

# Greater Cambridge

Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan (Interim)

A report by Strategic Leisure Limited

June 2026



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## Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Definition
PPOSS	Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy
GC	Greater Cambridge
SLL	Strategic Leisure Limited
MES	Match Equivalent Session
MPS	Matches Per Season
TGR	Team Generation Rate
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
NTP	Non-Turf Pitch
RFU	Rugby Football Union
FA	Football Association
FF	Football Foundation
LFFP	Local Football Facilities Plan
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
EN	England Netball
BE	Bowls England
EH	England Hockey
PP	PitchPower
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
DDCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework

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### 1. Introduction and Methodology

#### Study Area

- 1.1. The study area is Greater Cambridge which comprises the City of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire District. The sub areas used for each local authority area are described in their individual sections for ease of reference.

**Map 1: The Greater Cambridge Study Area**



## Current and Future Population

- 1.2. The key demographic factors impacting future provision of sport and physical activity facilities across Greater Cambridge include very significant population growth, as summarised in Table 1. The population and housing figures used throughout this PPOSS have been provided by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service and match those used in the Local Plan trajectory.

**Table 1: Current and Future Population for Greater Cambridge Area**

	2021 (Census 2021)	2031	2045 (including post 2045 build out)
The City of Cambridge	145,700	150,000	176,734
South Cambridge District	162,000	204,483	289,210
<b>Greater Cambridge</b>	<b>307,700</b>	<b>354, 483</b>	<b>465,944</b>
			<b>Post-2045 build out</b>
<b>Population growth resulting from full-build out of residential developments post-2045</b>	<b>227,033</b>		<b>534,733</b>

## Strategic Growth Sites

- 1.3. In terms of major planned growth in the City of Cambridge there is a long-term proposal for a high-density urban extension at North-East Cambridge (NEC) for approximately 7,925 dwellings. There is also another urban extension of 10,591 dwellings at Cambridge East where the Cambridge East airport is currently located.
- 1.4. In South Cambridgeshire three new settlements are planned at [Northstowe \(Phase 1 already built and Phase 2 under construction\)](#), [Waterbeach and Bourn Airfield](#) each comprising of approximately 10,000, 11,000 and 3,500 dwellings, respectively. There is also an urban extension of up to 2,606 dwellings at [Cambourne](#) West). Cambourne is located a short distance west of Bourn Airfield. There is already a significant under-supply in swimming provision for Camborne that has been built out.

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- 1.5. A summary of the Strategic Growth Areas is set out in Table 2. Different population-per-dwelling ratios have been used for individual housing sites to reflect the projected demographics of specific growth areas. These ratios have been provided by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service, and are taken from the Local Plan trajectory.

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**Table 2: Summary of Planned Growth Areas**

Site	Number of Dwellings	Population 2024-Full Build Out
Cambridge urban area - allocations	-	3,247
North West Cambridge (Eddington)	3,872	4,709
Darwin Green	2,573	6,053
Cambridge East	2,591	5,856
North of Worts Causeway	200	540
South of Worts Causeway	230	621
Bell School	42	113
Northstowe	10,186	24,812
Waterbeach New Town	11,000	31,279
Bourn Airfield New Village	3,500	9,975
Cambourne West	2,606	5,843
Rural area - allocations	-	1,430
Cambridge urban area - windfalls	-	9,055
Rural area - windfalls (excluding Wellcome Genome Campus)	-	14,729
Wellcome Genome Campus	1,500	4,275
North East Cambridge	7,925	16,246
North West Cambridge (Eddington densification) (2,000 student rooms included)	2,500	4,500
Cambridge East (airport)	8,000	21,600
Cambourne (expansion)	15,000	42,750

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Site	Number of Dwellings	Population 2024-Full Build Out
Garages between 20 St. Matthews Street and Blue Moon Public House, Cambridge	12	29
Land between Hinton Way and Mingle Lane, Great Shelford	125	325
Land at Maarnford Farm, Hunts Road, Duxford	60	156
The Moor, Moor Lane, Melbourn	20	52
Land at Highfields (phase 2) , Caldecote	64	166
Land to the west of Cambridge Road, Melbourn	120	312
Grange Farm New Settlement	6,000	17,100
Cambridge Biomedical Campus	700	1,260
		<b>227,033</b>

- 1.6. The impact on pitch capacity the housing developments in Table 2 will have has been explored as part of the assessment document of this PPOSS. This will form the basis of the scenario testing and recommendations in this strategy and action plan.

### Project Scope and Objectives

- 1.7. Greater Cambridge Planning Authority commissioned Strategic Leisure Limited (SLL) to develop a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) as part of the wider suite of strategic planning documents to inform the development and implementation of planning policy, assessment of planning applications and the need to provide evidence to help secure internal and external funding. The PPOSS will inform the standards for pitch provision required through planning policy.
- 1.8. A PPOSS is a strategic assessment that provides an up-to-date analysis of supply and demand for playing pitches (grass and artificial) and its current and future demand in the local authority. The strategy and the evidence base upon which it is based is delivered using national guidance and facility insight from specific Governing Bodies of Sport. The assessment focusses on natural and artificial facilities used by the following sports:

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- Football
- Rugby Union
- Cricket
- Hockey

- 1.9. Within these sports, the strategy seeks, as far as is practicable, to include consideration of all forms of play, whether;
- Club and league based (formal) competitions and training.
  - Less formal programmed forms of the respective sports (e.g. turn up and play products such as Rush Hockey, walking football, All Stars Cricket, and Touch Rugby)
  - Informal and un-programmed play by groups of residents, workers, students, school friends (out of school).
- 1.10. A separate Outdoor Courts and Rinks strategy has also been undertaken for Greater Cambridge, which provides an assessment of outdoor tennis, padel outdoor netball and outdoor bowls facility provision in the area, following Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities guidance. This assessment was undertaken in collaboration with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), England Netball (EN), Bowls England (BE) and British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA).
- 1.11. The PPOSS provides a holistic analysis of sports facilities across the Study Area. This will lead to a comprehensive set of recommendations for the future development of leisure / health and wellbeing provisions, in line with the needs of local residents.
- 1.12. The steering group has worked with the Council to provide a strategy that is fit-for-purpose and addresses the specific issues and risks for the area. It is key that this Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy reflects the local context and enables Greater Cambridge to maximise the amount of high-quality sporting provision for its residents, while understanding the need to meet planning and housing requirements.

### Overarching Strategic Framework

- 1.13. The Greater Cambridge PPS will contain an overarching framework for the hierarchy of playing pitch provision across the single local authority area.
- 1.14. The overarching framework will identify the strategic added value of the proposals by:
- addressing the cross-boundary issues across Greater Cambridge

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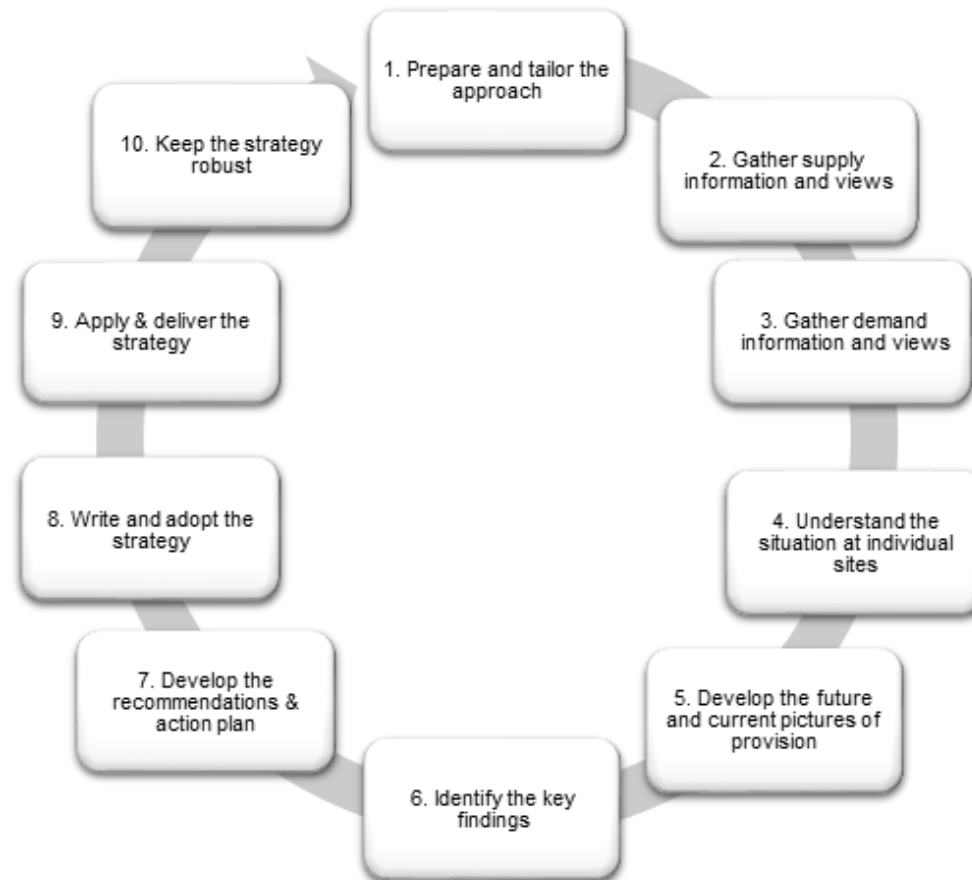
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- addressing the sub regional issues
  - identifying a consistent approach to undertaking pitch assessment, to ensure that the baseline information available on the current supply and demand for different sports is comparable across the authority
  - providing generic and site-specific recommendations on opportunities for cross-boundary provision within and beyond the boundaries of the neighbouring counties
  - making recommendations for addressing the needs of potential/future major growth areas in the local authorities
- 1.15. The formulation of this strategy is influenced by a number of key national and local strategies. These policies inform the approach to the current and future provision of sports facilities. The policies provide links to health improvement, increased participation, and the appropriate levels of provision of facilities to meet local needs. A detailed overview of Greater Cambridge's strategic priorities as well as geographical and demographic issues are highlighted in Appendices 6 and 7.
- 1.16. From a planning perspective, the national context connects planning policy, a Local Plan and population growth at a local level, and the need to plan for increased demands for infrastructure and provision, is linked to key elements of Sport England's Planning for Sport Guidance: Protect, Enhance, and Provide.
- 1.17. **Protect:** The Protect objective seeks to safeguard existing sport and physical activity provision from loss or prejudice through development. Sport England's guidance is clear that existing provision should only be lost where:
- an assessment has demonstrated that provision is surplus to requirements;
  - the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
  - the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss.
- 1.18. **Enhance:** The Enhance objective focuses on maximising the value of existing provision through improvements to quality, access and management. Rather than simply protecting facilities from loss, this objective actively promotes investment in existing sites, including upgrades to playing surfaces, ancillary infrastructure, and community access arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose and capable of meeting current and future demand.
- 1.19. **Provide:** The Provide objective addresses the need to deliver new or additional provision where existing facilities do not adequately meet current or future demand. New provision should be needs led and informed by a robust evidence base. The NPPF (paragraph 102) requires planning policies to be based on up-to-date assessments of need, with new residential development expected to generate, and where necessary fund, proportionate increases in sporting infrastructure.

Methodology

1.20. Although the development of a new methodology is underway, this PPOSS follows the published guidance from Sport England. The guidance used is the 2013 version, *Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance – An Approach to Developing and Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy*<sup>1</sup>. Figure 1.1 summarises the approach proposed in this guidance and is broken down into 10 steps.

**Figure 1: Developing and Delivering a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy – The 10 Step Approach (Sport England, 2013)**



1.21. These 10 steps are grouped into the following 5 stages:

- **Stage A – Prepare and tailor the approach (Step 1)**
  - 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.
  
- **Stage B – Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision (Steps 2 and 3)**
  - 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
  
- **Stage C – Assess the supply and demand information and views (Steps 4, 5 and 6)**
  - 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
  
- **Stage D – Develop the strategy (Steps 7 and 8)**
  - 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

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- **Stage E – Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (Steps 9 and 10)**

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

1.22. This strategy report covers Stage D of the methodology, and is informed by Stages A, B and C which are incorporated into the assessment report. Stage E is an ongoing review, which should take place on an annual basis following the publishing of this PPOSS.

1.23. All pitch sports are subject to the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) methodology, whereas other outdoor sports (tennis, netball, outdoor bowls and padel) are assessed using the Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (ANOG). There are 4 stages to the ANOG assessment:

- **Stage A – Prepare and tailor the approach.**

- Establish a clear understanding of the purpose, scope and scale of the assessment. This will be undertaken in line with Stage A of the PPOSS methodology.

- **Stage B – Gather information on supply and demand.**

- To build a clear picture of the supply of outdoor facilities, information will be gathered on the quality, quantity, accessibility and availability of individual sites.
- Demand data such as local population, club affiliation, educational demand, unmet/latent demand, future growth and sport specific priorities will be gathered.
- Supply and demand data will be gathered alongside Stage B of the PPOSS methodology, using consultation, club surveys, site assessments etc.

- **Stage C – Assessment – bringing the information together.**

- Development of the key findings regarding quality, quantity, accessibility and availability of outdoor sports provision in the area. Implications of each site will be developed on the principle of protect, enhance and provide.

- **Application – Application of the assessment**

- All key findings and priorities from Stage A – C will be applied and used to inform sports strategy, planning policy, infrastructure planning and funding applications.

- 1.24. The findings in this report are based on data collected from several credible sources, including, but not limited to;
- Local authority and public policy strategic documentation;
  - Sport England tools, including the Playing Pitch Calculator, Sports Facility Calculator, Active Places Power and the Active Lives Survey;
  - Stakeholder consultation, including Greater Cambridge Officers, Sport England, relevant National Governing Bodies of Sport, education providers, key user clubs; and
  - Site visits, undertaken at all strategically important sites across the Study Area.
- 1.25. It should be noted that whilst the Playing Pitch Calculator and any sport-specific demand models have been used as a baseline for all calculations within this assessment, the figures generated should be considered only as an indicator of the scale of any identified shortfall or surplus across the study area. Although theoretically correct, the future deficits identified may present unrealistic expectations for the delivery of new provision, given the significant financial challenges involved. Any new facility development should therefore be considered wherever possible, but not to the detriment of other sports or existing facilities, ensuring that all current provision remains financially sustainable.
- 1.26. A project steering group comprising representation from the Council, Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) has guided the study from its commencement. At critical milestones, the Steering Group members have reviewed and verified the data and information collected to allow the work to proceed efficiently through each stage.

### Report structure

1.27. The structure of the PPOSS report is as follows:

- Introduction and Methodology
- City of Cambridge
  - Headline Findings
  - Football
  - 3G AGP
  - Cricket
  - Rugby Union
  - Hockey
- South Cambridgeshire District
  - Headline Findings
  - Football
  - 3G AGP
  - Cricket
  - Rugby Union
  - Hockey

1.28. Supporting information is included in the appendices and referenced throughout. To inform this strategy document, an assessment document has also been produced, which provides an in depth capacity analysis which forms the basis of the PPOSS.



## 2. **Headline findings of the evidence base for each sport**

- 2.1. The sport by sport summaries below highlight the quantitative and qualitative findings for the main pitch sports across Greater Cambridge generated by the Stage C assessment. Further site-specific findings are identified in the individual sections of this report.

### **Grass Football Pitches**

- 2.2. In the City of Cambridge, there is a total of 60 pitches across 24 sites that are used for secured or unsecured community football. 15 of these pitches are located in the east sub area, 25 in the south, 6 in the west and central area and 14 in the north.
- 2.3. There are 23 pitches on university college sites that are currently unavailable for community use, of which 22 are located in the west and central sub area. There are also 5 other sites in the City of Cambridge, that although marked for football, are currently unavailable for community use.
- 2.4. There are 26 community football clubs in the City of Cambridge, comprising a total of 120 teams. Cambridge University has a further 58 teams affiliated to Cambridgeshire FA, bringing the total number of teams in the study area to 178. The largest proportion of these teams come from adult male 11v11 (74).
- 2.5. The current supply and demand analysis for accessible and secure pitch provision in the City of Cambridge, shows capacity deficits on adult 11v11, youth 11v11 and 9v9 pitches. There is a balanced position for 7v7 provision and 2.5 MES of spare capacity on 5v5 pitch types.
- 2.6. When looking forward to 2045, the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) has identified a population increase need for 32 adult 11v11 football pitches, 16 youth football pitches and 13 mini soccer grass pitches for all developments within the City of Cambridge as identified in the table above and provision of 96 additional changing rooms.

### **3G Artificial Grass Pitches**

- 2.7. There are 6 11v11 equivalent 3G AGP's in the City of Cambridge, although only 4 of these are available for community use. However, only 2 of these currently cater for community football teams. There are a further 4 small sided 3G pitches, all of which are available to the community. Only St Marys School Sports Ground and Cambridge University RUFC offer WR22 compliant surfaces.

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- 2.8. The current supply of 3G AGPs across the City is insufficient to meet training needs community teams and University of Cambridge Colleges teams when applying the theoretical FA model 38 teams to 1 full size 3G AGP. Access issues of 3G AGPs have been highlighted for mid-week training by Trumpington FC and Chesterton Eagles FC.
- 2.9. Based on community clubs having suitable access to 2 11v11 3G pitches, there is a current deficit of 3 full size equivalent 3G pitches.
- 2.10. This shortfall increases to 8x 3G AGPs to meet existing and future demand by 2045.

#### Cricket

- 2.11. In the 2025 season, there were 27 maintained grass cricket squares, across 24 sites, providing 251 wickets across Cambridge City. There are four sites with non turf pitches.
- 2.12. The only cricket facility owned by Cambridge City Council is at Parkers Piece. The square was replaced in 2018 and is now maintained by Cambridge NCI Cricket Club. However, Darwin Green also now has cricket provision owned by Cambridge City Council and will be in use from 2026. There is only 1 secured use cricket facility in Cambridge City, at Parkers Piece. Although Storey's Field, Eddington previously provided secured use, the site is now condemned as a cricket facility and is currently unused for cricket. No club has its own cricket facility. All other sites are either in the ownership of the University of Cambridge, University of Cambridge Colleges, independent schools, or other education establishments.
- 2.13. 14 clubs have been identified as playing in Greater Cambridge, with a total of 32 teams. There are 11 teams in junior age categories and 21 senior level teams.
- 2.14. Although theoretically, there is adequate cricket provision in the City of Cambridge, the vast majority sites are university owned and offer no security of tenure for community clubs. There is a significant shortfall of secure, community accessible provision in the City of Cambridge.
- 2.15. Population growth and housing development are predicted to create further shortfalls by 2045, with the PPC suggesting a need for 4 additional pitches by 2045.

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#### Rugby Union

- 2.16. In the 2024/25 season, there were 18 sites providing 35 (2 with sports lighting) senior, 4 junior, 2 mini natural grass rugby pitches and 2 World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant AGP across the City of Cambridge.
- 2.17. There are 2 community clubs in the study area, comprised of 24 teams; 7 senior male, 1 senior female, 5 youth boys, 5 youth girls and 6 mini teams. Cambridge University also has an extensive rugby union programme with 20 college teams competing in a structured league system.
- 2.18. There is a current shortfall of 8 MES (2024/25) of capacity on training pitches with sports lighting to accommodate the current mid-week demand of 14.50 MES (2024/25). When including weekend competitive play and training demand 10.25 MES there is a shortfall currently of 7.75 MES.
- 2.19. With increases from club participation aspirations growth the shortfall of training match equivalent sessions grows to 13 MES and training and weekly match play grows to 5.50 MES.
- 2.20. There is a deficit of 3G AGP provision in the study area. If future AGP development was to be rugby union compliant, it could help to reduce some of the training deficit currently experienced in the City of Cambridge.

#### Hockey

- 2.21. There is a total of 13 full size AGPs in Greater Cambridge that are suitable for Hockey, however only 5 offer any security of tenure of community hockey clubs.
- 2.22. There are insufficient secured match slots to meet the current demand for Cambridge hockey clubs on both a Saturday and Sunday. This deficit is predicted to increase by 2045 due to housing growth creating the need for an additional 3 AGPs to meet new projected population demand. With latent demand and the insufficient supply to meet match play currently there is a need by 2045 to provide 3 full size floodlit AGPs in the Cambridge City.
- 2.23. Ancillary provision at St Catherine's College and St John's College is inadequate, with no access to toilets immediately adjacent to the pitch and no clubhouse on either site. This provides a barrier to the growth of hockey as participation initiatives are unable to be run from either site.

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- 2.24. There is the need to secure community use agreements on university sites wherever possible. Although some education pitches are well-utilised, due to the lack of formal tenure for clubs, access to the pitch for community clubs could be lost at short notice.
- 2.25. There is a lack of sports lighting on hockey AGPs in Cambridge City, with St Catherine's College, Stephen Perse Foundation, The Perse School and The Leys School, Latham Road pitches being unable to meet training or match play demand mid-week due to lack of lighting.

### 3. Grass Football Pitches – City of Cambridge

- 3.1. To help develop the recommendations/actions and to understand their potential impact, several relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues in this section, resulting in sport specific recommendations.
- 3.2. It must be noted that all calculations in this document are based on how youth football is currently structured, however from season 2026/2027, a reduced size 3v3 format<sup>1</sup> will be introduced at U7 age groups, and teams will stay at reduced size pitches for longer, meaning that 11v11 football will begin at U14 rather than U13 as is currently the case. This will result in less usage of 11v11 grass pitches and increased demand for 5v5, 7v7 and 9v9 provision.

#### Scenario 1 – Exploring the impact of growth of the female game

- 3.3. The Football Foundation has identified a minimum growth in the female game of 50% over a 3 year period. As highlighted in Table 3, there are currently 20 female-only teams in the City of Cambridge.

**Table 3: Current Female Only Football Provision in the City of Cambridge**

Sub Area	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	9v9	7v7	5v5	Total No. Teams
East	0	0	0	0	0	0
South	1	4	1	0	3	9
West and Central	0	0	0	0	0	0
North	2	2	2	2	0	8
Cambridge University	3	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>

<sup>1</sup> <https://futurefit.EnglandFootball.com/futurefit/a-closer-look-at-3v3/index.html>

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- 3.4. Table 4 identifies the number of women's and girls' teams per type and sub area if demand was to increase by 50%. All figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
- 3.5. There is predicted to be a growth of 3 adult 11v11 teams, 3 youth 11v11 teams, 2 9v9 teams, 1 7v7 teams and 2 5v5 teams. This gives a total growth 11 teams, of which 5 will be in the South, 4 in the North and 2 will be from Cambridge University.

**Table 4: 50% growth of Female-Only Football Provision in the City of Cambridge**

Sub Area	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	9v9	7v7	5v5	Total No. Teams
East	0	0	0	0	0	0
South	2	6	2	0	5	14
West and Central	0	0	0	0	0	0
North	3	3	3	3	0	12
Cambridge University	5	0	0	0	0	5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>31</b>

- 3.6. Each grass pitch has a limit, based on a quality assessment, of how much usage it can accommodate each week before it's quality is negatively impacted. This limited is quantified in Match Equivalent Sessions (MES). Football demand is also provided in MES, allowing for the capacity of pitches to be easily assessed. 1 match played by a team on an appropriately sized pitch for their age group, is equivalent to 1 MES. However, each team is assigned 0.5 MES per week, as most will play both home and away fixtures.
- 3.7. If each team is assigned 0.5 MES of demand, to take into account home and away fixtures, there will be demand for an additional 5.5 MES on grass pitches across the study area.
- 3.8. If there were no changes to the pitch supply in the City of Cambridge, growth of the female game would have the following impact on grass pitch provision:
- Adult 11v11 - the deficit of -6 MES would increase to -7.5 MES.
  - Youth 11v11 – the current shortfall of -4 MES would increase to -5.5 MES

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- 9v9 – the current deficit of -2.5 MES would rise to -3.5 MES
  - Mini 7v7 – a shortfall of -0.5 MES would be created
  - Mini 5v5 – current spare capacity would be reduced to 1.5 MES.
- 3.9. However, due to the restructure in youth football from 2026/2027, some of the additional demand for Youth 11v11 pitches will actually be met by 9v9 provision and will also result in extra demand for 7v7 and 5v5 pitches. Regardless of where additional demand is placed, deficits will be found on all pitch types, other than mini 5v5 by 2042.
- 3.10. The identified growth of 11 female teams over the next 3 years will also impact the capacity position of 3G AGPs. Using the FA's 1:38 model, the 11 new teams will create demand for 0.3 11v11 equivalent 3G pitches, raising the future deficit to 8.3 by 2045.

**Key outcome:** A 50% growth in female-only teams (11 additional teams) would add 5.5 MES of demand across all pitch formats, deepening existing deficits on adult, youth, and junior pitches.

**Implications for provision:** Existing deficits worsen across every pitch type except mini 5v5, where spare capacity is consumed. 3G demand increases by 0.3 pitches, raising the future 3G deficit to 8.3 by 2045.

**Strategic priority:** Plan specifically for women's and girls' football in new and improved provision; the south and north sub-areas have the greatest need

**Scenario 2 – Exploring the impact of grass pitch quality improvements on pitch capacity**

3.11. This scenario explores how pitch capacities will be impacted if all poor quality grass pitches, currently used by community clubs, are improved to a good quality. Tables 5 – 9 shows changes in capacity for each poor quality pitch by pitch type.

**Table 5: Grass Pitch Improvements – Adult 11v11 Capacity Analysis**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES	Improved Pitch Capacity - MES	Improved Weekly Balance - MES	Improved Peak Period MES
Trumpington Community College	South	Secured	1	1	2.5	-1.5	No Spare Capacity	3	0.5	No Spare Capacity
Castle School	North	Secured	3	3	6	-3	No Spare Capacity	9	3	No Spare Capacity

3.12. Table 5 shows that pitch improvements to poor quality Adult 11v11 pitches would remove 4.5 MES of overplay across the study area, reducing the shortfall to -1.5 MES. However, due to the current demand for football at the sites, there would be no impact on the actual spare peak time capacity.

**Table 6: Grass Pitch Improvements – Youth 11v11 Capacity Analysis**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES	Improved Pitch Capacity - MES	Improved Weekly Balance - MES	Improved Peak Period MES
Trumpington Community College	South	Secured	1	1	4	-3	No Spare Capacity	4	0	No Spare Capacity

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Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES	Improved Pitch Capacity - MES	Improved Weekly Balance - MES	Improved Peak Period MES
Chesterton Recreation Ground	North	Secured	1	1	3	-2	No Spare Capacity	4	1	No Spare Capacity

3.13. Table 6 demonstrates that improving the quality of Youth 11v11 pitches would decrease the current overplay and create 1 MES of spare capacity across the study area. However, no additional spare capacity at peak times would be created.

**Table 7: Grass Pitch Improvements – 9v9 Capacity Analysis**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES	Improved Pitch Capacity - MES	Improved Weekly Balance - MES	Improved Peak Period MES
Abbey Leisure Complex Coldhams Common	East	Secured	2	2	0.5	1.5	1.5	8	7.5	1.5
Trumpington Community College	South	Secured	3	3	5	-2	No Spare Capacity	12	7	No Spare Capacity
Chesterton Recreation Ground	North	Secured	1	1	5	-4	No Spare Capacity	4	-1	No Spare Capacity
North Cambridge Academy	North	Unsecured	2	2	2	0	No Spare Capacity	8	6	No Spare Capacity

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3.14. Table 7 shows that by undertaking pitch quality improvements, the current -2.5 MES shortfall of 9v9 provision reduced and 3.5 MES of spare weekly capacity created. However, as with other pitch types, due to current demand for the sites, no additional capacity at peak times would be created.

**Table 8: Grass Pitch Improvements – Mini 7v7 Capacity Analysis**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES	Improved Pitch Capacity - MES	Improved Weekly Balance - MES	Improved Peak Period MES
North Cambridge Academy	North	Unsecured	2	4	1	3	1	12	11	1

**Table 9: Grass Pitch Improvements – Mini 5v5 Capacity Analysis**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES	Improved Pitch Capacity - MES	Improved Weekly Balance - MES	Improved Peak Period MES
North Cambridge Academy	North	Unsecured	1	2	2	0	No Spare Capacity	6	4	No Spare Capacity

3.15. Tables 8 and 9 shows that there although pitch quality improvements would create additional weekly capacity on 7v7 and 5v5 pitches at North Cambridge Academy, peak time capacity will remain at 1 MES per week for 7v7 provision and there will be no peak time capacity impact on the 5v5 pitch.

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- 3.16. Pitch quality improvements should be considered at all sites, wherever possible. However, due to their current poor quality and the ability to reduce overplay, priority sites should be:
- Trumpington Community College
  - Chesterton Recreation Ground
  - Castle School
  - North Cambridge Academy
- 3.17. However, as shown in Tables 5 – 9, pitch quality improvements will have minimal impact in creating additional capacity for match play at peak times, and therefore the development of further grass pitch provision is required to cater for all current and future demand.
- 3.18. Based on predicted population growth through housing development, use of the Playing Pitch Calculator as part of the Stage C Assessment, identified the requirement for an additional 32 adult 11v11 football pitches, 16 youth football pitches and 13 mini soccer grass pitches.

**Key outcome:** Improving all poor-quality pitches to good standard reduces weekly overplay and creates marginal spare capacity, but creates no additional peak-time capacity on any pitch type

**Implications for provision:** Priority improvements at Trumpington Community College, Chesterton Recreation Ground, Castle School and North Cambridge Academy would deliver meaningful reductions in overplay, but are insufficient alone to resolve the structural deficit

**Strategic priority:** Pursue quality improvements as an immediate step, but treat them as complementary to — not a substitute for — new pitch provision.

**Scenario 3 – The impact of year on year participation growth of over the next 5 years on grass and 3G pitch capacity**

3.19. The Stage C assessment explored the impact of population growth and housing development to 2045 on grass pitch and 3G AGP capacity. However, the FA predict an average of 3.09% year-on-year growth of affiliated football teams over the next 5 years to 2031. This figure is better aligned to actual growth that has been realised by football clubs nationally. However, the rate of growth varies significantly across all age groups.

3.20. The predicted rate of growth by age category is:

- Adult Male - -0.61%
- Adult Female - +11.1%
- Youth Boys - +3.97%
- Youth Girls - +15.02%
- Mini Soccer - +6.74%

3.21. Table 10 shows the predicted level of team growth, by age category, based on 5-year FA predictions.

**Table 10: Future demand driven by participation growth.**

Age Groups	Current no. of Teams	Projected Team Number Change	Projected no. Teams 2031
Adult Men 11v11 (16-45yrs)	74	2	76
Adult Women 11v11 (16-45yrs)	6	4	10
Youth Boys 11v11 (12-15yrs)	29	6	34
Youth Girls 11v11 (12-15yrs)	6	6	12
Youth Boys 9v9 (10-11yrs)	14	3	19
Youth Girls 9v9 (10-11yrs)	3	3	6
Mini Soccer Mixed 7v7 (8-9yrs)	25	10	35
Mini Soccer Mixed 5v5 (6-7yrs)	21	8	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>222</b>

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- 3.22. Table 10 shows that 43 new football teams are likely to be created in the City of Cambridge by 2031, increasing demand for both grass and artificial pitch provision.
- 3.23. If all new teams are assigned 0.5 MES of match play demand, there will be demand for an additional 21.5 MES at peak match play times in the study area.
- 3.24. 3 MES of this additional demand will be placed on Adult 11v11 pitches, increasing the current deficit to -9 MES by 2031.
- 3.25. Youth 11v11 pitches would experience a demand increase of 6 MES by 2031, increasing the current shortfall of provision to -10 MES.
- 3.26. An increase of 3 MES per week would be placed on 9v9 pitches in the study area, raising the shortfall to -5.5 MES over the next 5 years.
- 3.27. Although there is no current shortfall of 7v7 pitch provision, participation growth would create demand for an additional 5 MES by 2031, resulting in a deficit of -5 MES.
- 3.28. Due to team growth over the next 5 years, an additional 4 MES per week will be required on 5v5 grass pitches. This will result in the loss of all spare capacity and create a shortfall of -2.5 MES by 2031.
- 3.29. The additional 43 teams will also increase demand for 3G pitches in the City of Cambridge. Based on the FA's 1:38 model, team growth over the next 5 years will generate demand for 1x 11v11 equivalent 3G pitch, raising the future requirement for new 3G AGP provision to 9 by 2045.

**Key outcome:** FA-predicted growth of 43 additional teams by 2031 adds 21.5 MES of peak demand, pushing deficits on every pitch format into significant negative territory and raising the 3G requirement by a further full pitch

**Implications for provision:** Adult 11v11 deficit rises to -9 MES; youth 11v11 to -10 MES; 9v9 to -5.5 MES; 7v7 creates a new -5 MES deficit; 5v5 loses all spare capacity and enters deficit

**Strategic priority:** New grass pitch delivery must keep pace with near-term participation growth, not only long-term housing trajectories.

**Scenario 4 – The impact of securing community use agreements at currently unsecure sites**

- 3.30. Although sometimes used to support community football demand, there are a number of sites within the City of Cambridge that do not offer any security of tenure for clubs or are unavailable. Despite potentially offering spare peak time capacity, these sites are not considered as part of the current and future capacity analysis as public access to them could be removed without notice.
- 3.31. This scenario will explore the impact that securing community use agreements could have on the capacity of grass football pitches in the study area.
- 3.32. Tables 11 – 15 show all unsecure sites currently used by the community, by pitch type.

**Table 11: Adult 11v11 Capacity Analysis – Unsecure Sites**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	Pitch Quality	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES
Coleridge Community College	East	Unsecure	Standard	1	2	1.5	0.5	0.5
Hills Road Sixth Form College	East	Unsecure	Good	2	6	1.5	4.5	0.5
Clare College Sports Ground	South	Unsecure	Good	2	6	1.5	4.5	0.5
Long Road Sixth Form College	South	Unsecure	Good	1	3	1.5	1.5	No Spare Capacity
St Catherines College	South	Unsecure	Good	4	12	6	6	No Spare Capacity
Emmanuel College Sports Ground	West and Central	Unsecure	Good	2	6	2	4	No Spare Capacity

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Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	Pitch Quality	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES
Gonville and Caius College Sports Ground	West and Central	Unsecure	Good	1	3	2	1	No Spare Capacity
Pembroke College Sports Ground	West and Central	Unsecure	Good	2	6	2	4	No Spare Capacity
Fitzwilliam College Sports Ground	North	Unsecure	Good	1	3	4.5	-1.5	No Spare Capacity

3.33. Table 11 shows that securing community use agreements on Adult 11v11 pitches would add 1.5 MES of peak time capacity to the study area, lowering the current deficit to -4.5 MES per week.

3.34. However, if access to the community was removed from the sites in Table 11, 22.5 MES of demand would be displaced with very limited capacity elsewhere to meet additional demand.

**Table 12: Youth 11v11 Capacity Analysis – Unsecure Sites**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	Pitch Quality	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES
Hills Road 6th Form College Sports Ground	East	Unsecure	Good	2	6	1	5	1

3.35. The only unsecure site with Youth 11v11 provision is Hills Road Sixth Form College. If a community use agreement was secured, then an additional 1 MES of peak time capacity would be added to the pitch supply, decreasing the current shortfall to -3 MES per week.

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**Table 13: 9v9 Capacity Analysis – Unsecure Sites**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	Pitch Quality	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES
North Cambridge Academy	North	Unsecure	Poor	2	2	2	0	No Spare Capacity

**Table 14: Mini 7v7 Capacity Analysis – Unsecure Sites**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	Pitch Quality	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES
North Cambridge Academy	North	Unsecure	Poor	2	4	1	3	1

**Table 15: Mini 5v5 Capacity Analysis – Unsecure Sites**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	Pitch Quality	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES
North Cambridge Academy	North	Unsecure	Poor	1	2	2	0	No Spare Capacity

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- 3.36. North Cambridge Academy is the only unsecure site in the study area offering 9v9, 7v7 and 5v5 pitch provision. By securing a community use agreement on site, 1 MES of spare peak time capacity would be created for 7v7 pitches, creating a study area wide surplus of 1 MES per week.
- 3.37. Although there is no spare capacity on either 9v9 or 5v5 pitches on site, the loss of community access to the site would result in 5 MES of displaced demand.
- 3.38. Although securing community use agreements would add a small level of spare peak time capacity to the study area, it is more vital to protect against the loss of community access to grass pitch provision resulting in the potential displacement of 28.5 MES of demand.
- 3.39. There are also a number of university college sites with grass football pitch provision, that are currently unavailable for community use and are used solely by the university. These are identified in Table 16.

**Table 16: Unavailable Grass Football Pitch Sites**

Site name	Security of Tenure	Pitch Type	No. Pitches	Weekly Capacity MES	Peak Period Capacity
Churchill College	Unavailable	Adult 11v11	2	6	2
Corpus Christi College Sports Ground	Unavailable	Adult 11v11	2	6	2
Downing College Sports Ground	Unavailable	Adult 11v11	2	6	2
Homerton College	Unavailable	Adult 11v11	1	3	1
Jesus College	Unavailable	Adult 11v11	2	6	2
Newnham College Sports Ground	Unavailable	Adult 11v11	1	3	1

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Site name	Security of Tenure	Pitch Type	No. Pitches	Weekly Capacity MES	Peak Period Capacity
Queens College, Kings College, Selwyn and Robinson College Sports Ground	Unavailable	Adult 11v11	7	21	7
St Johns College	Unavailable	Adult 11v11	3	9	3
Trinity Hall	Unavailable	Adult 11v11	1	3	1

- 3.40. The unavailable sites in Table 16 have a theoretical peak time capacity of 21 MES per week, which if secured would create large levels of spare capacity on Adult 11v11 pitches. However, these are used extensively by the university, in particular St John’s College, therefore limiting both the weekly and peak time capacity that would be available to any community clubs.
- 3.41. Although seeking community use agreements alone would not adequately address the playing pitch shortfall, it should be a priority to secure community agreements on unsecure and/or unavailable sites, wherever possible, with a focus on those that a currently meeting demand from community user groups.

**Key outcome:** Formalising community use at currently unsecured education and university sites would add small amounts of peak-time capacity (1.5 MES for adult 11v11; 1 MES for youth 11v11; 1 MES for mini 7v7), but the more critical risk is the potential displacement of 28.5 MES of demand if informal access is withdrawn

**Implications for provision:** University college sites with 23 currently unavailable adult pitches hold theoretical capacity of 21 peak MES, but are heavily used by the university, limiting what could realistically be released

**Strategic priority:** Securing formal tenure at unsecure sites is urgent as a protective measure — to prevent loss of existing access — rather than primarily as a means of creating new capacity.

### Football – Grass Pitch Summary

- 3.42. The City of Cambridge faces a significant and growing shortfall of grass pitch provision across all pitch formats, driven by existing demand pressures, growth in the female game, and the substantial population increase expected from major housing developments at North East Cambridge and Cambridge East. Pitch quality improvements at priority sites, including Trumpington Community College, Chesterton Recreation Ground, Castle School and North Cambridge Academy should be pursued as an immediate step to reduce overplay, though these measures alone will not resolve the underlying deficit. Securing formal community use agreements at currently unsecured education and university college sites is equally urgent, both to protect existing access and to prevent significant displacement of demand if informal arrangements are withdrawn.
- 3.43. New grass pitch provision must be planned and delivered in step with housing growth, with multi-pitch sites the preferred approach wherever development scale warrants it. New sites should incorporate appropriate clubhouse, changing, and car parking provision and be designed to accommodate the full range of football formats, including the reformed youth structures coming into effect from 2026/27. The east of the city, where the greatest growth in demand is projected, should be a priority geography for identifying new sites. Developer contributions and Football Foundation funding will be critical mechanisms for delivery, alongside engagement with the FA's Local Football Facility Plan.

### Football – Grass Pitch Recommendations

1. Improve the quality of grass pitches through PitchPower wherever possible, with priority given to:
  - Trumpington Community College
  - Chesterton Recreation Ground
  - Castle School
  - North Cambridge Academy
2. Where suitable and avoiding unnecessary travel, consider transferring 5v5 and 7v7 match play demand onto 3G AGPs, creating additional capacity on existing grass pitches.
3. Support the development of additional grass pitches and ancillary provision wherever possible, in relation to key housing sites.

4. Ensure that community use of education pitches is secured through formal community use agreements that provide security of tenure for community clubs.
5. Ensure that large scale housing developments provide appropriate levels of provision to cater for their new population. Where a residential development is of a size to justify on-site football provision, (2 pitches or more) focus on the creation of multi-pitch sites that meet the new demand created by the development and existing shortfalls where possible, with accompanying clubhouse, access and car parking provision included
6. Protect the existing supply of grass and AGP provision, in line with Sport England's Playing Field Policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

## 4. 3G Artificial Grass Pitches – City of Cambridge

4.1 To help develop the recommendations/actions and to understand their potential impact, several relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues in this section, resulting in sport specific recommendations.

### Scenario 5 – The impact of additional 3G development in the City of Cambridge

4.2 As the assessment document states, there is a predicted shortfall of 8 11v11 sized equivalent 3G AGPs to meet existing and future demand by 2045.

4.3 Theoretically, to meet the needs of all 178 current football teams in the City of Cambridge, there would be a requirement for 5 x 3G AGPs. There is an identified need for a further 5 x 3G AGPs from population projections to 2045. A total of 10 11v11 equivalent 3G AGPs. As there are currently 2 full size 3G pitches available, this leaves a future deficit of 8 11v11 equivalent 3G pitches.

4.4 There is currently 2 11v11 size 3G AGPs available to football clubs that offer security of tenure; Trumpington Community College and Abbey Leisure. Although St Mary’s School Sports Ground should offer community use as a planning obligation, this is currently not the case.

4.5 To increase access to 3G provision for both football and rugby union clubs, there are a number of proposals in place for the development of additional 3G AGP pitches. Table 17 provides an overview of these. It should be noted that to support rugby union demand, further provision of World Rugby compliant pitches (WR22) should be considered wherever possible.

**Table 17: Proposed New 3G Pitch Development**

Location	Sub Area	Number of Pitches Proposed	Estimated Delivery Date	Comments
Eddington Sports Hub	West and Central	2	TBC	Proposal
St John’s College	West and Central	1	TBC	Proposal
North Cambridge Academy	North	1	TBC	Proposal

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- 4.6 There are proposals for 4 additional 11v11 equivalent 3G pitches within the study area, at St Johns College, North Cambridge Academy and Eddington Sports Hub (x2). Therefore, there is a need to identify a further 4 potential sites for 3G development to meet both current and future demand.
- 4.7 It should be a priority to secure community access to St Mary's School Sports Ground, in line with planning obligations. As well as this, working with the Perse Upper School to provide access for community clubs to the 2 currently unavailable 3G pitches on site, would contribute to the reduction of the 3G pitch shortfall in the City. If all 3 of these pitches were made fully available for community use, along with the development of the 4 pitches identified in Table 17, only 1 additional site would need to be found.
- 4.8 However, use of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator to assess the development need of individual housing growth areas, suggests that the greatest future demand for 3G provision will be generated in North East and East Cambridge. None of the planned developments in Table 17, or either St Mary's School or Perse Upper School, are located in the east of the study area. Therefore, any further site identification should be focused on the east of the City of Cambridge.
- 4.9 Although all sites identified above would support a significant amount of community activity, to ensure that the needs of both rugby union and football are met, it is important that further analysis of the suitability and sustainability of any potential site is carried out by the PPOSS steering group and a decision-making process undertaken to establish priority sites for 3G development

**Key outcome:** A theoretical deficit of 8 full-size 3G pitches exists by 2045. Proposed developments at North Cambridge Academy, St John's College and Eddington Sports Hub (4 pitches in total), plus securing community use at St Mary's School and The Perse Upper School, could reduce this but leave a residual gap requiring further site identification

**Implications for provision:** Greatest future demand will be generated in north-east and east Cambridge; none of the pipeline proposals are located in the east sub-area

**Strategic priority:** Advance the pipeline proposals and focus new site identification on the east of the city. All new pitches should be WR22-compliant to serve both football and rugby

**Scenario 6 – The impact on demand for 3G pitch provision if all match play demand is transferred to 3G pitches**

4.10 The scenario explores the impact on demand if all matches for teams playing competitive football on grass pitches in the City of Cambridge were played on 11v11 equivalent floodlit 3G AGPs. Table 18 uses an FA suggested approach to calculating the 3G match play demand.

**Table 18: Full size 3G pitches required to cater for all football match play demand**

Format	No. of teams at peak time	No. of matches at peak time	3G units per match	Total units required formats	3G pitches required
	(x)	(y) = x/2	(z)	(A)=(y)*(z)	B= (A)/64
Mini Soccer 5v5	21	10.5	4	42	0.7
Mini Soccer 7v7	25	12.5	8	100	1.6
Youth 9v9	17	8.5	10	85	1.3
Youth 11v11	35	17.5	32	560	8.8
Adult 11v11	22	11	32	352	5.5
<b>Total (Rounded)</b>					<b>18</b>

4.11 Table 18 shows that 18 11v11 equivalent 3G pitches would be required to meet match play demand for all affiliated community football teams in the City of Cambridge. This figure does not include demand from university affiliated teams. If the 58 university teams are also included in the calculation, then the 3G pitch requirement would increase to 32 full size pitches.

4.12 Even if all 4 proposed 3G pitches (Table 17) are developed and community use is secured on the 3 currently unavailable pitches at St Mary’s School and The Perse Upper School, there would still be a shortfall of 9x 11v11 equivalent 3G pitches. This level of 3G development is significantly above the number of 3G pitches that have been identified to meet the current training demand from clubs and is therefore unrealistic.

4.13 However, Table 18 shows that 3 full size 3G pitches could meet all match play demand from mini 5v5 and 7v7 teams, with some remaining spare capacity. These pitches could also meet training demand from affiliated clubs and cater for the potential increase in demand created by FutureFit (3v3 for U7 players).

**Key outcome:** Meeting all affiliated community football match play on 3G pitches would require 18 full-size equivalents (rising to 32 if university teams are included) — far in excess of what is realistic to deliver

**Implications for provision:** Full transfer is not a credible strategy. However, 3 full-size 3G pitches could absorb all mini 5v5 and 7v7 match play, providing meaningful relief for grass pitches

**Strategic priority:** Focus 3G match play transfer on mini formats, with multi-format line marking on all new pitches to maximise flexibility.

### 3G AGP Summary

- 4.14 The City of Cambridge has a substantial deficit of 3G AGP provision relative to the needs of its affiliated football community, a shortfall that will grow considerably as population increases to 2045. Securing formal community use at St Mary's School Sports Ground where a planning obligation already exists and progressing discussions with The Perse Upper School to open its pitches to community clubs should be prioritised as near-term actions, as these would make a meaningful contribution to reducing the deficit without new build expenditure. Proposals for new pitches at North Cambridge Academy, St John's College and Eddington Sports Hub should be actively supported and advanced.
- 4.15 Beyond these identified sites, further locations for 3G development must be identified, with a clear focus on the east of the city where population-driven demand will be greatest and where no pipeline provision currently exists. Any new 3G pitches should be multi-marked to accommodate all football formats and should be constructed to World Rugby Regulation 22 standards wherever feasible, to serve both football and rugby union. All new and existing pitches should have formal community use agreements, robust sinking funds for carpet replacement, and the operational sustainability of each site should be secured before development proceeds.

### 3G AGP Recommendations

1. Ensure that any new 3G pitches are constructed to meet NGB compliant dimensions that are appropriate for that sport, format of play and the appropriate quality performance standards that meet the performance testing criteria.
2. Protect the existing stock of 3G pitches.
3. Retain all certified 3G pitches on the respective sporting registers and ensure certification of each is renewed through performance standard testing.
4. Maximise use of capacity where available at weekends to accommodate match play, to reduce grass pitch shortfalls.
5. Ensure that any new 3G pitches have community use agreements in place. Where current sites have 3G pitch provision ensure formal community use agreements are in place. Priority sites for community use agreements are St Mary's School Sports Ground and The Perse Upper School.
6. Ensure all 3G pitch providers put in place a sinking fund to meet the cost of carpet and sports lighting replacement/refurbishment to ensure long-term pitch sustainability.
7. Encourage increased match play on 3G AGPs for football by providing multi line-marking solutions to allow for match-play across all formats of football (5v5, 7v7, 9v9 and 11v11). This will enable significant levels of match-play to be transferred from grass to 3G, particularly mini soccer and Youth 9v9, this will help to alleviate over play of existing grass pitches and allow for the grass pitches where transfer of play occurs to be reconfigured for alternative football play if necessary and ensure that 3G pitches remain suitable to accommodate such demand through appropriate 3G AGP Registration. Provision of a 3G AGP at North Cambridge Academy would reduce overplay of the natural grass pitches on site.
8. There is a need for an additional 8 x 3G AGPs to meet existing and future demand by 2045. The development of additional provision at North Cambridge Academy, St John's College and Eddington Sports Hub should be supported, with a focus on providing secured community use. Further site identification should be focussed in the East sub area.

## 5. Cricket – City of Cambridge

- 5.1. To help develop the recommendations/actions and to understand their potential impact, several relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues in this section, resulting in sport specific recommendations.

### Scenario 7 – Exploring the growth in women and girl’s cricket

- 5.2. Since 2021, Cambridgeshire Cricket (CC) has seen a 10 fold team increase in the junior girls’ game and a 4 fold increase in the senior women’s game across Greater Cambridgeshire. There is also a predicted 75% growth in girl’s teams and 37% growth in women’s teams over the next 2 years to 2028.
- 5.3. Table 19 shows the current and predicted future number of female teams in the City of Cambridge based on the Greater Cambridge growth rates.

**Table 19: Cricket - Growth of the Female Game**

Age Category	Current Team No.	Predicted Team No.
Junior Girls	1	2
Senior Women	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>

- 5.4. Table 19 suggests that based on the current demand for women and girls’ cricket in the City of Cambridge, 2 additional teams will be added; 1 junior and 1 senior. These are likely to be generated by City of Cambridge CC (currently the only club with female teams) which is based in the east sub area and utilise Hills Road Sixth Form College.
- 5.5. The PPOSS assumes that each senior team will create demand for 10 matches per season (MPS), whilst junior teams will generate 8 MPS of demand.
- 5.6. Although, there is 3 MPS of available capacity at Hills Road Sixth Form College, the site does not offer any security of tenure for the club, therefore they may be forced to relocate at short notice, and therefore any spare capacity cannot be considered.

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- 5.7. The only site offering security of tenure for community cricket clubs in the study area is Parkers Piece, which due to high demand, is currently overplayed by 3 MPS. If additional female growth was added, the deficit of available, secure sites would increase to -21 MPS by 2028.
- 5.8. Although growth of the female game will be minimal over the next two years, this is a result of the currently low team numbers. Based on current trends, demand for women and girls' provision will continue to grow, creating significant increases in team numbers by 2045.
- 5.9. Not only will this increase the shortfall of available, secure grass wickets in the study area, but will also further highlight the need for investment into female appropriate clubhouse and ancillary facilities. Without appropriate changing facilities, that allow for separate, secure, female spaces and meet safeguarding regulations, any growth in the female game will not be sustainable.

**Key outcome:** Predicted growth of 2 additional female teams by 2028 is modest in absolute terms, but would deepen the deficit of secure provision to -21 MPS at Parkers Piece. The only secured site is already overplayed

**Implications for provision:** Growth of the female game is structurally constrained by the lack of secured sites with appropriate ancillary facilities; female-appropriate changing provision is absent at most venues.

**Strategic priority:** Invest in female-appropriate ancillary facilities alongside any new or improved cricket provision; without this, growth will not be sustainable.

### Scenario 8 – Securing community use of education sites

- 5.10. Parkers Piece is currently the only cricket site in the study area that is not education owned and offers security of tenure for community cricket clubs. However, additional cricket provision is being developed at Darwin Green, which will be local authority owned and available for community use.
- 5.11. All remaining cricket facility provision is owned either by independent schools or university colleges, of which there are 219 grass wickets. Based on a good quality wicket providing 5 MPS of capacity and a standard quality wicket providing 4 MPS, education owned sites could provide 1,068 MPS. However, these sites offer no security of tenure and often lie dormant during peak hours, instead of catering for demand from community cricket clubs.

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5.12. Cambridgeshire Cricket have identified 2 priorities for securing community use on education sites in the City of Cambridge:

- Providing community clubs with opportunities to establish long-term security of tenure on university college grounds and other education sites
- Developing agreements with independent schools to provide access to multi-square grounds and practice facilities to support talent pathway programmes and cricket festivals.

5.13. Although they do not offer security of tenure, there are a number of college sites that are currently used to support community cricket and therefore should be priorities for the development of community use agreements. These are identified in Table 20.

**Table 20: University college sites currently supporting community use**

Site	Team Use	Demand (MPS)	Grass Wickets	Supply (MPS)	Capacity Position (MPS)
Fitzwilliam College	Cambridge NCI CC Champion of the Thames Qualcomm Remnants CC University Cams over 50s	59	10	50	-9
Trinity Hall	Cam Kerala CC	10	8	40	30
Emanuel College	Serendib CC	10	6	30	20
Kings and Selwyn College	Madingley CC Sharks CC University	30	10	50	20
Queens and Robinson College	Camden CC Arm Ltd CC Shark CC	16	11	55	39
Fenners Cricket Ground	County Youth and Women's Cricket	12	14	70	58

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Site	Team Use	Demand (MPS)	Grass Wickets	Supply (MPS)	Capacity Position (MPS)
Hills Road Sixth Form College	City of Cambridge CC	52	11	55	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>189</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>161</b>

- 5.14. Table 20 shows that of the education-owned sites that are currently used by the community, provide 350 MPS of capacity, whilst catering for 189 MPS of demand. This results in approximately 161 MPS of spare capacity. However, due to the unsecured nature of these sites, community access to them could be lost without notice, resulting in the displacement of 189 MPS of demand from community clubs.
- 5.15. Table 21 shows other university college sites, that do not currently cater for any community use.

**Table 21: University college sites with no community use**

Site	Grass Wickets	Supply (MPS)
Jesus College	6	30
Churchill College	7	35
Downing College Sports Ground	8	40
Pembroke College	10	50
Gonville and Caius Sports Ground	10	50
St Johns College	22	88
Trinity College Old Field	18	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>383</b>

- 5.16. If access to sites in Table 21 was secured, an additional 383 MPS of capacity would be made available, long-term, to community clubs in the City of Cambridge.

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- 5.17. There are a number of community cricket clubs in Greater Cambridge that currently 'nomadic' and do not have access to home ground that offers long term security of tenure. Which is a major barrier in the development and growth of clubs. By providing secure access to university college sites, community clubs will be given the opportunity to grow sustainably into inclusive clubs offering playing opportunities for men, women, girls and boys.
- 5.18. However, as well as securing access to playing facilities; access to appropriate ancillary provision and ensuring the affordability of facility hire will remain key issues for many community clubs in the utilisation of university college sites. The development of community use agreements that take into consideration these key issues is vital in ensuring the sustainability of any agreements between clubs and education sites.
- 5.19. Cambridgeshire Cricket (CC) also identify the need to secure access to independent school facilities, particularly those with multi-square sites, to help facilitate talent pathways and multi-game festivals, as well as expand the state school programme. CC is currently in discussions with:
- The Leys School (Latham Road Ground)
  - The Perse Prep School
  - The Perse Upper School
- 5.20. Although some county cricket usage is currently supported by these sites, barriers such as covenants, planning restrictions and the cost of hire are major limiting factors in securing further use by community clubs and county cricket initiatives.

**Key outcome:** Education-owned sites currently used informally by the community provide 350 MPS of capacity meeting 189 MPS of demand. A further 383 MPS is locked in sites with no community use at all. Loss of informal access would displace 189 MPS overnight

**Implications for provision:** Nomadic clubs cannot grow sustainably without a secure home ground. Cambridgeshire Cricket's discussions with The Leys School and the Perse schools need to progress; affordability and ancillary provision must be built into any agreement

**Strategic priority:** Negotiate and formalise community use agreements with university colleges and independent schools as the single most important short-term action for cricket in the city.

**Scenario 9 – Creating additional capacity through Non-Turf Pitches (NTPs)**

- 5.21. Although grass wickets are the preferred surface for cricket, they have a limited carrying capacity and require a high level of expertise to prepare and maintain them. Although not necessarily appropriate for competitive senior demand, Non-Turf Pitches (NTPs) offer a consistency of bounce that suits the junior game, reduces preparation and maintenance time and offer significantly more capacity than grass wickets.
- 5.22. Table 22 shows the sites with NTPs in the City of Cambridge. A good or standard quality NTP can hold 60 MPS, whilst a poor quality NTP is not suitable for match play and is therefore assigned 0 MPS.

**Table 22: Non-Turf Pitches (NTPs) in the City of Cambridge**

Site	Ownership	Security of Tenure	NTPs	Quality	Supply (MPS)
Storeys Field	Trust	Secure	1	Poor (Condemned)	0
Netherall Academy	Academy	Unsecure	1	Standard	60
St Faiths School	Independent School	Unavailable	1	Standard	60
North Cambridge Academy	Academy	Unsecure	1	Poor	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>4</b>		<b>120</b>

- 5.23. There are currently 4 NTPs in the City of Cambridge, however only 2 of these are of an adequate quality to support any demand. The NTP at Storeys Field (Eddington) is condemned and has never been used by any community cricket club; whilst provision at North Cambridge Academy is of poor quality and not suitable for use outside of curriculum time.
- 5.24. Although the NTP at St Faiths School could potentially provide 60 MPS of capacity, it is currently unavailable for community use. Netherall School has previously been used as a training and match play venue for clubs in the south and east sub areas, however it does not currently support any community demand. If brought back into use, an additional 60 MPS could be made available for junior cricket.

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- 5.25. As stated in Scenario 10, there are proposals in place which involve the loss of the NTP at Storeys Field. Despite there being a need for accessible cricket facilities in the area, the site is only appropriate for junior cricket and is not currently used by any club. There is a new cricket facility at Darwin Green, which is located 1km away, owned by the local authority where junior cricket facilities could be relocated. If relocated junior provision included an NTP, 60 MPS of additional, accessible provision would be added to the study area.
- 5.26. Although the development of additional NTP wickets should be considered on sites that are available to the community and offer security of tenure for clubs, there is theoretically sufficient grass provision to meet all demand in the City of Cambridge. The key issue is that a significant amount of it is not currently accessible to the community, suggesting that the main priority should be the development of community use agreements.
- 5.27. Despite being cost effective in terms of initial capital investment and maintenance costs, NTPs require planning permission and may be restricted by other local restrictions.

**Key outcome:** Only 2 of the city's 4 NTPs are of adequate quality; 1 is condemned and 1 is unavailable. Bringing Netherall School's NTP back into community use could add 60 MPS of junior capacity

**Implications for provision:** NTPs offer a cost-effective route to junior capacity but the fundamental problem is lack of accessible, secure provision — not aggregate quantity of wickets

**Strategic priority:** Develop NTPs where security of tenure and site access can be assured; do not rely on them as the primary solution to the structural access deficit.

### Scenario 10 – Mitigation for the loss of Storey's Field, Eddington

- 5.28. There is an ongoing planning application (25/04742/REM), impacting sport and leisure provision in Eddington. The application references two separate sites; Storey's Field (Eddington Community Park) and Eddington Avenue Recreation Ground.
- 5.29. Currently, there is an NTP junior cricket facility at Storey's Field, however the wicket is of poor quality and has been condemned by Cambridge City Council due to the outfield being dangerous. The site does not cater any community cricket demand.

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- 5.30. Alongside the development of a community garden, table tennis, basketball and play space; proposals for the site include retaining the central grass playing field (30m radius) and the NTP wicket.
- 5.31. However, the ECB and Sport England guidelines suggest a minimum boundary distance of 37.5m, meaning that the field will only be suitable for U9 soft ball cricket. This would result in the site becoming unusable after the age of 9. The ECB do not recommend the provision of junior cricket pitches in isolation due to their restrictive nature and suggest that any development of junior focussed facilities should be co-located with adult cricket to ensure that additional play opportunities are maximised.
- 5.32. Greater Cambridge planning suggests that due to its restrictive capacity and the associated lack of demand, the existing cricket pitch no longer forms part of the proposed sports offer for Phase 1 of North West Cambridge. An enhanced formal sports offer is now proposed to be delivered at Eddington Avenue Recreation Ground and will include:
- 3x multi-use courts (tennis, netball and pickleball) with sports lighting
  - 2x 9v9 3G artificial grass pitches with sports lighting.
  - Sports pavilion
  - Play provision
- 5.33. New sport and leisure facilities, including sports pavilion, 3x tennis courts, MUGA and 5x grass wicket cricket pitch has recently been developed at Darwin Green. Although the site is located in the North sub area, it is located approximately 1km away from the existing provision at Storey's Field in West and Central sub area and is easily accessible for residents of both areas. Both sites could be considered collectively as part of the wider North West Cambridge area.
- 5.34. Re-provision of the existing junior NTP, from Storey's Field to Darwin Green would:
- Create additional high-quality, accessible capacity for cricket
  - Allow for the co-location of junior and senior cricket facilities;
  - Have no impact on existing clubs;
  - Promote progression from junior to senior cricket;
  - Maximise cricketing play opportunities;
  - Provide the opportunity to deliver alternative sport and play provision on the condemned cricket facility at Storey's Field.

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- 5.35. Mitigation for the loss of Storey's Field cricket facilities, by delivering new provision at Darwin Green should be considered. Delivery of an NTP wicket would reduce maintenance responsibility, lower costs and provide safe and sustainable junior match play and senior training opportunities.

**Key outcome:** The condemned NTP at Storey's Field serves no current community demand. Retaining a cricket facility on the restricted site (30m radius, only suitable to age 9) would isolate junior cricket from senior facilities, contrary to ECB guidance

**Implications for provision:** Re-provision of the NTP at Darwin Green (1km away, local authority-owned) would create accessible, co-located junior and senior cricket and maximise the new site's potential.

**Strategic priority:** Relocate the junior NTP from Storey's Field to Darwin Green; this is the preferred mitigation and aligns with ECB co-location principles.

### Cricket Summary

- 5.36. Cricket provision in the City of Cambridge is structurally insecure. Although sufficient grass wickets exist in theory, the overwhelming majority are held by the University of Cambridge or independent schools and offer no security of tenure for community clubs. The immediate strategic priority is to negotiate and formalise community use agreements with university colleges and independent schools, at affordable rates, to give existing clubs long-term stability and create a platform from which nomadic clubs can establish secure home bases and develop women's and junior sections. Cambridgeshire Cricket's ongoing discussions with The Leys School, The Perse Prep and The Perse Upper School should be progressed, and the use of Fenners and other college grounds for county pathway and festival activity should be formalised.
- 5.37. Population growth will generate demand for additional cricket facilities by 2045, and delivery should be planned in connection with major housing developments. The condemned NTP at Storey's Field, Eddington should be re-provided at Darwin Green, enabling co-location of junior and senior cricket and maximising the opportunity presented by the new local authority-owned site. Investment in female-appropriate ancillary provision — secure, separate changing facilities — is a prerequisite for the sustainable growth of the women's and girls' game and should be embedded in any improvement or new-build programme.

### Cricket Recommendations

1. As part of the Local Plan and ongoing planning policy, there is a need to protect all sites designated as cricket playing fields.
2. Relocate the condemned junior NTP wicket at Storey's Field (Eddington) to Darwin Green.
3. Secure increased access and community use agreements at university colleges, independent schools and academies for community clubs at an affordable price.
4. An equivalent of a further 4 new cricket facilities will be required by 2045
5. Work with Cambridge City Junior Cricket club to provide net facilities at Hills Road Sixth Form College.
6. Investment in ancillary provision to ensure their suitability to cater for women and girls.
7. Consider the development and usage of NTPs to support junior demand wherever possible.
8. Any future loss of facilities or non turf pitches will require mitigation
9. Ensure that all nomadic clubs are supported in establishing secure 'home' bases to help them develop and add women's and girls' teams to their clubs

## 6. Rugby Union – City of Cambridge

6.1 To help develop the recommendations/actions and to understand their potential impact, relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues in this section, resulting in sport specific recommendations.

### Scenario 11 – The impact of grass pitch quality improvements

6.2 This scenario will explore the impact of grass pitch quality improvements at both Cambridge RUFC and Cantabrigians RUFC. Table 23 provides an overview of pitch capacity based on drainage and maintenance scores.

**Table 23: Match Equivalent Calculation for Rugby Pitches.**

Drainage	Maintenance		
	Poor (M0)	Standard (M1)	Good (M2)
Natural Inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2
Natural Adequate (D1)	1.5	2	3
Pipe Drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25
Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2	3	3.5

6.3 Table 24 shows the current pitch quality scores, compared with the pitch capacity if all pitches were improved to D2/M2.

**Table 24: Community sites and individual pitch capacity**

Site Name	Pitch	Quality Score	Pitch Capacity	Overall capacity of site	Improved Quality Score	Improved Pitch Capacity	Improved Overall capacity of site
Cambridge RUFC	Pitch 1	D2/M1	2.5	13	D2/M2	3.25	19.5
Cambridge RUFC	Pitch 2 (Training Pitch Floodlit)	D2/M1	2.5		D2/M2	3.25	

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Site Name	Pitch	Quality Score	Pitch Capacity	Overall capacity of site	Improved Quality Score	Improved Pitch Capacity	Improved Overall capacity of site
Cambridge RUFC	Pitch 3	D1/M1	2	4	D2/M2	3.25	6.5
Cambridge RUFC	Pitch 4 (Partially floodlit)	D1/M1	2		D2/M2	3.25	
Cambridge RUFC	Pitch 5	D1/M1	2		D2/M2	3.25	
Cambridge RUFC	Pitch 6	D1/M1	2		D2/M2	3.25	
Cantabrigians RUFC	Pitch 1 (Partially Floodlit)	D1/M1	2		D2/M2	3.25	
Cantabrigians RUFC	Pitch 2	D1/M1	2		D2/M2	3.25	

- 6.4 By improving pitch quality, the total site capacity of Cambridge RUFC is increased from 13 MES to 19.5 MES, whilst Cantabrigians RUFC will see an improvement of 2.5 MES per week, raising capacity to 6.5 MES.
- 6.5 Based on current demand, there is a deficit in provision of -4.25 MES at Cambridge RUFC and a shortfall of -3.5 MES at Cantabrigians RUFC. Table 25 highlights how improved drainage and maintenance scores would impact the training and match play capacity of each site.

**Table 25: Cambridge Rugby Club and Cantabrigians Rugby Club – Improved Pitch Quality Capacity**

Club	Demand Match Equivalent Sessions Training Midweek per Week	Demand Match and Training Equivalent Sessions Weekends Per Week	Total Demand Match Equivalent Sessions per Week	Supply Match and Training Equivalent Sessions per Week	Overplay Match and Training Equivalent Sessions per Week
Cambridge Rugby Club	8.50	8.75	17.25	19.5	2.25
Cantabrigians Rugby Club	6	1.5	7.5	6.5	-1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14.50</b>	<b>10.25</b>	<b>24.75</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1.25</b>

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- 6.6 If all pitches were improved to D2/M2, the current deficit in provision at Cambridge RUFC would be lost and 2.25 MES of spare weekly capacity would be created. However, although this will reduce overplay, no new peak time capacity will be created.
- 6.7 Cantabrigians RUFC will see a reduction in overplay on site from -3.5 MES to -1 MES per week.
- 6.8 Table 25 identifies how pitch quality improvements will impact on the current and future capacity for match play and training sessions until 2045 across the City of Cambridge based on an increased population up to 2045 from new housing developments.

**Table 26: Current and Future Demand to 2045 For Cambridge City Rugby (Match Equivalent Sessions)**

	(A) Current Demand Match Equivalent Sessions (2024/25)	(B) Improved Weekly Capacity	(C) Current Capacity Position (2024/25) = (B – A)	(D) Participation Increase	Future Capacity Position
Weekly Midweek Training Equivalent Sessions floodlit pitches.	14.50	9.75	-4.75	5	-9.75
Weekly Weekend Match Equivalent sessions	10.25	16.25	6	5.75	0.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.75</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1.25</b>	<b>10.75</b>	<b>-9.5</b>

- 6.9 The assessment report identified a current city-wide deficit of -8 MES for training, increasing to -13 by 2045. However, Table 25 shows that pitch quality improvements would reduce the current and future training deficits to -4.75 MES and -9.75 MES respectively.
- 6.10 When considering weekend match play, the assessment report found there was 0.25 MES of spare capacity, which would be lost by 2045 with a match play deficit of -5.5 MES created. If all pitches were improved to D2/M2, the current spare capacity would increase to 6 MES and 0.25 MES of capacity would be retained by 2045.

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- 6.11 Although pitch quality improvements will have a positive impact on reducing the current shortfalls of provision, it does not address peak time capacity issues and therefore, a holistic approach to investment should be considered, including grass pitch improvements, floodlight installation as well as grass and 3G pitch development.
- 6.12 It should be a priority for all club sites to undertake pitch quality improvements wherever possible.

**Key outcome:** Improving all pitches at Cambridge RUFC and Cantabrigians RUFC to D2/M2 standard would eliminate the current deficit at Cambridge RUFC (creating 2.25 MES spare capacity) and reduce overplay at Cantabrigians from -3.5 to -1 MES. Looking to 2045, a training deficit of -9.75 MES and a near-zero match play balance would remain even with improvements in place

**Implications for provision:** Quality improvements are necessary but insufficient. Floodlit mid-week training remains the critical gap, and Cantabrigians RUFC faces the additional complication of losing its Hills Road site from 2029 due to East West Rail works

**Strategic priority:** Progress pitch improvements immediately, plan holistically for floodlighting investment, and urgently identify and develop a new permanent site for Cantabrigians RUFC ahead of the 2029 closure.

### Rugby Union Additional Information

- 6.13 As part of ongoing works by East West Rail, rugby union pitch provision at Hills Road Sixth Form College, where Cantabrigians RUFC is based, will be lost from 2029 for approximately 8 years. Once works are finished, the site will be smaller and offer less available pitch space than is currently on offer.
- 6.14 East West Rail has offered to fund the permanent relocation of Cantabrigians RUFC to an alternative site within the City of Cambridge, which will include land purchase, pitch development, sports lighting installation and ancillary provision including 4-6 changing rooms and social space.
- 6.15 Although a new site is yet to be identified, it is imperative that all pitch and ancillary works are completed in advance of the closure of the current site to ensure there is continuity of provision and no demand is displaced without alternative facilities in place.

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- 6.16 All pitch development should be to a high standard (D2/M2) and facilities should allow the club to establish themselves quickly and provide them with a base from which they have opportunities to grow. All ancillary provision should meet RFU and Sport England guidelines and be appropriate to cater for the women and girls' game.

#### Rugby Union Summary

- 6.17 Rugby union in the City of Cambridge operates with a notable training deficit, particularly for floodlit mid-week sessions, and this shortfall will worsen as population grows toward 2045. Pitch quality improvements at Cambridge RUFC and Cantabrigians RUFC, targeting drainage and maintenance standards, should be progressed as a priority to reduce overplay and increase weekly carrying capacity. Alongside surface improvements, investment in floodlighting should be considered holistically, as lighting provision is integral to addressing the mid-week training gap.
- 6.18 The imminent loss of Cantabrigians RUFC's site at Hills Road Sixth Form College, due to East West Rail works from 2029, requires urgent action. A new permanent site must be identified, fully developed to a high standard, and brought into use ahead of the closure of the existing facility to ensure uninterrupted provision. The new site should include a minimum of two quality pitches, appropriate ancillary facilities meeting RFU guidelines, and provision suitable for the women's and girls' game. Separately, the Council should work with Cambridge University, St Mary's School and Homerton College to improve community club access to WR22-compliant 3G AGPs, and plan for the delivery of new pitches to serve growth areas in the north and east of the city.

#### Rugby Union Recommendations

1. Work with Cambridge Rugby Club and Cantabrigians Rugby Club to review quality, drainage, and maintenance issues, reduce overplay and provide increased capacity for midweek training and match and training at weekends.
2. Work with Cantabrigians Rugby Club to identify a new site, develop new pitch and ancillary facilities and ensure the continuity of rugby union provision.
3. Cambridge City Council to consider development of a minimum 2 pitch site providing good quality rugby pitches to meet future population demands to 2045.

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4. City of Cambridge, RFU, University of Cambridge, St Mary's School and Homerton College, Cambridge Rugby Club and Cantabrigians Rugby Club to work together to open up access for the existing community club to existing and future World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant AGPs in the City of Cambridge.
5. Protect the existing supply of grass and rugby compliant AGP provision, in line with Sport England's Playing Field Policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF

## 7. Hockey – City of Cambridge

7.1 To help develop the recommendations/actions and to understand their potential impact, several relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues in this section, resulting in sport specific recommendations.

### Scenario 12 - Securing community use of education sites

7.2 The assessment report for this PPOSS found that there are 13 pitches, across 10 sites in the City of Cambridge that can be used for hockey. Although 12 of these are currently available for community use (The Perse Prep School is unavailable), only 5 pitches across 3 sites offer any security of tenure for community hockey clubs (Wilberforce Road, St Mary’s and Homerton College and Long Road Sixth Form College).

7.3 Despite no formal community use agreements being in place, all other hockey sites cater for a significant amount of community demand. Without security of tenure, access to pitch provision could be removed or restricted at short notice or without prior warning, resulting in the displacement of hockey demand.

7.4 Table 27 shows the sites that are currently available for use by community clubs, but do not offer any security of tenure.

**Table 27: Unsecure Sites Currently Used for Community Hockey**

Playing Pitch Sites – Currently Providing Community Use for Hockey	Sub Area	Ownership and Use	No of AGPS	Sports Lighting	Mid-week supply (Peak hours)	Mid-week Training Demand	Weekend Supply (Peak hours)	Weekend Match Play/ Training Demand
St Catherine’s College CB3 9JR	West Central	Higher Education – unsecured community use	1	No	0	0	8	10

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<b>Playing Pitch Sites – Currently Providing Community Use for Hockey</b>	<b>Sub Area</b>	<b>Ownership and Use</b>	<b>No of AGPS</b>	<b>Sports Lighting</b>	<b>Mid-week supply (Peak hours)</b>	<b>Mid-week Training Demand</b>	<b>Weekend Supply (Peak hours)</b>	<b>Weekend Match Play/ Training Demand</b>
St Johns College CB3 9AA	West Central	Higher Education – Unsecured community use.	1	Yes	18	3	8	2
Stephen Perse Foundation Sports Ground CB2 7EJ	South	Education – Unsecured community use	1	No	0	0	8	2
The Leys School, Latham Road Sports Field CB2 7EG	South	Education – unsecured community use	1	No	0	0	8	15
The Leys School Sports Complex CB2 7AD	South	Education – Unsecured community use	1	Yes	18	0	8	0
The Perse Upper School CB2 8QF	South	Education – Unsecured community use	2	No	0	0	16	0

7.5 Table 26 shows that if access to unsecure hockey pitches was lost, 36 hours of mid-week training supply would be removed from the study area, potentially displacing 3 hours of demand from Cambridge City Juniors.

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- 7.6 When considering match play, 56 hours of weekend availability would be lost from the supply, impacting 29 hours of match play demand from community clubs.
- 7.7 If access to any pitch currently used to meet hockey demand is lost, it will have a hugely negative impact on one or multiple clubs in the City of Cambridge. There is no capacity on other secure provision in the study area. Also, the significant shortfall of 3G AGPs in the study area, increases demand for sand-based AGPs from community football clubs and results in accessibility challenges for hockey clubs in accessing appropriate surfaces.
- 7.8 Securing long-term community use agreements with set times and availability for hockey clubs is vital in ensuring that clubs can cater to the demand of their membership, to reduce the potential for current shortfalls of hockey to worsen, and to ensure that hockey clubs in the City of Cambridge are not displaced.

**Key outcome:** Of 13 hockey pitches in the city, only 5 across 3 sites offer any security of tenure. If unsecured education sites were lost, 36 hours of mid-week supply and 56 hours of weekend supply would be removed, impacting clubs with no alternative provision available

**Implications for provision:** The majority of hockey activity in Cambridge depends on informal arrangements that could be lost with little warning.

**Strategic priority:** Securing formal, long-term community use agreements — particularly at St Catherine's College, The Leys School and Stephen Perse Foundation — is the single most urgent strategic action for hockey

**Scenario 13 - The installation of sports lighting on currently unlit sites**

7.9 Table 28 identifies the hockey pitch sites in the City of Cambridge, that do not have any sports lighting provision and therefore cannot cater for any mid-week training demand from hockey or football clubs throughout winter.

**Table 28: Hockey sites with no sports lighting**

<b>Playing Pitch Sites – Currently Providing Community Use for Hockey</b>	<b>Sub Area</b>	<b>Ownership and Use</b>	<b>No of AGPS</b>	<b>Sports Lighting</b>
St Catherine’s College CB3 9JR	West Central	Higher Education – unsecured	1	No
Stephen Perse Foundation Sports Ground CB2 7EJ	South	Education – Unsecured	1	No
The Leys School, Latham Road Sports Field CB2 7EG	South	Education – unsecured	1	No
The Perse Upper School CB2 8QF	South	Education – Unsecured	1	No
The Perse Upper School CB2 8QF	South	Education – Unsecured	1	No
The Perse Prep School CB2 8EX	South	Education – Unsecured	1	No

7.10 A full size pitch with sports lighting can provide 34 hours per week of peak time capacity, however because of its limitations, the sites in Table 27 can only offer 16; 8 hours on Saturdays and 8 on Sundays. As well as limiting opportunities for community sports clubs, lack of sports lighting also has a significant impact on its financial sustainability.

7.11 Although the assessment report identified that there is currently adequate provision to meet training demand, St John’s College does not offer any security of tenure and access to pitches with sports lighting will become more challenging with future population growth and increases in demand.

7.12 If sports lighting was installed at all sites in Table 27, an additional 108 hours of mid-week training capacity would be added to the supply of sand-based AGPs in the City of Cambridge.

7.13 However, currently only St Catherines College, Stephen Perse Foundation Sports Ground and The Lays School, Latham Road offer any community use and none of the sites offer any security of tenure. Although the installation of sports lighting should be considered at all sites currently offering community access, it should be done alongside the development of secure community use agreements that provide long term guaranteed access to community hockey clubs.

**Key outcome:** Six hockey sites have no sports lighting, restricting them to weekend-only use. Installing lighting at all six would add 108 hours of mid-week training capacity

**Implications for provision:** None of the unlit sites offer security of tenure; lighting investment without concurrent tenure agreements would be financially unsustainable and could still be withdrawn

**Strategic priority:** Pursue lighting installation only alongside, not separately from, the securing of formal community use agreements

**Scenario 14 - The impact of the increased growth of junior participation in Hockey**

7.14 The assessment report used team generation rates and Sport England’s Playing Pitch Calculator to predict the future demand for hockey to 2045. However, due to successful promotion of the sport, increased participation pathways and elite success, growth in junior participation is predicted to grow significantly quicker. This scenario looks at the impact of a 20% growth in boys 11-13, girls 11-13 and mixed 5-10 year old membership.

**Table 29: 20% increase in junior hockey membership**

Sport and Age Groups	No. of members	20% growth	Projected number of members
Hockey Junior Boys (11-13yrs)	100	20	120
Hockey Junior Girls (11-13yrs)	141	28	169
Hockey Mixed (5-10yrs)	285	57	342
<b>Total</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>631</b>

7.15 The increased growth in junior hockey will lead to 105 additional members, creating a total junior membership of 631.

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- 7.16 As previously identified in the strategy and assessment reports, although theoretically there is currently adequate capacity for training and match play, if unsecure sites in the study area are lost, there will be shortfall of provision and access to appropriate facilities at peak times is challenging.
- 7.17 The projected increase in junior participation will put further strain on the facility stock unless sports lighting is installed at additional sites and further community use agreements are secured at education sites with hockey pitches.

**Key outcome:** A 20% increase in junior membership (105 additional members) would add further strain to an already fragile facility stock, particularly if unsecured sites are lost

**Implications for provision:** Junior growth is not supportable under current tenure arrangements; additional secure capacity and lighting are prerequisites

**Strategic priority:** Tie infrastructure investment to junior development planning; growth ambitions should not outpace the secured facility base

### Scenario 15 - The impact of imported demand leaving the study area

- 7.18 Royston Hockey Club are officially a North Hertfordshire club; however, they utilise St Catherine's College pitch for all of their weekend match play demand. The assessment report attributed 2.5 hours per week of match play demand at St Catherine's to the club and they train at St Mary's and Homerton College for 3 hours per week on a Wednesday evening.
- 7.19 The North Herts PPOSS identifies the need to provide additional hockey AGP provision at Royston Heath, which will allow Royston Hockey Club to return to the study area. If this is the case, additional capacity will be created at both St Catherine's College and St Mary's and Homerton College. Although this may create opportunities for the growth of other hockey clubs, the financial sustainability of both sites will be impacted.

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- 7.20 Whilst the club remain in the City of Cambridge, it should still be a priority to secure a long term community use agreement at St Catherine's College to ensure the future sustainability of the club.

**Key outcome:** Royston Hockey Club (a North Hertfordshire club) currently uses St Catherine's College and St Mary's and Homerton College. If North Herts delivers its own provision at Royston Heath, this demand will leave, freeing capacity but potentially undermining the financial viability of those sites

**Implications for provision:** The departure of imported demand creates both an opportunity (capacity for Cambridge clubs) and a financial risk (reduced income for operators)

**Strategic priority:** Regardless of Royston HC's future plans, secure a long-term community use agreement at St Catherine's College now to protect Cambridge clubs and site sustainability.

### Hockey Summary

- 7.21 Hockey in the City of Cambridge is underpinned almost entirely by unsecured access to education and university college pitches. While sufficient pitch capacity exists on paper, the absence of formal tenure means this provision is fragile and could be reduced or withdrawn without notice, leaving clubs without adequate facilities. Securing long-term community use agreements — particularly at St Catherine's College, The Leys School and the Stephen Perse Foundation — is the single most important strategic action, and should be pursued as a matter of urgency. Investment in community-accessible ancillary provision at St Catherine's and St John's College should accompany any agreement to create fit-for-purpose venues for club development.
- 7.22 Sports lighting is a critical gap across a number of hockey sites, limiting mid-week use and reducing the financial sustainability of those facilities. Any programme of lighting installation should be tied to the concurrent securing of formal tenure. Looking ahead to 2045, population growth from housing development will generate demand for additional AGP provision. Developer contributions should be directed towards delivering new floodlit AGPs with clubhouse facilities in the Cambridge City area, and all future provision should be designed and protected in the Local Plan to serve the long-term needs of the hockey community.

### Hockey Recommendations

1. As part of the Local Plan and ongoing planning policy, there is a need to protect all sites designated as hockey playing fields (AGPs).
2. Provide 1 AGP on-site from developer contributions and consider appropriate sites to provide the pooled off-site contributions to 2045 for 2 additional new AGPs with sports lighting, clubhouse (Changing and social facilities) in the Cambridge City area.
3. Explore the development of sports lighting on currently un-lit hockey pitches wherever possible.
4. Consider investment in community accessible ancillary provision at St Catherine's College and St John's College.
5. Ensure a sink fund is in place for long-term sustainability of any new AGPs in the future
6. Secure community use agreements at all currently unsecure pitches, primarily at university college sites.



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# South Cambridgeshire District

## 8. **Headline findings of the evidence base for each sport**

- 8.1. The sport by sport summaries below highlight the quantitative and qualitative findings for the main pitch sports across Greater Cambridge generated by the Stage C assessment. Further site-specific findings are identified in the individual sections of this report.

### **Grass Football Pitches**

- 8.2. South Cambridgeshire has a significant and varied grass football network. In the 2024/25 season, 77 playing fields provided 213 marked natural grass pitches available for secured and unsecured community use. There are 568 registered affiliated teams across the district, spanning all age groups and formats from adult 11v11 to mini soccer.
- 8.3. Current need: The current supply and demand analysis identifies capacity deficits on adult 11v11 pitches in the south west and north sub areas, and on 9v9 pitches in those same areas. There is spare capacity on youth 11v11 pitches across all three sub areas and on 9v9 pitches in the south east. Mini soccer formats show no current overplay issues across any sub area.
- 8.4. Future need: The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator identifies a significant requirement for additional pitches to serve new population growth to 2045, including 67 adult 11v11 pitches, 102 youth 11v11 and 9v9 pitches, and 85 mini soccer pitches (7v7 and 5v5).
- 8.5. Overall provision requirement: New grass pitch provision must be planned alongside housing development across all three sub areas to address both existing deficits and the scale of growth anticipated to 2045. Changing facilities will also be required to support this additional pitch provision.

### **3G Artificial Grass Pitches**

- 8.6. South Cambridgeshire has 11 full size 11v11 3G AGPs and 5 small sided AGPs. Three existing full size pitches will require carpet replacement in the short term. There is also one World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant 3G pitch at Shelford RFC.
- 8.7. Current need: Applying the FA's model of 38 teams per full size 3G AGP, the 568 affiliated teams in South Cambridgeshire generate a theoretical requirement for 15 full size 3G AGPs. Against the current provision of 11, there is a current shortfall of 4 full size 3G AGPs.

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- 8.8. Future need and overall provision requirement: Future population growth from new housing development between 2024 and 2045 will generate demand for 15 additional 3G AGPs. Combined with the existing shortfall, a total of 19 new full size 3G AGPs will be required across South Cambridgeshire by 2045.

#### Cricket

- 8.9. South Cambridgeshire has an extensive and well-distributed cricket network. In the 2025 season, 52 sites provided 376 grass wickets and 21 non-turf pitches, all in secured community use. 50 clubs and 185 teams are active across the district, spread across the south west, south east and north sub areas.
- 8.10. Current need: All three sub areas have theoretical spare capacity for match play. However, this spare capacity is not always accessible at peak times, and a number of 'nomadic' clubs are experiencing difficulty securing a home ground. Unlike in the City of Cambridge, all community cricket sites in South Cambridgeshire are secured, which provides a stronger foundation for the sport.
- 8.11. Future need and overall provision requirement: Population growth from new housing development will generate a need for 37 additional cricket squares by 2045. New provision should be integrated into strategic growth sites across the district to ensure cricket can meet both current access challenges and future demand.

#### Rugby Union

- 8.12. In the 2024/25 season, 13 sites across the district provided 20 senior, 3 junior and mini natural grass rugby pitches, together with 2 World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant AGPs. There are 2 community clubs comprising 22 teams, the majority of which are from Shelford Rugby Club.
- 8.13. Current need: Current provision shows 2.5 MES of spare capacity for midweek training, but a deficit of 2.5 MES for weekly match play. This match play shortfall will need to be addressed to allow clubs to fulfil their competitive fixtures without displacement.
- 8.14. Future need and overall provision requirement: Population growth will generate demand for an estimated 8 additional rugby union pitches to 2045. The recent opening of Western Park in the north sub area, providing a senior pitch and a World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant AGP, is a positive step towards meeting this growing demand.

Hockey

- 8.15. Hockey provision in South Cambridgeshire is limited to a single AGP at Northstowe Secondary College, currently used by Huntingdon and Northstowe Ladies Hockey Club. The facility hosts one Saturday match and one midweek training session per week.
- 8.16. Current need and overall provision requirement: The existing facility is currently sufficient to meet both current and future needs to 2045. The priority is to secure long-term community use tenure at Northstowe Secondary College to protect access for the club and to ensure that additional training and match play capacity can be accommodated as the club grows.

## 9. Grass Football Pitches – South Cambridgeshire District

- 9.1. To help develop the recommendations/actions and to understand their potential impact, several relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues in this section, resulting in sport specific recommendations.
- 9.2. It must be noted that all calculations in this document are based on how youth football is currently structured, however from season 2026/2027, a reduced size 3v3 format will be introduced at U7 age groups, and teams will stay at reduced size pitches for longer, meaning that 11v11 football will begin at U14 rather than U13 as is currently the case. This will result in less usage of 11v11 grass pitches and increased demand for 5v5, 7v7 and 9v9 provision

### Scenario 16 – Exploring the impact of growth of the female game

- 9.3. The Football Foundation has identified a minimum growth in the female game of 50% over a 3 year period. As highlighted in Table 30, there are currently 79 female-only teams in South Cambridgeshire.

**Table 30: Current Female Only Football Provision in South Cambridgeshire**

Sub Area	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	9v9	7v7	5v5	Total No. Teams
South West	2	8	5	3	1	19
South East	4	4	3	4	2	17
North	11	15	10	6	1	43
<b>Totals</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>79</b>

- 9.4. Table 31 identifies the number of women’s and girls’ teams per type and sub area if demand was to increase by 50%. All figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Table 31: 50% growth of Female-Only Football Provision in South Cambridgeshire**

Sub Area	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	9v9	7v7	5v5	Total No. Teams
South West	3	12	8	5	2	29

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Sub Area	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	9v9	7v7	5v5	Total No. Teams
South East	6	6	5	6	3	26
North	17	23	15	9	2	65
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>119</b>

- 9.5. There is likely to be an increase of 9 adult female teams across the study area, 1 of which will be in the south west, 2 in the south east and 6 in the north sub area. These new teams will add 4.5 MES of demand for senior grass football pitches in South Cambridgeshire. Although there is currently spare capacity in the south west and south east areas, this will be significantly reduced, whilst the shortfall in the north will be increased to -4 MES.
- 9.6. Youth 11v11 female teams are predicted to increase by 14 teams; 4 in the south west, 2 in the south east and 8 in the north. This will add demand for 7 MES across the study area, eradicating all spare capacity in the south west and south east areas and increasing the deficit of provision in the north sub area.
- 9.7. Youth 9v9 female teams will increase by 3 in south west, 2 in the south east and 5 in north, giving a total growth of 9 new female teams and increasing demand by 4.5 MES. The 3 MES of spare capacity in the south east sub area will be reduced to 2 MES, whilst shortfalls of provision in the south west and north sub areas will be increased to -9.5 MES and 5 MES respectively.
- 9.8. There will be a growth of 9 Mini 7v7 and 5v5 teams across South Cambridgeshire. 3 of these will be in the south west, 3 in the south east and 4 in the north sub area. New mini teams will increase demand for grass pitches by 4.5 MES. Although there is no current overplay, this increase in demand will reduce capacity and put strain on mini pitches at peak times.
- 9.9. The identified growth of 40 female teams over the next 3 years will also impact the capacity position of 3G AGPs. Using the FA's 1:38 model, the 40 new teams will create demand for 1 11v11 equivalent 3G pitches, raising current shortfall to -5 and the future requirement to 20 by 2045.

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**Key outcome:** A 50% increase in female teams (40 additional teams) would add 4.5 MES of senior demand, eradicate spare capacity in the south west and south east, and deepen the north sub-area deficit to -4 MES. Similar pressure applies across youth and mini formats. 3G demand increases by 1 pitch, raising the future deficit to 20 by 2045

**Implications for provision:** The north sub-area, with the greatest concentration of female teams, requires the most immediate response

**Strategic priority:** All new and improved provision must be designed to accommodate women's and girls' football, with female-appropriate facilities as a non-negotiable minimum

### Scenario 17 – Exploring the impact of grass pitch quality improvements on pitch capacity

- 9.10. This scenario explores how pitch capacities will be impacted if all poor quality grass pitches, currently used by community clubs, are improved to a good quality. Tables 32 – 36 shows changes in capacity for each poor quality pitch by pitch type.

**Table 32: Grass Pitch Improvements – Adult 11v11 Capacity Analysis**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES	Improved Pitch Capacity - MES	Improved Weekly Balance - MES	Improved Peak Period MES
Bourne Jubilee Playing Fields	South West	Secured	1	1	0	1	1	3	3	1
Shepreth Recreation Ground	South West	Secured	1	1	0	1	1	3	3	1

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Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES	Improved Pitch Capacity - MES	Improved Weekly Balance - MES	Improved Peak Period MES
Fen Drayton Recreation Ground	North	Secured	2	2	1.5	0.5	0.5	6	4.5	0.5

9.11. Table 33 shows that although pitch improvements to poor quality Adult 11v11 pitches would increase the weekly carrying capacity, there would be no impact to peak time capacity.

**Table 33: Grass Pitch Improvements – Youth 11v11 Capacity Analysis**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES	Improved Pitch Capacity - MES	Improved Weekly Balance - MES	Improved Peak Period MES
Gamlingay Village Primary School	South West	Unsecure	1	1	2	-1	No Spare Capacity	4	2	No Spare Capacity

9.12. Table 34 demonstrates that improving the quality of the Youth 11v11 pitch at Gamlingay Village Primary School, the current overplay would be resolved and a weekly balance for 2 MES would be created. However, due to current demand on site, there would remain no spare capacity at peak time.

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**Table 34: Grass Pitch Improvements – 9v9 Capacity Analysis**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES	Improved Pitch Capacity - MES	Improved Weekly Balance - MES	Improved Peak Period MES
West Wickham Recreation Ground	South East	Secure	1	1	0	1	1	4	4	1

9.13. Table 34 shows that undertaking pitch quality improvements at West Wickham Recreation Ground would increase the weekly carrying capacity from 1 MES to 4 MES. However, this would have no impact on the peak time capacity of the pitch, which would remain to 1 MES per week.

**Table 35: Grass Pitch Improvements – Mini 7v7 Capacity Analysis**

Site name	Sub Area	Security of Tenure	No. Pitches	Pitch capacity MES	Pitch demand MES	Balance Weekly MES	Peak period MES	Improved Pitch Capacity - MES	Improved Weekly Balance - MES	Improved Peak Period MES
Stapleford Primary School	South East	Unsecure	1	2	1	1	1	6	5	1
Bar Hill Community Primary School	North	Secured	1	2	4	-2	No Spare Capacity	6	2	No Spare Capacity

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- 9.14. Pitch quality improvements to 7v7 pitches in South Cambridgeshire would remove overplay at Bar Hill Community Primary School and increase the weekly balance to Stapleford Primary. However, as with all other pitch types, there would be no impact to the peak time capacity of the sites.
- 9.15. Pitch quality improvements should be considered at all sites, wherever possible. However, due to their current poor quality and the ability to reduce overplay, priority sites should be:
- Bar Hill Community Primary School
  - Gamlingay Village Primary School.
- 9.16. The assessment report identified a number of other sites, through site assessments and consultation, that suffer from drainage or maintenance issues where pitch improvements should be considered. These are:
- Girton Recreation Ground
  - Barrington Playing Fields
  - Great Chishill Playing Fields
  - Waterbeach Recreation Ground
  - Coton Recreation Ground
  - Balsham Recreation Ground
  - Steeple Morden Recreation Ground
  - Hardwicke Recreation Ground
  - Swavesey Recreation Ground
  - Willingham Recreation Ground
- 9.17. However, if maintenance is to be undertaken on education sites, strict community use agreements should be agreed to ensure that community football clubs are able to benefit from improved grass pitch provision.
- 9.18. Pitch quality improvements will have no impact in creating additional capacity for match play at peak times, and therefore the development of further grass pitch provision is required to cater for all current and future demand.

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- 9.19. Based on predicted population growth through housing development, use of the Playing Pitch Calculator as part of the Stage C Assessment, identified the requirement for an additional 67 adult 11v11 football pitches, 102 youth football pitches and 85 mini soccer grass pitches.

**Key outcome:** Improving poor-quality pitches would increase weekly carrying capacity at several sites but create no additional peak-time capacity anywhere in the district.

**Implications for provision:** Priority sites are Bar Hill Community Primary School and Gamlingay Village Primary School, plus a wider list of parish recreation grounds with drainage and maintenance issues.

**Strategic priority:** Pitch quality improvement is an important but ancillary measure; only new provision can address peak-time deficits.

#### Scenario 18 – The impact of year on year participation growth of over the next 5 years on grass and 3G pitch capacity

- 9.20. The Stage C assessment explored the impact of population growth and housing development to 2045 on grass pitch and 3G AGP capacity. However, the FA predict an average of 3.09% year-on-year growth of affiliated football teams over the next 5 years to 2031. This figure is better aligned to actual growth that has been realised by football clubs nationally. However, the rate of growth varies significantly across all age groups. The predicted rate of growth by age category is:

- Adult Male - -0.61%
- Adult Female - +11.1%
- Youth Boys - +3.97%
- Youth Girls - +15.02%
- Mini Soccer - +6.74%

- 9.21. Table 36 shows the predicted level of team growth, by age category, based on 5-year FA predictions. This growth prediction does not take into account disability football teams.

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**Table 36: Future demand driven by participation growth.**

Sub Area	Age Groups	Current no. of Teams	Projected Team Number Change	Projected no. Teams 2031
<b>South West</b>	Adult Men 11v11 (16-45yrs)	39	1	40
	Adult Women 11v11 (16-45yrs)	2	1	3
	Youth Boys 11v11 (12-15yrs)	41	9	50
	Youth Girls 11v11 (12-15yrs)	8	8	16
	Youth Boys 9v9 (10-11yrs)	26	6	32
	Youth Girls 9v9 (10-11yrs)	5	5	10
	Mini Soccer Mixed 7v7 (8-9yrs)	36	14	50
	Mini Soccer Mixed 5v5 (6-7yrs)	29	11	40
	<b>Total</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>241</b>
<b>South East</b>	Adult Men 11v11 (16-45yrs)	26	1	27
	Adult Women 11v11 (16-45yrs)	4	3	7
	Youth Boys 11v11 (12-15yrs)	18	4	22
	Youth Girls 11v11 (12-15yrs)	4	4	8
	Youth Boys 9v9 (10-11yrs)	18	4	22
	Youth Girls 9v9 (10-11yrs)	3	3	6
	Mini Soccer Mixed 7v7 (8-9yrs)	44	17	61
	Mini Soccer Mixed 5v5 (6-7yrs)	22	8	30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>North</b>	Adult Men 11v11 (16-45yrs)	55	2	57
	Adult Women 11v11 (16-45yrs)	11	8	19
	Youth Boys 11v11 (12-15yrs)	40	9	49
	Youth Girls 11v11 (12-15yrs)	15	15	30

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Sub Area	Age Groups	Current no. of Teams	Projected Team Number Change	Projected no. Teams 2031
	Youth Boys 9v9 (10-11yrs)	30	6	36
	Youth Girls 9v9 (10-11yrs)	10	10	20
	Mini Soccer Mixed 7v7 (8-9yrs)	34	13	47
	Mini Soccer Mixed 5v5 (6-7yrs)	36	14	50
	<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>308</b>

9.22. Table 36 shows that, based on FA growth predictions, there is predicted to be a total growth of 176 teams over the next 5 years. 55 of these new teams will be from the southwest sub area, 44 from the southeast and 77 from the north of the study area.

9.23. 16 of the new teams will be adult 11v11, 48 will be youth 11v11, 34 will be 9v9 and there will be 78 new mini 7v7 and 5v5 teams.

9.24. If all new teams are assigned 0.5 MES of match play demand, there will be demand for an additional 88 MES at peak match play times in the study area. The impact of this increased demand is explored below:

- **South West Sub Area**

- **Adult 11v11** – The current deficit of -3 MES will increase to -4 MES.
- **Youth 11v11** – The current 5.5 MES of spare capacity will be lost and a deficit of -3 MES created
- **Youth 9v9** – The current deficit of -8 MES will be increased to -13.5 MES
- **Mini Soccer** – Although demand will increase by 12.5 MES, there will remain adequate capacity.

- **South East Sub Area**

- **Adult 11v11** – Spare capacity will be reduced by 2 MES to 6 MES.
- **Youth 11v11** – There will be a deficit of -3 MES
- **Youth 9v9** – The current deficit of -3 MES will be increased to -6.5 MES
- **Mini 7v7** – There will remain adequate capacity, despite an increase in demand of 6.5 MES.
- **Mini 5v5** – An increase of 7 MES will create a shortfall of -6 MES

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- **North Sub Area**
  - **Adult 11v11** – There will be an increased demand for 5 MES, resulting in a shortfall of -6 MES.
  - **Youth 11v11** – The current deficit -3 MES will be increased to -15 MES
  - **Youth 9v9** – Additional demand for 8 MES will increase the current shortfall to -10.5 MES
  - **Mini Soccer** – Although demand will increase by 13.5 MES, there will remain adequate capacity.

9.25. An increased number of football teams due to FA predicted growth, will also impact the demand for 3G pitches in South Cambridgeshire. An additional 176 teams will require 5 11v11 equivalent 3G pitches to meet all training demand. This would increase the current shortfall of 4, to a deficit of 9 full size 3G pitches by 2031.

**Key outcome:** FA-predicted growth of 176 new teams across South Cambridgeshire by 2031 adds 88 MES of peak demand, creating or deepening deficits across every pitch format and sub-area, and requiring 5 additional 3G pitches to meet training demand.

**Implications for provision:** The north sub-area is most severely affected (youth 11v11 deficit grows to -15 MES; adult 11v11 to -6 MES). Mini formats retain some capacity in the north and south west, but south east mini 5v5 enters deficit.

**Strategic priority:** Growth-driven provision planning must be sub-area specific; the north requires the most urgent attention given the scale of new settlements at Northstowe and Waterbeach.

### Football – Grass Pitch Summary

9.26. South Cambridgeshire faces a very significant scale of additional grass pitch requirement over the plan period, driven by three major new settlements at Northstowe, Waterbeach and Bourn Airfield alongside numerous other growth sites. New provision must be planned and delivered in direct response to housing growth, with developer contributions the primary funding mechanism. Multi-pitch sites with full ancillary provision — clubhouse, changing facilities, car parking — should be the default approach for larger developments, as single-pitch sites without adequate infrastructure have repeatedly proved unsustainable. Smaller developments should contribute to improving existing sites, guided by PPOSS priorities and the Local Football Facility Plan.

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- 9.27. Pitch quality improvements are needed across a range of existing sites, with Bar Hill Community Primary School, Gamlingay Village Primary School and a number of parish recreation grounds identified as priorities for drainage and maintenance investment. Female participation is growing rapidly across all age groups and formats, and all infrastructure improvements should actively accommodate women's and girls' football, including accessible toilet and changing provision as a minimum standard. Community use agreements at education sites must be formalised to protect the security of access that clubs currently rely upon, and multi-sport opportunities at Coton, Fulbourn and Girton recreation grounds should be progressed jointly between football and cricket.
- 9.28. The key constraint in regards to grass pitches in South Cambridgeshire is the lack of available peak time capacity, not overall weekly supply. This creates challenges in addressing current and future shortfalls as peak time supply often cannot be created through pitch quality improvements or securing community use agreements. Therefore, the development of additional pitch provision is a priority across South Cambridgeshire.

#### Football – Grass Pitch Recommendations

1. Where pitches are overplayed and/or assessed as 'Poor' or 'Standard' quality, prioritise investment and review delivery model of maintenance and ensure maintenance is of an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality to a 'good' standard. Priority sites for pitch quality improvement are:
  - Bar Hill Community Primary School
  - Gamlingay Village Primary School.
  - Girton Recreation Ground
  - Barrington Playing Fields
  - Great Chishill Playing Fields
  - Waterbeach Recreation Ground
  - Coton Recreation Ground
  - Balsham Recreation Ground
  - Steeple Morden Recreation Ground
  - Hardwicke Recreation Ground
  - Swavesey Recreation Ground
  - Willingham Recreation Ground

2. There is a need to ensure that teams play on the appropriate size pitch and the overplay of adult 11v11 pitches is resolved.
3. Improve ancillary facilities where there is a demand to do so and where it can benefit the wider footballing offer. Ensure any works provide suitability for female and disability access to facilitate increased football formats. Prioritise multi - pitch sites and key sites for female participation and development, seek to provide access to toilet facilities as a minimum requirement at all sites. Multisport opportunities for cricket and football to work together to improve ancillary facilities have been identified at Coton Recreation Ground, Fulbourn Recreation Ground and Girton Recreation Ground. Eversden Playing Fields and Lynton Way Sawston ancillary facilities have been identified as needing refurbishment
4. The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator for projected future population identifies a need to seek developer contributions to provide pitches and pavilions for future population growth to 2045 across South Cambridgeshire:
  - Adult 11v11 x 67 pitches.
  - Youth 11v11 and 9v9 x 102 pitches.
  - Mini soccer 7v7 and 5v5 x 85 pitches.
5. Support the development of additional grass pitches and ancillary provision wherever possible, in relation to key housing sites
6. Where a residential development is of a size to justify on-site football provision, (2 pitches or more) focus on the creation of multi-pitch sites that meet the new demand created by the development and existing shortfalls where possible, with accompanying clubhouse, access and car parking provision included given that single pitch sites without appropriate ancillary facilities can be unsustainable.
7. Where a development is not of a size to justify on-site football provision, secure contributions to improve existing sites within the locality, guided by the priorities identified within the PPOSS Action Plan and the Greater Cambridge Local Football Facility Plan.
8. Ensure that community use of education pitches is secured through formal community use agreements that provide security of tenure for community clubs.
9. Protect the existing supply of grass provision, in line with Sport England's Playing Field Policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

## 10. 3G Artificial Grass Pitches – South Cambridgeshire District

- 10.1 To help develop the recommendations/actions and to understand their potential impact, several relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues in this section, resulting in sport specific recommendations.

### Scenario 19 – The impact of additional 3G development in South Cambridgeshire

- 10.2 The assessment document identified 11x 11v11 sized 3G pitches available for community use in the study area. However, to meet the training demand of all 568 teams in South Cambridgeshire, the FA 1:38 model suggests that there is a requirement for 15 11v11 equivalent 3G pitches, leaving a current shortfall of 4 3G AGPs.
- 10.3 Based on population growth as a result of housing development, Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator highlights a requirement for an additional 15 11v11 equivalent 3G pitches across South Cambridgeshire to meet the future demand for artificial training facilities. This would create a theoretical deficit of 19 11v11 3G AGPs.
- 10.4 It must be noted that the identified future deficits of 3G AGP provision in South Cambridgeshire, although theoretically correct based on the FA 1:38 model and the Playing Pitch Calculator, provides a potentially unrealistic expectations for the future delivery of 3G pitches. The delivery of this level of new provision, as well as facing significant financial challenges, will also likely have an impact on existing grass pitches, multi-sport sites and sand-based hockey AGPs.
- 10.5 Although this PPOSS will use the figures generated by the FA 1:38 model and Playing Pitch Calculator as a baseline for all calculations, the figures should be seen only as an indicator of the size of the significant shortfall in the study area. New 3G pitch development should be considered wherever possible, however this should not be at the detriment to other sports, such as hockey, and should ensure that all existing AGPs remain financially sustainable.
- 10.6 To increase access to 3G provision for football clubs, there are a number of proposals in place for the development of additional 3G AGP pitches. Table 37 provides an overview of these. It should be noted that to support rugby union demand, further provision of World Rugby compliant pitches (WR22) should be considered wherever possible.

**Table 37: Proposed New 3G Pitch Development**

Location	Sub Area	Number of Pitches Proposed	Estimated Delivery Date	Comments
Cambridgeshire County FA Facility (Location TBC)	TBC	1	TBC	Proposal
Cambourne Fitness and Sports Centre	South West	1	TBC	Proposal
Girton Recreation Ground	North	1	TBC	Proposal

- 10.7 A Cambridgeshire County FA facility would cater for demand from community football clubs, with a focus on women and girls and disability provision. The location of any facility will be decided based a site feasibility study, however, may also require the development of supporting ancillary facilities.
- 10.8 Girton Recreation Ground has been identified as a potential site for a new 3G AGP and will serve the needs of Cambridge City Women’s FC and Girton Colts FC. The site also has a multi-sport focus with grass cricket provision and the refurbishment of ancillary provision should ensure that it can adequately cater for both sports.
- 10.9 There are also proposals for the development of an additional 11v11 3G AGP adjacent to the existing 3G provision at Cambourne Fitness and Sports Centre. Cambourne Town FC is a large club that based on team numbers require access to an additional 3G pitch to meet their training and match play demand. The site would also focus on providing for women and girls and walking football and would require additional ancillary provision to effectively cater for increased demand on site.
- 10.10 Although the 3 proposals identified in Table 36 would significantly reduce the current deficit of 4, based on future population growth there is a clear need for the identification of a number of additional sites. Any new 3G AGP development in South Cambridgeshire should consider developing a partnership agreement with Coton FC, Histon Hornets FC, Milton Colts FC, Sawston United FC, Shelford and Stapleford Strikers FC, Waterbeach Colts FC, Whittlesford Warriors FC and Willingham Wolves FC. These clubs have been referenced as none currently access 3G provision and each are large clubs in the study area.

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- 10.11 Although all sites identified above would support a significant amount of community activity, to ensure that the needs of both rugby union and football are met, it is important that further analysis of the suitability and sustainability of any potential site is carried out by the PPOSS steering group and a decision-making process undertaken to establish priority sites for 3G development

**Key outcome:** A current shortfall of 4 full-size 3G pitches grows to a theoretical deficit of 19 by 2045. Three proposals (Cambourne Fitness and Sports Centre, Girton Recreation Ground, Cambridgeshire County FA facility) would address the current gap but not future demand

**Implications for provision:** Large clubs currently without any 3G access — Coton FC, Histon Hornets, Milton Colts, Sawston United, Willingham Wolves and others — represent the most acute unmet need. Cambourne's growth areas make the Cambourne site particularly critical.

**Strategic priority:** Advance the three pipeline proposals and implement a structured programme of site identification across all sub-areas, prioritising clubs with no current 3G access.

### Scenario 20 – The impact on demand for 3G pitch provision if all match play demand is transferred to 3G pitches

- 10.12 The scenario explores the impact on demand if all matches for teams playing competitive football on grass pitches in South Cambridgeshire were played on 11v11 equivalent floodlit 3G AGPs. Tables 38 - 40 use an FA suggested approach to calculating the 3G match play demand.

**Table 38: Full size 3G pitches required for cater for all football match play demand – South West**

South West	No. of teams at peak time	No. of matches at peak time	3G units per match	Total required units	3G pitches required
	(x)	(y) = x/2	(z)	(A)=(y)*(z)	B= (A)/64
Mini Soccer 5v5	29	14.5	4	58	0.9
Mini Soccer 7v7	36	18	8	144	2.3
Youth 9v9	31	15.5	10	155	2.4

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South West	No. of teams at peak time	No. of matches at peak time	3G units per match	Total required units	3G pitches required
	(x)	(y) = x/2	(z)	(A)=(y)*(z)	B= (A)/64
Youth 11v11	49	24.5	32	784	12.3
Adult 11v11	41	20.5	32	656	10.3
<b>Total (Rounded)</b>					<b>28</b>

10.13 Table 38 shows that if all match play demand from clubs in the south west sub area was to be met on 3G pitches, there would be a requirement for 28 11v11 equivalent 3G AGPs. There are currently 4 full size 3G AGPs in the sub area, resulting in a deficit of -24.

**Table 39: Full size 3G pitches required for cater for all football match play demand – South East**

South East	No. of teams at peak time	No. of matches at peak time	3G units per match	Total required units	3G pitches required
	(x)	(y) = x/2	(z)	(A)=(y)*(z)	B= (A)/64
Mini Soccer 5v5	22	11	4	44	0.7
Mini Soccer 7v7	44	22	8	176	2.8
Youth 9v9	21	10.5	10	105	1.6
Youth 11v11	22	11	32	352	5.5
Adult 11v11	30	15	32	480	7.5
<b>Total (Rounded)</b>					<b>18</b>

10.14 Table 39 identifies the need for 18 11v11 equivalent 3G pitches in the south east sub area if all match play demand from community football clubs is to be met on 3G provision. Although there are 3 full size 3G pitches in the sub area, Shelford RFC only caters for rugby union demand and Cambridge City FC does not offer any security of tenure. This results in a deficit of 17 3G AGPs in the south east sub area.

**Table 40: Full size 3G pitches required for cater for all football match play demand - North**

North	No. of teams at peak time	No. of matches at peak time	3G units per match	Total units required formats	3G pitches required
	(x)	(y) = x/2	(z)	(A)=(y)*(z)	B= (A)/64
Mini Soccer 5v5	36	18	4	72	1.1
Mini Soccer 7v7	34	17	8	136	2.1
Youth 9v9	40	20	10	200	3.1
Youth 11v11	55	27.5	32	880	13.8
Adult 11v11	66	33	32	1056	16.5
<b>Total (Rounded)</b>					<b>37</b>

- 10.15 Table 40 shows that 37 11v11 equivalent 3G pitches would be required to meet match play demand for all affiliated community football teams in the north sub area. As there are 5 existing full size 3G AGPs in the sub area, there is a theoretical deficit of 32 3G AGPs in the north of the study area.
- 10.16 A total requirement of 83 11v11 3G AGPs to meet all match play demand in South Cambridgeshire is unrealistic and this level of 3G development is significantly above the number of 3G pitches that have been identified to meet the current training demand from clubs.
- 10.17 However, the tables above suggest that to meet all match play demand from mini 5v5 and 7v7 teams, there is a requirement for 10 11v11 sized 3G pitches (3.2 in the south west, 3.5 in the south east and 3.2 in the north).
- 10.18 Although moving match play demand to 3G provision would reduce usage and overplay of grass pitch provision and should be considered wherever possible for mini football, the priority should be to deliver 3G AGPs that can meet the training demand of affiliated community clubs.

**Key outcome:** Meeting all South Cambridgeshire match play demand on 3G pitches would require 83 full-size equivalents (28 south west, 18 south east, 37 north) — wholly unrealistic. However, 10 pitches could absorb all mini 5v5 and 7v7 match play across the district

**Implications for provision:** Full transfer is not achievable or desirable; targeting mini formats for match play transfer is a practical and proportionate approach that would relieve grass pitch overplay.

**Strategic priority:** Use 3G match play transfer as a targeted tool for mini football; primary focus for new 3G investment should remain on meeting training demand.

### 3G AGP Summary

- 10.19 South Cambridgeshire has a current shortfall of 3G AGP provision and a very large future requirement driven by new housing, distributed across three sub-areas with differing site contexts. The three proposals at Cambourne Fitness and Sports Centre, Girton Recreation Ground and the Cambridgeshire County FA facility should be advanced as short to medium-term priorities. The Cambourne scheme is particularly important given the scale of Cambourne Town FC and the additional demand from Cambourne West and Cambourne North growth areas; it should be designed to prioritise women, girls and walking football and include complementary ancillary provision. Girton Recreation Ground has a multi-sport dimension — combining football 3G with cricket and general recreation — and the ancillary refurbishment programme there should reflect this.
- 10.20 Beyond the identified pipeline, a programme of site identification is required across all three sub-areas to meet future demand, with particular attention to large clubs that currently have no access to 3G provision, including Coton FC, Histon Hornets, Milton Colts, Sawston United and Willingham Wolves. All new 3G pitches should be built to NGB standards, include multi-format line marking, carry formal community use agreements, and have sinking funds in place from the outset. Where rugby union demand can be accommodated, WR22 compliance should be sought. Three existing pitches at Anglian Leisure Linton, Cambourne Fitness and Sports Centre and Comberton Village College require carpet replacement and their Football Foundation replacement funds should be confirmed and activated.

### 3G AGP Recommendations

1. Ensure that any new 3G pitches are constructed to meet NGB compliant dimensions that are appropriate for that sport, format of play and the appropriate quality performance standards that meet the performance testing criteria.
2. Protect the existing stock of 3G pitches.
3. Ensure new developments provide for new 3G AGPs. The Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator Tool estimates a need for 15 x 3G AGPs from new housing development population by 2045.
4. Retain all certified 3G pitches on the respective sporting registers and ensure certification of each is renewed through performance standard testing.
5. Maximise use of capacity where available at weekends to accommodate match play, to reduce grass pitch shortfalls.
6. Ensure that any new 3G pitches have community use agreements in place. Where current sites have 3G pitch provision ensure formal community use agreements are in place.
7. There are three 11v11 3G FTPs that will require replacement carpets, at Anglian Leisure Linton, Cambourne Fitness and Sports Centre, Comberton Village College. All three pitches were Football Foundation funded and are required to have a pitch replacement fund in place. The replacement fund will meet the cost of replacement.
8. Encourage increased match play on 3G AGPs for football by providing multi line-marking solutions to allow for match-play across all formats of football (5v5, 7v7, 9v9 and 11v11). This will enable significant levels of match-play to be transferred from grass to 3G, particularly mini soccer and junior 9v9, this will help to alleviate over play of existing grass pitches and allow for the grass pitches where transfer of play occurs to be reconfigured for alternative football play if necessary and ensure that 3G pitches remain suitable to accommodate such demand through appropriate 3G AGP Registration.

## 11. Cricket – South Cambridgeshire District

11.1. To help develop the recommendations/actions and to understand their potential impact, several relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues in this section, resulting in sport specific recommendations.

### Scenario 21 – Catering for the rise in ‘Nomadic’ non-village based sides

11.2. Cambridgeshire Cricket highlights that the nature of demand for cricket in South Cambridgeshire is moving away from village-based clubs and teams to a more diverse range of players, predominantly from South Asian communities. These clubs are not affiliated to specific villages and therefore source training and match play facilities from a range of sites, often changing regularly throughout the season.

11.3. Table 41 provides an overview of the ‘nomadic’ sides operating in South Cambridgeshire.

**Table 41: South Cambridgeshire Nomadic Cricket Teams**

Club Name	Number of Saturday League Teams					
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Cam Kerala	3	3	3	3	4	4
Cambridge Old Monks			1	2	2	3
Cambridge Tamil Sangam			1	1	2	2
Teluga Assoc of Cambridge CC	2	3	3	3	3	3
Cam Valley						1
Cambourne Knights						1
Serendib						1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>

11.4. As table 41 shows, there are currently 15 sides operating without a home ground, a 200% increase since 2021. Although the figures only take into consideration Saturday teams, a number of these clubs also have Sunday and/or midweek teams.

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- 11.5. The ‘nomadic’ clubs have aspirations to grow and to broaden their offer beyond adult male teams, to include junior and women and girls’ cricket. However, the lack of a home ground with security of tenure and associated facilities provides a significant barrier.
- 11.6. Cricket in South Cambridgeshire is delivered through a network of parish council facilities, that operate primarily in support of village residents and their cricket teams. Any investment, maintenance responsibility, voluntary action is done to benefit parish residents and there is often a reluctance to provide services for other clubs from outside of the village.
- 11.7. The development of multi-sport hub sites, operated by the District Council or other wider-reaching organisation, could allow a number of nomadic sides to ground share at the same venue. This would provide opportunities to expand clubs and cater for an even wider range of the community.

**Key outcome:** Nomadic clubs (predominantly from South Asian communities) have grown 200% since 2021 to 15 sides in 2026, with aspirations to add women's and junior sections. Parish council facilities are structurally oriented toward village residents and create barriers for these clubs.

**Implications for provision:** The parish-based delivery model is not equipped to support nomadic club development. Without a secure home ground, these clubs cannot grow sustainably.

**Strategic priority:** Develop district-operated multi-sport hub sites where multiple nomadic clubs can share a home ground; this is the primary strategic response to a growing equity and access gap.

### Scenario 22 – Exploring the growth in women and girl’s cricket

- 11.8. Since 2021, Cambridgeshire Cricket (CC) have seen a 10 fold team increase in the junior girls’ game and a 4 fold increase in the senior women’s game across Greater Cambridgeshire. There is also a predicted 75% growth in girl’s teams and 37% growth in women’s teams over the next 2 years to 2028.
- 11.9. Table 42 shows the current and predicted future number of female teams in South Cambridgeshire based on the Greater Cambridge growth rates.

**Table 42: Cricket - Growth of the Female Game**

Sub Area	Age Category	Current Team No.	Predicted Team No.
South West	Junior Girls	7	12
	Senior Women	3	4
South East	Junior Girls	4	7
	Senior Women	1	1
North	Junior Girls	1	2
	Senior Women	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>26</b>

- 11.10. Table 42 predicts that due to identified growth of the female game, there will be an increase of 10 female teams by 2028. 9 of these are likely to be junior girl's sides, whilst 1 will be a senior women's team. Of the 26 total teams by 2028, 16 will be located in the south west sub area, 8 in the south east and 2 in the north sub area.
- 11.11. The PPOSS assumes that each senior team will create demand for 10 matches per season (MPS), whilst junior teams will generate 8 MPS of demand. Based on these figures, there will be increase in demand of 82 MPS; 52 MPS of which will be attributed to the south west sub area.
- 11.12. The assessment report identified significant levels of spare capacity on grass wickets across South Cambridgeshire, suggesting that growth of the female game can be catered for on existing grass wicket provision. However, based on current trends, demand for women and girls' provision will continue to grow, creating significant increases in team numbers by 2045.
- 11.13. Although there is spare capacity on grass wickets in South Cambridgeshire, investment is required to provide female appropriate clubhouse and ancillary facilities. Without appropriate changing facilities, that allow for separate, secure, female spaces and meet safeguarding regulations, any growth in the female game will not be sustainable.

**Key outcome:** 10 additional female teams are predicted by 2028 (9 junior girls, 1 senior women), adding 82 MPS of demand predominantly in the south west. Existing grass wicket capacity is theoretically sufficient to absorb this growth

**Implications for provision:** The binding constraint is not pitch quantity but the absence of female-appropriate changing and ancillary facilities across most venues

**Strategic priority:** Investment in female-appropriate ancillary provision is the prerequisite for sustainable growth of women's and girls' cricket in South Cambridgeshire.

### Scenario 23 – Creating additional capacity through Non-Turf Pitches (NTPs)

- 11.14. Although grass wickets are the preferred surface for cricket, they have a limited carrying capacity and require a high level of expertise to prepare and maintain them. Although not necessarily appropriate for competitive senior demand, Non-Turf Pitches (NTPs) offer a consistency of bounce that suits the junior game, reduces preparation and maintenance time and offer significantly more capacity than grass wickets.
- 11.15. Tables 43 to 45 show the sites with NTPs in South Cambridgeshire. A good or standard quality NTP can hold 60 MPS, whilst a poor quality NTP is not suitable for match play and is therefore assigned 0 MPS.

**Table 43: Non-Turf Pitches (NTPs) in South Cambridgeshire – South West**

Site	Ownership	Security of Tenure	NTPs	Quality	Supply (MPS)
The Recreation Ground Southend Bassingbourn	Parish Council	Secure	1	Good	60
Caldecote Recreation Ground	Parish Council	Secure	1	Good	60
Coton Recreation Ground	Parish Council	Secure	1	Standard	60
Eversden Playing Fields	Parish Council	Secure	1	Poor	0
Fowlmere Village Hall and Recreation Ground	Parish Council	Secure	1	Standard	60

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Site	Ownership	Security of Tenure	NTPs	Quality	Supply (MPS)
Lower Cambourne	Town Council	Secure	1	Standard	60
Bourn Jubilee Playing Field	Parish Council	Unsecure	1	Poor	0
Hardwicke Recreation Ground	Parish Council	Unsecure	1	Poor	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>8</b>		<b>300</b>

**Table 44: Non-Turf Pitches (NTPs) in South Cambridgeshire – South East**

Site	Ownership	Security of Tenure	NTPs	Quality	Supply (MPS)
Stapleford Recreation Ground	Parish Council	Secure	1	Poor	0
Wale Recreation Ground	Parish Council	Secure	1	Good	60
The Lawn Whittlesford	Parish Council	Secure	1	Good	60
Linton College Sports Ground	Education	Unsecure	1	Poor	0
Granta Park Business Park	Private	Unsecure	1	Poor	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>5</b>		<b>120</b>

**Table 45: Non-Turf Pitches (NTPs) in South Cambridgeshire - North**

Site	Ownership	Security of Tenure	NTPs	Quality	Supply (MPS)
Dry Drayton Cricket Ground	Private	Secure	1	Good	60
Elsworth Recreation Ground	Parish Council	Secure	1	Good	60
North Lodge Park	Parish Council	Secure	1	Good	60
Sycamore Recreation Ground Milton	Parish Council	Secure	1	Good	60
Swavesey Recreation Green and Sports College	Education	Unsecure	1	Standard	60
Cottenham and District Sports Centre	Education	Unsecure	1	Standard	60
Over Community Centre	Trust	Unsecure	1	Poor	0

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Site	Ownership	Security of Tenure	NTPs	Quality	Supply (MPS)
<b>Total</b>			<b>7</b>		<b>360</b>

- 11.16. There are 20 NTPs in the South Cambridgeshire, 8 in the south west, 5 in the south east and 7 in the north sub area. However, only 13 of these offer security of tenure for community for community cricket clubs.
- 11.17. 13 of the existing NTPs are of an adequate quality to support match play and training demand. If the capacity of these NTPs was to be considered, an additional 780 MPS of capacity would be added to the study area. Of this, 300 MPS is located in the south west, 120 MPS in the south east and 360 MPS in the north.
- 11.18. Although not always appropriate to meet adult demand, a number of cricket clubs such as Little Shelford, Triplow and Cambridge St Giles use NTPs on site extensively for junior cricket.
- 11.19. Although the development of additional NTP wickets should be considered on sites that are available to the community and offer security of tenure for clubs, there is theoretically sufficient grass provision to meet all demand in South Cambridgeshire. Despite being cost effective in terms of initial capital investment and maintenance costs, NTPs require planning permission and may be restricted by other local restrictions.
- 11.20. It should be a priority to protect the existing stock of NTPs, ensure they are appropriately maintained and secure community use

**Key outcome:** South Cambridgeshire has 20 NTPs, 13 of adequate quality providing 780 MPS of potential capacity. Existing grass provision is theoretically sufficient to meet all demand; NTPs add supplementary junior capacity where security of tenure is in place

**Implications for provision:** The primary risk is loss of existing NTPs through neglect or change of use; protecting and maintaining the current stock is more important than expanding it.

**Strategic priority:** Protect the existing NTP stock, ensure maintenance standards are upheld, and secure community use wherever tenure is not already formalised.

### Cricket Summary

- 11.21. Cricket in South Cambridgeshire is broadly well-provided in terms of grass wicket quantity, with provision spread across a network of parish council sites that support the district's strong village club tradition. However, access, distribution and security of tenure are significant constraints. The growing number of nomadic, non-village-based clubs many rooted in South Asian communities represents a structural challenge, as the parish model is not designed to accommodate teams without a village connection. Developing multi-sport hub sites operated by the District Council or an independently managed organisation, capable of hosting multiple nomadic clubs as co-located ground-sharers, is a strategic priority that would enable these clubs to establish secure bases and grow their offer to include junior and women's cricket.
- 11.22. The growth of women's and girls' cricket is significant and accelerating, and existing grass wicket capacity can accommodate this in volumetric terms. However, the sustainability of this growth depends entirely on investment in female-appropriate ancillary facilities secure, separate changing provision across the network of club sites. NTPs should be protected, maintained to at least standard quality, and secured for community use wherever tenure is currently absent; they are particularly valuable for supporting junior development and reducing pressure on main squares. New cricket provision in connection with major housing growth sites should be planned through developer contributions, with a target of additional squares to meet the demand generated by new population by 2045.

### Cricket Recommendations

1. Protect the existing supply of grass and NTP pitches (and their capacity) identified in the assessment unless replacement equivalent capacity can be provided elsewhere to an equal or better standard.
2. Consider the development of multi-sport sites, operated independently, where multiple 'nomadic teams can use as a home ground.
3. Protection from loss also extends to where a club folds, as additional capacity on a lost ground and previously used for cricket may be required by other clubs and this should be explored in relation to potential demand where this scenario happens. Such sites also need protection for future supply as the anticipated growth in junior age groups moves through into the adult game towards during the strategy period.
4. Consider increasing the current use of existing pitches where spare capacity notionally exists, where physically, practically and logistically possible.

5. Ensure that facilities are affordable and accessible for all traditional and non-traditional club structures, investing in facilities that will have the most significant impact on the growth of cricket. Encourage all facilities to support access by other clubs, teams and participants in an affordable manner.
6. Support projected growth in the women's and junior games by ensuring that the quality of pitches and ancillary facilities meets their needs (i.e. that they are fit for purpose in relation to space, accessibility and functionality) where junior and women's teams play and train.
7. Support the training needs of clubs by providing in-situ practice nets where necessary to improve the capacity for training which can help retain the quality of pitches on the main square.
8. Support the continual improvement of facilities, and the workforce that prepare them, to a good quality to help attract and retain players.
9. Ensure that the provision of any new pitches and facilities meet the most up-to-date quality design standards and dimensions supported by the NGB and Sport England.
10. Seek to provide additional capacity, where needed, at existing club home grounds as a preference over sites far from home grounds, where physical, ownership and planning constraints do not prevent such change. This will help to ensure the long-term financial stability of clubs given the social tradition and culture of the sport.

## 12. Rugby Union – South Cambridgeshire District

12.1 To help develop the recommendations/actions and to understand their potential impact, several relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues in this section, resulting in sport specific recommendations.

### Scenario 24 – The impact of grass pitch quality improvements

12.2 This scenario will explore the impact of grass pitch quality improvements at both Shelford Rugby Club and Cottenham Renegades Rugby Club. Table 46 provides an overview of pitch capacity based on drainage and maintenance scores.

**Table 46: Match Equivalent Calculation for Rugby Pitches.**

Drainage	Maintenance		
	Poor (M0)	Standard (M1)	Good (M2)
Natural Inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2
Natural Adequate (D1)	1.5	2	3
Pipe Drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25
Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2	3	3.5

12.3 Table 47 shows the current pitch quality scores, compared with the pitch capacity if all pitches were improved to D2/M2.

**Table 47: Community sites and individual pitch capacity**

Site Name	Pitch	Quality Score	Pitch Capacity	Overall capacity of site	Improved Quality Score	Improved Pitch Capacity	Improved Overall capacity of site
Shelford RUFC	Pitch 2 (Sports Lighting)	D1/M1	2	9	D2/M2	3.25	13
Shelford RUFC	Pitch 3	D1/M2	3		D2/M2	3.25	

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Site Name	Pitch	Quality Score	Pitch Capacity	Overall capacity of site	Improved Quality Score	Improved Pitch Capacity	Improved Overall capacity of site
Shelford RUFC	Pitch 4	D1/M1	2		D2/M2	3.25	
Shelford RUFC	Pitch 5 (Junior)	D1/M1	2		D2/M2	3.25	
Cottenham Village College	Pitch 1	D1/M0	1.5	1.5	D2/M2	3.25	3.25

- 12.4 Improving pitch quality to D2/M2 at Shelford RUFC will increase grass pitch capacity by 4 MES per week to 13 MES. However, Shelford RUFC also has access to 3G provision on site, which they utilise for approximately 12 hours per week.
- 12.5 Pitch quality improvements at Cottenham Village College will increase site carrying capacity from 1.5 MES to 3.25 MES per week.
- 12.6 Based on current demand, there is a weekly deficit in provision of -0.5 MES at Shelford RUFC (if 3G AGP capacity is also considered), and 0.5 MES of spare capacity at Cottenham Village College. Table 48 highlights how improved drainage and maintenance scores would impact the training and match play capacity of each site.

**Table 48: The impact of Improved Pitch Quality Capacity**

Club	Demand Match Equivalent Sessions Training Midweek per Week	Demand Match and Training Equivalent Sessions Weekends Per Week	Total Demand Match Equivalent Sessions per Week	Supply Match and Training Equivalent Sessions per Week	Overplay Match and Training Equivalent Sessions per Week
Shelford RUFC	11	10	21	13 + 12 hours on 3G pitch	4
Cottenham Village College	0.5	0.5	1	3.25	2.25
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11.50</b>	<b>10.50</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>28.25</b>	<b>6.25</b>

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- 12.7 If all pitches were improved to D2/M2, all deficit at Shelford would be reduced and 4 MES of additional capacity provided on site. However, although this will reduce overplay, no new peak time capacity will be created. The current spare capacity at Cottenham Village College would be increased from 0.5 MES to 2.25 MES.
- 12.8 In total, pitch quality improvements are expected to result in a total of 6.25 MES of spare weekly capacity.
- 12.9 Table 49 identifies how pitch quality improvements will impact on the current and future capacity for specific match play and training sessions until 2045 across the South Cambridgeshire based on an increased population up to 2045 from new housing developments.

**Table 49: Current and Future Demand to 2045 For South Cambridgeshire Rugby (Match Equivalent Sessions)**

	(A) Current Demand Match Equivalent Sessions (2024/25)	(B) Improved Weekly Capacity	(C) Current Capacity Position (2024/25) = (B – A)	(D) Participation Increase	Future Capacity Position
Weekly Midweek Training Equivalent Sessions floodlit pitches.	11.5	15.25	3.75	2.5	1.25
Weekly Weekend Match Equivalent sessions	10.5	13	2.5	2.5	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>28.25</b>	<b>6.25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.25</b>

- 12.10 The assessment report highlights a current mid-week training position of 2.5 MES. Demand increases through population growth reduced this to 0 MES by 2045. However, Table 49 shows that pitch quality improvements would create 3.75 MES of spare mid-week training capacity, of which 1.25 MES would be retained by 2045.
- 12.11 When considering weekend match play, a shortfall of -2.5 MES was found on grass rugby union pitches. This deficit is predicted to increase to -5 MES by 2045. The impact of pitch quality improvements would create 2.5 MES of spare match play capacity, although this would be reduced to 0 MES by 2045 as a result of increases in demand linked to housing development and population growth.

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12.12 Although pitch quality improvements will have a positive impact on reducing the current shortfalls of provision, it has a limited impact on increasing peak time capacity, therefore, a holistic approach to investment should be considered, including grass pitch improvements, floodlight installation as well as grass and 3G pitch development.

12.13 It should be a priority for all club sites to undertake pitch quality improvements wherever possible.

**Key outcome:** Improving Shelford RUFC and Cottenham Village College pitches to D2/M2 would create 6.25 MES of spare weekly capacity. By 2045, mid-week training retains 1.25 MES of spare capacity and weekend match play exactly balances at zero — but this is only achievable with improvements in place

**Implications for provision:** Without quality improvements, the match play deficit of -2.5 MES grows to -5 MES by 2045. Cottenham Village College's clubhouse also requires upgrading to support the club's development.

**Strategic priority:** Prioritise pitch quality improvements at both club sites now; plan for new provision (minimum 2-pitch site) to meet population growth, and pursue a WR22-compliant 3G pitch as part of any multi-sport development in the district.

### Rugby Union Summary

12.14 Rugby union in South Cambridgeshire is concentrated primarily at Shelford RUFC, which carries the vast majority of demand across the district, supported by limited provision at Cottenham Village College. Pitch quality improvements at both sites, improving drainage and maintenance standards should be prioritised, as these will increase weekly carrying capacity and reduce overplay without the need for new land. At Cottenham, clubhouse upgrades are also needed to provide a viable long-term base for Cottenham Renegades RUFC. The existing WR22-compliant 3G at Shelford is an important asset that should be protected and, where possible, its availability to rugby union maximised.

12.15 Looking to the long term, population growth from Northstowe, Waterbeach and other growth sites will generate demand that the current club network cannot absorb. The District Council should plan for the delivery of a minimum two-pitch site to good quality standard to serve new population growth, and any new multi-sport development in the district should explore the incorporation of WR22-compliant 3G provision. A holistic approach to investment combining pitch quality improvements, floodlighting, and where necessary new provision will be required to maintain and grow rugby union's place in the district's sporting landscape.

### Rugby Union Recommendations

1. Work with Shelford Rugby Club and Cottenham Renegades RUFC to review quality, drainage, and maintenance issues, reduce overplay and provide increased capacity for midweek training and match and training at weekends.
2. Work with Cottenham Renegades RUFC to upgrade their clubhouse facilities.
3. South Cambridge District Council to consider development of a minimum 2 pitch site providing good quality rugby pitches to meet future population demands to 2041.
4. Support the development of a World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant AGP as part of multi-sport sites wherever possible.
5. Protect the existing supply of grass and rugby compliant AGP provision, in line with Sport England's Playing Field Policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

## 13. Hockey – South Cambridgeshire District

13.1 The 2026 key issues and recommendations for hockey are.

### Hockey Key Issues and Recommendations

1. There is one AGP suitable for Hockey in South Cambridgeshire District (Northstowe Secondary College) currently used by Huntingdon and Northstowe Ladies Hockey Club. The club currently has 1 team playing on a Saturday and training on Tuesday evenings for 1.5 hours. This facility is currently sufficient to meet current needs and future needs until 2045 and is required to be protected in the Local Plan.
2. There is a need to ensure security of tenure at the Northstowe Secondary College AGP for use by Huntingdon and Northstowe Hockey Club and to ensure that the club can access additional training time and match play slots as the club grows in the future.
3. Although there is currently an adequate level of provision in South Cambridgeshire, reliance on 1 hockey AGP could be seen as a strategic risk. The development of additional provision should be considered as part of strategic housing development sites or new educational institutions to ensure the long term sustainability of hockey if provision at Northstowe Secondary College was ever to be lost or require resurfacing.

## 14. Summary of Recommendations

**Table 50: Summary of Recommendations**

Objective	Recommendation
<p><b>OBJECTIVE 1:</b>            To <b>protect</b> the existing supply of outdoor sports provision to meet current and future needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 1: Ensure, that all existing outdoor sports facilities are protected through the implementation of local, national and Sport England planning policy;</li> <li>• Recommendation 2: Secure tenure and access to sites for participation-focused development clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements; and</li> <li>• Recommendation 3: Ensure continued use of education facilities where there is a need, these should have long-term security agreements where possible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OBJECTIVE 2:</b>            To <b>enhance</b> outdoor sports provision and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 4: Improve quality of playing pitches and ancillary facilities;</li> <li>• Recommendation 5: Work with facility owners, operators and sports clubs to ensure there is an appropriate maintenance regime and all pitches being improved.</li> <li>• Recommendation 6: Secure external funding in partnership with other stakeholders; and</li> <li>• Recommendation 7: Secure developer contributions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OBJECTIVE 3:</b>            To <b>provide</b> new outdoor sports facilities where there is current or future demand to do so</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 8: Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand; and</li> <li>• Recommendation 9: Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock.</li> <li>• Recommendation 10: develop facilities in the area of greatest demand to minimise travel time for residents.</li> </ul>

**Action Plan**

13.1. The Sport Specific Action Plan Appendix 2 provides individual sport recommendations and individual site recommendations by geographic area and reflect the outcomes of the scenarios and identified quantitative and quality improvements identified in the assessment report and strategy document of this report.

13.2. The Sport Specific and Individual Site Action Plans are given timescales to deliver:

**Short Term** Delivered against or worked towards within three years (ahead of the first full review of the PPOSS);

**Medium Term.** Delivered within 6 years; and

**Long Term.** No specific date – In many instances the action is an aspiration and is general support for clubs or other bodies to progress with and is not an action the Council or the Playing Pitch Steering Group have control over.

13.3. The strategic actions within Appendix 2 have also been ranked as low, medium, or high based on cost. These are based on Sport England’s estimated facility costs. The range in which these sit is:

**(L) - Low - less than £50k**

**(M) - Medium - £50k-£250k**

**(H) - High £250k and above**

13.4. In addition to using the planning system to lever in developer contributions, it is recognised that external partner funding will need to be sought to deliver much of the action plan because there are many competing demands for developer contributions and the funding available is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the identified projects. Although seeking developer contributions in applicable situations and other local funding/community schemes could go some way towards providing for new residents and could contribute towards meeting existing deficiencies and/or improving provision, other potential/match sources of funding will need be investigated e.g. look to apply for grants and work with NGBs and Sport England to seek partnership funding for several projects.

13.5. It is important that the PPOSS Steering Group keep this strategy alive and Greater Cambridge use it to make informed investment and planning decisions. This will be achieved by:

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- Monitoring the delivery of the recommendations and actions;
- Providing up to date annual supply and demand for pitch stock; and
- Addressing changing trends and formats for the different pitch sports as they develop and monitoring participation of these changes and trends.

## Disclaimer

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