

Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance

An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy

Appendix 2a



The Football Association (FA) Offer of Support

This offer of support seeks to help Local Authorities (LAs) develop and deliver a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and ensure a collaborative approach from the start.

The offer is subject to a LA reading the guidance document and then discussing any points of clarification and the key principles of the approach with Sport England prior to engaging The FA.

This initial engagement with Sport England and subsequently The FA should take place as soon as a LA is thinking of developing a PPS, with appropriate notice and before a brief is drafted and any external support is secured. This being the case The FA will seek to provide the following offer of support to LAs during each stage of the work.

The FA offer will be coordinated regionally through its eight Regional Facilities and Investment Managers (RFIM). Following the discussion with Sport England set out above contact should be made with the RFIMs (see contact details below). Where appropriate, the RFIM will delegate responsibility and involvement of certain aspects of the offer to County Development Managers (CDMs). For example, CDMs may be called upon to support attendance at steering group meetings and to contribute to report reading and providing comments.

Please note the need for early engagement. Should a situation arise where a significant amount of PPSs are being undertaken at the same time within the same area of the country this may lead to some capacity issues with the FA providing elements of its offer.

Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach (Step 1)

- Attend an initial scoping meeting and help to tailor the approach
- Engage with, support and where possible attend steering group meetings
- Provide and discuss the current and potential football landscape within the area (including highlighting any known central venues) and identify FA strategic priorities/direction
- Review and provide comments on a draft tailored brief for the work and timescales

Stage B: Gather supply and demand information and views (Steps 2 & 3)

The following support will be coordinated through the RFIMs but actioned through the County FA network.

- Check the details of all natural and artificial grass pitches provided by Active Places Power and LA records (to be supplied by LA)
- Issue FA AGP mapping to the LA

- Provide three basic reports from FA affiliation information (Data on Demand): Developing Playing Pitch Clubs, Leagues and Protecting Playing Fields (see Appendix 2c – Step 3: Gathering demand information and views)
- Broker attendance at league forums/meetings with league secretaries
- Help improve football club survey return rates - logo use on surveys, email endorsement e.g. CDM follow up email to non-respondents
- Check and challenge the initial pitch quality ratings

For particular areas or where resources allow the FA may also be able to:

- Attend league forums/meetings to further help facilitate consultation

Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views (Steps 4, 5 & 6)

- Provide responses to specific queries relating to the assessment work
- Check and challenge the site overviews
- Discuss the suggested nature and extent of likely future demand
- Assist with identifying the key issues from the assessment work
- Review and provide comments on the draft assessment details/report

Stage D: Develop the strategy (Steps 7 & 8)

- Assist with identifying and agreeing the recommendations and a prioritised action plan based on the key findings of the assessment work and FA priorities
- Agree timescales for recommendations and actions where the FA can assist their delivery
- Review and provide comments on a draft strategy document

For particular areas or where resources allow the FA may also be able to:

- Support any consultation on the strategy document (i.e. helping the LA to present a draft strategy document to wider stakeholders)

Stage E: Deliver the strategy and maintain its robustness (Steps 9 & 10)

- Engage at agreed periods with the steering group to help review the delivery of the strategy and agree the nature and extent of any update required.

Contacting the Football Association

The FA Regional Facilities and Investment Manager areas are managed as follows:

Region	County areas
North East & Yorkshire	Durham, Northumberland, East Riding, North Riding, West Riding, Sheffield & Hallamshire
North West	Cheshire, Liverpool, Lancashire, Isle of Man, Cumberland, Manchester, Westmorland
East Midlands	Derby, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire
West Midlands	Birmingham, Herefordshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire
East	Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Norfolk, Suffolk
South East	Berks & Bucks, Hampshire, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Sussex
South West	Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire
London	London, Middlesex, AFA, Jersey, Army, RAF, Royal Navy, Guernsey

For up to date contact details please refer to the following The FA website page:

<http://www.thefa.com/News/my-football/facilities/2012/dec/fa-facilities-team>

Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance

An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy

Appendix 2b



The Football Landscape

The Football Association (FA), the governing body of football in England, is responsible for developing and regulating the game at all levels from international football to the grassroots. It is committed to making football accessible, enjoyable and safe for everyone, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, background or ability.

National Game Strategy (2013-17) provides a strategic framework that sets out the key priorities, expenditure proposals and targets for the national game. One of the key headings within the National Game Strategy is 'Facilities'. To underpin the National Game Strategy in 2013 The FA launched its first [FA Facility Strategy](#) seeking to implement the following vision: Build, protect and enhance sustainable football facilities to improve the experience of the Nations Favourite Game.

The strategy is made up of 5 key strands:

- Leading the development of technical standards
- Facility planning protection of playing fields
- Supporting club and league volunteers
- Targeted facility improvement schemes
- Capital investment

The Strategy also reinforces the urgent need to provide affordable, new and improved facilities in schools, clubs and on local authority sites where there is community use. Of particular interest is working with Charter Standard Community Clubs to work through asset transfer opportunities to reduce the reliance on the public sector.

Over 75% of football is played on public sector facilities rather than in private members' clubs. The leisure budgets of most local authorities have been reduced over recent years as priorities have been in other sectors. The loss of playing fields has also been well documented and adds to the pressure on the remaining facilities to cope with the demand, especially in inner city and urban areas.

The growth of the commercial sector in developing custom built 5-a-side facilities has changed the overall environment. High quality, modern facilities provided by Powerleague, Goals, JJB (now DW) and playfootball.net for example, have added new opportunities to participate and prompted a significant growth in the number of 5-a-side teams in recent years.

Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance

An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy

Appendix 2c



The 10 Step Approach – Football Specific Details

The following details should be used specifically for football when working through the steps 2 to 4 of the approach.

Step 2: Gather information and views on the supply of pitches

1. Pitch Types - Differentiate between the following pitch types:
 - Mini soccer (U7s-U8s) 5v5
 - Mini soccer (U9-U10) 7v7
 - Youth football (U11-U12) 9v9
 - Youth football (U13-U16) 11v11
 - Adult football 11v11
 - Where a pitch is marked out over another pitch please count only the largest pitch size format available in supply i.e. if a 9v9 pitch is marked out over a full size adult pitch then the pitch should only be classed as one full size adult pitch.

2. Pitch sizes - Measure against FA recommended dimensions:

www.thefa.com/my-football/football-volunteers/Runningaclub/yourfacilities/~media/42E67E5DF06C475C8BE0BED035CD325B.ashx

All Artificial Grass Pitches (3G) should only be captured if they are on the FA register. Please refer to the FA RFIM to confirm pitch status. The FA have launched several specific documents relating to 3G surfaces and these can be found on www.thefa.com/my-football/football-volunteers/Runningaclub/yourfacilities. If you can't locate them please speak to the FA for the latest copies.

3. AGPs - Contact the relevant FA RFIM to check the number and size of Artificial Grass Pitches suitable for football use (competitive play and training activity) (Football Turf Pitches) in the area and those on the FA register (suitable for competitive play). The information on the use of such pitches should be broken down into the different formats of football dependent on the line markings available on the AGP. Each available hour should not be duplicated (e.g. 10am-12pm on Saturdays cannot be counted as 11v11 and 7v7 availability).

Also refer to Sport England and the NGBs 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface for Hockey, Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union' document for a guide as to suitable AGP surfaces for Football (see below link). www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/

4. Ancillary Facilities - Details should be provided about the scale and quality of ancillary facilities including changing provision, security fencing and pitch perimeter barriers, stands and car parking.

5. **Pitch Quality** – It is highly likely that due to the number of sites for football a greater number of non-technical assessments will need to be undertaken than for the other sports in order to help assess quality. Where required these non-technical assessments should only be undertaken once the pitches have had a significant amount of play within a season and ideally **during December to February**. If a timescale outside of this period is proposed then this should have already been discussed with the RFIM during Stage A.

The non-technical quality assessment form can be used to help assess the quality of both the pitches and the ancillary facilities. If they are used then please work with your FA RFIM and/or CDM to categorise quality as good, standard or poor.

Step 3: Gather information and views on the demand for pitches

The FAs affiliation data which covers club, league, type of football and name of home ground can be supplied upon request through its data on demand system on an area by areas basis. Affiliations commence in May and the most accurate data is reported in January. This information should be presented for the following formats of football;

- Adult 11v11
- Youth 11v11
- Youth 9v9
- Mini Soccer 7v7
- Mini Soccer 5v5

Football participation reports have been generated which set the context for the development of football in each local authority area. They provide an outline of the current football infrastructure in relation to clubs, teams, leagues and facilities. This is recognised as a useful starting point for gathering the demand information for a playing pitch strategy.

The reports include FA conversion rates which estimate the number of individuals playing football by multiplying the number of teams by the average number of players involved in the different forms of football. This provides a useful participation baseline.

Alongside the guidance provided under Step 3 within the main playing pitch strategy guidance document the table below sets out football specific information.

Demand type	Details
Organised competitive play	<p>Differentiate between the following team types and age groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Mini soccer (U7s-U10s) i.e. 5v5 and 7v7▪ Youth football (U11-16) i.e. 9v9, 11v11▪ Adult football i.e. 11v11 <p>Play should be categorised in the following slots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Saturday AM, PM▪ Sunday AM, PM▪ Midweek <p>Also identify the level of competition (i.e. Saturday teams moving into the football pyramid)</p>
Organised training and casual play	<p>Identify other regular (e.g. weekly) usage of pitches and sites for training sessions, friendly matches plus informal casual use which will use some of the capacity of a pitch and may affect its quality.</p> <p>As a guide, 2 teams training on a natural grass pitch per week equates to 1 match equivalent sessions a week.</p> <p>Regular casual and unlicensed use where known to impact on the quality of a natural grass pitch should be captured as one match equivalent sessions a week.</p>

Demand type	Details
	For educational demand using an external site 2 hours of educational use could be captured as one match equivalent session.
Population projections and future demand	<p>Population projections will be required for the following age and gender categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Male 11v11 (16-45yrs) ▪ Female 11v11 (16-45yrs) ▪ Youth male 11v11 (12-15yrs) ▪ Youth female 11v11 (12-15yrs) ▪ Youth male 9v9 (10-11yrs) ▪ Youth female 9v9 (10-11yrs) ▪ Mini soccer 7v7 (8-9yrs) ▪ Mini soccer 5v5 (6-7yrs) <p>The projections by these categories should be used to calculate the Team Generation Rates (TGRs) in Step 5 to help develop the likely future demand.</p>

Step 4: Understand the situation at individual sites

1. Pitch carrying capacity - As a guide, details are provided below on the number of match equivalent sessions a week that a natural grass pitch is likely to be able to regularly accommodate, based on an agreed quality rating, without adversely affecting its current quality:

Agreed pitch quality rating	Adult Football	Youth Football	Mini Soccer
	Number of match equivalent sessions a week		
Good	3	4	6
Standard	2	2	4
Poor	1	1	2

Other Information:

Impact on demand of central venue football

Central venues for football should be identified during Stages A and B. If the local authority currently hosts a central venue league there may be teams travelling into the authority to play football from one or a number of adjoining areas. As set out in the main guidance document all demand taking place at sites within the study area should be recorded. Therefore, the incoming demand should be included and recorded during Stage B and used within the assessment work in Stage C. The assessment, and also the scenario testing in Stage D, could highlight the impact that this imported demand to central venues has on the demand for pitch provision at peak times within the local authority. Given the potential effect of any proposed recommendations and actions for these sites across an area wider than the study area they should be specifically discussed with The FA, the league(s) and the adjoining authorities.

Similarly there may be teams using a central venue in a neighbouring authority i.e. displaced demand. In line with the example scenario questions set out in the main guidance document (Stage D) it would be useful to look at a scenario to help understand what the situation may be should the site in the neighbouring authority be unavailable i.e. would provision in the study area be able to accommodate this displaced demand?