



WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

ASSESSMENT REPORT FEBRUARY 2020

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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ABBREVIATIONS

National governing bodies of sport throughout this Report and referred to as follows:

ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
RFL	Rugby Football League
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RUFC	Rugby Union Football Club

References to club names throughout this Report are referred to as follows:

AC	Athletics Club
BC	Bowls Club
CC	Cricket Club
FC	Football Club
HC	Hockey Club
LTC	Lawn Tennis Club
RFC	Rugby Football Club

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1: Introduction

- 1.1 Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd was appointed by Watford Borough Council to undertake an assessment of all formal outdoor playing pitch facilities across the authority to assist in strategically planning for the future.
- 1.2 The Council is developing a new Local Plan which will provide the planning framework for Watford up until 2036. The Playing Pitch Strategy will form a key element of the evidence base to support local policy and the Local Plan as a whole, ensuring that it is compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.3 This is the Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report for Watford. It presents a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch and other outdoor sports facilities in Watford in accordance with Sport England's The Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a The Playing Pitch Strategy. The guidance details a stepped approach that is separated into five distinct stages:
 - ◀ Stage A: Preparation
 - ◀ Step 1: Clarify why the Playing Pitch Strategy is being developed
 - ◀ Step 2: Set up the management arrangements
 - ◀ Step 3: Tailor the approach
 - ◀ Stage B: Information Gathering
 - ◀ Step 4: Develop an audit of playing pitches
 - ◀ Step 5: Develop a picture of demand
 - ◀ Stage C: Assessment
 - ◀ Step 6: Understand how each site is being used
 - ◀ Step 7: Develop the current picture of provision
 - ◀ Step 8: Carry out scenario testing
 - ◀ Stage D: Key Findings & Issues
 - ◀ Step 9: Identify key findings & issues
 - ◀ Step 10: Check and challenge key findings & issues
 - ◀ Stage E: Strategy Development & Implementation
 - ◀ Step 11: Develop conclusions & recommendations
 - ◀ Step 12: Develop an action & implementation plan
 - ◀ Step 13: Adopt, monitor and review the Playing Pitch Strategy
- 1.4 Stages A to C are covered in this report, with Stage D and Stage E covered in the subsequent strategy document. This Assessment and subsequent Strategy will run from 2019-2036, in line with the new Local Plan for Watford.
- 1.5 St Albans demand. This applies to demand that migrates between the local authorities included and also to demand that migrates to and from neighbouring local authorities such as Three Rivers, Hertsmere, Dacorum and St Albans.

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1.2: Local context

Watford Local Plan

1.6 Watford Borough Council's Local Plan consists of the following documents:

- ◀ Core Strategy 2006-2031 (Adopted 2013)
- ◀ Saved policies of Watford District Plan 2000 (adopted 2003)

1.7 The Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan, which will set out the vision for the Borough and how it will grow up until 2036. It will reconsider housing and employment need and propose ways of meeting that need more fully. It will allocate sites for housing, employment and other forms of development and will set out development management policies for Watford.

1.8 The Council's aim is to publish the Local Plan in May 2020. Timescales for the stages of production of the Local Plan are set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme. The timetable is expected to be as follows:

- ◀ Issues and Options Consultation - September – October 2018
- ◀ First Draft Local Plan (Preferred Options Consultation) – September - October 2019
- ◀ Publication of the Final Draft Local Plan – May 2020
- ◀ Submission – September 2020
- ◀ Independent Examination - October 2020 - February 2021
- ◀ Adoption – May 2021

South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan

1.9 Watford Borough Council, together with Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans and Three Rivers councils have also begun work on a Joint Strategic Plan for the wider South West Hertfordshire area.

1.10 The Joint Strategic Plan is intended to set the longer-term strategic framework and shared priorities within which future local plans will be prepared. A key aim will be to ensure that infrastructure such as transport, schools, health and utilities are properly co-ordinated and delivered alongside the need for new homes and jobs.

1.11 The councils are working towards preparing the Joint Strategic Plan by aligning expectations for the Plan initially within a Statement of Common Ground, which is expected to be published in 2020.

Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2020

1.12 The Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Partnership was formed in 2008. It brings together partners from the public, voluntary and community sector to identify and respond to health and wellbeing priorities in both areas. It operates under the strategic umbrella of the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board which developed the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2020. Its vision is that *'with all partners working together we aim to reduce health inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of people in Hertfordshire.'*

1.13 The strategy will underpin the local contribution to tackling health inequalities and underlying causes and is, thus, built around the four significant stages of the life course. These are:

- ◀ Starting well
- ◀ Developing well
- ◀ Living and working well
- ◀ Ageing well

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Herts Sports & Physical Activity Partnership Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021

- 1.14 Herts Sports Partnership is one of 44 county active partnerships in England tasked with rolling out the local delivery of Sport England initiatives and, in some cases, the dissemination of Sport England funding. It works alongside numerous partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors and its stated mission is to '*work strategically to deliver an inclusive, insight led and sustainable sport and physical activity sector in Hertfordshire.*' It has identified the following strategic objectives and will work with partners to:
- ◀ Increase participation in sport and physical activity
 - ◀ Improve health and wellbeing by reducing inactivity
 - ◀ Demonstrate the economic and social value of sport and physical activity
 - ◀ Strengthen the local delivery infrastructure
 - ◀ Make the Partnership fit for the future

1.3: Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach

Management arrangements

- 1.15 A project team from the Council has worked with Knight, Kavanagh and Page to ensure that all relevant information is readily available and to support the consultants as necessary to ensure that project stages and milestones are delivered on time, within the cost envelope and to the required quality standard to meet Sport England guidance.
- 1.16 Further to this, a Steering Group is and has been responsible for the direction of the Playing Pitch Strategy from a strategic perspective and for supporting, checking and challenging the work of the project team. The Steering Group is made up of representatives from Watford Borough Council, Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport).
- 1.17 It will be important for the Steering Group to continue once the Playing Pitch Strategy has been finalised for several reasons, including a continuing responsibility to:
- ◀ Be a champion for playing pitch provision in the area and promote the value and importance of the Playing Pitch Strategy
 - ◀ Ensure implementation of the Playing Pitch Strategy recommendations and action plan
 - ◀ Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the Playing Pitch Strategy
 - ◀ Ensure that the Playing Pitch Strategy is kept up to date and refreshed

Why the Playing Pitch Strategy is being developed

- 1.18 The rationale for undertaking this study is to update current levels of provision within Watford across the public, private, education, voluntary and commercial sectors and to compare this with current and likely future levels of demand.
- 1.19 Its primary purpose is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of indoor and outdoor sports facilities meet local and community needs of existing and future residents. The strategies will be produced in accordance with national planning guidance and provide robust and objective justification for future sporting provision throughout Watford.
- 1.20 One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Paragraph 96 discusses the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation that can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

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- 1.21 Paragraphs 96 and 97 discuss assessments and the protection of “existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields”. Paragraph 99 and 100 also promote the identification of important green spaces by local communities and the protection of these facilities. Such spaces may include playing fields.
- 1.22 This strategy provides an evidence base for planning decisions and funding bids and background evidence to support Local Plan policies in relation to formal recreation. It will ensure that this evidence is sound, robust and capable of being scrutinised through examination and meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018).

Scope

- 1.23 The scope of the Playing Pitch Strategy will focus geographically on all local provision, regardless of ownership and management arrangements. Provision included within the project is as follows:

Table 1.1: Summary of scope

Grass playing pitches	Artificial turf pitches	Non-pitch facilities
Football pitches	Artificial grass pitches ¹	Athletics tracks
Cricket pitches	Third generation artificial grass pitches ²	Tennis courts
Rugby union pitches		Netball courts
Rugby league pitches		Bowling greens
Gaelic football pitches		Croquet lawns
		Cycling facilities

- 1.24 Please note that, although included in the scope, no rugby league provision is presently considered to exist in Watford. The RFL states that provision in neighbouring Dacorum through Hemel Stags adequately services any demand also arising in Watford.
- 1.25 Pitch sports (i.e. football, rugby union, rugby league, hockey and cricket) will be assessed using the guidance set out in Sport England’s Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy. In addition, any other grass sport pitches identified during the project will also be included. This includes hurling, which is identified as being a key sport within Watford.
- 1.26 Non-pitch facilities (e.g. bowls, tennis etc) will be assessed using Sport England’s Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (2014). This requires a different methodology to assess supply and demand to that used for pitch sports.
- 1.27 With regards to each sport, the Playing Pitch Strategy will specifically consider the number of pitches/facilities and will take into account the size, quality, location, accessibility and capacity of the provision as well as accompanying ancillary facilities such as changing accommodation, toilets and car parking.

¹ Artificial grass pitches are a surface of synthetic fibres with sand or water infills made to look like natural grass and are most often used to accommodate hockey. For further detail on the specifications, please see Part 6: Artificial grass pitches

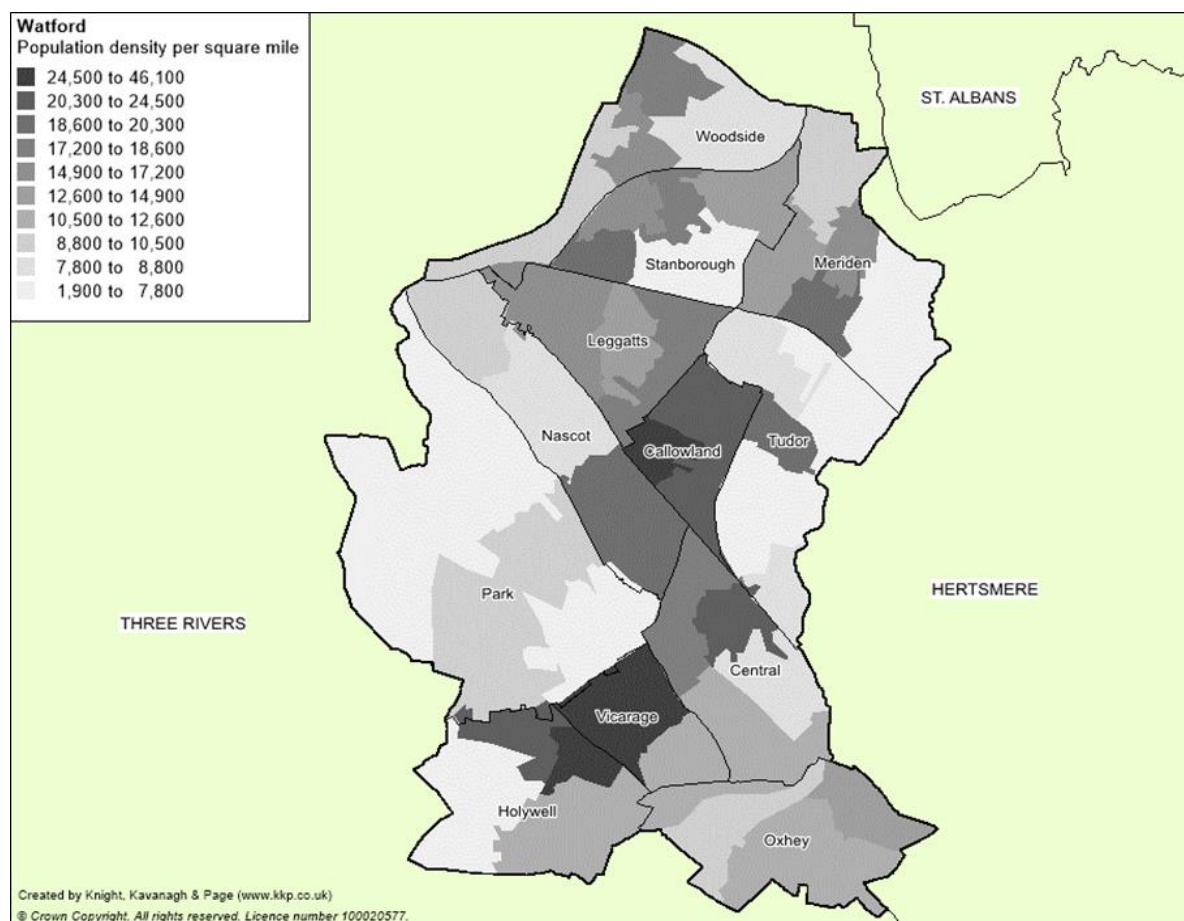
² Third generation artificial grass pitches provide infills that are mixtures of sand and granules of recycled rubber, or rubber crumb and are most often used to accommodate football and rugby. For further detail on the specifications please see Part 3: Third generation artificial grass pitches

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Study area

- 1.28 The study area will comprise the whole of the Council's administrative area. It is considered that there is not a requirement to use sub areas within Watford given the relatively small geographical distance across the authority.
- 1.29 In addition, cross-boundary issues will also be explored to determine the level of imported and exported demand from neighbouring authorities; Three Rivers, Hertsmere, Dacorum and St Albans.

Figure 1.1: Watford ward breakdown



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

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

Gather supply information and views – an audit of playing pitches

- 1.31 Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance uses the following definitions of a playing pitch and playing field. These definitions are set out by the Government in the 2015 'Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order'.³

³ www.sportengland.org>Facilities and Planning> Planning Applications

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

1.32 Although the statutory definition of a playing field meets a minimum size, this Playing Pitch Strategy includes smaller size sites that contribute to the supply side, for example, a site containing one mini 5v5 football pitch⁴ (as this is less than 0.2 hectares). This Playing Pitch Strategy counts individual grass pitches (as a delineated area) as the basic unit of supply. The definition of a playing pitch also includes artificial grass pitches.

Quantity

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

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

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

Accessibility

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

- ◀ **Community use** - facilities in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire and currently in use by teams playing in community leagues.
- ◀ **Available but unused** - facilities that are available for hire but are not currently used by teams which play in community leagues; this most often applies to school sites but can also apply to sites which are expensive to hire.
- ◀ **No community use** - facilities which as a matter of policy or practice are not available for hire or used by teams playing in community leagues. This should include professional club pitches along with some semi-professional club pitches, where play is restricted to the first or second team.
- ◀ **Disused** – provision that is not being used at all by any users and is not available for community hire either. Once these sites are disused for five or more years they will then be categorised as 'lapsed sites'.
- ◀ **Lapsed** - last known use was more than five years ago (these fall outside of Sport England's statutory remit but still have to be assessed using the criteria in paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework).

⁴ Refer to Table 2.1 for football pitch format explanations

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Quality

- 1.36 The capacity of a facility to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by their quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of provision affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of a sport. In extreme circumstances it can result in a facility being unable to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.
- 1.37 It is not just the quality itself which has an effect on its capacity but also the quality, standard and range of ancillary facilities. The quality of both the outdoor sports facility and ancillary facilities will determine whether provision is able to contribute to meeting demand from various groups and for different levels and types of play.
- 1.38 The quality of all outdoor sports facilities identified in the audit and the ancillary facilities supporting them are assessed regardless of ownership, management or availability. Along with capturing any details specific to the individual facilities and sites, a quality rating is also recorded within the audit for each. These ratings are used to help estimate the capacity to accommodate competitive and other play within the supply and demand assessment.
- 1.39 In addition to undertaking non-technical assessments (using the templates provided within the guidance and as determined by National Governing Bodies of Sport), users and providers were also consulted on the quality and in some instances the quality rating was adjusted to reflect this.

Gather demand information and views

- 1.40 Presenting an accurate picture of current demand for outdoor sports facilities (i.e. recording how and when provision is used) is important when undertaking a supply and demand assessment. Demand for outdoor sports facilities in Watford tends to fall within the categories of organised competitive play and organised training. There is also some informal play recorded.
- 1.41 Current and future demand for outdoor sports facilities is presented on a sport by sport basis within the relevant sections of this report.
- 1.42 In addition, latent, unmet, imported and exported demand for provision is also identified within each section. Unmet and latent demand is defined as the number of additional teams that could be fielded if access to a sufficient number of outdoor sports facilities (and ancillary provision) was available, whereas exported and imported demand refers to those that are playing outside of their local authority of choice. Please refer to Appendix One: Glossary of Terms for further details.
- 1.43 A variety of consultation methods were used to collate such demand information. Firstly, face to face consultation was carried out with key clubs from each sport, thus allowing for the collection of detailed demand information and an exploration of key issues to be interrogated and more accurately assessed. For all remaining clubs, an online survey (converted to postal if required) was utilised.
- 1.44 Local sports development officers, county associations and regional governing body officers advised which of the clubs to include in the face to face consultation and Sport England was also included within the consultation process prior to the project commencing. Issues identified by clubs returning questionnaires were followed up by telephone or face to face interviews.

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- 1.45 As key providers and users of outdoor sports facilities, educational establishments were also consulted. This involved face to face meetings with secondary schools/colleges and an online survey being sent to primary schools. The response rates and methods of consultation are set out in the table below.

Table 1.2: Summary of consultation

Sport	Total number	Number responding	Response rate	Methods of consultation
Football clubs ⁵	25 clubs 92 teams	14 clubs 72 teams	52% clubs 78% teams	A combination of face to face meetings, online survey and telephone consultations
Cricket clubs	2 clubs	2 clubs	100%	Consulted via face to face meetings
Rugby union clubs	2 clubs	2 clubs	100%	Consulted via face to face meetings
Hockey clubs	1 club	1 club	100%	Consulted via face to face meeting
Tennis clubs	3 clubs	2 clubs	66%	Consulted via telephone and online survey
Bowls clubs	5 clubs	3 clubs	60%	Consulted via online survey
Netball clubs	-	-	-	No clubs in Watford, however, England Netball was consulted due to demand in neighbouring authorities
Athletics clubs	1 club	1 club	100%	Consulted via online survey
Secondary schools	5	3	60%	Consulted via face to face meetings.
Primary schools	31	14	45%	Consulted via online surveys

Future demand

- 1.46 Alongside current demand, it is important for a Playing Pitch Strategy to assess whether the future demand for playing pitches can be met. Using Office of National Statistics population projections, as well as likely participation growth informed through consultation, an estimate can be made of the likely future demand for playing pitches.
- 1.47 Team generation rates are used to provide an indication of how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group) in order to help estimate the change in demand for pitch sports that may arise from any population change. Future demand for pitches is calculated by adding the percentage increases to the population increases in each analysis area. This figure is then applied to the team generation rates and is presented on a sport by sport basis.

⁵ Please note that the FA accept a team response rate for football club responses

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- 1.48 Other information sources that were used to help identify future demand, especially for non-pitch sports (where team generation rates are not applicable) include:
- ◀ Recent trends in the participation
 - ◀ The nature of the current and likely future population and their propensity to participate
 - ◀ Feedback from clubs on their plans to develop additional teams / attract additional members
 - ◀ Any local and National Governing Bodies of Sport specific sports development targets (e.g. increase in participation)

Population growth

- 1.49 The current resident population in Watford is 96,675 (2017 mid-year estimates⁶). By 2036 (the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand, in line with the Local Plan period) the population is projected to increase to 110,811⁷ representing an increase of 14,136 (or equivalent to a percentage increase of 14.6%) according to Office of National Statistics data.
- 1.50 As Office of National Statistics figures are available by individual age brackets (to reflect team growth) this is considered the most accurate data set to apply to team generation rates (as identified above) to calculate likely future demand within the Assessment Report.

Housing growth

- 1.51 The target for the number of homes required across Watford comes directly from the central government standard approach that will be used by all boroughs across the UK. This number is derived from Office of National Statistics population and household projections with adjustments made to take account of local house price to earnings ratios.
- 1.52 The revised housing figures have been incorporated into the Watford Local Plan from 2018 – 2036 and means a total of approximately 14,000 dwellings are needed over the Local Plan period. The Council has undertaken a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment which shows that Watford has the capacity to provide between 7,000-8,000 dwellings in the plan period.

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

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

Understand the situation at individual sites

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

⁶ Source: Office of National Statistics Mid-2017 Population Estimates for Lower Layer Super Output Areas in England and Wales by Single Year of Age and Sex

⁷ Source: Office of National Statistics 2016-based projections 2016-2041. Released: 24 May 2018

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

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

- 1.56 As a guide, the Football Association (FA), Rugby Football Union (RFU) and the English Cricket Board (ECB) have set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its quality.

Table 1.3: Summary of carrying capacity for playing pitches

Sport	Pitch type	No. of match equivalent sessions		
		Good	Standard	Poor
Football	Adult pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Youth pitches	4 per week	2 per week	1 per week
	Mini pitches	6 per week	4 per week	2 per week
Rugby Union*	Natural inadequate	2 per week	1.5 per week	0.5 per week
	Natural adequate	3 per week	2 per week	1.5 per week
	Pipe drained	3.25 per week	2.5 per week	1.75 per week
	Pipe and slit drained	3.5 per week	3 per week	2 per week
Cricket	One grass wicket	5 per season	4 per season	0 per season
	One synthetic wicket	60 per season	60 per season	0 per season

- 1.57 For hockey, the capacity of an artificial grass pitch is dependent on various factors including availability, floodlighting and current usage levels. Generally, a floodlit sand artificial grass pitch can accommodate up to four matches during one day. Similarly, for third generation artificial grass pitches, due to the variation in accommodating different football formats, a set capacity rating is unavailable. However, a scenario for accommodating football matches on third generation artificial grass pitches (with recommended programming) will be run in the Strategy.
- 1.58 For tennis, the LTA suggests a broad guide to help approximate members per court ratio. This is set at 40/60/100/200 (non-floodlit outdoor court, floodlit outdoor court, seasonal indoor and permanent indoor respectively).
- 1.59 However, it should be noted these numbers provide a guide to clubs for achieving financial sustainability, they do not constitute a pure terms calculation an upper limits of court capacity (i.e. could a 3 court, floodlit venue only sustain 180 members). Working out capacity requires a more nuanced approach taking into account issues including type of court, programming, age of member, and demand for different types of play.
- 1.60 For athletics, there is no maximum capacity set out by UK Athletics. Instead a minimum membership of 200 is required to ensure that tracks remain sustainable.
- 1.61 For all remaining non-pitch sports (i.e. bowls, netball, croquet and cycling) there are no nationally recognised capacity recommendations set out by National Governing Bodies of Sport. Instead, potential capacity is evaluated on a site by site basis following consultation and site assessments.

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Develop the current picture of provision

- 1.62 Once capacity is determined on a site by site basis, actual spare capacity is calculated on an area by area basis via further interrogation of temporal demand. Although this may have been identified, it does not necessarily mean that there is surplus provision. For example, spare capacity may not be available when it is needed or the site may be retained in a 'strategic reserve' to enable pitch rotation to reduce wear and tear.
- 1.63 Capacity ratings assist in the identification of sites for improvement/development, rationalisation, decommissioning and disposal.

Identify the key findings and issues

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

Develop the future picture of provision (scenario testing)

- 1.65 Modelling scenarios to assess whether existing provision can cater for unmet, latent, exported and future demand is made after the capacity analysis. This will also include, for example, removing sites with unsecured community use to demonstrate the impact this would have if these sites were to be decommissioned in the future.
- 1.66 The scenario testing generally occurs in the Strategy and Action Plan that proceeds this document and therefore does not form part of the Assessment Report.

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PART 2: FOOTBALL PITCHES (GRASS)

2.1: Introduction

- 2.1 The organisation primarily responsible for the development of football in Watford is Hertfordshire County FA. It is also responsible for the administration, in terms of discipline, rules and regulations, cup competitions and representative matches, development of clubs and facilities, volunteers, referees, coaching courses and delivering national football schemes.
- 2.2 This section of the report focuses on the supply and demand for grass football pitches. Part 3 captures supply and demand for third generation artificial grass pitches which are the preferred artificial surface type for football. In future, it is anticipated that there will be a growing demand for these pitches for competitive football fixtures, especially to accommodate mini and youth football.

Football definitions

- 2.3 Football in England (as specified by the FA) is played in the following formats and as such these references are used throughout this section to refer to supply (pitch types) and demand (team types).

Table 2.1: Football definitions

Team reference	Age group	Team type	Playing format	Pitch type
Adult men	16-45 years old	Adult	11v11 (11 a side)	Adult
Adult women	16-45 years old	Adult	11v11 (11 a side)	Adult
Youth boys	12-15 years old	Under13 - Under16	11v11 (11 a side)	Youth 11v11
Youth girls	12-15 years old	Under13 - Under16	11v11 (11 a side)	Youth 11v11
Youth boys	10-11 years old	Under11 - Under12	9v9 (9 a side)	Youth 9v9
Youth girls	10-11 years old	Under11 - Under12	9v9 (9 a side)	Youth 9v9
Mini-soccer mixed	8-9 years old	Under9 - Under10	7v7 (7 a side)	Mini 7v7
Mini-soccer Mixed	6-7 years old	Under7 – Under8	5v5 (5 a side)	Mini 5v5

Local Football Facility Plan

- 2.4 To support in delivery of both the current and superseding the FA National Games Strategy, the FA has commissioned a nationwide consultancy project. By 2020, a Local Football Facility Plan will be produced for every local authority across England. Each plan will be unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation.
- 2.5 The Local Football Facility Plan is strategically aligned to the National Football Facilities Strategy; a 10-year plan to change the landscape of football facilities in England. The National Football Facilities Strategy represents a major funding commitment from the national funding partners (The FA, Premier League, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Football Foundation) to inform and direct an estimated one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next ten years.
- 2.6 Each Local Football Facility Plan will build upon Playing Pitch Strategy findings (where present and current) regarding the formal and affiliated game, to also include strategic priorities for investment across small sided football (recreational and informal including indoors). The Local Football Facility Plan will also incorporate consultation with groups outside of formal football, as well as underrepresented communities. This could include those which may be key partners with regards to football for behavioural change and groups which may be key drivers of FA National Games Strategy priorities around participation in the likes of women and girls' football, disability football and futsal.

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- 2.7 Local Football Facility Plans will identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all national football investment through the funding partners will be identified via Local Football Facility Plans.
- 2.8 It is important to recognise that a Local Football Facility Plan is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a Playing Pitch Strategy and is not an accepted evidence base for site change of use or disposal. A Local Football Facility Plan will, however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a Playing Pitch Strategy and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.
- 2.9 The Local Football Facility Plan for Watford is being produced in conjunction with the Playing Pitch Strategy and therefore findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy will directly inform the outcomes of the Local Football Facility Plan.

Consultation

- 2.10 In addition to face-to-face consultation with key football clubs, an electronic survey was sent to all clubs playing within Watford. Contact details were provided by Hertfordshire County FA and the invitation to complete the survey was distributed via email. Through both face to face meetings and survey responses, a total of 14 clubs responded to consultation requests, which equates to a 52% club response rate and 78% team response rate.

Table 2.2: Summary of consultation

Club name	Responded?	Club name	Responded?
Everett Rovers Youth	Yes	AFC Leavesden First	No
Everett Rovers FC	Yes	Aldenham FC First	No
Sun Sports Youth	Yes	Bennetts End Rovers First	No
Sun Sport FC	Yes	FC Woodside First	No
Watford Youth Sports	Yes	Glenn Sports First	No
Fox and Stone FC	Yes	London Girls Development Academy Seniors	No
Fullerians FC	Yes	North Watford First	No
Gadeside Rangers FC	Yes	Reed Rangers First	No
Herons Youth FC	Yes	SkyLine FC First	No
Hertfordshire Eagles FC	Yes	Sun Sports Rovers First	No
London Girls Development FC	Yes	Tudor Arms FC First	No
Watford FC	Yes	Watford Athletic First	No
Watford FC Development	Yes	West Herts Youth	No
Watford Youth Sport	Yes	-	-
West Herts FC	Yes	-	-

- 2.11 Further to this, the Watford Sunday Football League and the Watford Friendly League were consulted to provide an insight into adult and youth participation in Watford.

2.2: Supply

- 2.12 The audit identifies a total of 67 grass football pitches in Watford across 20 sites. Of the pitches, 59 are available, at some level, for community use across 15 sites. All unavailable pitches are located within education sites and at Vicarage Road (Watford FC).

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- 2.13 For the location of sites please see Figure 2.1 and for a full breakdown of football supply, please refer to Table 2.13.

Table 2.3: Summary of supply

Number and type of pitches					Total
Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
25	6	9	10	9	59

- 2.14 Most available pitches in Watford (42%) are adult size which is, in part, due to youth 11v11 teams playing on adult pitches. This is not ideal for youth players at Under13-16 and is not in line with the recent FA Youth Review. Just six available pitches are youth 11v11 size representing 10% of the available supply in Watford which is low in relation to the proportion of youth teams (36 teams – 39% of all teams) which should be playing matches on this size pitch.
- 2.15 In accordance with the FA Youth Review, Under17 and Under18 teams can play on adult pitches. The FA’s recommended pitch size for adult football is 100x64 metres. Please refer to the table below for more detail.

Table 2.4: Football pitch types and sizes

Team type	Pitch type	FA recommended pitch dimensions (metres excluding run offs)	FA recommended pitch dimensions (metres including run offs)
Adult	Adult	100x64	106x70
Under15 - Under16	Youth 11v11	91x55	97x61
Under13 - Under14	Youth 11v11	82x50	88x56
Under11 - Under12	Youth 9v9	73x46	79x52
Under9 - Under10	Mini 7v7	55x37	61x43
Under7 - Under8	Mini 5v5	37x27	43x33

Future supply

- 2.16 Westfield Academy has plans to develop a good quality, adult football pitch on its site which would meet Football Pyramid Step 7 FA Ground Grading requirements⁸. The School note that there is an electricity supply to the pitch and therefore it could support floodlighting to meet higher level ground grading requirements (if required).

Lapsed/disused supply

- 2.17 The former Meriden Primary School playing fields (to the south of The Meadows in the Meriden area) are proposed as a development allocation in the emerging Watford Local Plan. While not currently used for community use, there is a likely need to mitigate its loss to meet Sport England Playing Field Policy⁹ requirements.

⁸ See Football pyramid demand section from paragraph 2.49

⁹ <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/final-playing-fields-policy-and-guidance-document.pdf>

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Figure 2.1: Location of football pitches

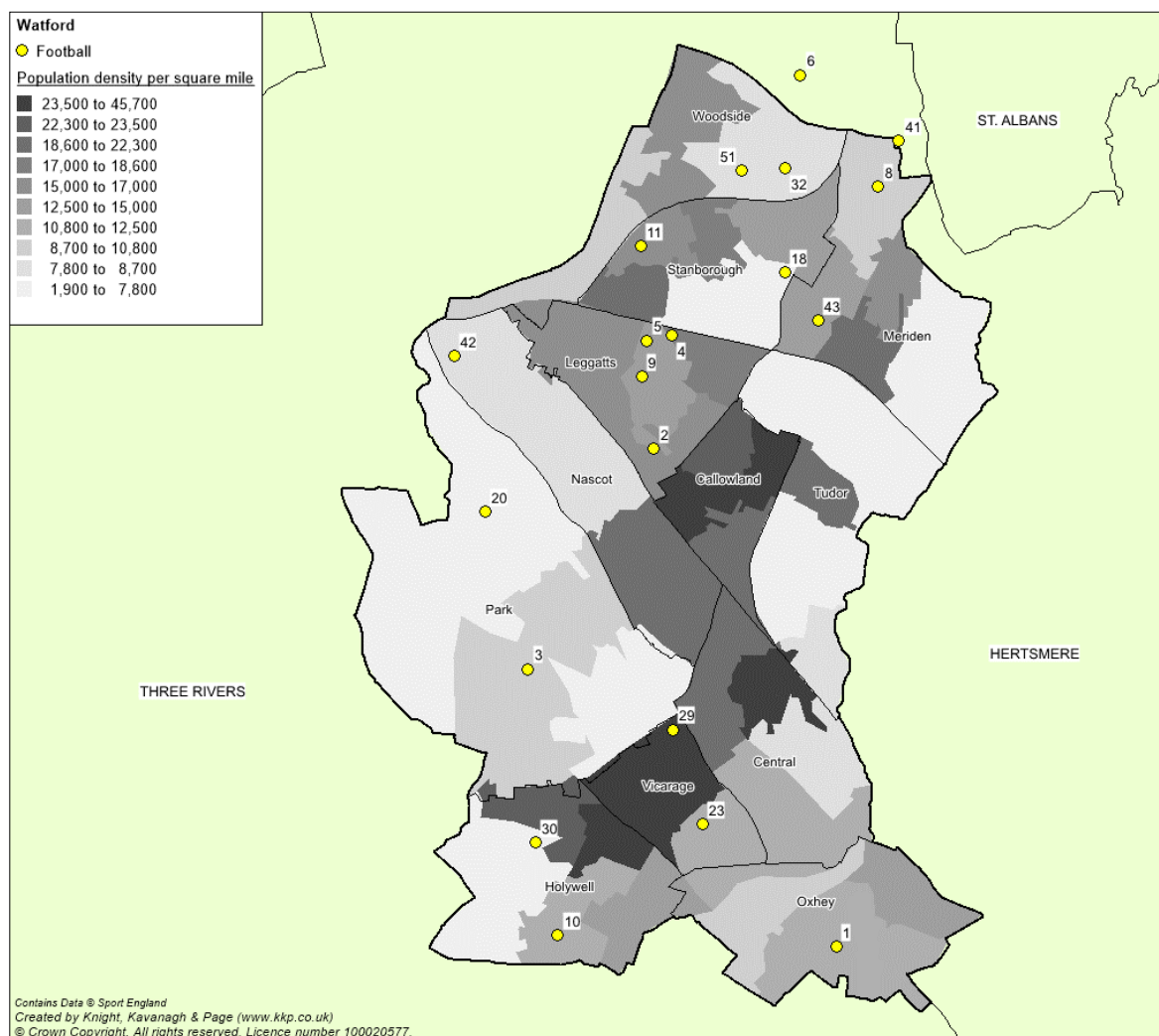


Table 2.5: Key to map of football pitches

Site ID	Site name	Ward
1	Bromet School	Oxhey
2	Callowland Recreation Ground	Leggatts
3	Cassiobury Park	Park
4	Cherry Tree Primary School	Leggatts
5	Everett Rovers Fc	Leggatts
6	Francis Combe Academy	Outside
8	Garston Park	Meriden
9	Harebreaks Recreation Ground	Leggatts
10	King George V Playing Fields	Holywell
11	Kingsway Junior School	Stanborough
18	Stanborough Park	Stanborough
20	Sun Postal Sports and Social Club	Park
23	Watford FC (Vicarage Road Stadium)	Vicarage
29	West Herts Sports Club	Vicarage
30	Westfield Academy	Holywell
32	Woodside Playing Field	Woodside
41	Coats Way JMI and Nursery School	Outside

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Site ID	Site name	Ward
42	Holy Rood Catholic Primary school	Nascot
43	The Grove Academy	Meriden
51	Watford Town Cricket Club	Woodside

Pitch quality

2.18 The quality of football pitches across Watford have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the FA¹⁰) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

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

2.20 Pitch quality primarily influences the carrying capacity of a site; often pitches lack the maintenance necessary to sustain levels of use. As such the weighting of the non-technical site assessments for football pitches falls heavily on the maintenance regime. Pitches that receive little to no ongoing repair or post-season remedial work are therefore more likely to be assessed as poor quality, therefore limiting the number of games they are able to accommodate each week without it having a detrimental effect on quality.

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

2.22 The table below summarises the quality of grass football pitches that are available for community use in Watford.

Table 2.6: Summary of quality

	Adult pitches			Youth pitches			Mini pitches		
	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor	Good	Standard	Poor
Total	3	18	4	2	8	5	2	14	3

2.23 In total, seven pitches are assessed as good quality, 40 as standard quality and 12 as poor quality.

2.24 For a full site by site breakdown of quality, please refer to Table 2.10: Football pitch capacity analysis.

2.25 All good quality pitches are located at Sun Postal Sports and Social Club. The site owner hires a dedicated groundsman to maintain the site, and remedial works are undertaken to a high standard. Most football pitches in Watford are assessed as standard quality (68%) and are located on Council and school sites such as Callowland Recreation Ground and Westfield Academy.

¹⁰ See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for football pitches

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- 2.26 Pitches maintained by local authorities and schools often undergo limited maintenance regimes due to restricted budgets. Additionally, this is usually exacerbated on recreation grounds, as well as some school sites, by the open access nature of such provision resulting in high levels of use for other purposes, such as unofficial football activity, dog walking and fitness groups.
- 2.27 Notwithstanding the above, most of the Council maintained pitches in Watford are assessed as standard quality, with the maintenance regime relatively sophisticated when compared to other local authorities nationally. The programme consists of regular grass cutting, line marking and annual aeration, chain harrowing and sand dressing.
- 2.28 20% of pitches in Watford are assessed as poor quality. As aforementioned, poor quality is a result of several potential factors including basic maintenance and/or issues from sites being public open spaces and therefore having unofficial use/dog walking activity etc. In Watford, the following sites are identified as having poor quality pitches:
- ◀ Everett Rovers FC (Football Club)
 - ◀ Francis Combe Academy (School)
 - ◀ Garston Park (Council)
 - ◀ Woodside Playing Field (Council)
- 2.29 Pitches at both Everett Rovers FC and Francis Combe Academy are poor quality due to a basic maintenance regime which consists of cutting and lining the pitches for match play as required. The maintenance at the two remaining council sites is to a higher standard than the former sites, but both do suffer from high levels of casual use. It is also noted that most pitches at Woodside Playing Field are on a slope which has impacted on the quality scores of the pitches.
- 2.30 In addition to non-technical site assessments, the views of clubs have also been considered. The table below provides a summary of responses provided by clubs playing at sites in Watford.

Table 2.7: Summary of quality comments received

Site ID	Site name	Club/league name/s	Club comments
5	Everett Rovers FC	Everett Rovers FC	The Club highlight that a portion of its pitches have trees overhanging which causes issues with growth (due to sun restrictions) and excess leaves falling onto pitches which impact on pitch playability.
6	Francis Combe Academy	Abbots Langley FC	Pitches are basically maintained and drain poorly.
8	Garston Park	Sun Postal Sports FC / Watford Sunday League	Site is overused attributing to poor pitch surface and problem areas.
10	King George V Playing Fields	Ripstone FC	Potholes in the pitch.
32	Woodside Playing Field	Watford Youth FC / Watford Sunday League	Pitches are on a significant slope and drainage issues are prominent.

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FA Pitch Improvement Programme

- 2.31 With quality of grass pitches becoming one of the biggest influences on participation in football, the FA has made it a priority to work towards improving quality of grass pitches across the country. This has resulted in the creation of the FA Pitch Improvement Programme. As part of this, grass pitches identified as having quality issues undergo a pitch inspection from a member of the Institute of Groundsmanship. In Watford, two sites are noted as having recent inspections, these are at: Everett Rovers FC and Westfield Academy. It is likely that the quality of these pitches will increase in the future once recommendations from are implemented.

Over marked pitches

- 2.32 Over marking of pitches can cause notable damage to the surface quality and lead to overuse beyond recommended capacity. In some cases, mini pitches may be marked onto senior pitches or mini matches may be played widthways across adult or youth pitches. This can lead to targeted areas of surface damage due to a large amount of play focused on high traffic areas, particularly the middle third of the pitch.
- 2.33 Over marking of pitches not only influences available capacity, it also causes logistical issues regarding kick off times; for example, when two teams of differing age formats are playing at the same site. The following sites contain overmarked pitches:
- ◀ Everett Rovers FC
 - ◀ West Herts Sports Club
 - ◀ Watford Town Cricket Club

Ancillary facilities

- 2.34 Ancillary facilities refer to the type of amenities which are available on a site accompanied by their quality, such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, showering provision, car parking, dedicated official and spectator facilities and boundary fencing.
- 2.35 The quality of ancillary facilities (changing pavilions and accompanying carparking) across Watford has been assessed via a combination of site visits and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:
- ◀ Good
 - ◀ Standard
 - ◀ Poor
- 2.36 The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>67%), Standard (34-66%), Poor (<34%). The quality ratings assigned to the sites also consider the user quality ratings gathered from consultation.
- 2.37 The table below identifies known ancillary facility quality for football sites across Watford which are available for community use.

Table 2.8: Summary of ancillary facility quality¹¹

Site ID	Site name	Management	Ancillary facility quality
2	Callowland Recreation Ground	Council	Standard
3	Cassiobury Park	Council	Good
5	Everett Rovers Fc	Sports Club	Good

¹¹ Primary school sites containing community available football pitches have not been included as none are identified as having dedicated changing facilities.

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Site ID	Site name	Management	Ancillary facility quality
6	Francis Combe Academy	School	Standard
8	Garston Park	Council	Standard
9	Harebreaks Recreation Ground	Council	Poor
10	King George V Playing Fields	Council	Poor
18	Stanborough Park	Council	Poor
20	Sun Postal Sports and Social Club	Sports Club	Standard
29	West Herts Sports Club	Sports Club	Standard
30	Westfield Academy	School	Poor
32	Woodside Playing Field	Council	Poor
44	Watford Town Cricket Club	Sports Club	Poor

- 2.38 Of the abovementioned sites, two are good quality, five standard and six poor. All facilities at poor quality sites are identified as requiring modernisation, each having common issues such as outdated changing rooms and shower facilities.
- 2.39 Of note is Westfield Academy which currently accesses an old portacabin facility for all its community football demand for both its grass and third generation artificial grass pitches. The School has significant football usage on its site and expresses a facility aspiration to develop a new, high quality changing pavilion with adjoining education and social space.
- 2.40 The ancillary offering at West Herts Sports Club is largely outdated and is in need of refurbishment to future proof it for the next generation of sporting users at the site. The facility was built in the 1960s and whilst it has had some level of refurbishment, is still largely in need of major work to ensure it remains fit for purpose in the coming years. The facility is a mixed sport venue, and the home to cricket, football, squash and tennis clubs which all use the facilities on site.
- 2.41 The Club aspires to sell a small parcel of land it owns to a private developer to create 23 apartments on Cassio Road. The Club has outline plans to use the capital receipt of the sale of the land to reinvest back into the onsite ancillary offer.
- 2.42 Ancillary facilities at Woodside Playing Field for Watford Town CC are poor quality. There are two separate buildings on the site which the Club accesses. In the main, it has a separate clubhouse/changing facility which is specially for the Club. Whilst functional, and having no significant issues, it is dated and in need of modernisation. Further to this, if required, it can access a larger changing pavilion which is shared with other sporting users of Woodside Playing Field.
- 2.43 Watford Borough Council has developed a masterplan for Woodside Playing Fields which shows the creation of a new sports pavilion and changing facilities which would replace the current facilities on site.

Training facilities

- 2.44 Getting access to good quality, affordable training facilities is a problem for many football clubs throughout the country. In the winter months, midweek training is only possible at floodlit facilities such as third generation artificial grass pitches.
- 2.45 The FA's long-term ambition is to provide every affiliated team in England the opportunity to train once per week on a floodlit third generation artificial grass pitch. Please refer to Part 3: Third generation artificial grass pitches for further detail.

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Security of tenure

- 2.46 Most teams in Watford rent pitches from the Council. Tenure of these sites is secure, i.e. there is a guarantee that pitches will continue to be provided over the lifespan of the Playing Pitch Strategy. An exception to this is found at schools and academies which although may allow community use, are able to terminate community access at any time, unless a written community use agreement is in place.
- 2.47 Francis Combe Academy and Cherry Tree Primary School have written community use agreements in place. Westfield Academy also has a planning condition requiring a community use agreement to be completed for its playing fields, but this has not been completed to date.
- 2.48 No club responding to consultation highlighted issues with tenure agreements and therefore this it is not considered to be a prominent issue in Watford. The general landscape of club access is through either local authority managed sites or through dedicated club sites where long term lease agreements or ownership is in place.

Football pyramid demand

- 2.49 The football pyramid is a series of interconnected leagues for adult men's football clubs in England. It begins below the Football League (the National League) and comprises of seven steps, with various leagues at each level and more leagues lower down the pyramid than at the top. The step system has a hierarchical format with promotion and relegation between the steps, allowing even the smallest club the theoretical possibility of rising to the top of the system.
- 2.50 Clubs playing within the National League must adhere to ground requirements set out by the FA. The higher the level of football being played the higher the requirements. Clubs cannot progress into the league above if the ground requirements do not meet the correct specifications. Ground grading assesses grounds from A to H, with 'A' being the requirement for Step 1 clubs and H being the requirement for Step 7 clubs. Please refer to the FA website¹² for the full specifications for each.
- 2.51 There are no teams in Watford which compete in the National League System. Sun Sport Postal Club does have a pitch which meets Step 7 ground grading requirements, but no such team which accesses the pitch competes at that level.
- 2.52 There are currently no women's step clubs in Watford. It is noted that Watford FC Ladies compete in the FA Women's Super League 2nd Division (the second tier of the women's league pyramid). The Club is however based in Dacorum, at Kings Langley FC.

2.3: Demand

- 2.53 Through the audit and assessment, 92 teams from within 25 clubs are identified as playing in Watford. This consists of 18 adult men's, one adult women's, 47 youth boys', one youth girls' and 25 mini mixed teams.
- 2.54 Youth 11v11 football is the most prominent format of play, whilst youth and mini football is the least common.

¹² <http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/player/ground-grading>

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Table 2.9: Summary of demand

	Number and type of teams					Total
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	
Total	19	36	12	13	12	92

Women's and girls' demand

- 2.55 There are currently two dedicated female teams playing in Watford, representing just over 2% of the total number of teams. The teams are predominately provided by:
- ✦ London Girls Development Academy
 - ✦ Watford Youth Sports
- 2.56 Consultation with clubs around Watford suggests that Garston Ladies (based in Three Rivers) offers a significant programme for women's and girls' football and therefore demand naturally gravitates outside of Watford.
- 2.57 The FA currently has a drive to increase women's and girls' participation by 50%. As such, it is imperative that sufficient facilities become suitable for female access, particularly in relation to toilets and appropriate changing facilities.

Exported demand

- 2.58 No teams are identified as accessing facilities outside of Watford to meet match requirements.

Imported demand

- 2.59 Three clubs from Three Rivers and one from Hertsmere (Hews FC) are identified as importing demand into Watford to access grass football pitches, these are:
- ✦ Abbots Langley FC (Francis Combe Academy)
 - ✦ Chorleywood Common FC (Westfield Academy)
 - ✦ Bedmond Youth FC (Kingswood Junior School)
 - ✦ Hews FC (Callowland Recreation Ground)

Latent/unmet demand

- 2.60 No club responding to consultation identified any latent or unmet demand, each state that they are able to access suitable facilities to grow.

Future demand

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

Population increases

- 2.62 Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth (2036).

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Table 2.10: Population increases

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group	Predicted future number of teams (2036)	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Men's (16-45)	19,632	18	1:1091	19,833	18	0
Senior Women (16-45)	19,829	1	1:19829	19,587	1	0
Youth Boys (12-15)	3,576	35	1:102	4,458	43	8
Youth Girls (12-15)	3,242	1	1:3242	4,283	1	0
Youth Boys (10-11)	1,278	12	1:107	1,436	13	1
Youth Girls (10-11)	1,295	0	0	1,399	0	0
Mini-Soccer Mixed (8-9)	2,764	13	1:213	2,777	13	0
Mini-Soccer Mixed (6-7)	2,851	12	1:238	2,707	11	0

- 2.63 Application of team generation rates forecast that there will be a possible increase of nine teams. This equates to the potential growth of nine junior boys' teams.
- 2.64 It is important to note that population growth does not account for specific targeted development work within certain areas or focused towards certain groups. For example, there is a focus on developing female football participation within Hertfordshire and nationally which, as mentioned previously, is likely to lead to more women's and girls' teams in the future and therefore increase demand for pitches.
- 2.65 Outside of women's and girls' increases, given the large amounts of future demand identified through team generation rates, it is considered unlikely that aspirations from clubs will happen exclusively of population growth. Instead, it is thought that the ambitions will be absorbed within the increases.

FA Wildcats Centres

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

- 2.66 All organisations delivering Wildcats centres receive a £600 start-up grant and 30 branded footballs in their first year of running the programme to help develop and increase girl's participation, organisations receive a secondary grant of £300 in the secondary year of operation to help sessions run sustainably. No wildcat sessions were identified as taking place in Watford in 2019.
- 2.67 In light of both FA aspirations to double female participation in football through its Game Changer strategy and the establishment and foreseen future effect of the Wildcats programme, it is likely that the growth in affiliated women's and girl teams may exceed that shown through team generation rates, however at present to what extent is not quantifiable.

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Participation increases

- 2.68 Five clubs report aspirations to increase the number of teams they provide. Of the clubs that quantify their potential increase, there is a predicted growth of 15 teams, as seen in the table below. As a breakdown this consists of an increase of; one adult, three youth 11v11, four youth 9v9, four mini 7v7 and three mini 5v5 teams.

Table 2.11: Participation increases

Club	Future demand	Pitch size	Match equivalent sessions ¹³
Everett Rovers FC	3 x Mini 7v7	Mini 7v7	1.5
London Girls Development Academy	2 x Youth 9v9	Youth 9v9	1
	1 x Mini 5v5	Mini 5v5	0.5
Sun Postal Sports FC	1 x Adult	Adult	0.5
	1 x Youth 11v11	Youth 11v11	0.5
	1 x Youth 9v9	Youth 9v9	0.5
Herons Youth FC	2 x Youth 11v11	Youth 11v11	1
	1 x Youth 9v9	Youth 9v9	0.5
	1 x Mini 5v5	Mini 5v5	0.5
Gadeside Rangers FC	1x Mini 7v7	Mini 7v7	0.5
	1 x Mini 5v5	Mini 5v5	0.5

Future demand summary

- 2.69 On balance, it is considered that that total future demand in Watford should account for population and participation increases added together and as such, these are the figures applied in the supply and demand conclusions tables.

2.4: Capacity analysis

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

Table 2.12: Summary of carrying capacity for football pitches

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

¹³ Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, 0.5 pitches can therefore be seen in the table where there is latent demand for one team.

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- 2.71 Table 2.13 overleaf applies the above pitch ratings against the actual level of weekly play to determine a capacity rating as follows:

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

Education sites

- 2.72 To account for curricular/extra-curricular use of education pitches it is likely that the carrying capacity at such sites will need to be adjusted. The only time this would not happen is when a school does not use its pitches at all and the sole use is community use. The adjustment is typically dependent on the amount of play carried out, the number of pitches on site and whether there is access to an on-site artificial grass pitch.
- 2.73 In some cases, where there is no identified community use, there is little capacity to accommodate further play. School usage often exceeds recommended pitch capacity, which is further exacerbated by basic maintenance regimes that may not extend beyond grass cutting and line marking.
- 2.74 In Watford, site capacity at education sites has been reduced by one match equivalent session per pitch to account for curricular and extra-curricular use. This is based on consultation and the discovery that all pitches are in use, as well as from experience of how school sites use pitches from other strategies in the locality and nationally.

Informal use

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

Peak time

- 2.76 Spare capacity can only be considered as actual spare capacity if pitches are available at peak time. In Watford, peak time is Sunday AM for all pitches, as most teams across all age groups play at this time.
- 2.77 Please note that, on occasions, spare capacity in the peak period is identified despite the pitch being played to capacity, overplayed or having more spare capacity identified in the peak period than what exists overall. This is because most of the use on those particular pitches occurs outside of the peak period; therefore, the identified spare capacity at peak time should not be utilised over and above overall capacity unless quality improvements are made that increases overall capacity.

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Table 2.13: Capacity analysis

Site ID	Site name	Management	Tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size ¹⁴	No. of pitches	Community use availability	Agreed quality rating	Current play (MES ¹⁵)	Site capacity ¹⁶ (MES)	Capacity balance (MES)	Spare capacity in the peak period	Comments
2	Callowland Recreation Ground	Council	Secure	Adult		1	Yes	Standard	0.5	2	1.5	1	Actual spare capacity.
2	Callowland Recreation Ground	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	1	Yes	Standard	-	4	4	1	Actual spare capacity.
3	Cassiobury Park	Council	Secure	Adult		2	Yes	Standard	-	4	4	2	Actual spare capacity.
4	Cherry Tree Primary School	School	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	1	Yes	Standard	1	4	3	1	Actual spare capacity.
4	Cherry Tree Primary School	School	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	1	Yes	Standard	2.5	2	0.5	-	Pitch overplayed.
5	Everett Rovers FC	Sports Club	Secure	Adult (Mini)	(5v5) *	1	Yes	Standard	2	2	-	-	Pitch at capacity.
5	Everett Rovers FC	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		1	Yes	Standard	1	2	1	-	No capacity in the peak period.
5	Everett Rovers FC	Sports Club	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	2	Yes	Standard	3	8	5	-	No capacity in the peak period.
5	Everett Rovers FC	Sports Club	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	1	Yes	Standard	2	4	2	-	No capacity in the peak period.
5	Everett Rovers FC	Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(11v11) (9v9) *	1	Yes	Poor	4	1	3	-	Pitch overplayed.
5	Everett Rovers FC	Sports Club	Secure	Youth (Mini)	(9v9) (7v7) *	1	Yes	Poor	2	1	1	-	Pitch overplayed.
6	Francis Combe Academy	School	Secure	Adult		2	Yes	Poor	3	2	1	-	Pitch overplayed.
6	Francis Combe Academy	School	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	1	Yes	Poor	2	1	1	-	Pitch overplayed.
8	Garston Park	Council	Secure	Adult		1	Yes	Poor	1	1	-	-	Pitch at capacity.
9	Harebreaks Recreation Ground	Council	Secure	Adult		1	Yes	Standard	1.5	2	0.5	-	No capacity in the peak period.
9	Harebreaks Recreation Ground	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	1	Yes	Standard	0.5	4	3.5	0.5	Actual spare capacity.
9	Harebreaks Recreation Ground	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	1	Yes	Standard	1	4	3	-	No capacity in the peak period.
10	King George V Playing Fields	Council	Secure	Adult		4	Yes	Standard	1.5	8	6.5	2.5	Actual spare capacity.
10	King George V Playing Fields	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	1	Yes	Standard	-	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity.
11	Kingsway Junior School	School	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	1	No	Standard	2.5	4	1.5	-	Capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
					(5v5)	1			2.5	4	1.5	-	
18	Stanborough Park	Council	Secure	Adult		1	Yes	Standard	-	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity.
18	Stanborough Park	Council	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	1	Yes	Standard	-	2	2	1	Actual spare capacity.
20	Sun Postal Sports and Social Club	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		3	Yes	Good	3	9	6	1.5	Actual spare capacity.
20	Sun Postal Sports and Social Club	Sports Club	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	1	Yes	Good	0.5	6	5.5	1	Actual spare capacity.
20	Sun Postal Sports and Social Club	Sports Club	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	1	Yes	Good	1	6	5	0.5	Actual spare capacity.
20	Sun Postal Sports and Social Club	Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	1	Yes	Good	3	4	1	-	No capacity in the peak period.
20	Sun Postal Sports and Social Club	Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	1	Yes	Good	2	4	2	-	No capacity in the peak period.
29	West Herts Sports Club	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		1	Yes	Standard	2.5	2	0.5	-	Pitch overplayed.
29	West Herts Sports Club	Sports Club	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	1	Yes	Standard	1.5	4	2.5	-	No capacity in the peak period.
29	West Herts Sports Club	Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	1	Yes	Standard	1	2	1	-	No capacity in the peak period.
30	Westfield Academy	School	Unsecure	Adult		1	Yes	Standard	1	2	1	-	Capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
30	Westfield Academy	School	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	1	Yes	Standard	1	4	3	-	Capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
30	Westfield Academy	School	Unsecure	Mini	(7v7)	1	Yes	Standard	1	4	3	-	Capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
30	Westfield Academy	School	Unsecure	Youth	(11v11)	1	Yes	Standard	3.5	2	1.5	-	Pitch overplayed.

¹⁴ * Denotes overmarked pitches. Usage is accounted to the capacity for the largest pitch format.

¹⁵ Match equivalent sessions

¹⁶ Based on pitch quality The FA recommends a maximum number of match equivalent sessions to be accommodate per pitch type. Please refer to Section 2.4 for the full breakdown.

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Site ID	Site name	Management	Tenure	Pitch type	Pitch size ¹⁴	No. of pitches	Community use availability	Agreed quality rating	Current play (MES ¹⁵)	Site capacity ¹⁶ (MES)	Capacity balance (MES)	Spare capacity in the peak period	Comments
30	Westfield Academy	School	Unsecure	Youth	(9v9)	1	Yes	Standard	1	2	1	-	Capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.
32	Woodside Playing Field	Council	Secure	Adult		4	Yes	Standard	3	8	5	2	Actual spare capacity.
32	Woodside Playing Field	Council	Secure	Adult		1	Yes	Poor	0.5	1	0.5	-	No capacity in the peak period.
32	Woodside Playing Field	Council	Secure	Mini	(5v5)	1	Yes	Poor	1	2	1	-	No capacity in the peak period.
32	Woodside Playing Field	Council	Secure	Mini	(7v7)	1	Yes	Poor	1	2	1	-	No capacity in the peak period.
32	Woodside Playing Field	Council	Secure	Youth	(11v11)	1	Yes	Poor	2	1	1	-	Pitch overplayed.
44	Watford Town Cricket Club	Sports Club	Secure	Adult		1	Yes	Standard	0.5	2	1.5	-	Spare capacity discounted to protect cricket outfield.
44	Watford Town Cricket Club	Sports Club	Secure	Youth	(9v9)	1	Yes	Standard	0.5	2	1.5	-	Spare capacity discounted to protect cricket outfield.
44	Watford Town Cricket Club	Sports Club	Secure	Youth (Mini)	(9v9) (7v7)	1	Yes	Standard	0.5	2	1.5	-	Spare capacity discounted to protect cricket outfield.
1	Bromet School	School	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	2	No	Standard	2	8	6	-	No community use.
23	Vicarage Road (Watford FC)	Sports Club	Secure				No	Good	1	3	1	-	No community use.
41	Coats Way JMI and Nursery School	School	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	1	No	Standard	1	4	3	-	No community use.
42	Holy Rood Catholic Primary school	School	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	1	No	Standard	1	4	3	-	No community use.
43	The Grove Academy	School	Unsecure	Mini	(5v5)	2	No	Standard	2	8	6	-	No community use.

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Spare capacity

- 2.78 To determine ‘actual spare capacity’, each site with ‘potential capacity identified in Table 2.10 has been reviewed. A pitch is only said to have ‘actual spare capacity’ if it is available for community use and available at the peak time for that format of the game. Any pitch not meeting this criterion has consequently been discounted.
- 2.79 There may also be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.
- 2.80 Pitches that are of a poor quality are not deemed to have actual spare capacity due to their already low carrying capacity. Any identified spare capacity should be retained in order to relieve the pitches of use, which in turn, will aid the improvement of pitch quality.
- 2.81 Unless security of tenure is confirmed as being secured through a community use agreement during consultation with the operator, school sites that state they are currently available for community use but are unused are not considered to have actual spare capacity as they do not offer secure community use for clubs and as such use could be terminated at any time.
- 2.82 Based on the above, it is determined that there is a total of 16 match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity in Watford at peak time (Sunday AM). This has been aggregated up by pitch type below.

Table 2.14: Summary of actual spare capacity

	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions per week)				
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5
Total	10	1	1	1.5	2.5

Match equivalent sessions

- 2.83 Regardless of quality, pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected. As the main usage of pitches is likely to be for matches, it is appropriate for the comparable unit to be match equivalent sessions but may, for example, include training sessions and informal use.
- 2.84 At this stage, match equivalent sessions do not equate to a number of pitches. This is because an area might show three match equivalent sessions of spare capacity, however, this is likely to be spread across a number of sites. Further to this, minimal spare capacity on one site may be required to accommodate strategic reserve and as such retained. If the spare capacity is on one pitch, then it might indicate a need to create a different type of pitch to address a deficiency. This will be fully determined, and recommendations will be made accordingly within the Strategy and Action Plan.

Overplay

- 2.85 Overplay occurs when there is more play accommodated on a site than it can sustain (which can often be due to the low carrying capacity caused by poor quality). Only sites which are overplayed and have current community use have been included in the overplay summary, therefore school sites which do not currently have any community use but may be overplayed due to curriculum use and school fixtures have not been included.

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- 2.86 In total, nine pitches across seven sites are overplayed by a combined total of 9.5 match equivalent sessions. This has been aggregated up by pitch type below.

Table 2.15: Summary of overplay

	Actual spare capacity (match equivalent sessions per week)				
	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5
Total	1.5	6	2	-	-

- 2.87 The majority of overplay is identified on adult, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches. There is no identified overplay on mini pitches in Watford. The highest levels of overplay is on youth 11v11 pitches and this is consistent with there being the fewest supply of this pitch format in Watford, despite almost 40% of demand being for youth 11v11 football.

2.5: Supply and demand analysis

- 2.88 Having considered supply and demand, the table below assesses current demand (i.e. spare capacity taking away overplay). Total future demand in Watford accounts for population and participation increases added together and as such, these are the figures applied in the tables below.

Table 2.16: Supply and demand analysis

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity ¹⁷	Demand (match equivalent sessions per week)			
		Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Total
Adult	10	1.5	8.5	0.5	8
Youth 11v11	1	6	5	5.5	10.5
Youth 9v9	1	2	1	2.5	3.5
Mini 7v7	1.5	-	1.5	2	0.5
Mini 5v5	2.5	-	2.5	1.5	1

- 2.89 The current position for football pitches in Watford is that there are current shortfalls identified on youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches. All other pitch formats have actual spare capacity for additional growth. When considering future demand, current shortfalls are exacerbated, with youth 11v11 pitch format accounting for the highest shortfall, and new shortfalls emerge for mini 7v7 pitch types.

¹⁷ In match equivalent sessions

2.6: Summary

- ◀ **Current supply of football pitch provision is insufficient with shortfalls evident on youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches**
- ◀ **When considering future demand, these shortfalls will worsen on youth and new shortfalls for mini 7v7 pitches emerge**
- ◀ The audit identifies a total of 67 grass football pitches in Watford across 20 sites, of which 57 pitches are available for community use across 14 sites
- ◀ Of pitches which are available for community use, seven are good quality, 38 are standard quality and 12 are poor quality
- ◀ Six changing pavilions are identified as being poor quality
- ◀ No clubs identify issues with lease arrangements or pitch access
- ◀ There are 92 teams from within 25 clubs identified as playing in Watford. This consists of 18 adult men's, one adult women's, 47 youth boys', one youth girls' and 25 mini mixed teams
- ◀ Four clubs are identified as importing demand into Watford to play competitive fixtures
- ◀ Five clubs report aspirations to increase the number of teams they provide; total growth equates to 15 teams. Team generation rates forecast the potential growth of nine junior boys' teams
- ◀ In total, 15 match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity are identified across pitches in Watford. In contrast, 9.5 match equivalent sessions of overplayed are identified
- ◀ There are current shortfalls on youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches which are anticipated to grow in the future. The future position anticipates shortfalls of mini 7v7 pitch provision

PART 3: THIRD GENERATION ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES

3.1: Introduction

- 3.1 Third generation artificial grass pitches utilise longer fibres with a combination of rubber and sand infill to offer heightened performance. They are predominately used for football matches but most commonly for football training but can also be used for rugby matches dependent upon having a shock pad.
- 3.2 Competitive football can take place on third generation artificial grass pitches that have been FIFA or International Matchball Standard tested and approved by the FA for inclusion on the FA Pitch Register¹⁸. As such, a growing number of third generation artificial grass pitches are now used for competitive match play, providing that the performance standard meets FIFA quality (previously FIFA One Star), as well as for training purposes. Football training does, however, take place on hockey suitable artificial grass pitches (please refer to Part 6: Artificial grass pitches for greater explanation on pitch specifications) but is not the preferred option.
- 3.3 World Rugby produced the 'Performance Specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby'¹⁹, more commonly known as 'Regulation 22' that provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union. The artificial surface standards identified in Regulation 22 allows matches to be played on surfaces that meet the standard, meaning full contact activity, including tackling, rucking, mauling and lineouts, can take place.
- 3.4 The specification includes a rigorous test programme that assesses ball/surface interaction and player/surface interaction and has been modified to align the standard with that of FIFA. Any third generation artificial grass pitch used for any form of competitive rugby must comply with this specification and must be tested every two years to retain compliance.
- 3.5 England Hockey's Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy (updated June 2018)²⁰ advises that third generation artificial grass pitches should not be used for hockey matches or training and that they can only be used for lower level hockey (introductory level) as a last resort when no sand-based or water-based artificial grass pitches are available.

Table 3.1: Pitch definitions

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

¹⁸ <http://3g.thefa.me.uk/>.

¹⁹ <https://www.world.rugby/handbook/regulations/reg-22/>

²⁰ file:///C:/England_Hockey_Artificial_Grass_Playing_Surface_Policy_Feb_2018.pdf

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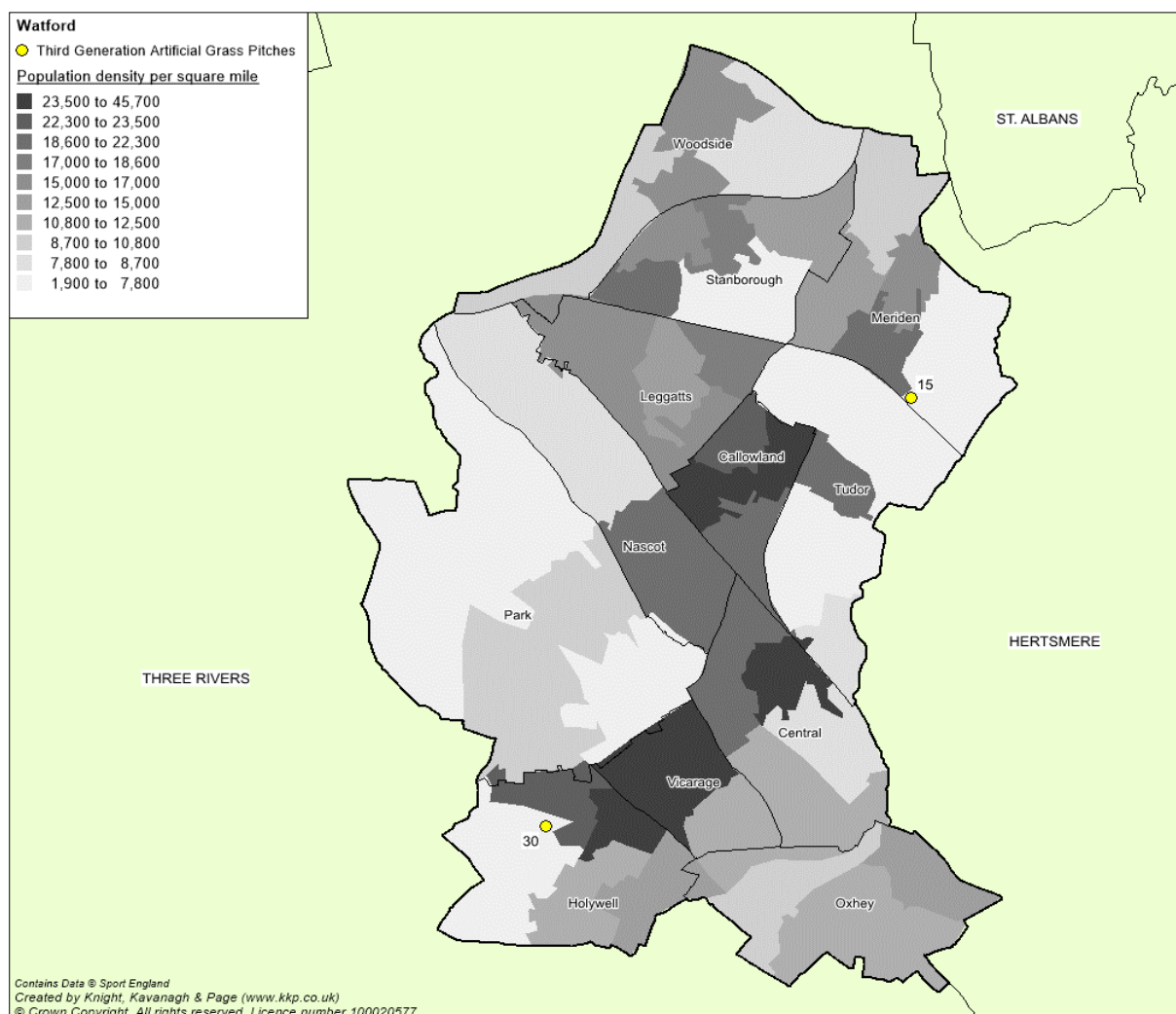
3.2: Supply

- 3.6 A full size third generation artificial grass pitch is considered by the FA to measure at least 100 x 64 metres (106 x 64 metres including run offs); however, for the purposes of this report, all pitches measuring over 100 x 60 metres (inclusive of run offs) are considered to be full size due to the amount of demand they can accommodate. Nationally, many third generation artificial grass pitches are slightly undersized due to being converted from sand-based provision (dimensions for hockey are smaller than for football).
- 3.7 There is one pitch in Watford which meets the full size specification, based at Westfield Academy. In addition, there is a small sided third generation artificial grass pitch located at the Meriden Community Centre.

Table 3.2: Summary of supply

Site ID	Site name	Ward	Community use?	Floodlit?	Size (metres)
15	Meriden Community Centre	Meriden	Yes	Yes	61 x 43
30	Westfield Academy	Holywell	Yes	Yes	100 x 60

Figure 3.1: Location of third generation artificial grass pitches



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Future supply

- 3.8 The Council has developed a masterplan for Woodside Playing Fields which specifies the conversion of an existing artificial grass pitch to a third generation artificial grass pitch. If converted, it would not meet FA size specifications to be a full size pitch.
- 3.9 During consultation, the following providers in Watford outlined aspirations to potentially deliver a full size third generation artificial grass pitch in the future:
- ◀ Westfield Academy (to provide a secondary pitch)
 - ◀ Sun Postal Sports & Social Club
 - ◀ Francis Combe Academy
- 3.10 It should also be noted that Thomas Parmiter School (Three Rivers) and Queens School (Hertsmere) aspire to develop full size third generation artificial grass pitches. If delivered, due to their proximity to Watford, these would likely also service demand from Watford residents.

FA Pitch Register

- 3.11 All third generation artificial grass pitches in Watford are currently on the FA Pitch Register and can therefore be used to host competitive matches. Re-testing is required every three years to ensure that this remains the case.

World Rugby compliant pitches

- 3.12 The RFU investment strategy into third generation artificial grass pitches considers sites where grass rugby pitches are over capacity and where a pitch would support the growth of the game at the host site and for the local rugby partnership, including local clubs and education sites. There are no World Rugby compliant third generation artificial grass pitches in Watford with the nearest located in neighbouring, Three Rivers. Watford is considered to be a strategic area for the RFU for the potential delivery of new a World Rugby compliant third generation artificial grass pitch in the future.

Management

- 3.13 The full size pitch at Westfield School is managed by third party operator, Fusion Lifestyle. However, it should be noted that its contract with the School is soon to be finished and as such will be re-tendered. The pitch at the Meriden Centre is managed in-house by Watford FC Community Sports and Education Trust.

Availability

- 3.14 The availability of the full size pitch at Westfield Academy is available to the community from 17:00-22:00 Monday to Friday and from 09:00-14:00 on Saturday and Sunday. The pitch at the Meriden Community Centre is open from 09:00 until 22:00 Monday until Sunday.

Quality

- 3.15 Depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of an artificial grass pitch usually lasts for approximately ten years and it is the age of the surface, combined with maintenance levels, which most commonly affects quality.

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3.16 Taking the above into account, the quality of third generation artificial grass pitches across Watford have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the FA²¹) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

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

3.17 The table below summarises the quality of third generation artificial grass pitches in Watford.

Table 3.3: Summary of quality

Site ID	Site	Year installed/ resurfaced	Quality
15	Meriden Community Centre	2004/2015	Good
30	Westfield Academy	2016	Good

3.18 The full size pitch at Westfield Academy is good quality. The non-technical audit found no issues, with the current surface being of a high quality. Likewise, the small sided pitch at the Meriden Centre is also good quality, with no issues identified.

3.19 Consultation with local clubs also suggests that these pitches are of a good quality and that they play a crucial role in supporting midweek training demand in Watford.

Ancillary facilities

3.20 At Westfield School there is a dedicated portacabin facility which services both the grass football pitches and third generation artificial grass pitch. The School has significant football usage on its site and expresses a facility aspiration to develop a new, high quality changing pavilion with adjoining education and social space.

3.21 The ancillary offer at the Meriden Centre is good quality and adequately services all demand for the third generation artificial grass pitch.

3.3: Demand

3.22 Both third generation artificial grass pitches currently servicing Watford are well used, especially midweek during winter months due to accommodating training demand, with both operating close to capacity.

Football

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

²¹ See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for third generation artificial grass pitches

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Training demand

- 3.24 Getting access to good quality, affordable training facilities is a problem for many clubs throughout the country. In the winter months, midweek training is only possible at floodlit facilities.
- 3.25 The FA's long-term ambition is to provide every affiliated team in England the opportunity to train once per week on a floodlit third generation artificial grass pitch, together with priority access for every FA Charter Standard Community Club through a partnership agreement. In order to calculate the number of football teams a third generation artificial grass pitch can service for training, peak time access is considered to be from 18:00 until 22:00 Tuesday-Thursday resulting in an overall peak period of 12 hours per week. Mondays and Fridays are not included within this calculation as it is considered that most teams do not want to train in such close proximity to a weekend match.
- 3.26 Full size third generation artificial grass pitches are divided into thirds or quarters for training purposes meaning they can accommodate either three or four teams per hour and either 36 or 48 teams per week (during the peak training period). Based on an average of these numbers, it is estimated that 38 teams can be accommodated on one full size pitch for training.
- 3.27 Given the above, with 92 teams currently affiliated to Watford there is a need for 2.4 full size third generation artificial grass pitches to service affiliated football demand. It is considered that currently 1.5 pitches are provided through Westfield Academy and the Meriden Centre. And thus, a shortfall of one full size pitch (rounded up from 0.9).
- 3.28 When accounting for future demand of 24 teams (established through potential club growth plans for population forecasts) there is a need for three full size third generation artificial grass pitches. With 1.5 pitches provided through Westfield Academy and the Meriden Centre, this equates to a future shortfall of 1.5 pitches.
- 3.29 Based on the pitch booking information provided by Westfield Academy, the midweek peak time is operating at 94% capacity. However, just 18% of this usage is from clubs based in Watford. Most of the usage is imported demand from clubs based in neighbouring authorities. On this basis, it can be said that there is demand for additional provision to service teams from Watford.

Match play demand

- 3.30 Improving grass pitch quality is one way to increase the capacity at sites but given the cost of doing such work and the continued maintenance required (and associated costs), alternatives need to be considered that can offer a more sustainable model for the future of football. The substitute to grass pitches is the use of third generation artificial grass pitches for competitive matches, providing that the pitch is FA approved, floodlit and available for community use during the peak period.
- 3.31 In Watford, both third generation artificial grass pitches have undergone testing and are therefore FA approved to accommodate competitive matches. The caveat to this is that programming may need to be adjusted to allow more teams to utilise the facilities and pricing can often be a barrier as grass pitches remain generally cheaper to access.
- 3.32 Neither of the pitches are accessed by Watford based teams for match play. However, Westfield Academy is blocked booked by Chorleywood Common FC (from Three Rivers) to accommodate a proportion of its matchday fixtures on both Saturdays and Sundays.

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- 3.33 Scenarios will be run in the Strategy to further test the need for third generation artificial grass pitches to accommodate competitive demand from within Watford.

3.4: Supply and demand analysis

- 3.34 In conclusion, there is an insufficient supply of full size third generation artificial grass pitches to meet current and anticipated future football training demand based on the FA model in Watford.
- 3.35 The current position is a shortfall of one full size third generation artificial grass pitch and the future position is a shortfall of 1.5 pitches. However, considering that most of the peak time demand at Westfield Academy is taken up by teams from outside of Watford, it is considered that there is further demand for pitches to be provided.
- 3.36 In theory, if the third generation artificial grass pitch at Woodside Leisure Centre (youth 11v11 size) is developed this would satisfy the additional demand created from Westfield Academy being used by non-Watford teams.
- 3.37 Therefore, even with the above, there remains a current shortfall in Watford of one full size third generation artificial grass pitch and a future shortfall of 1.5 pitches. As earlier mentioned, there are several operators which aspire to develop further third generation artificial grass pitch provision in Watford. However, it is also likely that the future shortfall (0.5 pitches) can be suitably absorbed from the cross boundary movements of teams into Hertsmere, Three Rivers and Dacorum with several third generation artificial grass pitch projects identified in each respective Local Football Facility Plan.
- 3.38 For rugby union, there is no current supply of third generation artificial grass pitches. As previously stated, the Watford area is a potential target area for the future delivery for provision.

3.5: Summary

- ◀ **There is an insufficient supply of full size third generation artificial grass pitches to meet current and anticipated future football training demand based on the FA training model in Watford**
- ◀ There is one full size (Westfield Academy) and one small sided third generation artificial grass pitch (The Meriden Centre) in Watford
- ◀ Both third generation artificial grass pitches are FA approved and can therefore be used to host competitive matches and were both assessed as good quality. No quality issues were identified on either pitch
- ◀ There are no World Rugby compliant third generation artificial grass pitches in Watford. The nearest is in neighbouring authority, Three Rivers. However, the Watford area is a potential target area for the future delivery for provision
- ◀ Westfield Academy aspires to deliver a new changing pavilion to service its third generation artificial grass and grass football pitches
- ◀ There is a current shortfall of one full size pitches in Watford, which increases to 1.5 pitches when accounting for future demand

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

PART 4: CRICKET PITCHES

4.1: Introduction

- 4.1 Hertfordshire Cricket serves as the governing and representative body for cricket across Watford. Its aim is to promote the game at all levels through partnerships with professional and recreational cricketing clubs, and other appropriate agencies.
- 4.2 It is working in partnership with the ECB to deliver its refreshed strategy called “Inspiring Generations” which was announced in January 2019. It builds on the strong foundations laid by Cricket Unleashed and supports the growth of cricket in England and Wales between 2020 and 2024. At the heart of this strategy is a single unifying purpose, which gets to the core of what the game can do for society both on and off the field to ensure that cricket is in an even stronger position that it is in 2019.
- 4.3 This five-year plan for 2020-24 sets six clear priorities of action. These are:
- ◀ Grow and nurture the core
 - ◀ Inspire through elite teams
 - ◀ Make cricket accessible
 - ◀ Engage children and young people
 - ◀ Transforming women’s and girl’s cricket
 - ◀ Supporting communities

Consultation

- 4.4 There are two ECB affiliated clubs based in Watford which both responded to consultation requested as detailed below, resulting in a 100% response rate. Consultation was undertaken with Hertfordshire Cricket to give a strategic overview of cricket in Watford.

Table 4.1: Summary of consultation

Club name	Responded?
Watford Town CC	Yes (face to face meeting)
West Herts CC	Yes (face to face meeting)

- 4.5 In addition to these clubs, there are also 11 non-ECB affiliated clubs competing in Watford.

4.2: Supply

- 4.6 There are ten grass wicket squares in Watford located across six sites. Of these, eight are available for community use as can be seen below. Unavailable provision is located at Watford Grammar School for Boys.

Table 4.2: Summary of supply

Site ID	Site	Ward	Community use?	No. of squares
3	Cassiobury Park	Park	Yes	1
10	King George V Playing Field	Holywell	Yes	2
25	Watford Grammar School for Boys	Park	No	2
26	Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field)	Park	Yes	1

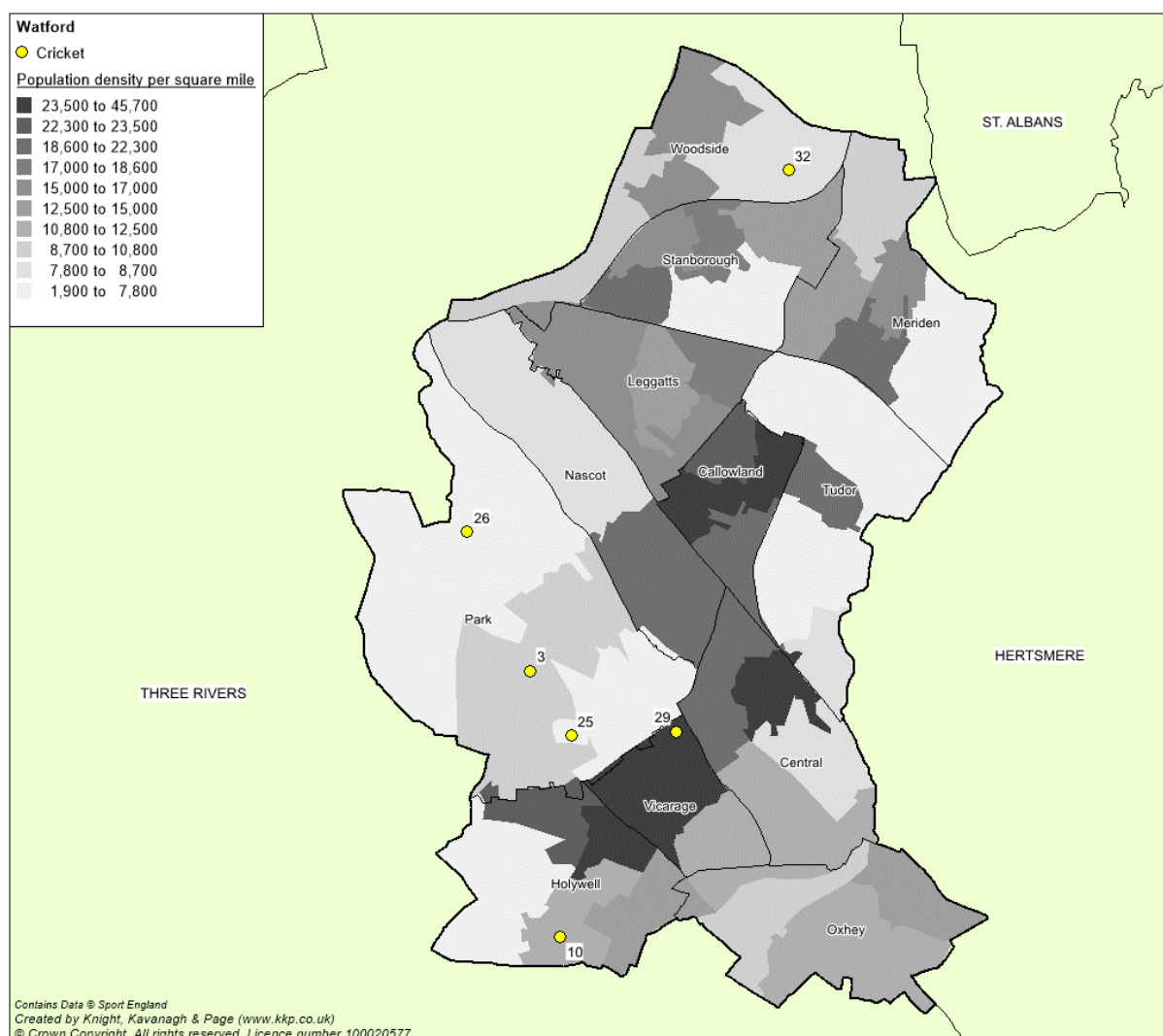
WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Site ID	Site	Ward	Community use?	No. of squares
29	West Herts Sports Club	Vicarage	Yes	1
32	Woodside Playing Field	Woodside	Yes	3

Non-turf pitches

- 4.7 The ECB highlights that non-turf pitches which follow its TS6 guidance²² on performance standards are suitable for high level, senior play and are considered able to take 60 matches per season, although this may include training sessions via the use of mobile nets.
- 4.8 In Watford, there are two non-turf pitches that accompany grass wicket squares, these are located at Woodside Playing Field (aligned to use from Watford Town CC) and one at Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field).

Figure 4.1: Location of cricket pitches



²² <http://www.cag.org.uk/docs/ecb-non-turf-pitches-ts6-final-328.pdf>

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Future supply

- 4.9 There are no plans to create new cricket provision in Watford. However, consultation with West Herts CC highlights an aspiration to either access a good quality square away from its home ground or to develop a new cricket square in its locality to help support both its large junior section and senior match play during peak times.

Ball strike issues

- 4.10 ECB identifies a growing issue in relation to potential ball strike issues (which can result in damage to properties) where there is either new cricket provision being put in place close to houses, or more commonly, a new housing development being built near to a cricket pitch.
- 4.11 As such, the ECB recommends that the clubs and organisations seek to have a ball strike risk assessment undertaken at an early stage of planning; further information can be provided by the ECB.

Pitch quality

- 4.12 The quality of cricket pitches across Watford have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the ECB²³) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

- 4.13 The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>80%), Standard (50-79%), Poor (<49%).
- 4.14 Maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of cricket; if the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous. As an example, if a square is poor quality, a ball can bounce erratically on a wicket and become a danger to nearby players.
- 4.15 The table below summarises the quality of cricket pitches that are available for community use in Watford.

Table 4.3: Summary of quality

Site ID	Site	No. of squares	Square quality
3	Cassiobury Park	1	Poor
10	King George V Playing Field	2	Poor
26	Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field)	1	Standard
29	West Herts Sports Club	1	Good
32	Woodside Playing Field	2	Standard
		1	Poor

- 4.16 In total, one square is assessed as good quality, three as standard and four as poor quality.
- 4.17 The good quality pitch is located at West Herts CC. It has a dedicated groundman which maintains the site on a regular basis and to a high standard.

²³ See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for cricket pitches

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- 4.18 Two pitches at Woodside Playing Field and one pitch at Watford Grammar School for Boys are assessed as standard quality.
- 4.19 Watford Town CC also highlight that its main square, located at Woodside Playing Field is of a standard quality, although notes it is heavily compacted and would benefit from being re-laid.
- 4.20 Most cricket pitches in Watford are assessed as poor quality (four). The non-technical assessment found little evidence of wickets being regularly rolled and repaired after competitive matches.
- 4.21 Watford Town and West Herts cricket clubs both offer several teams at senior level with matches usually played on Saturdays. Consequently, these teams must play at alternate sites around Watford, these are (or have been in the past), Woodside Playing Field (square two and three), Cassiobury Park or King George V Playing Field. Both clubs raise concerns around the general maintenance undertaken on the cricket squares and as such the clubs consider that prepared wickets can be, at times, dangerous for competitive play. The key issue raised by clubs with these squares is in relation to a ball bouncing erratically on the wicket, which has the potential to harm players.
- 4.22 Other issues at these sites include wickets producing a 'slow game' which is more reflective of lower level cricket. The clubs also note that the sites are public open spaces, with the outfield generally overmarked by football pitches, and therefore maintaining provision to a good standard, for cricket, is challenging for the maintenance contractor. Further to this, it is noted that during the cross over between the football and cricket season that the quality of the cricket outfield can, at times, decrease with potentially dangerous divots occurring on the outfield as a result of football activity.
- 4.23 Regarding non turf wickets, the one provided at Watford Town CC is good quality having been resurfaced in 2018. The other, at Watford Grammar School (New Field) is standard quality.
- 4.24 To obtain a full technical assessment of wicket and pitches, the ECB recommends a Performance Quality Standard assessment. This looks at a cricket square to ascertain whether the pitch meets the Performance Quality Standards, which are benchmarked by the Institute of Groundsman. Clubs in Watford can contact Hertfordshire Cricket to arrange for a pitch advisor to undertake a Performance Quality Standard.

Table 4.4: Performance Quality Standard assessment ratings

Quality Rating	Details
Premier (High)	Where the surface is intended for Premier League play, with those within the top quartile capable of holding minor county and 1st class one day matches. May include some of the better schools and university pitches.
Club (Standard)	A Club pitch suitable for league, school and junior cricket.
Basic	An acceptable level suitable for recreational cricket and where the surface is designed and maintained within tight financial limitations such as local authorities.
Unsuitable	This is where the surface is deemed unfit or unsafe for play.

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

Ancillary facilities

- 4.26 Ancillary facility rating is primarily influenced by the type of amenities which are available on a site accompanied by their quality, such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, showering provision, car parking, dedicated umpire, spectator facilities and boundary fencing.
- 4.27 The ancillary offering at West Herts Sports Club is largely outdated and is in need of refurbishment to future proof it for the next generation of sporting users at the site. The facility was built in the 1960s and whilst it has had some level of refurbishment, is still largely in need of major work to ensure it remains fit for purpose in the coming years. The facility is a mixed sport venue, and the home to cricket, football, squash and tennis clubs which all use the facilities on site.
- 4.28 The Club aspires to sell a small parcel of land it owns to a private developer to create 23 apartments on Cassio Road. The Club has outline plans to use the capital receipt of the sale of the land to reinvest back into the onsite ancillary offer.
- 4.29 Ancillary facilities at Woodside Playing Field for Watford Town CC are poor quality. There are two separate buildings on the site which the Club accesses. In the main, it has a separate clubhouse/changing facility which is especially for the Club. Whilst functional, and having no significant issues, it is dated and in need of modernisation. Further to this, if required, it can access a larger changing pavilion which is shared with other sporting users of Woodside Playing Field.
- 4.30 Watford Borough Council has developed a masterplan for Woodside Playing Fields which shows the creation of a new sports pavilion and changing facilities which would replace the current facilities on site. Watford Town CC highlights the benefits this will create to the Club and did not raise any issues with the development, which will replace its current ancillary offer.
- 4.31 The remaining changing facilities at Cassiobury Park and King George V Playing Field are to be audited as part of the winter site audit in November 2019. One key issue in relation to King George V Playing Field was raised by West Herts CC; it highlights that the changing facilities on site are closed at 18:30 on Saturdays with matches often played until 20:00 and therefore the ancillary offering is generally not considered useable or practical.

Training facilities

- 4.32 Access to cricket nets is important, particularly for pre-season/winter training. Consultation with both West Herts CC and Watford Town CC identifies that both clubs are adequately serviced by both fixed and mobile cricket nets to undertake training.
- 4.33 It is, however, noted that West Herts CC aspires to develop an artificial wicket on its site to increase the spread of training available on site and to improve mid-season training structures. If this is to be provided, it may also provide an opportunity for junior match play.
- 4.34 When asked about access to indoor provision, neither West Herts CC nor Watford Town CC raised any issues. Both suitably access provision at Francis Combe School and Watford Grammar School for Boys.

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Security of tenure

- 4.35 West Herts CC has freehold of its site and therefore has secure tenure.
- 4.36 Watford Town CC has an annual rental agreement in place with the Council which allows for priority use of the main cricket square at Woodside Playing Fields.
- 4.37 No other clubs are deemed to have unsecure tenure in Watford, despite most unaffiliated clubs renting provision from the Council, this is because it is anticipated that the Council will continue to fully provide cricket facilities, for the foreseeable future.
- 4.38 Despite the above, Grammar School for Boys (New Field) is considered to have unsecure tenure. Its current user, Old Fullarians CC, is an 'old boys' association and therefore it is based at the school through a special relationship

4.3: Demand

- 4.39 There are 13 clubs competing in Watford, generating 41 teams. As a breakdown, this equates to 22 senior men's and 19 junior boys' teams as seen below.

Table 4.5: Summary of demand

Club name	No. of competitive teams			
	Senior men's	Senior women's	Junior boys'	Junior girls'
West Herts CC	5	-	12	-
Watford Town CC	5	-	7	-
Old Fullarians CC	1	-	-	-
Watford Badshahs CC	1	-	-	-
Watford Haidery CC	2	-	-	-
Delta CC	1	-	-	-
Old Eastcotians CC	1	-	-	-
VSC CC	1	-	-	-
Nascot CC	1	-	-	-
Zahira CC	1	-	-	-
Young Stars CC	1	-	-	-
Martians CC	1	-	-	-
Church Boys CC	1	-	-	-
Total	22	-	19	-

- 4.40 Most ECB affiliated senior teams play in the Saracens Hertfordshire Cricket League and most junior teams play in the Hertfordshire Junior Cricket League, with junior teams also playing in friendly competitions when required.
- 4.41 For non-affiliated teams, play is generally on Sundays with the Middlesex Sunday League and Chess Valley Sunday League providing opportunities for social and competitive cricket.
- 4.42 Participation levels for ECB affiliated cricket clubs within Watford are strong with both clubs fielding several senior and junior teams. For non-affiliated clubs, team numbers are limited with most clubs operating just one senior team, however, this reflects the nature of these clubs which generally want to continue operating as one team clubs.

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Cricket Playing Survey

4.43 The ECB's most recent Cricket Playing Survey (2019²⁴) identified:

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

Exported demand

4.44 As of the close of the 2019 season there is one team exporting demand outside of Watford; West Herts CC 3rd senior men's team, which plays matches at Rudolph Steiner School, Dacorum.

4.45 Further to this, the Club previously accessed Queens School (Hertsmere) which has now removed its cricket square as of 2018 and then Aldenham School (Hertsmere), however, the cost of access here became cost prohibitive.

Latent/unmet demand

4.46 West Herts CC reports latent demand equating to one senior Saturday team and four junior teams. The Club highlights that it has high levels of demand which it could formalise into dedicated playing teams but it cannot currently access suitable provision during the peak time periods.

4.47 No club responding to consultation identified any unmet demand

Last Man Stands

4.48 Last Man Stands was founded in 2005. The social outdoor eight-a-side T20 cricket game is played midweek, lasts approximately two hours and is generally played on non-turf wickets. All eight wickets are required to bowl a team out so when the seventh wicket falls, the 'Last Man Stands' on his own. This shorter format of the game has encouraged more people to participate in the sport and is increasing in popularity.

4.49 There is no Last Man Stands league currently in Watford, with the closest in operation located in Milton Keynes and Aylesbury.

Future demand

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

²⁴ The source of the above data is Play-Cricket.com and reflects club and league cricket only (for example doesn't include Women's Soft Ball Cricket, or junior cricket).

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Population increases

- 4.51 Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future (2036) based on population growth.

Table 4.6: Population increases

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group	Predicted future number of teams	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Men's (18-55)	26,169	22	1:1,246	27,474	23	1
Senior Women's (18-55)	26,074	0	0	27,149	0	0
Junior Boys (7-18)	7,495	19	1:416	8,673	21	3
Junior Girls (7-18)	7,103	0	0	8,439	0	0

- 4.52 When team generation rates are applied across Watford there is considered enough demand to create one senior men's team and three junior boys' teams.
- 4.53 Please note that due to limited women's or girls' teams currently existing in Watford, team generation rates automatically predict that none will be created in the future as it takes current participation as a baseline.
- 4.54 It is important to note that population growth does not account for specific targeted development work within certain areas or focused towards certain groups. For example, female cricket growth at women's and girls' age groups is relatively small, however, there are planned increases in activity around female participation through both All Stars Cricket and a programme of softball cricket in 2018 which are likely to reflect in growth above levels shown through team generation rates.

All Stars cricket

- 4.55 In partnership with the ECB and Chance to Shine cricket clubs in Watford can register to become an ECB All Stars Cricket Centre. Once registered, a club can deliver the programme which aims to introduce cricket to children aged from five to eight. Subsequently, this may lead to increased interest and demand for junior cricket at clubs. The programme seeks to achieve the following aims:
- ◀ Increase cricket activity for five to eight year olds in the school and club environment
 - ◀ Develop consistency of message in both settings to aid transition
 - ◀ Improve generic movement skills for children, using cricket as the vehicle
 - ◀ Make it easier for new volunteers to support and deliver in the club environment
 - ◀ Use fun small sided games to enthuse new children and volunteers to follow and play the game
- 4.56 In Watford, there is one All Stars Cricket Centre, this is located at West Herts CC. No other club is currently registered for the programme.
- 4.57 The ECB has launched Dynamos Cricket, a new programme to inspire kids aged 8-11 to play cricket. Dynamos Cricket is the latest launch by the ECB, building on the existing All Stars programme for 5-8-year-olds. Participants will continue to develop their skills and be introduced to a countdown style of cricket match.

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Softball cricket

- 4.58 Softball cricket is an ECB initiative aimed at women and girls to increase participation in cricket as a sport. The aim of softball cricket sections are enjoyment and participation; without pads, a hardball, a heavy bat and limited rules. Sessions follow a festival format with each session running for a maximum of two and half hours, shorter than traditional formats. Playing equipment is supplied by festival organisers, with all participants provided with a t-shirt for taking part.
- 4.59 Each match consists of two teams of six to eight people, with everyone having an opportunity to bat and bowl. Each team bats once, with a pair of batters facing two or three overs. Batters are dismissed in traditional ways, but bowling can be either overarm or underarm, depending on the bowler's preference. Each batting team starts with a score of 200 runs, with runs added to this total by running between the wickets or by hitting the ball to a boundary. Two runs are added to the total for each wide ball; whilst five runs are removed when a batter is out.

Participation increases

- 4.60 Watford Town CC highlights a specific aspiration to develop a dedicated Saturday senior men's team which it states would be able to play competitive fixtures at Woodside Playing Fields.
- 4.61 West Herts CC does not highlight any specific future demand aspirations. As previously mentioned, it has expressed latent demand equating to one senior Saturday men's team and four junior team and therefore perceives itself as being unable to grow at this time.

Future demand summary

- 4.62 In conclusion, future demand for senior cricket equates to two senior men's teams. This is based on future growth aspirations from Watford Town CC and anticipated population growth identified by team generation rates.

Peak time demand

- 4.63 An analysis of match play identifies peak time demand for senior cricket as Saturday, with most teams playing at this time (11 teams). The remaining senior teams play on Sundays (nine teams) or midweek (two teams).
- 4.64 For junior cricket, peak time demand is midweek, with all clubs' youth sections playing between Monday and Friday. As a result, squares have greater capacity to carry junior demand as play can be spread across numerous days (providing the squares are not overplayed).

4.3: Capacity analysis

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

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

Table 4.7: Summary of cricket pitch carrying capacity

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

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

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

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Table 4.8: Capacity analysis

Site ID	Site name	Site users *	Security of tenure	Community use?	No. of squares	Pitch quality	No. of grass wickets	Capacity (sessions per season)	Actual play (sessions per season)	Capacity rating (sessions per season)	Potential spare capacity for senior Saturday cricket?	Potential spare capacity for senior Sunday cricket?
3	Cassiobury Park	West Herts CC Nascot CC Young Stars CC Martians CC	Secure	Yes	1	Poor	12	0	27	27	No	No
10	King George V Playing Field	West Herts CC Old Eastcotians CC Watford Haidery CC VSC CC Church Boys CC	Secure	Yes	2	Poor	9	0	24	24	No	No
							9	0	22	22	No	No
26	Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field)	Old Fullarians CC	Unsecure	Yes	1	Standard	8	32	14	18	No	No
29	West Herts Sports Club	West Herts CC	Secure	Yes	1	Good	14	70	100	30	No	No
32	Woodside Playing Field	Watford Town CC Delta CC Zahira CC	Secure	Yes	3	Standard (Square One)	17	68	65	3	No	No
						Standard (Square Two)	12	48	18	30	Yes	Yes
						Poor (Square Three)	12	0	16	16	No	No

4.68 * Many non-ECB affiliated clubs are considered to be nomadic in Watford and on occasion change home venue during the season to play competitive cricket fixtures. For the purpose of the analysis, the site in which clubs play the most fixtures has been utilised.

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Spare capacity

- 4.69 The next step is to ascertain whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be deemed 'actual spare capacity' by which it is available at peak time. There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for regular training sessions, or to protect the quality of the site.
- 4.70 Cricket squares also need to be able to accommodate and sustain the average number of home fixtures senior teams play per season. For Saturday senior cricket, this is 12 matches per season and for Sunday cricket it is seven matches per season. It should be noted that the average number of cricket matches per season between non ECB affiliated and ECB affiliated clubs does highly differentiate with affiliated clubs competing in more matches throughout a season.
- 4.71 Woodside Playing Field Square One has been excluded from the capacity analysis on the basis that it does not exhibit enough spare capacity to accommodate another senior team. It current has spare capacity equating to three match equivalent sessions per season and therefore could not realistically accommodate any further senior play without a deterioration in quality. Further to this, the square is at capacity during the peak time for senior match play Saturday, and therefore could realistically only accommodate Sunday match play (if sufficient capacity was available).
- 4.72 Although there is potential spare capacity of 18 match equivalent sessions per season at Watford Grammar School (New Fields), this has been discounted as the Club using the site (Old Fullerians CC) has unsecure tenure.
- 4.73 Woodside Playing Field Square Two is considered to have actual spare capacity, equating to 30 match equivalent sessions per season. This is both on Saturdays and Sundays and can potentially equate to one senior team using the square in the peak period on Saturday or two teams assigned to the square on Sundays (based on a home vs away rotation). Due to the number of teams this square can realistically accommodate it is considered that there are 12 match equivalent sessions per season available on Saturday and 14 on Sundays. For the remaining sites in Watford, there is not considered to be spare capacity as a result of the current quality shortfalls.

Overplay

- 4.74 There are five sites in Watford considered to be overplayed by a total of 119 match equivalent sessions per season.
- 4.75 Largely, overplay in Watford is directly attributed to the quality of the cricket squares, with four of the five squares being assessed as poor quality. As detailed earlier, poor quality cricket squares carry a capacity rating of 0 and therefore any play attributed to these facilities equates to overplay. As a reminder, the four poor quality cricket squares are located at Cassiobury Park, King George V Playing Field and Woodside Playing Fields.
- 4.76 In contrast, West Herts Sports Club has a good quality cricket square which is overplayed. Overplay at this site is as a result of the square accommodating around 100 matches per season. Overplay at this site also aligns to the latent demand identified by the Club (one senior men's team and four junior teams) which cannot currently be accommodated due to the level of overplay.

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Table 4.9: Summary of overplay

Site ID	Site name	Number of squares overplayed	Overplay (matches per season)
3	Cassiobury Park	1	27
10	King George V Playing Field	2	46
29	West Herts Sports Club	1	30
32	Woodside Playing Field	1	16

- 4.77 The highest level of overplay in Watford is based at King George V Playing Field (across two squares) and West Herts Sports Club.

4.4: Supply and demand analysis

- 4.78 Consideration must be given to the extent to which current provision can accommodate current and future demand for both senior and cricket. The tables below look at actual spare capacity on grass wicket squares against overplay, latent and future demand highlighted during consultation and population growth. Match equivalent sessions for future demand are calculated using the average number of matches played per season (12 matches for senior men's Saturday teams, and seven senior men's Sunday teams) accompanied with any anticipated growth from team generation rates.

Table 4.10: Supply and demand analysis (senior Saturday cricket)

Actual spare capacity (sessions per season)	Demand (match sessions)				
	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Latent demand	Total
12	119	107	24 ²⁵	12 ²⁶	143

- 4.79 As seen in the above table, there is an overall shortfall for senior cricket on grass wicket squares in Watford amounting to 107 match equivalent sessions, meaning supply is considered insufficient to meet current demand. When accounting for future demand aspirations for the ECB, the overall identified shortfall increases to 143 match equivalent sessions per season.
- 4.80 Further to this, an analysis has been undertaken for senior Saturday cricket as seen in the table below. As there is no identified future or latent demand for senior cricket on Sundays the current shortfall of 107 match equivalent sessions per season does not increase.

Table 4.11: Supply and demand analysis (senior Sunday cricket)

Actual spare capacity (sessions per season)	Demand (match sessions)				
	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Latent demand	Total
12	119	107	-	-	107

- 4.81 In relation to junior cricket, it is collectively based around Watford Town CC and West Herts CC with clubs cumulatively operating 19 teams. Population growth identified in Table 2.5 highlights future demand of three junior teams and expressed latent demand from West Herts CC equates to four junior teams. As such, a total of seven junior teams needs to be accounted for in the overall supply and demand balance.

²⁵ Based on growth aspirations from Watford Town CC and TGRs

²⁶ Based on latent demand identified by West Herts CC

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- 4.82 The average number of games played per season varies considerably amongst junior cricket, with younger teams generally playing fewer fixtures. In Watford, junior teams on average, play four home fixtures per season. As such, 28 match equivalent sessions per season need to be accounted for. In theory, this can currently be accommodated at Woodside Playing Fields (Square Two) or on other Council operated sites if quality improvements are undertaken.
- 4.83 West Herts CC is unable to accommodate additional fixtures on its cricket square due to identified overplay. It is, however, noted that it aspires to develop a non-turf pitch which could help with accommodating competitive fixtures for junior teams. Watford Town CC has limited spare capacity current but has scope for an increased capacity if quality improvements are undertaken on the site.
- 4.84 In summary, there is an insufficient supply of cricket provision to cater for current and future senior demand across Watford. In theory, future and latent junior demand can be accommodated in Watford, although this reduce available capacity for senior cricket at Woodside Playing Fields.

4.5: Summary

- ◀ **There is insufficient supply of cricket provision to cater for current and future senior demand across Watford**
- ◀ There are ten grass wicket squares in Watford located across six sites. Of these, eight are available for community use over five sites
- ◀ In Watford, there are two non-turf pitches that accompany grass wicket squares, these are located at Woodside Playing Field (aligned to use from Watford Town CC) and one at Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field)
- ◀ Most clubs in Watford are considered to have secure tenure at their primary home venue. Old Fullarians CC is the sole club with unsecure tenure
- ◀ The non-technical assessment of community available grass wicket squares in Watford found one square to be good quality, three standard and four poor quality
- ◀ The poor quality squares are located at Cassiobury Park, King George V Playing Field and Woodside Playing Field
- ◀ The audit of ancillary facilities determines that provision at both Woodside Playing Field and Watford Town CC are both outdated and in need of improvement
- ◀ There is a masterplan for Woodside Playing Fields which outlines plans for a new changing pavilion and clubhouse which would benefit Watford Town CC and other site users
- ◀ West Herts Sports Club aspires to sell a portion of its site to invest the capital receipt into improving facilities at the site
- ◀ West Herts CC aspires to develop a non-turf pitch on site to improve training and match opportunities
- ◀ There are 13 clubs competing in Watford, generating 41 teams. As a breakdown, this equates to 22 senior men's and 19 junior boys' teams
- ◀ West Herts CC exports senior demand outside of Watford to accommodate cricket provision. It also identifies latent demand equating to one senior men's and four junior boys' teams
- ◀ Future demand in Watford equates to one senior men's team and three junior boys' teams. This is derived from Watford Town CC and population growth
- ◀ There are five sites in Watford considered to be overplayed by a total of 119 match equivalent sessions per season

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PART 5: RUGBY UNION PITCHES

5.1: Introduction

- 5.1 The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is the national governing body for rugby union. It is split into six areas across the Country with a workforce team that covers development, coaching, governance and competitions, Watford falls into Area 2. A full-time development officer is responsible for Watford (as part of the wider region) and works closely with all clubs to maximise their potential. This work involves developing club structures, working towards the RFU accreditation (Clubmark) and the development of school-club structures.
- 5.2 The rugby union playing season operates from September to May.

Consultation

- 5.3 There are two rugby union clubs currently playing within Watford, both of which, responded to consultation, resulting in a 100% response rate.

Table 5.1: Summary of consultation

Club name	Responded?
Watford RFC	Yes (face to face meeting)
Fullerians RFC	Yes (face to face meeting)

Rugby definitions

- 5.4 Rugby in England (as specified by the RFU) is played in the following formats and as such these references are used throughout this section to refer to supply (pitch types) and demand (team types).

Table 5.2: Rugby definitions

Team reference	Age group	Team type	Pitch type
Senior men	19-45 years old	Senior	Senior
Senior women	19-45 years old	Senior	Senior
Colts	17-18 years old	Under 18 - Under 19	Senior
Junior boys	13-16 years old	Under 14 - Under 17	Junior
Junior girls	13-16 years old	Under 14 - Under 17	Junior
Mini rugby mixed	7-12 years old	Under 8 - Under 13	Mini

5.2: Supply

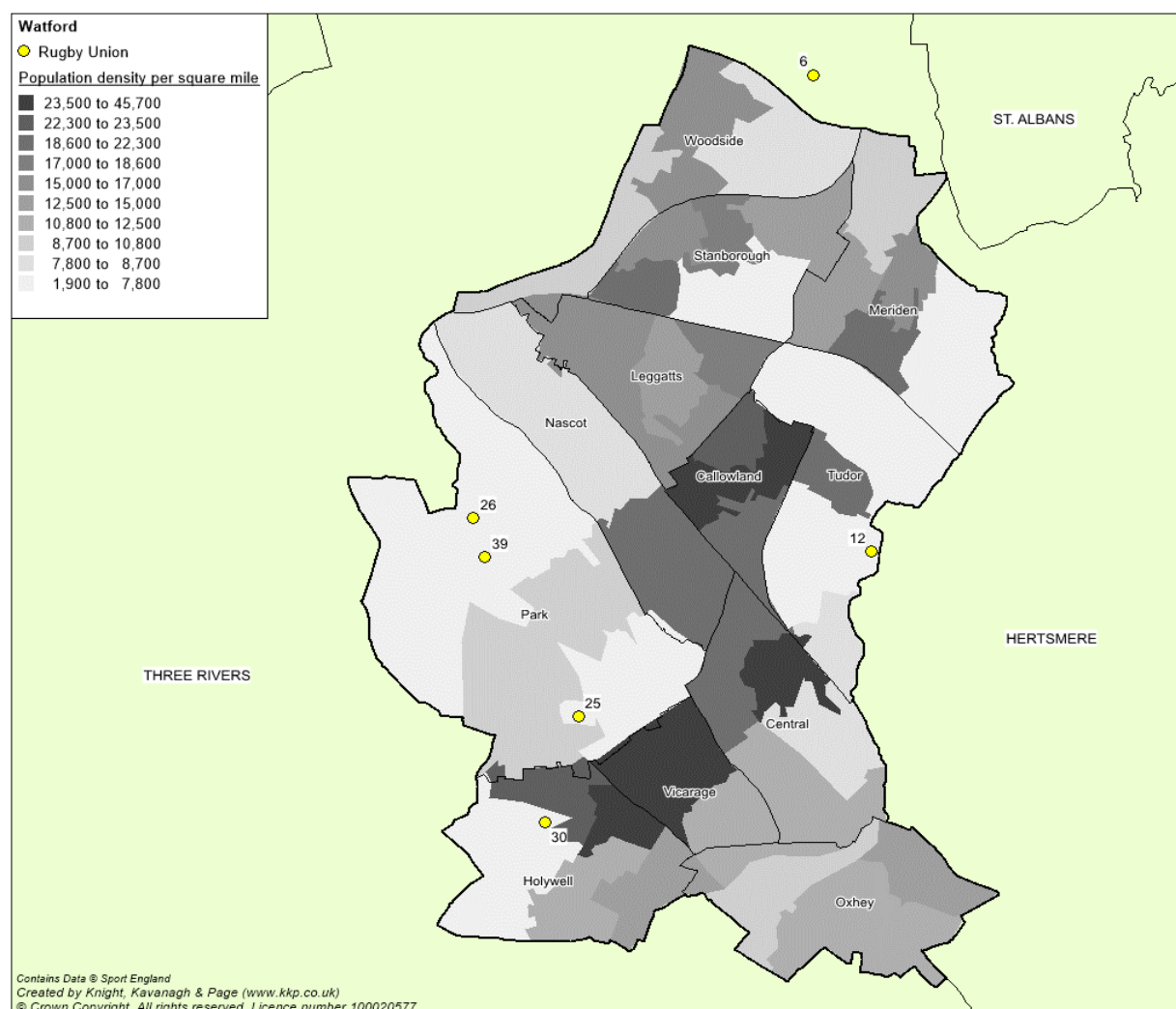
- 5.5 In total, there are 22 rugby union pitches in Watford spread across six sites, as a breakdown this consists of 13 senior pitches and nine mini pitches.
- 5.6 Of these pitches, those located at Watford Grammar School for Boys and Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field) are unavailable for community use. This is to sustain pitch quality to accommodate high levels of curricular demand.
- 5.7 Traditionally, mini and junior rugby takes place on over marked senior pitches and this is the case at Watford RFC. Fullerians RFC has dedicated mini pitches to accommodate most of its demand for mini rugby.

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Table 5.3: Summary of supply

Site ID	Site	Ward	Community use?	No. pitches
6	Francis Combe Academy	Outside	Yes	1
12	Knutsford Playing Fields	Tudor	Yes	2
25	Watford Grammar School for Boys	Park	No	2
26	Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field)	Park	No	4
30	Westfield Academy	Holywell	Yes	1
39	Fullerians RFC	Park	Yes	12

Figure 5.1: Location of rugby union pitches



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- 5.8 The audit only identifies dedicated, line marked pitches. For rugby union pitch dimension sizes please see the table below.

Table 5.4: Rugby pitch dimensions

Team type (ages)	Team reference	Maximum pitch dimensions (metres) ²⁷
Under8	Mini	45 x 22
Under9	Mini	60 x 30
Under10	Mini	60 x 35
Under11	Mini	60 x 43
Under12	Mini	60 x 43
Under13	Junior	90 x 60 (60 x 43 for girls)
Under14 - Adult	Senior	100 x 70 ²⁸

Future supply

- 5.9 There are no identified plans to create new rugby union pitches in Watford.

Security of tenure

- 5.10 Both rugby union clubs in Watford have secure tenure. Watford RFC has a long term lease arrangement in place with the Council for access to its pavilion and grass pitches and Fullarians RFC has two separate arrangements in place, one with Hertfordshire County Council and one with the Council with more than 40 years remaining on each.

Pitch quality

- 5.11 The quality of rugby pitches across Watford have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by RFU²⁹) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

- 5.12 The methodology for assessing rugby pitch quality looks at two key elements; the maintenance programme and the level of drainage on each pitch. An overall quality based on both drainage and maintenance can then be generated. The agreed rating for each pitch type also represents actions required to improve pitch quality. A breakdown of actions required based on the ratings can be seen below:

Table 5.5: Definition of maintenance categories

Category	Definition
M0	Action is significant improvements to maintenance programme
M1	Action is minor improvements to maintenance programme
M2	Action is no improvements to maintenance programme

²⁷ Recommended run off area for all pitch types requires five-metres each way and a minimum in-goal length of six metres.

²⁸ Minimum dimensions of 94 x 68 metres are accepted.

²⁹ See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for rugby pitches

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Table 5.6: Definition of drainage categories

Category	Definition
D0	Action is pipe drainage system is needed on pitch
D1	Action is pipe drainage is needed on pitch
D2	Action is slit drainage is needed on pitch
D3	No action is needed on pitch drainage

Table 5.7: Quality rating matrix

		Maintenance		
		Poor (M0)	Adequate (M1)	Good (M2)
Drainage	Natural Inadequate (D0)	Poor	Poor	Standard
	Natural Adequate (D1)	Poor	Standard	Good
	Pipe Drained (D2)	Standard	Standard	Good
	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	Standard	Good	Good

- 5.13 The figures are based upon a pipe drained system at 5m centres that has been installed in the last eight years and a slit drained system at 1m centres that has been installed in the last five years.

Table 5.8: Summary of quality

Site ID	Site name	Community use?	Number of pitches/types	Floodlit?	Non-technical assessment score	Quality rating
6	Francis Combe Academy	Yes - unused	1 senior	No	M0/D1	Poor
12	Knutsford Playing Fields	Yes	2 senior	No	M0/D1 M0/D0	Poor
30	Westfield Academy	Yes - unused	1 senior	No	M0/D1	Poor
39	Fullerians RFC	Yes	5 senior 7 mini	1 floodlit senior pitch	M2/D1	Good

- 5.14 Of the community available pitches in Watford, there are five good quality senior pitches and seven good quality mini pitches. There are also four poor quality senior pitches (across three sites) provided at Knutsford Playing Fields (Watford RFC), Francis Combe Academy and Westfield Academy.
- 5.15 All pitches provided at Fullerians RFC are good quality, the Club employs a dedicated groundsman to undertake all maintenance on site which ensures that the technical specifications of pitch maintenance are delivered to a high standard. Further to this, the Club owns various pieces of equipment to help sustain quality standards.
- 5.16 In contrast, pitches provided at Knutsford Playing Field (Watford RFC) are poor quality. These pitches are owned by the Council and maintained by Veolia as part the Club's long term lease agreement. Maintenance consists of verti-draining and chain harrowing on an annual basis with regular cuts throughout the season, however, this level of maintenance falls short of the requirements to acquire an M1 ranking/standard quality (as determined by RFU). It is noted that the Club in partnership with the RFU and the Council installed pipe drainage on part of its main senior pitch, although it is reported that there are still significant issues with drainage.

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- 5.17 Pitches located at Francis Combe Academy and Westfield are assessed as poor quality due to receiving relatively basic maintenance regimes.
- 5.18 Although not available for community use, provision at both Watford Grammar School for Boys and Watford grammar School for Boys (New Field) is assessed as standard quality with the School reporting it operates a robust maintenance programme and that its pitch drainage is suitably adequate for curricular need.

Ancillary facilities

- 5.19 From a club perspective, both Watford RFC and Fullerians RFC are serviced by good quality facilities. In 2011, Watford RFC opened a refurbished clubhouse and changing rooms. Consultation with the Club highlights that facilities remain of a good quality. Whilst not a current problem, the Club did raise a potential issue around the future growth of its mini and junior section and the potential capacity constraints of the facility. This is particularly notable around women's and girls' rugby which mainly overlaps with junior boys' rugby on Sundays.
- 5.20 In 2018, Fullerians RFC opened its new clubhouse to players and the wider community. This facility meets current RFU specifications for changing rooms and is of an excellent standard for community rugby.
- 5.21 All other sites are based at education facilities, and whilst no specific issues have been raised, there is no specific clubhouse/social facilities at these sites for rugby (or other sports), other than changing rooms provided as part of the school offer.

5.3: Demand

- 5.22 Demand for rugby pitches in Watford tends to fall within the categories of organised competitive play and organised training.

Competitive play

- 5.23 There are two community rugby union clubs based in Watford; Watford RFC and Fullerians RFC. Collectively, these clubs operate a total of 34 teams.
- 5.24 Fullerians RFC is the largest club in Watford (and one of the largest in Hertfordshire), operating a total of 23 teams. As a breakdown this consists of four senior men's, one senior ladies, two colts' (one a dedicated girls' team) eight junior (two are dedicated girls' teams) and eight mini teams (one is a dedicated girls' team).
- 5.25 Watford RFC operates 11 teams, which as a breakdown consists of two senior men's, one colt, four juniors (one a dedicated girls' team) and four mini teams.
- 5.26 Competitive play for mini and junior teams mainly consists of friendly matches against other local clubs; with training weekends often built into the season, allowing players to develop core skills and tactical awareness. Junior teams will also compete in County level cup competitions as an introduction to competition rugby. Colts teams, Under17 (juniors) and Under19 (seniors) often compete in organised league structures; providing frequent competitive fixtures; with the leagues acting as a bridge to senior rugby.

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Table 5.9: Summary of demand

Club	Site	Number and type of rugby union teams			
		Senior	Colts	Junior	Mini
Fullerians RFC	Fullerians RFC	5	2	8	8
Watford RFC	Knutsford Playing Field	2	1	4	4
Total		7	3	12	12

Training demand

- 5.27 Throughout the Country, many rugby teams train at their home ground on match pitches. As a result, usage is concentrated which reduces the capacity for match play on these pitches and means they are more likely to be overplayed. A key factor in determining the extent of training on match pitches is the presence of floodlighting.
- 5.28 An alternative to training on floodlit grass pitches is via a World Rugby compliant third generation artificial grass pitch, the nearest, of which, is provided in in Three Rivers, at Joan of Arc Catholic School. For an artificial grass pitch to be suitable for contact rugby, it must have a third generation artificial grass pitch and must be approved by World Rugby.
- 5.29 A World Rugby compliant pitch also enables the transfer of match demand from grass pitches onto third generation artificial grass pitches, which alleviates overplay of grass pitches and as a result protects quality. The RFU Investment Strategy considers sites where grass rugby pitches are over capacity and where an artificial grass pitch might support the growth of the game at the host site and for the local rugby partnership, including local clubs and education sites.
- 5.30 In Watford, both clubs access grass pitches and training areas for midweek training. Watford RFC has access to a small floodlit training area which it undertakes all its midweek training on. This is the size of a third of a senior pitch and therefore is inadequately sized to deliver structured rugby union training sessions. Midweek training consists of two training nights per week on a Tuesday and Thursday for its senior teams and a Wednesday night session for its junior teams. This total demand equates to three match equivalent sessions per week on the training area. Floodlighting on the site is basic, but currently adequate for the size of the floodlit space. It is worth noting that due to the size of the training area, demand is heavily concentrated and therefore during the winter when weather conditions are generally adverse, the facility does become unusable for the Club.
- 5.31 Fullerians RFC has one senior floodlit pitch which accommodates midweek training for all its 23 teams. The Club operates a significant midweek training offer for all its 23 teams which includes every team getting access to a midweek training slot. The pitch is used four days between Monday and Friday and demand on it equates to 12 match equivalent sessions per week, which is a significant level of midweek training demand concentrated on one pitch.

Infrequent play

- 5.32 The RFU has plans to encourage participants which have previously played rugby union to re-engage through participation as part of a more casual sporting offer. The league will provide opportunities for teams and players which are unable to play weekly or frequently for various reasons and will operate on an occasional basis. The league will also act as an entry point for newly created clubs and provide competitive opportunities. Matches will take place outside of peak time for senior rugby (Saturday PM), with Friday evenings or midweek being the most likely times for matches to take place.

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Touch rugby

- 5.33 To actively encourage participation in rugby union clubs may provide alternative offers to traditional club competition. Touch rugby is one possible format which clubs can use; touch rugby is non-contact rugby sessions, during which participants compete in teams to score tries, following similar laws to traditional rugby union formats. Clubs, schools or community organisation can establish their own touch rugby sessions or can become hosts of O2 touch rugby sessions.
- 5.34 O2 touch rugby are 90 minutes long and combine music, fitness and rugby skills. Sessions are mixed in terms of gender, ability and age and is based on touch rugby being a social activity. In Watford, just Watford RFC offers O2 touch rugby sessions. Fullarians RFC offers a social touch offer as opposed to the O2 rugby programme.

Walking rugby

- 5.35 Walking rugby is a slower game of touch rugby that is accessible for disability groups and older participants, generally aged 55 years and above. The game is less physical than traditional rugby, but the general aim remains the same, with passing and scoring laws applying; and tackling involves a two-handed touch to the waist or below. Sessions for over 55's are an opportunity for participants to become physically active and for others to re-engage with rugby at a less strenuous pace. At present there are no formal walking rugby sessions taking place in Watford

Use of artificial pitches

- 5.36 Nationally, clubs identify the use of third generation artificial grass pitches for training as a method of protecting the match pitches and providing a high quality surface for full contact practice. Competitive play continues to take place on grass pitches for the most part, with ad hoc use of third generation artificial grass pitches for fixtures in the case of unsuitable pitches due to waterlogging or frost. Further detail on use of third generation artificial grass pitches can be found in Part 3: Third Generation Artificial Grass Pitches.
- 5.37 In December 2015, the RFU announced plans to increase the supply of available World Rugby certified pitches across the country as part of its Investment Strategy. This is to be made up of 60 pitches on rugby club sites, with a further 40 pitches on other community based sites with usage agreements securing capacity for use by local rugby clubs and groups. The RFU believes increased investment into third generation artificial grass pitches will allow it to sustain and grow participation in the game given increasing pressure on grass pitches, changing player expectations, competition from other sports investing in artificial pitches and changing weather conditions.
- 5.38 There are no existing World Rugby compliant third generation artificial grass pitches in Watford, with the closest located at St Joan of Arc School in Three Rivers. There are no plans to develop new World Rugby compliant third generation artificial grass pitches in Watford at this time, but it is considered to be a strategic area for the RFU for potential future investment.

Exported/imported demand

- 5.39 There is no demand exported/demand out of Watford.

Unmet/latent demand

- 5.40 Neither of the rugby union clubs in Watford note any unmet or latent demand.

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Future demand

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

Population increases

- 5.42 Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth (2036).

Table 5.10: Population increases

Age group	Current population within age group	Current no. of teams ³⁰	Team Generation Rate	Future population within age group ³¹	Predicted future number of teams (2036)	Additional teams that may be generated from the increased population
Senior Men's (19-45)	19,096	6	1:3183	19,114	6	0
Senior Women's (19-45)	19,334	1	1:19334	18,908	1	0
Junior Boys (13-18)	3,498	11	1:318	4,460	14	3
Junior Girls (13-18)	3,187	4	1:797	4,273	5	1
Mini rugby mixed (7-12)	7,913	12	1:659	8,378	12	0

- 5.43 Population growth forecasts the creation of three junior boys' teams and one junior girls' teams.
- 5.44 It is important to note that population growth does not account for specific targeted development work within certain areas or focused towards certain groups. The RFU is focused on actively exploring opportunities to assist with the transition between late junior years and senior rugby with a specific focus on growing the senior game with the addition of adult teams (both men's and women's). This area has a strategic focus from the RFU and is being facilitated by encouraging casual play and midweek senior matches, along with O2 touch and cross pitch 7s. The RFU recognises the traditional reduction in participation numbers at this time and it is hoped that by addressing the decrease and offering alternative match times then clubs may be able to retain a larger number of players.
- 5.45 This is not the sole focus of the RFU, which is developing junior participation across Watford, based on a model of coaching sessions delivered in schools and local communities. Intentions are to form junior teams from these training groups which are linked to local schools and will use pitches at school sites, in some cases also linking to existing clubs to provide a performance pathway.

Participation increases

- 5.46 Watford RFC aspires to develop a significantly larger mini and junior section than it currently has. It plans to develop a full rugby pathway from Under6 age groups through to Under18 at each male age group and at Under11, Under15 and Under18 for girls. Based on the current number of teams it operates, this growth equates to the development of an Under10, Under11 and Under15 boys' team and Under11, Under15 and Under18 girls' teams. If this growth is realised, this will equate to a match demand of 2.25 match equivalent sessions per week.

³⁰ Colts teams are accounted for as junior teams.

³¹ There is potential that the ONS projections may be under estimating future demand when compared to housing growth figures and as such, this should be subject to periodic review.

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- 5.47 Fullerians RFC highlights future demand for one additional senior ladies' team which equates to 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Future demand summary

- 5.48 Total future demand in Watford is based on adding population and participation together. Population growth forecasts the creation of four junior teams (equating to two match equivalent sessions) and club aspirations equating to one senior ladies', three junior and three mini teams which equates to 2.75 match equivalent sessions.

Education

- 5.49 Rugby union is traditionally a popular sport within independent schools; however, the RFU is also active in developing rugby union in local state schools through the All Schools programme launched in September 2012. This aims to increase the number of secondary state schools playing rugby union, with such schools linking to a local team of RFU rugby development officers (RDOs) which deliver coaching sessions and offer support to establish rugby union as part of the curricular and extracurricular programme. Francis Combe School has been engaged with the RFU All Schools programme in the past but does not currently do so.
- 5.50 Watford Grammar School for Boys is not engaged in the scheme but is considered to operate a strong rugby union programme. It has multiple teams in each age group and competes in high level school competition against many independent schools with rugby specialisms.

5.4: Capacity analysis

- 5.51 The capacity for pitches to regularly accommodate competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of playing rugby. In extreme circumstances, it can result in the inability of a pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.
- 5.52 To enable an accurate supply and demand assessment of rugby pitches, the following assumptions are applied to site by site analysis:
- ◀ All sites that are used for competitive rugby matches (regardless of whether this is secured community use) are included on the supply side
 - ◀ Use of school pitches by schools increases demand by one match equivalent session, unless school activity levels are known
 - ◀ All competitive play is on senior sized pitches (except for where mini pitches are provided).
 - ◀ From Under13 upwards, teams play 15 v15 and use a full pitch
 - ◀ Mini teams (Under6-Uunder12) play on half of a senior pitch i.e. two teams per senior pitch or a dedicated mini pitch
 - ◀ For senior and youth teams the current level of play per week is set at 0.5 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis (assumes half of matches will be played away)
 - ◀ For mini teams playing on a senior pitch, play per week is set at 0.25 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis and playing across half of one senior pitch
 - ◀ Senior men's rugby generally takes place on Saturday afternoons
 - ◀ Senior women's rugby generally takes place on Sunday afternoons
 - ◀ Junior rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings
 - ◀ Mini rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings
 - ◀ Training that takes place on club pitches is reflected by the addition of match equivalent sessions to current usage levels

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- 5.53 As a guide, the RFU has set a standard number of matches that each pitch should be able to accommodate, set out below.

Table 5.11: Summary of rugby pitch carrying capacity

	Match equivalent sessions		
	Maintenance score		
Drainage score	M0 - Poor	M1 - Adequate	M2 - Good
D0 - Natural Inadequate	0.5	1.5	2
D1 - Natural Adequate or Pipe Drained	1.5	2	3
D2 - Pipe Drained	1.75	2.5	3.25
D3 - Pipe and Slit Drained	2	3	3.5

- 5.54 Carry capacity is based upon a basic assessment of the drainage system and maintenance programme ascertained through a combination of the quality assessment and consultation. This guide, however, is only a very general measure of potential pitch capacity. It does not account for specific circumstances at time of use and it assumes average rainfall and an appropriate end of season rest and renovation programme.

The peak period

- 5.55 In order to fully establish actual spare capacity, the peak period needs to be established. Peak time for senior rugby union matches is Saturday afternoons and is considered such within Watford, although junior and mini teams play on senior pitches on Sunday mornings. Peak time for mini and junior pitches is Sunday mornings.

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Table 5.12: Capacity analysis

Site ID	Site name	Community use?	Security of tenure	Number of pitches	Pitch type	Non-technical score ³²	Quality rating	Floodlit?	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Pitch capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Comments
6	Francis Combe Academy	Yes – unused	Unsecure	1	Senior	M0/D1	Poor	No	1.5	1.5	1.5	Pitches at capacity through curricular use.
12	Knutsford Playing Fields (Watford RFC)	Yes	Secure	2	Senior	M0/D1	Poor	No	4.5	2	2.5	Pitches overplayed through weekend match play from Watford RFC.
						M0/D0						
30	Westfield Academy	Yes – unused	Unsecure	1	Senior	M0/D1	Poor	No	1.5	1.5	1.5	Pitches at capacity through curricular use.
39	Fullerians RFC	Yes	Secure	1	Senior	M2/D1	Good	Yes	12	1.5*	10.5	The floodlit training pitch is significantly overplayed due to midweek use. The remaining pitches on site are used solely for match play and therefore are generally only used on weekends.
4				Senior	M2/D1	Good	No	7.5	12	4.5		
7				Mini	M2/D1	Good	No	4	21	17		
25	Watford Grammar School for Boys	No	Unsecure	1	Senior	M1/D1	Standard	No	2	2	-	Pitches at capacity through curricular use.
				1	Mini	M1/D1	Standard	No	2	2	-	Pitches at capacity through curricular use.
26	Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field)	No	Unsecure	3	Senior	M1/D1	Standard	No	6	6	-	Pitches at capacity through curricular use.
				1	Mini	M1/D1	Standard	No	2	2	-	Pitches at capacity through curricular use.

* The capacity of the floodlit training pitch at Fullerians RFC has been reduced by 1.5 match equivalent sessions in agreement with the RFU. This is because the pitch is significantly overplayed and therefore the maintenance undertaken cannot suitably mitigate the effects of overuse.

³² See tables 5.3 and 5.4 for definitions

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Actual spare capacity

- 5.56 The next step is to ascertain whether or not any identified ‘potential capacity’ can be deemed ‘actual capacity’. There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.
- 5.57 Generally, pitches located at education and/or unsecure sites which are available for community use but are currently unused, are not considered to have actual spare capacity as security of use cannot be formally evidenced as guaranteed. Further to this, generally pitches are often operating at capacity through curricular usage. This is the case in Watford with both Francis Combe Academy and Westfield School operating at capacity.
- 5.58 Four senior pitches at Fullarians RFC have actual spare capacity on Saturdays and Sundays to accommodate match play. In total, this equates to 4.5 match equivalent sessions per week. On Saturdays only two senior teams will play at home due to a home vs away rotation of senior teams and therefore this capacity can be considered valid.
- 5.59 The Club also has seven mini pitches which are used for mini age group rugby (Under 6s – Under 12s). These pitches cannot accommodate either junior or senior match play as they are too small. Whilst these pitches present a spare capacity of 17 match sessions per week, in realistic terms, this capacity is not available. The reason for this is, at mini age group rugby, clubs operate on a festival style format in which at any one point, dozens of teams can play at club site on a rotational basis. Therefore, at several points in a season, these pitches will be at full capacity. As such, the spare capacity identified through the analysis has been discounted from the overall supply and demand balance.

Overplay

- 5.60 Three pitches in Watford are overplayed by a total of 13 match equivalent sessions per week. Two of these are located at Knutsford Drive Playing Field (Watford RFC) where overplay is mostly aligned to poor pitch quality. There is one overplayed pitch at Fullarians RFC which is mostly aligned to significant midweek training.

5.5: Supply and demand analysis

- 5.61 Having considered supply and demand, the table below identifies the overall spare capacity in each of the analysis areas for senior rugby union pitches based on match equivalent sessions per week.
- 5.62 Total future demand in Watford is based on adding population and participation together. Population growth forecasts the creation of four junior teams (equating to two match equivalent sessions) and club aspirations equating to one senior ladies’, three junior and three mini teams which equates to 2.75 match equivalent sessions.

Table 5.13: Supply and demand analysis (senior rugby pitches)

Match equivalent sessions				
Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Future demand	Future total
4.5	13	8.5	2.75	11.25

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- 5.63 There is a current overall shortfall of senior rugby union pitches in Watford totalling seven match equivalent sessions per week. This is solely attributed to overplay on two pitches at Knutsford Drive Playing Field (Watford RFC) and one at Fullerians RFC.
- 5.64 When future demand is considered the current shortfall is exacerbated to 11.25 match equivalent sessions per week.
- 5.65 In summary, the current supply of rugby union provision is insufficient to accommodate current demand. Furthermore, future increases in demand exacerbate this shortfall meaning that current supply cannot sufficiently service anticipated future demand.

5.6: Summary

- ◀ **An overall shortfall is evident to service senior demand in Watford.**
- ◀ In total, there are 22 rugby union pitches in Watford spread across six sites, as a breakdown this consists of 13 senior pitches and nine mini pitches. Pitches aligned to Watford Grammar School for Boys are unavailable for community use.
- ◀ Of the community available pitches in Watford, there are five good quality senior pitches, seven good quality mini pitches. There are also four poor quality senior pitches (across three sites) provided at Knutsford Playing Fields (Watford RFC), Francis Combe Academy and Westfield Academy.
- ◀ There are two community rugby union clubs based in Watford; Watford RFC and Fullerians RFC. Collectively, these clubs operate a total of 34 teams
- ◀ Both Watford RFC and Fullerians RFC have good quality ancillary provision.
- ◀ There are no identified issues with security of tenure.
- ◀ There are no World Rugby compliant third generation artificial grass pitches in Watford with the closest available to clubs being based in Three Rivers.
- ◀ Both clubs aspire to increase the number of teams they currently offer.
- ◀ Three pitches are overplayed in Watford. Two are based at Knutsford Playing Field (Watford RFC) and one is based at Fullerians RFC. Overplay totals 13 match equivalent sessions per week.
- ◀ Future demand equates to 2.75 match equivalent sessions per week and exacerbates current shortfalls to 11.25 match equivalent sessions per week.

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

PART 6: ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES

6.1: Introduction

- 6.1 Hockey is played on artificial grass pitches and in England the sport is governed by England Hockey (EH) and is administered locally by the Hertfordshire Hockey Association.
- 6.2 A typical artificial grass pitches pitch is constructed from a free draining, frostfree sub-base, one or two tarmac layers, a 15mm shock pad and an artificial grass carpet, either sand filled, sand dressed or water based³³. Below is a brief summary of each type.

Sand filled artificial grass

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

Sand dressed artificial grass

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

Water-based artificial grass

- 6.5 A very high density carpet with no sand infill which requires irrigation via a sprinkler system to maintain a layer of water on the pitch. The water provides low slide resistance and reduces the risk of abrasions caused by coarse sand.
- 6.6 Competitive league hockey matches, and training can only be played on artificial grass pitches. Although competitive, adult and junior club training cannot take place on third generation artificial grass pitches, some may be suitable for introductory level hockey, such as school curriculum low level hockey.
- 6.7 For senior hockey teams, a full size pitch for competitive matches must measure at least 91.4 x 55 metres excluding surrounding run off areas which must be a minimum of two metres at the sides & three metres at the ends. EH preference is for four metre side and five metre end run offs, with a preferred overall area of 101.4 x 63 metres though a minimum overall area of 97.4 x 59 metres is accepted.

Club consultation

- 6.8 There is one hockey club based in Watford; West Herts Hockey Club. The Club was consulted with via a face to face meeting to inform this section of the report.

Table 6.1: Summary of consultation

Club name	Responded?
West Herts Hockey Club	Yes (face to face meeting)

³³ For more detail, please refer to: [EH artificial pitch guidance.pdf](#)

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

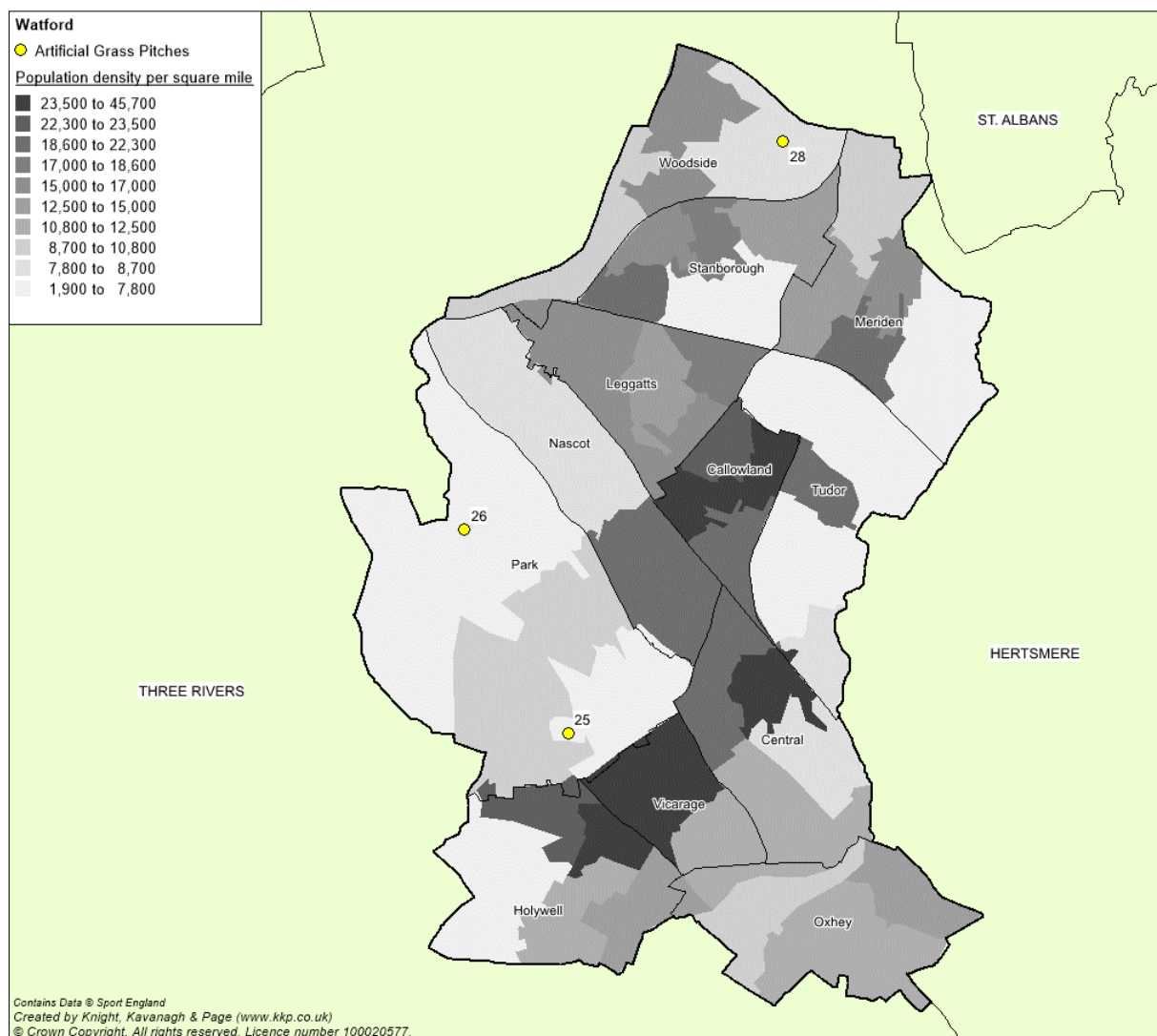
6.2: Supply

6.9 There is a total of three hockey suitable artificial grass pitches in Watford located across three sites. This consists of two full size pitches and a smaller size pitch which is located at Watford Grammar School for Boys.

Table 6.2: Summary of supply

Site ID	Site name	Ward	Community use?	Size (metres)	Floodlit?	Number
25	Watford Grammar School for Boys	Park	Yes	70 x 30	Yes	1
26	Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field)	Park	Yes	100 x 60	Yes	1
28	Woodside Leisure Centre	Woodside	Yes	97 x 55	Yes	1

Figure 6.1: Location of artificial grass pitches



WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Future supply

- 6.10 There are no identified plans to develop new hockey suitable artificial grass pitches in Watford.

Loss of provision

- 6.11 Watford Borough Council has developed a masterplan for Woodside Playing Fields (including existing facilities at Woodside Leisure Centre) which proposes that the existing artificial grass pitch at the site is converted to a third generation artificial grass pitch.

Ownership/management

- 6.12 Two of the three existing facilities in Watford are managed in-house by Watford Grammar School for Boys. The remaining full size pitch at Woodside Leisure Centre, is managed by Everyone Active.

Security of tenure

- 6.13 West Herts Hockey Club is based at Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field). The Club has secure tenure on the site, with it having a long term lease agreement in place with the School for the next 20 years.

Availability

- 6.14 Sport England's Facilities Planning Model applies an overall peak period for artificial grass pitches of 34 hours per week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00).
- 6.15 Both artificial grass pitches located at Watford Grammar School for Boys and its New Field site are all reserved for school use until 18:00 during weekdays and then available to the community until 22:00 whereas during weekends, they are available from 09:00 until 21:00 on Saturdays and from 09.00 until 21.00 on Sundays. This means each pitch is available for 29 hours of the peak period.
- 6.16 The artificial grass pitch based at Woodside Leisure Centre is fully available during the peak period (34 hours per week).

Quality

- 6.17 Taking the above into account, the quality of hockey suitable artificial grass pitches across Watford have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by EH³⁴) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:
- ◀ Good
 - ◀ Standard
 - ◀ Poor
- 6.18 The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>80%), Standard (60-79%), Poor (<60%). The quality ratings assigned to the sites also consider the user quality ratings gathered from consultation.

³⁴ See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for artificial grass pitches

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

- 6.19 In addition, depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of an artificial grass pitch usually lasts for approximately ten years and it is the age of the surface, combined with maintenance levels, which most commonly affects quality.
- 6.20 The table below summarises the quality of third generation artificial grass pitches in Watford.

Table 6.3: Summary of quality

Site ID	Site name	Surface type	Club using the site	Quality rating	Built/resurfaced
25	Watford Grammar School for Boys	Sand Dressed	-	Good	2018
26	Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field)	Sand Dressed	West Herts HC	Good	2007/2018
28	Woodside Leisure Centre	Sand Filled	-	Poor	1994/2008

- 6.21 The full and half size pitches based at Watford Grammar School for Boys and its New Field site are good quality. In contrast, the pitch at Woodside Leisure Centre is assessed as poor quality.
- 6.22 The pitch at Woodside Leisure Centre has exceeded its ten year life expectancy. The non-technical assessment found it to have suffered high levels of general wear and tear which resulted in a poor surface grip, furthermore, it is noted that the pitch does not have suitable line markings to accommodate competitive hockey play.

Ancillary facilities

- 6.23 West Herts HC has access to a dedicated sports pavilion at Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field) as part of its lease agreement with the School. The pavilion was constructed in 2015 and consists of ten changing rooms, a bar, kitchen and space for social activities. The Club report that there are no issues with the pavilion and that it suitably services all hockey demand.

6.3: Demand

Competitive play

- 6.24 There is one community based hockey club in Watford; West Herts HC. The Club is one of the larger community hockey clubs in Hertfordshire and operates a total of 11 senior and eight junior teams. As a breakdown, this consists of six senior men's, five senior women's, four junior boy's, three junior girls' teams and a mixed Under10s team. In total (based on 2019/20 England Hockey affiliation data) it has 335 active participants.
- 6.25 Community club hockey is generally played on Saturdays throughout the day in competitive EH leagues.

Displaced demand

- 6.26 West Herts HC exports demand outside of Watford to play competitive fixtures at St Michaels School in Three Rivers. The Club operates a high number of senior teams and cannot accommodate all match play on one pitch at Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field). It therefore uses the pitch in Three Rivers for either one or two matches per week (dependent on home vs away rotation).

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

- 6.27 Following the Christmas half term, Watford Grammar School for Boys begins to play competitive hockey fixtures against other schools, in Saturday based competitions, which reduces capacity for match play for the hockey club. This increases the dependency on the pitch at St Michaels School to two fixtures per week (and potentially three dependent on home vs away rotation).
- 6.28 The Club report that this exported demand is not an issue due to the relatively short drive time (circa 10 – 15 minutes) to access the facility. In the 2019 Three Rivers Playing Pitch Strategy, the pitch at St Michaels School was identified as being poor quality.

Training demand

- 6.29 Access to artificial grass pitches for midweek training is important to sustain and grow all formats of hockey. Currently, all clubs are identified as accessing suitable provision to train midweek. There is no identified unmet or latent demand for access to pitches midweek. In total, West Herts HC trains for eight hours per week which provides suitably training slots for all its senior and junior teams. The Club reports that if required, it would be likely to be able to access additional pitch space to train (during off peak periods).

Future demand

- 6.30 Growing participation is the number one aim within EH's strategic plan and key drivers include working with clubs, universities and schools, regional and local leagues, developing opportunities for over 40s and delivering a quality programme of competition. Growth in participation will not only come from the traditional 11 a side game but from the informal, recreational ways to play hockey such as small sided hockey, which can be played at any time during the week or at weekends.
- 6.31 Nationally, since 2012, hockey has seen a 65% increase in juniors taking up the sport within the club environment. This increase is expected to continue across all age groups in the future, especially given the success of Great Britain's women's team in the 2016 Rio and the anticipated legacy impact.
- 6.32 Though there remains a desire from EH to increase participation within the club/league based game, not all future demand may be realised entirely as new formalised teams playing at peak time. Some clubs may decide to offer pay and play opportunities to participants or offer small sided formats such in a bid to increase participation and club memberships by providing a different hockey offer.
- 6.33 Increased demand from new participants will lead to a requirement for increased capacity on available artificial grass pitches at peak time, but also midweek and on Sundays to deliver other formats of hockey activity. At present, it is not necessarily clear as to what format this may take or when it is likely to take place, however, it is clear that there will be a requirement for access to increased capacity on artificial grass pitches across the area. This should be considered when assessing demand for artificial grass pitches in the future, as not only will they be needed for peak match play times and midweek training to accommodate increased participation within the formalised hockey environment, but also throughout the week and at non-peak times to offer wider opportunities for play.
- 6.34 Unlike other pitch sports, England Hockey do not use team generation rates to determine future demand. England Hockey likes to understand growth by participation, rather than dedicated teams. As such, team generation rates have not been used to calculate future growth in Watford.

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

- 6.35 From a club perspective (the traditional 11 a side game), West Herts HC did not raise any future growth aspirations and highlighted that it is operating at capacity. However, it would be keen to have an emphasis on player retention as opposed to specific growth aspirations.

Peak time demand

- 6.36 Most men's and women's hockey teams currently play matches on a Saturday which is therefore the peak time for use of artificial grass pitches for competitive play.

6.4: Supply and demand analysis

- 6.37 The Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance suggests that a floodlit pitch as able to accommodate four match equivalent sessions on a Saturday with teams playing in a home and away format, as such this equates to one artificial grass pitch being able to cater for eight "home" teams. Teams play matches on home v away formats and therefore one team requires 0.5 match sessions per week on its "home" artificial grass pitch.
- 6.38 In Watford, West Herts HC accommodates five match sessions (ten teams) at its home ground and therefore based on the Club being the sole community hockey club in Watford, this figure has been used as the basis for analysis.
- 6.39 Firstly, the existing pitch at Woodside Playing Fields has been discounted for potential usage due to its poor quality and not having suitable line markings to accommodate senior competitive hockey play. The small sided pitch at Watford Grammar School for Boys is also discounted due to not being suitably sized for competitive senior hockey play (it is noted that this facility can provide midweek training opportunities although no demand for this has been identified).
- 6.40 Therefore, existing provision servicing West Herts HC includes the full size pitch at Watford Grammar School (New Field) and St Michaels School in Three Rivers. On this basis, there is a sufficient supply of provision servicing the Club's current demand. However, Watford Grammar School (New Field) is operating at full capacity (inclusive of the reduced Christmas usage due to curricular access on Saturdays).
- 6.41 Although the Club identifies no future demand growth, thought needs to be given to the reliability and security of accessing St Michaels School in Three Rivers in the future. As the pitch is considered to be poor quality (based on the findings of the 2019 Playing Pitch Strategy) and provides unsecure tenure, the future position of usage may be either reduced to a more social level of hockey, or removed altogether, at which point, the Club would need to access provision elsewhere in either Watford or Three Rivers.
- 6.42 Based on the findings of the 2019 Three Rivers Playing Pitch Strategy, there is spare capacity elsewhere in Three Rivers, with both Merchant Taylors Sports Complex and Nuffield Health at RMS (Royal Masonic School) showing as having capacity for additional hockey usage. If access to either of these sites could be secured (and considered suitable to use), the future position of the Club would be secure with no shortfalls in Watford for hockey provision.
- 6.43 The drive time from Watford Grammar School for Boys (New Field) to the alternate sites in Three Rivers are both under 20 minutes and therefore considered to be reasonable to access.

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Converting hockey suitable artificial grass pitches to third generation artificial grass pitches

- 6.44 Since the introduction of third generation artificial grass pitches and given their popularity for football, providers have seen this as a way of replacing their tired sand-based carpet and generating money from hiring out a third generation artificial grass pitch to football clubs and commercial football providers. This has come at the expense of hockey, with players now travelling further distances to gain access to a suitable pitch and many teams being displaced from their preferred geographical area.
- 6.45 Due to its impact on hockey, it is appropriate to ensure that sufficient sand-based artificial grass pitches are retained for the playing development of hockey. To that end, a change of surface will require a planning application and, as part of that, the applicants will have to show that there is sufficient provision available for hockey in the locality. Advice from Sport England and EH should therefore be sought prior to any planning application being submitted.
- 6.46 It should also be noted that, if a surface is changed, it could require the existing floodlighting and drainage to be changed and, in some instances, noise attenuation measures may need to be put in place.
- 6.47 The current position for hockey is that existing provision servicing West Herts HC including the full size artificial grass pitches at Watford Grammar School (New Field) and St Michaels School in Three Rivers is sufficient to meet current demand.
- 6.48 If long term access to St Michaels School can be secured and suitable quality improvements undertaken (when required) then the future/longer term position for hockey is likely to be satisfied. Likewise, if access can be secured to either Merchant Taylors Sports Complex or Nuffield Health at RMS (Royal Masonic School) in Three Rivers this would also likely satisfy any demand in the future.
- 6.49 As the artificial grass pitch at Woodside Leisure Centre is currently unusable for competitive hockey (and there is no current evidence of the pitch supporting recreational sessions) it is not currently considered to play a role in providing for hockey in Watford. If extensive refurbishment is undertaken on the pitch, for the benefit of hockey, then it could be given consideration in playing a role for hockey in the future.

6.5: Summary

- ◀ **There is sufficient availability of pitches within Watford and Three Rivers to accommodate current demand from West Herts HC**
- ◀ **There is also a sufficient level of provision in Watford in the future, if suitable provision can be secured in Three Rivers**
- ◀ There are two full size and one small size sand based artificial grass pitches in Watford
- ◀ All full size provision is available for community use, although the artificial grass pitch at Woodside Leisure Centre is not marked for competitive hockey and is unavailable for community use for hockey
- ◀ The artificial grass pitch at Woodside Leisure Centre is assessed as poor quality and the remaining provision at Watford Grammar School for Boys is assessed as good quality
- ◀ West Herts HC is the only registered hockey club in Watford. It operates a total of 11 senior and eight junior teams. It does not express any future demand
- ◀ West Herts HC has a long term lease arrangement in place with Watford Grammar School for Boys and as such has secure tenure

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

PART 7: BOWLING GREENS

7.1: Introduction

- 7.1 All bowling greens in Watford are flat greens as opposed to crown green bowls. Bowls England is the National Governing Body of Sport for flat green bowls with overall responsibility for ensuring effective governance. Regionally, it is administered by the Hertfordshire Bowls.
- 7.2 The flat green bowling season runs from Mid-April until late September.

Consultation

- 7.3 There are five bowling clubs identified in Watford, three of which, completed an online survey resulting in a 60% response rate. Further to this, Hertfordshire Bowls was also consulted to provide a strategic insight into bowling in Watford.

Table 7.1: Summary of consultation

Club name	Responded?
Herts Bowling Club	No
North Watford Bowling Club	Yes
Garston Bowling Club	No
Oxhey Bowling Club	Yes
Watford with Cassiobury Ladies Bowling Club	Yes

7.2: Supply

- 7.4 There are five bowling greens in Watford located across five sites, all of which, are available for community use.

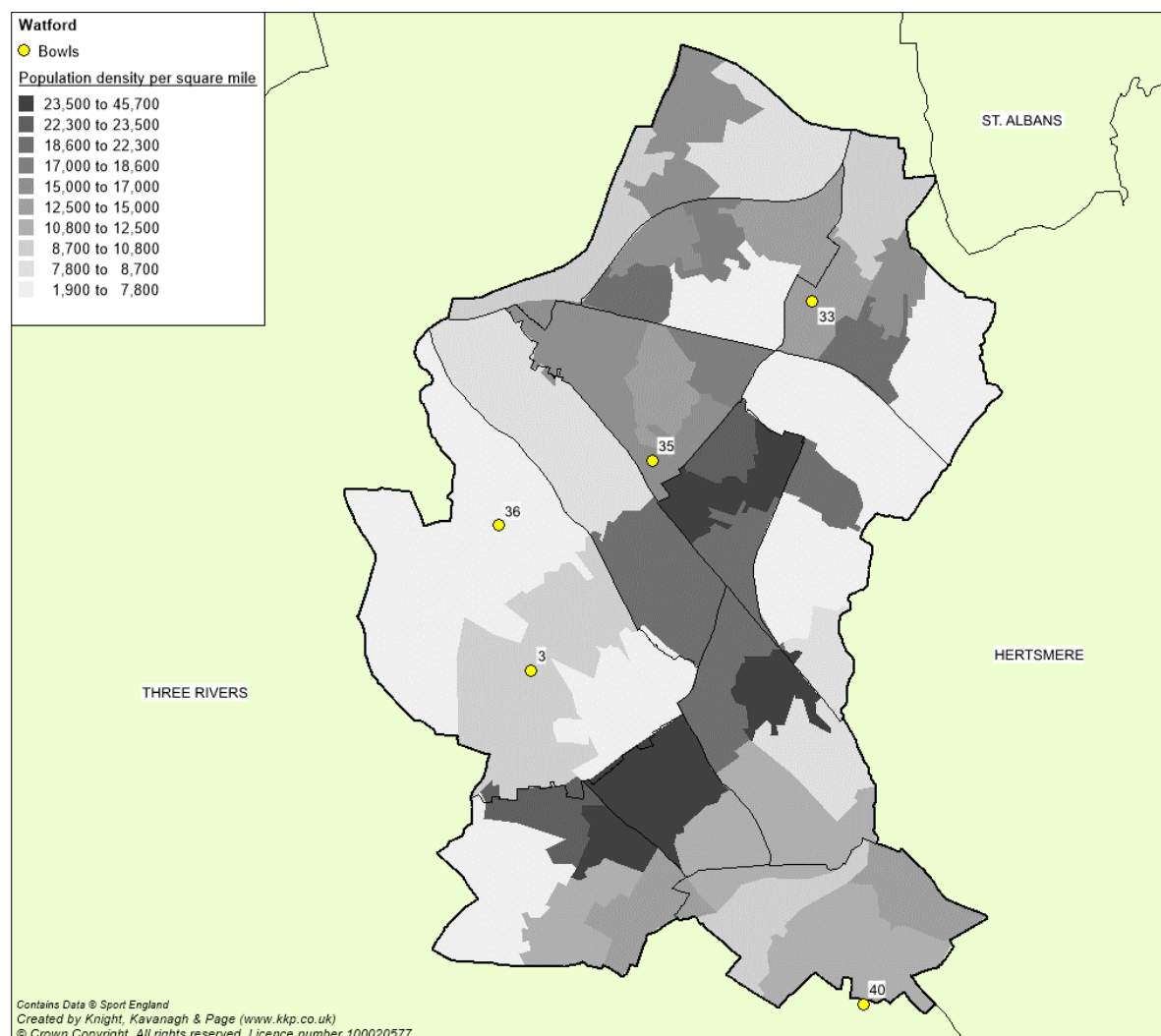
Table 7.2: Summary of supply

Site ID	Site name	Ward	Community use?	Number of greens	Green type
3	Cassiobury Park	Park	Yes	1	Flat
33	Garston Bowling Club	Meriden	Yes	1	Flat
35	North Watford Bowling Club	Leggatt's	Yes	1	Flat
36	Herts Bowling Club	Park	Yes	1	Flat
40	Oxhey Bowls Club	Outside	Yes	1	Flat

- 7.5 Playing fields which have previously hosted formal pitch provision are categorised as either disused or lapsed. A disused site is a playing field which is not being used at all by any users and is not available for community hire either. Once these sites are disused for five or more years they will then be categorised as 'lapsed sites'.
- 7.6 There is one disused green at Woodside Playing Fields following the closure of Owls Bowls Club in March 2019.

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Figure 7.1: Location of bowling greens



Ownership/management

- 7.7 Of the clubs responsive to consultation attempts, it is noted that both North Watford BC and Oxhey BC have long term lease agreements in place with the Council which expire within the next ten years.
- 7.8 Watford with Cassiobury Ladies Bowling Club annually rents its green from the Council. Tenure arrangements at the remaining two clubs are unknown, however, it is not thought that any clubs have unsecure tenure.

Quality

- 7.9 The quality of bowling greens across Watford have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments³⁵) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good
- ◀ Standard
- ◀ Poor

³⁵ See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for bowling greens

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

- 7.10 The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows: Good (>80%), Standard (70-80%), Poor (<70%). For bowling greens, the non-technical assessment considers several attributes of the site including the surrounding hard surfaces to the green, disability access, evenness, grass coverage and signs off unofficial use.
- 7.11 The table below summarises the quality of bowling greens that are available for community use in Watford.

Table 7.3: Summary of quality

Site ID	Site name	Site user	Number of greens	Quality of green
3	Cassiobury Park	Watford with Cassiobury Ladies Bowling Club	1	Good
33	Garston Bowling Club	Garston Bowling Club	1	Good
35	North Watford Bowling Club	North Watford Bowling Club	1	Good
36	Herts Bowling Club	Herts Bowling Club	1	Good
40	Oxhey Bowls Club	Oxhey Bowling Club	1	Standard

- 7.12 In total, four greens are assessed as good quality, one as standard and none are assessed as poor quality.
- 7.13 Oxhey BC also highlights that the firmness of the green, the length of grass and the surface drainage is not good and that the overall evenness of the surface is poor quality. All remaining greens are assessed as being good quality. However, Watford with Cassiobury Ladies BC states that the quality of its green has declined in the past year due to a perceived limited maintenance regime and a lack of financial ability to hire external contractors to carry out remedial work to the green.

Ancillary facilities

- 7.14 All clubs in Watford have access to a clubhouse/pavilion on site with a dedicated pavilion. In the main, no concerns were raised by either clubs or the Hertfordshire Bowling Association. North Watford BC did, however, highlight that its clubhouse needs a new heating system to enable all round year usage. The Club is looking to secure external grant funding to achieve this.
- 7.15 Further to the above, Watford & Cassiobury BC highlight issues with car parking arrangements at Cassiobury Park which are perceived to be difficult and can be problematic for its elderly membership base.

Bowls England grants³⁶

- 7.16 Provided a club is affiliated to the Bowls England it is eligible to apply for a club loan. These loans can relate to a variety of ancillary issues and include the following:
- ◀ Fencing
 - ◀ Car parking
 - ◀ New pavilion
 - ◀ Changing rooms
- 7.17 Clubs can repay these loans interest free over an eight year period. The highest amount available is £20,000.

³⁶ <https://www.bowlsengland.com/for-clubs/club-loans>

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Floodlighting

- 7.18 No greens in Watford are serviced by floodlighting. This means that opportunities for training and matches during evenings outside of the summer months is impossible. However, floodlit bowling greens are relatively rare across the country and this should not necessarily be considered an issue.

7.3: Demand

Current demand

- 7.19 There are five bowls clubs playing in Watford, three of which, responded to consultation requests which provided membership information. Additional membership information for the non-responsive clubs was provided by Hertfordshire Bowls. Total club bowls membership across Watford totals 290. As a breakdown, this consists of 185 senior men's and 105 senior women. There are no identified junior players across any club site.

Table 7.4: Summary of demand

Club name	Site	Current membership ³⁷			
		Senior male	Senior female	Junior	Total
North Watford BC	North Watford Bowling Club	18	3	-	21
Oxhey BC	Oxhey Bowling Club	48	47	-	95
Watford with Cassiobury Ladies BC	Cassiobury Park	21	7	-	28
Herts BC	Herts Bowling Club	58	40	-	98
Garston BC	Garston Bowling Club	40	8	-	48
Total		185	105	-	290

- 7.20 Despite there being a decline in senior membership for bowls nationally, Oxhey BC reports that membership levels have increased by 22 members in the last three years.

Future demand

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

Population increases

- 7.22 As bowls teams are not governed by age groups in the same way that pitch sports are (and there are no junior teams playing in Watford) there is no requirement to provide a team generation rate which can then be applied to population increases.
- 7.23 Instead, using Office of National Statistics population projections (2019-2036), the number of persons aged 65 and over living in Watford is likely to increase continuously from 12,772 in 2018 to 19,166 in 2036, representing an increase of 50%. Due to this age band being the most likely to play bowls, it can be said that demand for bowling greens in Watford is likely to increase slightly in the future or at least remain static.

³⁷ Membership details for Herts BC and Garston BC are based on 2018 figures and were provided by Hertfordshire Bowls.

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Participation increases

- 7.24 Oxhey BC highlight that it operates an open day on an annual basis to encourage new membership at the Club. Further to this, it regularly advertises in the local newspaper. The Club was, however, unable to quantify any specific growth aspirations.
- 7.25 North Watford BC aspires to grow its senior membership base by six members and Watford & Cassiobury BC aspires to grow by 16 members.

Latent/unmet demand

- 7.26 None of the bowling clubs in Watford are reported as being at capacity, with all clubs willing to accept new members. As such, it is considered that anyone within Watford that would like to start participating could do so at the clubs and greens already in existence.
- 7.27 No unmet demand was reported by clubs during consultation.

7.4: Supply and demand analysis

- 7.28 Bowling green capacity is very much dependent on the leagues and the day that they operate. A green may have no spare capacity on an afternoon or evening when a popular league operates but may be unused for the rest of the week. However, in many cases greens are used during the afternoons by club members which bowl socially.
- 7.29 Bowls England does not have any specific guidance on bowling green capacity, as a guide, it states that any club with at least 20 members is generally considered be sustainable. In Watford, all clubs have a membership over 20, although notably, North Watford BC operates with a membership of just 21 and therefore should be monitored to ensure it does not fold in the near future.
- 7.30 When asked if an additional bowling green would assist in accommodating current or future membership, no responding club suggested a green would be beneficial. Therefore, it is considered, based on consultation feedback, that the current supply of provision is suitable to accommodate both current and future demand levels.

7.5: Summary

- ◀ **There is a sufficient supply of bowling greens to accommodate current and future demand in Watford**
- ◀ There are five flat outdoor bowling greens located across five sites in Watford, none of which, are floodlit
- ◀ Four greens are assessed as good quality and one as standard. None are poor quality
- ◀ There is one disused green located at Woodside Playing Fields following the closure of Owls Bowls Club in March 2019
- ◀ There are five bowls clubs playing in Watford
- ◀ North Watford BC highlight that its clubhouse needs a new heating system to enable all round year sport. The Club is looking to secure external grant funding to achieve this
- ◀ Taking the above into account, there is no requirement for additional flat green bowls provision to be provided in Watford to service current or future demand

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

PART 8: TENNIS COURTS

8.1: Introduction

- 8.1 The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is the organisation responsible for the governance of tennis and administers the sport locally across Watford. The LTA has recently restructured its strategic approach to targeting a number of national focus areas, with a priority on developing tennis at park sites.

Consultation

- 8.2 There are three tennis clubs identified in Watford. Of these, two responded to consultation requests resulting in a 66% response rate, as seen in the table below.

Table 8.1: Summary of consultation

Club name	Responded?
Cassiobury LTC	Yes
Grosvenor LTC	Yes
West Herts & Watford LTC	No

8.2: Supply

- 8.3 There are 46 outdoor tennis courts identified in Watford across eight sites, with all courts available for community use.
- 8.4 Eight of the 46 courts in Watford have a grass surface. For the purpose of a Playing Pitch Strategy, grass courts are usually discounted from the overall supply of courts due to the inconsistency of British weather having a significant impact on court quality. In addition, grass courts are generally unavailable during winter months due to high level of inclement weather and therefore cannot be relied upon to support demand for tennis year round. However, in this instance, these courts have been included in the overall supply as they are used as a primary facility for Grosvenor LTC.
- 8.5 Further to this, it is noted that the Council manages two courts at Oxhey Grange, these are located within the Three Rivers authoritative boundary. For the purposes of the Playing Pitch Strategy, these have not been included within the tennis court supply.
- 8.6 For the purposes of this report, availability for community use refers to courts in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management recorded as being available for hire by individuals, teams or clubs. This also includes availability for social use or pay and play.

Indoor provision

- 8.7 There are no identified indoor tennis courts located in Watford. Despite this, the LTA has identified the Watford/Hemel Hempstead (Dacorum) area as a potential target area to develop a dedicated indoor tennis facility. The LTA is interested in speaking to local authorities and other landowners to discuss the prospect of developing Indoor Tennis provision in targeted areas over the next 10 years.

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

8.8 The LTA aspires to increase the number of high quality community accessible indoor facilities, which will be focussed on filling strategically identified gaps in provision. The criteria which the LTA has adopted is outlined below:

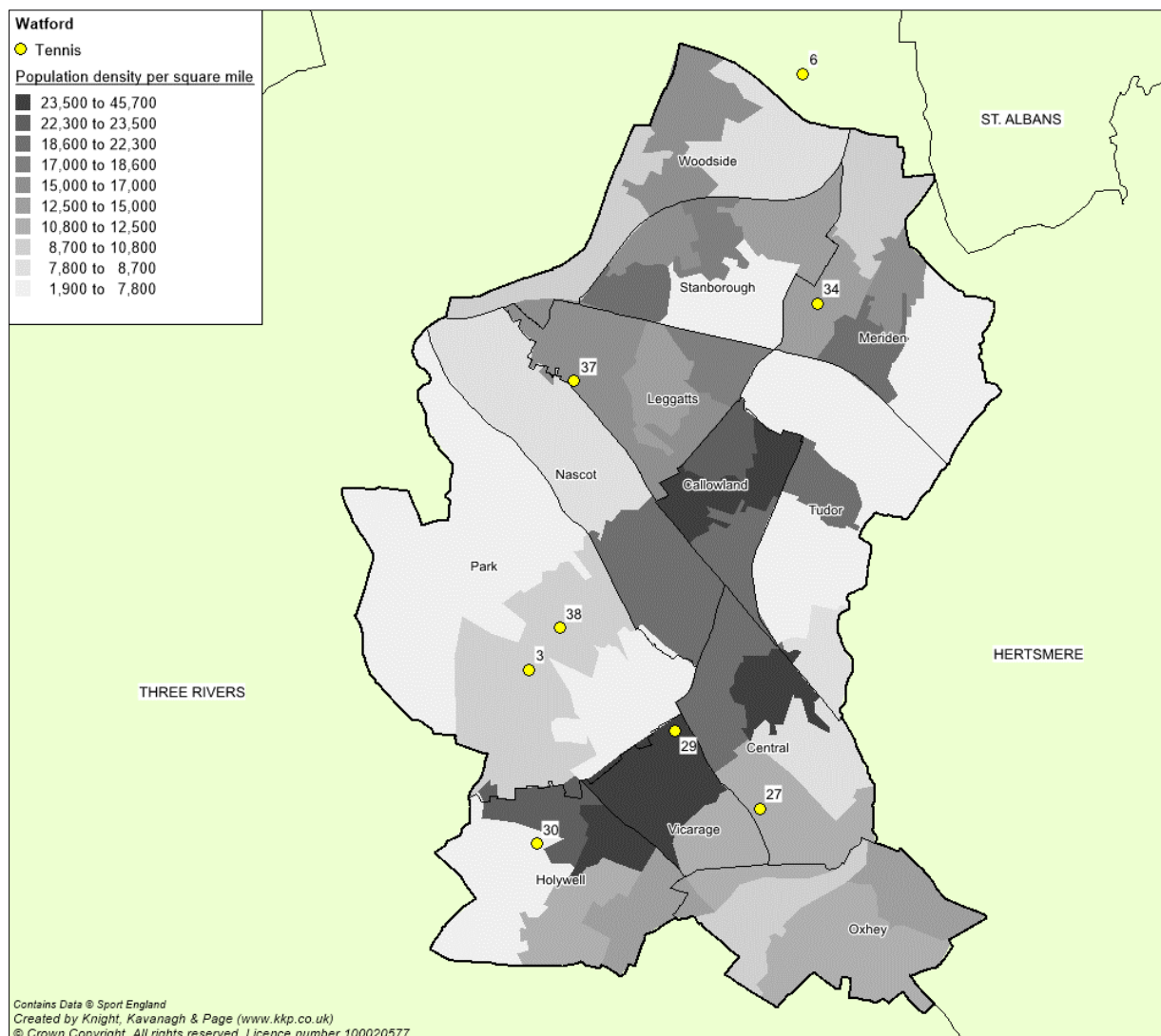
- ◀ 72 optimal locations have already been identified in England
- ◀ The optimal locations will have a population in excess of 75,000 within a 20 minutes drive time in towns and cities and 75,000 within a 30 minute drive time in rural locations
- ◀ The existing indoor tennis centre have had their catchment protected to a 30 minute radius to avoid competition reducing use of existing provision. This stock includes indoor courts in commercial centres
- ◀ A facility mix of four to six indoor courts and access to outdoor floodlit courts as well as access to additional facilities

Table 8.2: Summary of supply

Site ID	Site name	Ward	Community use?	Management	No. of courts	Floodlit?	Court type
3	Cassiobury Park	Park	Yes	Council	8	No	Grass
					2	No	Macadam
6	Francis Combe Academy	Outside	Yes	School	4	Yes	Macadam
27	Watford Grammar School for Girls	Central	Yes	School	6	No	Macadam
29	West Herts Sports Club	Vicarge	Yes	Sports Club	4	Yes	Macadam
					3	No	Macadam
					3	No	Grass
30	Westfield Academy	Holywell	Yes	School	5	No	Macadam
34	Lea Farm Recreation Ground	Meriden	Yes	Council	2	No	Macadam
37	Orchard Park	Leggatts	Yes	Council	3	No	Macadam
38	Cassiobury Tennis Club	Park	Yes	Sports Club	2	No	Macadam
					1	Yes	Macadam
					3	Yes	Artificial

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Figure 8.1: Location of tennis courts



Ownership and management

- 8.9 In terms of club ownership, both West Herts & Watford LTC and Cassiobury LTC own their respective home venues. Grosvenor LTC hires courts at Cassiobury Park on a yearly basis from the Council. The remaining community courts are managed wither by the Council or education providers.

Floodlighting

- 8.10 Floodlit courts enable use throughout the year and are identified by the LTA as being particularly crucial for club development. In Watford there are eight floodlit courts available for community use across Watford, these are located at West Herts Sports Club and Cassiobury LTC. West Herts Sports Club has a live planning application to provide floodlighting around three of its macadam courts, which will increase its overall stock of floodlit courts to seven.
- 8.11 Grosvenor LTC is the only club in Watford which is not serviced by floodlighting. It highlights that it has demand for floodlighting at Cassiobury Park to service its members during autumn and winter.

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Court type

- 8.12 Most courts in Watford have a macadam surface. The estimated lifespan of a macadam court is ten years, depending on levels of use and maintenance levels.
- 8.13 Three courts located at Cassiobury LTC have an artificial turf surface. Such provision generally allows for greater levels of access, especially during inclement weather spells, as well as requiring less frequent maintenance than macadam. Likewise, to a floodlit macadam court, the LTA reports a cost of £1,800 to refurbish.
- 8.14 Further to the above, there are also 11 grass tennis courts provided across two sites; Cassiobury Park and West Herts Sports Club. There are no set guidelines in relation to cost for grass court refurbishment.

Quality

- 8.15 The quality of tennis courts across Watford have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments³⁸) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:
- ◀ Good
 - ◀ Standard
 - ◀ Poor
- 8.16 The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows: Good (>80%), Standard (70-80%), Poor (<70%).
- 8.17 Maintaining high court quality is an important aspect of tennis and therefore the non-technical assessment assesses several factors which evidence court quality. The criteria for the non-technical assessment consists of; court surface grip underfoot, damage to a court surface, line markings, evidence of moss/lichen, slope of courts, disability access, fencing and courts being of an appropriate size for competitive tennis.
- 8.18 The table below summarises the quality of tennis courts that are available for community use in Watford.

Table 8.3: Summary of quality

Good	Standard	Poor
18	24	4

- 8.19 Following a non-technical assessment, 18 tennis courts are identified as being good quality and 24 standard and four poor quality.
- 8.20 Good quality courts are located at:
- ◀ Cassiobury Park
 - ◀ Cassiobury Tennis Club
 - ◀ West Herts Sports Club

These courts were assessed as good quality as a result of each surface having a good grip underfoot, clear line markings, no evidence or moss/lichen, showing no signs of unofficial or inappropriate uses.

³⁸ See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for tennis courts

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- 8.21 Standard quality courts are located at Lea Farm Recreation Ground, Cassiobury Park (four of the grass courts) Orchard Park, Francis Combe Academy, Watford Grammar School for Girls and Westfield Academy.
- 8.22 In 2017, the Council resurfaced its stock of tennis courts and improved the quality of courts at the following sites:
- ◀ Cassiobury Park
 - ◀ Lea Farm Recreation Ground
 - ◀ Orchard Park
- 8.23 Only four courts were assessed as poor quality (four of the grass courts at Cassiobury Park) which are used by Watford residents (these are in addition to four accessed by Cassiobury Park LTC. These received a poor quality scores due each court having a poor grip underfoot and having levels of wear and tear. Poor quality scores were ratified by the LTA.
- 8.24 Improving the quality, offer and experience of tennis in parks is a strategic priority for the LTA to open up tennis. It reports that the biggest barriers to participate in tennis are:
- ◀ Not knowing where the closest courts are
 - ◀ Not knowing how to book or play on the courts
 - ◀ Not knowing the condition of the surface
- 8.25 Park tennis courts can be opened up in a variety of ways to ensure greater use by local residents. This can range from booking courts to offering coaching programmes. The LTA has three products for local authorities to use to remove the barriers and open tennis up to all of the residents in their area; ClubSpark, Rally and Gate Access (explained in the *Future demand* section).

Table 8.4: Summary of quality by site

Site ID	Site name	No. of courts	Court type	Court quality
3	Cassiobury Park	4	Grass	Standard
		4	Grass	Poor
		2	Macadam	Good
6	Francis Combe Academy	4	Macadam	Standard
27	Watford Grammar School for Girls	6	Macadam	Standard
29	West Herts Sports Club	4	Macadam	Good
		3	Macadam	Good
		3	Grass	Good
30	Westfield Academy	5	Macadam	Standard
34	Lea Farm Recreation Ground	2	Macadam	Standard
37	Orchard Park	3	Macadam	Standard
38	Cassiobury Tennis Club	2	Macadam	Good
		1	Macadam	Good
		3	Artificial	Good

Ancillary provision

- 8.26 Grosvenor LTC highlight that it has submitted a funding application to Sport England to develop a new clubhouse on site at Cassiobury Park. It highlights that funding for the development is agreed in principle.

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- 8.27 Cassiobury LTC did not highlight any specific issues with its onsite ancillary provision and it is not thought that there are issues with ancillary provision at West Herts & Watford LTC.
- 8.28 The ancillary offering at West Herts Sports Club is largely outdated and is in need of refurbishment to future proof it for the next generation of sporting users at the site. The facility was built in the 1960s and whilst it has had some level of refurbishment, it is still largely in need of major work to ensure it remains fit for purpose in the coming years. The facility is a mixed sport venue, and the home to tennis, cricket, football and squash clubs which all use the facilities on site.
- 8.29 The Club aspires to sell a small parcel of land it owns to a private developer to create 23 apartments on Cassio Road. The Club has outline plans to use the capital receipt of the sale of the land to reinvest back into the onsite ancillary offer.
- 8.30 The park tennis courts (Cassiobury Park, Orchard Park and Lea Farm Creation Ground) are currently managed and maintained under contract management with Veolia. There are no onsite facilities at these sites for toilets. Cassiobury Park courts are located close to the park café which has accessible toilets and refreshments.
- 8.31 The LTA report that use of park tennis courts are greatly increased where there is accessible toilets and a café nearby providing more of a destination to play tennis. Additional floodlighting expands the maximum available courts hours available to play for longer periods of the year. Overall the combination of these ancillary elements is shown to increase the value and sustainability of tennis within park sites.

8.3: Demand

- 8.32 Combined, membership of the responding clubs in Watford equates to a total of 502 members, which is derived from 334 senior members and 168 junior members. As West Herts & Watford LTC was unresponsive to consultation attempts, membership details were provided through the LTA.

Table 8.5: Summary of demand

Name of club	Number of members		
	Seniors	Juniors	Total
Cassiobury TC	177	122	299
Grosvenor LTC	18	-	18
West Herts & Watford LTC ³⁹	139	46	185
Total	334	168	502

- 8.33 Of clubs which were of responsive to consultation, none have had a reduction in participation in the past five years. Grosvenor LTC reports that its membership levels have remained consistent with little increase or decrease. Cassiobury LTC highlights that its membership has grown by around 30-35 members over the past five years because of open day events and coaching at local schools.

³⁹ Membership details provided by the LTA

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Latent/unmet demand

- 8.34 The LTA provides all registered tennis clubs and venues with a self-service guide to grow club membership. This enables clubs to know its catchment, understand the competition and how to best serve existing and future members. Contained within this guide is a mapping report function which uses tennis market segments⁴⁰ to plot where latent demand will exist within a 10 minute catchment. The table below provided, by the LTA gives an indicative view of latent demand across Watford.

Table 8.6: LTA tennis segmentation

Tennis segment	Population within a ten minute drive time of:	
	Cassiobury LTC	West Herts & Watford LTC
Tennis Titans	7,992	11,268
Tennis Troupers	42,749	48,089
Seasonal Spinners	6,088	5,515
Wimbledon Warriors	10,730	12,626
Social Butterflies	12,408	13,459
Senior Stalwarts	17,914	17,407

Future demand

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

Population increases

- 8.36 As tennis teams are not governed by age groups in the same way that pitch sports are there is no requirement to provide a team generation rate which can then be applied to population increases.

Participation increases

- 8.37 Two clubs which responded to consultation indicate plans to increase membership in the future totalling 70 members. A breakdown of growth aspirations can be seen below.

Table 8.7: Participation increases

Name of club	Future demand expressed in members		
	Seniors	Juniors	Total
Cassiobury TC	30	30	60
Grosvenor LTC	10	-	10
Total	40	30	70

⁴⁰ <https://www.lta.org.uk/globalassets/venue/cmc-newsletter/lta-tennis-customer-segmentation.pdf>

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Local Tennis Leagues

- 8.38 Recreational Tennis leagues are less formal in comparison to established club play, offering greater flexibility and an opportunity for all abilities to engage in competition at local venues. The leagues are run by an organisation called Local Tennis Leagues which affiliates to the LTA and are available to all aged 18 years and above, with administration and support based online. Players are organised into mixed sex leagues of eight based on similar ability levels, with matches arranged between the two players at whatever time and court is agreed. The flexibility of play is conducive to the use of park sites which are typically more easily accessible. There is not a Parks Tennis League currently operating in Watford, with the closest located in neighbouring authority St Albans.

Tennis Tuesdays

- 8.39 After being trialled in London in 2014, the LTA launched Tennis Tuesdays in partnership with sportswear brand Nike. The initiative focuses on increasing women's participation in tennis and skill development with a key fundamental social element, seeking to engage women in new and innovative ways to help break down barriers to female participation. Sessions are available to all abilities and are structured based on four ability levels ranging from beginner to advanced, each week based on one of six themes ranging from improving specific techniques to tactical awareness and match play. Sessions run from May to October, taking place every Tuesday evening for an hour.
- 8.40 As it stands there are no Tennis Tuesday's sessions running within Watford, with the closest session operating at the Queensmead Sports Centre in the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Tennis for Kids⁴¹

- 8.41 Tennis for Kids is a six week coaching offer for children that have never played tennis before and is identified as a priority by the LTA. For £25, children get six weeks coaching by an LTA Accredited coach, along with a free racket, pack of balls and personalised t-shirt so that they can continue playing. To date nearly 25,000 children have participated in the Tennis for Kids programme this year. Sessions were held at Cassiobury LTC and Cassiobury Park in 2019 with the next nearest sessions located at Oxhey Hall LTC which is in the neighbouring authority Three Rivers.

Tennis for Free⁴²

- 8.42 Tennis for Free is a community sports charity that works in partnership with the LTA. The charity delivers free, fully inclusive weekly coaching sessions for all ages and abilities in local communities across the UK, especially those in low income areas. Tennis for Free offer a package for local authorities and court operators that includes financial support for local LTA Accredited coaches to deliver the sessions, tennis equipment for attendees and coaches and promotional support. Sessions are typically delivered across three courts, although the charity have recently launched 'Tennis for Free Lite', available to clubs who wish to open their doors to non-members. Through its offer it aims to:
- ◀ Reinvigorate under-used public facilities
 - ◀ Make tennis a sport for all
 - ◀ Make tennis more financially accessible in the UK
 - ◀ Improve the physical and mental wellbeing of local communities through tennis

⁴¹ <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/tennisforkids>

⁴² <https://www.tennisforfree.com/index.php>

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- 8.43 There have previously been Tennis for Free sessions operating in Watford; located at Cassiobury Park attracting around 400 individuals.

Nature Valley Big British Tennis Weekend⁴³

- 8.44 The Nature Valley Big Tennis Weekend is an LTA initiative which all registered venues can access. Clubs and venues have the ability to sign up to host open days, which are free of charge, and create a relaxed and welcoming environment for those new to tennis to participate. This in turn can potentially lead to the clubs attracting new members.

- 8.45 The LTA hosts three dedicated weekends a year (May / July & September) which are the UK's biggest public tennis events. Furthermore, venues are able to run additional events outside these dates and will benefit from their events being promoted on the national LTA campaign website. All clubs running an open day are asked to promote a follow on offer to all attendees, such as a reduced rate introductory membership or a number of free coaching sessions, to encourage people to continue playing after the event. Events were held in at Cassiobury LTC and Cassiobury Park in 2019 attracting c.130 attendees.

Informal and parks tennis

- 8.46 It is considered that all community available courts in Watford that are not accessed by clubs have spare capacity for a growth in demand, although this is difficult to quantify as use is not recorded at every site due to many being open access. It is generally considered that courts are at their busiest during summer months, with little activity taking place outside of this. The LTA have developed a package of support for LA to grow the use of park tennis courts by removing key barriers to participation. The three products are ClubSpark, Rally and Gate Access and can be used individually or in combination.

ClubSpark

- 8.47 ClubSpark is a flexible and simple venue management platform with multiple products and applications to help venues, local authorities and coaches manage their sport. ClubSpark is a tool that is offered for free as part of LTA venue registration and allows administrators to manage all functions of their venue(s) including:

- ◀ Managed Website - create and manage a mobile friendly website tailored to LA/club requirements to promote events and activities
- ◀ Managed Coaching – set up coaching lessons and courses online
- ◀ Membership Management - improve membership engagement by making it easier for the venue and for members to pay, renew and keep in touch. Take online payments, manage direct debits and monitor revenue streams with ease. Membership modules can also be used to take 'Season Ticket' payments for venues operating a non-traditional annual facility fee. 'Season Tickets' can be configured to allow court bookings to be made for free or at a reduced rate by players who hold one, whilst still allowing non-holders to book
- ◀ Organise Payments - Set the way you want payments to be taken, whether it's immediate pay and play, or bookable as part of a membership package
- ◀ Court Bookings – Reduced admin for managing bookings. Give staff, coaches, members and the general public access to book and pay for courts, classes or other resources online

⁴³ www.lta.org.uk/gbtw.

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- ◀ Scheduling - Set unique booking and price rules to suit your venue. Enable lights to switch on/off automatically when linked to the LTA Premium Gate Access system
- ◀ Book and Pay remotely - Customers can make bookings and payments for a venue anytime, anywhere via the real-time booking app
- ◀ Reporting - ClubSpark allows administrators to view reports highlighting income, court usage, revenue and number of members and season ticket holders. This allows for identification of trends and patterns and evidence to demonstrate participation levels and impact

RALLY

- 8.48 Rally is an aggregator that collects all booking and coaching information via partner venues ClubSpark pages and displays it for participants in one easy to view page. Rally allows players to search for venues close to them, and provides booking options, removing the barriers of not knowing where courts are or how to book. Rally provides a helpful customer journey, with a personal profile to review and manage bookings, and helpful reminders. Courts can be set to book for free of charge or at a fee agreed by the LA.

Gate Access

- 8.49 The LTA have developed two Gate Access systems that work in association with ClubSpark, to secure your courts and to allow access to booked customers only. Members of the public can book a court online (making payment if required) and will receive a four digit access code via email, to enter using the courtside keypad. The system will allow entry for the time booked if a correct code is entered.
- 8.50 Nationally the LTA have reported that in the last three years sites with gate access installed have attracted 64,841 unique players to make bookings, leading to 609,671 courts being booked, and has generated £1.1m of income.
- 8.51 There are two gate options available Smart Access Premium & Smart Access Lite. The demands and needs of users plus the setup of the venue will determined the most appropriate system for each site.
- 8.52 Following a detailed demographic analysis of all park tennis locations across the UK, the LTA has identified locations where they believe they can support the growth of participation through the implementation of gate access technology. The three park sites in Watford have been identified with a high penetration rate for tennis players and therefore are eligible to apply for a grant to pay for the installation of a Smart Access gate (one gate per site).

8.4: Supply and demand analysis

- 8.53 The LTA suggests that a non-floodlit hard court can accommodate a maximum of 40 members whereas a floodlit hard court can accommodate a maximum of 60 members. Using these figures, the table below analyses whether or not courts currently in use by clubs are sufficient to meet both current and future demand.
- 8.54 The LTA does not allocate court capacity to grass courts due to the inconsistency of British weather having a significant impact on court quality. In addition, grass courts are unavailable during winter months due to high level of inclement weather and therefore cannot be relied upon to support demand for tennis year round. As such, grass courts are not accounted for in the table overleaf.

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Table 8.8: Supply and demand analysis

Site ID	Site name	Current demand (members)	Future demand (members)	Number of courts (floodlit)	Recommended capacity (members)	Current capacity	Future capacity
3	Cassiobury Park	18	28	2	80	62	52
29	West Herts Sports Club	185	-	7 (4)	360	175	175
38	Cassiobury Tennis Club	299	359	6 (4)	280	19	79

- 8.55 From a club perspective, Grosvenor LTC (based at Cassiobury Park) and West Herts TC are deemed to have spare capacity both now and, in the future, to accommodate current and reasonable levels of future demand.
- 8.56 LTA capacity guidelines suggest that Cassiobury TC is operating over capacity with its current membership, with this likely to be exacerbated in future if growth aspirations are achieved. However, the Club highlights that it has spare capacity on its courts and expects that all future growth could be adequately accommodated on its existing courts.

8.5: Summary

- ◀ **Based on recommended LTA capacity guidance, there is insufficient supply of tennis courts at Cassiobury LTC to cater for current demand. All other club sites are deemed to have suitable capacity for current and future demand**
- ◀ **As all remaining, non-club courts are deemed to have spare capacity, focus should be on improving quality to an adequate standard and to increase informal activity**
- ◀ There are 46 tennis courts identified in Watford across eight sites, with all courts available for community use
- ◀ No clubs' express concerns with regards to security of tenure
- ◀ Grosvenor LTC is the only club in Watford which is not serviced by floodlighting. It highlights that it has demand for floodlighting at Cassiobury Park to service its members during autumn and winter
- ◀ West Herts Sports Club plans to provide floodlighting for three of its onsite macadam courts
- ◀ Following a non-technical assessment, 18 courts are identified as being good quality and 24 are standard, there are four poor grass courts located at Cassiobury Park
- ◀ None of the responding tennis clubs highlight any issues with the ancillary provision at their respective sites, although it is noted that Grosvenor LTC has submitted a grant funding application to Sport England to develop a new clubhouse
- ◀ Combined, membership of all clubs in Watford equates to a total of 502 members

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PART 9: NETBALL COURTS

9.1: Introduction

- 9.1 England Netball governs netball in England. Levels of participation are quickly increasing, with over 100,000 affiliated members and at least one million women and girls playing during a typical week. Its aim is to provide its members and partners with the best possible service and experience in sport.

Consultation

- 9.2 There are neither any netball clubs nor leagues which operate directly in Watford. Consultation with England Netball representatives therefore informed this section of the report in terms of demand.

9.2: Supply

- 9.3 In total, there are 13 outdoor netball courts located across three sites in Watford. All of these are located at education sites and are available for community use.

Table 9.1: Summary of supply

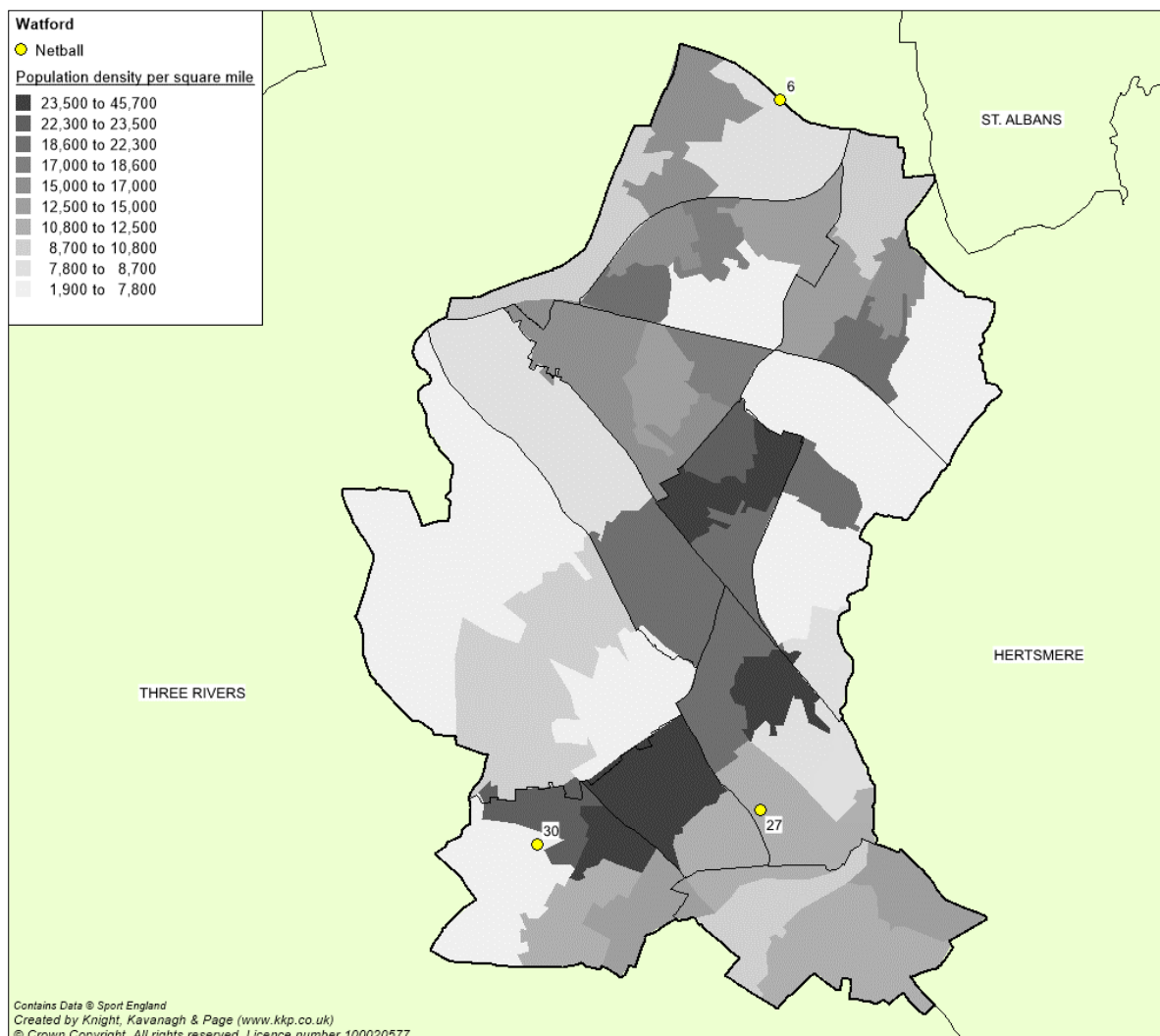
Site ID	Site name	Ward	Community use?	Management	No. of courts	Floodlit?	Court type
6	Francis Combe Academy	Outside	Yes	School	3	Yes	Macadam
27	Watford Grammar School for Girls	Central	Yes	School	6	No	Macadam
30	Westfield Academy	Holywell	Yes	School	4	No	Macadam

Overmarking

- 9.4 Whilst it does help with usage levels and sustainability, an issue for netball nationally is that many of its courts are dual use tennis courts. This limits accessibility (especially during the summer when tennis nets are often permanently in place) and can impact on quality due to higher levels of wear and tear. All courts in Watford are overmarked with tennis markings and are used as multi use facilities to cater for several sports (including tennis and basketball).

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Figure 9.1: Location of netball courts



Quality

- 9.5 All netball courts in Watford have a macadam surface. The estimated lifespan of a macadam court is ten years, depending on levels of use and maintenance levels.
- 9.6 The quality of netball courts across Watford have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments⁴⁴) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:
- ▶ Good
 - ▶ Standard
 - ▶ Poor
- 9.7 The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows: Good (>80%), Standard (70-80%), Poor (<70%).

⁴⁴ See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for netball courts

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- 9.8 Maintaining high court quality is an important aspect of netball and therefore the non-technical assessment assesses several factors which evidence court quality. The criteria for the non-technical assessment consists of; court surface grip underfoot, damage to a court surface, line markings, evidence of moss/lichen, slope of courts, disability access, fencing and courts being of an appropriate size.
- 9.9 All courts in Watford are assessed as standard quality albeit no specific issues were identified on any court across the three sites. As all the courts are overmarked with tennis and are located on school sites, it is likely that this affects the quality due to the higher levels of wear and tear.

9.3: Demand

- 9.10 There are neither any netball clubs nor leagues which operate directly in Watford. There is, however, significant netball demand in neighbouring authorities which likely accommodates demand from Watford residents.

Watford Premier Netball Club

- 9.11 Watford Premier Club is an England Netball accredited Club. It has six established senior teams and four junior teams with four coaches. The Senior 1st, 2nd and 3rd teams train on Tuesday nights between 19.30 – 21.30 at Thomas Parmiter Sports Centre (Three Rivers).
- 9.12 The Senior 4th and 5th teams train on Thursday evenings between 19.30 – 21.30 at Thomas Parmiter Sports Centre on the outdoor (floodlit) courts. The 4th and 5th teams compete in Division 1 of the St Albans League. All matches are played on Saturday afternoons at St Albans Girls School (St Albans).
- 9.13 The senior 6th team competes in the Division 1 Watford Netball League; its matches are played at Thomas Parmiter Sports Centre (outdoor) on Sundays.
- 9.14 All club junior teams (years 6, 7, 8 and 9) train on Monday nights 19.00 – 20.00 at Thomas Parmiter Sports Centre. This can take place indoors or outdoors depending on the weather.

Ley Netball Club

- 9.15 The Club operates as a social netball team which does not play in local leagues. It has approximately 12 junior female participants (although this number varies from session to session). It has one coach who is Level 1 qualified. Training sessions are held in the sports hall at St Clement Danes School (Three Rivers). Whilst the school has outdoor netball courts, the team prefers to play indoors.

Watford Netball League

- 9.16 The Watford Netball League began in 2010 with three divisions of eight teams each. Since then, the League has fluctuated between three and four divisions. For the current 2018-2019 season, 23 teams compete across three divisions. It operates from a centralised venue, with all matches taking place on the outdoor courts at Thomas Parmiter Sports Centre (Three Rivers).

Kath Worrell Junior League

- 9.17 The Kath Worrell Junior League also operates from a centralised venue, with all matches taking place at Thomas Parmiter Sports Centre. It currently has two divisions, an Under 14s division with eight teams and an Under 11s division with six teams.

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Other demand

- 9.18 The England Netball 'I Heart Leagues' are a social and gentle introduction into match play. The leagues are designed for players which have participated in the Back to Netball program or Social Players looking for access to a lightly competitive game each week. There is an I Heart Netball League at St Michael's Catholic High School (Three Rivers) with 10 teams. The season runs for 13 weeks and all matches take place indoors.

Future demand

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

Population increases

- 9.20 As there are no actual netball teams playing in Watford there is no requirement to provide a team generation rate which can then be applied to population increases.

Participation increases

- 9.21 Although no specific demand is identified for teams to play in Watford in the future. There are a number of England Netball initiatives that could help to increase participation in the area as identified below.

Play Netball

- 9.22 Play Netball is Britain's largest social netball league provider and arranges fixtures, league tables, umpires, netballs and bibs so players can focus on playing. People can join as individuals to find a team, a group to join the same team or produce their own team of 7 or 10 people.

- 9.23 Plans are in place for a Play Netball Watford League to begin at Thomas Parmiter Sports Centre. The league would operate over a ten-week season, with matches played on Wednesdays across three match slots; 7pm, 7:40pm and 8:20pm. However, there has been no confirmation of this league operating yet.

Back to Netball and Walking Netball

- 9.24 Back to Netball sessions are running across England and provides women of all ages a welcoming re-introduction to the sport. Sessions cover the basics of the game including passing, footwork and shooting and finish with a friendly game. Since its creation in 2010, over 60,000 women have taken part. Currently, Back to Netball sessions take place outdoors at Westfield Academy (delivered through Hertfordshire County Netball).

- 9.25 Walking netball has evolved from a growing demand of walking sports e.g. walking football. Walking netball is a slower version of the game. It has been designed so that anyone can play regardless of age and fitness level and therefore offers opportunities for older adults to participate and enjoy. As there are no identified sessions as taking place in Watford this could be something to consider introducing.

Latent/unmet demand

- 9.26 There is no identified latent or unmet demand for netball in Watford.

9.4: Supply and demand analysis

- 9.27 Based on the current supply of outdoor netball courts in Watford, it is considered that there is a sufficient supply to accommodate any current demand and future demand. As described throughout this section, the majority of netball in Hertfordshire is based in indoor venues, and therefore, there is a general lack of demand for specific outdoor facilities.

9.5: Summary

- ◀ **There is enough netball provision in Watford to meet current and future demand therefore a priority should be placed on maintaining court quality**
- ◀ In total, there are 13 outdoor netball courts located across three sites in Watford. All are based at education sites and are available for community use
- ◀ Following a non-technical assessment, all 13 courts are standard quality
- ◀ There is neither any clubs nor leagues based in Watford. All demand is played at central venue locations in Three Rivers
- ◀ There is one Back to Netball session delivered by Hertfordshire Netball located at Westfield Academy

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PART 10: ATHLETICS TRACKS

10.1: Introduction

- 10.1 Athletics is administered across the United Kingdom by UK Athletics, including responsibility for developing and implementing the rules and regulations of the sport, anti-doping protocol, health and safety, facilities and welfare, training and coach education and permitting and licensing.
- 10.2 Locally, the sport is governed through England Athletics. It has a team of 12 Club Support Managers throughout England overseen by the Head of Clubs and Participation.

Consultation

- 10.3 There is one identified athletics club in Watford; Watford Harriers AC which provided a response to an electronic survey. In addition to this, England Athletics were consulted to provide a strategic overview for athletics for Hertfordshire.

Table 10.1: Summary of consultation

Club name	Responded?
Watford Harriers AC	Yes

10.2: Supply

- 10.4 There is one formal athletics tracks in Watford located at Woodside Athletic Stadium, which is an eight lane, synthetic 400 metre track. The track is fully floodlit and provides all accompanying field event facilities including, four sand pits, hammer and discuss cages, Olympic standard pole vault, two shot putt fans and two synthetic javelin runways. The stadium provides a 700 seater covered spectator stand.

Ownership/management

- 10.5 Woodside Athletic Stadium is owned by Watford Borough Council and maintained by the Council's leisure provider, Everyone Active. Watford Harriers AC currently pays the Council each season to secure the Club's use of the track although a lease agreement is currently being renegotiated.

Quality

- 10.6 Track and field facilities at Woodside Athletic Stadium are good condition. Both the non-technical assessment⁴⁵ and consultation feedback did not highlight any specific issues at the facility. The site is a key facility regionally for athletic competition, however, Watford Harriers AC report that quality has deteriorated over the past year.
- 10.7 The Club highlight that the maintenance on the facility is basic, and that more could be done to ensure that the quality is sustained, and where possible, improved upon.

⁴⁵See Appendix 3 for the non-technical assessment for athletics tracks

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TrackMark

- 10.8 TrackMark⁴⁶ is a UK athletics quality assurance scheme for outdoor track & field facilities. Accreditation of a facility can demonstrate to hirers, athletes, clubs etc, that a facility is well managed, well maintained and accessible to all potential users.
- 10.9 The Woodside Track currently has a 'working towards' status to accreditation. Of the six units, it has passed two, has two pending accreditation and is working toward another two (see footnote for details of TrackMark units).

Ancillary provision

- 10.10 No issues with ancillary provision at Woodside Athletics Track are raised by Watford Harriers AC. The Council owns a pavilion on site which is leased to the Club. The Club is responsible for the maintenance of the facility. Showers, toilets, a kitchen, changing rooms, social area and equipment store are all available on site. The venue is also Disability Discrimination Act compliant and fully fenced. However, break-ins have occurred on site after crawling under the fence, leading to damage to the external toilets and equipment on site.
- 10.11 Watford Harriers AC has ambitions of extending the clubhouse on site.

10.3: Demand

- 10.12 There is a single athletics club identified in Watford; Watford Harriers AC. Numerous events are also held in Watford such as Parkrun and the Watford Half Marathon.

Watford Harriers AC

- 10.13 Watford Harriers AC has an established history and aims to provide facilities for all ages and all abilities in all disciplines of the sport. The Club is based at Woodside Athletics Track, with competitions and training taking place on site. Training currently takes place at the track on Tuesdays from 7pm, Thursdays from 7pm and Sundays from 10.30am.
- 10.14 There are currently 60 male, 35 female and 251 junior (Under18) members of the Club. Over the previous three years, senior membership is reported to have declined due to the cost of senior training being prohibitive. Meanwhile, junior membership has remained static over recent years.
- 10.15 England Athletics highlight that the Club plays a very active and important role for Athletics in the region as well as southern England. It provides coaching and competitive opportunities across all track and field disciplines and operates popular open meetings with athletes traveling from all over the country to compete.

Parkrun

- 10.16 Parkrun is a series of weekly five kilometre (k) runs held on Saturday mornings in areas of parks and open space across 850 locations in 12 countries including the UK. They are open to all, free, and are safe and easy to take part in. Parkrun events are all ability runs open to all aged 14 years and older, whilst there are shorter 2k Junior parkrun events available on Sunday mornings for runners aged four to fourteen years old. In order to take part, runners must first register online in order to receive a printed barcode which gives them access to all parkrun events.

⁴⁶ <https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/facilities/>

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

- 10.17 Parkrun actively promotes local clubs as part of its weekly events in order to advertise them to runners who may potentially be interested in joining a club, whilst approximately 10% of current parkrun participants are already associated to running clubs. It is common for local clubs to also support parkrun events through volunteering.
- 10.18 There is one parkrun event in Watford every week, based at Cassiobury Park. The Cassiobury Parkrun has taken place 250 times since its inception, attracting a total of 10,904 runners and an average of 330 runners per week. Its biggest weekly attendance to date is 617 runners.
- 10.19 There is no junior Parkrun event currently taking place in Watford. The closest junior Parkrun takes place at King George Recreation Ground (Hertsmere). However, given the popularity of adult Parkrun, this is something that there is likely to be demand for in Watford too.

Couch to 5k

- 10.20 Couch to 5k is a national health initiative promoted by the National Health Service to encourage absolute beginners get into running as part of establishing and maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle including regular exercise. The plan consists of three runs per week and a day of rest in between, with a different schedule for each of the nine weeks to completion. It starts with a mix of running and walking, to gradually build up fitness and stamina, in order to create realistic expectations and a sense of achievability to encourage participants to stick with it. The end goal of the plan is for the participant to be able to run 5k.
- 10.21 Through the Couch to 5k plan the National Health Service particularly promotes the health benefits of running and regular exercise which underpin the initiative, such as improved heart and lung health, weight loss and possible increases in bone density which can help protect against bone diseases such as osteoporosis. This also includes mental benefits of running through goal setting and challenge setting, which can help boost confidence and self-belief. Furthermore, running regularly has been linked to combating depression.
- 10.22 It is believed that an increase in people running through the Couch to 5k plan may increase interest and possibly have a knock-on effect leading to increased demand at running groups and clubs as people may wish to continue develop their running further.
- 10.23 Watford Absolute Beginners is a registered RunTogether group which currently offers a free Couch to 5k running group. The programme will run for 10-12 weeks and will start from Watford Met Station.

RunTogether

- 10.24 RunTogether is an official England Athletics recreational running project which aims to get the whole nation running. The role of RunTogether is to provide enjoyable, supportive and inclusive running opportunities across England in the form of set routes, running groups and access to programmes such as Find a Guide and Mental Health Ambassadors.
- 10.25 In Watford, there are two registered RunTogether groups; Watford Absolute Beginners and #WatRunFit. Watford Absolute Beginners offer a free Couch to 5k programme as mentioned above.
- 10.26 #WatRunFit offers a weekly four to six mile run on Mondays at 7pm. All runs begin from Sun Postal Sports & Social Club although circuits alternate between Croxley, Abbots, Bushey (Three Rivers/Hertsmere) and North Watford. Summer routes also vary to make the most of evening light and local trail routes.

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Watford 10k

- 10.27 The Watford 10k is professionally managed by Watford Mencap and is a permanent fixture in the runners' calendar. In 2019, the race began in Cassiobury Park with a total of 666 runners taking part compared to the 604 runners in the 2018 edition.

Future demand

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

Population increases

- 10.29 As athletics clubs are not governed in the same way in terms of having teams like the pitch sports, there is no requirement to provide team generation rates.

Participation increases

- 10.30 Watford Harriers AC identifies an aspiration to add an additional 20 male and 35 female members in the near future. It is also recognised that the Club is operating a "Junior Challenge" in 2020 which is a road race (fun run) held annually the Club. This is aimed at children aged under 8 and between Under 10 – Under 14. This has the potential to increase its junior membership, although this cannot be quantified.
- 10.31 England Athletics reports that there is generally a current growth being experienced in relation to athletics and running. In addition, it is to be expected that the popularity of the Parkrun events as well as demand for RunTogether groups, will increase in the future following national trends.

10.3: Supply and demand analysis

- 10.32 It is considered that in order for an athletics track to be sustainable, a club membership of 200 is required; however, a number of other factors should also be considered. As Watford Harriers is operating well above this threshold with 346 members the track is deemed to be sustainable.
- 10.33 Given the quality of both the track and field facilities at Woodside Athletics Stadium, evidence does not suggest a wider need (based on accessed demand) for further dedicated athletics facilities within Watford. Priority should therefore be placed on sustaining the maintenance regime at Woodside Athletics Stadium to maintain the quality of provision on site and ensure refurbishment work is undertaken when necessary.
- 10.34 The Woodside Playing Field Athletic track plays a significant sub-regional in servicing demand for residents from neighbouring authorities, this includes Three Rivers, Dacorum and Hertsmere. None of the aforementioned authorities have significant, dedicated provision for athletics and therefore this facility plays a role for competitive meetings and competition.
- 10.35 Sustaining and increasing the popularity of numerous running events taking place within Watford such as Parkrun, Couch to 5k, RunTogether and Watford 10k will also be key to ensuring athletics continues to grow.

10.4: Summary

- ◀ **Evidence does not suggest a wider need (based on accessed demand) for further dedicated athletics facilities within Watford**
- ◀ **Priority should therefore be placed on improving the maintenance regime at Woodside Athletics Stadium to maintain the quality of provision on site and ensure refurbishment work is undertaken when necessary**
- ◀ **Sustaining and increasing the popularity of numerous running events taking place within Watford such as Couch to 5k, RunTogether and Watford 10k will also be key to ensure athletics continues to grow**
- ◀ **There may be opportunities to consider compact athletics tracks to further help satisfy the growing demand for athletics in Watford**
- ◀ There is one formal athletics tracks in Watford located at Woodside Athletic Stadium which is an eight lane, synthetic 400 metre track. The track is fully floodlit and also provides all accompanying field event facilities
- ◀ Track and field facilities at Woodside Athletic Stadium are both reported to be in good condition. The site is considered to be a key facility regionally for athletic competition, however, Watford Harriers AC report that quality has deteriorated over the past year
- ◀ There is one identified athletics club in Watford; Watford Harriers AC. The Club is based at Woodside Athletics Track, with competitions and training taking place on site
- ◀ There are currently 60 male, 35 female and 251 junior (Under18) members of Watford Harriers AC. Over the previous three years, senior membership is reported to have declined. Meanwhile, junior membership has remained static over recent years. The Club hopes to add an additional 20 male and 35 female members in the near future
- ◀ At present, there is one Parkrun event that takes place in Watford every week

PART 11: OTHER OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

11.1: Croquet lawns

- 11.1 The Croquet Association is the national governing body for the sport of Croquet in England. The sport is continuing to grow in popularity with over 200 clubs now registered with the Croquet Association. A full size croquet lawn measures 35 yards (32m) by 28 yards (26.6m).
- 11.2 Watford (Cassiobury) Croquet Club is the only croquet club in Watford. The Club was unresponsive to consultation attempts and therefore desktop research has been used to inform this section.
- 11.3 The Club has access to three dedicated croquet lawns at Cassiobury Park which it leases on a long term basis from the Council. The lawns are maintained by Veolia and the non-technical audit found the lawns to be of a good quality.
- 11.4 Its current clubhouse facility is poor quality and in need of modernisation. The Club announced on its website, plans to develop a new pavilion, which will include a kitchen, toilet, water and electric and this will represent a significant increase on the ancillary offering available to the Club.
- 11.5 The governing body recommends an average of 25 participants per lawn as a capacity guideline, although current membership figures are unknown, it is not thought that there is a need to increase the supply of croquet provision available in Watford.

11.2: Gaelic football pitches

- 11.6 Gaelic football is a distinctly Irish field invasion game played with a round football which can be caught, kicked and hand passed. The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) is the development and promotion agency for Gaelic games across the globe, including Gaelic football.
- 11.7 There is one GAA club in Watford; Glen Rovers Hurling & Football Club. In 2017, it opened new facilities at Radlett Road Playing Fields which consist of a full size dedicated Gaelic football pitch and new ancillary provision. The non-technical audit of provision found the pitch to be standard quality and the clubhouse to be good quality.
- 11.8 Several attempts were made to engage the Club in consultation although all were unsuccessful, and therefore, details for this section have been informed through desktop research.
- 11.9 The Club operates a total of six teams which consists of four juniors and two seniors (including one senior women's). All fixtures are played at Radlett Road Playing Field. Junior fixtures are played on an ad-hoc basis as there is a small pool of competitive teams available to compete against in Hertfordshire. The senior teams play in regular league competitions.
- 11.10 The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) does not have a specific capacity guidance, but given the nature of how fixtures are played, it is likely that demand is adequately accommodated on its site and that it has the capacity to grow the number of teams it operates in the future.

11.3: Cycling provision

11.11 British Cycling is the national governing body for all forms of cycling. It oversees six sporting disciplines, with each having a dedicated facility type:

- ◀ Track cycling – Velodrome
- ◀ Road cycling – Closed Road Circuits
- ◀ Mountain Bike – Trails
- ◀ BMX – Race/Pump tracks
- ◀ Cycle Speedway – Cycle speedway tracks
- ◀ Cyclocross – non-dedicated, non-permanent venues

11.12 British Cycling aids in the development of all six formats, helping to safeguard those that wish to participate in a competitive and compelling environment. The popularity of cycling has increased since elite sporting success in the Olympics, Paralympics and major championships.

11.13 There are no purpose-built facilities within Watford with the nearest dedicated cycling facility located at Gosling Sports Park in Welwyn Hatfield. In addition to this, there are no current recreational BMX tracks available for recreational use.

11.14 Watford Borough Council is planning to develop a BMX track (and skatepark facility) in Oxhey Park which will service demand for this type of activity in the future.

11.15 Watford Velo Club is a British Cycling affiliated Club which has 90 members⁴⁷. The Club was formed in 2009 to encourage and support Watford residents which shared a passion for cycling. The Club accommodates for all aspects of competition, including road racing, time trialling, hill climbing and mountain biking.

HSBC UK Go-Ride

11.16 HSBC UK Go-Ride is a British Cycling's development programme for young people. It offers a fun and safe way to introduce young people to the sport and provides a platform to improve cycling skills.

11.17 People can get involved through holiday coaching programmes or through their local accredited club which allows them to sample the various disciplines of the sport. Progression is obtainable with Go-Ride Racing, offering competition for riders to transition from school or club coaching to inter club and open regional competitions.

11.18 There is one Go-Ride route in Watford which takes place at Cassiobury Park. The route is six miles and starts at Watford Cycle Hub. The route provides opportunities for children and novice bikers an opportunity to gain confidence by riding on roads and in a small group.

11.19 Limited formal demand for cycling is identified within Watford; however, it is considered that the majority of current demand does not require dedicated facilities as the majority of participants utilise roads and cycle paths. As such, there is no clear evidence to suggest that cycling provision is required in Watford, especially considering the proximity of the facilities at Gosling Sports Park.

⁴⁷ <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/club/profile/712/watford-velo-sport>

APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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 of the area. This may be 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 local authority/study area.

Unmet demand is demand that is known to exist but unable to be accommodated on current supply of pitches. This could be in the form of a team with access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa. This could also 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 declined 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.

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.

Future demand is an informed estimate made of the likely future demand for pitches in the study area. This is generally based on the most appropriate current and future population projections for the relevant age and gender groupings for each sport. Key trends, local objectives and targets and consultation also inform this figure.

Casual use or other use could take place on natural grass pitches or artificial grass pitches and include:

- ◀ Regular play from non-sports club sources (e.g. companies, schools, fitness classes)
- ◀ Infrequent informal/friendly matches
- ◀ Informal training sessions
- ◀ More casual forms of a particular sport organised by sports clubs or other parties
- ◀ Significant public use and informal play, particularly where pitches are located in parks/recreation grounds.

Carrying capacity is the amount of play a site can regularly accommodate (in the relevant comparable unit) for community use without adversely affecting its quality and use. This is typically outlined by the NGB

Overplay is when a pitch is used over the amount that the carrying capacity will allow, (i.e. more than the site can accommodate). Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected.

Spare capacity is the amount of additional play that a pitch could potentially accommodate in addition to current activity. There may be reasons why this potential to accommodate additional play should not automatically be regarded as actual spare capacity, for example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below its carrying capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of friendly matches and training activity. This needs to be investigated before the capacity is deemed **actual spare capacity**.

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Match equivalent sessions is used as the comparable unit for natural grass pitches. Converting both the amount of play a site can accommodate (its carrying capacity) and how much play takes place there (its current use) into the same unit of demand enables a comparison to be undertaken.

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

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

Therefore, for football, rugby union and rugby league, pitches should relate to a typical week within the season and one match = one match equivalent session if it occurs every week or 0.5 match equivalent sessions if it occurs every other week (i.e. reflecting home and away fixtures). For cricket pitches it is appropriate to look at the number of match equivalent sessions over the course of a season and one match = one match equivalent session.

APPENDIX 2: SPORTING CONTEXT

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

National context

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

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

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

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

Sport England: Towards an Active Nation (2016-2021)

Sport England has recently released its new five year strategy 'Towards an Active Nation'. The aim is to target the 28% of people who do less than 30 minutes of exercise each week and will focus on the least active groups; typically women, the disabled and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Sport England will invest up to £30m on a plan to increase the number of volunteers in grassroots sport. Emphasis will be on working with a larger range of partners with less money being directed towards National Governing Bodies.

The Strategy will help deliver against the five health, social and economic outcomes set out in the Government's Sporting Future strategy.

- ◀ Physical Wellbeing
- ◀ Mental Wellbeing
- ◀ Individual Development
- ◀ Social & Community Development
- ◀ Economic Development

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National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

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

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

The 'promoting healthy and safe communities' theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sports and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.

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

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

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

The FA National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)

The Football Association's (FA) National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a ten-year period. The Strategy is presently in draft and is due for publication in 2018.

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

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

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

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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

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

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

Local Football Facility Plans

To support in delivery of the NFFS, The FA has commissioned a national project. Over the next two years to 2020, a Local Football Facility Plan will be produced for every local authority across England. Each plan will be unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation, including currently underrepresented communities.

Identifying strategic priorities for football facilities across the formal, recreational and informal game, Local Football Facility Plans will establish a ten-year vision for football facilities that aims to transform the playing pitch stock in a sustainable way. They will identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all will be identified via Local Football Facility Plans. These will guide the allocation of 90% of national football investment (The FA, Premier League and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) and forge stronger partnerships with local stakeholders to develop key sites. This, together with local match-funding will deliver over one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next 10-years.

It is important to recognise that a Local Football Facility Plan is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Therefore, it cannot be used as a replacement for a Playing Pitch Strategy and it will not be accepted as an evidence base for site change of use or disposal.

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

A Local Football Facility Plan will; however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a Playing Pitch Strategy and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

The FA: National Game Strategy (2018-2021)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- ◀ Growing the base through participation and facilities investment.
- ◀ Growing the base through participation and facilities investment.
- ◀ Launching centres of excellence and a new elite domestic structure.
- ◀ Investing in girls' county age group cricket.
- ◀ Delivering a girls' secondary school programme.

The Rugby Football Union Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

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

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

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

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

- ◀ Improve player transition from age grade to adult 15-a-side rugby
- ◀ Expand places to play through artificial grass pitches
- ◀ Engage new communities in rugby
- ◀ Create a community 7's offering

England Hockey - A Nation Where Hockey Matters 2013

The vision is for England to be a 'Nation Where Hockey Matters'.

We know that delivering success on the international stage stimulates the nation's pride in their hockey team and, with the right events in place, we will attract interest from spectators, sponsors and broadcasters alike. The visibility that comes from our success and our occasions will inspire young people and adults to follow in the footsteps of their heroes and, if the right opportunities are there to meet their needs, they will play hockey and enjoy wonderful experiences.

Underpinning all this is the infrastructure which makes our sport function. We know the importance of our volunteers, coaches, officials, clubs and facilities. The more inspirational our people can be, the more progressive we can be and the more befitting our facilities can be, the more we will achieve for our sport. EH will enable this to happen and we are passionate about our role within the sport. We will lead, support, counsel, focus and motivate the Hockey Nation and work tirelessly towards our vision.

As a governing body, we want to have a recognisable presence to participants of the game, be that through club or association website or their communications, or through the work of the many outstanding coaches in our game, so that players understand that their club is part of a wider team working together to a common goal.

The core objectives are as follows:

1. Grow our Participation
2. Deliver International Success
3. Increase our Visibility
4. Enhance our Infrastructure
5. For EH to be proud and respected custodians of the sport

Club participation

Our club market is well structured and clubs are required to affiliate to EH to play in community leagues. As a result only relatively few occasional teams lie outside our affiliation structure. Schools and Universities are the other two areas where significant hockey is played.

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Hockey is clearly benefiting from a double Olympic legacy. After Great Britain's women won bronze in front of a home crowd in London in 2012 the numbers of young girls playing the sport doubled and a historic gold in Rio 2016 saw more than 10,000 players promptly joining clubs. These triumphs have inspired the nation to get active and play hockey. Thanks to the outstanding work of the network of clubs across the country, EH has seen unprecedented growth at both ends of the age range. There has been an 80% increase in the number of boys and girls in clubs, as well as a 54% increase in players over the age of 46.

Hockey clubs have reaped the rewards of the improved profile of the sport, focussing on a link with schools to provide excellent opportunities for young players. Programmes such as Quick sticks – a small-sided version of hockey for 7-11 year olds – in Primary Schools have been hugely successful in allowing new players to take part in the sport from an early age. The growth in the sport since the eve of London 2012 has been seen across the country, examples being a 110% increase in under 16s club participation in London, and a 111% growth in the North West in the same age bracket.

England Hockey Strategy

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

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

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

The 3 main objectives of the facilities strategy are:

1. PROTECT: To conserve the existing hockey provision

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

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

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

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

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

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Growing the Game of Golf in England (2017-2021)

In 2014, England Golf developed its first national strategy to help golf in England rise to some serious challenges. Membership was declining, many clubs were facing financial and business problems and the perception of the game was proving damaging. As such, it decided to set out recommendations for actions that would help “raise the game”. The 2014 strategy helped achieve the following:

- ◀ 427,111 people being introduced to golf for the first time.
- ◀ 31,913 new members for England’s golf clubs from national initiatives.
- ◀ Over £25 million generated for golf clubs through new members.
- ◀ Four counties to merge their men’s and women’s unions associations.
- ◀ Support for 15,200 national, regional and county squad players.
- ◀ Over 150 championships and events organised across the country.

Following the above strategy, England Golf is now setting out to “grow the game” of golf through seven strategic objectives. Developed in consultation with the golfing community, six of these are developed from the previous work in 2014, whilst one (being customer focussed) is brand new and intends on boosting the impact of them all.

The objectives are:

- ◀ Being customer focussed
- ◀ Stronger counties and club
- ◀ Excellent governance
- ◀ Improve image
- ◀ More members and players
- ◀ Outstanding championships, competitions and events
- ◀ Winning golfer

Bowls England: Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Although the Plan is currently being updated, this version remains the most up to date available. Bowls England will provide strong leadership and work with its stakeholders to support the development of the sport of bowls in England for this and future generations.

The overall vision of Bowls England is to:

- ◀ Promote the sport of outdoor flat green bowls.
- ◀ Recruit new participants to the sport of outdoor flat green bowls.
- ◀ Retain current and future participants within the sport of flat green bowls.

In order to ensure that this vision is achieved, ten key performance targets have been created, which will underpin the work of Bowls England up until 31st March 2017.

- ◀ 115,000 individual affiliated members.
- ◀ 1,500 registered coaches.
- ◀ Increase total National Championship entries by 10%.
- ◀ Increase total national competition entries by 10%.
- ◀ Medal places achieved in 50% of events at the 2016 World Championships.
- ◀ County development officer appointed by each county association.
- ◀ National membership scheme implemented with 100% uptake by county associations.
- ◀ Secure administrative base for 1st April 2017.
- ◀ Commercial income to increase by 20%.

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Despite a recent fall in affiliated members, and a decline in entries into National Championships over the last five years, Bowls England believes that these aims will be attained by following core values.

The intention is to:

- ◀ Be progressive.
- ◀ Offer opportunities to participate at national and international level.
- ◀ Work to raise the profile of the sport in support of recruitment and retention.
- ◀ Lead the sport.
- ◀ Support clubs and county associations.

British Tennis Strategy 2019

The new LTA Strategy includes seven strategies relating to three objectives which are built around the following vision and mission:

Vision: tennis opened up

Mission: to grow tennis by making it relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable

Objectives

- ◀ Increase the number of fans on our database from [623,602] to [1,000,000] by 2023.
- ◀ More people playing more often;
 - Increase the number of adults playing tennis each year from [7.7% (4,018,600)] of the population to [8.5% (4,420,460)], and the frequency of adults playing tennis twice a month from [1.9% (858,700)] of the population to [2.2% (1,000,000)] by 2023.
 - The number of children playing tennis from [x] to [y] by 2023 (to be finalised December 2018 on publication of Sport England's new Child Participation Survey).
- ◀ Enable 5 new players to break into the top 100 by 2023 and inspire the tennis audience.

Strategies

1. Visibility - Broaden relevance and increase visibility of tennis all year round to build engagement and participation with fans and players.
2. Innovation - Innovate in the delivery of tennis to widen its appeal.
3. Investment - Support community facilities and schools to increase the opportunities to play
4. Accessibility - Make the customer journey to playing tennis easier and more accessible for anyone
5. Engagement - Engage and collaborate with everyone involved in delivering tennis in Britain, particularly coaches and volunteers to attract and maintain more people in the game.
6. Performance - Create a pathway for British champions that nurtures a diverse team of players, people and leaders.
7. Leadership - Lead tennis in Britain to the highest standard so it is a safe, welcoming, well-run sport.

England Netball - Your Game, Your Way 2013-17

Even though this Plan is out of date, England Netball remains committed to its '10-1-1' mission, vision and values that form the fundamentals for its strategic planning for the future for the sport and business. To facilitate the successful achievement of Netball 10:1:1 and Goal 4, England Netball will:

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

- ◀ Accelerate the participation growth by extending our market penetration and reach through the activation of a range of existing and new participant-focused products and programmes that access new and targeted markets.
- ◀ Increase the level of long-term participant retention through targeting programmes at known points of attrition and easy transition through the market segments, supported by an infrastructure that reflects the participant needs and improves their netball experience.
- ◀ Build a sustainable performance pathway and system built on the principles of purposeful practice and appropriate quality athlete coach contact time.
- ◀ Develop sustainable revenue streams through the commercialisation of a portfolio of products and programmes and increasing membership sales. This will also include the creation of cost efficiencies and improved value for money through innovative partnerships and collaborations in all aspects of the business.
- ◀ Establish high standards of leadership and governance that protect the game and its people and facilitates the on-going growth and transformation of the sport.

England Athletics Strategic Plan – Athletics & Running: for everyone, forever – 2017 and beyond

This plan sets out England Athletics' mission, vision and strategic priorities that will direct how they work as an organisation during the coming years: what they do and how they will do it.

Vision: Make athletics and running the most inclusive and popular sport in England, led by a network of progressive clubs and organisations and supported by a sustainable, respected and trusted governing body.

For England Athletics to achieve this vision, they will focus on three values:

- ◀ Pride – taking pride in their work and demonstrating to athletes that they recognise the importance of their role in bettering athletics.
- ◀ Integrity – demonstrate integrity to earn respect and to build effective partnerships.
- ◀ Inclusivity – promote inclusivity in all their actions.

Mission: To grow opportunities for everyone to experience athletics and running, to enable them to reach their full potential.

In order to achieve their mission, England Athletics will have three strategic priorities.

1. To expand the capacity of the sport by supporting and developing its volunteers and other workforce. The target is to achieve a 6% increase every year of licensed leaders, coaches and officials.
2. To sustain and increase participation and performance levels in our sport. To achieve this, England Athletics' current targets are to increase the number of club registered athletes from (149,000 to 172,000), engage 135,000 people through the RunTogether programme and to increase athlete performance levels across all events and disciplines by 1% every year.
3. To influence participation in the wider athletics market. Their target here is to increase the number of regular athletes or runners by at least one million.

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

England Athletics Facility Strategy (2018 – 2025)

The purpose of this document is to set out our long term vision for athletics facilities in England. Facilities form a vital component of the overall England Athletics strategy.

The development, protection and enhancement of facilities will support our strategic plan and help England Athletics contribute to the delivery of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Sporting Futures: A New Strategy for Sport and Sport England's strategy Towards an Active Nation. Appropriate facilities help to attract and inspire new participants and provide the foundation and focus for a significant proportion of the England Athletics family.

The England Athletics Strategic Plan notes that the sport increasingly needs to become financially sustainable and that a business-like and innovative approach is a vital component of its future success. Facilities are fundamental, but they are also expensive to create and to maintain. The sport therefore faces a significant challenge to develop, improve and maintain facilities, most of which are currently operated and funded by third parties.

This strategy sets out a challenge to all those involved with the delivery of the sport to be innovative and business like in the operation and development of facilities at a time of financial challenge, as it aims "To create an innovative and inspiring network of sustainable athletic facilities, with the capacity to meet both current and future demand across England".

UK Athletics Facilities Strategy (2014-2019)

Facilities are essential to attracting, retaining and developing athletes of the future. Having the right facilities in the right place will be crucial in meeting growing demand, increasing participation in physical activity and athletics, improving the health of the nation and supporting a new generation of athletes in clubs and schools through to national and world class level.

UKA and the Home Country Athletics Federations (HCAFs) recognise the challenges faced by facility owners and venue operators, and the 5 year Facility Strategy (2014-2019) uses a Track & Field facility model designed to support a sustainable UK network of development, training and competition venues that meet Home Country needs aligned to UKA's Athlete/Participant Development Model. In addition to Track and Field provision, UKA recognises the huge amount of club activity that takes place on roads, paths and trails and the strategy also maps out a plan for future "running" facilities.

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX 3: NON TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT SHEETS

Grass football pitch non-technical assessment sheet

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Football						
Please complete one form per pitch						
Site reference:			Site Name:			
6 figure grid reference			Pitch ID(s):			
Number of football pitches on site:			Pitch size:	(Adult 11v11, Youth 11v11, 9v9, 7v7 Mini, 5v5, 7v7)		
Availability			Are any other pitches marked out over this pitch?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
If yes, please indicate what pitches are overmarked? (i.e. one youth pitch is overmarked on a adult pitch) in Pitch Issues						
Weather at time of visit & date of visit						
Pitch Issues:						
Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)						
Element (Gathered via a non technical site assessment)	Rating			Guidance notes		Comments
Playing surface						
Grass Cover	Good >80%		Adequate 60-80%		Poor <60%	Advice is to walk through the middle of the pitch
Does the pitch meet The FA minimum size?	Yes - as per the FA recommended size		Within FA recommended guidelines		No	See size chart below for recommended dimensions
Slope of pitch (gradient and cross fall)	Flat		Moderate		Severe	
Length of grass	Good		Too long		Too short	Good 30mm-50mm, Too long 51mm plus, Too short 29mm less
Evenness of pitch	Good		Adequate		Poor	
Problem Areas: Evidence of dog fouling/glass/litter/vehicle tracks	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots	
Problem Areas: Evidence of unofficial use/damage to the surface	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots	
Problem Areas: Evidence of poor drainage	No evidence of standing water or poor drainage		Some evidence of poor drainage		Yes, poor drainage	
Maintenance programme (information from maintenance schedule/grounds team/club survey)						
Grass cutting	Yes, as required		Yes, but not frequent enough		No	
Seeded	Yes, as required		Not known		No	
Aerated (per year)	Three or more times		Once/ twice		No	
Sand dressed	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No	
Fertilised	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No	
Weed killed	Within the last 12 months		Within the last 2 years		No	
Section total						
NB if none of this information is provided you should assume that only the grass is being cut and the rest of the maintenance items should be marked with the lowest score option.						
PITCH SCORE			0.0%	RATING	Poor	

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Cricket pitch non-technical assessment sheet

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Cricket									
Please complete one form per pitch									
Site reference					Site Name				
6 figure grid reference					No of Pitches:				
Pitch ID					No of wickets:	Natural		Non turf	
Weather at time of visit:									
Availability									
Community Use - used, Community Use - unused, No Community Use, Available but Unused									
General comments/observations									
*You will need a cricket ball and ruler to assess wicket quality as indicated									
Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer).									
Element	Rating					Guidance notes	Site comments (use the guidance notes to help complete)		
About the cricket outfield									
Grass coverage	Good	Acceptable	Poor						
Length of grass	Good	Acceptable	Poor						
Evenness	Even	Uneven							
Evidence of Dog fouling/glass/stones/litter?	None	Yes	Immediate action required						
Evidence of Unofficial use?	None	Yes	Immediate action required						
Evidence of Damage to surface?	None	Yes	Immediate action required						
							section total		
Artificial Wickets									
Is the wicket and surrounds married in	Yes	No							
Evenness of wicket	Even	Uneven							
Stump holes	Yes	No							
Moss or materials in the surface	Yes	No							
Rips or surface lifting	Yes	No							
Surface worn in high traffic areas - creases	Yes	No							
Hardness - does the ball rebound when thrown straight down?	Yes	No							
							section total		
Grass Wickets									
Presence of line markings	Yes	No							
Evidence of rolling	Yes	No							
Evidence of straight cut and height	Yes	No							
Evidence of repair work on old wickets	Yes	No							
Grass coverage (square and wickets)	Yes	No							
Hardness - does a cricket ball thrown straight down into the surface rebound/bounce?	Yes	No							
							section total		
Changing/ Pavilion									
Umpires provision	Yes	No							
Toilets	Yes	No							
Hot/cold water	Yes	No							
Heating	Yes	No							
Condition of building	Good	Acceptable	Requires attention						
							section total		
Non Turf Cricket Practice Nets									
Is the wicket and surrounds married in (no trip points)	Yes	No							
Evenness of wicket (no contours in surface levels)	Even	Uneven							
Stump holes (no wider than a standard cricket ball)	Yes	No							
Moss or materials in the surface (should be none)	Yes	No							
No rips or surface lifting	Yes	No							
Surface worn in high traffic areas - crease	Yes	No							
Hardness - does the ball rebound when thrown straight down	Yes	No							
Is the steel frame/ posts upright?	Yes	No							
							section total		
Are steel cross members detached?	Yes	No							
Are all posts and net fixings in place?	Yes	No							
Can a ball pass through any part of the netting?	Yes	No							
Is appropriate safety/ supervisory signage present?	Yes	No							
							section total		
Maximum score	180		Scoring	Score	Percentage Score	Facility Present?	Potential Rating: Poor		
			Outfield	0	0%	No			
			Artificial Wickets	0	0%	No			
			Grass Wickets	0	0%	No			
			Changing/Pavilion	0	0%	No			
			Non Turf Practice	0	0%	No			
			Overall score	0	0%				

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Rugby pitch non-technical assessment sheet

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Rugby Union									
Please complete one form per pitch									
Site reference				Site Name					
6 figure grid reference				Pitch ID(s)					
Date of assessment				Pitch size	(Senior, Mini/Midi)				
Number of pitches on site				Are any other pitches marked out over this pitch?					
Availability				If yes, please indicate what pitches are overmarked? (i.e. one mini/ midi pitch is overmarked on a senior pitch) in Pitch Issues					
Community Use - used, Community Use - unused, No Community Use, Available but Unused									
Weather at time of visit									
General comments/observations									
Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)									
Qualitative information (gathered on site)	Rating						Guidance notes	Comments	
Grass Coverage	Good		Adequate		Poor		>90% = good. <80% = poor		
Size of pitch	Acceptable (between recommended minimum and maximum sizes)		Flag for further investigation (below recommended minimum size)		Unacceptable (above maximum size)		Maximum size = width 70m, goal line to goal line 100m, in goal area 22m, run offs 5m where practical. Recommended minimum size = width 68m, goal line to goal line 94m, in goal area 6m, run offs 5m where practical.		
Length of grass	Too Long		Good		Too short		Too long = >75mm. Too short = <50mm		
Problem Areas: Evidence of glass/litter/vehicle tracks/dog fouling	None		Yes - some		Yes lots				
GOALPOSTS									
Are goalposts installed?	Yes		No						
Is there any obvious danger on posts?	Yes		No						
Are the posts stable in the ground?	Yes		No						
Is the crossbar fixed securely?	Yes		No						
Is there evidence of rust on the posts?	Yes		No						
ANCILLARY									
Is the pitch floodlit?	Yes		No						
Is there changing accommodation for the pitch?	Yes		No						
Is an appropriate level of car parking available?	Yes		No						
Pitch maintenance (information gathered via club survey/ pitch provider consultation) - refer to the guidance notes below									
Aerated (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never		
Sand dressed (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never		
Fertilised (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never		
Weed killed (per year)	three or more times		twice		once		never		
Chain harrowed	every week		fortnightly		monthly		never		
								Pitch Maintenance Score	
Drainage	Natural (inadequate) SCORE D0		Natural (adequate) SCORE D1		Pipe drained SCORE D2		Pipe and slit drained SCORE D3		Unknown SCORE D0
Natural (adequate) = 3 or less training/match cancellations per season Natural (inadequate) = 4 or more training match cancellations per season *Based on a pipe drained system at 5m centres that has been installed in the previous eight years **Based on a slit drained system at 1m centres completed in the previous five years.									

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Artificial grass pitches non-technical assessment (including third generation turf pitches)

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Artificial grass pitches									
Site reference			Site Name						
6 figure grid reference			Pitch ID						
Number of AGPs on site			Pitch size	Full (i.e., 100m x 60m)			Half (i.e., 60m x 40m)		
Availability	Community Use - used, Community Use - unused, No Community Use, Available but Unused								
Type of pitch	Long Pile 3G (65mm with shock pad)			Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)			Short Pile 3G (40mm)		
		Sand Dressed			Sand Filled			Water based	
Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)									
Element	Rating						Guidance notes	Site comments	
Age of Surface	less than 2 years		2-5 years		5-10 years		over 10 years		
Evidence of moss/lichen (all surfaces)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Loose gravel (macadam surface)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Holes or rips in surface (macadam, art. grass or polymeric surfaces)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Grip underfoot	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Line markings - quality	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Problem Areas: Evidence of Glass/ stones/ litter	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Problem Areas: Evidence of inappropriate use	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Problem Areas: Evidence of damage to surface	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots		If no evidence, assume none.		
Access for disabled players. i.e.: ramps onto courts, width of gates	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Condition of posts/ nets/ goals	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Surrounding fencing	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Adequate safety margins (w here appropriate)	Yes - fully		No- but adequate		No - not adequate				
Is the AGP floodlit?	Yes		No						
Is the AGP left open at all times?	Yes		No						
Are there dug outs?	Yes		No						
Are there youth shelters/spectator seating around AGP?	Yes		No						
Is there changing accommodation for the AGP?	Yes		No						
Maximum score	93	Scoring:	Poor <=50	Total Score		0			
			Standard 51-79	Potential Rating		Poor			
			Good 80+						

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Bowling green non-technical assessment

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Bowling green						
KKPref	<input type="text"/>					
Site name:	<input type="text"/>					
Number of greens	<input type="text"/>					
Flat/crown	<input type="text"/>	Community Use?	<input type="text"/>			
Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)						
Element	Rating			Comments		
About the greens						
Grass cover	Over 70%	<input type="checkbox"/>	40-69%	<input type="checkbox"/>	less than 40%	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evenness of surface	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signs of wear and tear	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes - some	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes - lots	<input type="checkbox"/>
Condition of ditches/boarding	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surface of surrounding hard areas	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the green and surrounding area fenced?	Yes		<input type="checkbox"/>	No		<input type="checkbox"/>
Fencing around the green and ancillaries	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem areas: litter, glass, fouling, leaf fall on the green	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes - some	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes - lots	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem Areas: Evidence of inappropriate use on the green	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes - some	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes - lots	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access for disabled players/spectators - ie: ramps onto greens, width of gates	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ancillary facilities						
Changing Accomodation	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Toilets	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Car parking	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
General comments about the site:						
<input type="text"/>						

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Tennis court non-technical assessment

Non Technical Visual Quality Assessment - Tennis/ Netball/ Courts									
KKPref									
Site name:									
Number of courts -	Tennis	Netball	Basketball	Five-a-side					
General Playground or specific sports court area?									
Court surface	Management		Community Use?						
	Artificial turf, Clay, Grass, Macadam, Polymeric, Shale		Club, LA - Parks, Parish Council, Public, School						
Assessment Criteria (please rank each of the following aspects for each pitch with an 'X' in the coloured box to the right of the chosen answer)									
Element	Rating						Comments		
About the courts									
Evidence of moss/lichen (all surfaces)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Loose gravel (macadam surface)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Holes or rips in surface (macadam, art. grass or polymeric surfaces)	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Grip underfoot	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Line markings - quality	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Surrounding fencing	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Size of courts	Yes - fully		No- but adequate		No - not adequate				
Adequate safety margins	Yes - fully		No- but adequate		No - not adequate				
Slope of courts	Flat		Slight		Gentle		Moderate		Severe
Problem Areas: Evidence of Glass/ stones/ litter	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Problem Areas: Evidence of inappropriate use	None		Yes - some		Yes - lots				
Access for disabled players - ie: ramps onto courts, width of gates	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Changing Accomodation									
Changing Accomodation	Yes		No						
About the equipment									
Posts and net	Good		Adequate		Poor				
Are the courts locked when not in use?	Yes		No						
Practice wall	Yes		No						