

# Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance

An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy



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## Contents

Page 1	<b>Introduction</b>
Page 3	<b>Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach</b>
Page 12	<b>Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision</b>
Page 26	<b>Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views</b>
Page 45	<b>Stage D: Develop the strategy</b>
Page 53	<b>Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date</b>

## Appendices

Appendix 1	<b>Sport England</b>
	1a. Sport England offer of support
	1b. Indicative project plan
	1c. Use of Sport England's strategic planning tools
	1d. Example brief structure
	1e. Example document for collating the supply, demand and assessment information (A version with some populated example data is also provided)
	1f. Suggested educational establishments consultation questions
	1g. Key findings and issues sub questions
	1h. Overplay and spare capacity flow diagrams
Appendix 2	<b>Football Association</b>
Appendix 3	<b>England and Wales Cricket Board</b>
Appendix 4	<b>Rugby Football Union</b>
Appendix 5	<b>Rugby Football League</b>
Appendix 6	<b>England Hockey Board</b>

The National Governing Body (NGB) appendices provide the following information:

- a. The NGB offer of support
- b. The sporting landscape
- c. The 10 step approach - sport specific details
- d. Example non-technical quality assessment form
- e. Example sports club survey

## Introduction

- 1 This document provides a recommended step-by-step approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy (PPS). Covering both natural and artificial grass pitches the document and approach has been developed by Sport England in partnership with:
  - The Football Association
  - England and Wales Cricket Board
  - Rugby Football Union
  - Rugby Football League
  - England Hockey Board.
- 2 The document has also benefitted from valuable input from a number of local authorities (LAs) and the experience and expertise of Sport England's Strategic Planning Framework members for PPSs: Knight, Kavanagh and Page supported by naa.

This document replaces Sport England's previous 2003 guidance document 'Towards a Level Playing Field: A Guide to the Production of Playing Pitch Strategies'. This latest guidance takes on board the experiences and lessons learnt from a decade of developing strategies using the previous document.

- 3 **Who is the document for?**

The document provides guidance and support to local authorities (LAs) who are looking to understand and assess the need for playing pitches and improve provision. However, the document will also be useful for other parties who may be looking to carry out an assessment of need and develop a PPS for an appropriate study area.
- 4 **What are the key principles of the approach?**

The approach is based on the following key principles:

  - A collaborative approach resulting in a PPS which is owned by and can be used by a number of parties
  - A steering group led approach with strong project management
  - Sport England and national governing body (NGB) engagement from the outset
  - Making the best use of available knowledge, skills and other resources
  - Securing adequate resources and setting realistic budgets and timescales
  - Clarity on why a PPS is being developed and providing a locally specific and tailored approach
  - Reflecting the differences in how each sport is played and pitch type is used
  - Developing an understanding of the situation at individual sites
  - Building in the opportunity to check and challenge the work at key points as it progresses
  - Looking at scenarios to explore key issues and findings and test potential recommendations and actions
  - The development and delivery of local area, sport and site specific recommendations and actions
  - Establishing and implementing an approach to keep the PPS robust and up-to-date.
- 5 **What are the steps?**

The approach comprises of 10 steps (See Figure 1) which are grouped into the following five stages:

  - Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach (Step 1)**
  - Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision (Steps 2 & 3)**
  - Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views (Steps 4, 5 & 6)**
  - Stage D: Develop the strategy (Steps 7 & 8)**
  - Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (Steps 9 & 10)**
- 6 This document provides advice on how each step can be undertaken. At the end of each stage a checklist allows progress to be checked and challenged against the relevant steps. Sport England, and the pitch sport national governing bodies (NGBs) listed in paragraph 1, recognise and appreciate the resources that will be required to work through these steps. Therefore, each organisation has committed to providing a clear offer of support to LAs developing or updating a PPS. This support, based on a partnership and steering group led approach, is outlined in more detail under Stage A and in the Sport England and sport specific appendices.

- 7 Good preparation and ensuring the approach is tailored to the study area (Step 1) is critical to the success of developing and delivering a PPS and ensuring the best use of available resources. Sport England and the NGBs recommend that adequate time should be spent preparing the work (i.e. working through Step 1) prior to any brief being drafted and before tendering for any external consultancy support (if required). To highlight the likely timescale for developing a PPS an indicative project plan is provided in the Sport England appendix.

**Figure 1:** Developing and Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy – The 10 Step Approach



8. Sport England and the NGBs are keen to ensure that this guidance evolves and is improved upon through regular reviews and updates. To aid this process feedback on its use and the development and delivery of PPSs is welcomed. Feedback, including good practice, lessons learnt and suggested improvements can be sent to: [planningforsport@sportengland.org](mailto:planningforsport@sportengland.org)

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

Working through Stage A will help to:

- Provide clarity over why the PPS is being developed and what it seeks to achieve
- Ensure a strong and representative steering group is put in place to lead the work
- Provide clarity on how the development of the PPS is to be managed
- Provide certainty on the support and resource available to help develop a PPS
- Develop an understanding of how the sports are governed and played in the study area
- Ensure an approach that is tailored to the particular nature of the study area
- Develop a strong and tailored brief to guide the development of the PPS
- Develop an understanding how the required information set out in Stage B can be gathered.



## Step 1: Prepare and tailor the approach

A1 Working through the questions set out in this step will help to ensure the development of a well prepared and managed PPS which is tailored to the study area. Taking the time to carry out this step well will enable the most efficient and effective use of resources when undertaking the remaining stages and delivering the PPS.

### A2 **Why is the strategy being developed?**

It is important to clarify why the PPS is being developed, what it seeks to achieve and who it will benefit. While there may be some dominant factors the wider benefits of having a PPS in place should be acknowledged and realised through the work. The key drivers for developing a PPS may include:

- Aims and objectives for improving health and well-being and increasing participation in sport
- Sports development programmes and changes in how the sports are played
- The need for evidence to help protect and enhance existing provision
- The need to inform the development and implementation of planning policy
- The need to inform the assessment of planning applications
- Potential changes to the supply of provision due to capital programmes e.g. for educational sites
- Budgetary pressures to ensure the most efficient management and maintenance of playing pitch provision
- The need to develop a priority list of deliverable projects which will help to meet any current deficiencies provide for future demands and feed into wider infrastructure planning work
- Prioritisation of internal capital and revenue investment
- The need to provide evidence to help secure internal and external funding.

The development of a PPS, if well prepared, has the potential to provide a robust document for the use and benefit of a variety of parties. However, the potential benefits are unlikely to be realised and available resources not put to best use if its preparation and development is dominated by one party, or the need for one required outcome. Further details on the areas a PPS could be applied to are provided in Stage E.

### A3 **What support is available to help develop the strategy?**

As stated in paragraph 6, Sport England and the NGBs have each committed to providing an offer of support to LAs developing and updating a PPS. Along with helping a LA with the work it is hoped that these offers will enable a collaborative approach from the start, which will remain throughout the development and delivery of the PPS. The offers are subject to a LA first of all reading the guidance document and then discussing any points of clarification and the key principles of the guidance with Sport England. Once this discussion has taken place the NGBs should then be engaged. It is important that this discussion and the subsequent engagement of the NGBs takes place as soon as a LA is thinking of developing a PPS and before a brief is drafted. Along with outlining how they can support the work, the NGBs within their respective appendices also provide detail on the nature of their sport and its development, some specific information in relation to certain steps of the approach and example sports club survey and non-technical quality assessment forms.

A4 Along with providing some direct support Sport England can also offer assistance through use of its Strategic Planning Framework ([www.sportengland.org/planningtoolsandguidance](http://www.sportengland.org/planningtoolsandguidance) - Strategic Planning Framework for Sport). Use of the framework can help LAs and other relevant parties secure quality assured external support.

Based on the offers in the appendices the level of support the NGBs and Sport England can provide to a particular project should be agreed. As a reminder wherever the following symbol appears in this guidance document particular support and/or advice may be available from the NGBs or Sport England. 

### A5 **How should the work begin?**

As outlined in paragraph A3 as soon as a decision is made to start looking at developing a PPS it is recommended that a LA reads and discusses this guidance document with Sport England and then engages the NGBs. It will be extremely valuable to then hold an **initial scoping meeting** and ensure other relevant parties are engaged before any brief is drafted. An initial scoping meeting should balance the need to be focussed but also include appropriate parties which have an interest in the provision and use of the pitches in the study area. The parties

should include all relevant LA departments (i.e. Leisure (sports development and grounds maintenance), Planning, Education, and Estates) and the NGBs, along with potentially a small number of other parties which may be able to represent users and providers and Sport England. Along with an invitation to the meeting a link should be provided to this document so those parties not already familiar with it have a chance to come to the meeting with an understanding of what may be required and how they could contribute to the work.

A6 The meeting should start to work through Stage A by:

- Identifying and confirming the key drivers for the work and what it may be able to achieve for all parties
- Establishing a partnership approach, steering group and project team (paragraphs A12 to A16) which has the necessary knowledge and skills to undertake the work (paragraphs A17 and A18)
- Identifying and agreeing the nature and extent of support parties may be able to provide across all stages
- Discussing the nature and extent of the study area and what sports to include (paragraphs A8 and A26)
- Discussing how the approach can be tailored to the nature and needs of the study area
- Discussing the timescales and when will be best to undertake particular steps (paragraphs A19 to A21).

A7 Establishing a true partnership approach from the start will benefit both the development and delivery of the PPS. It is likely that all parties will be able to provide some valuable input to the work along with potential support and resource if they are involved from this very early stage. This can ensure a collaborative approach and the best use of available resources. It should help to avoid a situation where resources are spent, or requested within a brief, to deliver an area of the work which could have been undertaken or supported by another party if they were engaged early enough.

A8 **How should the study area be defined?**



The majority of PPSs are undertaken for an individual LA area. However, the extent of the study area should be decided after looking at a number of factors. These include why the PPS is being developed and available knowledge on how pitch sports are played and sites are used in the area. It may be useful for some LAs to pool resources and extend a study area where there are known to be significant cross boundary issues with the movement of demand and/or where the LAs are producing a joint Development Plan and/or share Leisure Services. Knowledge of any particular sites within the LA area, or within adjoining areas, that cater for cross boundary demand (e.g. any central venues for a sport serving a wider catchment than a single LA) should be highlighted and the relevant LAs engaged in the work at this stage. This may suggest a wider study area or just ensure that this cross boundary movement is highlighted at this stage so that it can be reflected in the assessment and development of the key findings and issues (Stage C) and the recommendations and action plan (Stage D). It may also be appropriate to carry out a PPS for a defined town and its immediate hinterland where the supply of and demand for pitches is clearly defined to that area. The extent of the study area should be discussed at the initial scoping meeting and subsequently agreed by the steering group.

A9 **Has high level officer and political support been secured?**

Securing high level LA officer and political support early in the process will provide significant benefits to the work. Without this support it will be difficult to develop and deliver a PPS. The support is required to help establish and maintain a partnership approach, ensure the work is properly resourced and managed, and the LA delivers the recommendations and actions that it is able to whilst helping facilitate and support others to deliver actions outside of its direct control. This support at an initial scoping meeting, and at relevant steering group meetings, will help to highlight the importance of the work to other parties, the commitment of the LA and provide an informed champion for the PPS as it progresses and through to its adoption and delivery.

A10 **What is the vision for playing pitch provision and how far forward will the strategy look?**

Building on the understanding of why a PPS is being developed and the benefits it can provide it is useful to develop a vision for playing pitch provision in the study area. The vision should provide a clear focus to the work, articulate what the PPS seeks to achieve, be realistic but also challenge and question how the demand for pitch sports could be met. A decision should be made on how far forward the PPS will look which will depend on why it is being developed. The PPS may need to align with the Development Plan for the study area to link with any housing growth and wider infrastructure planning work. If this is the case then it should also look to build in a shorter timescale (e.g. 3 or 5 years) to reflect and align with sports development planning.

A11 **What are the key objectives of the strategy?**

Building on the vision, a clear set of objectives should be developed which relate to the 10 steps. Establishing the objectives will help to map out how the vision will be achieved and the PPS developed. The objectives should be practical and relate to specific outcomes and achievements for each step as opposed to generic statements. They should be measurable, be able to help guide the management of the work and used to check progress.

A12 **How will the development of the strategy be managed?**

Strong project management is vital to the development of a PPS and ensuring the most efficient use of available resources. There is a need for clear responsibilities and timescales with a strong commitment from all involved in the work. In terms of structure the development of a PPS would benefit from having a two tiered approach with a dedicated steering group and project team.

A13 A strong and effective **steering group** should lead and drive a PPS forward during its development and also to ensure the delivery of its recommendations and actions. The establishment of a steering group should be an outcome of the initial scoping meeting. Membership of the group should be balanced and representative of the different parties and key drivers behind the work and the providers and users of playing pitches in the study area. Further to paragraph A9 it will be useful to have an appropriate LA elected member (e.g. portfolio holder) and/or high level officer on the group. An appropriate chairperson should be appointed to drive the work and the meetings forward and provide the main point of contact for the project team. Membership could include:

- LA Leisure (inc. sports development, grounds maintenance), Planning, Education and Estates officers
- NGB and Sport England representatives (where resources allow - refer to the offers of support)
- Representatives from the community sport sector (e.g. county/local sports partnership, league secretaries)
- Any particularly large pitch providers and/or users in the study area.

A14 The meeting schedule for the group should be determined locally to ensure maximum value in helping to progress the stages of the work. As a guide an example of when and why the group could meet is set out below.

**Suggested steering group meetings and their purpose**

**Towards the end of Stage A** to agree the drivers, vision, objectives and scope, along with how the supply and demand information may be best gathered, to prepare and sign off the project management documents (project brief and plan) and ensure the approach is tailored to the study area.

**Towards the end of Stage B** to receive an update on, and check and challenge key elements of the information gathering work along with helping to resolve any issues (e.g. gaps in the information required, and lack of engagement by some parties).

**During Stage C (at the end of Step 5)** to check and challenge the Step 4 and 5 work and discuss what the key findings and issues may be. The project team are likely to require the group to decide some key areas of the assessment work at this meeting to enable the final pictures and key findings and issues to be developed.

**Towards the end of Stage C** to agree the key findings and issues, sign off the assessment details, agree any locally specific scenarios to look at when developing the strategy document and discuss initial thoughts on recommendations and actions.

**Towards the end of Stage D** to review a draft strategy document, including the recommendations and action plan, and agree the approach for its sign off by the group, its adoption by the LA and its endorsement by all members. This meeting should also ensure that all members are clear on who is responsible for each action, how the PPS can be applied, how they personally can ensure it is used and applied within their area of work and influence, and that a process is in place to monitor its delivery and keep it robust and up to date.

A15 The success of a PPS should be determined by its delivery. Therefore, the steering group should continue once the PPS is completed to ensure delivery against the recommendations and action plan and ensure that it is kept robust and up to date (see Stage E).

- A16 The **Project Team** should comprise of a small number of people who will be responsible for the day-to-day development of the PPS ensuring tasks are completed in line with an agreed project plan. The team should include officers from relevant LA departments where the work is carried out in house. Relevant LA officers should also form part of the project team even where the majority of the work is to be carried out by an external party (i.e. consultancy). It is important that the team has a good understanding of the nature and use of playing pitch provision in the area and have, or can readily call on, the necessary skills required to develop a PPS (see paragraph A17). Within the project team a project manager should be appointed who also sits on the Steering Group and is responsible for:
- Managing the link between the project team and the steering group
  - Ensuring strong project management and maintaining progress against an agreed project plan
  - Keeping the steering group and all relevant parties informed with the progress of the work on a regular basis (e.g. fortnightly basis and particularly between steering group meetings).

It will be critical for all members of the project team, whether the work is undertaken in house or with external support, to have adequate time allocated in their work programmes. The project team will also require adequate administrative support. Members of the steering group may put forward candidates for the project team and be able to ensure that they are given the required time to develop the work.

A17 **What knowledge and skills are required to develop the strategy?**

The successful and timely development of a PPS requires specific experience, skills and knowledge. In particular the project team should ensure that they have:

- Strong project management skills
- Experience in developing, managing and maintaining partnerships
- Experience in effectively consulting a variety of users (e.g. clubs/leagues/schools) using varied techniques
- Advanced MS office (or similar) skills and in particular Excel (or other software for collating, clearly presenting and enabling the interrogation of significant amounts of data)
- Use of and experience in geographical information systems
- Experience in analysing and interrogating data.

The project team also requires knowledge of:

- How people participate in pitch sports in the area
- Educational sites and changes in educational provision in the area
- Managing and maintaining pitches.

- A18 **Project management** skills within the project team and the designation of an experienced project manager will be vital to the successful development and delivery of a PPS. With its staged step-by-step approach building in key check and challenge points, along with a focus on preparing and tailoring the work, the approach set out in this document lends itself to a strong project management process. This is particularly important given the various stakeholders and parties that need to be involved to ensure the development of a robust PPS. The [Association for Project Management](#) provide useful information and advice on ensuring strong and effective project management.

A19 **How long will it take to develop the strategy?**

A realistic timescale needs to be set for the development of a PPS. This will vary from one PPS to the next depending on a number of local factors including the size and nature of the study area, the number of sites, how well the work is prepared, what established relationships are already in place with key parties, information readily available, and the resource dedicated to the work. However, as a guide from starting the preparation work through to formal adoption may take 9 to 12 months.

- A20 The timescale, and when will be best to undertake elements of the work, should be discussed at the initial scoping meeting and subsequently agreed by the steering group. This should ensure that:



- Key elements will be undertaken at suitable times to ensure their robustness and make the best use of resources (e.g. survey work)

- Adequate time is allowed for each step of the approach, in particular steps 2 and 3 which are likely to be the most time consuming, and for checking and challenging the work at key points as it progresses
- All parties are fully aware, and provided with appropriate notice, of when they may need to engage and provide support
- As far as can be foreseen the project team and steering group are aware of, and work to overcome, anything which could cause a delay to the work (e.g. unavailability of any key party for a defined period, planned restructure which could result in significant change to the project team during the work)
- The timescale aligns with other relevant timescales e.g. the development of wider strategies (health and wellbeing, sports facility and greenspace strategies) and does not conflict with others (e.g. political timescales within a local authority).

An indicative project plan to help guide discussion on the timescales is provided in the Sport England appendix.

**A21 When is a good time to undertake the strategy?**



The timing of a PPS should ideally be dictated by when it is best to gather the necessary information. Starting late summer could be a good time if information gathering for summer sports can be prioritised and then moving onto the winter sports in the autumn and winter. Alternatively late winter may also be appropriate focussing on the winter sports first and then when they are in season moving on to the summer sports. To help agree the timing of the work Figure 2 presents an indication of the typical season for each sport.

**Figure 2:** Indication of the typical season per sport

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cricket												
Rugby League												
Rugby Union												
Football												
Hockey												

**A22 How could the strategy be presented?**

When preparing to develop a PPS thought should be given to how it will be structured and presented. It may be useful to separate the final outputs into two, these being:

- **An assessment report or other method of presenting the assessment details** - Succinctly presenting the information gathered (Steps 2 & 3), the results of the assessment work and the resulting key findings and issues (Steps 4 to 6).
- **A strategy document** - Presenting the approach undertaken, the key findings and issues from the assessment work and scenario testing, the subsequent recommendations and actions along with how the PPS will be used, applied and kept robust and up to date (Steps 7 to 10).

However, if this approach is taken it is critical that both elements are provided to develop a robust PPS and that the work does not stop with the presentation of the assessment details.

**A23 What makes the study area different?**



Before embarking on developing a PPS it will be very useful to gain an understanding of what makes the study area different and the impact this may have on the supply of and demand for pitches. This will help to shape and tailor the approach to the local area, save time and resources as work progresses through the steps and assist in producing a locally tailored and specific brief and PPS. The following are examples of the types of things that may be specific to a local area which may be valuable to discuss, highlight and decide how to address.

**Nature of pitch sports** - Knowing which sports are dominant in the area and the nature of the clubs is likely to help with planning the information gathering work and enhance engagement with sports clubs.

**Geography** - In rural areas parish councils may be significant providers of pitches and therefore should be fully consulted. In urban areas there may be a more complex mix of site ownership and management which could require more specific consultation techniques and longer consultations periods.

**Large presence of private sites** - This may cause some difficulties in consulting the right people and place greater importance on the need to look at how to consult and issues around securing community access.

**The presence of universities and sports colleges** - Such establishments may be significant providers of pitches which could potentially offer greater community use if they are made aware of any unmet demand.

**Large capital investment programmes** - These may be related to educational sites and therefore it would be key for someone who has an overview of the impact of the programme to be on or engaged with the steering group rather than just rely on consulting the individual establishments. There may be changes to some pitch sites which have already been agreed but not yet implemented.

**The presence of major / large clubs** - There may be a few large clubs which are vital to the delivery of a particular sport. Given their importance it may be most effective to invite them to a sport specific consultation meeting with the support of the relevant NGB to help gather information, check the issues and findings and ensure their buy in to the recommendations and actions.

**Cross boundary movement of demand and central venues** - There may be a significant amount of demand that is known to be generated from outside the study area but play on sites within the study area or vice versa. Any known imported or exported demand should be highlighted during Stage A to help tailor the approach. Some cross boundary movement of demand may be due to the use of a central venue by a sport and a particular league for competitive matches. A central venue may be located in one area but is used by clubs and teams from a wide geographical catchment.

**The presence of sports development programmes and initiatives** - There may be some programmes or initiatives that are active in the area that are, or will, affect the demand for pitches. Discussions should be held with the appropriate parties to ensure that this demand can be captured in the assessment work.

**A24 How does the population of the study area participate in sport?**



It is useful to have an understanding of the following within the study area:

- The level and nature of participation in sport by the population
- Whether there are any clear trends in participation and what this may mean for pitch sports
- Where people that play pitch based sports reside and whether there are any concentrations of demand
- Whether people would like to increase their participation in pitch sports.

A25 Alongside knowledge gained from discussions with the NGBs and other parties (e.g. league secretaries), Sport England has a considerable amount of survey data and strategic planning tools which can help with understanding the above points and tailoring the approach. Details of this data and how the tools could be used for the benefit of undertaking a PPS are provided in the Sport England appendix. Gaining an understanding of how the population participates at this stage will help with tailoring the approach, notably to steps 3 and 5.

**A26 Which sports should be included in the strategy?**

The larger pitch sports of football, cricket, hockey, rugby union and rugby league are likely to be the focus of a PPS. However, to ensure the robustness of the PPS consideration needs to be given to other pitch sports that may be active in the area. While the level of detail may vary any such sports and their clubs should be engaged early, supply and demand information gathered and then assessed alongside the larger sports. As a guide the pitch sports included in the definition of a playing pitch in the Government's 2010 'Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order include football, rugby, cricket, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, American football, Australian football, gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.

A27 There may be occasions where there is no immediate evidence of a sport being played in the study area. This may include one or more of the larger sports (e.g. rugby league). If this is the case then the relevant NGBs should still be engaged early in the process to establish if they have, or are aware of, plans to establish the sport in the area. Some evidence of a sport being played may emerge as the information gathering work progresses.

**A28 How are the sports governed, what is the league structure, how many clubs and teams are there?**



As a guide, playing pitch sports are generally governed by the NGB (e.g. The Football Association) with a representative body operating at a county or regional level e.g. a County Football Association. As each sport differs it is important to identify the sporting structures from the relevant NGB as this will help with the information gathering stage and any wider consultation. Facility development is usually the responsibility of the

NGB at a national/sub regional level with the representative body operating at a regional/ county level responsible for sports development. The NGBs will be able to provide details on the league structures for their sport in the study area. The leagues are often one of the most important stakeholders to engage with as they generally have a good understanding of the overarching issues in the study area and should be able to help with compiling a list of the sports clubs.

**A29 Should any sub areas be used?**



Depending on the nature of the study area providing some form of sub area assessment may be useful. However, any sub areas should reflect how the sports are played within the study area and therefore the catchments for clubs, teams and pitches. Discussion with the NGBs and other parties should help with setting any appropriate sub areas. However, it may be best to leave a final decision on this to the end of Stage B as the information gathered may indicate relevant sub areas and/or change certain perceptions of the nature of any such areas. For example information from clubs of how far their members travel to their home ground may suggest much wider catchments than originally thought to be the case. It may be appropriate for the size of any sub areas to differ per sport, for different age groups within a sport and between pitch types e.g. natural and artificial grass pitches.

**A30 Has a tailored brief been developed?**

After reading through this document and working through Stage A the steering group should develop a strong brief for the work which, along with the project plan, tailors the approach to the study area. The task of drafting the brief may fall to a nominated individual(s) on the steering group. The brief and the project plan, which should then be agreed by the steering group, can be used to guide the work if it is being undertaken by a LA in house or sent out to potential tenderers if seeking external consultancy support. An example structure for a brief is provided in the Sport England appendix.

**A31** External consultancy support (e.g. through Sport England's Strategic Planning Framework – see paragraph A4) could be procured to develop the assessment and the PPS (Steps 2 to 8). However, after working through Stage A it may be clear that relevant parties (in house to a LA or external e.g. other members of the steering group) are well placed and able to undertake certain pieces of work. If this is the case then it should be confirmed in writing with the relevant parties, including proposed timescales, and be written into the brief. This could reduce the external consultancy support required and/or allow such support to be better utilised where it will be most beneficial. For example, an NGB may be aware of some recent professional quality assessments for some sites that could be used. In addition, LA grounds maintenance staff may be well placed (given the local knowledge and all year round understanding of the sites) to help carry out some non-technical quality assessments where they are required (paragraph B17). This would not only be an efficient use of time (particularly if it can be tied into regular routines) but would add value to the process.

**A32** Even where relevant parties can provide support and/or undertake certain pieces of work it will be useful for any external consultancy support to be secured before work on Stage B commences. This should be the case even if the consultancy support is to be focussed on later steps. This will enable the LA to discuss the overall approach with the appointed consultant(s) early in the process and benefit from their advice and experience.

It is important that Stage A is carried out in full by a LA, including establishing the commitment of all relevant parties to the work and understanding what and when they can contribute, prior to going out to tender for any external consultancy support.

This will help to overcome a number of issues which may otherwise crop up as the work progresses causing unnecessary delays and the inefficient use of the external support. Along with helping the development of the PPS this will hopefully enable the relationships established to be long lasting. This should aid the delivery of the strategy and its ability to be kept robust and up to date in a resource efficient manner.

Carrying out Stage A in full before going out to tender will also enable the development of a tailored brief. This is important as it will provide a LA with the opportunity to understand how any tenderers will seek to address issues that are particular to the study area and their experience in doing so.

## Stage A Checklist: Prepare and tailor the approach

A33 After working through Stage A it should be possible to answer ‘Yes’ to the following questions. If this is the case the work is ready to move on to Stage B. However, if this is not the case for one or more questions then the steering group should decide what affect this may have on the further development and robustness of the PPS and how best the question(s) could still be answered.

<b>Stage A Checklist: Prepare and tailor the approach</b>	Tick	
	Yes	Requires Attention
<b>Step 1: Prepare and tailor the approach</b>		
1. Is it clear why the PPS is being developed (the drivers) and what it seeks to achieve (the benefits)?		
2. Has the level of support Sport England and each of the main pitch sport NGBs can provide to the particular project been agreed?		
3. Has an initial scoping meeting been held including all relevant parties?		
4. Has a steering group been established to lead the work and is it representative of the drivers behind the work and providers and users of pitches in the area?		
5. Has a partnership approach been developed and has it been confirmed what support, advice and/or resources each party can bring to the work?		
6. Has the study area been defined and agreed by all relevant parties and have any known cross boundary issues been highlighted?		
7. Has high level officer and political support been secured and are such relevant individuals part of the steering group?		
8. Has a vision for pitch provision for the study area been developed alongside specific objectives and is there agreement on how far forward the PPS should look?		
9. Has a strong project team been established which is supported by adequate resources and has the necessary skills to develop the PPS?		
10. Has a realistic project plan been agreed by the steering group and the NGBs which sets out the overall timescale and when elements of the work will be undertaken?		
11. Has some thought been given to how the work will be structured and presented?		
12. Have any features which make the study area different been identified along with the impact they may have on pitch provision and the approach to the PPS?		
13. Has an understanding been developed of how the population participates in sport and what this may mean for pitch provision now and in the future?		
14. Alongside the main pitch sports has the inclusion of other pitch sports been considered and is there agreement on which should be included in the PPS?		
15. Is it clear how the sports to be included are governed in the area, what the league structure is and how this can help with developing the PPS?		
16. Has an indication been provided on the potential nature of any sub areas, do they represent how the sports are played in the study area and will these be reviewed once relevant information is gathered during Stage B?		
17. Has a strong, locally specific and tailored brief been developed which builds in the work undertaken to prepare the approach to developing the PPS?		
18. Have the project brief and project plan been signed off by the steering group?		
19. If external consultancy support is to be procured is this to be done after Stage A is complete but before work on Stage B commences?		

## Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision (Steps 2 & 3)

Working through Stage B will help to provide:

- An accurate audit of the supply of pitches and ancillary facilities
- An accurate audit of the current demand for pitches
- Information on which to base an understanding of the future demand for playing pitches
- Detailed views and opinions on the adequacy of provision from users and pitch providers
- A single document within which all the supply and demand information gathered is presented ready to be assessed in Stage C.

The guidance within this stage suggests what supply and demand information is required in order to develop accurate audits and carry out a robust assessment of provision. Advice is also provided on how the information could be gathered and presented.

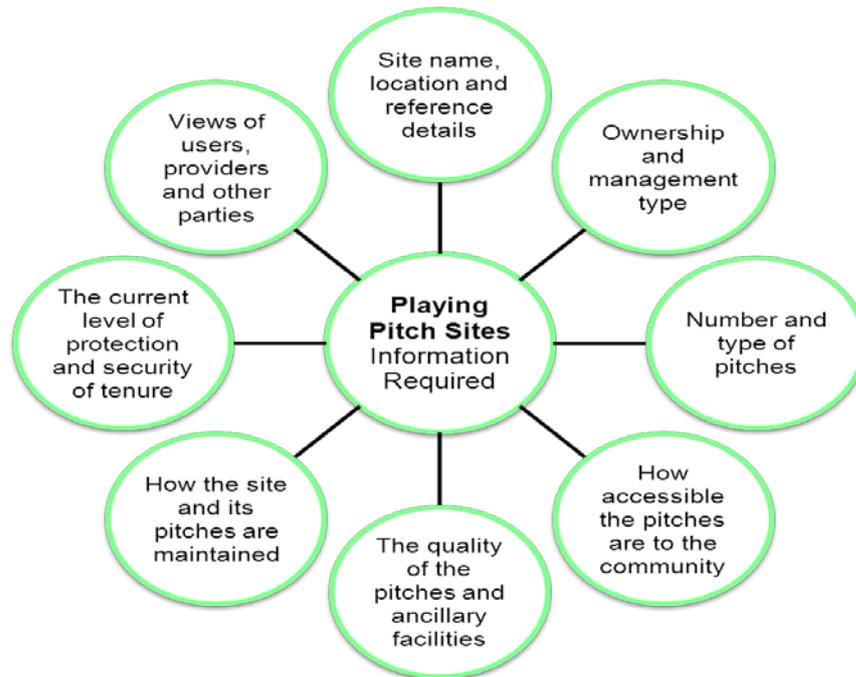


## Step 2: Gather supply information and views

### B1 What information is required for all playing pitch sites?

It is recommended that the information presented in Figure 3 should be gathered for all playing pitch sites, irrespective of ownership, in order to develop an accurate audit of provision. Sites where pitches were once, but are no longer, marked out and remain undeveloped should also be included in the audit, as should any land allocated as a playing field within a relevant development plan document. For each area presented in Figure 3 guidance is provided below on the nature of the information required and how it could be gathered.

**Figure 3:** Supply of provision – The information required



### B2 How should gathering information on playing pitch sites begin?

Running the PPS Audit Report on Sport England's [Active Places Power \(APP\)](#) website is a good and resource efficient starting point for gathering the supply information. The report provides all the playing pitch data held on APP for a LA and can be copied straight into the example document for collating and presenting the audit information provided in the Sport England appendix (paragraphs B43). The information from APP should be checked and supplemented by other sources. Any amendments to the APP information should be noted and fed back to Sport England. This will help to ensure the accuracy of the information for the benefit of all in the study area and also save a LA time and resources when maintaining this PPS audit information.

### B3 What are the names, reference and location details for each site?

A single, clear name and address should be provided for each site. As some sites may be referred to differently by different people it is important that any known names for the same site are noted but a single name is decided upon for the purposes of the audit. Recording co-ordinates (e.g. eastings and northings) for each site will help to accurately locate them for any related mapping work that may be provided to support the assessment work and the identification of key findings and issues. A unique reference ID should also be recorded for each site (the APP reference could be used) and each pitch so they can be clearly referred to.

### B4 Who owns and manages the sites?

An appropriate ownership and management type should be recorded for each site. These types may include LAs, town and parish councils, educational establishments, sports clubs, voluntary, charitable and community organisations and private organisations (e.g. commercial company sports ground). While the management type may be the same as the ownership type there are likely to be instances where they differ which should be noted (e.g. a site may be owned by a LA but managed by a sports club or trust).

## B5 What is the number and type of pitches on each site?



The number of natural and artificial grass pitches (AGPs) currently on a site for each sport and relevant age group should be recorded. To help ensure consistency the NGBs, in their appendices, set out the relevant pitch types and sizes for their respective sport. A number of other details are also required, these being:

- Where pitches may be **marked out** on one another
- The **number and type of wickets** (grass and non-turf wickets) on each cricket pitch
- Whether **additional space** exists on a site to potentially provide for further pitches or training areas.
- Whether pitches benefit from having **artificial sports lighting**
- The **size of AGPs** (e.g. full size pitch, multiple small sided pitches) and the **age of the surface**
- The **surface type** of all AGP's along with the **sports and type of play they can accommodate**.

B6 Where pitches are marked out on one another only the larger size pitch should be included in the audit. However, a note should be made against the larger pitch of the other pitches that may be marked out over it (formally or less formally e.g. by the use of cones). The exception to this is if a pitch is marked out over a cricket outfield as this pitch should be included. Noting whether there is any additional space at a site will help to understand if further pitches or training areas could be provided on the site.

B7 The size and surface type of an AGP affects the sports and types of play (e.g. matches/training) it can accommodate. Therefore, this detail should be recorded in the audit. Further details relating to the relevant surface types can be found in the 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface' document (paragraph D2) and the sport specific appendices. The age of the surface will help to indicate its quality and when it should be renewed.



## B8 How accessible are the pitches to the community?

Along with the location details (paragraph B3) there are four areas of accessibility information that should be gathered, these being:

- The availability of all pitches
- The cost of hiring available pitches/leasing sites
- Physical access to available sites
- The hours AGPs are available to the local community.

B9 **The availability of pitches** - It is important to understand which sites are available to and used by the local community along with how certain it is that this availability will remain. Each pitch should be assigned one of the categories set out below.

### Community use categories

**Available for community use and used** - Pitches in any ownership which are available for hire by, or leased to the community (e.g. leased to a sports club) and currently in use by community teams, for example:

- i. For educational pitches, community use relates to pitches used by the community over and above the educational establishments own use (i.e. over and above a school's curricular and extracurricular use).
- ii. For company sports grounds, sports & social clubs or third sector sports organisations community use relates to pitches where there are no restrictions on its use i.e. not having to be an employee, or related to an employee of the company to access provision.

**Available for community use but unused** - Pitches that are available for hire to the community but are not currently used by community teams; this may apply to some school sites and sites which are available but unused as they are expensive to hire.

**Not available for community use** - Pitches which as a matter of policy or practice are not available for use by community teams. This should include professional club pitches and some semi - professional club pitches where play is restricted to the first or second team.

**Not available as disused** - Any sites where pitches were once, but are no longer, marked out and remain undeveloped.

B10 For pitches that are available to the community the degree of certainty that this availability will continue needs to be recorded (i.e. how secure is the availability to the community?). Unless local information suggests otherwise it can be assumed that the availability of all pitches in LA, town and parish council and sports club ownership will be secure. However, for other provision the degree of certainty over the long term needs to be established. As a guide there should be a good degree of certainty that the pitch will be available to the community for at least the following three years. A judgement should be made based on the information gathered and **a record of secured or unsecured community use** put against each pitch. This will be particularly important for educational sites. Arrangements which may suggest such certainty could include:

- A formal community use agreement
- A leasing or management agreement requiring pitches to be available to the community/a community club
- A formal policy for community use adopted by the owner and or educational establishment
- Written confirmation from the owner and or educational establishment.

B11 In the vast majority of cases all pitches within a single site will have the same community use category and security of use. However, there may be occasions where the details differ e.g. on an educational site the natural grass pitches may not be available whereas an AGP on the site may be available with secured community use.

B12 **The cost of hiring pitches/leasing sites** - The price of hiring a pitch or leasing a site is a key element of its accessibility to the community. A high cost may result in a pitch being theoretically accessible to the community but having little or no actual current use. This could place pressure on other pitches as well as hindering the development of some clubs, their teams and their financial sustainability. Particular issues with the price of hiring or leasing pitches within the study area should be noted and recorded against the relevant site. It will be useful to compare available prices for LA pitches and those in other ownership and management categories with one another, along with those with different quality ratings (paragraphs B15 to B19) and in neighbouring areas.

B13 **Physical access to available sites** - Any issues and views from users and other parties about physically accessing a site should be noted. It will also be useful to gather information on how far people travel to sites and where from. This will help to understand the catchment of sites and clubs, suggest and review any sub areas (paragraph A29) along with highlighting the nature and extent of any imported demand from neighbouring areas. This information will help to add value to the assessment work (Stage C) and the development of the PPS and action plan (Stage D).

B14 **The hours AGPs are available to the local community** - It is important to know when all AGPs, which are available to the community, can be used. A record should be made of the hours such AGPs are available during a typical week. For example, an AGP on a school site with the benefit of sports lighting may be available on weekdays between 17:00 - 21:00 and between 09:00 - 17:00 on weekends. These hours are important to record because as opposed to the quality of natural grass pitches, it is the hours an AGP is available to the community, along with its surface type, which is most likely to determine how much play it can accommodate (its carrying capacity). Understanding the carrying capacity of pitches forms a key element of the approach to assessing provision set out in Stage C.

#### **How could the above information be gathered?**

Active Places Power PPS Audit Report checked and supplemented by local pitch site records and knowledge (e.g. LA records), consultation with and information from the NGBs, consultation with pitch providers and sports clubs along with available aerial photography.

The number and type of pitches can also be checked when carrying out any necessary non-technical quality assessments (paragraph B17). Any required site visits may pick up further issues with physically accessing a site and whether additional space exists to potentially provide for additional pitches or training areas.

#### **B15 What is the quality of the pitches and ancillary facilities?**

It is important to understand the quality of pitches and their ancillary facilities. As a minimum the quality of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of a sport. However, it can also severely limit the amount of play that can take place resulting in the inability of a pitch to cater for all or certain types of demand. The capacity for natural grass pitches to regularly provide for matches, training and other activity over a week

and a season is most often determined by their quality. The quality, standard and range of ancillary facilities (e.g. changing provision) can also affect the capacity of a pitch and its attractiveness to users. The quality of both the pitch and ancillary facilities will determine how well a pitch is able to contribute to meeting demand from various groups and for different levels and types of play. Therefore, understanding the quality of provision is key to the assessment work in Stage C, and the development of the recommendations and action plan in Stage D, as it will help to:

- Ensure differences in the quality of sites and pitches is known and reflected in the assessment
- Identify pitches that are being over-used and why some may be under-used
- Identify common issues with the quality of provision and the reasoning behind these
- Select and justify priorities for action and investment.

**B16** It is recommended that the quality of all pitches and their ancillary facilities should be recorded regardless of their ownership, management or availability to the community. Along with capturing any details and issues specific to individual pitches and sites a quality rating should be recorded and agreed by the project team for each pitch and the ancillary facilities on a site. The NGBs, within their respective appendices, provide further advice and suggest appropriate quality ratings for their sports (e.g. good, standard and poor). As far as possible the project team should ensure that the quality rating given to a pitch is a true reflection of its usual quality during the season for the relevant sport. The rating should not be overly influenced by what may have been particularly adverse weather conditions in the year the work is undertaken. Where appropriate the age of any ancillary provision (e.g. pavilion/clubhouse) and/or the year it was last refurbished should be recorded.

**B17** Depending on the number of sites within a study area recording a quality rating per pitch can be a resource intensive task. Therefore, to balance the resource implications and the need for an accurate record based on the best available information it is suggested that the following approach could be undertaken.



#### **Suggested approach to assessing the quality of provision**

The project team should ensure that:

- For all sites information and views on the quality of pitches and ancillary facilities are sought from the users of the pitches (e.g. sports clubs) and the site provider (owner/manager)
- Any recently undertaken and available professional quality assessments of a site and/or particular local professional knowledge are used.

If Stage A has been undertaken well then the project team should already be aware of which parties (within the steering group or external) have particular knowledge about which sites and/or where professional assessments already exist and are available for certain sites. Looking at this information, alongside feedback from the users and providers of a site, should enable the project team to establish a clear indication of the quality of a pitch and its ancillary facilities enabling an initial quality rating to be recorded.

However, where the Stage A work has not indicated that any professional assessments or knowledge exists for a site the project team should:

- See if it is possible to work with others (e.g. the NGBs) to carry out professional assessments for any sites which are particularly important for the delivery of sport in the area. This can ensure that they are fed into the development of the PPS rather than included as an action for a later date.
- Carry out non-technical quality assessments for the remaining sites and pitches. The results of such assessments should not be used in isolation but looked at alongside the views of the users and provider to help determine initial quality ratings. Within their appendices the NGBs have provided example sport specific non-technical pitch quality assessment forms. These have been designed to help with developing an understanding of the quality of a pitch and highlight any particular issues and to be used by the most appropriate person within the project team or steering group. For example, it will add value if such assessments are undertaken by grounds maintenance staff who are likely to be able to provide a greater understanding of any potential issues and quality throughout the season.

The sources of information used to determine the initial quality rating for each site and its pitches should be recorded.

- B18 The drainage of a pitch along with the management and maintenance regimes in place will affect its quality. Where known these details should be fed into the judgement of the project team to help determine the quality ratings (paragraph B20). The number of cancelled matches at a site over the course of a season can also help to indicate pitch quality. Depending on the management and maintenance regimes in place poor quality pitches, and/or or those with particular issues such as inadequate drainage, are likely to be subject to a higher number of cancellations. Available information on cancellations for the previous season (or ideally the average for the past three seasons if available) should be gathered to help with the assessment of quality.
- B19 The project team should ensure that relevant parties (e.g. those on the steering group and the NGBs) are given the opportunity to check and challenge the initial quality ratings so that agreed ratings can then be used in the assessment work (Stage C).

#### How could the above information be gathered?

Consultation with sports clubs and pitch providers supported by available professional quality assessments (e.g. via consultation with NGBs), local professional knowledge (e.g. consultation with LA grounds maintenance staff), site visits and use of NGB example non-technical quality assessment forms, local pitch site records and knowledge (e.g. LA records on cancellations).

#### B20 How are the sites and pitches maintained?

As indicated in paragraph 18, how sites and pitches are maintained will affect their quality along with their potential availability to the community. Where it is available gathering information on the maintenance regimes at sites available to the community will help the project team to understand the nature of the sites and the key issues (Stage C). This will also assist with looking at appropriate scenarios and developing recommendations and actions (Stage D). Any issues with or proposals to amend the maintenance regime, arrangements and/or responsibilities for any sites and pitches should also be recorded. This may include feedback from some of the pitch providers regarding concerns with being able to maintain the sites due to the on-going costs.

#### How could the above information be gathered?

Consultation with pitch providers supplemented by consultation with sports clubs

#### B21 What is the current level of protection afforded to the sites and the security of tenure?

As presented below, protection is afforded to playing pitches and playing field land at a national level through the Government's [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF). The Government, within the [2010 'Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order](#), defines a playing field as 'the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch'.

#### National Planning Policy Framework - Paragraph 74:

'Existing open space, sports and recreational 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 needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.'

- B22 Paragraph 74 of the NPPF is similar in its wording to Sport England's [Playing Fields Policy](#) which it applies in relation to its statutory consultee status on planning applications affecting playing field land. Within the NPPF the Government also introduced the ability for local communities through local and neighbourhood plans to designate land as a Local Green Space. The NPPF indicates that this designation would provide the land the same protection through the planning system as Green Belt land. Amongst the reasons for designating land as Local Green Space includes if it holds a particular local significance for recreational value (including as a playing field). Further guidance from the Government is expected on the application of this designation. A record

should be made in the audit of any sites which are covered by this designation. The current Development Plan for the study area (Local and Neighbourhood Plans) should also be checked to see what protection it affords playing pitch sites (e.g. it is likely to include planning policy seeking to protect open space, sport and recreational provision).

- B23 Playing field land, and therefore pitches and other sport and recreational provision at a site, may also be protected through additional means including a deed of dedication or covenant and charitable status. [Fields in Trust](#) (formerly the National Playing Fields Association) has significant experience in helping protect playing field land through these other means and their most recent programme, 'The [Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge](#)', protected over 1500 spaces across the UK via these methods. Further information can be found on their website and in the joint Fields in Trust and Sport England publication titled 'The Long Term Protection of Playing Field Land'. Within the supply audit a record should be made of relevant development plan policies and any specific protection afforded to individual sites by these other means. This information can raise awareness of the current protection provided to all playing field land in the study area and particular further protection afforded to individual sites. This knowledge can be used to look at possible ways of enhancing the protection of playing pitches when developing the recommendations and actions (Stage D).
- B24 It is important to understand if there are any issues with the security of tenure at any sites as this may affect the adequacy of provision in the near future and/or be currently hindering the potential to improve provision. For example, a lease currently held by a sports club for a site may be coming to the end of its term and unlikely to be extended or renegotiated. In addition, a club may not be able to seek funding to improve its site as it does not hold the required security of tenure (e.g. the freehold or appropriate length of lease). Any issues with the security of tenure of sites should be recorded within the audit.

#### How could the above information be gathered?

Viewing the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan for the study area, consultation with Fields in Trust (and/or local county playing fields association) and using the '[Find your nearest FIT Field](#)' tool on their website, local pitch site records and knowledge, consultation with and information from NGBs, consultation with pitch providers and also sports clubs in relation to security of tenure.

#### B25 **What are the views of users and others on the adequacy of provision?**



Views should be sought from the users of pitches and other parties (e.g. NGBs, league secretaries and pitch providers) on the adequacy of provision at individual sites and as a whole within the study area. These views should be noted in the audit along with any issues raised with particular sites, sports and/or pitch types. Advice on how consultation could be undertaken with all relevant parties to help gather the best available information and views is provided in paragraphs B40 to B42.

#### How could the above information be gathered?

Consultation with users of the pitches (e.g. with sports clubs and educational establishments) supplemented by consultation with NGBs, league secretaries and pitch providers.

### Step 3: Gather demand information and views

#### B26 What information is required on the demand for playing pitches?

It is recommended that the information presented in Figure 4 should be gathered in order to develop a robust picture of the demand for playing pitches. For each area in Figure 4 guidance is provided below on the nature of the information required and how it could be gathered. In addition, some sport specific details are also set out in the relevant NGB appendices (e.g. the age ranges of teams for each sport).

#### B27 How should gathering information on the demand for playing pitches begin?

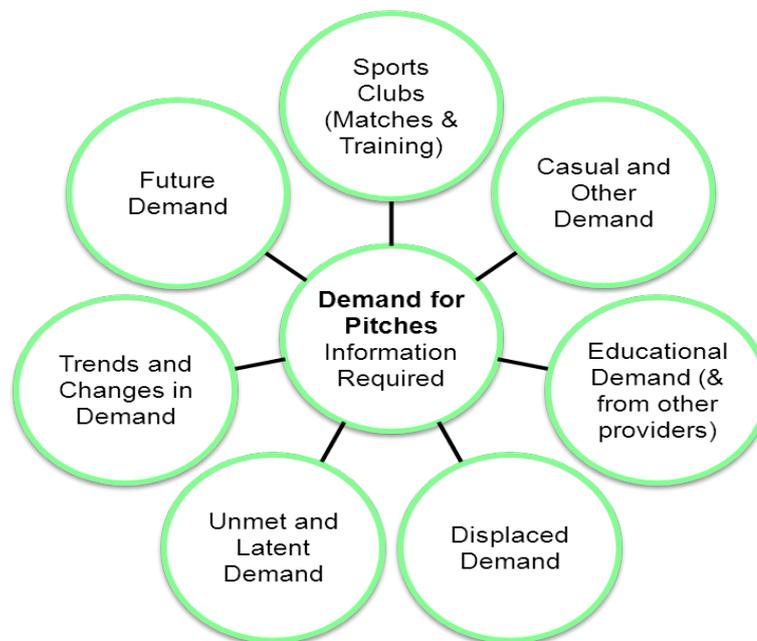
 If Stage A has been completed well then it should be clear to the project team what demand information is already available from a variety of parties, including the NGBs. Gathering this already available information should form the starting point alongside developing an accurate list of consultees. Building on early discussions with the NGBs this list should include all sports clubs which currently play on pitches in the study area (even if a club predominantly comprises of residents from outside the study area), league secretaries and educational and other establishments or parties which may generate a demand for pitches.

B28 Particular attention needs to be given to getting the list of consultees as accurate as possible. Information should be cross checked against other sources to ensure that this is the case. For example, club and team information from the NGBs and leagues should be checked against details from pitch providers of who plays at their site and other sources. This will help to ensure that all clubs/users are included and subsequently consulted (e.g. any non NGB affiliated sports clubs/teams that use pitches within the study area).

#### How could the above information be gathered?

Discussions with NGBs and league secretaries, consultation with pitch providers, LA education departments and others regarding lists of educational establishments and other users.

Figure 4: Demand for provision – The information required



To enable a robust assessment of provision to be undertaken (Stage C) it is important to know where the current demand takes place (i.e. the sites used by the individual sports clubs and other parties). Therefore, wherever possible when developing the audit all demand should be allocated to a specific site(s). If some demand uses a number of sites on an infrequent basis (i.e. a team may play at a different site each week) then as much information as possible should be recorded against the sites it uses and how frequent this use is.

### B29 **What demand is there from sports clubs for matches and training?**



For each sports club that plays on pitches within the study area it is important to know:

- The number and nature of teams they run (the NGB appendices provide specific age ranges for each sport)
- Where and when each team plays their home matches e.g. A named site and Saturday AM
- When and for how long an AGP is booked for and the nature of the use (i.e. matches or training)
- Where, when and for how long each team trains (e.g. a named site and Tuesday evening 8-9pm. It should be noted whether this activity takes place on a natural grass pitch, an AGP or at any other facility)
- Whether the members of their teams reside within the study area and how far they travel to any home site.

There may be situations where there is no formal record of a club booking a pitch for matches and/or training but they are known to use a particular site on a regular basis. This may only be picked up through local knowledge but where it is known it should be recorded as regular demand from sports clubs against the site as opposed to referring to it as casual or other demand. The source of the information should be noted.

#### **How could the above information be gathered?**

Consultation with sports clubs supplemented by consultation with NGBs, league secretaries and pitch providers.

### B30 **Is there any casual use or other demand taking place at the sites?**

Information on any casual or other use of pitches, including when it takes place and for how long, should be sought and recorded. Casual or other use could take place on natural grass pitches or AGPs 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.

B31 It may be difficult to know if there is any casual or other use of particular sites. However, where through consultation this is apparent it should be recorded against each site as it is likely to use some of the capacity of the pitches and could have a significant impact on their quality (especially for natural grass pitches).

#### **How could the above information be gathered?**

Consultation with pitch providers supplemented by consultation with sports clubs, local knowledge and any required site visits (e.g. where non-technical quality assessments are to be undertaken).

### B32 **Do educational establishments (other providers) have adequate provision to meet their demand?**

Schools, colleges, universities and other organisations within a study area can generate a significant demand for playing pitches. However, it can be very difficult to gather accurate information on this demand. For example, demand from schools is likely to range from competitive matches to PE lessons and break time activity. Nevertheless, it is important that a PPS recognises the demand from such establishments. The majority of educational establishments will have their own playing pitches but some may also use other sites in addition to their own (e.g. other schools pitches, provision at a nearby recreation ground or an AGP at a local leisure centre). Understanding whether or not their own pitch provision, and/or the provision they currently access externally (i.e. outside of their own site) is adequate to meet their current and future demands should be the focus of understanding educational demand. If they do use other external provision in addition to their own then how secure this use is along with the nature and extent of the use should be understood and recorded against the relevant site(s). It will be particularly important to record the use of other external provision if it takes place on sites which are also available to the community as this may affect the capacity of the sites to provide for community use.

B33 The level of use of by educational establishments of their own provision will affect the capacity of their provision to meet any community demand. When gathering this information on educational demand details should also be sought on the nature and extent of any current and potential future use of their provision by the local

community. To help gather this demand and supply information for educational establishments a series of suggested consultation questions are provided in the Sport England appendix. These questions could also be applied to other organisations which may generate demand for and also be a provider of pitches.

#### How could the above information be gathered?

Consultation with educational establishments and other relevant parties who may generate demand and be a provider of pitches checked against consultation with sports clubs

#### B34 Is there any displaced demand?



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. It is important to know whether any displaced demand is due to issues with the provision of pitches and ancillary facilities in the study area, just reflective of how the sports are played (e.g. at a central venue for the wider area) or due to the most convenient site for the respective users just falling outside of the LA/study area. It is therefore important to establish:

- What displaced demand exists and why including the amount and type of demand (e.g. a senior match on a natural grass pitch, a junior training session on an AGP)
- Whether those generating the displaced demand would prefer to play within the study area and where.

B35 There may also be some displaced demand within the study area (e.g. from one town to another). Evidence of any such internal displaced demand may be able to be picked up in consultation with sports clubs and others by asking them if they currently play at their preferred location and if they don't, why is this and where they would prefer to play. Displaced demand could be generated from many sources including entire sports clubs, individual teams from within a club and educational establishments which do not have adequate provision of their own, or access to adequate provision within the vicinity. For sports clubs some displaced demand may result from a lack of provision within the study area which meets the requirements of a particular league/standard of play.

#### How could the above information be gathered?

Consultation with NGBs and league secretaries supplemented by consultation with sports clubs, educational establishments and other parties who may generate demand along with neighbouring local authorities

#### B36 Is there any unmet and latent demand?

The nature and extent of any unmet demand and latent demand should be recorded along with what actions would help to satisfy the demand. Current **unmet demand** could be in the form of a team that has currently got access to a pitch for its matches but nowhere to train or vice versa. It could also be from an educational establishment that is currently using an indoor facility because of the lack of access to outdoor pitch provision. Along with a lack of pitches of a particular type being available to the community unmet demand may be due to the poor quality and therefore limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement. 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. As it is known to exist it should be possible to quantify any unmet demand (e.g. a training session for one team on a weekday evening).

B37 Alongside current unmet demand there may also be some evidence of **latent demand** within the study area. Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. This could include feedback from a sports club who may feel that they could set up and run an additional team if they had access to better provision. Details of the potential amount and type of latent demand in the study area should be sought. Some of Sport England's strategic planning tools (see the Sport England appendix) may also help with providing an indication as to whether any latent demand may exist in the study area.

### B38 **Are there any key trends and changes in the demand for playing pitches?**



To develop a PPS there needs to be an understanding of the key trends and changes in the demand for pitch sports. Information should be sought on any trends in the number and types of teams playing each sport in the study area along with any recent and proposed changes in how the sports are played. Information from sports clubs for example may suggest an upward trend in the number of teams for a particular age group whereas for other ages the focus of the clubs may be just trying to maintain the number of teams they currently run.

#### **How could the above information be gathered?**

Consultation with sports clubs supplemented by consultation with NGBs, league secretaries, educational establishments and other relevant parties who may generate demand along with the use of Sport England's strategic planning tools (see the Sport England Appendix).

### B39 **What is the likely future demand for playing pitches?**



Alongside current demand it is important for a PPS to assess whether the future demand for pitches can be met. To do so an informed estimate will need to be made of the likely future demand for pitches in the study area. Advice on how to develop and apply this estimate is provided in Stage C. However, to enable this estimate to be developed the following information, alongside key trends and the changes in the demand for pitch sports, should be gathered:

- The most appropriate current and future population projections for the relevant age and gender groupings for each sport as set out by the NGBs in their relevant appendices. These will be required for the year(s) the PPS is looking forward to for the study area as a whole and for any sub areas
- Any LA sports development and public health related development objectives and targets
- Any NGB development objectives and targets
- Feedback from sports clubs on plans to develop additional teams and the additional provision required
- Feedback from educational establishments and other parties on whether their future demand can be met by the provision they currently access and if not then the additional provision required.

#### **How could the above information be gathered?**

LA population projections (i.e. those used within the Development Plan(s) for the study area), consultation with relevant LA departments and with sports clubs, NGBs, educational establishments and other parties who may generate future demand.

## **Guidance on how to gather, present and check the information and views**

### B40 **How can consultation be undertaken to help gather the supply and demand information and views?**

By reading this document in full and working through Stage A the steering group and project team should have developed a clear approach to gathering the required information in the most resource efficient way for the particular study area. Further to the advice in the 'How could the above information be gathered' boxes provided above, the steering group and project team may be aware of other parties that could be consulted, and/or other sources, which will provide useful information and views on provision in the study area.



#### **Example surveys**

To help with gathering the required information the NGBs, within their respective appendices, have provided example club survey forms for their sport which could be used to help gather the required information. The forms have been developed to try to help a project team gather all the required information. However, they are only examples and can be amended as required by the project team to reflect the particular nature and known issues in the study area and any information that may be readily available from other sources.

Suggested consultations questions for educational establishments are also provided in the Sport England appendix.

B41 It is important that any consultation is tailored to how particular groups are likely to best engage with the work and help provide the information. For example, while example club survey forms are provided by the NGBs this does not suggest a postal survey should necessarily be carried out. To achieve a good response rate to a postal survey tends to require a significant amount of chasing resulting in an inefficient use of resources. To ensure the best possible response rates the steering group and project team should look at direct and innovative ways of consulting to which the consultees in the study area are likely to be receptive. Some possible approaches are provided below.



#### Some possible consultation approaches

**Using the contacts and meetings of members of the steering group** – for example asking for time at a league meeting to explain the work and seek survey responses from clubs in attendance.

**Using members of the steering group to undertake some of the consultation** – others may be better placed than the project team to engage with particular parties and secure the best response as they are already in regular contact with those who information is required from. For example local NGB contacts and/or league secretaries may be well placed to gather the required information from a number of sports clubs.

**Hold sport specific meetings** - with a number of the larger sports clubs and key representatives (e.g. league secretaries), where the survey details can be provided and discussion held around key issues.

**On-line surveys** - well designed and user friendly online surveys which link straight to a database recording the information can be a particularly user friendly and resource efficient approach.

**Ensure members of the steering group are aware of any consultation** – if members are aware of the nature and timing of the consultation they can subsequently raise awareness of it to any relevant parties and help to secure responses.

**Ensure face to face consultation** with:

- Key clubs for the delivery of each sport in the study area
- Clubs that have their own pitch provision which they also make available to others
- Particularly important pitch providers in the study area
- Key staff in all relevant LA departments
- The Head of PE/Sport and staff responsible for bookings at any colleges, secondary schools and universities supported by telephone consultation with others schools (i.e. primary) and colleges.

B42 The benefits of carrying out face to face consultation with key stakeholders should not be undervalued. For example, for secondary schools it allows issues around availability and the ability to provide for community use to be further explored. For key and/or large sports clubs it provides an opportunity to further explore demand related issues and what this may mean for pitch provision and particular sites.

#### Consultation response rates

The level of engagement with a variety of parties, including sports clubs and pitch providers, will provide a very clear indication as to the robustness of a PPS and the assessment on which it is based. The engagement may be in the form of a completed survey form, or as set out above, a more direct approach.

For those sports with a small number of clubs in the study area experience has shown that it is possible, and therefore a PPS should seek to, receive consultation responses from all clubs representing all teams. Where there are a particularly large number of clubs and teams for a specific sport then so long as the consultation is tailored and well prepared experience has shown that it is still possible, and therefore a PPS should seek to, achieve high response rates (i.e. responses representing in excess of 75% of all teams).

Where it has not been possible to secure responses from all teams it is important that responses have been received from all the larger clubs and those that are key to the delivery of the sport in the area. However, to accurately reflect the current situation this should not be at the expense of seeking responses from smaller clubs just to achieve a high team response rate. The consultation may establish that it is the smaller clubs that have the majority of issues with pitch provision in the study area.

If a member of the steering group or other party carries out any consultation on behalf of the project team it is critical that they take real ownership of the delivery of the work as its success will affect the rest of the project. Where this occurs it should be agreed in writing (including timescales) and well managed to ensure the project team is kept fully aware and up to date with the progress of the work.

#### B43 **How could the supply and demand information be collated and presented?**

All the information required for the supply and demand audits should be collated and presented in one single document. This enables there to be one single source of information on which to base the assessment work (Stage C) and to which all relevant parties are aware of and can refer to. An **example document** which could be used to help collate and present the information is provided in the Sport England appendix. The document is an example to help with the development of a PPS and if used could be amended and modified as appropriate for the particular study area. Alternatively, the project team may decide to improve the example document as they see fit and/or develop an alternative document which still ensures all the required information is in one place. While the example document will help with carrying out the assessment (Stage C) and presenting some of the assessment details (Step 4) it has not been developed as an automated assessment tool. As a guide, alongside a blank example document, an additional populated version is provided in the Sport England appendix with some example data.

It is important for the assessment work in Stage C that wherever possible **all types of current demand are allocated to the site where the play takes place**. This is required in order to clearly see how much demand the audit information suggests currently takes place at each site and across each pitch type at a site

In line with the example document, however the audit information is collated and presented it should be possible to **filter and sort the information by a range of areas** including by site, sport, pitch type, availability to the community and the security of community use. This will aid the assessment work (Stage C) and also allow those viewing the document to quickly look at and help check and challenge the information of interest to them.

#### B44 **Checking and challenging the supply and demand information**



It is important that relevant stakeholders are given the opportunity to **check and challenge the supply and demand audits** once the information has been collated into a single document. This should include members of the steering group and the NGBs and will provide the project team with a useful check of the information before they start assessing it in Stage C.

#### B45 **Data Protection**

Prior to carrying out this stage the project team should take advice from their relevant data protection advisers. In order to assist some pointers are provided below but it is the responsibility of the project team to ensure that any other data protection issues are covered:

- When gathering information some of this may be personal such as names and contact details. All personal data must be kept securely.
- So far as the Data Protection Act 1998 is concerned individuals who are contacted should be told what their information will be used for. It should be ensured that the information they provide is not used for any other purpose without their express consent.
- If members of the project team are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 it is also a good idea to remind people that the information they disclose to you may be further disclosed in response to any FOI enquiry.
- Where personal information is gathered (e.g. names and addresses) this can be retained for the duration of the project unless an individual asks for their information to be removed from your records. If this is the case then all information which identifies that individual should be removed (although you may retain the anonymised data).

## Stage B Checklist: Gather supply and demand information and views

B46 After working through Stage B it should be possible to answer 'Yes' to the following questions. If this is the case the work is ready to move on to Stage C. However, if this is not the case for one or more questions then the steering group should decide what affect this may have on the further development and robustness of the PPS and how best the question(s) could still be answered.

Stage B Checklist: Gather supply and demand information and views	Tick	
	Yes	Requires Attention
<b>Step 2: Gather supply information and views</b>		
1. Has the Active Places Power PPS Audit Report been run to help develop the audit?		
<b>Does the project team know...</b>		
2. The name, reference and location details for each site?		
3. Who owns and manages each site?		
4. The number and type of pitches on each site (by sport and age group)?		
5. The age and surface type of AGPs and the types of play they can accommodate?		
6. How available each pitch is to the local community and for those that are available how secure the community use is?		
7. The cost of hiring/leasing pitches in the study area across ownership and management categories, quality ratings and within neighbouring areas?		
8. The quality of all pitches and ancillary facilities and have initial quality ratings been checked with by steering group and NGBs and subsequently agreed?		
9. How the pitches are maintained and whether there are any issues with, or proposals to amend, the current maintenance regime and/or arrangements?		
10. What the current level of protection is for all sites (e.g. planning policy), which are afforded any other particular protection (e.g. deeds of dedication) and if there are any issues with the security of tenure and any sites?		
11. What the views of users and other parties are on the adequacy of provision at individual sites and as a whole within the study area?		
<b>Step 3: Gather demand information and views – Does the project team know...</b>		
1. All the sports clubs that use pitches in the study area, the number and nature of teams they run and where and when they play matches and train?		
2. Of any casual use or other demand taking place at sites in the study area?		
3. The pitch sites educational and other such establishments use and whether this provision is adequate to meet their current and future needs?		
4. Where and when any educational (and other similar) establishments use provision over and above their own (i.e. external sites) and how secure any such use is?		
5. Whether educational establishments feel they have any spare capacity for community use at their sites?		
6. The nature and extent of displaced demand, the reasons for this, where it is currently met, whether those generating it would rather play in the study area?		
7. The nature and extent of any unmet and latent demand?		
8. Whether there are any key trends and changes in the demand for pitches?		
9. All the necessary information to allow for an estimate to be developed of the likely future demand for playing pitches?		
<b>Collating and presenting the supply and demand information</b>		
1. Is the supply and demand information collated into a single document allowing the viewer to sort the information by key areas (i.e. by site, sport and pitch type)?		
2. Within the single document have all types of current demand, wherever possible, been allocated to the site where the play takes place?		
3. Have the steering group and NGBs had the opportunity to check and challenge the audit information?		

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

Working through Stage C will help to provide:

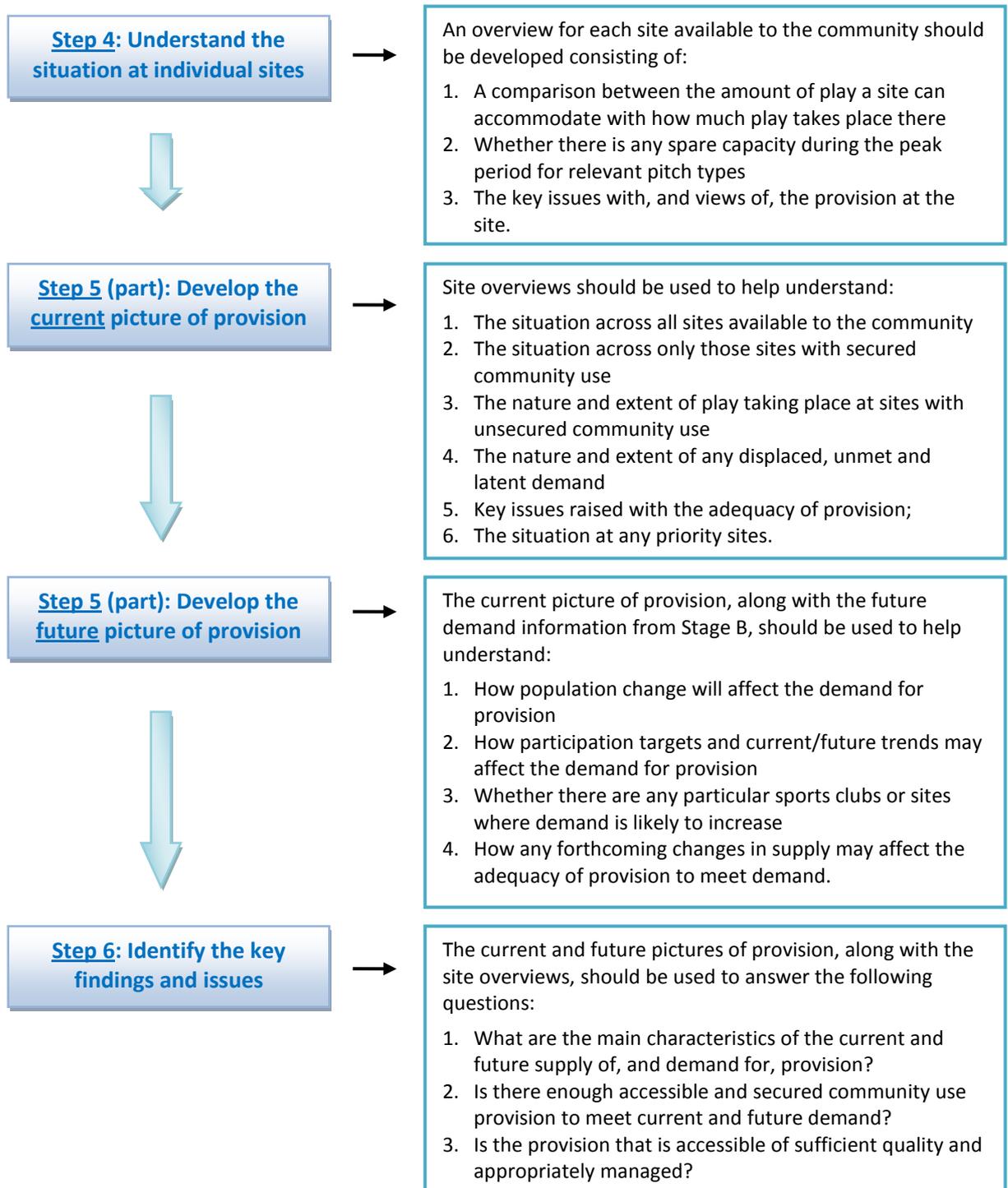
- An understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community
- An indication of whether the current supply in the study area is adequate to meet both current and future demand
- The views and opinions of all relevant parties on the adequacy of provision
- The key issues with the supply of and demand for provision in the study area.



## An overview of the assessment process

- C1 The guidance in this stage sets out how the information and views gathered in Stage B can be used to assess the adequacy of provision to meet both current and future demand. This should result in a series of key findings and issues from which recommendations and a sport, area and site specific action plan can be developed in Stage D.
- C2 An overview of the recommended approach to the assessment is provided in Figure 5 below. This is followed by detailed guidance on each element. Sport England and the NGBs believe that any assessment should start by using the supply and demand information to gain an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community.

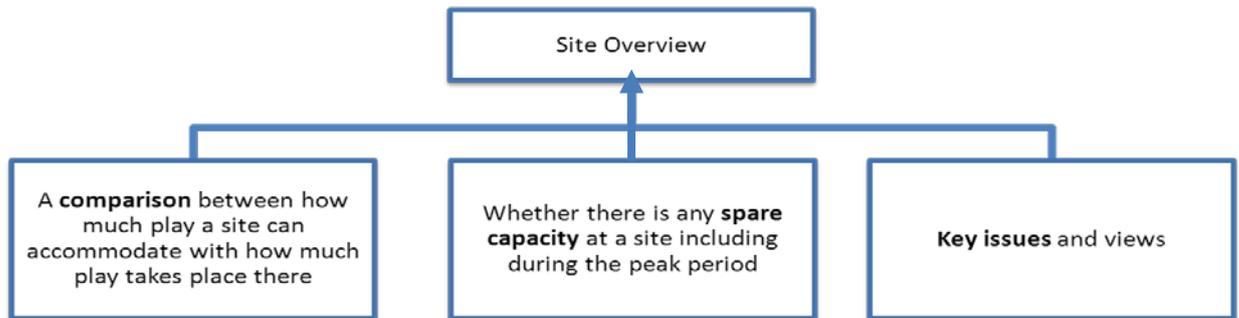
**Figure 5:** An overview of the assessment process



## Step 4: Understand the situation at individual sites

- C3 The assessment should start by using the supply and demand information gathered during Stage B to gain an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community. This understanding can be presented as a site overview covering the three areas in Figure 6:

**Figure 6:** Developing a site overview

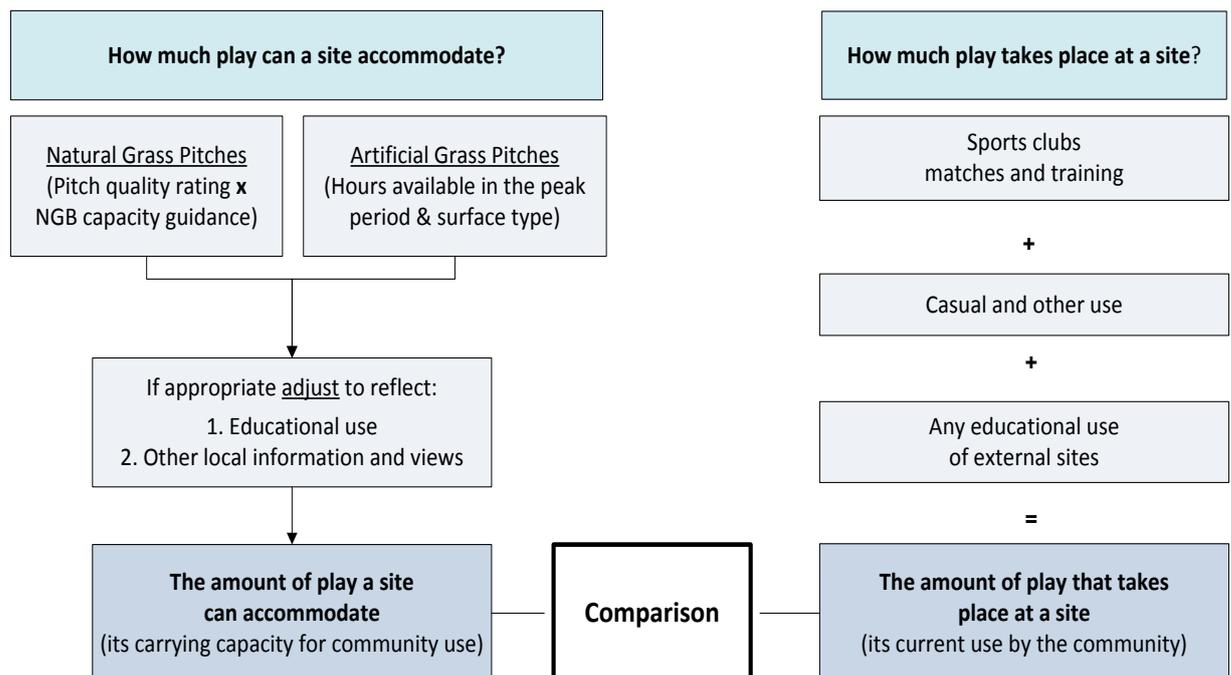


- C4 The information gathered during Stage B should have been collated and presented in line with the **example document** provided in the Sport England appendix (paragraph B43). When following the guidance provided below the project team can then filter the supply and demand information by site and pitch type to help develop the site overviews. To help with understanding the approach some example site overviews are included in the populated example document within the Sport England appendix.

### 1. Comparing how much play a site can accommodate with how much play takes place there

- C5 Figure 7 and the following paragraphs provide guidance on how this comparison can be undertaken. To do so the amount of play a site can accommodate (its carrying capacity - paragraph C10) and how much play takes place there (its current use - paragraph C17) needs to be established. When establishing this it is important that both elements are converted into the same unit of demand (a comparable unit - paragraph C6).

**Figure 7:** How to compare the amount of play a site can accommodate (its carrying capacity) with how much play takes place there (its current use)



### What comparable units should be used?

- C6 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 will enable a comparison to be undertaken. Reflecting the different nature of the sports and how pitches are used the units set out below should be used.

#### Comparable Units

**Natural Grass Football, Rugby Union and Rugby League Pitches** = Match equivalent sessions per week

**Cricket Pitches** = Match equivalent sessions per season

**Artificial Grass Pitches** = Hours per week in the peak period

#### C7 Natural Grass Pitches – Why match equivalent sessions per week/season?

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**.

- C8 Based on how they tend to be played this unit for **football, rugby union and rugby league pitches** should relate 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.

#### C9 Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) – Why hours per week in the peak period?

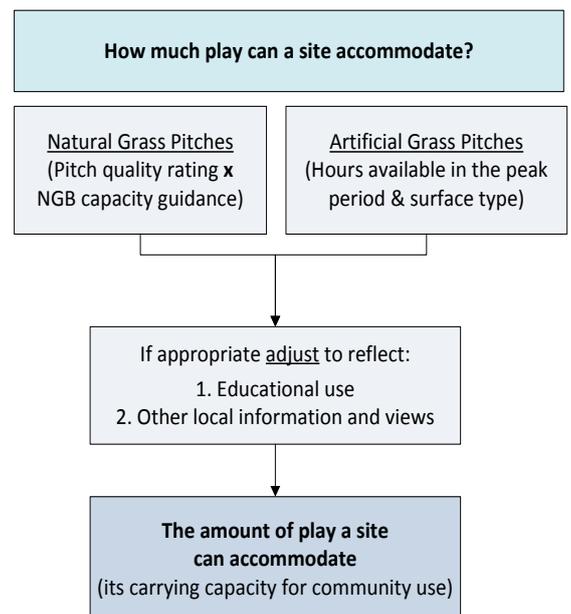
How much play an AGP can accommodate is primarily determined by the hours it is available for, rather than how much play it can accommodate before its quality is adversely affected as with natural grass pitches. To reflect when such pitches are most in demand it is appropriate for the comparable unit for AGPs to be **hours** a pitch is available **per week in the peak period**. This should relate to a typical week within the season for the sports an AGP can accommodate (i.e. dependant on its surface type – paragraph B7). If an AGP benefits from sports lighting then its use will be extended which may allow for play throughout the peak period (i.e. including weekday evenings). Whilst not affecting the overall hours available, the surface type of an AGP will affect its ability to accommodate certain sports and types of play.

### How to establish how much play a site can accommodate?

- C10 Paragraphs C11 to C16 provide guidance relating to the **left hand side of Figure 7** which will help to establish how much play a site can accommodate. This should be regarded as its **carrying capacity**. The carrying capacity of a site is not simply how much play currently takes place there. For example, natural grass pitches at a site may be currently used to the extent that their quality is deteriorating and their use is being adversely affected. In this situation their carrying capacity is being exceeded (i.e. the site is being overplayed).

For the purposes of this assessment the **carrying capacity for natural grass pitches** should be defined as the amount of play a site can regularly accommodate (in the relevant comparable unit) for **community use** without adversely affecting its quality and use.

For **AGPs** the **carrying capacity** relates to the hours it is available in the peak period for **community use**.



C11 **Natural grass pitches - How many match equivalent sessions can a pitch accommodate?**



The NGBs, within their appendices, have provided a guide as to the amount of play, in match equivalent sessions, a natural grass pitch could accommodate over a typical week (or a wicket over the course of a season for cricket) depending on its quality. The project team should use the agreed pitch quality ratings from Stage B and the NGB guidance to provide an initial suggested carrying capacity for each pitch.

In line with the guidance in paragraph C8, the number of wickets on a **cricket** pitch should be looked at alongside guidance from the ECB (directly and within their appendix) to determine the overall carrying capacity of the pitch. If a pitch also has a non-turf wicket(s) its carrying capacity should be recorded separately to the grass wickets.

As indicated in paragraph B18 how pitches are maintained, along with their drainage, will also affect their quality and therefore their carrying capacity. As a guide for **rugby union** pitches the RFU have suggested a carrying capacity within their appendix based on the drainage and maintenance afforded to pitches. These suggested figures can be used alongside the quality rating to determine the carrying capacity.

C12 **Artificial grass pitches (AGPs) - How many hours per week in the peak period is a pitch available for?**

Within Stage B the hours an AGP is available for community use during the week should have been recorded. To calculate the carrying capacity the project team will now need to record how many of these hours fall within the peak period for community use. As a guide the overall peak period for AGPs may be Monday to Thursday 17:00 to 21:00; Friday 17:00 to 19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00 to 17:00, totalling 34 hours a week. While these hours could be used to define the peak period they should be checked against the hours AGPs within the study area are most used by the community. The local details may suggest slightly different peak hours. The hours recorded in the peak period for each AGP need to reflect a typical week. Therefore, if a pitch does not benefit from sports lighting it is unlikely to have any capacity for community use on weekday evenings.

If the correct supply information is recorded within the **example document** provided (paragraph B43) it will automatically present an initial carrying capacity for each **natural grass pitch** based on the NGB guidance in their appendices. It will also highlight the hours per week in the peak period entered for each **AGP**.

C13 **How much play is a site likely to be able to accommodate?**

Adding together the initial carrying capacity for all similar pitches on a site will provide a total initial carrying capacity for each pitch type a site provides. For AGPs the carrying capacity of a site per surface type should be recorded.

As presented in Figure 7 the initial carrying capacity for each pitch type at a site should then be **adjusted**, if appropriate, to reflect educational use of educational sites and other local information and views.

C14 **How to reflect educational use of educational sites?**

The educational use of pitches on educational sites needs to be reflected in the assessment. However, rather than trying to quantify all the use an educational establishment makes of its own natural grass pitches, the importance for the comparison work is to establish their carrying capacity for community use. Therefore, before the carrying capacity of the grass pitches on such sites is agreed the responses received from the relevant educational establishment during Stage B should be looked at. The responses should be checked against the quality ratings, suggested initial carrying capacity, feedback from other users of the site (e.g. sports clubs) and other local knowledge. An informed judgement should then be made by the project team of how to adjust the initial carrying capacity to ensure that it reflects the carrying capacity for community use (i.e. reducing the initial carrying capacity to build in the educational use of the site). To help with this two examples are provided below.

C15 For AGP's the situation should be easier to establish as, in line with paragraph C12, only the hours an AGP is available for community use should have been recorded for each site. If an educational establishment regularly uses an AGP on their site during the peak period (e.g. 5 – 6pm on a weekday evening) then this time should not have been included in the hours it is available for community use in the peak period.

**Adjusting the suggested initial carrying capacity to reflect educational use of educational sites - Examples**

A school with one good quality youth football pitch is used by a local football club for training every Saturday. The FA guidance suggests a potential carrying capacity of four match equivalent sessions a week. The school have indicated the pitch cannot accommodate any additional community use bearing in mind its own use of the site. It is therefore decided the carrying capacity of the pitch for community use should be limited to the current use by the club which it is agreed equates to one match equivalent session a week.

A school site with two senior football pitches of standard quality has a suggested carrying capacity of four match equivalent sessions a week based on the FA guidance (two sessions per pitch). While a club uses the site for two matches a week the school suggests it could accommodate an additional two. This would indicate a carrying capacity for community use of four match equivalent sessions a week (i.e. the current use and the potential additional use) leaving no allowance for the educational use when compared to the suggested carrying capacity. The club have raised some concerns with the quality of the pitches casting some doubt on their ability to accommodate additional play. Based on the information gathered it is decided that the site could accommodate more than the current two match equivalent sessions for community use but not to the extent suggested by the school. The suggested carrying capacity of four is therefore reduced to three to ensure it reflects the potential to accommodate some additional play (over and above the current two matches) but also the educational use of the site.

**C16 Check against other information and views then agree the amount of play a site can accommodate (its carrying capacity)**

Before the suggested carrying capacity figures are agreed they should be checked against any other relevant local information and views gathered during Stage B. This could include the number of match cancellations, the maintenance regime at a site, the provision and quality of ancillary facilities and the views received from the provider and users of the pitches. This information may suggest that for some sites the figures for grass pitches based on the NGB capacity guidance should be amended to reflect additional local knowledge and circumstances. For clarity and transparency any amended figures from those suggested using the NGB guidance should be clearly shown along with reasons for the amendment(s).

**How to establish how much play takes place at a site?**

C17 Paragraphs C18 to C25 below provide guidance relating to the **right hand side of Figure 7** which will help to establish how much play (demand) takes place at a site (**its current use**). All demand taking place at a site is likely to use some of its carrying capacity. Therefore, it is important that wherever possible all the demand allocated to a site during Stage B is converted into the relevant comparable unit. As presented in Figure 7 this should include use by sports clubs for matches and training activity, casual or other demand along with educational demand that uses external pitches (i.e. pitches that do not belong to the educational establishment such as a local recreation ground or an AGP at a local leisure centre).

If the demand information gathered during Stage B has been collated in line with the example document (paragraph B43) it should be possible to **filter it by site and pitch type**.

This will enable the project team to see **all the demand**, including the different types, they have **allocated to a site** and each pitch type within a site.

**How much play takes place at a site?**

Sports clubs  
matches and training

+

Casual and other use

+

Any educational use  
of external sites

=

**The amount of play that takes  
place at a site**  
(its current use by the community)

## C18 **Natural Grass Pitches - Sports Club Matches**

If matches are played on a pitch appropriate for the particular type of play and age range then:

- For **football, rugby union and rugby league** 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** one match = one match equivalent session.

### **Cricket**

As the comparable unit for cricket is match equivalent sessions per season the total number of home matches a cricket team plays over the course of a season at a site should be recorded. For example, a cricket club using a site with a single pitch may have two open age teams one of which plays up to 10 home matches a season and the other eight. The respective figure should be recorded against each team with the overall demand for matches the club places on the site totalling 18 match equivalent sessions per

C19 Taking into account how the sports are played there are likely to be situations where:



1. A match takes place **on a pitch dedicated for a different type of play and/or age range**, (e.g. a youth match taking place on an adult pitch)
2. A pitch is used which is **marked out over another pitch** (e.g. a mini pitch marked out on a senior pitch)
3. A league may make **use of a central venue** for matches rather than clubs having their own home ground.

The use of match equivalent sessions allows for these situations to be captured and allocated to the site where it takes place. However, the project team will have to make a judgement as to the level of match equivalent sessions it is appropriate to record against a site for such use. This should be based on the local information and knowledge gained from Stage B, alongside guidance from the NGBs. Some examples are provided below.

### **Youth and Mini/Midi Rugby**

Youth and mini/midi rugby union teams along with under 11 rugby league teams tend to use and/or mark out pitches on top of senior pitches. Where this occurs the play will cause some wear and tear of the senior pitches and therefore use some of their carrying capacity. As they are senior pitches this play needs to be quantified as match equivalent sessions of a senior pitch.

It may be decided that a rugby union match for an older youth team using a full senior pitch should equate to the same as a senior match (i.e. one match equivalent session). However, if a mini/midi team or under 11 rugby league team plays on half a senior pitch every week for half the time of a senior match then it may be appropriate to record the use as a quarter (0.25) of a match equivalent session per week. This would enable the demand to be captured against the senior pitches while reflecting the limited impact on the quality and carrying capacity of the pitches compared to senior play.

### **Youth Football**

A significant amount of youth football may be played on senior pitches. The play may use the full senior pitch markings or use additional markings e.g. a youth 9v9 pitch marked out on top of a senior pitch. In both cases this should have been noted and the pitch only included as a senior pitch in the supply audit (Stage B). As with the above rugby example the youth play will need to be allocated to the senior pitch in terms of match equivalent sessions per week. It may be that an under 12 team plays on a 9v9 pitch marked out across a senior pitch. The project team may decide that this equals half (0.5) a match equivalent session of the senior pitch. If the team uses this site every week then the 0.5 figure should be used. However, if the play is for matches which take place every other week (home and away basis) then this could be reflected as 0.25 match equivalent sessions a week.

### **Use of a Central Venue**

A league may use a designated central site for youth football in a local area where all the relevant youth football teams play their matches every week as opposed to each team having their own home ground. The central site may have been identified in Stage A and its use should have been recorded during Stage B. Therefore, the project team should know how many matches and in turn how many match equivalent sessions take place there on a weekly basis.

## C20 **Natural Grass Pitches - Training**



Natural grass pitches, especially those with sports lighting, may be regularly used for training activity. This will impact on the quality and use of a pitch causing significant wear and tear. Building this demand into the assessment work will require the judgement and local knowledge of the project team using the information gathered during Stage B and guidance from the NGBs. The likely impact of training on pitches compared to the impact of a match should be determined. For example, the RFU suggest that a club with two teams training together once a week (e.g. a midweek evening) may equate to one match equivalent session per week.

C21 The project team may be aware that some training activity takes place at a site but it has received limited details when undertaking Stage B to be confident enough to quantify it in match equivalent sessions. This and other demand that is difficult to quantify should still be noted and built into the overview of each site (paragraphs C27 and C28). If training activity takes place on a dedicated training area away from the pitches then this should also be noted in the site overview.

## C22 **Natural Grass Pitches – Casual and other demand**

Casual and other use of a site may also cause some wear and tear of its pitches affecting their quality and the capacity of a site to accommodate other play (e.g. matches). Where this may be the case it should also be built into the assessment. Using the information gathered in Stage B (paragraph B30 and B31), the project team should decide whether such use is substantial enough and/or having a particularly negative affect on the quality of pitches at a site to warrant quantifying it in match equivalent sessions. Some examples are provided below.

### **Cricket**

A cricket pitch may be located within a wider public open space (e.g. recreation ground) and the wickets may not be cordoned off. This may lead to them being regularly used for informal play and/or subject to wear and tear from other casual non-cricket activities. Where there is evidence that this is the case then the project team may decide to quantify this use as equivalent to a certain number of match equivalent sessions a season and be added to the overall usage.

### **Senior Football**

A site with two senior football pitches is used for regular friendly matches and/or informal play causing significant wear and tear. As the friendly matches occur approximately once a month they could be recorded as 0.25 match equivalent sessions a week. However, the informal play may be a regular weekly occurrence during the season with the extent of the wear and tear it causes justifying it being quantified as a full match equivalent session. In this instance the project team may decide that the total casual use of the site equates to 1.25 match equivalent sessions a week which is added to the overall usage.

## C23 **Artificial Grass Pitches – All types of play (demand)**

When, for how long and for what type of play (demand) a sports club or other party uses an AGP, should have been recorded during Stage B. It is the hours a club or other party uses an AGP within the peak period which should be recorded (paragraph C12). If a club or other party uses an AGP for more than one type of use then it is important when recording this use that it is separated out into the different types as indicated in the hockey example below. This will help the project team to understand how AGPs are being used (e.g. the breakdown between matches, training and more casual bookings).

### **Hockey**

A hockey club uses an AGP for four hours on a Saturday for matches. As the AGP has sports lighting the club also uses it for two training sessions a week, one for two hours (7.30-9.30pm) on a Tuesday evening and one for one hour (8-9pm) on a Wednesday evening. The total use of the AGP by the club is therefore seven hours a week in the peak period but the hours for each type of play need to be recorded separately i.e. matches = four hours and training = three hours.

## C24 Educational Demand - How to reflect educational use of external provision?

As set out in paragraph C14 rather than trying to quantify all the use an educational establishment makes of its own natural grass pitches the importance is to establish their carrying capacity for community use. However, the information gathered in Stage B may have picked up that some educational establishments have insufficient provision of their own and therefore use other sites in the vicinity (external sites). This use of any external sites which are available to the community will use some of the carrying capacity of the site which could otherwise be used by the community. In some situations this educational use may in part result in natural grass pitches being overused. Therefore, where this educational use of external provision occurs it should be quantified into the relevant comparable unit against the site it uses. For AGPs it may be less of an issue as the majority of any such educational use is unlikely to take place during the peak period. An example of such use is provided below.

A school may use a youth 11v11 football pitch on a local authority sports ground for one match a week to cater for its competitive play (one match equivalent session). It may also use an AGP at a local leisure centre for an hour on a Wednesday evening 5-6pm for hockey training (one hour a week in the peak period). This use should be recorded against the pitch types at the relevant sites. However, the school may also use the same AGP for 1.5 hours on a Tuesday afternoon between 2 and 3.30pm for curriculum use. Whilst this use should be noted against the site it does not need to be added to the total comparable units taking place at the AGP as it does not fall within the peak period.

## C25 The amount of play that takes place at a site (its current use)

Once all the demand allocated to a site available to the community has been converted into the relevant comparable unit and recorded the project team should total the amount of play currently taking there. This should be **calculated** separately **for each pitch type the site provides**. If the example document (or similar – see paragraph B43) is used then filtering the demand information by site and by pitch type should enable the relevant comparable units for the demand allocated to a site to be added together to provide the total. For some pitch types this may be just adding up a single sports clubs matches and some training activity taking place at a site. However, for others it could require adding up the units allocated to the pitch type at a site from a number of clubs matches and training activity, some casual or other use and from an educational establishment that uses the site as it has insufficient provision of its own.

The hours an AGP is used in the peak should be presented as a total for each type of AGP at a site (i.e. pitches with the same surface type) and broken down by the sports and types of play that take place there.

## The Comparison

C26 For each pitch type a site contains the project team should now have an understanding in the relevant comparable unit of how much play (demand) a site can accommodate (its carrying capacity for community use) and how much play takes place there (its current use by the community). As presented in Figure 7, this will now enable the project team to compare the two.



C27 The comparison should enable the project team to record whether, for each pitch type it contains, a site is:

- **Being overplayed** (current use exceeds the carrying capacity)
- **Being played to the level the site can sustain** (current use matches the carrying capacity) or
- **Potentially able to accommodate some additional play** (current use falls below the carrying capacity).

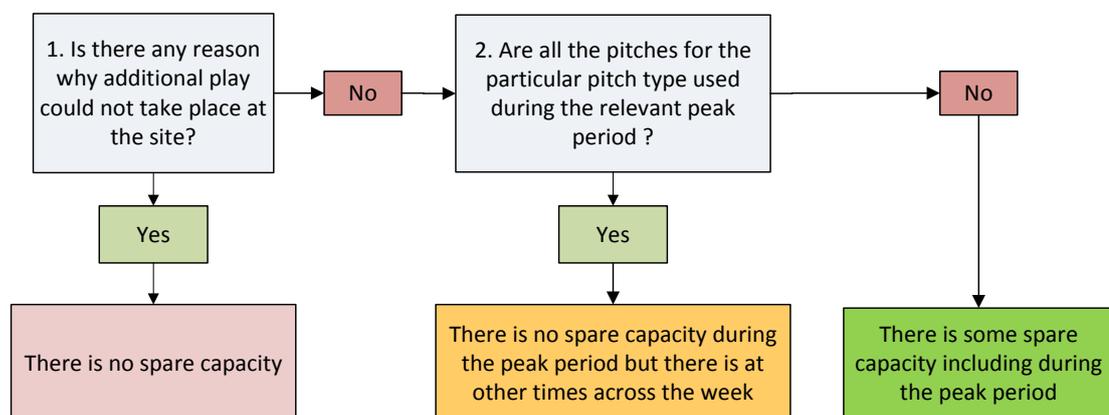
Given the nature of their carrying capacity (hours available in the peak period) AGPs will only be recorded as being played to the level the site can sustain or potentially able to accommodate some additional play. The results of the comparison may differ between pitch types on a single site. For example, senior football pitches and an AGP on a site may be able to accommodate some additional play while youth football, cricket and rugby pitches may be being overplayed.

The project team may have gathered some information on and/or be aware of some **use of a site which is difficult to quantify** into the relevant comparable unit. This may include some infrequent use of a site along with casual use and training activity where some clubs may not have fully responded to the survey but the use is known to exist during particular times of the year and/or season. Any such knowledge should be noted alongside the results of the comparison work and referred to when looking at following areas that also make up the site overview.

## 2. Whether there is any spare capacity at a site including during the peak period

- C28 The comparison work may have indicated that some sites could **potentially accommodate some additional play** for a particular pitch type. Where this may be the case it **should not be automatically assumed** that this equates to actual **spare capacity**. For such sites other information and views gathered during Stage B should be checked first to see if there are reasons why this potential to accommodate additional play should not 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 use may have been noted in Stage B but not built into the comparison as, based on the information received, the project team was not confident enough to quantify it in match equivalent sessions (paragraph C21 and C27). Therefore, although the comparison work may have identified the site as having the potential to accommodate additional play for a certain pitch type this may not equate to actual spare capacity.
- C29 For any **natural grass football, rugby union and rugby league pitch types** where the project team does determine that there is some **spare capacity** it should be established whether this exists during the relevant peak period or elsewhere in the week (see Figure 8). The project team should identify the peak period for each pitch type (i.e. when most teams of that type play). For example, the information from Stage B may indicate that the majority of play on senior football pitches takes place during Saturday afternoons while for youth 7v7 football pitches this may be on Sunday mornings. Once the peak period has been identified it should be checked whether the pitches on these sites are being used during their peak period.
- C30 If all the pitches are being used during their respective peak period then while spare capacity for the pitch type may exist at a site there would be **no actual spare capacity during the peak period**. As working through Figure 8 would suggest the spare capacity would be at other times across the week. However, if one pitch is not being used during the peak period then out of the total spare capacity recorded for the site there would be one match equivalent session of spare capacity during the peak period. Actual spare capacity in the peak period for such pitch types can only exist where the comparison work has indicated there is the potential to accommodate some additional play and the project team has determined that this can be regarded as spare capacity. There may be situations where a pitch may not be currently used during its relevant peak period. However, if there is no spare capacity at the site (i.e. the pitch type at the site is at capacity or being overplayed) then the comparison work would suggest that no additional play should be undertaken on the pitch during the peak period.

**Figure 8:** Does the potential to accommodate additional play equate to spare capacity?  
(football, rugby union and rugby league pitches)



C31 As **cricket pitches** are assessed across the course of a season there is no need to look separately at the peak period. For **AGPs** it should be clear from developing the comparison work how they are used (e.g. the breakdown between sports, matches, training and more casual bookings). While the comparable unit itself for AGPs relates to the peak period across the week (paragraph C6) it is important for **hockey** to establish whether there is any spare capacity for matches on the peak day (normally a Saturday). As indicated by England Hockey in their appendix an AGP cannot typically accommodate more than four hockey matches on the peak day (e.g. equating to approximately six hours use). Therefore, for those AGPs suitable for hockey matches and identified as having some spare capacity a record should be made of the extent of any spare capacity for matches on the peak day. For example, if four matches are already regularly taking place on the peak day then no spare capacity for hockey matches on the peak day should be recorded. However, if only three matches regularly take place on the peak day then there may be spare capacity for one additional match. Any other issues with access to AGPs for particular sports, types of play and at particular times during the week should be highlighted in the key issues and views with provision at a site and its use.

### 3. Key issues and views

C32 To supplement the comparison and spare capacity information the project team should ensure that the site overviews highlight any key and recurring issues and views raised with the provision at a site and its use. As a guide these may relate to:

- The quality and maintenance of the pitches
- The management of the site and the cost of hiring pitches
- The current protection afforded to the site
- Any risks to the future use of the site for pitch sports and the security of tenure
- The adequacy of the site to cater for its current use and whether any particular pitches are being overused
- The lack of additional space on the site for training and other activity away from the pitch provision
- Users of the site expressing some current unmet demand and/or looking to expand the number of teams they run/hours they wish to use an AGP
- The physical access to the site and the availability of the site to the community e.g. the site may be available to the community but for limited times
- The poor quality or lack of suitable ancillary facilities which is restricting the realistic progression of a team within their respective league structure
- Competing pressures for the use of the site (e.g. between sports for AGPs or with other non-sporting uses).

### Presenting and checking the site overviews

C33 To assist the project team with Steps 5 and 6, and to help others to view them, the site overviews should be presented in a way which allows them to be filtered and sorted by key fields including by site, availability to the community, the security of the use and by pitch type (see the example document in the Sport England appendix).



The **NGBs and other key stakeholders** should be given the **opportunity to check and challenge** the site overviews before they are used to develop the current and future pictures of provision in Step 5.

## Step 5: Develop the current and future pictures of provision

C34 The project team should use the site overviews (Step 4) to help develop and present the current and future pictures of provision for the study area (and any sub areas) from which key findings can be drawn (Step 6).

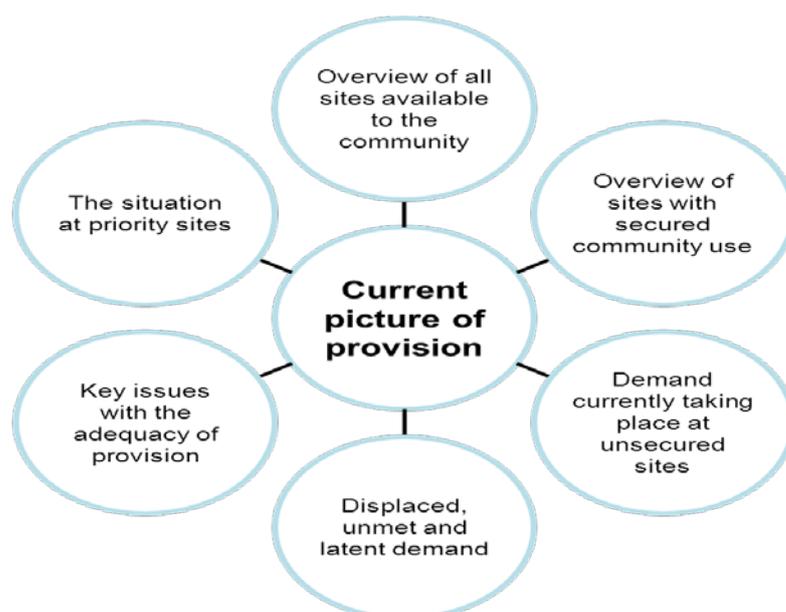
### Develop the current picture of provision

C35 To develop the current picture of provision each area presented in Figure 9 should be looked at to help answer the following questions:

- What is the overview of the situation across all sites available to the community?
- What is the overview of the situation across only those sites with secured community use?
- What is the extent and nature of demand currently taking place at unsecured sites?
- What is the extent and nature of any identified displaced, unmet and latent demand?
- What are the views and key issues raised with the adequacy of provision?
- What is the situation at priority sites?

Guidance on how each question could be answered is provided in the following paragraphs which can be used alongside sorting and filtering the site overview information accordingly (paragraph C33).

**Figure 9:** Developing the current picture of provision



C36 **What is the overview of the situation across all sites available to the community?**

The project team should use the overviews for all sites available to the community to develop an understanding for each pitch type (including each surface type for AGPs) of:

1. The amount of overplay and spare capacity in the relevant comparable unit (paragraph C6) within the study area (and within any sub areas)
2. The number, location and extent of sites which are overplayed, where spare capacity exists, or are being played to the level they can sustain.

For **football, rugby union and rugby league** pitches, an understanding of the extent and location of any spare capacity during the respective peak periods should also be developed alongside the situation across the week, as should the use of AGPs for **hockey matches** on the peak day (paragraphs C29 to C31).

C37 The project team should be able to use the above understanding to help answer the following questions for the study area (and any sub areas):

For each pitch type across those sites available to the community:

1. Is provision on balance being overplayed, is it at capacity or is there some spare capacity?
2. If provision is being overplayed or there is some spare capacity to what extent is this?
3. What is the total number and nature of sites which may be overplayed or where any spare capacity may exist and where are they?
4. Is there any spare capacity for football, rugby union and rugby league during the peak period, and for hockey matches on the peak day, and if so to what extent and where?

C38 The above information will enable the project team to develop a picture of current provision based on how sites are currently used. Alongside an understanding of the extent of any overplay or spare capacity, the answers will show if this relates to small amounts spread across a number of sites and wide geographical area, or larger amounts at a few sites which may be concentrated in certain locations within the study area. This information, which should ideally be also presented spatially through the use of appropriate maps, will be of considerable benefit when pulling together the key issues in Step 6 and undertaking Stage D.

C39 **What is the overview of the situation across sites with secured community use?**

The overview of sites available to the community (paragraphs C36 to C38) will help to provide a picture based on how sites are currently used. However, the **main findings of a PPS** should be based on the ability of sites with **secured community use** (paragraph B10) to meet the current and likely future demand. It is only the pitches on these sites that the project team can be certain will be available to the community over the longer term. Therefore, once the project team has developed an understanding as to the situation across all sites available to the community they should also develop an understanding (paragraph C36), and answer the same questions (paragraph C37), looking only at those sites with secured community use.

C40 **What is the extent and nature of demand currently taking place at unsecured sites?**

Once the two above overviews have been developed the project team should establish the nature and extent of demand currently taking place at unsecured sites. This is important to establish as this demand is potentially at risk as there is no certainty that the sites will remain available to the community. It should be possible to sort the site overview information by unsecured sites. By doing so the project team should then be able to total the amount of play currently taking place at unsecured sites, including during the respective peak periods for football, rugby union and rugby league pitches and for hockey matches on the peak day. The project team should highlight where these sites are to see if there any geographic concentrations within the study area. It should also be highlighted whether any particular sports or types of play are particularly reliant on such unsecured sites.

C41 **What is the extent and nature of any identified displaced, unmet and latent demand?**

After working through Stage B the project team may have recorded some **displaced demand** (paragraph B34) which would prefer to play within the study area, along with some **unmet** (paragraph B36) and **latent demand** (paragraph B37). The project team should look to highlight the nature of this demand (e.g. competitive matches or training activity) and quantify it in the relevant comparable unit (paragraphs C6 to C9). The project team should also be aware of the current location of where any displaced demand takes place and where those generating it would prefer to play, along with the location of sports clubs (and others) which may have expressed any unmet and/or latent demand. Unless the project team has information to the contrary it should be assumed that any identified displaced, unmet and latent demand for the use of football, rugby union and rugby league pitches takes place during the peak period and for hockey matches on the peak day.

C42 **What are the key issues with the adequacy of provision?**

The project team should look back at the other information, views and issues gathered and recorded within the site overviews and also during Stage B. This information will be valuable in helping to understand any key issues with the adequacy of the current provision to meet current demand. The project team should ensure that any key issues that relate directly to the drivers behind the development of the work (paragraph A2) are highlighted. As a guide some of the key issues and views that should be highlighted are provided below:

- Views from sports clubs and others on whether there is adequate provision within the study area as a whole, and on the sites they use, to meet current demand
- The sites where the users feel provision is inadequate and where sites are being overplayed
- Any concerns from users of pitches with the management and maintenance of sites as a whole or within particular ownerships
- Views on the quality of pitches and their ancillary provision
- Concerns from providers of playing pitches with the cost of maintaining the sites
- Whether some sites, or sites under specific ownership types, are expensive thereby limiting their use
- Current risks identified with the future use of some sites and the security of tenure
- The reasons for any displaced and unmet demand along with why any latent demand may exist
- Concerns raised by educational establishments with the ability of the provision they currently access (i.e. their own provision and/or external sites) to meet their current demands.

**C43 What is the situation at priority sites?**

Within the current picture the project team should also highlight the current situation at any priority sites for the delivery of each sport in the study area. This may include sites which provide a significant number of pitches, where large and/or significant clubs play, which provide for a certain league requirement and where a particular type of play takes place (e.g. sites which provide for the England Hockey Single System Pathway - see England Hockey Board appendix).

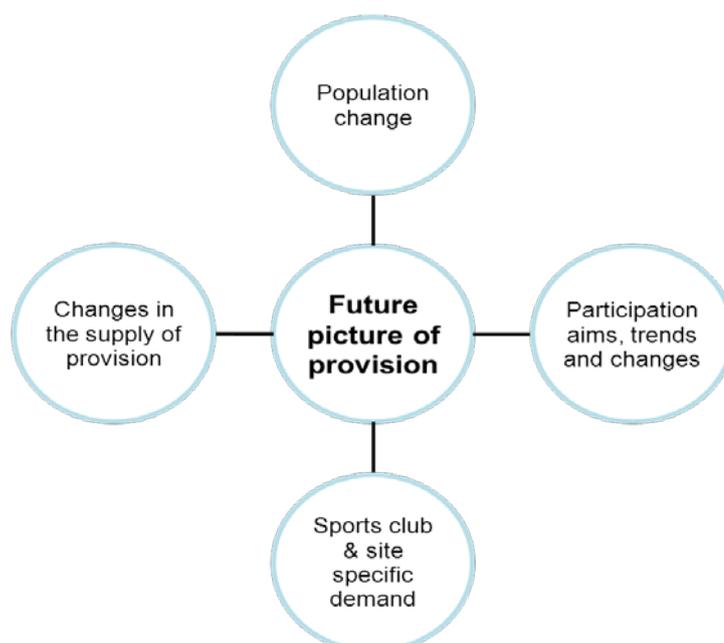
**Develop the future picture of provision**

**C44** The project team should build on the current picture of provision to develop the future picture. In order to do so each area presented in Figure 10 should be looked at to help answer the following questions:

1. How will population change in the study area affect the demand for provision?
2. How will participation aims, current trends and predicted changes in how pitch sports are played and pitches used affect the demand for provision?
3. Are there any particular sports clubs or sites where demand is likely to increase in the future?
4. Are there any forthcoming changes in the supply of provision and if so, how will this affect the adequacy of provision to meet demand?

Guidance on how each question could be answered, using the information gathered during Stage B (paragraph B39), is provided in the following paragraphs.

**Figure 10:** Developing the future picture of provision



C45 **How will population change in the study area affect the demand for provision?**

Information gathered during Stage B on the current population and the number of teams can be used to calculate **Team Generation Rates (TGRs)** for both genders for each age group within a sport. TGRs, which provide an indication of how many people it may take to generate a team, can help with estimating the change in demand for pitch sports that may arise from any population change in the study area (and any sub areas).

C46 A TGR can be calculated by dividing the current population within an age group for a sport by the number of teams in the area within that age group. The NGBs have set out the relevant age groups for their sports along with the pitches they use within their relevant appendices. The project team should be able to look back at the demand audit information (Stage B) to provide a total number of teams for each age group within each sport. These totals should only include teams whose members predominantly reside within the study area.

C47 The future population projections gathered during Stage B can then be looked at alongside the current population information to understand the level of population change for each age group. The TGRs can then be applied to this level of population change to help provide an indication of what the change may mean in terms of any change in the number of teams (e.g. how many additional teams may be generated in the future year(s)). The project team can then look at any potential change in the number of teams across all sports and age groups to establish what this may mean in terms of the change in demand for playing pitches for the future year(s) (i.e. the nature and extent of any increase in demand).

C48 Following the principles set out in Step 4 (paragraphs C18 to C23), the project team can convert this change in demand into the relevant comparable unit for each sport. This should be done separately for during the relevant peak period and across the week for football, rugby union and rugby league, along with highlighting any potential change in the demand for hockey matches on the peak day. An example of using TGRs is provided below and an example **TGR calculator**, which will help with this element of the work, is provided in the **example document** within the Sport England appendix.

**Team Generation Rate Example**

An area may have 10 youth boys' football teams of a particular age category and a current population of 900 boys within the relevant age group. This would equate to a TGR of one team per 90 boys in the age group (i.e. suggesting that it currently takes 90 boys within the age group to generate one team). A PPS may be looking ten years into the future at which point the population of this age group is projected to total 1,440. The TGR would therefore suggest that the projected increase of 540 junior boys within this age group may generate an additional six teams.

If it assumed that the six teams will play home and away fixtures they will demand a home pitch for matches every other week, equating to 0.5 match equivalent sessions a week or three match equivalent sessions a week for the six teams. The breakdown of when matches are played in the study area suggests that two thirds take place on a Sunday morning and the other third on a Saturday morning. Allocating the six teams in line with this current breakdown would generate a demand for two match equivalent sessions during the peak period of Sunday morning and one elsewhere in the week (i.e. Saturday mornings). The project team should also indicate the likely training requirements for such teams based on knowledge of how teams currently train and any known changes in how training activity may take place (e.g. use of AGPs once a week).

C49 **How will participation aims, current trends and predicted changes in how pitch sports are played and pitches used affect the demand for provision?**

It is important that any assessment of the future demand and resulting picture of provision also reflects:

- Relevant stakeholders aims and objectives in relation to maintaining and increasing participation in sport
- Whether there are any clear trends or predicted changes in how the population participates in pitch sports and uses playing pitches
- How the sports and their use of playing pitches may evolve.

C50 Information on the above points should be available from the work undertaken in preparing and tailoring the approach (Stage A) and during the information gathering (Stage B). The project team should use this information to form a view as to what the likely changes in the demand for pitch sports may be over the timescale of the PPS.



An indication should be provided of these changes along with an estimate of what they may mean in terms of the number of teams and demand for provision. A similar approach could be taken to the example set out in paragraph C48 in relation to TGRs. The principle should be to use information from a range of sources to help develop a realistic estimate of the future demand. This is likely to differ across the sports and age groups within a sport (i.e. for one age group the information may suggest a strong increase in demand whereas for another the focus may be on trying to maintain the existing number of teams).

 C51 Consultation with the NGBs will help to highlight any planned/known changes in how the sports are played including new forms of the game. This may place a greater demand on certain pitch types or highlight a need for more designated training areas.

C52 **Are there any particular sports clubs or sites where demand is likely to increase in the future?**

The consultation undertaken during Stage B may have indicated that there is likely to be some significant future demand generated by particular sports clubs and/or at specific sites or wider locations within the study area. The project team should look at the feedback from **sports clubs** received during Stage B regarding their plans to develop additional teams and the additional pitch provision that this may require. In addition, the responses received from **educational establishments** should be looked at to see if any concerns were raised with meeting their future demands for playing pitches. The nature and extent of any potentially significant future demand should be provided. As this future demand is likely to have more of a direct impact at a specific location (i.e. at or close to the current location of the club and/or educational establishment) the ability of particular sites and/or locations to meet this future demand should be looked at. This part of the assessment should focus on the potential situation at any priority sites for each sport along with other key clubs and/or sites and wider areas where there may be significant changes in demand.

C53 **Are there any forthcoming changes in the supply of provision and how will this affect the adequacy of provision to meet demand?**

The project team may already be aware of some forthcoming changes to the supply of provision or have learnt about such changes as a result of the information gathering work undertaken during Stage B. These changes may include a reduction in the maintenance regime afforded to some sites, changes in the number and location of some pitches (e.g. school redevelopments), the development of new provision and/or the enhancement of existing provision, along with transferring a site from one provider to another. Any changes should be highlighted and, looking at the current picture of provision, the project team should form a view as to their likely impact on the ability of the provision in the area to meet both current and future demand.

C54 **Presenting the future picture of provision**

The project team should be able to use the above information to help provide answers to the following questions for the study area (and any sub areas):



For each pitch type:

1. To what extent may the current provision available to the community be able to meet the future demand?
2. To what extent may the current provision with secured community use be able to meet the future demand?

The questions should be answered in relation to during the peak periods **and** throughout the rest of the week for football, rugby union and rugby league pitches, as well as for **hockey matches** on the peak day.

 C55 Once the project team has worked through Step 5 and as they begin Step 6 they should **present the current and future pictures of provision** to the steering group and NGBs. This will allow them to be reviewed and for initial discussions to be had on the potential key findings and issues which will help the project team with working through Step 6.

## Step 6: Identify the key findings and issues

C56 By working through Steps 1 to 5 the project team should have a good understanding of the key findings and issues with pitch provision in the study area and the adequacy of provision to meet both current and future demand. However, it is important that the project team looks back at these steps to draw together and present the key findings and issues. The knowledge gained from the information gathering and assessment work should enable the project team to answer the following questions for the study area and for each sport:

- **What are the main characteristics of the current supply of and demand for provision?**
- **Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet current demand?**
- **Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?**
- **What are the main characteristics of the future supply and demand for provision?**
- **Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet future demand?**

C57 The questions could be used as a guide to draw together and present the key findings and issues. To help answer the questions, and to act as reminder of the areas covered in the previous steps, a number of sub-questions are provided within the Sport England appendix. The list of sub-questions is not meant to be exhaustive and not all will be appropriate to the study area. However, the project team should ensure that all relevant key findings and issues for the study area are presented. The answers to the questions for football, rugby union and rugby league pitches should relate to the respective peak periods and throughout the rest of the week. This situation regarding hockey matches on the peak day should also be highlighted.

To help present the key findings and issues the project team should reference the situation at particular sites and geographical locations for each sport, along with maximising the potential use of appropriate maps and other visual tools.

C58 **What actions may be required to ensure provision can meet both the current and future demand?**

The key findings and issues should be used in Stage D to develop specific and deliverable recommendations and actions. These should be sport, area and site specific and seek to ensure that the provision of pitches is improved in line with the key drivers, vision and objectives for the strategy set out in Stage A. However, drawing together the key findings and issues at this point should enable the project team to start to indicate the likely nature of any actions which can be looked into further during Stage D. For example:

- Are a certain amount of new pitches required for a particular sport currently or in the future?
- Should a focus be on enhancing and securing access to existing provision including pitches not currently available to the community or currently unused?
- Is there a need to improve the quality and efficiency of current management arrangements and maintenance regimes?
- Should further work be undertaken with sports clubs and other parties to ensure the best use for sport is made of any available spare capacity and ensure any issues regarding security of tenure are overcome?
- Is there a need and an opportunity to strengthen local planning policy relating to the protection and improvement of playing pitches and secure additional ways of protecting particular sites (e.g. deeds of dedication)?

C59 **Presenting the assessment details and checking the key findings and issues**

As set out in paragraph A22 it may be useful to provide the assessment details as a separate output to a strategy document. The assessment details, which could be presented in a report or other format (e.g. excel spreadsheet and covering paper), should succinctly present:

- The supply and demand information gathered (Steps 2 & 3)
- The results of the assessment work including the site overviews (Step 4) and the current and future pictures of provision (Step 5)
- The key findings and issues arising from the information gathering and assessment work.



Once the assessment details are subsequently presented and agreed by the steering group the project team can use them to develop the strategy document and action plan (Stage D).

## Stage C Checklist: Assess the supply and demand information and views

C60 After working through Stage C it should be possible to answer ‘Yes’ to the following questions. If this is the case the work is ready to move on to Stage D. However, if this is not the case for one or more questions then the steering group should decide what affect this may have on the further development and robustness of the PPS and how best the question(s) could still be answered.

<b>Stage C Checklist: Assess the supply and demand information and views</b>	Tick	
	Yes	Requires Attention
<b>Step 4: Understand the situation at individual sites</b>		
1. Have overviews been developed for all sites available to the community? Do they:		
1a. Present the findings of the comparison work for each relevant pitch type?		
1b. Indicate whether there is any spare capacity, including during the peak period for football, rugby union and rugby league pitches and for hockey matches on the peak day?		
1c. Set out the key issues and views with the provision at the site and its use?		
2. Is it clear how much play a site can accommodate in the relevant comparable unit (its current carrying capacity for community use) for each pitch type it contains? In doing so has the work:		
2a. Used the agreed quality ratings and NGB guidance for natural grass pitches?		
2c. Set out the current carrying capacity per surface type for AGPs?		
2c. Ensured the suggested carrying capacity has been adjusted where appropriate to reflect:		
i) Use by the educational establishment of their site where it is available to the community		
ii) Other local information and views.		
3. Is it clear how much play takes place at a site for each pitch type it contains? In doing so has the work:		
3a. Built in all relevant sports club play (matches and training), casual and other use of a site, along with any educational use of external sites?		
3b. Ensured play taking place on a pitch dedicated for a different type of play/age range, on a pitch marked out over another pitch, or at a central venue has been captured?		
3c. Provided a total of the hours in the peak period each AGP is used but also broken this down by the sports and types of play that that takes place there?		
3d. Made a record of any use of a site which is difficult to quantify and/or allocate to a particular site?		
4. Has the project team presented and checked whether it is appropriate to record any identified potential to accommodate additional play at a site as spare capacity?		
5. Have the site overviews been presented in a way which allows them to be sorted and filtered by key fields to aid the further assessment work?		
6. Have the NGBs and other stakeholders been given the opportunity to review the site overviews?		
<b>Step 5 (part): Develop the current picture of provision</b>		
1. Has an overview been provided of the current situation across:		
a) All sites available to the community; and		
b) Only those with secured community use?		
2. Do the overviews indicate whether (and outline to what extent) provision is on balance being overplayed, is at capacity or whether some spare capacity exists?		
3. Do the overviews provide the situation during the peak periods and throughout the week for football, rugby union and rugby league pitches, as well as for hockey matches on the peak day?		

4. Has the total number, nature and location of sites which may be overplayed or where spare capacity exists been presented?		
5. Has the extent and location of any spare capacity for football, rugby union and rugby league pitches during the peak period, along with for hockey matches on the peak day, been presented?		
6. Has the extent, nature and location of demand currently taking place at unsecured sites been presented along with any sports and types of play that are heavily reliant on such sites?		
7. Has the extent, nature, location and reason for any displaced, unmet and latent demand been presented?		
8. Have the key issues and views with the adequacy of current provision been presented along with the situation at priority sites?		
<b>Step 5 (part): Develop the future picture of provision</b>		
1. Is it clear to what extent future population change may affect the demand for provision across all pitch types?		
2. Has the potential impact of relevant aims and objectives for increasing participation, along with current trends and predicted changes in how the pitch sports are played and pitches used, been presented and justified?		
3. Are particular and key sports clubs and/or sites where demand is likely to increase in the future highlighted? Is the nature and extent of this future demand presented along with the ability for it to be met by current provision?		
4. Have any forthcoming known changes in the supply of provision been presented along with how they may affect the adequacy of provision to meet demand?		
5. Has an indication been provided for each pitch type of what extent future demand may be met by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The current provision available to the community; and</li> <li>b) By only those current sites with secured community use?</li> </ul>		
6. Do the above indications present the potential situation during the peak period and throughout the rest of the week for natural grass football, rugby union and rugby league pitches, as well as for hockey matches on the peak day?		
7. Have the steering group reviewed the assessment work and discussed what the key findings and issues may be?		
<b>Step 6: Identify the key findings and issues</b>		
1. Have the key findings and issues been clearly presented and used to help answer the following questions?		
1a. What are the main characteristics of the current supply of and demand for provision?		
1b. Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet current demand?		
1c. Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?		
1d. What are the main characteristics of the future supply of and demand for provision?		
1e. Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet future demand?		
2. Has the likely nature of any actions that will be required to ensure provision can meet both current and future demand been presented?		
3. To help highlight and present the key findings and issues has reference been made to the situation at particular sites and geographic locations for each sport, and have appropriate maps and other visual tools been used?		
4. Have the assessment details, along with key findings and issues, been agreed by the steering group and presented in a suitable format?		

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

Working through Stage D will help to provide:

- A clear set of recommendations and a prioritised sport, area and site specific action plan
- A succinct and usable strategy document which is owned by all relevant parties and can be applied to a variety of areas and situations.



## Step 7: Develop the recommendations and action plan

### D1 Scenarios

It will be useful to take some time at the beginning of this stage to explore the key findings and issues from the assessment work (Stage C) in order to develop the recommendations and actions. This will help to understand the potential impact of any recommendations and actions along with ensuring they are study area, sport and site specific. Looking at a number of relevant scenario questions will help to do this. While some examples are provided below it is important that the questions clearly relate to the drivers behind the PPS (Stage A) and the key findings and issues from the assessment work (Stage C). The information gathered and assessed during Stages B and C should be used to help answer the questions.

#### Example Scenarios Questions: What if.....

1. **The quality of certain sites rated as poor are improved?** - Where would any quality improvements have the greatest benefit? Would increasing the quality rating and therefore carrying capacity of certain sites help to address overplay on the site/in the area?
2. **Community use can be secured at certain sites?** - Are there sites which are used but this use is unsecured? What are the barriers to securing long term use and how can they be overcome? Has an educational establishment which doesn't currently provide community use indicated it is willing to do so? Is it in a good location to meet demand and are any on-site works required to help provide this?
3. **Some pitches are re-designated from one sport (or pitch type) to another?** - Are there marked differences in how well demand is met for each sport in an area? If so, are there any pitches that can be re-designated to help improve the overall supply of provision to meet demand?
4. **A site outside of the study area that currently caters for a significant amount of demand generated from within the study area is no longer available?** - A significant amount of demand for a particular sport may be being met at a site outside of the individual study area (possibly at a central venue for the sport/a league). This displaced demand may be happy with currently using the site but would the study area be able to accommodate the demand should the site be no longer available to these users?
5. **There is a desire to move some current demand to a different pitch type?** - To help improve how a sport is played there may be a desire to work towards moving some demand to a different pitch type. For example, if the desire is for greater use of an AGP with a particular surface for training activity how many clubs do not currently have use of such an AGP and how many hours of use would their potential demand equate to? Is there capacity for this demand to be met within the current provision?
6. **New pitches are provided on a specific new or existing site?** - Along with highlighting any need for additional provision, the PPS should indicate where this could be best located to meet demand?
7. **There is a reduction in the maintenance budget for some sites?** - The quality rating and carrying capacity of some sites could be reduced and re-assessed against the play that takes place there.
8. **Further sports development initiatives or alternative forms of a sport are introduced?** - Is there an adequate amount of spare capacity in the area, including during the peak period and in the correct location, to help meet such potential activity?
9. **A pitch(es) is taken out of the supply in an area and replaced with provision elsewhere?** - The assessment may have indicated that some current pitches have limited value for pitch sports. This may be due to them being unattractive to users in their current location and/or are poor quality single pitch sites with no ancillary facilities. It may be that the overall provision could be improved by replacing such a pitch(es) with new equivalent or better provision elsewhere (e.g. within areas where a number of sites are being overplayed).
10. **A significant increase in demand will be located in a particular part of the study area?** - Are any major housing developments proposed? Of the total projected future demand from population change how much may be generated from a particular development. What will this mean for provision in the area (e.g. a need to improve the capacity of nearby sites and/or provide a certain amount of new provision)?

- D2 **Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)** - Particular care needs to be given when looking at any scenario questions, and developing recommendations and actions, for AGP's as their size and surface type affects the sports and types of play they can accommodate. The key findings and issues from Stage C may suggest that actions are required to provide new AGP provision or resurface one or more existing pitches. If this is the case then the principles of the '**Selecting the Right Artificial Surface**' guidance document should be followed. The use of the information gathered and assessed in Stages B and C will help to meet the initial steps of the approach set out in the Selecting the Right Artificial Surface document (Steps 1 and 2). The latter steps of the document (Steps 3 and 4) can then be followed to help determine the most appropriate surface for any potential new or resurfaced AGP.

#### Selecting the Right Artificial Surface Document

[www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/artificial-sports-surfaces/)

This document, developed by the National Governing Bodies of hockey, football, rugby union and rugby league in conjunction with the Football Foundation and Sport England, provides guidance on ensuring the correct surfaces are selected which maximise the benefit to sport.

Use of the document should help to ensure that investment in AGPs is used in the most effective and strategic way to meet the needs of each sport. In developing the document all the governing bodies agreed that the playing surfaces of AGPs should be selected on the basis of clearly articulated needs and a strong evidence base.

- D3 A number of the pitch sport NGBs have looked into the demand and potential future use of AGPs for their sport. This includes joint working to determine priority sites for certain sports within particular areas of the country and the likely demand if certain aspirations for how the sport may evolve are taken forward. Any available information specific to the study area should have been provided by the NGBs and gathered during Stage B. Alongside the results of the assessment work this information can be used to help look at any particular scenario questions for AGP provision and therefore assist with developing the recommendations and actions.



#### D4 **Developing the recommendations and actions**

The key findings and issues from Stage C, along with study area specific scenarios looked at within this step, should be used to develop clear and concise recommendations which will guide the improvement of playing pitch provision in the study area. These should be precise enough to enable the development of clear individual area, sport and site specific actions which will help to implement them. Further to the collaborative approach to undertaking the PPS the development of the recommendations should reflect the drivers, vision and objectives behind the work and take the opportunity to bring together a number of agendas and opportunities.



Engagement by all relevant stakeholders in developing the recommendations and actions is vital to help ensure the PPS is owned by all parties, is successfully implemented and reviewed. This will assist with bringing together resources, funding and other opportunities to ensure the PPS can co-ordinate actions and investment for maximum benefit to the sporting needs of the area.

- D5 It is likely that the recommendations and actions will need to cover a range of solutions for each sport. While the nature of the solutions will depend on the key findings and issues within the study area a number of examples are provided below. These have been separated out under the three headings of Protect, Enhance and Provide which may be useful headings to use when presenting the recommendations and actions. In addition, two flow diagrams are provided in the Sport England appendix which may help with looking at the possible actions available where sites may be overplayed or have some spare capacity during the relevant peak period. When developing the recommendations and actions particular attention should be paid to any issues at the priority sites highlighted in Stage C and any sites which are being significantly overplayed.

- D6 **Protect** - The recommendations should be clear as to the need to protect playing pitch provision irrespective of ownership and the degree of community access and use, along with unused sites and land allocated as a playing field in any relevant development plan document. This should be the situation unless the assessment has indicated that there is an excess of accessible pitches with secured community use to meet both current and future demand and particular provision at a site is surplus to requirements (see paragraphs D12 to D15 'Spare

Capacity'), or equivalent or better replacement provision will be secured. In addition, the information gathered during Stage B and assessed in Stage C may have indicated the need to further enhance the protection afforded to playing pitches and particular sites.

Possible solutions to help further **protect** the provision of playing pitches:

- Enhancing local planning policy and highlighting the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF paragraph 74) and Sport England's statutory consultee role on planning applications affecting playing field land
- Highlighting sites which have a particular special significance for sport and seek to designate them as a Local Green Space through the Development Plan process (see NPPF paragraphs 76 and 77)
- Securing deeds of dedication, covenants and/or charitable status, where appropriate for particular sites. [Fields in Trust](#) can support this solution by working flexibly with landowners to negotiate suitable deeds of dedication for individual sites and can offer long term protection of other forms of recreational land, including children's play areas and informal recreational spaces (paragraph B23)
- Negotiating and ensuring long term security of tenure at specific sites;

D7 Work undertaken during Stages A to C may have highlighted risks with the future use of one or a number of sites. Where this is the case then guidance should be provided on the future of the sites for pitch sports with appropriate recommendations and actions. Using the information gathered and assessed the PPS should look to highlight the need to protect these sites or direct the nature and extent of any replacement provision (see paragraph D9).

D8 **Enhance** - The recommendations and actions should look to make the best use of existing provision ensuring better quality, access and management. This may help to meet both current and future demand instead of, or alongside, new additional provision.

Possible solutions to help **enhance** the provision of playing pitches

- Improving the quality of the playing surface (e.g. drainage works)
- Providing enhanced ancillary facilities (e.g. sports lighting and changing provision)
- Securing community use at sites which do not currently provide such use but have indicated that they are willing to do so and are in a suitable location to help meet demand (this may require specific works to improve the site to enable this use e.g. changing accommodation)
- Improving the maintenance arrangements at a site or across a number of sites, especially those that are well used but of poor quality
- Sharing knowledge, skills and expertise in the management and maintenance of pitches
- Investigating whether any asset transfers are appropriate for any sites where they will be of clear benefit for the provision of pitches and all parties concerned
- Using sites with spare capacity for additional sporting activity (e.g. additional forms of a traditional pitch sport, trying out a new form of the game and/or providing for new or developing sports).
- Improving the programming and timetabling of the use of pitches/sites
- Considering other management options to meet demand during peak periods such as extending the playing season, encouraging leagues to allow the staggering of kick off times and introducing reduced pricing of pitches for less popular days and times
- Directing casual use to other areas of the site to help reduce wear and tear (e.g. removing / repositioning goal posts, protecting the cricket square).

D9 The overall stock of playing pitches could be enhanced by relocating some provision that may have limited value for pitch sports in their current location. While this may be a recommendation where it will result in a benefit to sport particular care needs to be taken. Pitches that are of poor quality or under-used should not be taken as necessarily indicating an absence of need in the area or value to pitch sports. Therefore, any recommendations along these lines should, using the information gathered and assessed in Stages B and C and from looking at any relevant scenarios, clearly present the detriment that may arise from any loss against the benefit to sport from any new replacement provision along with and how the proposals will meet with adopted planning policy (including the NPPF).

D10 **Provide** - The opportunities for providing new provision will vary depending on the nature of the study area. However, the key findings and issues from Stage C may suggest that alongside the enhancement of existing provision new natural and/or artificial grass pitches are required to meet current and/or future demand. Where this is the case the recommendations and actions should set out the level and type of provision required and how this should be delivered.

Possible solutions to help **provide** new playing pitches:

- Providing and then maintaining additional pitches on specific existing sites where space allows
- Developing new sites in the most appropriate locations to best meet demand
- Allocating land for new provision within Development Plan documents
- Working with neighbouring areas to provide new sites where space may not be available within the study area and/or to better meet cross boundary demand
- Providing a required number and type of pitches on-site, or appropriate provision off-site, to meet the specific needs of major development proposals.

D11 To ensure the maximum benefit is secured from any investment in new and/or enhanced provision it is important that the provision is fit for purpose and is able to maximise its potential capacity. All new pitch provision should be accompanied by appropriate ancillary facilities. Both new and enhanced provision should have regard to Sport England's and the relevant NGBs design guidance (see paragraph D16).

D12 **Spare capacity** - Retaining some spare capacity of accessible playing pitches with secured community use should be a key outcome of a PPS. This is required to ensure a flexible amount of supply which can respond to a number of situations (e.g. unforeseen peaks in demand, further developments of a particular sport and helping to accommodate any backlogs in matches and other activity due to adverse weather conditions). The assessment work in Stage C may have indicated that a number of sites have a small amount of spare capacity. This is often desirable as it will help to provide this flexibility and overcome any wear and tear on their pitches. Any spare capacity should also be protected for sporting use at sites that may be of special significance to the interests of sport in the study area. This may include sites that accommodate the highest level of competitive play within an area and/or are well established as a focal point for sports development activities.

D13 Some situations may arise where the assessment work indicates there is an excess of accessible provision with secured community use to meet both current and future demands and there are some particular concentrations of spare capacity. These concentrations may be in particular areas or at particular sites. By looking at particular scenarios and through dialogue with the NGBs and other parties it should be determined whether the spare capacity could be used for pitch sports in the future. This dialogue should include all relevant NGBs and not just those directly involved in the development of this guidance. It is important that the PPS, within the recommendations and actions, tries to provide a steer as to the future of any such spare capacity.



Where it has been determined that some spare capacity cannot be used for pitch sports then the following options should be considered in turn:

- Reducing the number of pitches marked out on a site to improve the quality of those remaining (e.g. increasing their size if appropriate, repositioning them to improve their alignment and drainage, allowing for greater movement of the pitches to improve the condition of high wear areas such as goalmouths). This will normally require a commitment to a higher degree of maintenance of the remaining pitches.
- Reallocating some of the provision to other outdoor sports, including to support a developing sport, or other recreational uses such as jogging, cycling or walking. When considering this option regard should be had to any wider assessment of sporting needs in the area and related sports and physical activity strategies.
- After considering the above it may be that there is some spare capacity that is genuinely surplus to the requirements of pitch based and other sports. If this is the case then consideration should be given to reallocating some of the provision for wider open space and informal recreation in line with any related open space needs assessment and strategy. Ensuring access to informal recreational spaces and play areas can help to meet the recreational needs of the wider community and these spaces can also be protected by deeds of dedication (see paragraph B23 regarding guidance from Fields in Trust).

D14 The change of use of pitches to non-sporting and open space uses, without appropriate replacement, should not be considered except in very limited qualified circumstances where the assessment has clearly shown:

1. That there is an excess of accessible provision with secured community use in the study area, and
2. The particular provision at a site to be surplus to requirements.

D15 The assessment may have shown there to be an excess in the quantity of provision but deficiencies and particular issues with the quality and accessibility of provision. In this situation any proposed change of use of a pitch that has been determined as being surplus to requirements should ensure significant and appropriate benefits are secured to help meet these identified deficiencies.

D16 **Additional guidance** – Alongside the Selecting the Right Artificial Surface document (paragraph D2) the following Sport England guidance may be of use when developing the recommendations and actions:

**Design and Cost Guidance:**

[www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance)

The design and cost guidance is separated into a number of sections including Natural Turf for Sport, Artificial Sports Surfaces, Artificial Sports Lighting, Pavilions and Clubhouses. Each section has design guidance, audits and checklists, case studies, cost advice and downloadable CAD drawings.

**Accessing Schools Guidance:**

[www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/accessing-schools](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/accessing-schools)

This guidance includes toolkits to help open up school sites to the community and ensure the process is a smooth one for both the school and community sport organisations.

**The Community Asset Transfer Toolkit:**

[www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/asset-transfer](http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/asset-transfer)

The toolkit is an interactive tool providing a step-by-step guide through each stage of the asset transfer process.

D17 **Developing an action plan**

The actions proposed by working through this stage should be pulled together under the relevant recommendations into a clear action plan. It may be useful for the plan to follow the Protect, Enhance and Provide headings set out above. However the plan is structured it is important that it:

- Sets out area, sport and site specific actions with clear priorities for the study area
- Indicates who is responsible for the delivery of each action, how it can be delivered and who else can help with its implementation
- Includes challenging but realistic and deliverable actions
- Provides an indication of the resource implications of each action, including where possible any associated financial costs, and how these resources could be secured
- Sets a timescale for the delivery of each action (e.g. short term – within a year, medium term – 1 to 2 years, longer term – 2 to 3 years).

D18 A key focus of this guidance is to ensure that the development and implementation of a PPS is a collaborative process involving a range of parties with an interest in playing pitch provision in the study area. It is likely that the delivery of the recommendations and actions will require the resources and expertise of these parties, including the NGBs. Therefore, it is important that wherever possible all relevant parties are signed up to the delivery of the action plan. The plan should set out the most appropriate actions to improve the provision of playing pitches in the study area and not be limited to just those that a local authority can deliver. All parties are likely to be able to deliver specific actions but a number will be outside of their control. However, where this is the case they may be in a position to help assist and/or facilitate others to deliver.

D19 The action plan should provide a clear programme of work and the infrastructure requirements needed to meet the current and future demand for playing pitches in the study area. After reading the plan it should be clear how the vision and objectives of the PPS set out in Stage A can be delivered. This approach recommends the inclusion of actual area and site specific deliverable projects that will help to meet demand and improve provision. It is this level of information that will assist with ensuring the recommendations and action plan can be delivered and the PPS can be successfully applied to a number of areas and circumstances (see Stage E).

## Step 8: Write and adopt the strategy

### D20 Writing the strategy

Building on the presentation of the assessment details (paragraph C59) the PPS document itself should be succinct, an easy read, and aimed at a variety of possible audiences. The PPS should provide the reader with a clear understanding of:

- Why the PPS has been developed and what it seeks to achieve (including the vision and objectives)
- How the development of the PPS fits with other related plans and strategies (internal within the lead organisation (e.g. local authority) and those of relevant external parties)
- The approach to developing the PPS and how this has been tailored to the study area;
- How the PPS has been managed and the robustness of the approach
- Who has been engaged and consulted during the development of the PPS and at what stage
- The key findings and issues from the assessment work for each sport referencing the situation at particular sites and geographical locations
- The recommendations and action plan along with how they will be implemented and delivered
- How the PPS will be used and applied (e.g. in sports development planning, developing planning policy, assessing planning applications and supporting finding bids – see Stage E)
- How the PPS and the assessment work on which it is based will be kept robust and up to date (see Stage E).

D21 As set out in Step 7 it should be clear from reading the PPS why the specific recommendations and actions have been included based on the key findings and issues from the assessment work, how they are to be delivered and what they will achieve.

The PPS should be written in line with the expectation that it will be the key document within the study area, guiding the improvement of playing pitch provision to meet current and future demands. Therefore, alongside the recommendations and action plan it should set out how it, and the assessment information on which it is based, should be used and applied in different circumstances and the benefit of doing so. Further guidance on applying a PPS is provided in Stage E.

 D22 Once the PPS document has been drafted it should be presented to the steering group and comments sought from the NGBs prior to it being subject to wider consultation. The nature and extent of this wider consultation should ensure that it meets any requirements set out by those areas where the PPS may be used (e.g. the consultation requirements of the local authority's planning department for similar strategies which support the development plan). Following the consultation and any subsequent amendments the PPS should be formally signed off by the steering group.

The checklists in this guidance document may be used by people looking to review and provide comments on the PPS and the supporting assessment details. Therefore, before any consultation takes place it will be very useful for the project team to look back and review the work against the checklists.

### D23 Adopting the strategy

 The status afforded to the PPS and therefore its key findings, recommendations and action plan by all relevant parties will be key to its success. The high level officer and political support secured during Stage A should help to ensure the local authority takes the lead by formally adopting the PPS. It is important that this is secured and its status is recognised across all relevant departments. This will aid the delivery of the PPS and ensure that it is given sufficient weight in all related local authority decisions affecting the future of playing pitches. It is also vital that the individual members of the steering group and other relevant parties formally endorse the final PPS document and recognises its lead role in guiding the improvement of playing pitches in the area. This will add further weight to the use and application of the PPS. If the Stage A work was carried out well with a good and proactive steering group maintained, then securing this endorsement and recognition should be relatively straightforward. However, the project team should have made an allowance in the project plan for adopting the PPS and securing such endorsement and recognition.

## Stage D Checklist: Develop the Strategy

D24 After working through Stage D it should be possible to answer ‘Yes’ to the following questions. If this is the case the work is ready to move on to Stage E. However, if this is not the case for one or more questions then the steering group should decide what affect this may have on the delivery of the PPS, the ability to keep it robust and up to date and how best the question(s) could still be answered

<b>Stage D Checklist: Develop the Strategy</b>	<b>Tick </b>	
	Yes	Requires Attention
<b>Step 7: Develop the recommendations and action plan</b>		
1. Have a number of study area specific scenarios been looked at to help explore key issues and findings along with possible recommendations and actions?		
2. Have any recommendations and actions regarding AGP provision taken into account the guidance in the ‘Selecting the Right Artificial Surface’ document and any NGB specific information?		
3. Do the recommendations reflect the drivers, vision and objectives of the work?		
4. Are the recommendations precise enough to enable the development of clear individual area, sport and site specific actions to help achieve them?		
5. Have all relevant parties been engaged with the development of, and are signed up to the delivery of, the recommendations and actions?		
6. Are the recommendations and actions clearly presented?		
7. Has particular attention been paid to the situation at priority sites and those which are being significantly overplayed?		
8. Have area, sport and site specific solutions been proposed to protect, enhance, and provide playing pitch provision to meet the current and future demand?		
9. Has guidance on the future of any sites highlighted as being at risk been provided?		
10. Do the recommendations and actions seek to make the best use of existing pitches?		
11. Has the detriment and benefit of proposals to relocate provision been presented?		
12. Has the level and type of any new playing pitch provision required been presented?		
13. Has the importance of providing appropriate and fit for purpose ancillary facilities been highlighted in order to maximise the potential benefit to sport of any pitches?		
14. Have the recommendations sought to ensure an adequate amount of spare capacity in the provision of accessible pitches with secured community use?		
15. Does the PPS provide a steer as to the future of any spare capacity and any provision that may be genuinely surplus to requirements (paragraphs D12 to D15)?		
16. Does the action plan cover the points listed in paragraph D17?		
17. Does the action plan provide the most appropriate actions to improve provision in the study area rather than just those which the local authority can deliver?		
18. Does the action plan represent an infrastructure plan for playing pitches with deliverable area, sport and site specific actions and projects?		
<b>Step 8: Write and Adopt the Strategy</b>		
1. Does the PPS document provide the reader with a clear understanding of the areas listed in paragraph D20?		
2. Is it clear from the PPS document why the recommendations and actions have been included, how they are to be delivered and what they will achieve?		
3. Does the PPS document indicate how it should be used and applied in different areas and circumstances along with the benefits of doing so?		
4. Has the PPS document been subject to appropriate consultation?		
5. Do all members of the steering group and other relevant parties endorse the PPS and recognise its lead role in guiding the improvement of pitches in the study area?		
6. Has the PPS document been formally adopted by the local authority and is its status recognised across all relevant departments?		

## Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (Steps 9 & 10)

Working through Stage D will help to provide:

- Clarity on how the strategy can be applied and delivered
- An approach to ensuring the strategy is kept robust and up to date.



## Step 9: Apply and deliver the strategy

- E1 The success of a PPS should be determined by how it is used. In order for it to be used well it needs to be of benefit to a variety of people in a variety of circumstances. This will help to ensure the delivery of the recommendations and actions. The majority of these people and circumstances should have been represented by members of the steering group throughout the development of the work. While the use of the PPS should be led by the local authority, its application and delivery should be the responsibility of the steering group.

Each member of the steering group should take the lead to ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence. The role of the steering group should not end with the completion of the PPS document (see Step 10 from paragraph E14).

- E2 To help ensure the PPS is well used it should be regarded as the key document within the study area guiding the improvement and protection of playing pitch provision. It needs to be the document people regularly turn to for information on the how the current demand is met and what actions are required to improve the situation and meet future demand. In order for this to be achieved the steering group need to have a clear understanding of how the PPS can be applied and therefore delivered.
- E3 The process of developing the PPS will hopefully have already resulted in a number of benefits that will help with its application and delivery. These may include enhanced partnership working across different agendas and organisations, pooling of resources along with strengthening relationships and understanding between different stakeholders and between members of the steering group and the sporting community. The drivers behind the PPS and the work to develop the recommendations and action plan will have also highlighted, and helped the steering group to understand, the key areas to which it can be applied and how it can be delivered. To assist with this understanding a number of such areas and examples for each are provided below.
- E4 **Sports Development Planning** - The PPS can be applied to help:
- Highlight, justify and make the case for sports development activities with particular sports, groups and clubs and in particular areas
  - Identify current and future trends and changes in the demand for pitch sports and how they are played
  - Inform the work, strategies and plans of sporting organisations active in the area including NGBs
  - Advocate the need to work with specific educational establishments to secure community use of their site(s)
  - Develop and/or enhance school club links by making the best use of school sites where they have spare capacity and are well located to meet demand.
- E5 **Planning Policy** – The PPS can be applied to help:
- Develop new, and review the effectiveness of existing, local planning policy (e.g. Local and Neighbourhood Plans) in line with paragraph 73 of the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
  - The implementation of local planning policy to meet the needs of the community in line with paragraph 74 of the NPPF.

The NPPF [Paragraph 73]:

‘Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.’

The NPPF [Paragraph 74]:

‘Existing open space, sports and recreational 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 needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.’

**E6 Planning Applications** – The PPS can be applied to help:

- Inform the development of planning applications which affect existing and/or propose new pitch provision
- Inform pre-application discussions to ensure any subsequent planning applications maximise their benefit to pitch sports and are developed in line with national (e.g. NPPF paragraph 74) and local planning policy
- Sports clubs and other organisations provide the strategic need for development proposals thereby potentially adding support to their application(s) and saving them resources in developing such evidence
- Local Planning Authorities and others assess planning applications affecting existing and/or proposing new playing pitch provision in line with national (e.g. NPPF paragraph 74) and local planning policy
- Sport England and other parties respond to relevant planning application consultations.

The PPS can also be applied to help Local Planning Authorities, planning policies, applications and decisions meet other relevant requirements of the NPPF including:

- Taking account of and supporting local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs (NPPF paragraph 17 – Core Planning Principles)
- Delivering the social, recreational, cultural facilities and services the community needs (NPPF paragraph 70)
- Planning positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of the framework (NPPF paragraph 157)
- Working with public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population (such as for sports, recreation and places of worship), including expected future changes, and any information about relevant barriers to improving health and well-being (NPPF paragraph 171).

**E7 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – The PPS can be applied to help:

- Advocate the need for playing pitch provision to be taken into account when a local authority is developing and/or reviewing an approach to the CIL (Charging Schedule and Infrastructure Delivery Plan) and the wider benefits of doing so (e.g. improving health and wellbeing)
- Provide prioritised infrastructure requirements for playing pitch provision including deliverable sport, area and site specific projects with costings (where known).

**E8 Funding Bids** – The PPS can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base and strategic need to support funding bids by a range of parties to a variety of potential funding sources
- Inform potential bidders of the likely strategic need for their project.

**E9 Facility and Asset Management** – The PPS can be applied to help:

- Ensure a strategic approach is taken to the provision and management of pitches
- Inform the current management, strategies and plans of pitch providers e.g. Local Authorities (within the study area and neighbouring areas), Leisure Trusts and educational establishments
- Share knowledge of how sites are managed and maintained, the lessons learnt and good practice
- Highlight the potential of asset transfers and ensure any proposed are beneficial to all parties
- Provide additional protection for particular sites over and above planning policy, for example through deeds of dedication (see paragraph B23 regarding guidance from Fields in Trust)
- Resolve issues around security of tenure.

E10 **Public Health** – The PPS can be applied to help:

- Understand how the community currently participates in pitch sports, the need for playing pitches and how this may evolve
- Raise awareness of and tackle any barriers to people maintaining and increasing their participation
- Highlight and address any inequalities of access to provision within the study area
- Provide evidence to help support wider health and well-being initiatives.

E11 **Co-ordinating Resources and Investment** – The PPS can be applied to help:

- Raise awareness of the current resources and investment (revenue and capital) going into the management, maintenance and improvement of playing pitch provision
- Co-ordinate the current and any future resources and investment to ensure the maximum benefit to sport and that value for money is secured
- Ensure the current and any future resources and investment are complimentary and do not result in their inefficient use.

E12 **Capital Programmes** – The PPS can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base to justify the protection and investment in playing pitch provision
- Influence the development and implementation of relevant capital programmes (e.g. school refurbishment and new build programmes).

E13 **Monitoring delivery**

A process should be put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered. This monitoring should be led by the local authority and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the steering group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery. As presented in Step 10 this should form an on-going role of the steering group.

## Step 10: Keep the strategy robust and up to date

E14 Developing a PPS requires significant resources from a range of parties. It is therefore essential that the benefits of providing these resources are not lost by leaving the PPS on the shelf and letting it run out of date. Along with ensuring it is used and applied a process should be put in place to keep the PPS robust and up to date. This will expand the life of the PPS providing people with the confidence to continue to both use it and attach significant value and weight to its key findings and issues, along with its recommendations and actions. It will also save considerable resources over the longer term compared with updating a PPS that has been left for a number of years and, along with the information on which it is based, has become dated and unreliable. Further benefits include:

- Enabling the PPS to continue to be successfully applied within a number of areas, including those identified in paragraphs E4 to E12
- Ensuring the local authority and other parties are well positioned to benefit from any opportunities that may arise to improve provision that were not available when the PPS document was first developed
- Providing early warning of any emerging issues with pitch provision
- Enabling the PPS to be updated to reflect changes in demand and how the sports are played.

As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPS being signed off by the steering group, then Sport England and the NGBs would consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date.

The nature of the supply and in particular the demand for playing pitches will likely to have changed over the three years. Therefore, without any form of review and update within this time period it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

E15 Ideally the PPS could be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the steering group. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment that would have been built up when developing the PPS. Taking into account the time to develop the PPS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

E16 An annual review should not be regarded as a particularly resource intensive task. However, it should highlight:

- How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others)
- How the PPS has been applied and the lessons learnt
- Any changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs in the area (e.g. the most used or high quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues
- Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport
- Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

E17 Linking back to Step 1 of the 10 step approach any subsequent update of the PPS should be tailored to the study area. Therefore, based on the review covering the points set out above (paragraph E16) a decision should be made by the steering group as to whether there is a need to carry out a fuller review and update of the PPS document, along with the information and assessment details on which it is based. It may be that there has only been some minor changes to the information which it is decided do not particularly affect the key findings and issues or the recommendations and action plan. Where this is the case then a very short progress and update paper could be provided which sets out the above information (paragraph E16) along with the process undertaken to carry out the review. Alternatively, the changes identified may suggest a need to provide a partial review and update focussing on a particular sport, pitch type and or sub area.

E18 If this approach is carried out on an annual basis then it should become clear to the steering group at which point a significant number of changes have occurred which may significantly affect the key findings and issues or the recommendations and action plan. At this stage a full review of the PPS including the supply and demand information and assessment details may be required.

E19 While the local authority should take the lead to ensure a process is put in place this should focus around the need to maintain the steering group. Guidance on the possible on-going role of the steering group is set out below:

Once the PPS is complete the role of the steering group should evolve so that it:

- Acts as a focal point for promoting the value and importance of the PPS and playing pitch provision in the area
- Monitors, evaluates and reviews progress with the delivery of the recommendations and action plan
- Shares lessons learnt from how the PPS has been used and how it has been applied to a variety of circumstances
- Ensures the PPS is used effectively to input into any new opportunities to secure improved provision and influence relevant programmes and initiatives
- Maintains links between all relevant parties with an interest in playing pitch provision in the area;
- Reviews the need to update the PPS along with the supply and demand information and assessment work on which it is based. Further to review the group should either:
  - 1) Provide a short annual progress and update paper;
  - 2) Provide a partial review focussing on particular sport, pitch type and/or sub area; or
  - 3) Lead a full review and update of the PPS document (including the supply and demand information and assessment details).

The steering group should meet at relevant points throughout the year to ensure that this role is progressed. This could be at six months and a year on from when they signed off the PPS and/or arranged to tie in with the different seasons of the sports and any meetings with the NGBs.

E20 The on-going role of the steering group should be supported by regular liaison with the NGBs. This could include annual sport specific meetings with the respective NGBs and any other relevant parties (e.g. league secretaries). These meetings could help to review and update the key supply and demand information, if necessary amend the assessment work, monitor the delivery of the recommendations and action plan and highlight any new issues and opportunities. The meetings could be timed to fit with the annual affiliation process undertaken by the NGBs which would help to capture changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area. Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites could be fed into these meetings. The NGBs may also be able to indicate any further performance quality assessments that may have been undertaken within the study area. Discussion with the league secretaries may indicate specific issues and/or any changes to the relevant club details.

E21 If all the supply and demand information was collated and presented into a single document which can be filtered accordingly (paragraph B43) then this can reviewed by the steering group, NGBs and other parties and any known changes highlighted. The potential impact of these changes can then reviewed to see what affect they may have on the site overviews and wider assessment work. Re-running the Active Places Power PPS Audit Report may also help to indicate any changes in the supply of provision.

The details on Active Places Power are regularly checked by The Leisure Database Company (TLDC) who are contracted by Sport England to collect both sport facility and selected affiliated club data. Data is updated by TLDC on a rolling basis primarily through a telephone survey with each site being checked annually. Data is also updated through feedback from users and through an "intelligent audit" e.g. monitoring of planning permissions, trade press etc.

This work by TLDC, along with incorporating any amendments fed back by the project team when checking the APP information in Stage B (paragraph B2), may help the steering group to keep the audit information up to date and highlight any changes made to the provision in the study area since the development of the PPS.

## Stage E Checklist: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date

E22 After working through Stage E it should be possible to answer ‘Yes’ to the following questions. If this is the case then appropriate arrangements should be in place to ensure the PPS is delivered and is kept robust and up to date. However, if this is not the case for one or more questions then the steering group should decide what affect this may have on the delivery of the PPS, its long term robustness and how best the question(s) could still be answered

<b>Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date</b>	Tick	
	Yes	Requires Attention
<b>Step 9: Apply &amp; deliver the strategy</b>		
1. Are steering group members clear on how the PPS can be applied across a range of relevant areas?		
2. Is each member of the steering group committed to taking the lead to help ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence?		
3. Has a process been put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered and the PPS is being applied?		
<b>Step 10: Keep the strategy robust &amp; up to date</b>		
1. Has a process been put in place to ensure the PPS is kept robust and up to date?		
2. Does the process involve an annual update of the PPS?		
3. Is the steering group to be maintained and is it clear of its on-going role?		
4. Is regular liaison with the NGBs and other parties planned?		
5. Has all the supply and demand information been collated and presented in a format (i.e. single document that can be filtered accordingly) that will help people to review it and highlight any changes?		
6. Have any changes made to the Active Places Power data been fed back to Sport England?		