

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY



Context

- RMBC commissioned Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd. to prepare the Playing Pitch Strategy.
- We will be asking Cabinet to formally adopt the Strategy.
- Once adopted, it will be used to:
 - Form the evidence base for future decision-making
 - Shape an Action Plan and next steps

Context

Developing PPS underpins several of the borough's key priorities:

- By ensuring high-quality, accessible outdoor sports facilities, the strategy directly supports the Rotherham *Cultural Strategy's* ambition to enable everyone to get active, get creative and get outdoors, more often.
- It also contributes to *Moving Rotherham* by creating the conditions for more residents to be active every day, helping shift inactivity levels and encouraging lifelong participation.
- The PPS aligns with the *Health and Wellbeing Strategy* by promoting physical and mental wellbeing, reducing health inequalities, and enabling opportunities for people of all ages to lead healthier lives.
- Overall, a robust Playing Pitch Strategy ensures that Rotherham has the right facilities, in the right places, to inspire more people to move more, feel better, and stay connected.

Playing Pitch Strategy



What is it?

The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) provides up-to-date, robust, Sport England-compliant assessment of the supply, demand and future needs for outdoor sports facilities in Rotherham. It covers football, cricket, rugby union, rugby league, hockey, tennis and padel.

Playing Pitch Strategy

Main purposes include:

- Assessing current and future needs
- Supporting planning and investment
- Protecting and enhancing facilities
- Promoting participation and health
- Coordinating stakeholders

Why is it needed?



The PPS is essential for:

- Planning policy (evidence base for Local Plan)
- Developer contributions (Access to Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator)
- Investment (supporting bids to the FA, FF, RFU, RFL, ECB, LTA)
- Protecting playing fields (NPPF requirements)
- Meeting participation demand, across all pitch sports

Methodology

Stage A: Prepare and Tailor the Approach

- Establish a steering group (local authority, National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), users).
- Define the scope, study area, and key sports to be included (e.g., football, cricket, rugby, hockey).

Stage B: Gather Information on Supply and Demand

- Supply: Audit existing pitches, including site visits, quality assessment (non-technical survey), and identifying owners.
- Demand: Consult clubs, schools, and leagues to understand usage, capacity, and unmet demand.
- Identify future demand based on population growth and housing projections.

Methodology

Stage C: Assess the Supply and Demand Information Identify key findings, trends, and issues.

- Assess if current provision is overplayed, underplayed, or balanced.
- Determine the quality and accessibility of existing facilities.

Stage D: Develop the Strategy

- Formulate a vision for future pitch provision.
- Create a prioritised, area-by-area action plan (Protect, Enhance, Provide).
- Define specific recommendations for each sport and site.

Stage E: Deliver the Strategy and Keep it Robust

- Adopt the strategy formally within the local authority.
- Implement action plans, secure funding, and maintain regular monitoring (annual updates recommended).

Consultation

Extensive consultation was conducted with:

- Sport England
- National Governing Bodies for sport: FA, FF, RFU, RFL, ECB, LTA
- Local clubs across all sports (over 100 clubs engaged)
- Schools and education providers
- Community organisations
- Neighbouring authorities (Barnsley, Doncaster, Sheffield)
- Cross department: Planning, Asset Management, Green Spaces



Consultation

What did we ask?

- Location of pitches including unused sites
- Number of club members/teams
- A club's aspirations for the future
- Usage of a pitch
- Pitch assessments
- Ancillary provision



Headline Findings

Football (grass)

- Current shortfalls in provision for youth 11v11 and 9v9 formats; adult and mini pitches have spare capacity.
- Future demand worsens shortfalls; 16–24 new grass pitches may be needed by 2040 if no improvements occur.



3G Football pitches

- Current supply is 7.25 full-size pitches, and the shortfall is between 9–13.5 depending on growth scenario.
- The south area of the borough is most acute. Possible solutions would be hub sites and central venue leagues.

Headline Findings

Rugby Union

- There is a shortfall of 19 match sessions, with this rising to 23.5 with 19–24 new grass pitches required if not mitigated by quality upgrades or World Rugby-compliant 3G pitch.

Cricket

- 11 sites are overplayed by 237 matches per season; 28–30 new squares needed if no improvements (generally there are 8 individual pitches per square).
- The installation of 36 additional wickets at key sites could resolve the shortfalls.

Headline Findings

Hockey

- 3 full-size AGPs meet current demand but limited future capacity; Dinnington High School pitch needs resurfacing, but this is likely to be a 3G football pitch. There is the potential for the Oakwood pitch to have more capacity if Chapelton Hockey Club move back to Sheffield.

Tennis

- 56 courts across the borough. Club demand is being met, but non-club courts need quality/lighting upgrades.
- 3 new courts required by 2040.
- **Padel** has a shortfall of 21 courts.

Next Steps

- Approval and adoption of PPS – Cabinet 13th April
- Action Plan – looking at where to prioritise the development/creation of sites
- 3G pitch portfolio project



3G Pitch Portfolio Project

- Outcomes of the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and the Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP), shows a shortage between 9 – 13.5 3G pitches across Rotherham dependant on growth scenarios
- Working with Football Foundation, Sheffield & Hallam County FA & site operators; schools, academies & organisations the project is aiming to deliver as many as possible as part of a portfolio approach



3G Pitch Portfolio Project

Why has a portfolio approach been taken?

- Lack of investment in Rotherham over the past 10 years
- A Strategic CIL application.
- Economies of scale when The FF go out to tender for the works to be completed.



Potential Locations for new 3G pitches

- Cortonwood Miners Welfare
- **Brampton Ellis playing fields**
- Wath Academy
- Rawmarsh Comprehensive
- **Parkgate FC**
- Wingfield Academy
- Thrybergh Academy
- **Herringthorpe Playing Fields**
- Maltby Miners Welfare
- **Dinnington High School**
- **Dinnington Rugby club**
- Aston Academy
- **Swallownest Miners Welfare**
- **Killamarsh Juniors**

Funding

- Funding the 3G pitches will be a combination of applications to the Football Foundation, Strategic CIL, Section 106 monies, and partnership funding from sites organisations.
- The cost of a 3G pitch varies dependent on the specification and location, but to give an indication of fees the average price is between £800,000 and £1.2 million per pitch (this does not include additional costs where ancillary facilities may be built or redeveloped).
- The FF have the potential to fund between 60 – 65% of the cost per pitch.



Next Steps

- Initial desk top surveys have been taken
- Further intrusive studies to be conducted
- Community engagement
- Partnership funding
- Pre-applications to planning for April/May
- Application to Strategic CIL

Any questions?

