

Bristol Playing Pitch Strategy

2026 – 2040



With consultancy support from:



Strategy overview

Vision

“To protect, enhance and provide the right combination of playing pitches to meet the current and future needs of the city’s population.

To increase participation in playing pitch sports through offering the best participant experience possible in terms of playing pitches and other supporting facilities at the most cost-effective price to both the user and provider.”

Priority sport specific actions (that reflect the key issues and findings)

	Protect	Enhance	Provide
Cricket	The number and quality of cricket grounds to prevent further displaced demand out of the city.	The quantity, quality and availability of pitches and ancillary facilities across the city to meet club’s needs.	New cricket training and match provision across the city.
Football	The number and quality of grass and 3G pitches in the city to cope with future demand from all age groups.	The large number of ‘poor’ and ‘standard’ pitches and changing facilities - specifically the ones most heavily used and with security of tenure.	4-6 new 11v11 sports-lit 3G artificial grass pitches. New grass pitches if sufficient pitch quality improvements can’t be made.
Hockey	The number and quality of hockey suitable (sand based) artificial grass pitches.	Security of tenure for clubs at all pitches, resurface ‘poor’ quality pitches and upgrade sports lighting to LED.	1-2 new full-sized sports-lit sand-based artificial grass pitch in North Bristol.
Rugby Union	The number and quality of grass pitches and WR22 compliant 3G pitches.	The quality, lighting and maintenance of pitches and ancillary facilities at club grounds.	New grass pitches and WR22 compliant 3G pitches to meet club demand.
Less Played Sports	The pitches currently used by community clubs.	The quality of pitches and access to 3G pitches.	New home grounds for clubs without a Bristol base where viable.

Bristol needs summary

- There is a lack of capacity to meet current and/ or future demand with current pitch stock.
- Cricket faces the most significant under supply and considerable action is required.
- Football and Rugby Union should prioritise the improvement of existing club pitches and facilities. In doing so, most clubs will be able to meet future demand.
- Hockey should focus on making sure pitches are well used and able to continue operating. This includes potential redistribution of play, resurfacing of ‘poor’ pitches and securing access in the longer term.
- More research is needed to support less played sports clubs to have a lasting Bristol home ground.

Key messages

- All playing field sites and playing pitches should be protected.
- Considerable work and investment is needed to provide the right combination of pitches and to improve the overall quality of pitches and changing provision in the most cost-effective way.
- Gaining and maintaining secure community use of pitches is a key priority.
- Pitches should be seen as flexible spaces for multiple sports, not tied to any one sport or age group. Collaboration and coordination between different sports is essential.

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Introduction

Bristol's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) covers the period between 2026 and 2040 and aligns with the latest Sport England guidance¹. Initial data was primarily gathered in 2023/24. The strategy has been developed collaboratively by Bristol City Council (BCC) Public Health, Planning and Parks teams, alongside sports national governing bodies (NGBs) and Sport England. Together these partners form the projects steering group. Consultancy support was provided by Stuart Todd Associates. Engagement with clubs, operators, owners and pitch providers has been carried out to understand the needs of local sports.

The strategy covers grass and artificial grass pitches (AGPs) used for football, rugby union, hockey and cricket. It also considers other less commonly played sports such as lacrosse, American Football, baseball, rounders, softball and Rugby League.

As recommended in Sport England guidance, the strategic framework is based on three themes:

- **Protect:** Safeguarding existing playing pitch provision, regardless of ownership or current community access.
- **Enhance:** Improving the quality, accessibility and management of existing pitches and supporting facilities to meet current or future demand.
- **Provide:** Developing new provision where existing provision isn't meeting demand.

The study area for the PPS is the whole of the Bristol City Council (BCC) area, as shown in Figure 1. For the purposes of this strategy, the area will be referred to as 'BCC area'. The map also shows the sub-areas used for analysis and presentation of the strategy's recommendations and actions.

¹ See https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport?section=assessing_needs_and_playing_pitch_strategy_guidance

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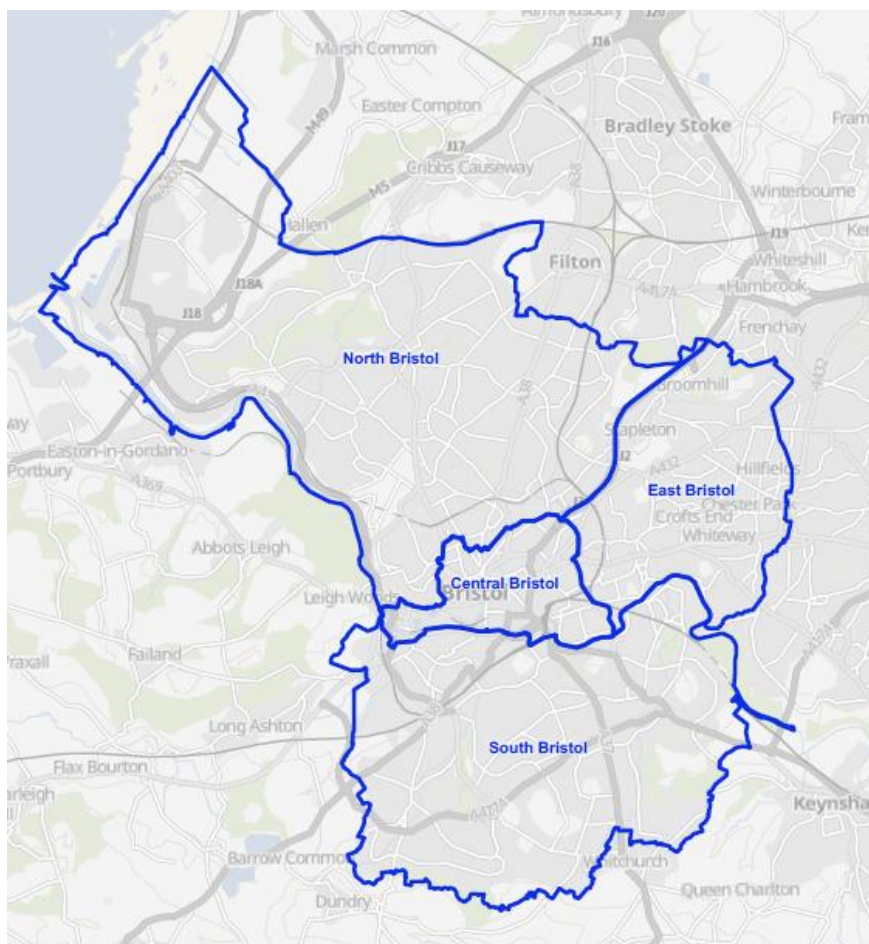


Figure 1: Map of Bristol City Council area and sub-areas

Key drivers

A Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) serves multiple functions across sport, public health and the local planning authority. It contributes towards health and wellbeing through supporting formal club-based sport and social, casual and informal sport, which encourages broader participation and increased physical activity.

This strategy aligns with Bristol City Council's [Corporate Strategy](#) priorities, including supporting the health and wellbeing of children, families and adults, creating safe and healthy neighbourhoods and affordable, safe and good quality homes. It reflects the council's wider ambition to focus on prevention and early action by investing in activities and facilities that build resilience and reduce harm over the long term. The PPS will continue to support the prevention of ill-health and will help communities to access physical activity across the city. The strategy also aligns with Bristol City Council's aim to be a highly inclusive and accessible council and city.

Bristol City Council's PPS provides a comprehensive understanding of the quality, quantity, availability and accessibility of playing pitches. It assesses the current levels of demand to identify where pitches may be overused or underused, and it projects future demand to support long term planning. This approach ensures that pitch provision takes both current

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needs and anticipated growth into account. The strategy also considers the increasing participation in girls', women's and disability sport, recognising the need for suitable and inclusive facilities.

The Playing Pitch Strategy:

- provides strong evidence to protect playing fields in the planning system and informs planning policy development.
- should be used to inform the planning of new developments and their on-site or off-site contributions to playing pitches, ensuring they are consistent with national and local policy.
- helps improve the quality of provision by identifying issues related to the condition of pitches and ancillary facilities.
- informs the investment to be made into schools, parks, community facilities, and other publicly or privately managed sites.
- can be used by clubs, teams and pitch operators to support funding applications aimed at improving the quality, quantity and accessibility of provision.
- provides a strategic view and options for the provision of pitches during the strategy period.
- is a key part within a broader set of strategies, evidence and actions which together support the physical and mental wellbeing of people who live and work in the area.

Vision

“ To protect, enhance and provide the right combination of playing pitches to meet the current and future needs of the city's population.

To increase participation in playing pitch sports through offering the best participant experience possible in terms of playing pitches and other supporting facilities at the most cost-effective price to both the user and provider.

”

Objectives

The following objectives guide the development and future delivery the Playing Pitch Strategy;

- To utilise Sport England's guidance on developing a Playing Pitch Strategy ensuring a comprehensive overview of Bristol's pitches.
- To work in partnership with the relevant national governing bodies (NGBs) for the mutual benefit of the local authority, national governing bodies, Bristol's sporting population and Sport England.
- Collect and collate relevant data in a format that allows easy analysis and interrogation.
- Use data to build a clear picture of playing pitch provision in Bristol.
- Identify key findings, issues and challenges facing Bristol playing pitch provision now and in the future.
- Write and adopt a strategy, that includes a clear set of recommendations and action plan.

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- Establish a team of people to oversee the action plan and recommendations, to maintain and update the data collected and to explore future opportunities arising from the strategy.

Methodology

The strategy was developed following Sport England’s Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (2013)² which recommends a 10-step approach across Stages A - E. See Figure 2:

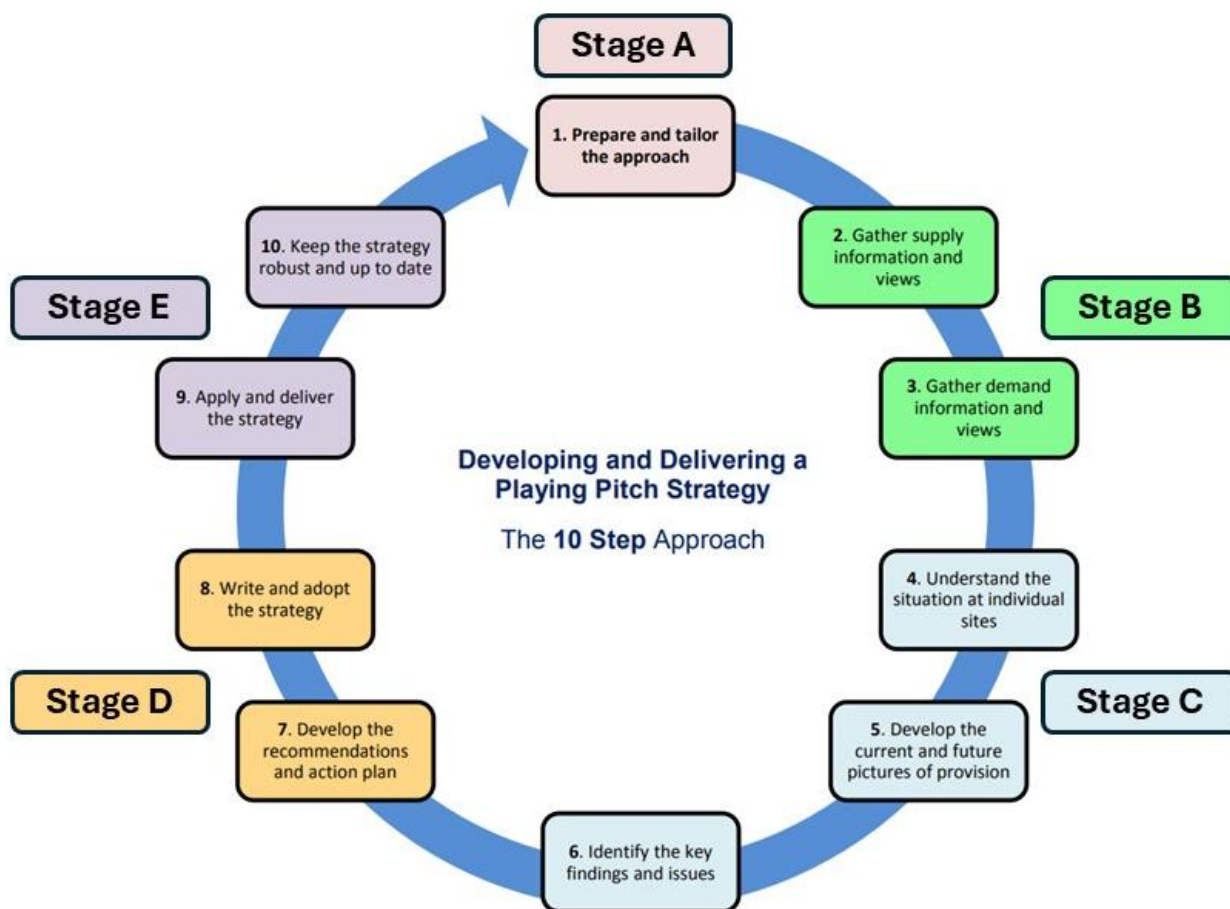


Figure 2: Developing and Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy - The 10 Step Approach

Action plan, monitoring and review

Recommendations and actions are set out and monitored in a “live” action plan framework which steering group members have a responsibility to update and implement through Stage E of the Sport England’s Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance. They are aspirational and do not result in any immediate financial commitment by BCC or the steering group. The Strategic Priorities Action Plan (Appendix 1) sets out priority actions in broad terms.

² See https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport?section=assessing_needs_and_playing_pitch_strategy_guidance

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It is important that the strategy and action plan is monitored to ensure that supply meets both current and future demand. This is particularly important later in the strategy period when the projected future demand becomes the new current demand, allowing for any differences in the original projections.

The strategy data will be reviewed in cycles to ensure the evidence base adapts to any changes and is up to date and relevant.

Action plan review meetings will be held regularly by the steering group, whilst delivery work will continue between partners on an ongoing basis. The difficulties and the possibilities of the recommendations will be explored, along with their potential impact on other planned actions. A “plan, deliver, monitor, manage” approach will guide the process. Implementation will be a shared responsibility relying on steering group members to coordinate and work closely with clubs, teams, league organisers, providers, and owners of current pitches and potential sites for additional pitches.

Further information

Comprehensive summary tables of the key findings including information on current demand, future demand, specific calculations on the supply / demand balance and AGP provision are available in separate Assessment Reports for each sport. These can be provided upon request.

Further detailed recommendations including sub-area breakdowns can be provide upon request.

Any queries or requests for further information should be sent to: activecity@bristol.gov.uk

Key issues and recommendations

General overview of pitch provision

Sport England’s Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (2013) warns against using area wide summary figures of pitch supply / demand balances. This is because area wide (or city wide for Bristol) figures can misrepresent the situation on a more local level. For example, an over-supply of pitches in the far north of the city does not solve the problem of an under-supply in the far south of the city. Despite this, the following table is included to provide a simple overview of pitch supply in the city. It highlights the number of additional pitches that would be required to meet future demand until 2040. The ‘Enhance’ recommendations in this strategy focus on improving grass pitches. Increasing their capacity and quality, would reduce the need for additional grass pitches, making these improvements a strategic priority.

Headroom capacity refers to the unused capacity of a sports pitch that a site can accommodate without compromising pitch quality. It’s a calculated comparison of supply and demand. It should not be considered more than needed or ‘surplus’ to demand or ‘spare’ for disposal. It doesn’t account for practical factors like how suitable or available the space is at the right times. For instance, in a very wet winter, pitches with headroom capacity may need to be used when others are waterlogged and can’t meet demand.

	Additional provision required by 2040 (without pitch improvements)
Adult Football (11 v 11)	15 pitches required
Youth Football (11v11 or 9v9)	12 pitches required
Junior Football (7v7 or 5v5)	0 (14 pitches headroom capacity)
Cricket	273 Grass Wickets / 34 Grounds required
Senior Rugby Union	7 pitches required
Artificial pitches (hockey suitable/ sand based)	1-2 pitches required
Artificial pitches (3G)	4-6 pitches required

Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports

Key Issues	Strategy Recommendation
Protect	
<p>There is a lack of capacity to meet current and/ or future demand with current pitch stock. There is also a lack of “new” greenfield sites to introduce additional supply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect existing supply of used, unused and disused pitches. • Maintain the quality of existing pitches to at least current standards where they have a quality rating of ‘standard’ or ‘good’. • Retain any headroom capacity to help accommodate growth to the end of the strategy period and flexibility during particularly wet seasons. • Explore bringing unused or disused pitches into community use. This could help address lack of capacity for some sports (particularly cricket) and help create a contingency to provide additional capacity during the winter months. This should only happen if the pitch fills a local gap, meets unmet demand, and where secure use can be agreed. • Any changes of use or development on pitches should be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Sport England Playing Fields Policy and Guidance. • Ongoing collaboration with Planning Services to ensure appropriate protection for playing fields, likely through the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plans. This includes used, disused, closed or lapsed pitches and pitches rested or reserved on multi-pitch sites.
Enhance	
<p>There is a significant supply of pitches which currently have unsecure community use or will be at risk through the strategy period.</p> <p>(Without this in place clubs and users are unable to access funding to invest in improvements)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain secure use of new and existing grass pitches and artificial grass pitches, including those on education sites. This should be in place for the long-term (preferably everlasting) with an appropriate body identified to monitor and enforce agreements. • Monitor leases and hire agreements so they can be renewed in advance of their expiry. • Work with clubs, operators and providers on sites where there is unsecure community use and where there is no control over the site by the club, to ensure that management, maintenance, access and necessary improvements meet the requirements of the club using the site.
<p>Pitch quality, lighting and ancillary facilities are limiting the demand that can be met on sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality and maintenance of existing pitches to increase how many matches they can accommodate without deterioration (carrying capacity), reducing the need for additional pitches. This is a key strategy focus and provides the most cost-effective option to meet demand. • Improve the quality, accessibility and capacity of changing facilities and clubhouses to meet current and future demand, including growth in junior, women’s and disability sections.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport specific recommendations are provided in the tables below.
Bristol has declared a Climate Emergency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the relationship between (and potential impacts of) existing and future pitch use and the reduction of carbon emissions, as well as wider sustainability issues. • Improve energy efficiency and localised renewable and low carbon energy generation at sites through LED directional lighting, solar photovoltaic (PV) systems where sunlight is converted into electricity, well-designed heat pumps and building insulation. • Work with partners and key stakeholders to improve sustainable travel options to pitches. • Provide secure cycle stands and electric vehicle charge points at grounds to support low carbon forms of travel. • Recommend that proposals for new grass and 3G pitches, and any supporting facilities, are provided outside of relevant flood risk zones, or provision can be satisfactorily tested through planning tools known as ‘sequential and exceptions tests’ to lessen the harmful impact and risks of flooding. • Refer to recommendations under ‘Provide for artificial grass pitch considerations’.
Volunteers often run clubs and maintain pitches and facilities. Due to increased demand, they are being placed under additional pressure to fulfil roles. Often this is an ageing population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with clubs to grow capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities.
Bristol has areas with levels of high deprivation which correlate with lower levels of physical activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with organisations to secure and keep access to formal and informal pitch sports for residents in areas with the highest levels of deprivation.
Provide	
<p>Four to six additional 3G artificial grass pitches will be required to meet expected demand by 2040.</p> <p>Around one to two new sand-dressed artificial grass pitch will be required to meet expected hockey demand by 2040.</p>	<p>Recommend proposals for new and resurfaced artificial grass pitches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a secure community use agreement in place for the long-term (preferably everlasting) for community access for a 38-hour peak period where possible. The peak period is typically Mon-Thurs 5pm-10pm, Fri 5pm-7pm and Sat and Sun 9am-5pm, a total of 38 hours per week. Identify an appropriate body to monitor and enforce the agreement. • have a sustainable business and financial management plan in place to ensure long-term use is successful. This should include usage and maintenance plans. Usage plans should balance the use between sports including consultation with lesser played sports national governing bodies and

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	<p>clubs. It should also inform whether the surface should meet the standards for World Rugby 22 (WR22). Local clubs, those engaging players from deprived areas, girls, women and disabled people should be prioritised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are designed with markings to meet local demand including potential markings for lesser played sports. This should be agreed by consultation. • have pricing plans that are competitive to ensure future success whilst remaining affordable for local clubs, especially in or close to areas of high deprivation. • have a ring-fenced sinking fund for ongoing maintenance and future surface replacement. These should be monitored to demonstrate enough funds are being reserved. <p>Climate and environmental considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure they are constructed and maintained to comply with national governing bodies quality performance standards and accreditation requirements. • Work with national governing bodies and providers to explore the viability and practicality of using alternative infills and overall recyclability of artificial pitch specifications for the future. • Provide satisfactory protection and mitigation to minimise rubber crumb and other infill loss such as containment barriers, perimeter kickboards, boot cleaning and detox units, drain filters and appropriate pitch brushing and cleaning regimes. • Provide energy efficient directional LED sports-lighting with a control management system and consideration to bat and insect-friendly lighting design. • Refer to Keep Bristol Cool maps which help planners and policy makers to assess heat vulnerability in neighbourhoods and the impact of climate change when looking at possible locations. They can minimise additional heat load of hot areas of the city by considering pitch watering during hot weather and planting evergreen trees to provide shade. • Provide acoustic sound barriers where needed with consideration to wildlife movement and their use of sound for navigation. • Satisfy tests applied by the local planning authority in relation to carbon emissions, noise, whole lifecycle of materials and requirements for net gains in biodiversity.
<p>Not all playing pitches have associated changing provision available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide new facilities where there is known or likely demand from clubs and where appropriate management can be implemented. • Ensure that any new facilities and other associated pitch infrastructure are provided to meet the most up-to-date Building Regulations, including, but not restricted to those relating to accessibility.

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<p>Although additional pitches are forecast as being needed, this could change through the strategy period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek and follow Sport England and National Governing Body guidance when developing proposals. • A “plan, deliver, monitor, manage” approach should be taken for new provision. • It should be co-ordinated by relevant partners and stakeholders to check feasibility. This must include a sustainable long term operational and financial business case, including all associated maintenance and lifecycle costs. • This is particularly important in the latter part of the strategy period to confirm that expected demand has been realised.
<p>General</p>	
<p>The central sub-area population is due to increase considerably over the strategy period with limited land available to accommodate pitches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most demand which is generated from the central sub-area will need to be accommodated in other sub-areas so this should be factored into recommendations and actions.
<p>There is demand being imported (coming in) and exported (moving out) across BCC’s boundaries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate the monitoring of cross border supply and demand data including the need for new provision to help prevent scenarios where clubs are left without sufficient training or playing capacity, or to prevent existing sites becoming unsuccessful due to new provision in neighbouring areas. • Clarify the aspirations of clubs who are forced to play out of Bristol (often known as displaced demand) but who might like to return.
<p>Sports provision is interrelated and there is a need to co-ordinate changes across sports.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor capacity improvements on grass rugby pitches and corresponding need to access WR22 3G pitch provision as this may impact football usage of the sites. • Understand the impact of new and/or renovated artificial grass pitches (AGP), and inter-relationship of use across sport. Take an approach which benefits sport as a whole and residents’ access to provision. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recommend AGPs which are suitable for hockey to maximise hockey use to support pitch viability. Viability is the ability to work as intended or to succeed. For sports pitches, this includes having good usage and income to cover costs, good operating and management models and developing savings that can be used to cover future replacement. b. Proactively manage the transition of football away from sand-based AGPs to additional 3G provision where the viability of the sand-based AGP is not at risk. c. Manage AGP demand across sports to encourage fair and just access to prevent any one sport being excluded.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore opportunities to accommodate cricket and less played sports on multi-sport sites where there is capacity to do so.• Consider new management and operating models for multi-sport sites ensuring that management, maintenance and access is shared appropriately between sports.• Consider measures which introduce greater cost-effectiveness to provision, maintenance and management of pitches and facilities, where this does not compromise the quality and capacity of supply.
There is a risk that key stakeholders are not engaged throughout the strategy period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The steering group should include key providers and operators in monitoring supply, demand, access for clubs and the provision of future additional pitches during Stage E.
There is limited funding to contribute towards improving sports provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify internal and external funding opportunities including contributions from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 Planning Obligations where appropriate.

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Rugby

Overview of supply and demand

- There is currently a significant amount of overplay where there is excessive use of the sports facility and capacity deficits where supply can't meet demand, on most club grounds, particularly for mid-week training.
- If the quality of 'poor' and 'standard' quality rated grass pitches is improved and additional sports-lighting is provided, current overplay and capacity deficits can be addressed for most clubs.
- Two clubs would still have a capacity deficit even with improvements.
- If the projected growth happens, by 2040, an equivalent of seven full-size grass pitches will be needed across the BCC area if demand cannot be accommodated on existing club pitches following improvements to quality and additional sports lighting.
- Understanding which clubs are most likely to accommodate projected demand, the split between demand for training and match capacity and how this will be apportioned across surface types will be important.
- The RFU's priority is to keep as much play as possible at club home grounds through improvements which maximise carrying capacity on grass pitches. WR22 3G provision should be considered to help part resolve overplay at club sites.

Key issues and recommendations

Key Issues	Strategy Recommendation
Protect	
There is a lack of capacity to meet current and future demand with current pitch stock. There is also a lack of "new" greenfield sites to introduce additional supply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As per 'Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports'.
WR22 compliant 3G pitches are needed to provide supplementary capacity to enable training in the winter or for clubs unable to use grass pitches for mid-week training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect the capacity that WR22 standard 3G pitches provide for rugby club use.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommendations and support for all existing and new WR22 standard 3G pitches to be tested every two years to maintain certification.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommendations and support for all 3G pitch operators to have sufficient funds for ongoing maintenance and future surface replacement.
Enhance	

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<p>There is a significant supply of pitches which have unsecure community use currently or will be at risk through the strategy period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per ‘Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports’
<p>There are existing overplay / capacity deficits on most club grounds which needs to be resolved to reduce the number of additional grass pitches needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pitch quality to ‘good’ or above to support current demand and reduce overplay. This should be supplemented by ensuring additional sports lighting can be provided to increase training capacity. • Improvements at secure community use grounds should be prioritised over unsecure community use grounds. • Pitch quality improvement works should be informed by an independent Grounds Management Association (GMA) or a Pitch Power (pitch inspection) report. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all upgraded pitches and sports lighting are supported by long-term maintenance plans to keep them in ‘good’ condition. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the current use of existing pitches through programming and/or configuring existing pitch layouts to accommodate additional pitches.
<p>Ancillary facilities aren’t always meeting the needs of the club, especially for growth in the women’s game.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality, accessibility and capacity of changing facilities and clubhouses where necessary to cater for current and future demand, including growth in junior, women’s and disability sections.
<p>Strategic developer contributions require careful consideration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S106 contributions should be applied to priority actions that help to sustain and grow clubs, as identified in the PPS.
<p>Provide</p>	
<p>For some clubs, improvements in pitch quality and sports-lighting still do not overcome overplay / capacity deficits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify additional grass pitch capacity close to existing grounds to meet club demand. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In limited scenarios, explore use of other pitches on the same ground such as pitches on education sites. ○ Use playing fields with unused or closed football pitches if future football demand doesn’t require keeping them, and capacity needs have already been addressed. ○ Identify sites with no community use, where the operator / provider / owner is willing to open for rugby team use.

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- Explore the role that WR22 standard, full-size, sports-lit 3G pitches can play as strategic provision to accommodate overplay and additional demand if it 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.
- Support provision of, or contributions towards, new full-size sports-lit 3G pitches where certainty of delivery can be put in place (for example, planning permission secured) and any loss of existing grass pitches is suitably mitigated. To mitigate is to make something less harmful, serious or bad. Following Sport England Playing Fields Policy and Guidance, to suitably mitigate the loss of playing fields it must be replaced with a new area that is the same or better quality, the same or greater quantity, in a suitable location and with the same or better accessibility and management arrangements.
- Any new 3G provision should follow recommendations detailed in ‘Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports’.

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Hockey

Overview of supply and demand

- Hockey can only be played on sand-based or water-based artificial grass pitches. There are no water-based pitches in the BCC area.
- Most full-size sand-based pitches are in the north sub-area. There is one in the south sub area but none in the east or central sub area. Most clubs are in the north sub-area, including all junior provision.
- When comparing current supply and demand on full-size sports-lit pitches, there is potential headroom capacity to accommodate additional hockey demand across the BCC area to 2040. However, some of this theoretical time available will not be suited to clubs' needs.
- Taking a more realistic view on available time, accounting for projected increases in demand up to 2040, including potential growth in informal hockey and the return of previously displaced demand to the BCC area, there is an estimated need for an additional one to two hockey pitches in the north sub-area to satisfy training demand. There is sufficient capacity on existing pitches to accommodate training in other sub-areas.
- If football use is transferred from sand based to 3G pitches, only one additional sand-based pitch would be needed to satisfy remaining demand.
- These figures anticipating future demand all assume that existing full-size sports-lit pitches used for hockey are protected for hockey club use.

Key issues and recommendations

Key Issues	Strategy Recommendation
Protect	
There is a lack of capacity to meet future demand with current pitch stock. There is also a lack of “new” greenfield sites to introduce additional supply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As per ‘Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports’
Sand-based artificial grass pitches are one of two surfaces that hockey can be played on. They also fulfil a wider multi-sport and informal activity role. Their future is at risk due to insufficient sink funds being generated and reserved to invest in surface replacement. Some	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect all pitches and the current number of hours used by hockey in the peak period as a minimum. This includes retaining hockey specific artificial grass pitches on education sites to support England Hockey’s strategic focus of growing youth participation and increasing hockey in schools.• Work closely with the education sector to promote awareness that sand-based surfaces offer a versatile, multi-sport solution for schools, different from 3G surfaces, which are more limited in the range of sports they can accommodate.• Maintain ‘good’ quality artificial grass pitch surfaces and lighting to the appropriate quality standard.

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<p>providers view 3G pitches as a more viable option financially with commercial operators willing to invest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for all artificial grass pitch operators to have sufficient funds for ongoing maintenance and future surface replacement. • Consultation should take place between providers, clubs, England Hockey, Football Association and the Football Foundation prior to any changes in surface type (for example, from sand to 3G). • Any replacement capacity should be provided for hockey clubs at the same site or an alternative site convenient for the club to access. The proposed pitches should also demonstrate long-term viability.
<p>Football demand on pitches reduces capacity for hockey clubs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with England Hockey, the Football Association, facility operators, and clubs on when sand-based full-size artificial grass pitches should be used mainly for hockey, while still considering football needs as per the strategy recommendations.
<p>Clubs returning to the BCC area will impact supply and demand balance and future provision calculations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue open discussions with the Bristol clubs playing outside the BCC area to understand if, at any point, they wish to return to a pitch within the BCC area.
<p>Enhance</p>	
<p>There is a significant supply of pitches which have unsecure community use currently or will be at risk through the strategy period.</p> <p>(Without this in place clubs and users are unable to access funding to invest in improvements)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per ‘Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports’
<p>‘Poor’ quality pitches and lighting offer a poor playing experience which can reduce usage from clubs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurface substandard artificial grass pitches and retain as sand-based surfaces. • Upgrade sports-lighting where necessary.
<p>Some clubs have provision split across multiple sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support hockey clubs to operate a “one site model” to help their ability to continue over the long-term. This helps the chances of financial success and maximises the availability of volunteer / coaches’ time.
<p>There are a few pitches with only a little demand from hockey, some of which have no other sports demand. The challenge is to protect the hockey pitches to meet future needs, while making sure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options for re-distributing hockey in the north sub-area to help keep play on the pitches which see little or no current demand from hockey. Options which can be considered are set out in Appendix 2 and can support the “one site model”.

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they stay viable until hockey demand increases.	
There is inequality of provision with no junior hockey in south and east sub-areas and no disability hockey in the BCC area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England Hockey should support clubs to introduce junior hockey in other areas of the city. • England Hockey should support clubs to introduce a disability inclusive session if possible.
Strategic developer contributions require careful consideration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S106 contributions should be applied to priority actions that help to maintain and grow clubs, as identified in the PPS.
Provide	
There is not a surplus of pitches meaning any loss needs to be properly mitigated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the loss of an existing pitch is unavoidable, it should be mitigated by providing equivalent replacement pitch capacity on a ‘good’ quality sand-based pitch in a single site / location appropriate to demand, in line with Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy.
Around one to two new sand-dressed artificial grass pitch will be required to meet expected hockey demand by 2040.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See additional recommendations relating to artificial grass pitch provision in ‘Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports’. • Provision is most likely to be needed in the north sub-area or in locations which serves growing population and demand. The number of pitches and timing of their delivery depends on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ how much headroom capacity on existing sand-based pitches can practically be used by clubs ○ the rate of increase in demand including the emergence of informal hockey sessions ○ the amount of transition of football demand away from sand-based artificial grass pitches to 3G provision ○ whether displaced demand returns to the BCC area ○ whether play is redistributed and consolidated across pitches. • The provision of additional pitches and / or facilities should be closely co-ordinated between national governing bodies, clubs, leagues, Sport England, the local authority and the landowner.
Additional pitches may be required to meet school need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals for new sand based artificial grass pitches on education sites should be supported if they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ are designed to meet the needs of the students ○ are funded by the school, college or trust ○ do not have a harmful or negative impact on the success use of full-size community use artificial grass pitches.

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Football

Overview of supply and demand

Grass pitches:

- Without any changes to the current pitch supply, projected demand to 2040 indicates a need for 17 additional adult 11v11 pitches and 12 additional youth 9v9 or 11v11 pitches. There is headroom capacity equivalent to around 14 small sided 5v5 or 7v7 pitches.
- Improving the quality of ‘poor’ and ‘standard’ pitches to ‘good’ quality pitches increases their carrying capacity. If recommended improvements are made, no new pitches would be needed. This is a priority for the strategy alongside bringing unused or disused pitches back into use.

3G pitches:

- Projected demand for 3G pitches to 2040, including the use of headroom capacity, suggests just over three new 11v11 sports-lit 3G pitches are needed. Without factoring in headroom capacity, this increases to just over four new 3Gs. These figures include expected demand from small sided/ casual/ informal usage plus the impact on capacity and community use artificial grass pitches from potential student demand in the peak period. The reality is that three to four pitches will be needed, as most ideas of headroom capacity will not be favourable for many teams to use.
- Currently, around 43 hours of weekday evening football use takes place on sand-based AGPs. This demand could be met by two additional 11v11 sports-lit 3G pitches. However, not all this demand may move to 3G, especially informal play. Factors such as location, cost and convenience will influence preferences and usage, so 3G pitches may need to continue to be supported by sand-based pitch usage.
- Due to unlikely space available to deliver 11v11 sports lit 3G pitches in the central sub-area, it is proposed that demand should be met through pitches in the other sub-areas. Figures suggest that a minimum of two 3Gs should be delivered in the south sub-area, at least one in the east sub-area and one to two in the north sub-area. The proposed locations and number of 3G pitches may change over time, depending on factors like funding availability and actual demand. Demand might not grow as expected, or it could grow faster or larger than predicted. Additionally, the Football Association is seeing rapid growth in the women’s game, which could lead to even more demand than currently anticipated.

Summary of proposed additional 3G capacity:

3G additional demand to 2040 (BCC area)	Number of 11v11 sports-lit 3G pitches
Projected future additional demand (net): Additional pitches required across BCC area if headroom capacity (unused time slots) is used	3.1
Projected future additional demand (gross): Additional pitches required across BCC area without using headroom capacity	4.3
If all sand artificial grass pitch football use moves to 3G	+2

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Key issues and recommendations

Key Issues	Strategy Recommendation
Protect	
There is a lack of capacity to meet current and/ or future demand with current pitch stock. There is also a lack of “new” greenfield sites to introduce additional supply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per ‘Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports’
Artificial grass pitch (AGP) provision is essential to meet demand from clubs, particularly for training. Action is required to ensure their fair usage and long-term protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for all existing and new 3G AGPs that are on the FA register to be re-tested every three years to sustain certification. Seek agreement between hockey (England Hockey), rugby (Rugby Football Union), football (Football Association), and other National Governing Bodies if necessary, and with providers and clubs, about which sport(s) should have shared, sole or priority use of AGPs. Advocate for all AGP pitch operators to have sufficient funds for ongoing maintenance and future surface replacement. ‘Good’ quality AGP surfaces and lighting should be maintained to the appropriate quality standard. To support grassroot football clubs, the Football Association should work with 3G pitch operators to monitor and manage access. This will help ensure fair use between clubs and other users and meet growing demand for 3G facilities.
Enhance	
There are pitches which have unsecure community use currently or will be at risk through the strategy period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per ‘Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports’. Support transferring the ownership of assets such as property or equipment and long-term lease models where supported by the club, BCC, Football Association and any other relevant partners.
The supporting facilities aren’t always meeting the needs of the club, especially for growth in disability, girls’ and women’s football.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality, accessibility and capacity of changing facilities and clubhouses where necessary to cater for existing and future demand, including growth in junior, women’s and disability sections.

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<p>Investment into pitch quality improvements needs to be prioritised based on evidence, long-term sustainability and practicality.</p>	<p>Pitch quality and maintenance improvements are a strategy priority following these recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery must be informed by an independent Grounds Management Association and/or a Pitch Power (pitch inspection) report or equivalent. This should be instructed by the national governing body, local authority or club. The process should be administered through the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund or latest approach adopted by the Football Association or Football Foundation. • Prioritise pitch quality improvements at secure community use grounds over unsecure grounds. • Focus on improving secure use pitches rated as ‘poor’ and ‘standard’, to ‘good’. • Improve drainage where flooding / waterlogging is known to be a consistent issue over several seasons and is preventing consistency and certainty of play. • Improve pitches where dog fouling is an issue, using fencing or signs if practical and affordable. Make sure there is space nearby for recreation and that summer sports areas aren’t affected. • All improvements should be subject to how easily they can be done, funding and a business plan demonstrating long-term success and inclusion of maintenance costs.
<p>There are different facility requirements through the competition levels. Some teams are unable to progress due to not having suitable provision in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable opportunity for club progression up the Football Association pyramid by supporting plans to develop relevant pitches to meet Football Association requirements.
<p>Pitch capacity could be better utilised on some sites to maximise their usage and reduce the need to find land for additional pitches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the current use of existing pitches, where physically and logistically possible, by considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ flexibility of when matches take place. ○ whether pitches could change from one size to another to rebalance deficits. • Encourage clubs and schools to open-up their facilities to other local clubs where capacity allows, rather than reserving them for sole use. This should be carefully managed to prevent overplay.
<p>Provide</p>	
<p>Four to six additional 3G artificial grass pitches will be required to meet expected demand by 2040.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per ‘Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports’

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<p>There is not enough capacity for 9v9 and 11v11 matches which may not be solved through grass pitch improvements alone meaning additional pitches would need to be introduced.</p> <p>New provision needs to be carefully considered for it to be effective long-term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● New grass pitches, or re-opening of disused pitches, should where it is practical:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ be provided to a ‘good’ quality.○ have commitments to the management and maintenance of the ground in place prior to delivery to help ensure quality is kept into the future. The management and operation of new pitches and facilities should rest with a single operator if possible.○ be 11v11 equivalent pitch sizes to enable maximum flexibility, season to season, for pitch use. For example, providing two x 11v11 pitches which can be changed to accommodate a range of other pitch sizes in any given season, rather than providing smaller pitches in a configuration which may not be adaptable to larger size pitches if needed in the future. Consideration should also be given to the new 3v3 format likely to be introduced in the 2026/27 season.○ have certainty of users (clubs / teams) committed to them.○ be secure and designed to reduce likelihood of dog fouling and vandalism.○ this should be separate from other multi-use green spaces, avoiding mixing different uses.○ meet the most up-to-date quality design standards and dimensions supported by the Football Association and Sport England.● Explore the possibility of moving all 5v5 and 7v7 matches to 3G pitches at weekends with conversion of most mini football pitches to larger sized pitches where practical and affordable to clubs as well as parents and carers. Two to three 11v11 3G pitches would be necessary to accommodate all play.
<p>Strategic developer contributions require careful consideration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Housing allocation site pitch provision should be discussed at the earliest opportunity with the local authority and national governing bodies.● For most sites, off-site contributions would be better to help improve existing provision, for example, improvements to the supporting facilities and the quality of pitches, rather than provision of additional pitch space on-site.● Larger developments, however, may require some grass provision on-site if:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ a new club can be formed, or an existing club can be allocated to the site to facilitate use○ it responds to demand from new residents○ there is a shortage of pitch provision in the immediate area○ supporting facilities, such as storage or changing rooms, can also be provided● Any new grass pitches provided by a developer should follow Sport England’s Design Guidance Notes and have agronomist (soil expert) sign off prior to handover.

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Cricket

Overview of supply and demand

- There is a significant under supply of cricket pitches to cater for current demand. Many clubs in the Bristol area are reporting a lot of unmet demand that cannot be satisfied due to lack of appropriate facilities.
- There is a large amount of demand that use playing fields in neighbouring authorities (North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, and Bath and North East Somerset). This displaced demand is often from diverse communities, predominately South Asian. The demand for cricket is very high in these communities. Because there are very few facilities available in the BCC area teams must travel to find suitable venues. Ideally, clubs would find a home close to their communities in the BCC area where they can grow.
- The expectation is that most growth will be in the junior game and women and girls' cricket. If the predicted growth happens, by 2040, the shortfall in cricket provision will be significantly worse impacting opportunities to play and presenting barriers to participation.

Key issues and recommendations

Key Issues	Strategy Recommendation
Protect	
There is a lack of capacity to meet current and future demand with current pitch stock. There is also a lack of “new” greenfield sites to introduce additional supply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As per ‘Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports’.• To protect the loss of all pitches including those sites where a club folds because the capacity may be required by other clubs. This should be explored in relation to potential demand if this scenario happens.• Consider the potential future use of disused cricket pitch sites across the city. These may include locations such as public parks, school grounds and community sports facilities. Such sites should be held in reserve to meet future demand if no other suitable sites with existing use and headroom capacity is available.• Recognise the importance of community access at the University of Bristol’s Coombe Dingle site, which currently supports several cricket clubs. If access were to be lost, it would significantly impact local cricket provision.• Regularly monitor the balance between supply and demand to ensure that any available capacity is being appropriately used and confirm that any spare headroom capacity to accommodate growth is not considered as more than needed or ‘surplus’ to cricket use.
Enhance	

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<p>There are pitches which have unsecure community use currently or will be at risk through the strategy period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per ‘Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports’.
<p>All opportunities to increase capacity on grounds should be taken to help meet demand.</p>	<p>The significant under supply for cricket needs to be addressed via a variety of recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider increasing the current use of existing pitches where spare capacity exists and if logistically possible. Improve maintenance and grass pitch quality on sites that are rated as ‘poor’. Resurface ‘poor’ quality artificial pitches. <p>Further recommendations under ‘Provide’.</p>
<p>Supporting facilities aren’t always meeting the needs of the club, especially for growth in disability, girls’ and women’s cricket.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality, accessibility and capacity of changing facilities and clubhouses where necessary to cater for current and future demand, including growth in junior, women’s and disability sections.
<p>There is limited use of school sites as venues for community cricket clubs. The schools that do have an artificial pitch are not used due to a combination of ‘poor’ quality pitches, lack of ancillary facilities and securing access with the school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase links between clubs and schools to explore use of their pitches and facilities (including security of community use) to help accommodate growth. Such links will also help to establish and maintain a pathway through the age groups for cricket. Support the improvement of pitches and facilities so they are fit for purpose for club usage.
<p>Strategic developer contributions require careful consideration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S106 contributions should be applied to priority actions that help to sustain and grow clubs, as identified in the PPS.
<p>Provide</p>	
<p>To meet future demand, an additional 273 grass pitches (cricket wickets), or 23 artificial pitches (cricket wickets), or more realistically a combination of both, is required.</p>	<p>It is unlikely that the total amount of additional supply would come solely through additional, new pitches. It should come from a variety of options including the ‘Enhance’ recommendations above and exploring the following for new provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional pitches on existing grounds where possible and where the provision of additional capacity offers real availability on the days demand requires. Provide in situ practice nets to move some training usage from the match pitches. Provide new artificial pitches for training and some match play. Create new cricket provision on existing and disused playing fields and open spaces provided they are near to identified demand.

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- Utilise housing development sites to provide additional capacity for cricket, through providing new sites and pitches, and through off site contributions to existing sites.
- Consider whether pitches and playing fields which currently are or have previously been available to other sports can provide solutions to support the significant additional demand / needs to accommodate cricket in BCC in the immediate future and to 2040.

When providing new pitches or facilities, they should:

- have a secure community use agreement for the long-term (preferably everlasting) with the appropriate body identified to monitor and enforce such agreements.
 - be best suited to the type and format of the demand.
 - meet the most up-to-date quality design standards and dimensions supported by the England and Wales Cricket Board and Sport England.
 - meet the most up-to-date Building Regulations, including, but not restricted to, those relating to accessibility.
 - have a sustainable long-term business and financial management plan in place for long-term success.
 - where possible, provide additional pitch capacity close to existing club home grounds, rather than at distant sites, if there are no physical, ownership, or planning barriers. This supports clubs' long-term financial stability and respects the social traditions of the sport.
 - follow a 'plan, deliver, monitor, manage' approach to the provision of additional capacity. The combination of provision between grass and artificial pitches will need to fit with real demand (for example, to match increased participation in the junior and women's game should it materialise as projected / targeted by the England and Wales Cricket Board / the County Cricket Board).
 - Be closely co-ordinated between the National Governing Bodies, clubs, league administrators, Sport England, the local authority, and the landowner to ensure that additional supply responds to required demand.
- Support work which explores the practicalities and development of a covered cricket dome at an appropriate site in the BCC area in partnership with Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation and the England and Wales Cricket Board.
 - 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.

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Less played sports

Overview of supply and demand

- There is community and higher education provision across sports in the wider area.
- Only Bristol Bombers Lacrosse Club and Bristol All Golds RFL are based within the BCC area. Both require increased access to facilities to grow and meet future demand.
- Bristol Aztecs American Football Club, Bristol Baseball Club and Bristol Harps Gaelic Football Club are based outside of the BCC area.
- There are numerous archery clubs outside of BCC area but no club with outdoor archery in the BCC area due to lack of suitable facilities.
- Rounders provision is considered informal in nature, utilising open parks.
- Clubs are seeing increased demand and have an appetite to grow, especially following the introduction of Flag Football in the 2028 Olympics. The development of youth sections was a priority for many. This is being limited by cost or insufficient pitch capacity.

Key issues & recommendations

Key Issues	Strategy Recommendation
Protect	
There is not a surplus but a lack of capacity to meet current and/or future demand with current pitch stock. There is also a lack of “new” greenfield sites to introduce additional supply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As per ‘Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports’. This is particularly important for less played sports where community provision is mostly through one club for each sport.
There is strong provision across sports within higher education settings. With the university due to grow, this is likely to increase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect the existing supply of grass pitches and artificial grass pitches.• Work with higher education providers to monitor provision and potential impact on community clubs using their facilities, or the need for higher education teams to use community sites.
Enhance	
There are pitches which have unsecure community use currently or will be at risk through the strategy period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As per ‘Key issues and recommendations that cover multiple sports’.

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Softball player experience is impacted by pitch quality and lack of suitable changing and toilet facilities on the Downs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support accessing and the improvement of the changing facilities at the Downs.• Improve the quality of grass pitches to 'good' quality.
Provision at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College is being limited by lack of changing facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular conversations should be held to understand any facility development plans or potential impact on sites in the BCC area if any provision were to move off-site.
American Football, Baseball, Lacrosse and Rugby Football League Clubs aim to develop junior sections but are limited by lack of training and/or match facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance capacity for training on 3G pitches to enable growth.• Support clubs to work with schools to help develop junior sections.• See provide below.
Provide	
Not all clubs have a 'home' in the BCC area with secure access limiting growth and the long-term ability to continue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore possible sites that could provide a permanent home for the following clubs:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bristol Baseball Club○ Bristol All Golds (Rugby Football League)○ Bristol Aztecs (American Football)○ Bristol Archery

Appendix 1: Strategic Priorities Action Plan

This draft action plan outlines the immediate priorities for the steering group. These focus on the strategy recommendations that are considered to have the greatest impact during the first phase of the strategy period. These priorities may change over time and will depend on the resources and finances available. A more detailed and regularly updated action plan will be maintained during Stage E to track progress on all recommendations.

Action	Sport(s)	Sub-area(s)	Approx. Timing	Protect	Enhance	Provide
Ongoing collaboration with Planning to ensure appropriate protection for playing fields, likely through the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plans. This includes used, disused, closed or lapsed pitches and pitches rested or reserved on multi-pitch sites. Any changes to pitch use or development must meet Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy and national planning rules.	Football / Cricket / Rugby / Less Played Sports	All	2026 - 2028	✓	✓	✓
BCC and national governing bodies (NGBs) should explore whether pitches used by other sports could help provide permanent homes for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bristol Baseball Club • Bristol All Golds (Rugby League) • Bristol Aztecs (American Football) • Bristol Archery 	Football / Cricket / Rugby / Less Played Sports	All	2026 - 2028		✓	✓
Work together across sports to coordinate improvements and new facilities, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how artificial grass pitches (AGPs) are used by football, rugby, and hockey, and making sure hockey has a clear usage plan to keep pitches viable in some areas. • Supporting football’s move away from sand-based AGPs to more 3G pitches. • Understanding whether increasing capacity on grass rugby pitches reduces the need for shared WR22 3G pitches with football. • Managing shared use of AGPs so that no sport is pushed out and all can continue to access facilities. 	Football / Hockey / Rugby	All	2026 - 2027		✓	✓

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Action	Sport(s)	Sub-area(s)	Approx. Timing	Protect	Enhance	Provide
Deliver the 3G pitch approach within the context of the football, rugby and hockey recommendations.	Football	All	2026 - 2040			✓
Gain secure use of new and existing grass pitches and AGPs, including those on education sites. This should be in place for the long-term (preferably in perpetuity) with an appropriate body identified to monitor and enforce agreements.	Football / Hockey / Rugby	All	2026 - 2028		✓	
Increase capacity by improving the quality and maintenance of existing pitches. Focus first on upgrading “poor” quality pitches with secure community use, then improve “standard” quality pitches where clubs are experiencing high demand. The goal is to make sure “good” quality is maintained over time.	Football	North, East and South	2026 – 2028		✓	
Increase capacity at busy sites or nearby locations where clubs have reported overuse or need more space for matches and training. Focus on the specific pitches and grounds identified.	Football	North, East and South	2026 – 2028		✓	
Improve changing rooms and other facilities to enhance the overall experience for players. Focus first on upgrading poor-quality facilities that are actively used and have secure community access, then improve standard-quality ones where possible.	Football	North, East and South	2026 – 2028		✓	
Explore consolidation options for hockey in the north sub-area to help retain play on the pitches which see little or no current demand from hockey.	Hockey	North	2026 - 2027		✓	
Support the resurfacing of the Merchants Academy Sports Centre AGP (south sub-area) as a sand-based surface to continue to host hockey, with it being the only pitch in the sub-area used by clubs (Peelers HC and Knowle HC). Upgrade the sports-lighting if necessary.	Hockey	South	2026 – 2028		✓	
Enhance capacity by improving the quality to “good” or above (GMA ratings) on pitches not currently at that standard or above.	Rugby	North, East and South	2026 – 2028		✓	
Support the improvement of the sports-lighting on identified club grounds.	Rugby	North and South	2026 – 2028		✓	✓
Create new cricket pitches—both grass and artificial—to meet current overuse and future demand across the area.	Cricket	North, South, Central, East	2026 - 2040			✓

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Action	Sport(s)	Sub-area(s)	Approx. Timing	Protect	Enhance	Provide
Reduce overuse at existing sites by improving maintenance and upgrading or replacing poor-quality grass and artificial pitches.	Cricket	North, South, East	2026 – 2030		✓	
Provide (or replace if existing in poor quality) practice net facilities to reduce some of the demand on the match pitches.	Cricket	North, South, East	2026 – 2030		✓	✓
Support work which explores the practicalities and the development of a covered cricket dome at an appropriate site in the BCC area in partnership with Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation and the ECB.	Cricket	East	2026 – 2028			✓

Appendix 2: Glossary

Explanation of technical terms and abbreviations

Term	Description
3G	Third generation artificial grass pitch 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. See 'WR22'.
WR22 3G pitch	A WR22 3G pitch refers to a 3G artificial grass pitch that complies with World Rugby Regulation 22. This regulation sets the performance and safety standards for artificial surfaces used in competitive contact rugby.
Ancillary facilities	The supporting spaces and services that help a sports venue function effectively, such as changing rooms, toilets, clubhouses, storage and spectator amenities.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	The Community Infrastructure Levy is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008 as a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area. Most new development that creates net additional floor space of 100 square metres or more, or creates a new dwelling, is potentially liable for the levy.
GMA / Pitch Power Report	A Pitch Power Report is a detailed assessment produced by the Grounds Management Association (GMA) following a pitch inspection. It provides tailored recommendations to help grassroots clubs and organisations improve or maintain the quality of their grass pitches.
Greenfield sites	Greenfield sites are undeveloped land areas that have not previously been built on.
Mitigate	To mitigate is to make something less harmful, serious or bad. Following Sport England Playing Fields Policy and Guidance, to suitably mitigate the loss of playing fields it must be replaced with a new area that is the same or better quality, the same or greater quantity, in a suitable location and with the same or better accessibility and management arrangements.
Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC)	The Playing Pitch Calculator is a tool developed by Sport England to help local authorities estimate the demand for playing pitches generated by a new population, such as from housing developments. The PPC uses local data and population profiles to estimate demand for matches, training, and pitch provision, but must be used alongside a robust assessment of local needs.
Peak period	The period of time used to compare community use on AGPs. The peak period is typically Mon-Thurs 5pm-10pm, Fri 5pm-7pm and Sat and Sun 9am-5pm, a total of 38 hours per week.
Section 106 Planning Obligations	S106 is part of planning legislation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. It enables local authorities to require developers to set aside monies to mitigate the impact of their development.
Sinking fund	A dedicated reserve of money set aside regularly by a sports facility operator to cover the future costs of major repairs or replacements, such as resurfacing pitches or upgrading equipment.
Viable/ Viability	Viability is the ability to work as intended or to succeed. For sports pitches, this includes having good usage and income to cover costs, good operating and

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Term	Description
	management models and developing savings that can be used to cover future replacement.

Supply & Demand Technical Terms

Term	Description
Match Equivalent Sessions	A standard unit of measurement used in Playing Pitch Strategies to assess the demand and capacity of sports pitches. It converts various types of pitch usage (e.g. matches, training) into a comparable format, allowing for consistent analysis. For football and rugby union, match equivalent sessions typically reflect usage over a typical week in the season, while for cricket, they represent usage across the whole season due to the nature of wicket rotation and pitch wear.
Supply:	
Carrying capacity	<p>How many matches each size and type of grass pitch should be able to accommodate without leading to deterioration of the pitch’s quality. The value is based on a calculation that considers the quality of the grass pitch as set by national governing bodies.</p> <p>Carrying capacity and demand are calculated in ‘match equivalent sessions’ to enable comparisons.</p> <p>For AGPs the carrying capacity is the number of hours available for community use in the peak period.</p>
Demand:	
Aspirational future demand	Demand that a club might identify as likely or desirable to come forward during the strategy period.
Current demand	Demand during the season when data is collected for the PPS.
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 (also known as exported demand). 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.”</p> <p>(Paragraph B34, Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance, 2013, Sport England)</p>
Future demand	Demand projected by the end of the strategy period. This is based on population and housing trajectories and trends in each sport.
Imported and Exported demand	<p>Imported demand refers to clubs or teams whose primary player base live <i>outside</i> of the BCC area but play or train <i>inside</i> the BCC area.</p> <p>Exported demand refers to clubs or teams whose primary player base live <i>inside</i> the BCC area but play or train <i>outside</i> the BCC area. See Displaced demand.</p>

Bristol Playing Pitch Strategy: 2026 – 2040

Term	Description
Unmet demand	<p>“Current unmet demand 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.”</p> <p>(Paragraph B36, Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance, 2013, Sport England)</p>
Results	
Supply / Demand Balance	<p>A calculation between the supply (‘carrying capacity’ of a pitch) and the demand (amount of use from teams). This is done in ‘match equivalent sessions’.</p> <p>A positive value indicates ‘headroom capacity’ whilst a negative value indicates ‘overplay’ and a ‘capacity deficit’.</p>
Headroom capacity	<p>The unused capacity of a sports pitch, measured in match equivalent sessions, that a site can accommodate without compromising pitch quality. It’s a calculated comparison of supply and demand. It should not be considered “surplus” to demand or “spare” for disposal. It doesn’t account for practical factors like how suitable or available the space is at the right times.</p>
Overplay	<p>Where a pitch is used more than its carrying capacity. This likely results in its quality deteriorating over time.</p>
Capacity deficits	<p>Where there is insufficient supply to meet the demand.</p>

Acronyms

Term	Description
BCC	Bristol City Council
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.
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
NGB	National Governing Body (for sport)
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
RFU	Rugby Football Union, the NGB for rugby union.
SE	Sport England