.”*

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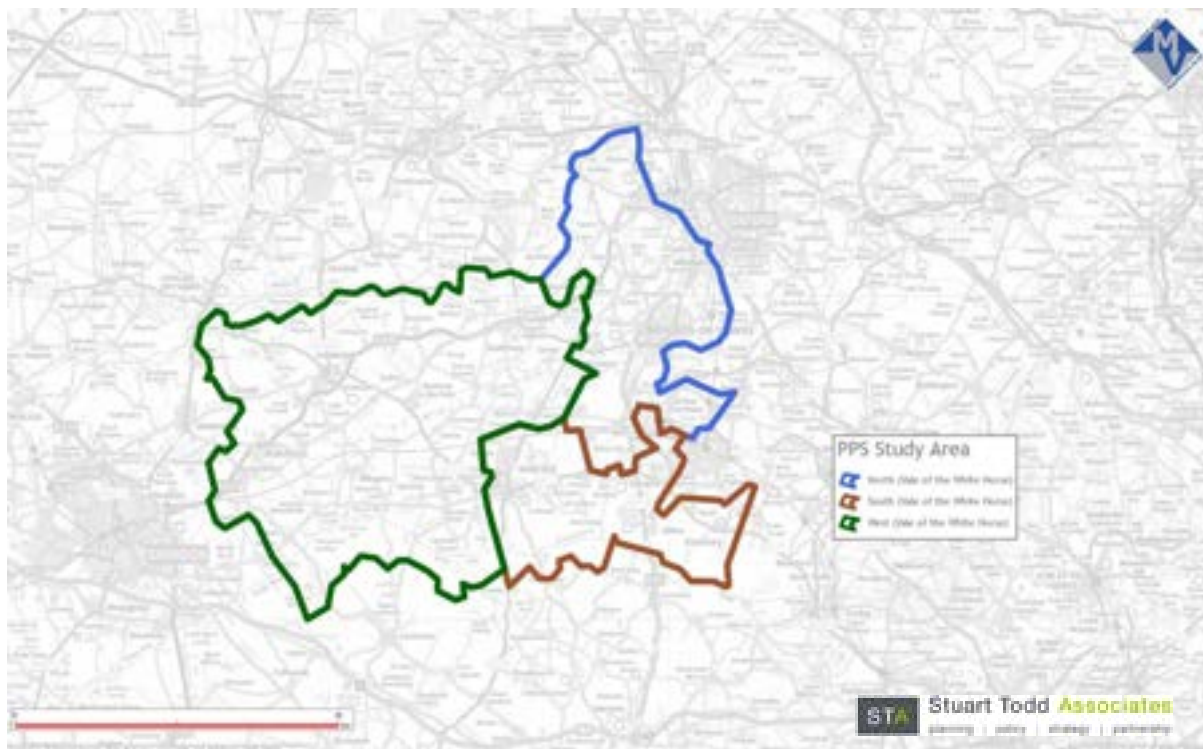
EX2 The PPS plays a number of important roles in sport, leisure and planning terms, and also has a direct link into the health and wellbeing agenda both in relation to formal club-based sport but also social, casual and informal sport aimed at getting people more active (with positive outcomes for mental as well as physical health). At its basic level, the PPS provides an audit of the quality, quantity and accessibility of playing pitches, establishes the current levels of demand (and therefore whether pitches are being over or under used) and projects forward demand likely to arise by the end of the strategy period so that the appropriate level of pitch provision can be planned for the future. The strategy:

- Can be used as robust evidence to protect existing playing pitches and playing fields;
- Can and should be used in the planning of new developments to include playing pitches on-site or contribution to off-site consistent with national and/or local policy;
- Can help to improve the quality of offer and provision by identifying and quantifying issues relating to the quality of pitches and ancillary facilities;
- Can be used by clubs and teams and pitch providers to support applications for funding for the improvement of the quality, quantity and accessibility of provision;

- Helps to defend against inappropriate development or loss of pitches;
- Informs planning policy development;
- Provides a strategic view and options for the provision of pitches during the strategy period; and,
- Forms an important part of the “package” of strategies, evidence and actions which can contribute towards improving the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those who live and work in the District.

EX3 What the strategy cannot do is provide a precise blueprint for change. Instead, it sets out a “direction of travel” with a number of detailed actions, recommendations and options for pitches which will need to be planned for, delivered, monitored and their impact on demand managed during the strategy period. The strategy cannot do the work necessary (for example, logistical, feasibility and viability work) required to confirm actions with 100% certainty and make things happen “on the ground”, which is the task of the many stakeholders (such as clubs, providers, owners and managers of pitches) and bodies (such as VoWHDC, sports governing bodies and Sport England) which may be responsible for delivery of pitches and facilities following the strategy’s adoption. The delivery stage of the PPS (known as “Stage E” in the Sport England guidance) should include at 3, 6 or 12 monthly meetings of the steering group to monitor, action and help deliver change. A wider strategy review should take place every 3 years.

Figure EX1: The Study Area and Sub-Areas



## Main Pitch Sports Key Issues

### FOOTBALL

EX4 The assessment data and discussion with members of the steering group suggest the following key issues are most prominent:

- The lack of secure AGPs and in particular 3Gs in the District.
- Supply / demand balance figures mask some of the overplay and lack of space to train or play matches experienced by clubs and reported by both the FAs and clubs themselves.
- 3G pitch capacity will be key to enabling teams to grow, particularly in housing growth areas (main towns). Loss of support for 3Gs (and possibly other AGP types) would represent a significant blow to supporting football in the District. While lack of future provision can be replaced by good quality sports-lit pitches, between 10 and 15 would be required per full-size sports-lit 3G, a challenge in a District with high land costs and likely revenue challenges moving forward – would such a way forward be viable?
- Opportunity for provision of new additional pitches rests largely at strategic housing allocation sites and so these should be utilised for additional provision where their location fits with the ability to start a new club or for an existing club to use new pitches as their home ground or additional home ground. It is important to be aware that additional playing pitches provided on housing allocation sites, or elsewhere, are also likely to require ancillary facilities.
- Quality, safety and accessibility of provision of both existing and future provision of pitches and facilities must recognise the needs of people with disabilities, girls and women, given continued likely growth in the game.

### HOCKEY

EX5 The assessment data and discussion with members of the steering group suggest the following key issues are most prominent:

- If projected growth comes to fruition, by 2041, the 0.21 pitch capacity for hockey should be able to be accommodated on the current home ground pitches use by Abingdon HC at Tilsley Park.
- For the future long-term sustainability of hockey clubs (with regard to financial viability and maximising the availability of volunteer / coaches' time) a "one site model" is preferred by England Hockey, focusing club activity on one central site.
- While projections indicate no growth in demand in the south sub-area, this is based on baseline data of no clubs being present at a home ground in this sub-area, and does not mean that there will be no demand from the population in that area. Demand arising from any developments in the sub-area should be accommodated by collecting off-site contributions based on Stage E discussion between the local authority and England Hockey, with contributions being channelled to improvements at the closest clubs to the proposed development site.
- Quality, safety and accessibility of provision of both existing and future provision of pitches and facilities must recognise the needs of people with disabilities, girls and women.
- Priorities and main concerns can be summarised as:



- the need to achieve greater security of tenure for Abingdon HC at Tilsley Park; and,
- ensure that there is sufficient capacity on the pitches for hockey to accommodate its demand, particularly on weekday evenings when the club is competing with football use.

## **CRICKET**

EX6 The assessment data and discussion with members of the steering group suggest the following key issues are most prominent:

- Projections for growth suggest that the junior game and Women & Girls cricket could see most growth. Increasing links with schools (including security of community use) and using their pitches and facilities could become important in accommodating growth, if it materialises “on the ground”. Such links will also help to establish and maintain a pathway through the age groups for cricket.
- Clubs with junior sections are growing significantly and outgrowing their home ground. These clubs are looking for second grounds to continue to service their membership and growth.
- Most ancillary facilities are not fit for purpose for Women & Girls and this market is likely to grow very fast over the period of the strategy. Quality, safety and accessibility of provision of both existing and future provision of pitches and facilities must recognise the needs of people with disabilities, girls and women, given continued likely growth in the game.
- Artificial pitches are important to help protect the grass pitches by providing additional capacity to host junior matches and provide training facilities for both juniors and seniors.
- Securing community use at club home grounds where there is currently unsecure community use is critical to give clubs certainty.
- Most clubs use volunteers to prepare their pitches and are over reliant upon this resource. It is generally an ageing workforce and the demands of the role have increased due to the growth of junior cricket and many sites being in use 6 or 7 times a week.

## **RUGBY UNION**

EX7 The assessment data and discussion with members of the steering group suggest the following key issues are most prominent:

- Priorities and main concerns can be summarised as:
  - the significant amount of existing overplay on most club grounds which needs to be resolved to reduce the number of pitches needed moving forward, particularly on grounds which host large, growing clubs;
  - improving quality of existing pitches as a priority to support existing demand and reduce overplay;
  - ensuring that sports lighting can be provided to enable additional evening use in co-ordination with pitch quality improvements;
  - exploration of the role that WR22 compliant 3G pitches could play in one or two locations to support growth and negate a high number of additional grass pitches being necessary (in Didcot and Faringdon); and,
  - if 3G options are not supported, how and where best to find additional pitch capacity close to existing grounds to cater for demand which ensure club use away from the home ground.

- Pitches used by clubs which have unsecure community use (for example, at Harwell) should be secured to ensure long-term certainty of use.
- If projected growth comes to fruition, by 2041, and no measures are taken to improve existing pitches' quality, capacity which allows the equivalent to around 13 full-size pitches will be necessary to support existing and future club demand.
- Quality, safety and accessibility of provision of both existing and future provision of pitches and facilities must recognise the needs of people with disabilities, girls and women, given continued likely growth in the game.

## **Main Findings by District and Sub-area**

EX8 The main recommendations which apply across the District, are set out below. These set out only "headlines" and full detailed recommendations are presented in the main body of the Strategy. Sub-area recommendations are limited, in this Executive Summary, to presenting headlines for future provision.

### **DISTRICT**

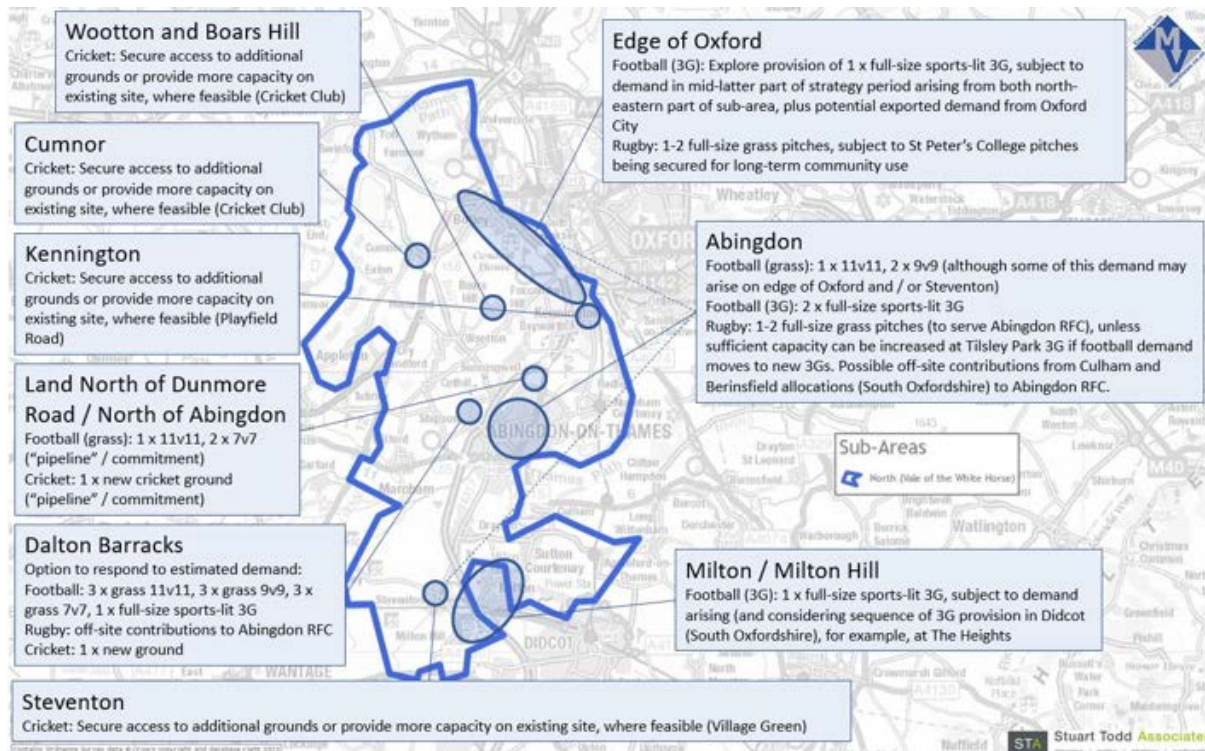
- Protect the existing supply of grass pitches and AGPs identified in the assessment and their capacity (for existing known, projected and potential additional currently unidentified future demand) unless the strategy proposes their replacement or alternative re-use for sport, leisure and recreation or unless replacement equivalent capacity can be provided elsewhere to an equal or better standard (i.e. "net improvements") reflecting the demand and type of use required "on the ground" by clubs.
- Any proposals which suggest potential loss of a playing pitch or wider playing field to supply should respond appropriately to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy<sup>1</sup>. It must not be assumed that the intensification of provision on an existing playing pitch or playing field site equates to satisfactory mitigation for loss of a grass pitch.
- Any identified notional spare grass pitch capacity at pitches already used for matches should be retained during the strategy period to allow for "capacity headroom" and flexibility of provision to help accommodate growth to the end of the strategy period.
- Maintain and improve the quality of all grass pitches and AGPs.
- Seek security of community use where not already in place.
- Improve the quality and accessibility of changing and other ancillary facilities to help ensure the quality of the experience for the sport is enhanced. Particular focus should be on supporting the growth of disability, girls' and women's sport through improvements which enhance the quality, safety and accessibility of facilities.
- Support proposals for improved energy efficiency and localised renewable and low carbon energy generation at facilities and grounds through measures such as LED directional lighting, solar pv, heat pumps and building insulation.
- Work with partners and key stakeholders to improve sustainable travel options to grounds, pitches and facilities.
- Strategic housing development allocations provide a good opportunity to deliver additional pitches (and off-site contributions to aid improvements of existing pitches and facilities) for pitch sports.

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport?section=playing\\_fields\\_policy](https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport?section=playing_fields_policy)

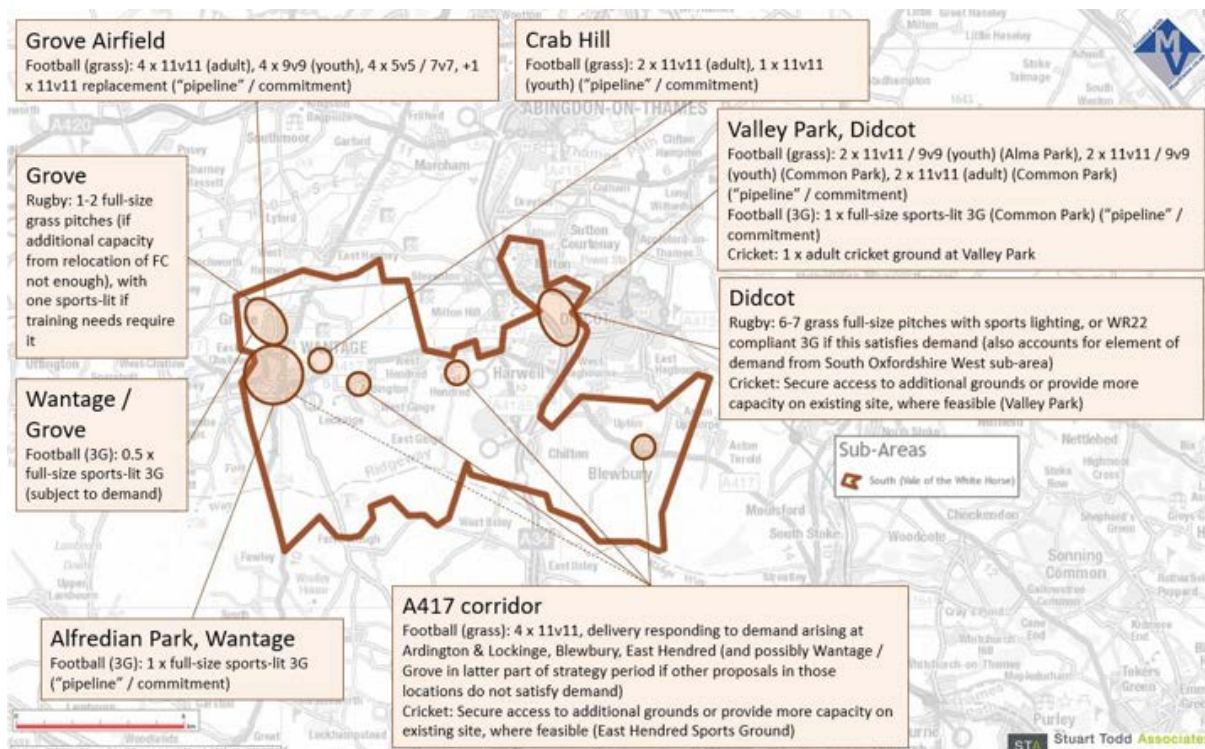
### NORTH SUB-AREA

EX10 The main “provide” headlines in this sub-area, set out in a spatial context, are as follows.



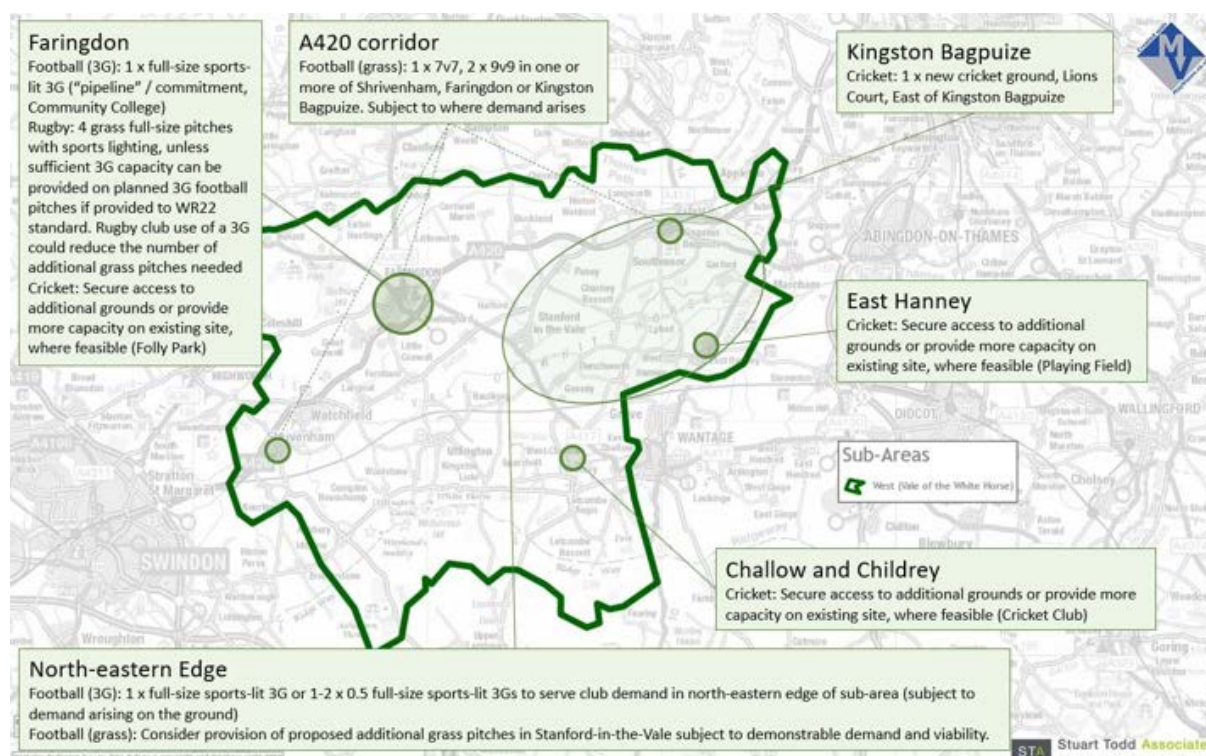
### SOUTH SUB-AREA

EX11 The main “provide” headlines in this sub-area, set out in a spatial context, are as follows.



## WEST SUB-AREA

EX12 The main “provide” headlines in this sub-area, set out in a spatial context, are as follows.



## Monitoring and Delivery

EX13 Following consultation on the draft strategy and any changes made as a result, confirmed recommendations and actions will be set out and monitored in a “live” action plan framework which members of the steering group will have a responsibility to update and implement. Implementation will depend on steering group members co-ordinating and working closely with clubs, teams, league organisers, providers / operators, owners of current pitches and owners of pitches and potential sites for additional pitches. The action plan framework will, in time, be updated by the District Council and delivery informed by other priorities such as (but not limited to) response to the climate emergency, economic recovery and levels of deprivation. The delivery stage will also confirm options for change presented in this strategy as further work during implementation is done on feasibility, viability and implications of other actions. However, PPS guidance recommends that an action plan is consulted upon as part of the strategy. Therefore, a “headline” action plan table is included in this draft Strategy setting out priority actions in broad terms.

EX14 To aid use of the strategy by local authority planning officers, the strategy also provides brief guidance for local authority officers in how to use and apply this strategy.

EX15 The importance of the delivery stage (Stage E of the PPS guidance and process) must not be underestimated. It is recommended that a “Stage E” action plan review meeting of the Steering Group should take place at least twice a year, but more frequently if issues suggest a need. These meetings must not be a replacement for important delivery work which should continue on an iterative and continuous basis between delivery partners.

# 1. Introduction

## (What is a Playing Pitch Strategy and why has it been developed?)

- 1.1 In Autumn 2022, we (Stuart Todd Associates Ltd.) were commissioned to develop a new playing pitch strategy (PPS) for Vale of White Horse District Council (VoWHDC), alongside development of the PPS for South Oxfordshire District. The strategy is compliant with the most up-to-date Sport England Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) guidance (issued in October 2013<sup>2</sup>). Development of the strategy necessitates a lengthy process to gather and analyse data across different sports' seasons, consult with key stakeholders and ensure agreement of the strategy's content by sports governing bodies and Sport England. Where possible, the approach to the strategy's development has sought to expedite this process, without compromising the need to meet the requirements of the guidance. The strategy covers the period between 2023 and 2041.
- 1.2 A PPS plays a number of important roles in sport, leisure and planning terms, and also has a direct link into the health and wellbeing agenda both in relation to formal club based sport but also social, casual and informal sport aimed at getting people more active (with positive outcomes for mental as well as physical health). At its basic level, the PPS provides an audit of the quality, quantity and accessibility of playing pitches, establishes the current levels of demand (and therefore whether pitches are being over or under used) and projects forward demand likely to arise by the end of the strategy period so that the appropriate level of pitch provision can be planned for the future.
- 1.3 The PPS:
- Can be used as robust evidence to protect existing playing pitches and playing fields;
  - Can and should be used in the planning of new developments to include playing pitches on-site or contribution to off-site consistent with national and/or local policy;
  - Can help to improve the quality of offer and provision by identifying and quantifying issues relating to the quality of pitches and ancillary facilities;
  - Can be used by clubs and teams and pitch providers to support applications for funding for the improvement of the quality, quantity and accessibility of provision;
  - Helps to defend against inappropriate development or loss of pitches;
  - Informs planning policy development; and,
  - Provides a strategic view and options for the provision of pitches during the strategy period;
  - Forms an important part of the "package" of strategies, evidence and actions which can contribute towards improving the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those who live and work in the District.

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>

It is for these reasons, and to ensure that the District has an up-to-date PPS guidance compliant strategy, that it was commissioned.

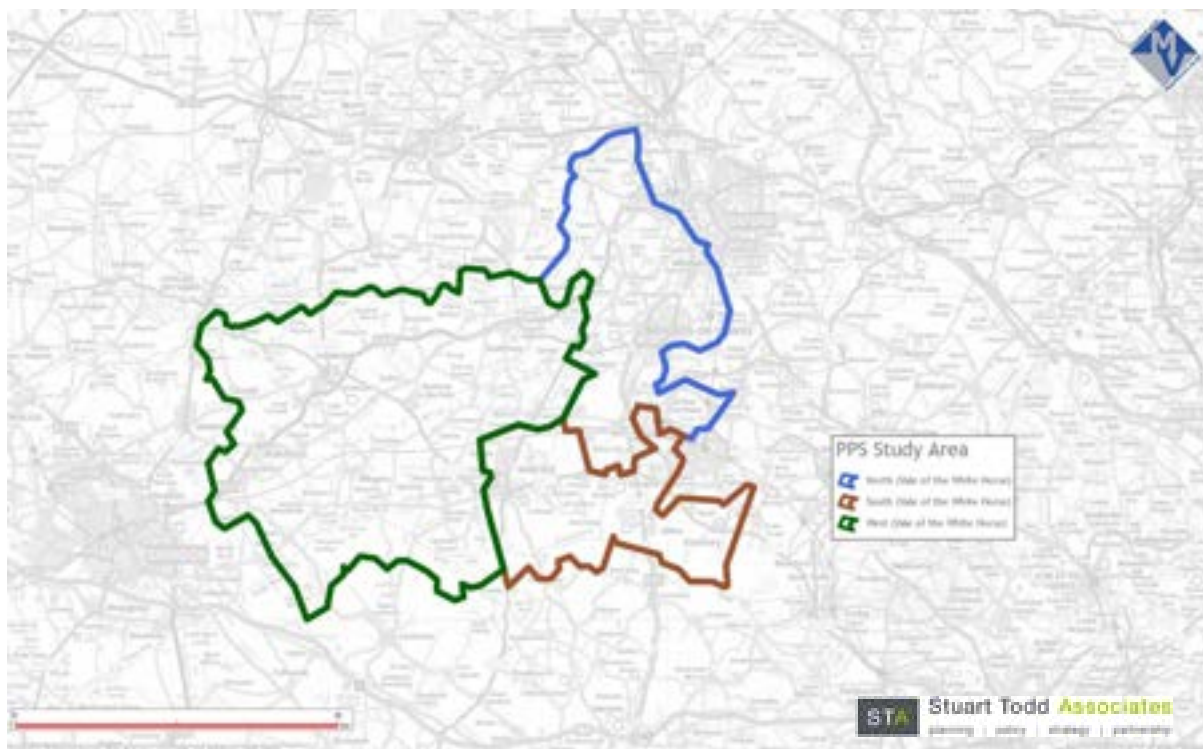
- 1.4 What the strategy does not and cannot do is provide a blueprint for change to 2041. The strategy can present options based on evidence and assessment of it (and indeed recommendations) but cannot do the work necessary (for example, logistical, feasibility and viability work) required to confirm actions with 100% certainty and make things happen “on the ground”, which is the task of the many stakeholders (such as clubs, providers, owners and managers of pitches) and bodies (such as the District Council, sports governing bodies and Sport England) responsible for delivery of pitches and facilities following the strategy’s adoption. The delivery stage of the PPS (known as “Stage E” in the Sport England guidance) should include 6 or 12 monthly meetings of the steering group to monitor, action and help deliver change. A wider strategy review should take place every 3 years.

## 2. The Study Area

### (What is the extent of the study area?)

- 2.1 The study area for the PPS is the whole of the District area, as shown on the map below (Figure 1). The locations of all pitches identified in the study are shown in Appendix 1 to this strategy and details of each pitch and site are set out in the Assessment Reports which accompany this strategy document.
- 2.2 Much of the data on pitches is listed and broken down into sub-areas within the District. This has been done to help provide more localised assessment than that which can be provided at a District-wide scale. Use of these sub areas for this PPS was confirmed by the Steering Group overseeing the work.

Figure 1: Study Area and Sub-Areas



### 3. Typology

#### (What sports and types of pitches does the strategy cover?)

- 3.1 The strategy does not consider all sports which use pitches. The typology for the playing pitch assessment is as follows:
- Outdoor grass pitches used for football, rugby union and cricket;
  - Outdoor full-size artificial grass pitches (AGPs) used predominantly for hockey and / or football (which can be partitioned to make a number of smaller pitches for smaller sided games or training); and,
  - Outdoor smaller, dedicated or “formal” AGPs (where booking is required, i.e. not open multi-use games areas) used predominantly for small sided football (games e.g. 5, 6 or 7-a-side).
- 3.2 In addition to the “main” pitch sports played in the District, we have also considered the demand for “lesser played” sports such as Lacrosse, American Football, Baseball, Rounders, Softball, Gaelic Football and Rugby League.
- 3.3 The PPS does not consider use of indoor sports halls, “kick-about” areas or, as indicated above multi-use games areas (MUGAs), although it is recognised that these play important roles in the provision of space for informal / casual play and many different sports and recommendations can include provision for MUGAs where, for example, they can play a key role in supporting clubs through informal play or training for younger age groups.
- 3.4 While all pitches meeting the above criteria are identified for the purposes of establishing the quantity of pitches available, only those pitches with some “community use” during the “peak period”<sup>3</sup> are taken forward in the assessment of provision. This is because the PPS is concerned with understanding and planning for public or wider use (for example by one or more clubs or teams) and accessibility, than that provided for a single user. Pitches without community use will tend to be used only by one group of users and will typically include mainly school sites. These are important to school pupils and students and will often not be available for wider community use to protect the quality of provision, for reasons of security and child safeguarding, or for logistical reasons such as not being able to open a school site up at a weekend or evening. However, an understanding of pitches not currently available for community use or access are noted to be able to understand the role they could potentially play in supporting provision in the future.
- 3.5 “Community use” does extend to those sites which are provided on a commercial basis and those which require a membership fee for use (where those fees are not exorbitant and where membership is not unduly restrictive).

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<sup>3</sup> The peak period for AGPs is Monday – Thursday 5pm – 10pm, Friday 5pm – 7pm and Saturday and Sundays 9am – 5pm. For competitive football the peak period varies between age groups but for adult men it is Saturday afternoon, adult ladies Sunday afternoon and juniors Saturday morning. For rugby union the peak period is Sunday mornings for youth, mini and midi, Saturday afternoon for adult men and Sunday afternoon for adult ladies. For cricket the peak period is Saturday afternoon for adult men, is variable for adult ladies across weekend afternoons and evenings depending on the format and league and is mostly Sunday mornings or afternoons for juniors.

- 3.6 Analysis of the supply of and demand for community use pitches is also split into developing an understanding of those pitches which have some security of community use (for example a long-term lease, covenant and / or community use agreement) and those which have unsecure community use (for example, where such agreements are absent and reliance is on a verbal or other form of informal arrangement). This distinction is important, as those pitches which are used by the community or clubs on unsecure sites are at risk of being taken away from supply (for example if the provided decides that they no longer wish to host clubs or other community use), sometimes at short notice, placing additional pressure on those sites with secure community use. During the assessment, consideration has been given to the degree of risk that reliance on use of unsecure sites is placing on supply overall.

## 4. Methodology

### (How has the strategy been developed?)

- 4.1 It has been important that the development of the PPS has followed the guidance published by Sport England and which has been agreed by the national governing bodies (NGBs) for the sports considered by the strategy. Use of the guidance, and data verification and checks on the quality of the various outputs during the strategy's development by these bodies ensures that the final strategy is robust, fits with their priorities and their own strategies and benefits from those bodies' support as its options are explored and actions delivered. This check was particularly important as the budget for the work limited the amount of primary data that could be collected.
- 4.2 Sport England's PPS guidance sets out a ten-step process to be followed to ensure that the PPS is robust. The ten-steps are set out below. Analysis of the data established in stage B is presented in reports setting out summary tables of key data and issues and stage C assessment report itself (the "Assessment Reports"). Those reports sit alongside this strategy as the evidence for its overall "direction of travel" and specific actions for sports and pitches.
- Stage A:
    1. Prepare and tailor the approach
  - Stage B:
    - 2 & 3. Gather supply & demand information and views.
  - Stage C:
    4. Understand situation at sites.
    5. Develop current & future pitches of provision.
    6. Identify key findings and issues
  - Stage D:
    7. Develop the recommendations and action plan.
    8. Write and adopt the strategy.
  - Stage E:
    9. Apply and deliver the strategy.
    10. Keep the strategy robust and up-to-date.
- 4.3 Put simply, for each of the sports (football, cricket, hockey and rugby union) and pitch types (grass and artificial) in the typology the report assesses current supply, demand, accessibility, availability, quality, quantity and issues with provision, to set out the position now; and then projects likely future need and demand forward to understand requirements for each sport and pitch type in



the future and the changes necessary to ensure provision is adequate to meet these future needs.

- 4.4 For lesser played pitch sports, we contacted sports governing bodies to understand key issues, constraints and opportunities in relation to each, where they indicated that there is demand for their sport in the District, and contacted clubs where they were present in the District to understand their key issues.
- 4.5 The supply and demand information and data used in the assessment was collected over several months during 2023 and was verified and agreed by the Steering Group prior to the assessment stage.

## 5. Consultation and Management of the Process

(Who has been involved in the strategy's development?)

### Steering Group

- 5.1 PPS guidance requires the development of the strategy to be steered and managed by a "steering group". This typically includes (at least) the commissioning local authority, Sport England and sports governing bodies (NGBs). The involvement of a steering group is particularly important given the importance of its members in the "grounding" and delivery of the strategy. The steering group plays a significant role by:
- considering (through "check and challenge") information and data during the process;
  - verifying and helping to localise data;
  - providing a connection with local providers, clubs and teams;
  - helping to put locally gathered information into a strategic context; and,
  - commenting on and shaping the outputs of the study at each stage in the process and giving approval required by the PPS guidance prior to the process moving to the next stage.
- 5.2 NGBs have played a key role, in particular, and their role and commitment to the process is set out in the PPS guidance.

<b>Organisation</b>
Vale of White Horse District Council
England and Wales Cricket Board
Oxfordshire County Cricket Board
England Hockey
Rugby Football Union
Berks and Bucks Football Association
Football Foundation
Sport England
Stuart Todd Associates Ltd.

- 5.3 Communication with the steering group has not simply been through meetings at key stages of the process. We have kept an ongoing dialogue with members of the steering group throughout the process.

## Consultation

- 5.4 Consultation is an integral and important part of the PPS' development, as set out above. Consultation has been undertaken, prior to the strategy being produced, in the following ways:
- online surveys early in the process sent to relevant clubs, pitch owners, pitch managers, pitch providers / operators and the education sector to ascertain up-to-date baseline information about quality, accessibility, demand for pitches and ancillary facilities being reviewed and other important issues of concern; and,
  - face-to-face on-site meetings with some of those providers and operators managing and maintaining sites during the pitch audit process.
- 5.5 This strategy has also been subject to wider consultation and views will help to inform and confirm the strategy's content. The use of pitches and issues of concern can change from season to season and so some flexibility in the interpretation of results at the pitch specific level will be required, something which will need to be acknowledged as the strategy is delivered and as solutions are identified. This is one of the reasons why, as noted above, the strategy cannot provide a blueprint for change but instead focuses on key actions and options for change to improve the quality of provision and respond appropriately to changes in demand now and in the future. Within this context, the actions which arise from the process are considered to be "live".

## **6. Responsibilities**

### **(Who has ownership of the strategy and who will deliver its actions?)**

- 6.1 While the development of the strategy was commissioned by the District Council (and therefore ownership of the strategy rests principally with the local authority), this does not mean that any additional pitches or facilities proposed to fill identified shortfalls or future provision must be funded and / or delivered and / or maintained by the local authority. The nature of sports facility and pitch provision has been changing over the last decade or so nationally with the role of local authorities now moving away from that of a provider, maintainer and operator of facilities to that of a facilitator and enabler. However, the strategy has an important role in informing the current and future reviews of the Council's Local Plan, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and approach to CIL and s106 planning obligations<sup>4</sup>. It will also play an important role informing the decision-making process as the Council considers planning applications (as the local planning authority) which relate to the protection, enhancement and provision of pitches and facilities.
- 6.2 New pitches and facilities are most likely to be provided in partnership by the local authority, sports organisations, national sports governing bodies, the education sector / establishments, clubs, businesses and operators, or more commonly by a combination of one or more of these. The local authority is likely to play a key enabling and co-ordination role in planning for and the delivery of new pitches and facilities across the District. The same applies to the improvement of existing pitches and facilities, where management and / or

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<sup>4</sup> Subject to any changes being brought about to the s106 and CIL regime by changes to the planning system during the strategy period.

ownership of existing facilities is no longer (or never has been) the responsibility of the Council. The current landscape of pitch provision therefore requires the steering group members each to (continue to) play an important role in helping to deliver the strategy's recommendations and action framework.

## 7. Other Strategies & Plans and Funding Opportunities

### (What key strategies & plans and funding opportunities are relevant to the PPS?)

- 7.1 There are a number of important strategies and plans which are relevant and link to the PPS strategy, both on the sport and planning side which are briefly summarised below. It is important to note the context that they provide, both for the strategy to be produced and also for the recommendations and actions it presents. There are other strategies and plans with which this strategy has a connection. However, these cannot all be summarised here.
- 7.2 We acknowledge and recommend, however, that important links should continue to be made by appropriate bodies between this strategy for pitches and sport and those produced for issues such as health & wellbeing (including leisure and active lives), green infrastructure, transport, economic development and wider planning programmes (in addition to those strategies summarised below). Appendix 2 provides a contextual summary of these various documents and of current funding opportunities.
- Current District-wide Adopted Planning Policies (Local Plan) (and Emerging Joint Local Plan 2041)
  - South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Active Communities Strategy
  - South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Infrastructure Delivery Plans
  - Neighbourhood Plans
  - National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance
  - Sport England: "Uniting the Movement" 2021-2031
  - Football Association "Strategic Plan" 2016-2020, "National Game Strategy for Participation and Development 2018-2021" and Local Football Facility Plans
  - England Hockey "Facilities Strategy" 2017-2033
  - England and Wales Cricket Board "Inspiring Generations" 2020-2024
  - Rugby Football Union National Facilities Strategy
  - Health and Wellbeing Strategy
  - Active Design
  - Oxfordshire Plan 2050
  - South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Local Transport & Connectivity Plan (LTCP5)

## 8. Decarbonisation, Sustainable Travel and Climate Change

### (What are the key issues for sport in relation to the changing climate?)

- 8.1 When considering the decarbonisation, sustainable travel and climate change agendas, there are several ways that the sport can help to minimise impact and contribute positively towards mitigating and adapting to the changing climate.
- 8.2 For example, clubs in control of their ground and providers / owners of grounds and facilities, measures such as solar pv and heat pumps can help to secure a local supply of energy and contribute towards lowering energy costs, as can retrofitting insulation to buildings<sup>5</sup>. Small, yet important measures, like making secure and well-lit cycle storage available at pitch sites and facilities can make a small difference and many sites already have good levels of cycle parking in appropriate locations on sites. However, this type of infrastructure provision can only be part of the answer. Sports facility, pitch and ground providers, nor NGBs or the local authority alone cannot be expected to provide all solutions to deliver this type of change “on the ground”. Cultural shift is also required across sport with many players using cars to get to matches and training, and a continuing challenge is likely to be that there are not and cannot be a sufficient number of facilities, grounds and pitches provided in all locations to enable a 20 minute cycle or walk to them – it seems unlikely to be viable to provide that number for each sport. Cultural shift will be difficult to embed in many sports, also because many players will simply not have the time in their day to factor in a longer journey time to play and many will not be prepared to cycle or walk significant distances to play matches or train after playing their sport for anywhere between one and several hours (and particularly if the weather is poor and they play outside). This is not to say that this is a challenge not worth addressing, but the Playing Pitch Strategy cannot provide full answers and proposals to resolve such issues, particularly as they go beyond the remit of the strategy and will require cross-discipline, cross-department and cross-sector working within and with organisations and other stakeholders outside of sport and planning. For example, it will be the role of other strategies and plans such as Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and Active Travel Strategies and Action Plans to help ensure that key sports hubs, in particular, which see a substantial amount of demand, are well connected by safe cycling and walking networks, while it is the role of public transport providers and local authorities to ensure that public transport also serves such facilities at the right times, right frequencies and to the most likely destinations of sports users and players.
- 8.3 There are some environmental concerns about the use of artificial pitch surfaces for sport. This is a greater concern perhaps for football and hockey than for cricket, while rugby will use WR22 compliant 3G pitches for training and matches where demand suggests a need and play cannot be accommodated at club ground grass pitches. Concerns seem to focus around use of a synthetic pitch which is predominantly plastic, and for 3G pitches

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<sup>5</sup> Advice is available for clubs, for example, <https://susfootball.com/net-zero-football-club/>

used by football and rugby, the current infill material of rubber crumb<sup>6</sup> and consequential loss of rubber particles off-site and into the environment and watercourses. However, 3G pitches can have a variety of infill materials and alternatives to rubber crumb which meet performance standards may become available during the lifetime of this strategy. Guidance already exists, however, about the use of infill materials on AGPs<sup>7</sup> and design and operational arrangements can be implemented which help in managing and mitigating elements of environmental concerns. For example, the Football Foundation has highlighted that independent studies<sup>8</sup> have shown that through good field design, operation and maintenance, infill migration from an artificial grass pitch can be reduced by up to 98% from typical worst-case situations. There are options to deal pro-actively with the containment of infill materials through retro-fit as existing surfaces / carpets are replaced at the end of their life.

- 8.4 At the current time, competitive play of hockey on grass is not supported by England Hockey. Therefore, no other scenarios for hockey play with use of AGPs removed from future supply have been developed. If no sand or Gen2 surfaces are permitted in the future, either new additional or replacement surfaces, or an alternative surface other than grass does not come forward, at the current time, this would mean an end to club-based competitive hockey.
- 8.5 When considering benefits and perceived disbenefits of the use of AGPs, the following presents a summary.

Benefits / arguments which could be made for provision

- Health and wellbeing – greater access to an all-weather surface for a greater number of users and a proportionately more significant benefit to health compared to provision of the same number of grass pitches.
- They can act as “outdoor classrooms” for schools.
- Matches can still be played during very wet winters when grass pitches are flooded.
- No need to water, or use fertiliser or herbicide.
- Rubber crumb on 3G pitches is typically made from recycled material (e.g. vehicle tyres) and the surface (carpet) is recyclable at the end of its life.
- There are other infills for use on 3G pitches, for example cork olive pips.
- Design features on 3G pitches - as identified in the FA Guide to 3G Football Turf Pitches - significantly reduces infill loss.
- Hockey can be played on a high-quality reliable, all-weather surface, minimising risk of injury. Competitive hockey cannot be played on a grass pitch, at the current time.
- Other sports, for example, rugby and lacrosse are played on AGPs.
- The potential impact of rubber crumb being lost and finding its way into watercourses, compared to erosion of micro-plastics and rubber from

<sup>6</sup> which helps to manage the movement of the ball.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://sapca.org.uk/guide/codes-of-practice/>

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.estc.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Ecoloop-Report-Effectiveness-RMMs.pdf>

footwear, car and bike tyres, etc seems likely to be significantly small. There are measures which can be put in place through a scheme's design and location to minimise loss. However, it is also the responsibility of users to ensure that they make use of some measures to reduce loss from the site.

- Work is ongoing within the industry to find and approve suitable alternative infill materials, such as cork, which meet the NGBs' competitive performance standards<sup>9</sup>.
- Economies of scale<sup>10</sup> – while there is a significant cost to building an AGP, for football, for example, a single full-size sports-lit 3G pitch can provide capacity equivalent to around 8-10 full size grass good quality pitches (5-6 of which would need to be sports-lit and fenced to protect quality and ensure that bookings can be honoured, with consequent costs and impact of powering more lighting and potential impact on dark skies). Good quality grass pitches would require proper management and maintenance to ensure that they remain good quality and able to accommodate the wear. If the pitches are only provided to “standard” quality, additional grass pitches would be necessary, with perhaps 15 pitches equating to the provision available from a single full-size 3G pitch. For rugby, a WR22 compliant 3G sports-lit pitch provides capacity equivalent to around 6 grass pitches.
- Full-size AGPs can serve a wide catchment of population. While travel to AGPs is typically by private car by most users (unless they live within a comfortable walking or cycling distance) it is the responsibility of others, not just sports clubs or pitch providers, to help ensure modal shift to lower carbon forms of travel. This will be a practical challenge to many sports players given time constraints, the need to take kit and equipment with them and desire to avoid poor weather (a disincentive to cycle). Improved travel solutions (both in terms of lower carbon and frequency of public transport) is also necessary to change behaviour.
- A localised “ban” on all artificial “carpets” for sport would also have an impact on non-turf wickets for cricket and could also impact some indoor sports such as indoor bowls, if the principle is adopted equitably.

#### Disbenefits / arguments which could be made against provision

- Environmental impact at the end of the life of the carpet (surface).

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that, at time of writing, there are no such alternatives available which meet FIFA Quality requirements, and as such, they cannot yet provide a solution to support affiliated football requirements/matchplay aligned to the demand identified within this strategy.

<sup>10</sup> At the current time, a new full-size sports-lit AGP costs around £1m to develop. A single full-size 11v11 grass pitch, without sports-lighting, costs around £200k. Equivalent capacity on grass pitches is likely to therefore be around double the cost of a single AGP. Maintenance of this number of grass pitches and cost of lighting is also likely to be significantly more per annum than for an AGP if the grass pitches are to be maintained to a level which can cope with likely use. Costs estimates do not include the cost of land, likely to be higher for grass equivalent pitches due to the footprint / area required.

- Environmental impact (in the case of 3G pitches) of infill loss.
  - Building an AGP usually takes place on a grass pitch or greenfield site (although mitigation of loss of a playing field can be a requirement of 3G development, although not in every case).
  - AGPs tend to provide “strategic” as well as a local provision due to the amount of use they can accommodate, their cost and catchment of users they need to be viable in the long-term. AGPs cannot usually be provided in a greater number of locations due to cost and viability, meaning that travel to them could be predominantly by private car (particularly where public transport is not an option for users). Therefore, even if at much higher capital and maintenance cost, a greater number of high quality grass pitches in more locations *might* encourage users to cycle and walk to play sport (and possibly provide an option to travel by public transport) and therefore reduce the need to travel.
- 8.6 Clearly, for the environment, sport and health to benefit, and for solutions to be financially viable, a balance needs to be struck, as is the case throughout the planning system between provision of AGPs and resolution of adverse impact and satisfactory mitigation of these. For example, the Government has been looking at carbon assessments for developments to be brought in (which seem likely to be introduced anyway by many local authorities) and impact assessments for travel / transport and the environment already exist. Net gain (in biodiversity) for development proposals has been introduced through the Environment Act 2021 and many Local Plans already introduced such requirements through policy. There is no reason why proposals for AGPs should not be required to demonstrate that they pass such tests. Authorities can already seek conditions on permissions including the design of schemes including multiple measures to prevent loss of rubber crumb from 3G pitches and end of surface life recycling for all AGPs. There is clearly a role for the planning system (and planning policies in particular in Local Plans) to ensure that such tests and requirements for mitigations are introduced to ensure that communities and people’s physical and mental health can still benefit from AGPs without compromising or having a net additional adverse impact on the environment. Much will need also to be done, outside of sport and the planning system, particularly if there is a future without artificial pitches, to help make the shift required to achieve net zero and to prevent, mitigate and adapt to climate change, while also providing fully for sport and health, within the context of the Council’s commitment for Vale of White Horse to be carbon neutral by 2045, with an aim for a 75 per cent reduction in emissions across the district by 2030<sup>11</sup>. The Council is introducing mandatory use of a Climate Impact Assessment Tool by its staff which will help to understand potential impact of proposals which come forward for sport.

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<sup>11</sup> subject to review. See Climate Action Plan for further details at <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2022/02/Vale-Climate-Action-plan-2022-2024.pdf>

## 9. The Role of Strategic Housing Sites

### (How can major housing developments contribute towards playing pitch provision?)

- 9.1 The assessment report captures the results of individual assessments of the demand likely to arise from the strategic housing development sites in the District, where the PPS can still have an influence on provision (some allocations already have agreements in place for provision of pitches which the assessment and strategy consider as “pipeline” commitments to additional supply). The amount of land required to accommodate these significant scales of housing also means that they present the best opportunity for provision of new pitches where required, to serve both demand from the housing site, and additional and future demand from a growing population to 2041. However, when considering how best to plan for and accommodate demand arising from major developments, it is dangerous to assume that in every instance provision for grass or AGP pitches identified from calculations for a strategic development for all sports should or can be provided within the development boundary itself.
- 9.2 It is important to note that the outputs from the Sport England calculator, which has been used to estimate demand arising from the new population on development sites, must be treated as an estimate and should be used as a starting point for negotiations for on and off-site provision and contributions. The input data is, effectively, a “snapshot” in time and input data can change from season to season. Calculations have been made based on local authority and sub-area administrative boundaries (and not spatial catchments which might cross administrative boundaries) and so discussions with neighbouring local authorities in locations where a reasonable catchment for a site extends into those authorities’ areas might be beneficial to inform discussions about the overall quantum of provision and whether that capacity is provided on-site, off-site, or through developer contributions.
- 9.3 Experience suggests that “provide and they will come” does not work for most pitch sports. Careful thought must be given to the appropriateness, viability and practicalities of use, running and maintaining a pitch if in a location away from an existing club’s home ground. Economies of scale and critical mass of members and volunteers required are also important factors, with provision of single pitch sites rarely representing good value or a practical solution when split sites draw members away from an existing home ground (therefore, introducing additional travel for some existing members / players) and where ancillary facilities also need to be provided at significant cost. Careful consideration must be given to not create single pitch sites where no existing club is prepared to play or run and maintain the site as a satellite location. Neither can it be automatically assumed that a new club will simply emerge from demand, given the need for volunteers and seed funds to establish a new club. It is also important to note that demand arising from the new population will occur incrementally as the development is delivered and occupied and that without sports infrastructure and “people capacity” in place at an early stage, demand will simply gravitate towards an existing club or clubs. This can often be the result of new residents moving to new developments who already live within the same housing market area – and it cannot be assumed that all new residents in a new development are new to the area and therefore these people will already have associations with



existing sports clubs (and will be likely to retain them if travel time does not introduce an impediment such that it will stop them playing at their “home” club).

- 9.4 Operation of a satellite site for an existing club must be carefully thought through if this is considered to be a workable potential solution. For critical mass within age groups, it would be likely that a club would favour moving several age groups, for example, to a new satellite pitch. The implication can be that more existing players then have to travel further to the new satellite location than the alternative of players arising from demand at a new development travelling to an existing club home ground. Support of NGBs is critical to realise effective and efficient creation of new clubs and / or the introduction of satellite sites for existing clubs.
- 9.5 Pooling or securing contributions from multiple sites can often be a more workable and appropriate solution for formal sports provision where funds can be used to strengthen and improve capacity at existing club sites or can be channelled into strategic sports hub sites within a major development site to replace existing club sites where improvements and expansion of capacity could prove challenging in the longer-term.
- 9.6 These factors have all been taken into account as the role of strategic housing sites has been considered and recommendations made about provision on each site later in this strategy. In many cases pitch demand figures are rounded up to the nearest full pitch as it is impractical to deliver a decimal of a pitch with the demand derived from need for particular age groups (i.e. providing 0.6 of a 11v11 football pitch does not support adult or youth 11v11 matches). The rounded up element of capacity will help to accommodate demand from outside the development site and / or a higher rate of participation. Figures for financial contributions derived from the calculator are set out in the assessment reports. The rounded up proportions of pitches are not part of the calculator outputs and rounded up proportions of pitches should not be sought as contributions from development.

## 10. The Vision for Playing Pitches in Vale of White Horse

(What should the strategy seek to achieve?)

- 10.1 At the start of the PPS process, the Steering Group overseeing the strategy's development agreed a Vision for the strategy. The Vision, set out below, sets the tone for the treatment of playing pitches in the District during the strategy period to the year 2041.

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### ***Vision***

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*“Vale of White Horse should provide a good supply of well managed and maintained playing pitches and ancillary facilities, which are fit for purpose, meet identified needs and encourage all residents to take part in sport and physical activity.*

*There will be a positive reaction to the impacts of climate change through sports provision, seeking to contribute to opportunities for the community to access playing pitches and ancillary facilities without the need to use unsustainable forms of transport and support access to the facilities through active travel means. The strategy will support the Councils' vision to become carbon neutral by 2030 and to reduce emissions across the district.”*

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## 11. The Aims of the Playing Pitch Strategy

### (How will the strategy meet the aspirations set out in the Vision?)

11.1 Accompanying the strategy's Vision, a set of aims has also been developed which set out what the strategy is seeking to achieve. They reflect the role of the strategy in contributing towards sport, activity, health and wellbeing; and, providing up-to-date evidence and strategy framework to help protect, enhance and provide pitches and demonstrate the demand and need for pitches, with the aim of provision in the right places and at the right time.

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#### Aims

- To protect, enhance and provide playing pitches and ancillary facilities and address any shortfalls in quantity and quality.
  - To help direct investment to where improvements can have the greatest impact.
  - To encourage community access to the site by active travel means or more sustainable methods of transport.
  - To include recommendations that take account of the need to achieve carbon neutral districts and have measures in place to help ensure that facilities can be managed sustainably
  - In the approach and preparation of the needs assessment and strategy, to consider and incorporate the councils' duties under Equality Act 2010 in its recommendations.
  - The assessment will help to ensure that the planning policies in the Joint Local Plan are based on a robust and up-to-date assessment of the needs for sports facilities.
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## 12. Main Pitch Sports Key Issues

12.1 This section presents a summary of the key issues for each main pitch sport, providing context for the sections which follow. Headlines only are provided to give brief context for each sport, with much more detail provided in the Assessment Reports.

### Football

#### In Numbers

12.2 The baseline position for football in terms of supply and demand in the District is as follows.

Clubs and Pitches										
Sub-area	Number of Clubs	Number of Teams	Number of Grass Pitches							Not available
			Pitch Size					Community Use		
			5v5	7v7	9v9	11v11 (youth)	11v11 (adult)	Secure	Unsecure	
North	26	154	14	27	12	20	52	60	13	52
South	10	57	4	18	6	10	17	31	6	18
West	9	56	3	11	4	17	18	25	5	23
<b>District</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>93</b>

#### Key Issues

12.3 The assessment data and discussion with members of the steering group suggest the following key issues are most prominent:

- The lack of unsecure AGPs and in particular 3Gs in the District.
- Supply / demand balance figures mask some of the overplay and lack of space to train or play matches experienced by clubs and reported by both the FAs and clubs themselves.
- 3G pitch capacity will be key to enabling teams to grow, particularly in housing growth areas (main towns). Loss of support for 3Gs (and possibly other AGP types) would represent a significant blow to supporting football in the District. While lack of future provision can be replaced by good quality sports-lit pitches, between 10 and 15 would be required per full-size sports-lit 3G, a challenge in a District with high land costs and likely revenue challenges moving forward – would such a way forward be viable?

- Opportunity for provision of new additional pitches rests largely at strategic housing allocation sites and so these should be utilised for additional provision where their location fits with the ability to start a new club or for an existing club to use new pitches as their home ground or additional home ground. It is important to be aware that additional playing pitches provided on housing allocation sites, or elsewhere, are also likely to require ancillary facilities.
- Quality, safety and accessibility of provision of both existing and future provision of pitches and facilities must recognise the needs of people with disabilities, girls and women, given continued likely growth in the game.

## Hockey

### In Numbers

12.4 The baseline position for hockey in terms of supply and demand in the District is as follows.

Sub-area	Clubs	Teams	Club Home AGPs (and community use)	
			Secure	Insecure
North	1	11	0	2
South	0	0	0	0
West	1	4	0	1
<b>District</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

### Key Issues

12.5 The assessment data and discussion with members of the steering group suggest the following key issues are most prominent:

- If projected growth comes to fruition, by 2041, the 0.21 pitch capacity for hockey should be able to be accommodated on the current home ground pitches use by Abingdon HC at Tilsley Park.
- For the future long-term sustainability of hockey clubs (with regard to financial viability and maximising the availability of volunteer / coaches' time) a "one site model" is preferred by England Hockey, focusing club activity on one central site.
- While projections indicate no growth in demand in the south sub-area, this is based on baseline data of no clubs being present at a home ground in this sub-area, and does not mean that there will be no demand from the population in that area. Demand arising from any developments in the sub-area should be accommodated by collecting off-site contributions based on Stage E discussion between the local authority and England Hockey, with contributions being channelled to improvements at the closest clubs to the proposed development site.

- Quality, safety and accessibility of provision of both existing and future provision of pitches and facilities must recognise the needs of people with disabilities, girls and women.
- Seeking to prevent loss of club grounds for hockey which could, in more rural parts of the district, further exacerbate the dispersed nature of grounds and clubs spatially.
- Priorities and main concerns can be summarised as:
  - the need to achieve greater security of tenure for Abingdon HC at Tilsley Park; and,
  - ensure that there is sufficient capacity on the pitches for hockey to accommodate its demand, particularly on weekday evenings when the club is competing with football use.

## Cricket

### In Numbers

12.6 The baseline position for cricket in terms of supply and demand in the District is as follows.

Sub-area	Clubs	Teams	Club Grounds (and community use)		Artificial pitches (and community use)		In situ Nets (and community use)	
			Secure	Insecure	Secure	Insecure	Secure	Insecure
North	7	20	5	2	3	2	4	0
South	5	15	3	2	3	1	3	2
West	9	21	6	3	0	0	1	3
<b>District</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>

### Key Issues

12.7 The assessment data and discussion with members of the steering group suggest the following key issues are most prominent:

- Projections for growth suggest that the junior game and Women & Girls cricket could see most growth. Increasing links with schools (including security of community use) and using their pitches and facilities could become important in accommodating growth, if it materialises “on the ground”. Such links will also help to establish and maintain a pathway through the age groups for cricket.
- Clubs with junior sections are growing significantly and outgrowing their home ground. These clubs are looking for second grounds to continue to service their membership and growth.
- Most ancillary facilities are not fit for purpose for Women & Girls and this market is likely to grow very fast over the period of the strategy. Quality, safety and accessibility of provision of both existing and future provision of pitches and facilities must recognise the needs of people with disabilities, girls and women, given continued likely growth in the game.

- Artificial pitches are important to help protect the grass pitches by providing additional capacity to host junior matches and proved training facilities for both juniors and seniors.
- Securing community use at club home grounds where there is currently unsecure community use is critical to give clubs certainty.
- Most clubs use volunteers to prepare their pitches and are over reliant upon this resource. It is generally an ageing workforce and the demands of the role have increased due to the growth of junior cricket and many sites being in use 6 or 7 times a week.

## Rugby Union

### In Numbers

12.8 The baseline position for rugby union in terms of supply and demand in the District is as follows.

Sub-area	Clubs	Teams	Club Home Pitches with posts (and community use)	
			Secure	Unsecure
North	2	22	7	0
South	3	30	4	1
West	1	16	2	0
<b>District</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>

### Key Issues

12.9 The assessment data and discussion with members of the steering group suggest the following key issues are most prominent:

- Priorities and main concerns can be summarised as:
  - the significant amount of existing overplay on most club grounds which needs to be resolved to reduce the number of pitches needed moving forward, particularly on grounds which host large, growing clubs;
  - improving quality of existing pitches as a priority to support existing demand and reduce overplay;
  - ensuring that sports lighting can be provided to enable additional evening use in co-ordination with pitch quality improvements;
  - exploration of the role that WR22 compliant 3G pitches could play in one or two locations to support growth and negate a high number of additional grass pitches being necessary (in Didcot and Faringdon); and,
  - if 3G options are not supported, how and where best to find additional pitch capacity close to existing grounds to cater for demand which ensure club use away from the home ground.
- Pitches used by clubs which have unsecure community use (for example, at Harwell) should be secured to ensure long-term certainty of use.

- If projected growth comes to fruition, by 2041, and no measures are taken to improve existing pitches' quality, capacity which allows the equivalent to around 13 full-size pitches will be necessary to support existing and future club demand.
- Quality, safety and accessibility of provision of both existing and future provision of pitches and facilities must recognise the needs of people with disabilities, girls and women, given continued likely growth in the game.

## 13. Other Pitch Sports

13.1 In addition to undertaking a fully compliant PPS guidance assessment for the main pitch sports, we were asked by the District Council to undertake an assessment of some other pitch sports that we were advised by the steering group to consider: lacrosse, gaelic football, rounders, softball / baseball, rugby league and American Football.

### Lacrosse

13.2 Lacrosse is traditionally played over the winter months, however in recent years the introduction of the mixed game tends to take place in the summer months. England Lacrosse (EL) has stated that there is one club in the District, Oxford Brookes University, which plays in Vale of the White Horse at the Oxford Brookes Botley campus at Harcourt Hill (on grass pitches). The nearest other clubs play within Oxford City; Oxford University and Oxford City Lacrosse Club which plays at The Oxford Academy. The latter formerly played at Horspath ion South Oxfordshire (moving to access sports-lit pitches for training during winter). The next nearest club plays to the south of the District in Newbury.

13.3 EL circulated surveys to clubs. Responses were received from both Brookes Lacrosse Club and Oxford City Lacrosse Club. Brookes, which plays in the District has 2 women's and one men's team, all of which play in BUCS (Universities') leagues. The club has said that it could grow if it had more volunteers, coaching staff and access to a training facility. Specifically, the club identified need for access to an astroturf (for example, at their current training ground at Cheney School, in Oxford City adjacent to the Headington campus) with lacrosse line markings so that they can train properly and play matches on both their current grass pitches at Harcourt Hill and also get more appropriate use of their current training pitch. They also specified a need for sports-lighting at their grass pitch at Harcourt Hill to enable them to play more matches over winter during the day (they play matches on Wednesdays). In turn this would also, they suggest, enable them to field more teams, perhaps one more women's and one more men's team. The response from Oxford City Lacrosse Club did not suggest that they have any needs relating to Vale of the White Horse, with no indication of a desire to move away from their current ground in Oxford.

13.4 The assessment data and consultation suggest the following key issues are most prominent for lacrosse:

- A need to increase capacity at Brookes' current home ground, for example, through sports-lighting at Harcourt Hill (Brookes Sport, Botley), or provision on a replacement facility to enable growth of the club.



- For any future facilities England Lacrosse would look for access to floodlit pitches with the preferred surface being 3G. Where not available, lacrosse is normally played on grass, and hard hockey surfaces, although useable, are not ideal.

## American Football

- 13.5 American Football is played football in two sub-types, Flag (non-contact) and Contact (the fully kitted pads and helmet). These are split into age groups and a playing stream just for the women's game. All other types are mixed sex. The season typically runs from April until the end of summer.
- 13.6 British American Football (BAF) were contacted to identify clubs in the area and key issues that they were aware of. In Vale of the White Horse, they identified one club, Oxford Saints, which play at Tilsley Park in Abingdon. The club had around 50 members in 2022. The club was sent a survey via the NGB, but did not respond. However, from the club's website<sup>12</sup>, they start training in January each year with matches starting in April. This suggests that most demand for pitch use will occur outside of the football and rugby seasons. Training usually takes place on grass pitches from 1-4pm on Sundays for seniors, 12-2pm on Saturdays for U19s, 11am-1pm on Saturdays for U16s and 10-11am on Saturdays for U14s. Home matches take place on grass pitches at Tilsley Park.
- 13.7 The only other demand in the District is hosted at Oxford Brookes' Harcourt Hill campus (Brookes Sport, Botley) where the University's team plays in the BUCS (Universities) league.
- 13.8 The assessment data and consultation suggest the following key issues are most prominent:
- Opportunities for growth, in particular related to the club based in Abingdon and which could arise in the Oxford area.
  - Most growth would seem likely to be accommodated at the existing club in Abingdon with players travelling to play there.
  - University demand is likely to continue to be accommodated on University owned pitches.

## Other sports with no key issues identified

### GAELIC FOOTBALL

- 13.9 We contacted the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) of Britain which confirmed that there are no gaelic football clubs in Vale of White Horse. The closest club plays in South Oxfordshire district at Horspath playing fields.

### ROUNDERS

- 13.10 We have had no consultation response from Rounders England. However, in most cases rounders can usually be accommodated as a social game during summer months on school or local authority owned sites.

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<sup>12</sup> See <https://oxfordsaints.com/>

**SOFTBALL AND BASEBALL**

13.11 We contacted Baseball and Softball UK, which responded to confirm that there are no clubs or leagues in Vale of the White Horse, with the nearest league operating out of South Oxfordshire from Horspath Athletics Ground.

**RUGBY LEAGUE**

13.12 We contacted the Rugby Football League, which confirmed that there are no clubs in the District, with the nearest three clubs being in Swindon, Wokingham and Reading. We contacted these clubs asking if there are any issues which might relate to the District but had no response.

## 14. District and Sub-area Strategy (Summaries)

- 14.1 This section summarises the above recommendations on a sub-area basis, for all sports, moving forward. A detailed split of the above recommendations on a sub-area basis is set out in Appendix 3.
- 14.2 The sub-area summaries which follow should be read within the context of the detailed recommendations above and should not be assumed that the summaries which follow capture all of the above recommendations.

### District-wide

#### PROTECT

##### All Sports

- Protect the existing supply of grass pitches and AGPs identified in the assessment and their capacity (for existing known, projected and potential additional currently unidentified future demand) unless the strategy proposes their replacement or alternative re-use for sport, leisure and recreation or unless replacement equivalent capacity can be provided elsewhere to an equal or better standard (i.e. “net improvements”) reflecting the demand and type of use required “on the ground” by clubs.
- Any proposals which suggest potential loss or reduction of a playing pitch or wider playing field to supply should respond appropriately to Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy<sup>13</sup> and the National Planning Policy Framework. It must not be assumed that the intensification of provision on an existing playing pitch or playing field site equates to satisfactory mitigation for loss of a grass pitch.

##### Football

- Maintain the quality of existing pitches to at least current standards where they have a quality rating of “standard” or “good”.
- The identified notional spare grass pitch capacity at pitches already used for matches should be retained during the strategy period to allow for “capacity headroom” and flexibility of provision to help accommodate growth to the end of the strategy period.
- “Mothballed”, closed or lapsed pitches previously used for football and pitches rested or reserved on multi-pitch sites should be retained as green / open space to protect potential future long-term demand and capacity for football or other sports should demand suggest a need. If such pitches are unavoidably lost, replacement should be made in line with Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy<sup>14</sup> to mitigate loss.

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<sup>13</sup> See [https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport?section=playing\\_fields\\_policy](https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport?section=playing_fields_policy)

<sup>14</sup> See [https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport?section=playing\\_fields\\_policy](https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport?section=playing_fields_policy)

- Ensure that all existing and new pitches that are on the 3G FA register are re-tested every three years to sustain certification.

### **Hockey**

- Maintain any good quality AGP surfaces and lighting to the appropriate quality standard.
- Protect the capacity available for hockey use on England Hockey Category 1, 2 and 3 surfaces.
- Protect the current number of hours used by hockey in the peak period as a minimum (i.e. seek to prevent use by additional football training on pitches used for hockey).
- A change of surface type (or carpet) will require planning application and applicants will have to show that there is sufficient AGP provision available for hockey within the demand catchment if the surface is changed. Advice from Sport England and England Hockey should be sought prior to any planning application being submitted.
- For the future long-term sustainability of hockey clubs (with regard to financial viability and maximising the availability of volunteer / coaches' time) a "one site model" for focusing club activity on one central site for each club should be followed.

### **Cricket**

- Protection from loss also extends to where a club folds, as additional capacity on a lost ground and previously used for cricket may be required by other clubs and this should be explored in relation to potential demand where this scenario happens. Such sites also need protection for future supply as the anticipated growth in junior age groups moves through into the adult game towards during the strategy period.
- Protect pitches by seeking to establish security of tenure for grounds / pitches currently considered as unsecure and explore community use on those not currently available (also see Enhance below).
- Regular monitoring of the balance between supply and demand should take place to ensure that appropriate use of any available capacity is being made and confirm that any spare "headroom" capacity to accommodate growth is not considered as "surplus" to cricket use.

### **Rugby**

- Ensure that all existing and new pitches that are World Rugby 22 compliant are re-tested every two years to sustain certification.

## **ENHANCE**

### **All Sports**

- Gain the secure use of clubs' and teams' home grounds / pitches which do not currently have secure community use, to provide certainty of future supply and enable clubs and users to access necessary funding to invest in improvements. This includes club or team use of pitches on education sites and any newly marked out pitches on any site.

- Enhance the quality of changing and other ancillary facilities where necessary to help ensure the quality of the experience for the sport is enhanced, with a focus on accessibility, safety and provision to cater for people with disabilities, girls and women.
- To inform fully, the specific programme of improvements to be made to a pitch to enhance quality, delivery must be informed by an independent Grounds Management Association / Pitch Power report or equivalent, instructed by the NGB, local authority or club.
- NGBs and the local authority should work with clubs, operators and providers, on sites where facilities and / or pitch areas are shared between sports, to ensure that management, maintenance and access is shared appropriately between sports, for example, through establishment of multi-sport site Trusts or other management bodies.
- Support proposals for improved energy efficiency and localised renewable and low carbon energy generation at facilities and grounds through measures such as LED directional lighting, solar pv, heat pumps and building insulation.
- Work with partners and key stakeholders to improve sustainable travel options to grounds, pitches and facilities.
- Support provision of secure cycle stands and ev vehicle charge points at club and other providers' grounds and facilities to enhance provision for low carbon forms of travel.
- Clubs should be encouraged to open-up facilities and pitches that they own and manage to other local clubs where there is capacity for them to do so (rather than allowing only their own teams to use their facilities and pitches).

### **Football**

- Gain secure community use of unsecure 3G pitches.
- Prioritise pitch quality improvements at secure community use grounds over unsecure community use grounds. Enhance capacity on existing pitches by improving quality, and improve maintenance to ensure that the better quality is sustained in the long-term. There should be a focus on improving secure use pitches rated as "poor" and "standard", where feasible.
- Enhance the quality of changing and other ancillary facilities where necessary to help ensure the quality of the experience for the sport is enhanced. Particular focus should be on supporting the growth of girls' and women's football through improvements which enhance the quality and accessibility of facilities.

### **Hockey**

- Gain formal agreement or greater security of use (in relation to unsecure tenure) on pitches used by clubs to provide certainty of supply for hockey.

### **Cricket**

- Consider increasing the current use of existing pitches where spare capacity notionally exists, where physically, practically and logistically possible.
- Support projected growth in the women's and junior games by ensuring that the quality of pitches and ancillary facilities meets their needs (i.e. that they are fit for purpose) where junior and women's teams play and train.

- Support the training needs of clubs by providing in-situ practice nets where necessary to improve the capacity for training which can help retain the quality of pitches on the main square.
- Support the continual improvement of facilities, and the workforce that prepare them, to a good quality to help attract and retain players.

### **Rugby**

- Prioritise pitch quality improvements at secure community use grounds over unsecure community use grounds. Improving the carrying capacity of pitches should be aligned with provision of sports-lighting to ensure that additional capacity provided by pitch improvements can be practically utilised on weekday evenings. The specific programme of works required to improve a pitch's quality must be informed by an independent GMA / Pitch Power report instructed by the NGB, local authority or club. 2023 GMA report recommendations are captured in the data tables report for rugby.

## **PROVIDE**

### **All Sports**

- Where the loss of an existing grass pitch or AGP is unavoidable, ensure that replacement pitch capacity and associated facilities are provided to a good quality standard in a location appropriate to demand to mitigate loss. Opportunities should be taken to replace pitches to a better quality than the provision they are replacing.
- Ensure that the provision of any new pitches and facilities meet the most up-to-date quality design standards and dimensions supported by the NGB and Sport England. Provision must ensure that all sexes, genders and age groups are supported and catered for. Any new grass pitches provided by a developer must be signed-off by an agronomist prior to "handover".
- Ensure that any new pitches and facilities have a sustainable long-term business and financial management plan in place to ensure long-term viability which includes usage plans. This includes, for AGPs in particular, the need for a sinking fund to retain funds during use for refurbishment or replacement of the surface and for recycling of the carpet and infill, a maintenance programme agreed between the provider, local authority and the NGB, and the provider must report to the local authority, Sport England and the NGB on an annual basis on the state of the sinking fund and statement of availability and use during the agreed peak period hours. Sinking funds established should be monitored to ensure that collection is taking place. The costs of hiring AGP pitch time and space will need to be competitive to help ensure future viability but it is important that, to help enable transition from use of grass for matches to maximise use of capacity on AGPs at weekends, match play charges reflect those paid for grass pitch use (for football).
- Ensure that all new pitches and facilities have a secure community use agreement in place for the long-term (preferably in perpetuity) and that the appropriate body is identified to monitor and enforce such agreements.
- Provision of new additional pitches which increase net capacity / supply will need to respond to projected demand set out in this strategy and operational use demonstrable "on the ground" wherever possible. This is particularly important in

the latter part of the strategy period to ensure that supply responds to demand which has actually or will come forward.

- Given the nature of demand, provision set out in the sub-area sections below may require adjustment during the strategy period, and provision should be considered in a flexible way to allow provision of additional supply in one area to respond to demand which arises in another, in other words, reflecting spatial need across sub-area boundaries and likely travel times to the nearest pitch.
- Ensure that proposals for new grass pitches and AGPs, and ancillary facilities, are provided outside of flood risk zones, or provision can be satisfactorily tested through the sequential and exceptions tests to mitigate satisfactorily against adverse impact and risk.
- Pitches should be secure; be easily and safely accessible by cycle, foot and public transport; have secure cycle storage / parking; electric vehicle charge points; and, have sufficient car parking spaces to accommodate demand for the use of the facility and any associated shared uses and comply with the most up-to-date Highways Authority, Local Planning Authority and Sport England requirements / guidance.
- Monitor closely the change in demand to map against projected demand and understand the real demand “on the ground” for additional match and training time. Additional new pitch provision, if required, should be provided only in response to projected demand in this strategy and demonstrable operational demand “on the ground”, together with a full understanding of feasibility and viability. The delivery of additional pitches should be made in a timely fashion, i.e. co-ordinated in alignment with demand, availability of supply and risk of loss of existing supply on unsecure sites. A “plan, deliver, monitor, manage” approach should therefore be taken to the provision of additional capacity.

## **Football**

- Ensure that proposals for new and resurfaced 3G pitches:
  - a) provide satisfactory protection and mitigation to minimise rubber crumb and other infill loss (retrofitting containment if necessary);
  - b) are constructed to meet FA and RFU recommended quality performance standards to meet performance testing criteria; and,
  - c) provide energy efficient directional LED sports-lighting;
  - d) satisfy tests applied by the local authority in relation to carbon emissions, whole lifecycle of materials and requirements for net gains in biodiversity;
  - e) for new pitches, explore the provision on multi-pitch sites where demand can be demonstrated.
- Where needed, increased capacity and / or use of grass pitches to meet demand could come from a combination of:
  - a) Increasing reliability of pitches through improved quality, drainage and maintenance;
  - b) Considering better grouping of age groups (and therefore pitch types and sizes) on multi-pitch sites;

- c) Making better use of pitches which are available for community use but not yet currently used by teams, where additional community use on those pitches would not result in unacceptable wear which significantly reduces a pitch's ability to cope with the additional demand / use placed upon it (for example, careful consideration must be given to use of education site pitches if those pitches are already well-used by students during the week);
- d) Re-opening "mothballed", lapsed or closed pitches, where they provide supply in a location which can respond to demand. If such pitches are unavoidably lost, however, replacement should be made in line with Sport England's Playing Fields Policy<sup>15</sup> to mitigate loss; and,
- e) Provision of additional pitches in appropriate locations as demand requires during the strategy period to:
  - i. respond to growth in demand (as a result of club unmet and latent demand, club growth, growth in social / informal and non-club participation, increased population and spatial gaps in provision) where this cannot be catered for on existing pitches; and / or,
  - ii. provide new additional capacity on strategic housing allocation sites where a new club can be formed to fully utilise pitches provided, where such provision responds to demand arising from the new residents, and / or responds to insufficient supply locally to respond to demand, enabling an existing club to make the new pitches their home ground or an additional home ground. Such sites, if providing sufficient pitch capacity, could form new home grounds for nomadic clubs which currently play across more than one site and are looking to consolidate club activity in one location; and / or,
  - iii. replace and increase the capacity of existing pitches of poor or standard quality; or, which prove uneconomical to manage and maintain; or, are unattractive to club use due to quality and / or cost.
- Support provision of or contributions to fund new full-size sports-lit 3G pitches where certainty of delivery of the intended new 3G is or can be put in place (for example, planning permission secured) and mitigation of loss of the existing grass pitch on which the 3G would be built is considered satisfactory.
- In cases where mitigation is required as the result of a loss of a pitch to development, and that mitigation is in the form of off-site contributions, to ensure certainty that the contributions can be used to deliver the intended provision in part or in full (and in turn help to address any "knock-on" mitigation required on the site to which the contribution applies), the Local Planning Authority should consider introducing a Grampian condition<sup>16</sup> on permission to ensure that mitigation is delivered as intended (and therefore certainty of delivery is guaranteed).

<sup>15</sup> See [https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport?section=playing\\_fields\\_policy](https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport?section=playing_fields_policy)

<sup>16</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/use-of-planning-conditions#Application-of-the-six-tests> for further details on use of Grampian Conditions. Section - "When can conditions be used relating to land not in control of the applicant?" Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 21a-009-20140306. The NPPG states that Grampian Conditions are conditions which are "prohibiting development authorised by the planning permission or other aspects linked to the planning permission (eg occupation of premises) until a specified action has been taken (such as the provision of supporting infrastructure)".



## **Hockey**

- Ensure that the provision of any new pitches and facilities meet the most up-to-date quality design standards and dimensions supported by the NGB and Sport England and include directional energy efficient LED sports lighting with a minimum of 350 lux.
- New AGPs should be located on a managed site hosted by a provider which will: adhere to the recommendations for pitches above; and, not rely on third party management of the pitch and ancillary facilities.

## **Cricket**

- Assuming that unsecure sites can be secured for community use and other measures to improve existing capacity have been taken, consider providing 86 additional grass pitches capacity, or 8 additional artificial pitches, or a combination of both grass and artificial is more realistic. This could be provided (on existing grounds rather than a new ground where feasible and where the provision of additional capacity equates to real availability on the days demand requires, the majority of which is likely to occur in sub-area North and South, followed by sub-area West. Where the additional demand is for capacity at existing club home grounds and there is no additional capacity on days when new teams require pitch use, an additional new ground may be required should the team generating the demand not be willing to play at sites where there may be available capacity when it is required.
- Where the loss of an existing pitch or practice nets is unavoidable, provide replacement pitch capacity with secure community use to good quality standard in a location appropriate to demand to mitigate loss.
- Seek to provide additional capacity, where needed, at (or, if this is not possible, within close proximity to) existing club home grounds as a preference over sites far from home grounds, where physical, ownership and planning constraints do not prevent such change. This will help to ensure the long-term financial stability of clubs given the social tradition and culture of the sport.
- The total amount of additional supply should come from a variety of sources, i.e. the projected demand is unlikely to need to be delivered solely through additional, new, grass pitches. Increased capacity to this amount will come from a combination of:
  - Improved maintenance on sites that are rated as poor which will increase the number of match equivalents that the pitch can sustain.
  - Provide replacement of surfaces (at artificial pitches) which will increase the number of match equivalents that the pitch can sustain.
  - Provide in situ practice nets for training to move the usage for training from the match pitches to the practice nets.
  - Provide additional grass or artificial pitches on existing sites to increase capacity, where feasible to do so.
  - Bringing “mothballed” pitches back into use where and when necessary, provided they are in close proximity to the identified demand (i.e. providing additional capacity on sites where grass pitches are not currently in use but where there have been pitches before);

- Provision of new additional grass pitches at new grounds provided they are in close proximity to the identified demand.
- The use of hybrid pitches in cricket is a new innovative technology but is currently not fully endorsed by the ECB. Research is ongoing in the recreational game and it will be sometime before the ECB will have detailed outcomes. This may change over the lifetime of the strategy and provide another option to increase capacity of existing sites.

## **Rugby**

- Seek to provide additional capacity, where needed, at (or, if this is not possible, within close proximity to) existing club home grounds as a preference over sites far from home grounds, where physical, ownership and planning constraints do not prevent such change. This will help to ensure the long-term financial stability of clubs given the social tradition and culture of the sport. Developer contributions sought for pitch provision / improvements for rugby should (for example, from the Community Infrastructure Levy or section 106 planning obligations) where feasible within planning regulations be considered first as contributions towards existing rugby club sites given the nature of how and where rugby is played (as a club on-site based sport). This could help to avoid contributions being sought or spent inappropriately on sites which may be remote from existing club home grounds and infrastructure and help to ensure any new provision or additional capacity provided through development is used (and in the most effective way). Additional capacity could be provided through grass, hybrid or 3G pitches.
- The total amount of additional supply should come from a variety of sources, i.e. the projected demand is unlikely to need to be delivered solely through additional, new, grass pitches. Increased capacity to this amount will come from a combination of:
  - a. Increase reliability of pitch use and improving the quality and / or maintenance regimes of existing pitches to improve quality to a D2/M2<sup>17</sup> rating to accommodate 3.25 match equivalents per week (where viable / subject to funding and a business plan being in place to ensure maintenance costs are catered for in the long-term) (see **Enhance**);
  - b. providing sports lighting to increase evening training capacity (see **Enhance**);
  - c. securing community use and security of tenure on current non-club unsecure sites if possible and feasible for club use, for example on education or other provider sites;
  - d. new additional pitches at existing club grounds where feasible, for example, through reconfiguration of existing pitch layouts to accommodate additional pitches, or provision adjacent or close to existing club sites; and / or,

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<sup>17</sup> D/M ratings are used in the PPS guidance. For D2/M2, this means that the pitch should be improved to a standard where it can accommodate 3.25 match equivalents per week. As a guide, this will typically mean, subject to individual detailed pitch assessments, that a pitch should at least have slit drainage and a “good” maintenance regime.

- e. WR22 compliant 3G pitch(es) to serve as strategic provision if other provision to accommodate overplay and additional demand cannot be catered for through the above measures. (If a shared rugby and football 3G is seen as a solution for both sports, a programme of use and certainty of availability for each sport should be agreed.)
- New additional pitches required should be provided as close to existing club grounds or provided on new sites which accommodate all club needs. Where this cannot be achieved and provision of s106 or CIL monies are not provided to enhance capacity at existing clubs sites, satellite grounds could be explored, but practical use will be dependent upon a club's ability to adequately run (and maintain) a satellite ground. Volunteer capacity must feature as one of the tests to assess viability and feasibility, amongst others, and other risks to the club's long-term sustainability and viability must be mitigated. An alternative option, subject to financial viability and critical masses required to ensure viability both at start-up and in the long-term could be the establishment of a new club at a new ground. All off-club site provision must take into account the RFU position on provision of pitch capacity and facilities away from existing club sites.

## **North Sub-area**

### **PROTECT**

#### **Football**

- Protect the 3G surfaces at Tilsley Park and Brookes Sport Botley (Harcourt) from loss (or mitigate loss through replacement), on the basis that they currently play an important role in supporting demand from clubs for training and additional demand from informal, casual and small-sided league play.
- Protect the sand-based surfaces at Tilsley Park from loss, on the basis that they currently play an important role in supporting demand from clubs for training and additional demand from informal, casual and small-sided league play. These pitches may continue to play an important role moving forward, subject to the ability to deliver additional and pipeline 3G pitches.
- Protect the AGP facility Radley College Sports Centre from loss, on the basis that it currently plays an important role in supporting demand from clubs for training and additional demand from informal, casual and small-sided league play. The pitch may continue to play an important role moving forward, subject to the ability to deliver additional and pipeline 3G pitches.

#### **Hockey**

- Protect the sand-based pitches at Tilsley Park used by Abingdon HC from loss.
- Protect the AGP facility Radley College Sports Centre from loss, seeking retention of a hockey surface at the time of carpet replacement should Tilsley Park pitches not have secure community use by that time.

## **Cricket**

- Protection of pitch supply is particularly important for club pitches as there is overplay across this sub-area.
- Protect the currently “mothballed” pitch sites (at Old Wallingford Way Recreation Ground and Appleford Recreation Ground) from development, holding in reserve to ensure that headroom capacity could be available to respond to potential demand if no other suitable site with existing use and headroom capacity is available.

## **Rugby**

- Protect from loss all club pitches (and the entirety of the home ground and facilities) used by Abingdon RFC (Southern Town Park) and Oxford RFC (Southern Bypass Ground).
- Protect the WR22 compliant 3G surface at Tilsley Park from loss on the basis that it could play an important role in supporting additional demand from Abingdon RFC.

## **ENHANCE**

### **Football**

- Gain the secure use of unsecure community use pitch sites:
  - Thrupp Lane.
- Enhance capacity on the following pitches by improving quality and improve maintenance:
  - Harwell Recreation Ground 1, 11v11;
  - Wootton and Dry Sandford Community Centre 2, 11v11; and,
  - Wootton and Dry Sandford Community Centre 3, 7v7;
  - Abingdon Utd FC, 11v11;
  - Abingdon Utd FC, 9v9;
  - Boxhill Recreation Ground 2, 7v7;
  - Boxhill Recreation Ground 3, 5v5;
  - Forest Side and Playfield Road - all pitches at Kennington FC sites (club has funding to make pitch improvements);
  - Southern Town Park 11, 7v7;
  - Southern Town Park 12, 7v7;
  - Southern Town Park 4, 9v9; and,
  - Southern Town Park 5, 9v9.
- Enhance the quality of changing and other ancillary facilities at:
  - Appleford Recreation Ground;
  - Boxhill Recreation Ground;
  - Caldecott Recreation Ground;

- Forest Side;
- Louie Memorial Playing Fields;
- The Heights, Milton Utd.; and,
- Wootton and Dry Sandford Community Centre.

### **Hockey**

- Gain formal agreement or security of use or tenure for club use of the Tilsley park pitches.
- Support improvements to the lighting at Tilsley Park, upgraded to LED lighting meeting England Hockey standards.
- Implement an improved maintenance regime / plan for the Tilsley Park sand AGPs.
- Resolve sharing issues between hockey and football use if apparent as the hockey club grows and requires additional weekday evening slots at times which reduce operational and volunteer pressures. If 3G provision is made in Abingdon, ensure that a managed transition takes place as hockey demand grows on-site and as solutions for football 3G surfaces are delivered to accommodate demand for football training.

### **Cricket**

- Gain the secure use of pitches which currently have unsecure community use at Playfield Road (Kennington); and Steventon Village Green to provide certainty of future supply.
- Consider increasing the current use of existing pitches where spare capacity notionally exists, where physically, practically and logistically possible at Anson Field and Appleton with Eaton Sports Field.
- Seek to address overplay at Cumnor CC, Wootton & Boars Hill CC and Steventon Village Green if overplay is causing reduction in pitch quality, through improved maintenance, replacement of surfaces (at artificial pitches), provision of in situ practice nets for training and / or provision of additional grass or artificial pitches.
- Support the improvement of club ancillary facilities to provide fit for purpose facilities, to service current membership and the growth in the Women & Girls game at Sunningwell CC, Cumnor CC and Steventon Village Green. This list will need to be monitored as more and more clubs establish new women & girls' sections.

### **Rugby**

- Gain the secure use / tenure of the 2 x pitches used by Oxford RFC at St Peter's College Recreation Ground to provide certainty of future supply.
- Enhance capacity on pitches at Abingdon RFC and Oxford RFC by improving quality through improved drainage (where viable / subject to funding and a business plan being in place to ensure maintenance costs are catered for in the long-term), by introducing sports-lights where necessary and feasible and by improving surface maintenance to ensure that the better quality is sustained in the long-term. Pitch improvements should be made to enhance capacity to at

least 3.25 match equivalents (D2/M2 rating<sup>18</sup>) and improvements should follow the recommendations made in the most up-to-date GMA pitch assessment report.

## PROVIDE

### Football

- Within this sub-area, the following measures should be taken to address the current and projected demand:
  - a. Should quality improvements be achievable to improve the quality and capacity of existing pitches on club grounds to “standard” quality from “poor” and to improve “standard” quality pitches to “good” where indicated in “ENHANCE”, deliver 1 x 11v11 and 2 x 9v9 good quality pitches in one or more of the following locations, to respond to demand:
    - i. in or on the edge of Abingdon;
    - ii. on the edge of Oxford;
    - iii. on the edge of Didcot (in alignment with recommendations in the South Oxfordshire PPS);
    - iv. responding to demand at St Edmunds FC;
    - v. responding to demand at Abingdon Youth FC;
    - vi. responding to demand at Steventon FC.
- Deliver pitches to respond to additional demand arising from growth in population from the strategic housing allocations. Options to respond to estimated demand include:
  - a. From demand arising from Dalton Barracks, deliver 3 x 11v11, 3 x 9v9 and 3 x 7v7 pitches and associated necessary ancillary facilities. To ensure their use, identify either an existing club or clubs which can relocate to the pitches as a new home ground, an existing club which will use the pitches at a home ground in addition to its existing home ground, or that capacity and support exists to create a new club.
- Deliver proposed pitches “in the pipeline” to meet demand arising in those locations. This means that pitches at:
  - a. land North of Dunmore Road / North of Abingdon, Abingdon, to deliver 1 x 11v11 pitch and 2 x Youth 7v7 pitches and associated necessary ancillary facilities.
- Support aspirations and plans to introduce 1 x 11v11 and 1 x “small sided” pitch and associated changing facilities / pavilion at Walnut Meadows (likely to cater for Drayton FC moving from their current home ground and for that playing field to be utilised for other recreation facilities;

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<sup>18</sup> D/M ratings are used in the PPS guidance. For D2/M2, this means that the pitch should be improved to a standard where it can accommodate 3.25 match equivalents per week. As a guide, this will typically mean, subject to individual detailed pitch assessments, that a pitch should at least have slit drainage and a “good” maintenance regime.

- Provide 3 x full-size sports-lit 3G pitches to serve Abingdon to address unmet and future demand (one of which could be delivered at Dalton Barracks), and consider additional +1 x full-size sports-lit 3G to serve the edge of Oxford (Botley – Kennington arc) should demand arise in the middle to late part of the period to 2041. Also consider additional +1 x full-size sports-lit 3G to serve western catchment of Didcot, with provision made in conjunction with overall sequencing of additional 3G provision in the town (also see South Oxfordshire report). This could be provided, for example, at The Heights, Milton United.

## **Cricket**

- Enable the supply of additional pitch capacity to accommodate existing overplay and future demand to a total equivalent capacity of 24 additional grass pitch capacity, or 2 additional artificial pitches, or a combination of both grass and artificial is more realistic, across this sub-area.
- Providing for additional supply should come, broadly sequentially, following the process set out in the district-wide recommendation above in PROVIDE.
- Dalton Barracks development will generate demand around 7 grass cricket pitches. Demand arising from this site will probably be best dealt with a new ground to be constructed as part of the development. However, this should be in consultation with a local club so that an anchor tenant can be found from the outset and ensure the site is fully utilised as intended.
- Land North of Dunmore Road / North of Dunmore Road development near Abingdon a new cricket ground has been agreed as part of the development. This is to accommodate future additional demand from the development and the final number of cricket pitches on the ground needs to be agreed.
- Support aspirations and plans to introduce 1 x non turf cricket pitch and associated changing facilities / pavilion at Walnut Meadows to cater for local demand.
- If additional pitches are required, capacity increases should be concentrated at the following sites as these clubs are continuing to grow and require additional facilities to service this growth. It should be noted these sites are already at or close to capacity so securing access to existing grounds with spare capacity or providing new grounds should be considered as a priority. Each site needs to undertake an assessment to identify exactly how much and where additional capacity can be provided. - Cumnor CC, Playfield Road, Steventon Village Green and Wootton & Boars Hill CC

## **Rugby**

- Within this sub-area, the following measures should be taken to address the current and projected demand:
  - a. Enable the supply of additional pitch capacity to accommodate existing overplay and future demand to a total equivalent capacity of 19.5 match equivalents across this sub-area with demand likely to arise at Abingdon RFC and Oxford RFC.
  - b. Providing for additional supply should come, broadly sequentially, following the process set out in the district-wide recommendation above in PROVIDE.

- c. Should quality improvements be achievable to improve the quality and capacity of existing pitches on club grounds to accommodate 3.25 match equivalents per pitch, additional capacity should be provided to the following scale at the following clubs:
- i. Abingdon RFC – provision to support a net additional demand of around 1-2 grass pitches with sports lighting, unless sufficient capacity can be guaranteed for the club at the Tilsley Park WR22 compliant 3G. Alongside the recommendations for South Oxfordshire in relation to rugby demand arising from Culham and Berinsfield development populations, consider the appropriate approach to catering for the additional demand generated by those developments in relation to provision at Abingdon RFC, in addition to catering for demand from the Dalton Barracks development.
  - ii. Oxford RFC – provision to support a net additional demand of around 1-2 grass pitches, should secure community use and certainty of tenure not be achieved on the St Peter’s College pitches used by the club as overspill at the current time.
- d. Provide additional changing facility capacity at Abingdon RFC.

### **Strategic Site On-site Provision**

- 14.3 As already noted above, strategic housing allocation sites present a significant opportunity to host pitches required as a result of demand which arises from their population, and also as locations for new pitches to help address wider demand across the sub-area or reasonable functional or spatial catchment where land is available either on-site or close to it.
- 14.4 The table below summarises the contribution that the strategic housing sites in this sub-area could make to provision of pitches, based on the sites that we have been advised can still be influenced / informed by the outcomes of the PPS. Off-site contributions for some sports are not summarised here, but are set out in detail in the assessment reports.
- 14.5 Recommendations for non-pipeline sites are flexible, however, as opportunities presented are a starting point which should continue to be informed by detailed discussions during the delivery phase of the strategy (Stage E).

#### *Summary of Estimated On-site Playing Pitch Provision at Strategic Housing Sites*

<b>Strategic Site</b>	<b>No. of dwellings modelled</b>	<b>Population modelled</b>	<b>On-site requirements (captured in “provide” recommendations)</b>
Dalton Barracks	2,750	6,600	Option to respond to estimated demand:  Football: 3 x grass 11v11, 3 x grass 9v9, 3 x grass 7v7, 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G  Cricket: 1 x Adult Cricket Ground

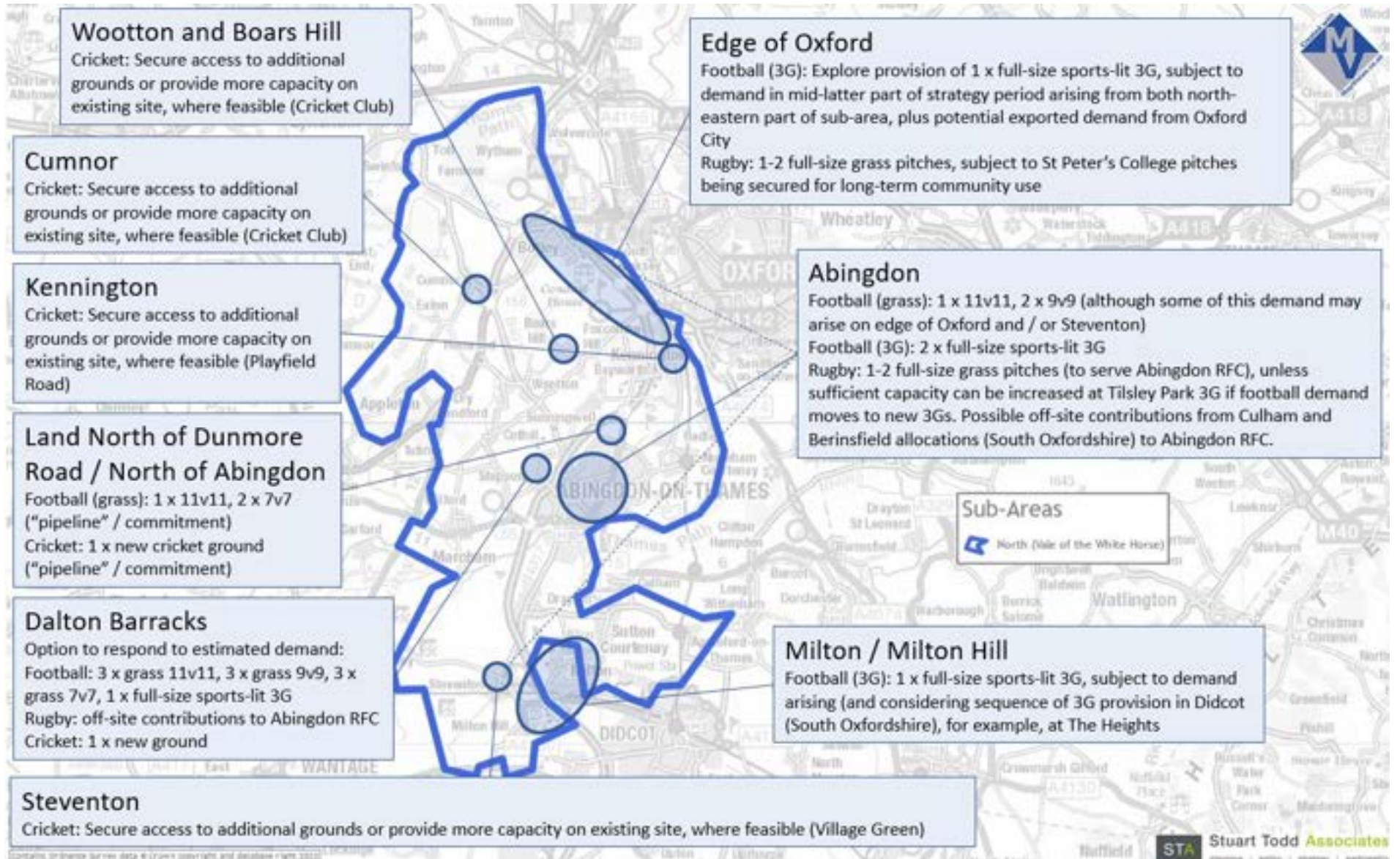


Land North of Dunmore Road / North of Abingdon	-	-	Football (grass): 1 x 11v11, 2 x 7v7 ("pipeline" / commitment)  Cricket: 1 x new cricket ground ("pipeline" / commitment)
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Notes: Numbers of dwelling and the population modelled has been done only for those sites over which the PPS can influence provision (i.e. where they are not already commitments through the planning process).

### **Spatial Summary**

14.6 The spatial summary of the main PROVIDE recommendations in this sub-area is as follows. These must be read alongside the more details recommendations in the PROVIDE section to contextualise and ground headline provision shown on the map and ensure that off-site contributions from other development sites are not missed.



## South Sub-area

### PROTECT

#### Football

- Protect the AGP facility at UTC Oxfordshire from loss, on the basis that it currently plays an important role in supporting demand from clubs for training and additional demand from informal, casual and small-sided league play. The site may continue to play an important role moving forward, subject to the ability to deliver additional and pipeline 3G pitches.
- Protect the 3G surface at Harwell Primary School from loss.

#### Cricket

- Protection of pitch supply is particularly important for all club pitches as the sub area is broadly at capacity.

#### Rugby

- Protect from loss all club pitches (and the entirety of the club home ground and facilities) used by Didcot RFC (Boundary Park), Grove RFC (Grove Recreation Lane) and Harwell RFC (Harwell Labs). Any proposed loss will be subject to satisfactory mitigation in accordance with the Sport England Playing Fields Policy and take into account relevant development plan policies<sup>19</sup>.

### ENHANCE

#### Football

- Gain the secure use of the following unsecure community use pitch sites (where desirable by the club and provider):
  - Harwell Labs Recreational Association; and,
  - Rutherford Labs.
- Enhance capacity on the following pitches by improving quality and improve maintenance:
  - Tugwell Field 3, 7v7.
- Enhance the quality of changing and other ancillary facilities at:
  - Harwell Recreation Ground.
- Support Upton Parish Council's aspiration to improve the Upton Recreation ground, subject to the Parish Council securing funding, demonstrable demand and confirmation that a club would utilise the site.

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<sup>19</sup> For example, employment allocation in the Local Plan at Harwell Labs

- Support the aspirations of Hendred Sports Club (East Hendred) to improve the changing facilities and introduce additional pitch capacity subject to demonstrable demand.

### **Cricket**

- Gain the secure use of pitches which currently have unsecure community use at Harwell Labs Recreational Association for certainty of future supply (where desirable by the club and provider).
- Consider increasing the current use of existing pitches where spare capacity notionally exists, where physically, practically and logistically possible at Blewbury Road, Wantage and Grove CC and Harwell Labs Recreational Association.
- Seek to address overplay at Boundary Park and East Hendred Sports Ground if overplay is causing reduction in pitch quality, through improved maintenance, replacement of surfaces (at artificial pitches), provision of in situ practice nets for training and / or provision of additional grass or artificial pitches.
- Support the improvement of club ancillary facilities to provide fit for purpose facilities, to service current membership and the growth in the Women & Girls game at East Hendred Sports Ground and Ardington & Lockinge Sports Ground. This list will need to be monitored as more and more clubs establish new women & girls' sections.

### **Rugby**

- Gain the secure use / tenure of the ground at Harwell RFC which does not currently have secure community use, to provide certainty of future supply and which will in turn enable the club to access necessary funding to invest in improvements if necessary.
- Enhance capacity on pitches at Didcot RFC (Boundary Park) if possible and Grove RFC (Grove Recreation Lane) by improving quality through improved drainage (where viable / subject to funding and a business plan being in place to ensure maintenance costs are catered for in the long-term), by introducing sports-lights where necessary and feasible and by improving surface maintenance to ensure that the better quality is sustained in the long-term. Pitch improvements should be made to enhance capacity to at least 3.25 match equivalents (D2/M2 rating<sup>20</sup>) and improvements should follow the recommendations made in the most up-to-date GMA pitch assessment report. At Grove RFC, secure the community use of the pitch which is currently unsecure and support improvements to the clubhouse and changing facilities.

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<sup>20</sup> D/M ratings are used in the PPS guidance. For D2/M2, this means that the pitch should be improved to a standard where it can accommodate 3.25 match equivalents per week. As a guide, this will typically mean, subject to individual detailed pitch assessments, that a pitch should at least have slit drainage and a "good" maintenance regime.

## PROVIDE

### Football

- Within this sub-area, the following measures should be taken to address the current and projected demand:
  - a. Should quality improvements be achievable to improve the quality and capacity of existing pitches on club grounds to “standard” quality from “poor” and to improve “standard” quality pitches to “good” where indicated in “ENHANCE”, deliver 4 x 11v11 good quality pitches in one or more of the following locations, to respond to demand:
    - i. in or on the edge of Wantage;
    - ii. on the edge of Didcot (in alignment with recommendations in the South Oxfordshire PPS);
    - iii. responding to demand at Ardington & Lockinge FC;
    - iv. responding to demand at Blewbury Amazons Girls FC;
    - v. responding to demand at East Hendred AFC;
    - vi. responding to demand at Grove Challengers FC (should the additional proposed pitches at Grove Airfield not satisfy demand);
    - vii. responding to demand at Wantage Town FC (should the proposed 3G at their home ground not satisfy demand).
- Deliver proposed pitches “in the pipeline” to meet demand arising in those locations. This means pitches at:
  - a. Valley Park, Didcot to deliver 2 x grass youth (Alma Park), 2 x grass youth (Common Park) and 2 x grass 11v11 adult pitches (Common Park), 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G (Common Park) and associated necessary ancillary facilities. Consideration should also be given strategically, across Didcot as a whole and in both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, whether future provision for some sports in the town could be consolidated on one or other of the Boundary Park and Valley Park sites.
  - b. Crab Hill, Wantage, 2 x grass adult 11v11 and 1 x grass youth 11v11 and associated necessary ancillary facilities.
  - c. Grove Airfield, 4 x grass adult, 4 x youth 9v9 and 4 x 5v5 / 7v7 pitches.
  - d. Alfredian Park, Wantage Town FC, deliver 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G pitch and associated necessary ancillary facilities.
- Provide 0.5 x additional full-size sports-lit 3G pitch to serve demand, in a location to be determined, to serve areas where demand appears on the ground, either in the Wantage / Grove or edge of Didcot area. This could be increased to a full-size 3G should demand be demonstrated that this will be viable at the time of proposal.

### Cricket

- Enable the supply of additional pitch capacity to accommodate existing overplay and future demand to a total equivalent capacity of 36 additional grass pitch

capacity, or 3 additional artificial pitches, or a combination of both grass and artificial is more realistic, across this sub-area.

- Providing for additional supply should come, broadly sequentially, following the process set out in the district-wide recommendation above in PROVIDE.
- Valley Park development near Didcot will provide additional playing field land but no agreement has been yet as to the exact make up of this provision and if it will include a new cricket ground. Consideration should also be given strategically, across Didcot as a whole and in both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, whether future provision for some sports in the town could be consolidated on one or other of the Boundary Park and Valley Park sites.
- If additional pitches are required, capacity increases should be concentrated at the following sites as these clubs are continuing to grow and require additional facilities to service this growth. It should be noted these sites are already at or close to capacity so securing access to existing grounds with spare capacity or providing new grounds should be considered as a priority. Each site needs to undertake an assessment to identify exactly how much and where additional capacity can be provided. - Boundary Park and East Hendred Sports Ground.

## **Rugby**

- Within this sub-area, the following measures should be taken to address the current and projected demand:
  - a. Enable the supply of additional pitch capacity to accommodate existing overplay and future demand to a total equivalent capacity of 36.25 match equivalents across this sub-area with most demand likely to arise at Didcot RFC and Grove RFC.
  - b. Providing for additional supply should come, broadly sequentially, following the process set out in the district-wide recommendation above in PROVIDE.
  - c. Should quality improvements be achievable to improve the quality and capacity of existing pitches on club grounds to accommodate 3.25 match equivalents per pitch, additional capacity should be provided to the following scale at the following clubs:
    - i. Didcot RFC – provision to support a net additional demand of around 6-7 grass pitches with sports lighting, unless capacity can be provided through a new WR22 compliant sports-lit 3G pitch. This response to demand includes an element of demand generated in South Oxfordshire’s West sub-area within which part of Didcot sits. Off-site contributions from major developments in the town can help fund improvements in capacity. Consideration should also be given strategically, across Didcot as a whole and in both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, whether future provision for some sports in the town could be consolidated on one or other of the Boundary Park and Valley Park sites.
    - ii. Grove RFC – provision to support a net additional demand of around 1-2 grass pitches, should the additional capacity brought to the club from the move of the football club from two football pitches at the club site not provide sufficient additional supply. At least one pitch should be floodlit, subject to training needs.

### **Strategic Site On-site Provision**

- 14.7 As already noted above, strategic housing allocation sites present a significant opportunity to host pitches required as a result of demand which arises from their population, and also as locations for new pitches to help address wider demand across the sub-area or reasonable functional or spatial catchment where land is available either on-site or close to it.
- 14.8 The table below summarises the contribution that the strategic housing sites in this sub-area could make to provision of pitches, based on the sites that we have been advised can still be influenced / informed by the outcomes of the PPS. Off-site contributions for some sports are not summarised here, but are set out in detail in the assessment reports.
- 14.9 Recommendations for non-pipeline sites are flexible, however, as opportunities presented are a starting point which should continue to be informed by detailed discussions during the delivery phase of the strategy (Stage E).

#### *Summary of Estimated On-site Playing Pitch Provision at Strategic Housing Sites*

<b>Strategic Site</b>	<b>No. of dwellings modelled</b>	<b>Population modelled</b>	<b>On-site requirements (captured in “provide” recommendations)</b>
Valley Park, Didcot	-	-	<p>Football (grass): 2 x 11v11 / 9v9 (youth) (Alma Park), 2 x 11v11 / 9v9 (youth) (Common Park), 2 x 11v11 (adult) (Common Park) (“pipeline” / commitment)</p> <p>Football (3G): 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G (Common Park) (“pipeline” / commitment)</p> <p>Cricket: 1 x Adult Cricket Ground</p> <p>Consideration should also be given strategically, across Didcot as a whole and in both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, whether future provision for some sports in the town could be consolidated on one or other of the Boundary Park and Valley Park sites.</p>
Crab Hill, Wantage	-	-	Football (grass): 2 x 11v11 (adult), 1 x 11v11 (youth) (“pipeline” / commitment)

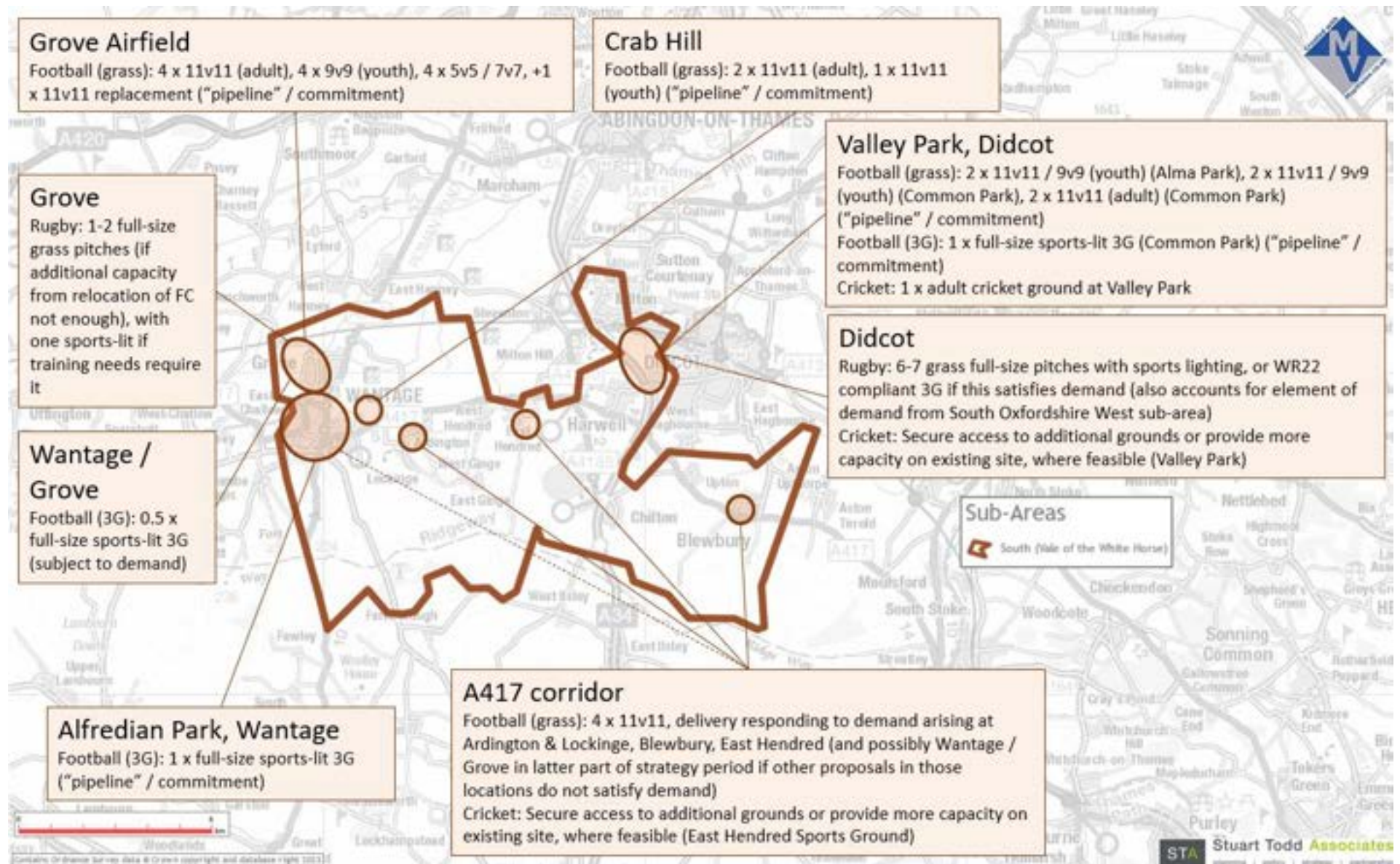
Grove Airfield	-	-	Football (grass): 4 x 11v11 (adult), 4 x 9v9 (youth), 4 x 5v5 / 7v7 (+1 x 11v11 replacement pitch) ("pipeline" / commitment)
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Notes: Numbers of dwelling and the population modelled has been done only for those sites over which the PPS can influence provision (i.e. where they are not already commitments through the planning process.

### **Spatial Summary**

14.10 The spatial summary of the main PROVIDE recommendations in this sub-area is as follows. These must be read alongside the more details recommendations in the PROVIDE section to contextualise and ground headline provision shown on the map and ensure that off-site contributions from other development sites are not missed.





## West Sub-area

### PROTECT

#### Cricket

- Protection of pitch supply is particularly important for all club pitches. Although there is some spare capacity at a couple of sites, all sites are in use by local clubs who provide cricket opportunities to their local communities.

#### Rugby

- Protect from loss club pitches (and the entirety of the club home ground and facilities) used by Faringdon RFC (Folly Sports Park).

### ENHANCE

#### Football

- Gain the secure use of the following unsecure community use pitch sites:
  - Kingston Bagpuize Sports Ground
- Enhance capacity on the following pitches by improving quality and improve maintenance:
  - Tucker Park Recreation Ground 4, 7v7;
  - West Hanney Playing Field 5, Hanney Youth FC, 9v9;
  - Kingston Bagpuize Sports Ground 3, Youth 11v11; and,
  - Kingston Bagpuize Sports Ground 4, Youth 11v11.

#### Cricket

- Gain the secure use of pitches which currently have unsecure community use at Buscot Park, Kingston Bagpuize Sports Ground and Letcombe Recreation Ground to provide certainty of future supply.
- Consider increasing the current use of existing pitches where spare capacity notionally exists, where physically, practically and logistically possible at Shrivenham Recreation Ground, Craven Playing Fields Buscot Park and Letcombe Regis Recreation Ground.
- Seek to address overplay at Kingston Bagpuize Sports Ground if overplay is causing reduction in pitch quality, through improved maintenance, replacement of surfaces (at artificial pitches), provision of in situ practice nets for training and / or provision of additional grass or artificial pitches.
- Support the improvement of club ancillary facilities to provide fit for purpose facilities, to service current membership and the growth in the Women & Girls

game at Challow & Childrey CC and Craven Playing Fields. This list will need to be monitored as more and more clubs establish new women & girls' sections.

## **Rugby**

- Enhance capacity on pitches at Faringdon RFC (Folly Sports Park) by improving quality through improved drainage (where viable / subject to funding and a business plan being in place to ensure maintenance costs are catered for in the long-term), by introducing sports-lights where necessary and feasible and by improving surface maintenance to ensure that the better quality is sustained in the long-term. Pitch improvements should be made to enhance capacity to at least 3.25 match equivalents (D2/M2 rating<sup>21</sup>) and improvements should follow the recommendations made in the most up-to-date GMA pitch assessment report.
- Explore opportunities for both the rugby and cricket clubs to gain security of tenure for changing / pavilion facilities on the site which suits the needs of both clubs moving forward.

## **PROVIDE**

### **Football**

- Within this sub-area, the following measures should be taken to address the current and projected demand:
  - a. Should quality improvements be achievable to improve the quality and capacity of existing pitches on club grounds to “standard” quality from “poor” and to improve “standard” quality pitches to “good” where indicated in “ENHANCE”, deliver 1 x 7v7 and 2 x 9v9 good quality pitches in one or more of the following locations, to respond to demand:
    - i. in or on the edge of Shrivenham;
    - ii. in or on the edge of Faringdon;
    - iii. responding to demand at Kingson Colts FC.
- Deliver proposed pitches “in the pipeline” to meet demand arising in those locations. This means pitches at:
  - a. Faringdon Community College to deliver 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G pitch and any associated necessary ancillary facilities.
- Consider provision of an additional +1 x full-size sports-lit 3G should demand arise in the middle to late part of the period to 2041, in either Faringdon or split on 2 x 0.5 3G pitches in Faringdon and Shrivenham.

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<sup>21</sup> D/M ratings are used in the PPS guidance. For D2/M2, this means that the pitch should be improved to a standard where it can accommodate 3.25 match equivalents per week. As a guide, this will typically mean, subject to individual detailed pitch assessments, that a pitch should at least have slit drainage and a “good” maintenance regime.

- Consider provision of proposed additional grass pitches in Stanford-in-the-Vale subject to demonstrable demand and viability.

## **Cricket**

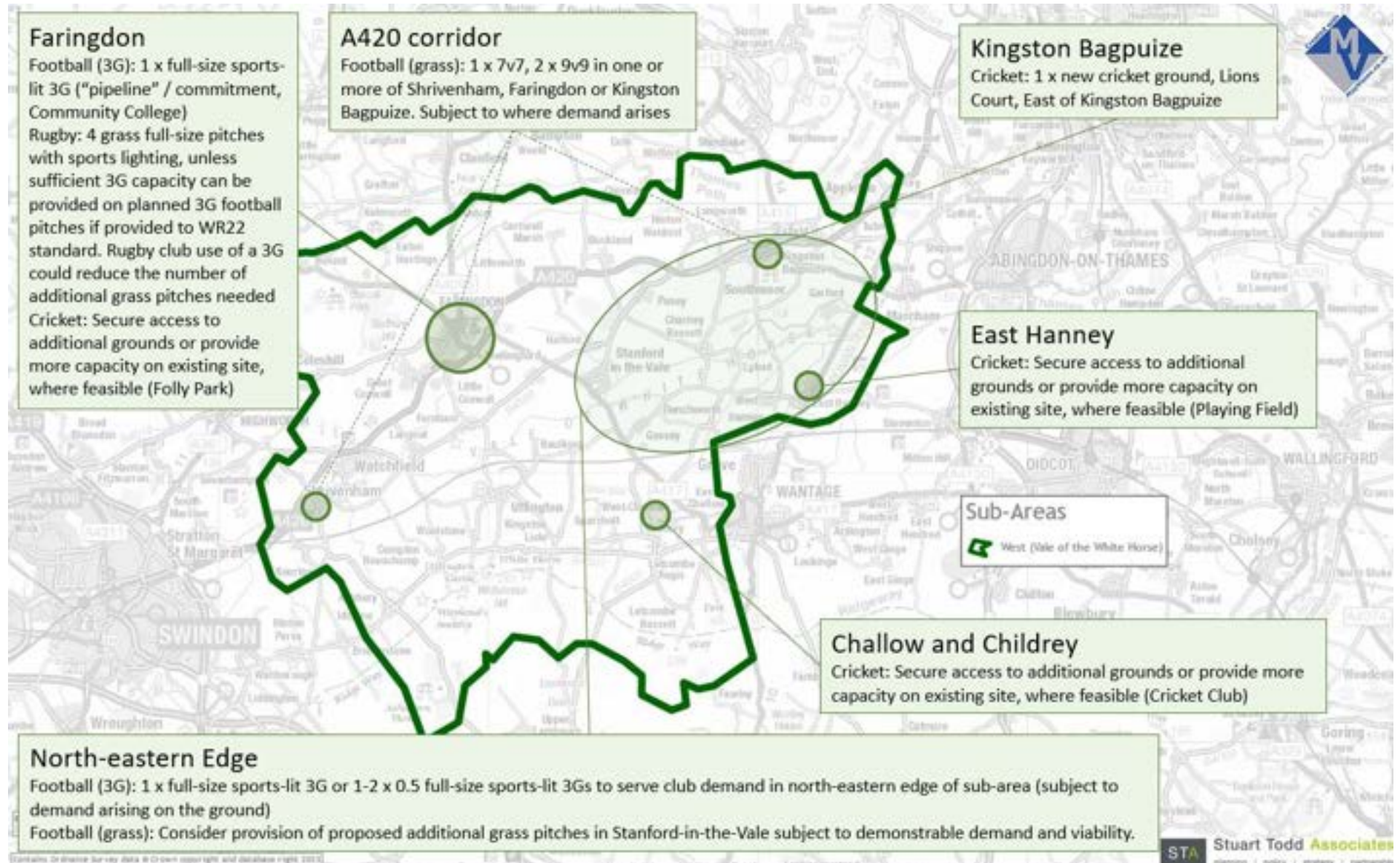
- Enable the supply of additional pitch capacity to accommodate existing overplay and future demand to a total equivalent capacity of 27 additional grass pitch capacity, or 3 additional artificial pitches, or a combination of both grass and artificial is more realistic, across this sub-area.
- Providing for additional supply should come, broadly sequentially, following the process set out in the district-wide recommendation above in PROVIDE.
- Lioncourt, East of Kingston Bagpuize – West sub area – will provide a new cricket ground and supporting pavilion around 200sqm. An agreement has not been signed but discussions are at an advanced stage.
- If additional pitches are required, capacity increases should be concentrated at the following sites as these clubs are continuing to grow and require additional facilities to service this growth. It should be noted these sites are already at or close to capacity so securing access to existing grounds with spare capacity or providing new grounds should be considered as a priority. Each site needs to undertake an assessment to identify exactly how much and where additional capacity can be provided. - Challow & Childrey CC, Folly Sports Park and East Hanney Playing Field

## **Rugby**

- Within this sub-area, the following measures should be taken to address the current and projected demand:
  - a. Enable the supply of additional pitch capacity to accommodate existing overplay and future demand to a total equivalent capacity of 15 match equivalents across this sub-area with demand likely to arise at Faringdon RFC.
  - b. Providing for additional supply should come, broadly sequentially, following the process set out in the district-wide recommendation above in PROVIDE.
  - c. Should quality improvements be achievable to improve the quality and capacity of existing pitches on club grounds to accommodate 3.25 match equivalents per pitch, additional capacity should be provided to the following scale at the following club:
    - i) Faringdon RFC – provision to support a net additional demand of around 4 grass pitches with sports lighting, unless sufficient capacity can be guaranteed for the club from use at a new 3G pitch in Faringdon, if, for example, the proposed pitch at the College comes forward and is WR22 compliant or at least is able to cater for rugby training (through the appropriate pile and inclusion of a shock-pad. Following delivery of a new 3G pitch and confirmation of the nature and amount of rugby club use, the number of additional grass pitches needed can be reduced.

## **Spatial Summary**

14.11 The spatial summary of the main PROVIDE recommendations in this sub-area is as follows. These must be read alongside the more details recommendations in the PROVIDE section to contextualise and ground headline provision shown on the map and ensure that off-site contributions from other development sites are not missed..



## **Didcot**

14.12 Given that Didcot lies on the boundary between South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, the following section reproduces the summary recommendations for the town from both District PPSs. As with the sections above, full detailed recommendations are set out in Appendices 3 and 4.

## **PROTECT**

### **Football**

- Protect the AGP facility at UTC Oxfordshire from loss, on the basis that it currently plays an important role in supporting demand from clubs for training and additional demand from informal, casual and small-sided league play. The site may continue to play an important role moving forward, subject to the ability to deliver additional and pipeline 3G pitches.

### **Rugby**

- Protect from loss all club pitches (and the entirety of the club home ground and facilities) used by Didcot RFC (Boundary Park).

## **ENHANCE**

### **Football**

- Gain the secure use of the following unsecure community use pitch sites:
  - Willowcroft Community School; and,
  - The Triangle (St Birinus School).
- Enhance capacity on the following pitches by improving quality and improve maintenance:
  - The Triangle 1 (St Birinus School) (1 x 11v11 pitch);
  - The Triangle 2 (St Birinus School) (1 x 11v11 pitch);
  - The Triangle 4 (St Birinus School) (1 x 9v9 pitch);
  - Boundary Park 4 (1 x 11v11 youth pitch) (to “good”, if possible);
  - Edmonds Park 1 (Didcot) (1 x 11v11 pitch);
  - Edmonds Park 2 (Didcot) (1 x 11v11 pitch);
  - Npower Loop Meadow Stadium 2 (training pitch) (1 x 11v11 pitch);
  - Loyd Recreation Park;
- Enhance the quality of changing and other ancillary facilities at:
  - Loyd Recreation Park.

## **Cricket**

- Seek to address overplay at Boundary Park if overplay is causing reduction in pitch quality, through improved maintenance, replacement of surfaces (at artificial pitches), provision of in situ practice nets for training and / or provision of additional grass or artificial pitches.

## **Rugby**

- Enhance capacity on pitches at Didcot RFC (Boundary Park) if possible by improving quality through improved drainage (where viable / subject to funding and a business plan being in place to ensure maintenance costs are catered for in the long-term), by introducing sports-lights where necessary and feasible and by improving surface maintenance to ensure that the better quality is sustained in the long-term. Pitch improvements should be made to enhance capacity to at least 3.25 match equivalents (D2/M2 rating<sup>22</sup>) and improvements should follow the recommendations made in the most up-to-date GMA pitch assessment report.

## **PROVIDE**

### **Football**

- Within the South sub-area in Vale of White Horse, the following measures should be taken to address the current and projected demand:
  - a. Should quality improvements be achievable to improve the quality and capacity of existing pitches on club grounds to “standard” quality from “poor” and to improve “standard” quality pitches to “good” where indicated in “ENHANCE”, deliver 4 x 11v11 good quality pitches in one or more of the following locations, to respond to demand:
    - i. in or on the edge of Wantage;
    - ii. on the edge of Didcot (in alignment with recommendations in the South Oxfordshire PPS);
    - iii. responding to demand at Ardington & Lockinge FC;
    - iv. responding to demand at Blewbury Amazons Girls FC;
    - v. responding to demand at East Hendred AFC;
    - vi. responding to demand at Grove Challengers FC (should the additional proposed pitches at Grove Airfield not satisfy demand);
    - vii. responding to demand at Wantage Town FC (should the proposed 3G at their home ground not satisfy demand).

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<sup>22</sup> D/M ratings are used in the PPS guidance. For D2/M2, this means that the pitch should be improved to a standard where it can accommodate 3.25 match equivalents per week. As a guide, this will typically mean, subject to individual detailed pitch assessments, that a pitch should at least have slit drainage and a “good” maintenance regime.



- Deliver proposed pitches “in the pipeline” to meet demand arising in those locations. This means that pitches at:
  - a. Land at Didcot North-east, to deliver 3 x 11v11 pitches and 5 x Youth 7v7 pitches and associated necessary ancillary facilities. Consideration should also be given strategically, across Didcot as a whole and in both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, whether future provision for sport in the town should be consolidated on one or other of the Boundary Park and Valley Park sites for any of the sports;
  - b. Valley Park, Didcot to deliver 2 x grass youth (Alma Park), 2 x grass youth (Common Park) and 2 x grass 11v11 adult pitches (Common Park), 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G (Common Park) and associated necessary ancillary facilities. Consideration should also be given strategically, across Didcot as a whole and in both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, whether future provision for some sports in the town could be consolidated on one or other of the Boundary Park and Valley Park sites.
- Provide an additional 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G in Didcot, as part of a strategic consolidation plan for provision for sport in the town and within the context of timing of when the 3G at Valley Park (Common Park site) will be delivered. Should enough demand arise in the middle to late part of the period for an additional 3G, a 3G could be considered to serve a wider catchment at, for example, The Heights, Milton United (in Vale of White Horse).
- Provide an additional 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G in the West sub-area in South Oxfordshire, subject to where demand arises, in the middle to latter part of the strategy period, perhaps in response to demand arising on the edge of Oxford, Wallingford or Didcot, or through provision of 2 x 0.5 size pitches in two locations.
- Provide 0.5 x additional full-size sports-lit 3G pitch to serve demand, in a location to be determined, in the South sub-area in Vale of White Horse, in the middle to latter part of the strategy period, to serve areas where demand appears on the ground, either in the Wantage / Grove or edge of Didcot area. This could be increased to a full-size 3G should demand be demonstrated that this will be viable at the time of proposal.

## **Hockey**

- Consider provision of an additional new full-size sports-lit sand based or Gen2 surface towards the latter part of the strategy period to accommodate growth by that point, if appropriate, feasible and viable. Provision must only be made subject to demand being demonstrated “on the ground” in Didcot and the logistics being in place for an existing club (for example, Abingdon or Wallingford) to run a satellite site in the town (if there is appetite and volunteer capacity), for example, for juniors residing in Didcot.

## **Cricket**

- Didcot Northeast development will provide new on-site cricket ground to accommodate additional demand for cricket from the development. The final number of cricket pitches on the ground to be agreed. Consideration should also be given strategically, across Didcot as a whole and in both South Oxfordshire and

Vale of White Horse, whether future provision for some sports in the town could be consolidated on one or other of the Boundary Park and Valley Park sites.

- If additional pitches are required, capacity increases should be concentrated at the following sites as these clubs are continuing to grow and require additional facilities to service this growth. It should be noted these sites are already at or close to capacity so securing access to existing grounds with spare capacity or providing new grounds should be considered as a priority. Each site needs to undertake an assessment to identify exactly how much and where additional capacity can be provided.
  - Boundary Park
- Valley Park development near Didcot will provide additional playing field land but no agreement has been yet as to the exact make up of this provision and if it will include a new cricket ground. Consideration should also be given strategically, across Didcot as a whole and in both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, whether future provision for some sports in the town could be consolidated on one or other of the Boundary Park and Valley Park sites.
- If additional pitches are required, capacity increases should be concentrated at the following sites as these clubs are continuing to grow and require additional facilities to service this growth. It should be noted these sites are already at or close to capacity so securing access to existing grounds with spare capacity or providing new grounds should be considered as a priority. Each site needs to undertake an assessment to identify exactly how much and where additional capacity can be provided, including Boundary Park.

## **Rugby**

- The following measures should be taken to address the current and projected demand:
  - a. Enable the supply of additional pitch capacity to accommodate existing overplay and future demand to a total equivalent capacity of 36.25 match equivalents across this sub-area with most demand likely to arise at Didcot RFC (and Grove RFC).
  - b. Providing for additional supply should come, broadly sequentially, following the process set out in the district-wide recommendation above in PROVIDE.
  - c. Should quality improvements be achievable to improve the quality and capacity of existing pitches on club grounds to accommodate 3.25 match equivalents per pitch, additional capacity should be provided to the following scale at the following clubs:
    - iii. Didcot RFC – provision to support a net additional demand of around 6-7 grass pitches with sports lighting, unless capacity can be provided through a new WR22 compliant sports-lit 3G pitch. This response to demand includes an element of demand generated in South Oxfordshire’s West sub-area within which part of Didcot sits. Off-site contributions from major developments in the town can help fund improvements in capacity.
- Consideration should be given strategically, across Didcot as a whole and in both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, whether future provision for

some sports in the town could be consolidated on one or other of the Boundary Park and Valley Park sites.

### **Strategic Site On-site Provision**

- 14.13 As already noted above, strategic housing allocation sites present a significant opportunity to host pitches required as a result of demand which arises from their population, and also as locations for new pitches to help address wider demand across the sub-area or reasonable functional or spatial catchment where land is available either on-site or close to it.
- 14.14 The table below summarises the contribution that the strategic housing sites in this sub-area could make to provision of pitches, based on the sites that we have been advised can still be influenced / informed by the outcomes of the PPS. Off-site contributions for some sports are not summarised here, but are set out in detail in the assessment reports.
- 14.15 Recommendations for non-pipeline sites are flexible, however, as opportunities presented are a starting point which should continue to be informed by detailed discussions during the delivery phase of the strategy (Stage E).

#### *Summary of Estimated On-site Playing Pitch Provision at Strategic Housing Sites*

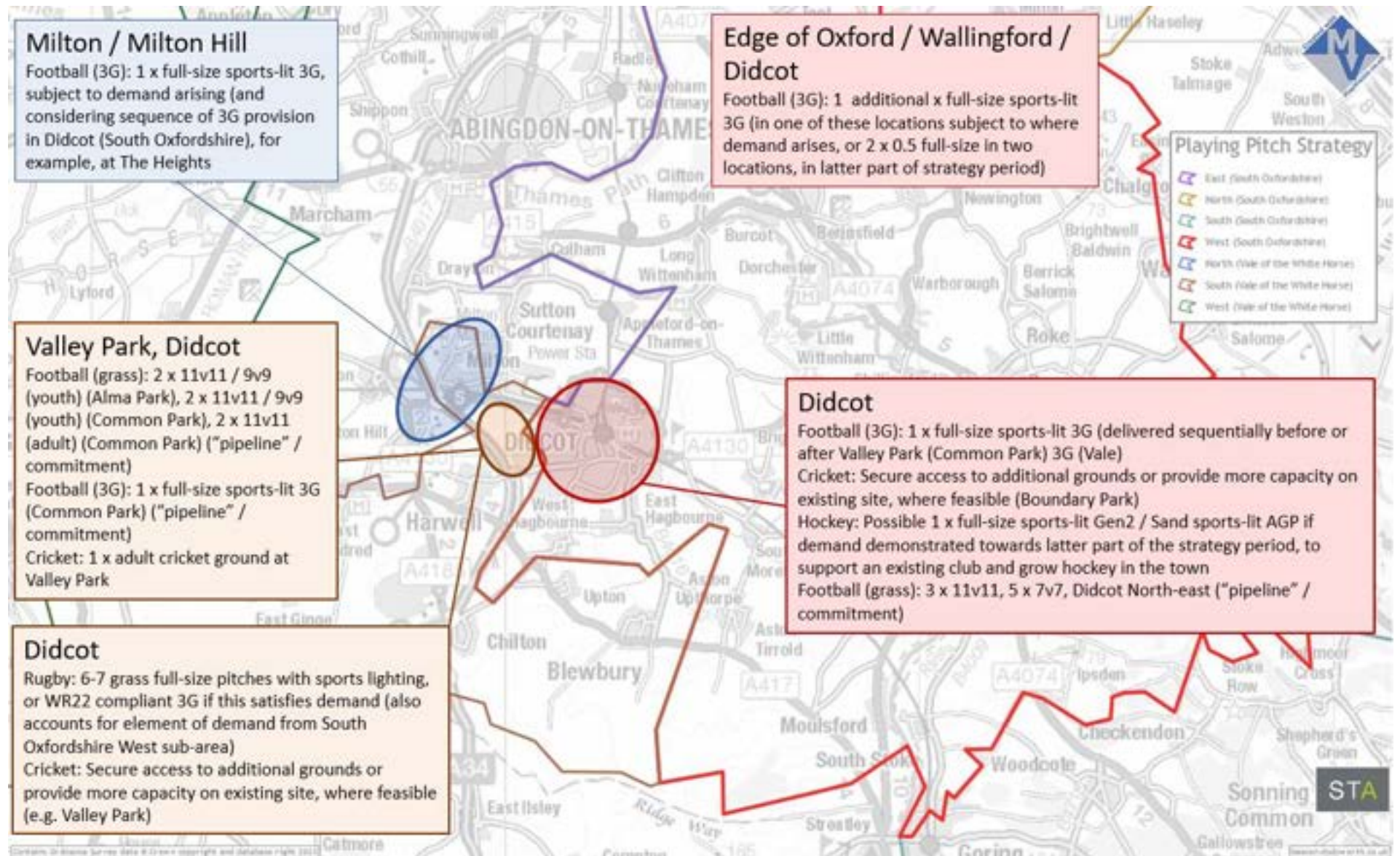
<b>Strategic Site</b>	<b>No. of dwellings modelled</b>	<b>Population modelled</b>	<b>On-site requirements (captured in “provide” recommendations)</b>
Valley Park, Didcot (South sub-area, Vale of White Horse)	-	-	Football (grass): 2 x 11v11 / 9v9 (youth) (Alma Park), 2 x 11v11 / 9v9 (youth) (Common Park), 2 x 11v11 (adult) (Common Park) (“pipeline” / commitment)  Football (3G): 1 x full-size sports-lit 3G (Common Park) (“pipeline” / commitment)  Cricket: 1 x Adult Cricket Ground
Didcot North-east	-	-	Football (grass): 3 x 11v11, 5 x 7v7, Didcot North-east (“pipeline” / commitment)

Notes: Numbers of dwelling and the population modelled has been done only for those sites over which the PPS can influence provision (i.e. where they are not already commitments through the planning process.

### **Spatial Summary**

- 14.16 The spatial summary of the main PROVIDE recommendations in this sub-area is as follows. These must be read alongside the more details recommendations

in the PROVIDE section to contextualise and ground headline provision shown on the map and ensure that off-site contributions from other development sites are not missed.



## 15. Scenarios

- 15.1 Five scenarios were tested as part of the assessment process in order to understand the impact of change in the provision or supply of pitches during the strategy period. These scenarios were agreed with the Steering Group and in broad terms the outcomes of those scenarios were as follows.

### “Do nothing”

- 15.2 General: A “do nothing” or absence of a strategy scenario has major implications for providing for both formal and informal sport. Demand is not fully catered for by supply at the current time in several sports. With projected population and participation growth there would be a very significant lack of provision with major impacts on physical, mental and social health. Doing nothing also implies no improvements to pitch or facility quality, meaning that capacity to accommodate even current levels of play would be substantially reduced over time, particularly as artificial pitches and surfaces degrade and require replacement. Doing nothing also implies that new provision or financial contributions would not be sought from development, a key source of funding and locations of new additional pitches.
- 15.3 Football: There is no current surplus of grass pitches and only a little headroom capacity in a few locations to allow for growth to be accommodated. There is currently a lack of artificial 3G pitches to cater for existing demand already, a position which would be exacerbated by no additional provision and no replacement as 3G surfaces become unusable. Pressure would increase on both 3G and grass surfaces, and also on other AGPs which currently host informal football and some club training. Existing deficiencies in catering for demand would also be exacerbated, for example, waiting lists for players to join clubs would not be addressed and so latent and unmet demand would remain.
- 15.4 Hockey: Ultimately, hockey could lose out relatively quickly compared to other sports given that the sport only uses AGPs and not grass. Without maintenance and replacement of existing surfaces hockey could simply not play and the eventual death of the sport in the District would be inevitable, unless it returned to using grass pitches, pitches which in turn would be under significant pressure from use by other sports as no additional grass pitches being provided would mean that the sport would have to share with other sports.
- 15.5 Cricket: There is no current surplus of cricket pitches with only a little headroom on sites that could accommodate some further growth. There are currently several clubs that are overplayed and if no improvements or access to other sites will prevent any further growth and may have detrimental impact on the quality of the pitches. The growth of the sport is reliant upon access to more pitches to continue the growth trends and the areas where demand is greatest with limited pitch supply is in and around the main population settlements.
- 15.6 Rugby Union: There is currently overplay on most club used rugby pitches in the District. This pressure on current supply would be exacerbated with no improvements made to existing pitches and their quality therefore likely to get worse. Growth in the game would likely stop with pitches unable to cater for additional demand and no additional provision of sports lighting on sites where capacity could be extended by enabling evening training. There would also be further pressure on use of any World Rugby 22 Compliant 3G pitches within or

outside the District with the inevitable position similar to football with surfaces degrading and not being replaced in the future.

## **Loss of Education Sites from Supply**

15.7 Football: Removing education sites currently used by clubs results in the following headlines. In each case, both available supply and the demand they cater for would need to be replaced within reasonably close proximity to the site. The large number of AGPs in the district which are on education or education controlled sites suggests a priority to gain secure community use agreements for sports use on the sites.

- Brookes Sport Botley (North sub-area) hosts 3 x 11v11 adult grass pitches of standard quality (2 match equivalents each). Demand on the site equates to 2 match equivalents. The site also hosts 5 x small 3G pitches which provide around 37.5 full-size equivalent hours per week to football.
- Radley College, Abingdon (North sub-area) hosts 3 sand AGPs with an approximate 54 hours of use for football per week.
- Tilsley Park in Abingdon (North sub-area), hosts a WR22 compliant 3G pitch which, while owned by the local authority, still poses a risk to certainty of supply for clubs using the site. For football, loss of AGP use there would remove a substantial amount of supply 50.5 hours (full-size equivalent hours) across sand and 3G pitches.
- Harwell Primary School (South sub-area) small 3G supports around 4.5 hours of demand for football use.
- UTC Oxfordshire (South sub-area) small 3G supports around 7 hours of demand for football use.

15.8 Hockey: While the Tilsley Park site is owned by the local authority and represents a low risk in terms of loss of the site for sale, with operator being the school, this still presents a risk in terms of certainty of access for the club. With this in mind it is appropriate to understand and quantify potential loss which can act as a motivation to ensure greater certainty of use between the provider, local authority and club, which can be partially achieved through building strong relationships with the provider. Loss of the site to use by hockey would mean that 8 hours of current demand would be necessary at weekends and 7.5 hours on weekday evenings, with a further 5 hours of capacity projected for demand arising in the future to 2041.

15.9 Cricket: No clubs use education sites at the current time.

15.10 Rugby: Only one club uses education sites at the current time. Oxford RFC uses 2 x pitches on the St Peter's College site adjacent to their club pitches. Demand on the site is not recorded in the supply / demand figures and so loss of their use is already factored into calculations. A priority will be to secure community use and certainty of tenure for the club. If use of these pitches are lost to club use, replacement pitches would need to be found to accommodate existing and future play. Tilsley Park in Abingdon, hosts a WR22 compliant 3G pitch which could be utilised by Abingdon RFC, but which does not have sufficient available capacity to do so if desired by the club, would represent a loss from supply if, in the future, the club accesses slots for weekday evening training or weekend matches and the school, as the operator of the site did not wish to book the pitch out to the club or prioritises hire for football over

rugby. Two full-size rugby pitches at Brookes Sport (Harcourt Hill, Botley) would be lost if education sites were removed from supply, although there is no community use on these pitches for clubs (with the only use for Brookes University teams).

### **Areas with High Levels of Deprivation**

- 15.11 Football: There are no football club home grounds located in areas of high deprivation.
- 15.12 Hockey: There are no AGPs used by hockey clubs located in areas of high deprivation.
- 15.13 Cricket: There are no cricket club home grounds located in areas of high deprivation.
- 15.14 Rugby: There are no rugby club home grounds located in areas of high deprivation.

### **No Additional 3G Pitches and Existing 3G Pitches Lost from Supply**

- 15.15 Football: Beyond the additional 3G pitches currently in the pipeline likely to be delivered, up to 5 additional full-size 3G pitches with sports lighting are projected as necessary to accommodate demand to 2041. These pitches could host, based on the FA / FF 1 pitch to 38 teams ratio, 190 teams' training, which would otherwise require provision on good quality grass pitches with sports lighting and / or indoor provision in sports halls. To give an indication of the scale of replacement grass pitch provision needed to absorb demand from a single full-size sports-lit 3G pitch (for both training and matches), capacity equivalent to around 8-10 full size grass pitches would be needed (5-6 of which would need to be sports-lit and fenced to protect quality and ensure that bookings can be honoured, with consequent costs and impact of powering more lighting and potential impact on dark skies). Should existing and pipeline full-size sports-lit 3G pitches also be lost to supply, this would represent another significant number of additional grass pitches needed to support the game.
- 15.16 Rugby: Full-size sports-lit WR22 compliant 3G pitches could play a role, as indicated above, in accommodating a significant level of demand for both Faringdon RFC and Didcot RFC, instead of the high number of additional grass pitches required to 2041. Should 3G pitches not be supported, the number of grass pitches set out above to accommodate demand for these clubs will likely need to be provided on sites close to existing club provision to ensure their long-term use and viability or on a new club ground which hosts the appropriate number of total pitches, after other options to accommodate additional demand have been exhausted. There could also be a "knock-on" impact of no new additional artificial pitches, with a greater number of teams across rugby, football and hockey all competing for artificial pitch time on existing AGPs. With hockey unable to play on 3G surfaces, this puts pressure on sand-based surfaces, competing with football and in Abingdon, for example, this will squeeze the amount of time available to rugby in the future on the WR22 compliant 3G at Tilsley Park.



15.17 Football and Rugby: If existing 3G pitches used for football were lost from supply, for example, if they were not resurfaced when existing carpets no longer meet required standards, the following loss would take place. In North sub-area, one full-size sports-lit 3G would be lost at Tilsley Park (currently with 38 hours of theoretical supply, although only used for football for around 11 hours, rugby for 1 hour and with 12 hours of the 38 hours of potential supply unavailable due to use of the athletics track which runs around the edge of the 3G pitch). Apart from this pitch, there are many other small 3G pitches, providing 46.5 full-size equivalent hours of use for football, for training and small-sided formats. Losing the supply available and time currently used would represent a significant loss in training time available for clubs in this sub-area, and particularly in Abingdon and on the edge of Oxford (at Brookes Sport, Botley). Rugby use of Tilsley Park's 3G pitch is limited to one hour, but the potential loss could represent a negative impact on the club as it grows in size. In the South sub-area, around 4.5 full-size equivalent hours would be lost, from use of a small 3G pitch at Harwell Primary School. If 3G pitches are lost to supply, this would place additional pressure on spaces which would otherwise have to be used for football training, such as sports halls and any locally accessible sand-based AGPs if they are retained in supply in the long-term, in some locations, placing additional pressure on slots used by hockey clubs.

## **16. Action Plan Framework and Delivery**

**(What needs to be done to implement the strategy?)**

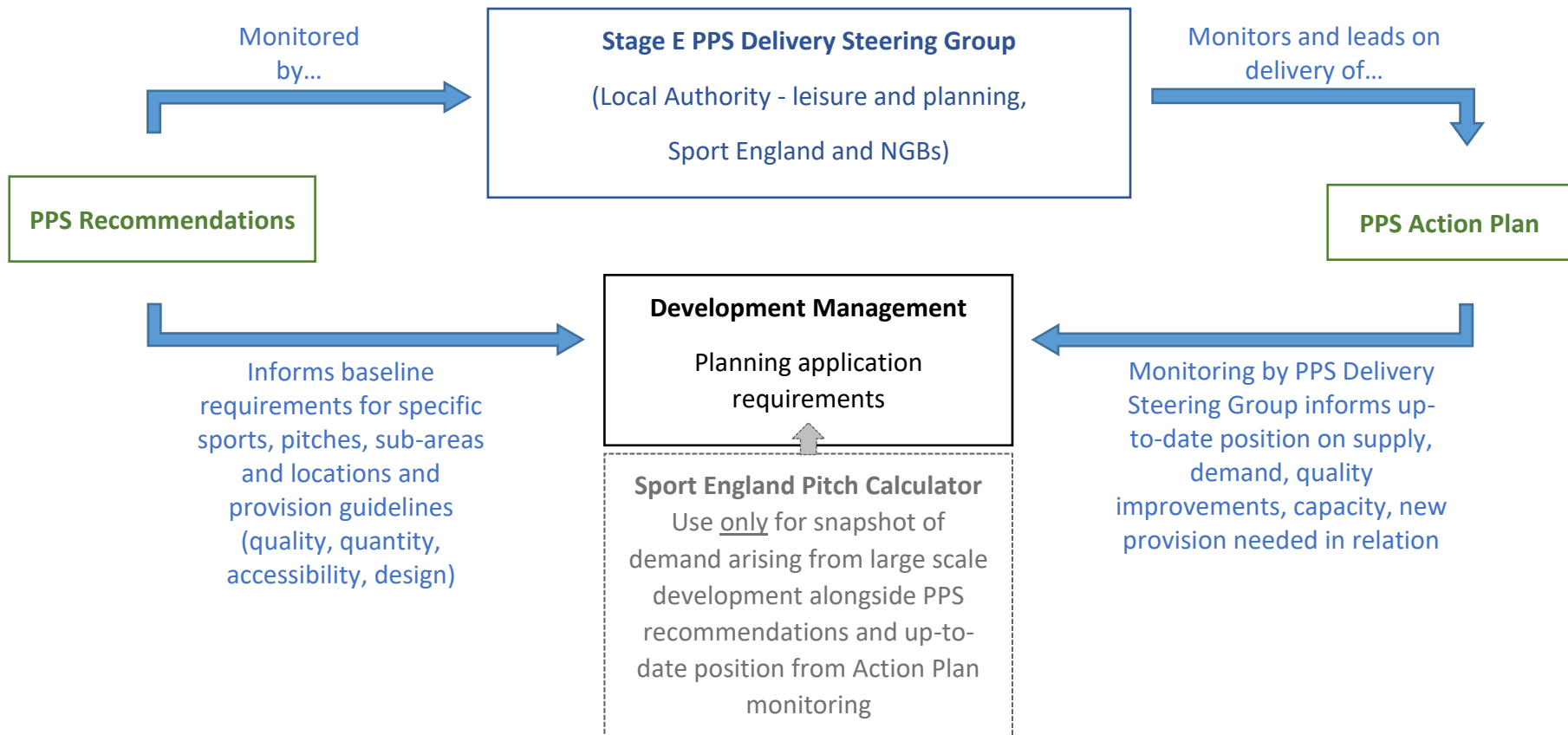
### **Action Plan**

16.1 Following consultation on the draft strategy and any changes made as a result, confirmed recommendations and actions will be set out and monitored in a "live" action plan framework which members of the steering group will have a responsibility to update and implement. As noted earlier this implementation will also depend on steering group members co-ordinating and working closely with clubs, teams, league organisers, providers, owners of current pitches and owners of pitches and potential sites for additional pitches. The action plan framework will, in time, be updated by the District Council and delivery informed by other priorities such as (but not limited to) response to the climate emergency, economic recovery and levels of deprivation. The delivery stage will also confirm options for change presented in this strategy as further work during implementation is done on feasibility, viability and implications of other actions. However, PPS guidance recommends that an action plan is consulted upon as part of the strategy. Therefore, an action plan table in Appendix 5 sets out priority actions in broad terms.

### **Planning Officer Guidance on Using this Strategy**

16.2 To aid use of the strategy by local authority planning officers, the diagram below aims to guide local authority officers on the key factors to think about when considering development proposals / planning applications.

## Guide to Interface between Delivery and Use of Strategy Recommendations to Inform Planning Applications



- 16.3 Within this context, the following figure provides a guide for planning officers to aid use and application of this strategy when considering planning proposals.

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### Guidance / Thought Process

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The PPS deals with pitch sports defined in the [typology](#). It has had input from local clubs, sports governing bodies, Sport England and key stakeholders. Consider the [diagram above](#) for context and relationship between DM and this strategy.

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The [Executive Summary](#) provides a useful overview of the strategy and its findings in broad terms.

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If you think that the proposal does or is likely to have an impact on existing or future provision / needs / demand, or you simply do not know, initially discuss with 'Planning Policy' officers and or 'Leisure' officers. Conversations with Sport England and the relevant sports governing body will also prove helpful and will be essential for many proposals.

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Identify where in the [study area](#) the proposal is and which sub-area it is within (and if it is on the edge of a sub-area).

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If on the edge of a sub-area, bear in mind that an appropriate response to development proposals may need to take into account demand from other adjoining sub-areas.

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Do not assume that the application of Local Plan standards for on-site open space will provide the answer for pitch needs. Remember that appropriate provision for sport to respond to demand from development may not require an on-site solution but instead require off-site provision or contributions to such provision, often at an existing pitch site or club base.

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In most cases, contributions for demand arising for hockey, rugby union, cricket and lesser played pitch sports will be required for existing site improvements to facilities and / or pitch quality or maintenance. This increases capacity at most sites to accommodate demand subject to practical useability of additional quality / supply at the times / days needed for teams. Detail of whether this is possible should be discussed with NGBs and / or Sport England initially.

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Early consideration is required of how financial contributions should be collected for sport (i.e. through CIL or s106, subject to the adopted CIL regime and also whether negotiation with the Parish or Town Council is appropriate with regard to use of their CIL proportion to deliver enhancements from demand from the new development.

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Contributions are most likely to be required to focus on addressing capacity at existing sites nearest to the proposal, although this will not always be the case. This should be discussed with NGBs and / or Sport England in the first instance who maintain a strategic picture of demand during PPS delivery.

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To understand the amount of land required for pitch sizes (and associated ancillary facilities) to be accommodated, refer to the most up-to-date dimensions standards. These can be found at <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance>

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A search in this Strategy for club, location or ground names will provide salient information about demand, supply and the needs of specific sites and pitches across the District and importantly, recommendations specific to sites. Site overviews produced alongside this Strategy are also a useful snapshot although some could quickly become dated after the base date of this Strategy. For additional provision, consider recommendations in the "ENHANCE" and "PROVIDE" sections of the strategy. For protection against loss, consider "PROTECT" recommendations.

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When considering recommendations of the strategy, they are [split by sport](#) in the main body of the strategy and [by sub-area in Appendix 3](#). In both of these sections, recommendations are set out under the headings of "PROTECT", "ENHANCE" AND "PROVIDE".

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The focus for football is on securing financial contributions for grass pitches unless there is a spatial gap in supply with a demonstrable demand or significant overplay suggests a need for a new pitch or pitches. Consideration should be given to the appropriate size of pitch needed and whether that size, age group using the pitch or local demand necessitates changing rooms / pavilion. NGBs and / or Sport England are likely to be able to advise in the first instance.

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Loss of pitches. The "bottom-line" in this strategy is protect all pitches from loss and to protect mothballed / closed / unused pitches for future use and to accommodate potential future demand. If unavoidable, replacement could be a solution.

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[Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator](#) provides a "policy off" or "strategy neutral" calculation of demand which can arise from new development proposals. This tool should not be used in isolation and cannot be expected to provide a quick and accurate answer. It can, however, be used to give an estimation of demand and capital and revenue costs required to address new demand. Figures generated through the calculator should be used alongside the recommendations in this Strategy and to inform discussion of an appropriate response with NGBs and Sport England. Calculator inputs align with a specific number of dwellings and average household size of 2.4 people. Outputs will be different if either of these variables change during the strategy period.

## 17. Monitoring and Review

### (How will the implementation of the strategy and action framework be monitored and reviewed?)

- 17.1 As referred to in the strategy recommendations, it is important that the strategy and impact of its actions are monitored to ensure that supply matches both projected demand set out in this strategy and demand “on the ground”. This is particularly important later during the strategy period given that future demand in the longer-term is less accurate given that it is based on projections. As actions are implemented, a “plan, deliver, monitor, manage” approach should be employed. It is recommended that a “Stage E” action plan review meeting of the Steering Group should take place at least twice a year, but more frequently if issues suggest a need. These meetings must not be a replacement for important delivery work which should continue on an iterative and continuous basis between delivery partners.
- 17.2 It is recommended that the strategy is reviewed after a period of 3 years or before this time should substantive changes be made to supply, demand or implications of change likely to take place during the strategy period (such as significant confirmed or adopted changes in levels of housing or population growth). Equally, other triggers for a review before this time could be changes to planning or sports policy or the methodology used to assess playing pitches and / or facilities or the desire to better understand likely provision required beyond the current adopted development plan periods.

## 18. Glossary

### (Explanation of technical terms and abbreviations)

Term	Description
3G	Third generation AGP usually dressed with rubber crumb. The surface is commonly used for football but can also be used for rugby where sufficiently sprung to reduce / absorb impact.
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch, sometimes referred to as an ATP (Artificial Turf Pitch) or NTP (Non-Turf Pitch). The term covers all types of artificial pitch including, sand based, sand dressed, water based and 3G.
BBFA	Berks and Bucks Football Association
Carrying capacity	Knowing the quality of a grass pitch allows us to make an assumption of how many matches each size and type of pitch should be able to accommodate without leading to deterioration of the pitch's quality. This is called its carrying capacity. The figures are provided as "match equivalent sessions per season" for cricket pitches and "match equivalent sessions per week" for rugby union and football. Any use of a pitch, when demand is considered is converted to this unit of measurement for ease of comparison. The assumption of match equivalent sessions for quality ratings is based on guidelines provided by sports governing bodies. The carrying capacity of AGPs is measured in the amount of time in hours available for community use in the peak period.
Demand:	
Current demand	Demand demonstrated as existing "on the ground" during the season when data is collected for the PPS.
Latent demand	"Whereas unmet demand is known to exist latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. This could include feedback from a sports club who may feel that they could set up and run an additional team if they had access to better provision. Details of the potential amount and type of any latent demand in the study area should be sought."  (Paragraph B37, Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance, 2013, Sport England)
Unmet demand	"Current <b>unmet demand</b> could be in the form of a team that has currently got access to a pitch for its matches but nowhere to train or vice versa. It could also be from an educational establishment that is currently using an indoor facility because of the lack of access to outdoor pitch provision. Along with a lack of pitches of a particular type being available to the community unmet demand may be due to the poor quality and therefore limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement. League secretaries may be aware of some unmet demand as they may have refused applications from teams wishing to enter their competitions due to a lack of pitch provision which in turn is hindering the growth of the league. As it is known to exist any unmet demand recorded should be easily quantifiable e.g. a training session for one team on a weekday evening."

	(Paragraph B36, Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance, 2013, Sport England)
Aspirational future demand	Demand that a club might identify as likely or desirable to come forward during the strategy period.
Displaced demand	<p>“Displaced demand generally relates to play by teams or other users of playing pitches from within the study area (i.e. from residents of the study area) which takes place outside the area. It is important to know whether this displaced demand is due to issues with the provision of pitches and ancillary facilities in the study area, just reflective of how the sports are played (e.g. at a central venue for the wider area) or due to the most convenient site for the respective users just falling outside of the LA/study area. It is therefore important to establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What displaced demand exists and why including the amount and type of demand (e.g. a senior match on a natural grass pitch, a junior training session on an AGP);</li> <li>• Whether those generating the displaced demand would prefer to play within the study area and where.”</li> </ul> <p>(Paragraph B34, Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance, 2013, Sport England)</p>
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board, the NGB for cricket.
EH	England Hockey, the NGB for hockey.
FA	Football Association, the NGB for football.
FF	Football Foundation
LP	Local Plan
Match equivalents	See “carrying capacity”
NGB	National Governing Body (for sport)
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance
OCCB	Oxfordshire County Cricket Board, the county cricket association.
OFA	Oxfordshire Football Association
Peak period	The period of time used to compare community use on AGPs. The peak period is typically Mon-Thurs 5pm-9pm, Fri 5pm-7pm and Sat and Sun 9am-5pm, a total of 34 hours per week.
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
RFU	Rugby Football Union, the NGB for rugby union.
SE	Sport England
TGR	Team Generation Rate, a calculation used to estimate future numbers of teams for the main pitch sports based on population projections set against the existing number of teams within the current population.

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