



Metropolitan
Borough of Wirral

Wirral Metropolitan Borough
Playing Pitch Assessment

Strategy and Action Plan

**METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL
PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT**

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This Strategy has been developed from research and analysis of playing pitch provision and use within Wirral in Merseyside. The sports included are football, cricket, hockey, rugby union, lacrosse and American football.

Research and consultation work was carried out between June and September 2002 culminating in the production of an Assessment Report. The Assessment Report provides a detailed picture of the provision, use, adequacy and shortfall of playing pitches within Wirral. Copies of the Assessment Report may be requested from the Education & Cultural Services Department at Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council (WMBC).

The Strategy & Action Plan puts forward recommendations for WMBC and its partners in relation to the provision and improvement of playing pitches and associated facilities. It is based on the findings of the Assessment Report and uses the eight catchment areas, as detailed below.

Wirral population figures split by Catchment Area (2001 Census)

Catchment Area	Population
A41 Corridor	139,868
Heswall	31,260
Hoylake	11,077
Leasowe	7,112
Mid Wirral	46,733
Rural Area	1,746
Wallasey	59,383
West Kirby	15,197
Wirral MBC	312,376

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PART 2: STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

1. Aim

The recommended aim of this Strategy and Action Plan is that:

Working towards the delivery of its Corporate objectives, WMBC will work directly and with partners to provide an adequate number of sustainable and good quality playing pitches which are properly distributed, managed to be accessible for all Borough residents and able to assist and encourage participation in active formal recreation.

The Strategy is aimed at supporting a number of statutory, corporate and wider objectives, including:

- ❑ The Department of Media, Culture & Sport 'A Sporting Future for All Action Plan' 2000 requirement for playing pitch audits and strategies to be produced by 2005.
- ❑ Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (July 2002).
- ❑ Merseyside Sports Active Sports Development Plan Frameworks, 2001-2006.
- ❑ Merseyside Local Football Partnership and the 'evolving football facilities strategy'.
- ❑ Wirral's Cultural Strategy 'Enriching Our Lives', 2002-2007.
- ❑ WMBC Strategic Plan for Physical Education and School Sport.
- ❑ WMBC Parks & Open Spaces, Sport & Recreation, Youth and Community strategies and other developing sub strategies.
- ❑ Wirral MBC Unitary Development Plan Review and land use planning policies for the provision and protection of playing pitches.

2. Policy objectives

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To deliver the Aim of the strategy WMBC is recommended to work towards achieving the following series of policy objectives:

1. To increase the quality and capacity of existing sports pitch facilities to meet the needs and aspirations of the sports governing bodies, affiliated leagues and local sports clubs.
2. To maintain a quality and quantity of sports pitch provision sufficient to meet the identified needs of local sports clubs and other pitch users.
3. To improve accessibility to sports pitch facilities and the opportunities for local sports clubs to use them.
4. To protect usable, accessible and viable sports pitch facilities within the Borough in the context of the national land use planning system and through the local development plan process.
5. To seek to improve the health and well being of residents by providing high quality opportunities for pitch sports in all areas of the Borough.
6. To support the development of local sports clubs and assist them to meet their needs and aspirations within the Borough boundary.
7. To seek to ensure that all schools are able to deliver the physical education national curriculum and make adequate provision for extra curricular pitch sports.

3. Targets

A number of targets are recommended to enable the policy objectives to be delivered. These include:

Policy

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- ❑ To identify and protect areas of open space that have the potential to contribute to sports pitch provision within the Borough.
- ❑ To develop policies to ensure that any sites lost to development or closure are replaced by accessible facilities of an equivalent or improved standard to meet the continued needs of local residents.
- ❑ To introduce the policies and procedures necessary to enable the Council to use development opportunities to fund improvements to existing sports pitches and to provide additional facilities where appropriate.

Provision and improvement

- ❑ To identify, create and protect a series of key facilities servicing local and Borough wide needs. This should include the designation of Community Sports Fields' (CSFs)
- ❑ To improve the quality of outdoor sports facilities including ancillary facilities such as changing accommodation and car parking as part of a phased programme of investment and activity.
- ❑ To seek to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to maintain sites to an appropriate standard and to ensure that the best quality sites remain available for community use.
- ❑ To work with, and assist partner agencies to bid effectively for resources to provide and maintain usable, accessible and viable sports pitch facilities within the Borough.
- ❑ To review the Playing Pitch Assessment every five years to monitor trends, highlight the impact of improvements and identify new priorities as part of a rolling programme linked to the provision of Best Value.

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Management

- ❑ To enter into lease or joint management arrangements with appropriate local users to deliver a higher quality of site management and effective sports development programmes.
- ❑ To work in partnership with the LEA and local schools to maintain, improve and encourage greater community access to school pitch facilities.
- ❑ To work with local clubs to produce and agree sports development plans, to seek to identify and secure the facility improvements, appropriate sites for new facility development and the funding opportunities necessary to meet these plans.
- ❑ To continue to seek to increase participation in all the pitch sports through sports development initiatives and increased opportunities at good quality facilities.

4. Investment and support

WMBC is recommended to work with partners to ensure that, in all areas, facilities of appropriate quality are provided within a sustainable budgetary and management framework

Community Sports Fields

The designation of Community Sports Fields (CSFs) should incorporate improvement to playing pitches and associated facilities. CSFs should be sites which either already provide a key Borough wide function or which have the potential to provide for a significant proportion of local demand at a single site. In each case they should be sites at which opportunities to play can be enhanced.

CSFs should provide a high quality of facility in terms of playing surfaces, changing rooms and parking. Facility improvements should, wherever

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possible, also be accompanied by security enhancements around pitches and associated facilities and around clubhouses and pavilions.

Self management

Alongside CSF designation it is recommended that WMBC also investigate the potential to enter into additional leasing arrangements for certain pitches and facilities. Self-management could involve local schools and sports clubs working together under a joint use/management arrangement.

It is recommended that WMBC consider a range of self-management options, in particular for playing fields where there is already only one main user.

This may be effective in enabling clubs to seek funding to improve facilities on sites that will only ever be medium or long-term priorities for Wirral MBC investment.

This type of self-management may involve the club having full control of all maintenance and management on only part of the site, which will as a minimum include the pitches and the associated changing accommodation.

Primary school sites

It is recommended that WMBC consider making the primary schools that currently have community use a priority in terms of funding opportunities. These sites are often located in areas that already have an identified shortfall of pitches. They are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bedford Drive Primary | <input type="checkbox"/> Liscard Primary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Castleway Primary | <input type="checkbox"/> Millfields Primary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dell Primary | <input type="checkbox"/> Overchurch Primary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Meols Primary | <input type="checkbox"/> St George Primary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hayfield Special School | <input type="checkbox"/> St Mary's CE Primary |

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Additional support should also be provided to other schools seeking to make their pitch facilities available to the wider community.

Secondary school sites

It is recommended that greater encouragement should also be given to the dual use of secondary school pitches. This should include investment to improve pitch surfaces and to provide changing rooms capable of independent access to support use by the wider community. Commitment to community use by the school should be a condition of funding.

To ensure the continued sustainability of good quality pitches and associated facilities it is recommended that WMBC investigates, in partnership with the sporting community and local residents, the feasibility of designating a number of Community Sports Fields at some of the high school playing fields within the area.

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5. Local standards

The table below summarises the local standards for the catchment areas within the Borough based on identified demand and an evaluation of the adequacy of current sports pitch provision to meet the needs of local sports clubs.

Catchment Area	Existing adequate pitches available for community use Hectares/1,000 population	Existing inadequate pitches available for community use Hectares/1,000 population	Pitches required to meet current shortfall and anticipated future demand Hectares/1,000 population	Local standard to meet current and future needs Hectares./1,000 population
A41 Corridor	0.76	0.19	0.06	1.02
Heswall	0.27	0.21	0.17	0.65
Hoylake	0.40	0.47	-	0.87
Leasowe	1.36	0.43	0.12	1.90
Mid Wirral	0.21	0.73	0.05	0.99
Rural Area	6.11	1.03	-	7.14
Wallasey	0.45	0.23	0.09	0.77
West Kirby	0.54	0.46	0.04	1.04
WIRRAL MBC	0.59	0.32	0.07	0.98

The above figures are derived from an assessment of the quality of the existing pitch stock to meet current and future needs over the next five to ten years. It is recommended that the far right column should replace the national standard currently set out in Policy RE5 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan.

It is recommended that WMBC's long term corporate and land-use policy aspirations should in particular be:

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- ❑ To maintain provision to the local standard in all areas, especially in the areas of highest demand such as Wallasey and the A41 Corridor.
- ❑ To seek to increase the local standard of provision within Heswall and Wallasey in order to meet the Borough average.

To test whether the standard is met in any catchment area, the total number of available public, private and voluntary sector pitches, excluding school pitches used solely for curricular use, should be determined and the area available calculated using the figures in Appendix 9.

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6. Team Generation Rates

Team generation rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. TGRs are derived, by dividing the appropriate population in each age band by the number of teams in the area. Based on an area by area analysis, this can be used to inform (in part) an assessment of the extent to which pitch supply is influencing participation and team migration.

Guidance from Sport England ('Towards A Level Playing Field' 2003) indicates that if an average TGR for a particular sport is 1:500 then:

- 1:100 – high TGR = relatively low latent (unmet) demand.
- 1:1000 – low TGR = relatively high latent (unmet) demand.

TGRs have been calculated on a sport by sport basis for each catchment area. TGRs for Wirral as a whole are also presented as a comparison. Where no TGR is given (and a dash is inserted) this indicates there are no teams within this age group for that area.

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Team Generation Rates by Catchment Area

	A41 Corridor	Heswall	Hoylake	Leasowe	Mid-Wirral	Rural Area	Wallasey	West Kirby	Wirral
Football									
Senior men (16-45)	1:268	1:817	1:466	1:663	1:423	1:294	1:262	1:612	1:320
Senior women (16-45)	1:14,376	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1:30,893
Junior boys (10-15)	1:70	1:67	1:91	1:54	1:63	1:10	1:57	1:73	1:64
Junior girls (10-15)	1:1,942	-	-	-	-	-	-	1:265	1:2,586
Mini soccer (6-9 mixed)	1:202	1:248	1:275	1:73	1:395	1:74	1:155	1:147	1:195
Cricket									
Senior men (18-55)	1:1130	1:1,689	-	-	1:1,371	-	1:1083	1:1,665	1:1,227
Senior women (18-55)	1:18,305	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1:39,919
Junior boys (11-17)	1:383	1:455	-	-	1:443	-	1:243	1:146	1:350
Junior girls (11-17)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rugby Union									
Senior men (18-45)	1:1,395	-	1:555	1:299	-	1:55	1:1,464	1:552	1:1,286
Senior women (18-45)	-	-	-	1:1,429	-	-	-	-	1:57,724
Junior boys (13-17)	1:537	-	1:130	1:293	-	1:11	1:367	1:126	1:399
Junior girls (16-17)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mini rugby (8-12 mixed)	1:1,609	-	1:105	-	-	1:17	1:488	1:138	1:615
Hockey									
Senior men									

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(16-45)	1:2,16 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1:4,71 4
Senior women (16-45)	1:9,58 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1:20,5 95
Junior boys (11-15)	1:1,26 0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1:2,81 4
Junior girls (11-15)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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PART 3: PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

7. Football

During the 2001/2002 season, 105 senior football pitches, 46 junior football pitches and 23 mini soccer pitches were available for community use. These are located on a mix of WMBC Cultural Services, education and privately owned/managed sites.

Number of available football pitches and teams in each catchment area

Catchment Area	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior men	Senior women	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini-soccer
A41 Corridor	48	13	11	97	2	87	3	36
Heswall	5	6	-	6	-	18	-	6
Hoylake	2	4	-	4	-	5	-	2
Leasowe	2	5	5	2	-	7	-	6
Mid-Wirral	25	7	-	20	-	31	-	6
Rural Areas	3	3	-	1	-	6	-	1
Wallasey	16	5	6	43	-	49	-	21
West Kirby	4	3	1	4	-	9	2	5
WIRRAL	105	46	23	177	2	212	5	83

Although the table indicates the number of pitches available for community use, it should be noted that not all available pitches are necessarily booked or used for competitive football. An available pitch may not be booked because of the quality of the playing surface, the availability of ancillary facilities, the geographical pattern of supply and demand or the cost of hire.

Men's and boy's football

Football in Wirral is strong and there are many well-established clubs. Two Wirral based Saturday football leagues service senior football. While both are down to minimum membership numbers, the higher status, West

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Cheshire League (which covers a wider area) has recently increased its number of divisions. The aim of the West Cheshire League, to increase the standard of football being played, appears to be having a significant impact on Wirral based leagues. The higher standard of facility required to enter, and remain in, the West Cheshire League is not only having an impact on the nature of the demand for pitches but also on the quality of pitches available to the other leagues and competitions. This will intensify as teams progress up through the League.

Consultation and research has highlighted that poor quality pitches and ancillary facilities are a serious concern for all the senior leagues operating in Wirral. The conclusion is that the quality of existing facilities is in some cases inhibiting individuals from continuing, or taking up, pitch sports. The demand for higher quality facilities is being reinforced by wider social trends that appear to make poorer facilities less acceptable to a wider spectrum of players.

The Assessment Report indicates that approximately half of all senior pitches in the Borough are considered to be inadequate. There is not, however, any great movement of Wirral based clubs to seek pitches in adjacent boroughs. This is, reportedly, because pitches/ancillary facilities in these areas are of even poorer quality. The league secretary of the Ellesmere Port Sunday League, for example, reports that pitch sites also lack suitable changing accommodation.

Junior age football is buoyant in Wirral. Junior clubs, in the main, compete within three affiliated leagues. These operate evenly over the whole Borough. They are the:

- ❑ Eastham Junior Football League.
- ❑ Ellesmere Port Junior League.
- ❑ Wallasey Junior Football League.

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The Assessment Report indicates that approximately 40% of junior football pitches are considered to be inadequate.

The lack of a sufficient number of good quality junior pitches is forcing many junior teams to play on senior sized pitches. Research demonstrates that the majority of existing junior sites suffer from poor pitch quality and poor ancillary facilities. While the wear and tear from junior use is less than for adult use, the additional pressure on senior pitches in areas of high demand is further eroding surface quality at a number of sites.

There could be more demand for mini soccer than is currently realised. Three leagues currently service mini soccer in Wirral. According to league secretaries more central venue sites are needed throughout Wirral to attract more players. The Assessment Report indicates that approximately 30% of mini soccer pitches are considered to be inadequate.

There is currently a significant reduction in the number of players moving from the junior leagues to senior open age teams. Some respondents point to a lack of youth-based leagues capable of bridging this gap. The Birkenhead Sunday League has operated a youth division for a number of years and the Wallasey Sunday League introduced a new youth division in 2002. The Ellesmere Port Junior League is also considering a new division for under 17 year-olds. Increased provision for this age group will further increase the pressure on existing facilities.

Peak times for senior and youth football are Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. The peak time for junior play is Sunday afternoon. In most areas in Wirral, the number of junior teams seeking pitches on Sunday afternoon exceeds the number of teams seeking pitches during the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning peaks.

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Women's and girl's football

Women's football is strong within Wirral. Women's football clubs, in the main, compete within two affiliated leagues: the AXA Premier League and the Northwest Women's League. Currently two Wirral-based ladies teams play within Wirral: Wirral Ladies FC formerly Bromborough Archers and Tranmere Ladies FC. Liverpool Ladies FC Reserves will begin to play at Poulton Victoria's home ground from 2002/2003.

Participation in women's and girl's football is expected to continue to increase over the longer term particularly with the growth of mini soccer and the development of the Active Sports Programme.

In the shadow of the successful women's football clubs playing in Wirral, girl's football does not have the same opportunity to thrive and there is as yet no formal link between junior and senior clubs. Wirral FA does not provide a girl's league and teams must belong to either the Liverpool Girl's League or the Cheshire Girl's Leagues. Both have major travel implications for Wirral based clubs.

The Wirral Girl's League was operational for two seasons with twelve u13 and u15 teams but folded in 2001 because of what were termed 'administrative problems'. According to one club representative, there was a lack of interest from local clubs in running girl's teams, but the League representative suggests that its failure was also due to a lack of support from the County FA and limited funding opportunities. It was also suggested that the lack of available school facilities contributed to the League's demise.

The majority of the teams have now folded. Individual team members are thought to have either gone to Tranmere Rovers youth section or are now not playing. Around five teams still play, but they must travel considerable distances to access appropriate competition. For example, Cheshire Girl's League teams play at the central venue site at Moss Farm, Northwich.

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Irby JFC reports that there is demand to create junior girl's teams. It is hoping to create two or three teams that will play in the Cheshire Girls League. An 'Awards for All' application will be entered to fund the set up process.

Shortfalls in the quality of existing pitch provision also impact on women's and girls football. The absence of sites with appropriate changing provision remains a barrier to growth in the short term.

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Summary of shortfall and need

The research identifies latent demand for at least five senior, 15 junior and two mini-soccer pitches. The “numeric position” is, however, marked by significant deficiencies in the quality of the facilities available across the Borough. The demand for higher quality facilities is set to increase further over the short to medium term.

Wallasey and Birkenhead have been identified as areas of major demand, where participation may also be suppressed due to the limited availability of local facilities. There is a pressing need to protect the existing stock of pitches in these areas and to improve sites to cater for high local demand. Sites elsewhere within the A41 Corridor will continue to be required to meet over-spill demand from Greater Birkenhead¹. Sites in Leasowe are also required to meet over-spill demand from Wallasey, until adequate additional provision can be secured in Wallasey.

Higher quality facilities are generally provided at privately owned and managed sites. These should continue to be recognised and protected as an important part of the overall supply of sites for football in Wirral.

¹ Greater Birkenhead includes the electoral Wards of Birkenhead, Bidston, Claughton, Oxtun, Tranmere, Egerton and Prenton (east of the M53).

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8. Cricket

Seven cricket leagues service club competition in Wirral. Most of the senior leagues also have junior divisions. One independent league runs cricket solely for youth and junior competition in Wirral. These leagues are:

- ❑ Bromborough Paints Merseyside Competition.
- ❑ Jacobs and Co. Cheshire Women's Cricket League.
- ❑ Liverpool and District Cricket Competition.
- ❑ Mellor Braggins Cheshire County League.
- ❑ Murray Smith Cheshire County League.
- ❑ Shammah Nicholls Cheshire Cricket Alliance.
- ❑ Wirral Junior Cricket League.

Number of available cricket pitches and teams in each catchment area

Catchment Area	No. of available pitches			No. of teams			
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior men	Senior women	Junior boys	Junior girls
A41 Corridor	18	-	-	29	2	18	-
Heswall	2	-	-	4	-	3	-
Hoylake	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Leasowe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mid-Wirral	2	-	-	8	-	5	-
Rural Areas	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wallasey	4	-	-	13	-	13	-
West Kirby	2	-	-	5	-	5	-
WIRRAL	29	-	-	59	2	44	-

In general the last five years has seen an increase in the number of teams being run within the majority of Wirral based cricket clubs. In addition, school cricket participation has increased, with far more schools putting teams forward for LA organised cricket tournaments, even though the cricket SDO reports that inner city schools lack access to cricket facilities. One girl's team played in the school tournaments last year, but with Active Sports in place for this year the expectation is that this number will

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increase. The Council's Sports Development Unit is keen to see further developments of club-school links in order for school teams to feed more effectively into clubs.

Within Wirral there is a specific geographical divide of cricket clubs, defined broadly by the location of the motorway. The more affluent catchment areas to the west of the motorway, which also have a greater access to suitable land, provide the greater number of clubs and often have the better quality facilities. In comparison the catchment areas to the east provide a smaller number of clubs often with facilities that need improvement.

In the opinion of the cricket SDO, the areas of Wallasey and New Brighton evidence a suppressed demand for cricket because demand for football is so high. This may also be related to the general lack of cricket facilities within the Wallasey area as a whole. New Brighton CC and Wallasey CC have had to secure sites at Bidston and at Bromborough Pool to gain access to a second pitch for third team competition.

Three clubs, in particular, are struggling to provide for junior teams:

- ❑ Tranmere Victoria CC
- ❑ Birkenhead St Mary's CC
- ❑ Liscard Central CC.

Only St. Mary's currently has access to a second pitch. The Sports Development Unit has highlighted these as its priority clubs. Tranmere Victoria CC has also been highlighted as a priority club to support in the context of improvements to pitch quality.

According to the cricket SDO, the new ECB regulation that top-flight clubs will need to provide a second pitch is unlikely to have a major effect on the majority of Wirral based clubs. It is felt that there are sufficient cricket pitches to withstand this increased demand. The issue will be the cost of

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maintaining and managing those pitches. Many third team pitches are not provided at an appropriate standard and, for example, do not have covers.

Women and girls cricket

There are two women's cricket clubs with home grounds in Wirral, each with one team:

- Oxton LCC
- Birkenhead Park LCC

There is no identified future or latent demand for women/girls cricket.

Summary of shortfall and need

Through the Active Sports programme, development staff and the new ECB regulation that top-flight clubs will need a second pitch, it has been identified that at least two cricket clubs in Wirral will need to find access to a second pitch. In addition, there is latent demand for one additional cricket pitch in the A41 Corridor. It is considered that the lack of good quality facilities in the East of the Borough (for example Central Park) may be suppressing demand in this area. Sites within Wallasey and the A41 Corridor will need to be protected until additional and improved provision can be secured.

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9. Hockey

Number of artificial turf pitches (ATPs) and hockey teams in each catchment area

Catchment Area	No. of full size ATPs			No. of teams			
	Public	Private	Schools	Senior men	Senior women	Junior Boys	Junior girls
A41 Corridor	2	2	-	12	3	4	-
Heswall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hoylake	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Leasowe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mid-Wirral	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rural Areas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wallasey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Kirby	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
WIRRAL	2	2	2	12	3	4	-

Two clubs play hockey in Wirral:

- ❑ Oxton HC.
- ❑ Bebington HC.

Oxton HC currently plays its home matches at ATPs at two private school sites in Birkenhead. Bebington HC uses the public ATP at the Bebington Oval but also uses a site outside the Borough in neighbouring Ellesmere Port and Neston. Neston South Wirral HC has a home base just over the Wirral boundary and attracts a number of its players from west Wirral.

Hockey is played by a number of high schools across Wirral. There are well-established schools hockey associations and there is currently a high demand from schools to seek to obtain their own ATP. There is also a strong demand to make ATPs available for football training.

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Hockey is part of phase two of the Active Sports Development Programme in Wirral. A number of issues have emerged that the programme hopes to address.

The activator has been particularly concerned about the wider availability of the existing school ATPs. All four have been provided independently, without the need to secure a formal community use agreement to obtain funding. As a result, they effectively operate as private, exclusive use facilities and use by the wider community and by the Council's Sports Development Unit has, until recently, been severely constrained.

It has also been identified that the Wallasey area does not yet have an accessible ATP facility. The hockey SDO is interested in the development of an ATP for school and community access in order to develop a new club in this area.

WMBC has been actively promoting the provision of additional ATPs across the Borough to address demand. Stage 1 approval has recently been granted by Sport England for a new floodlit ATP at Pensby and three new ATPs are proposed for funding at school sites under Round 3 of the New Opportunities Fund. All four will be subject to formal community use agreements. This programme should go some way towards addressing the activator's concerns with regard to wider community access and is set to provide two new ATP facilities in Wallasey.

Women's and girl's hockey

Bebington HC is due to set up a women's section in light of the high demand to join the Oxton HC women's section. The Oxton women's section has been in existence for around five years following a merger with the Port Sunlight Ladies HC. Both Oxton and Bebington have junior sections but because of the lack of leagues within a suitable catchment area they only provide friendly matches. For example, for the U13 age level the nearest league is based in Macclesfield.

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Summary of shortfall and need

There is no identified short-term demand for additional facilities for competitive hockey. The four new ATPs proposed, if managed effectively, should be adequate to meet curricular demands, the demands arising from additional sports development activity, and the demand for football training, for the medium to longer term.

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10. Rugby Union

Number of available rugby pitches and teams in each catchment area

Catchment Area	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior men	Senior women	Junior boys	Junior Girls	Mini rugby
A41 Corridor	14	-	-	17	-	9	-	6
Heswall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hoylake	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	7
Leasowe	3	1	-	4	1	1	-	-
Mid-Wirral	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rural Areas	3	-	2	5	-	4	-	6
Wallasey	4	-	-	7	-	6	-	9
West Kirby	3	-	-	4	-	4	-	7
WIRRAL	30	1	2	40	1	27	-	35

There are ten men's clubs and one women's club in Wirral providing opportunities for senior and junior participation. Senior men play competitive rugby either in North West Two or the South Lancashire/Cheshire League. New Brighton RUFC plays in National Division Three North. Some junior teams play matches within a non-affiliated league structure.

According to the rugby SDO the number of teams per club has reduced over the last three years in Wirral. If these trends continue, some clubs may be forced to rationalise. Rugby is currently at stage two of the Active Sports Programme with the aim of getting funds to the clubs to improve child protection and management. This will be achieved through running ten-week programmes at individual clubs across the Borough.

The Wirral Rugby Academy is currently based at New Brighton RUFC and has had some success according to the rugby SDO, in terms of its coaching and player development and by providing exit routes for players into clubs. The Academy has recently applied for SRB3 funding to develop more sports in

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the same way. Liverpool John Moores University RUFC travels from outside the Borough to use the facilities at Birkenhead Park RUFC.

Summary of shortfall and need

Research shows that the number of people playing rugby union has decreased in Wirral leading to a decrease in the number of teams. While some clubs are beginning to struggle, a number of well-established clubs operating at the higher levels are still operating at strength and Birkenhead Park RUFC in particular has identified a latent demand for one junior and one senior rugby pitch. The continued popularity of mini-rugby may create demand for additional pitch space.

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11. Lacrosse

There is one Lacrosse club in Wirral (Wirral Lacrosse Club). It currently runs one women's team and three junior teams at u16, u14 and u12. It plays in the Northern Lacrosse League.

According to a club representative there is some pressure from Manchester based clubs (where Lacrosse is particularly strong) and the English Lacrosse Association to start running boys/men's teams at the Club. In Lacrosse, men's and women's clubs are usually separate. The Club would struggle to accommodate more matches on its current pitch on the outfield at Oxton CC and would need more space. There is currently no men's team in the area but the Club believes that with the right support the demand exists.

There is potential to provide for the sport via increased winter use of cricket grounds.

Summary of shortfall and need

Research shows little short-term demand for additional lacrosse pitches. Wirral Lacrosse Club's belief that future demand for additional pitches would result from the creation of a men's section at the Club should be taken into consideration.

12. American Football

A Wirral-based club was first established in 1986 and has played at a number of Council sites, including the Leverhulme Playing Fields. Until recently it played home matches at Wallasey RUFC but from 2003 will play and train at Old Parkonians RUFC in Oxton. The Merseyside Nighthawks AFC is the only American Football Club in Merseyside. The nearest

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alternative clubs are at Chester and at Horwich in Lancashire. The Club plans to develop junior teams through its well publicised “rookie camps”.

Summary of shortfall and need

There is no short-term current demand for additional American Football pitches, although the Club’s intention to develop a junior team should be taken into consideration. If successful, additional pitches may be required.

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13. Summary of shortfall

Consultation with representatives from national governing bodies, local leagues and clubs reveals evidence of the short-term need for a small number of additional pitches based on current levels of demand. The main requirements so far identified are:

- ❑ Five senior football pitches.
- ❑ 15 junior football pitches.
- ❑ Two mini-soccer pitches.
- ❑ One cricket pitch.
- ❑ Access to second pitches for two cricket clubs.
- ❑ One senior rugby pitch.
- ❑ One junior rugby pitch.
- ❑ The possible need for a central venue site for girls' football.
- ❑ The possible need for an additional central venue site for mini-soccer.
- ❑ The possible need for additional provision for mini-rugby.

A number of clubs also indicate a need for additional provision because the quality of existing facilities is limiting, and occasionally preventing, an appropriate level or quality of use or because access to an improved, alternative site is limited by the local supply of suitable sites with extra capacity. This information shows that the existing pattern of facility provision is, to some extent, inhibiting club development and limiting the opportunity to participate in pitch sports.

The most significant issue arising out of the research is the impact of the quality of pitches and ancillary facilities. This factor is suppressing the demand for (and the growth of) particular sports within Wirral. Football league secretaries, for example, believe that years of under-investment in infrastructure and maintenance has been a contributory factor to the playing of a lower standard of football.

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The research clearly demonstrates that a number of WMBC pitches lack adequate changing facilities relative to the number of pitches on the site. Some of these facilities, in terms of health and safety and security, appear to barely meet minimum quality standards. This in turn, limits the stock of pitches that can be used for senior competition, because of County FA or other normal league requirements, for separate changing rooms, hot water and separate changing provision for officials.

Under-investment in the pitch infrastructure on school sites has also led to a decline in quality. Many playing fields are unable to support an appropriate level of use. Some schools already experience difficulties meeting curriculum requirements and additional community use could not be accommodated at many others.

While school pitches could cater for local junior and senior football, in many cases, schools do not allow access to their changing facilities - now a basic requirement for senior competitions. The majority of primary schools do not have changing rooms at all.

Parking provision at some sites is poor. This not only affects playing pitch users but can also become a highway safety issue. This situation does not aid the cause of local sport. Football, in particular, already has a poor perception amongst some local residents.

These qualitative issues are creating an artificially low level of use and demand for certain sports. Some clubs indicated, via the survey and consultation, that if the quality of facilities were improved they would be able to generate and run additional teams. This assessment has shown that, in part because of the poor quality of facilities, there is in some areas a low demand for facilities and therefore little requirement for additional pitches.

The issue of quality must therefore be taken into account in the analysis of the adequacy of provision. In terms of this assessment the approach has

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been to identify those sites or pitches that are inadequate for the following reasons:

- ❑ They have poor playing surfaces (often due to drainage, waterlogging, unevenness).
- ❑ They have no changing facilities or an inadequate number of changing facilities relative to the number of pitches.
- ❑ They offer no, or only very limited, off-street parking provision.
- ❑ They lack access to changing facilities, particularly at school sites, or because the additional cost of making a caretaker available out of school hours is too onerous.
- ❑ They require junior teams to play on senior sized pitches rather than junior pitches, which are more appropriate to their level.

The identification of existing sites that require significant investment within the local standard will assist WMBC to better target resources to maximise recreational open space provision through development opportunities in the future. Using commuted sums, existing capital budgets and other funding the Council should, progressively, be able to reduce the number of inadequate pitches identified in this assessment. This could be done by either providing investment into existing facilities or by providing new facilities of the appropriate standard.

The overall scale of the improvements identified as necessary by this assessment can be summarised as:

- ❑ 21 pitches at six sites require major improvements to existing changing facilities.
- ❑ 25 pitches at 12 sites require serviced changing facilities to be provided.
- ❑ 55 pitches at 22 sites require improvements to drainage and/or levels.

In the longer term, improvements to facility provision could increase the use of and demand for pitch provision. WMBC should review the adequacy of provision as part of a rolling programme at least every five years to

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identify ongoing inadequacies in provision and to revise priorities as applicable.

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PART 4: ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

14. A41 Corridor: Assessment of current situation

Summary of available pitches and teams

Sport	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior men	Senior women	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini
Football	48	13	11	97	2	87	3	36
Cricket	18	-	-	29	2	18	-	-
Hockey	4	-	-	12	3	4	-	-
Rugby Union	14	-	-	17	-	9	-	6
Lacrosse	1	-	-	-	1	-	3	-

Summary of identified inadequate pitch sites

Site	Inadequacies/comment	No. of pitches
Acre Lane	Previous license to Shore Villa JFC abandoned due to poor drainage and fixtures not being fulfilled. No changing facility. No independent parking.	2 senior football
Birkenhead Park	Poor drainage on all pitches and poor pitch levels. Can only withstand one match per week. Changing some distance from pitches.	3 senior football
Bromborough Rec.	Poor drainage reducing its capacity. Users report unacceptable changing accommodation. No off-road parking.	1 senior football
Conway Park	Site is generally in poor condition. Poor drainage and can only withstand one match per week. No off-road parking.	2 junior football
Green Lane	This site is let down by having no changing facility. Good pitch drainage but poor levels.	4 senior football
King's Lane	Poor contours and pitch drainage. Changing is limited and with no showers. It is in poor condition. Limited parking.	1 senior football 2 junior football 2 mini football
New Ferry Park	Although drainage is acceptable, the pitch levels are unacceptable, making it unplayable at times.	1 senior football

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Site	Inadequacies/comment	No. of pitches
The Oval	Drainage is rated as unacceptable.	1 senior football
Torr Park	No showers available in the new changing facility. Limited car parking is located some distance from the pitch.	1 cricket
Victoria Park	Drainage and levels are poor on the football pitches. A number of users report unacceptable quality. The cricket pitch is also in poor condition.	2 junior football 1 cricket
Total		13 senior football 6 junior football 2 mini football 2 cricket

Plymyard Playing Fields also has a parking problem. A car park extension was planned but failed to gain funding.

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Summary of identified latent/future demand

Club	Site	Level of latent demand	Pitch requirement
Birkenhead Park RUFC	Birkenhead Park	One senior, mini U8 – U11, one ladies, two youth teams	1 senior rugby 1 junior rugby
Blu FC	Birkenhead Park	Could expand number of teams significantly if more pitches available, including U15/U12, two girls teams and one open age team.	2 junior football 0.5 senior football
Manor Athletic	Octel Sports & Social Club	Club reports demand to develop a number of junior teams through the age groups. None can be accommodated currently at the site.	2 junior football
Old Parkonians	Old Parkonians New Development	Club currently hires a pitch off site to accommodate two senior teams. It is now becoming too costly to maintain this.	1 cricket
Allport Hawks	Octel Sports & Social Club	At least two junior teams. Limited number of junior pitches available at the Club compared to demand.	1 junior football
Total			0.5 senior football 5 junior football 1 cricket 1 senior rugby 1 junior rugby

Supply and Demand

There are supply and demand issues for cricket, football and rugby within the A41 Corridor but the most significant issues relate to football.

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An analysis of football pitches in the A41 Corridor shows no overall shortfall in provision. The principal issues are the quality of existing provision and a shortfall in the number of pitches available for junior play.

Football teams

While 189 teams have their origins within the A41 Corridor, 187 teams play their home fixtures within the catchment area.

Eleven senior teams, five youth teams, one junior team, two ladies teams and three girls teams play their home fixtures outside the catchment area. Twelve senior teams including three from Ellesmere Port & Neston, two youth teams, and six junior teams including four from Ellesmere Port & Neston, from outside the catchment area, play home fixtures at sites within the A41 Corridor.

Minimum levels of provision

The minimum provision needed to meet the local pattern of demand for senior pitches within the A41 Corridor would be:

- ❑ 34 pitches at the two matches per week standard; and
- ❑ Two pitches at the three matches per week standard.

This would provide the equivalent of 148 half shares. All 36 pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

The minimum provision necessary to meet the current pattern of use within the A41 Corridor would be:

- ❑ 29 pitches at the two matches per week standard; and
- ❑ Five pitches at the three matches per week standard.

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This would provide the equivalent of 146 half shares. All 34 pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

Expressed latent demand from senior clubs and junior teams that may need senior pitches would suggest the need for between one and three additional senior pitches.

The A41 Corridor needs at least 19 junior pitches to accommodate peak demand for teams within the u11 to u13 age groups. Expressed latent demand from junior clubs would suggest the need for between three and five additional junior pitches depending on the age group of the new teams created.

Current Levels of Provision

The current level of provision of senior pitches in the A41 Corridor is:

- ❑ seven pitches at the one match per week standard;
- ❑ 24 pitches at the two matches per week standard; and
- ❑ eight pitches at the three matches per week standard.

Another seven senior pitches are provided at private sites in addition to the facilities operated by Tranmere Rovers FC. A further two are disused because of the very poor standard of the playing surface.

Five senior pitches do not have access to changing rooms and another five only have access to substandard facilities. Seven are overplayed against their current match capacity grading.

One junior pitch is provided at a private site and three are provided at local primary schools. Three junior pitches do not have changing rooms and four others only have access to poor quality facilities. Three are only used for mini-soccer. Two junior pitches are overplayed against their current match capacity grading.

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Operational access

48 senior football pitches and 13 junior pitches are available for community use in the A41 Corridor. 13 senior pitches and six junior pitches are regularly played on despite being of an 'unsatisfactory' standard.

Analysis of demand indicates a total of 105 senior and youth football teams playing home fixtures within the A41 Corridor. Of these 103 play matches at recognised 'peak demand' times: 36 on Saturday afternoon and 67 on Sunday morning. 74 junior teams play on Sunday afternoons.

There are potentially 96 match booking periods available on Saturday afternoon and 96 on Sunday morning. This suggests that up to 192 senior and youth teams could be accommodated within the area, if the facilities could be provided to an acceptable standard. In practice, only 103 booking periods are currently taken up during these periods.

Saturday morning usage

Only one senior pitch at the Oval and the private pitch at Price's Sports Ground are used on Saturday morning.

Saturday afternoon usage

On Saturday afternoon 12 sites (40 football pitches) are booked for senior play. The senior pitches at Borough Road, Eastham Locks Sports Ground, New Ferry Park, Mayfields, King's Lane, Price's Sports Ground and The Glen are not used on Saturday afternoon. Only the private pitch at Cammell Lairds FC is fully booked and there is, therefore, theoretical capacity at all of the other available sites.

Sunday morning usage

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On Sunday morning, 13 sites (44 pitches) are used. Seven of the sites, Bebington Recreation Ground, Leverhulme Sports Ground, Mayfields, Plymyard Playing Fields, Wirral Sports Centre and the private pitches at Eastham Locks Sports Ground and at the Shaftesbury Youth Club are all booked to capacity. The other six sites have un-booked pitches. Only the senior pitches at Bromborough Recreation Ground, King's Lane Playing Fields, Price's Sports Ground and The Glen are not used for senior play on Sunday morning.

Sunday afternoon usage

Conway Park, Plymyard Playing Fields, Borough Road and the private sites at Octel Sports Ground, Old Parkonians and the Shaftesbury Memorial Playing Fields are fully booked on Sunday afternoon. Pitches at The Glen and Victoria Park are double played. A number of school sites are also fully utilised for mini-soccer.

21 junior teams, at u13 and below, are currently playing on senior size pitches within the A41 Corridor.

The theoretical capacity at other sites is limited by their ability to withstand senior play at other times of peak demand. The senior pitches at Leverhulme Playing Fields, the Oval, Wirral Sports Centre and the private site at Cammell Lairds are not played on Sunday afternoon in order to protect the quality of senior play.

Recommended Action for the A41 Corridor

Football

While the number of pitches already available within the A41 Corridor should be adequate to meet demand, the quality and type of existing facilities is preventing this from being realised. There is a need to improve

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the quality of the playing surfaces and changing facilities at a number of sites and a need to identify sites to accommodate additional junior pitches.

Based on this assessment, WMBC should seek to:

- ❑ maintain the existing provision of playing fields to allow the necessary improvements to be secured to meet local demand within the catchment area;
- ❑ support the improvement of a minimum of seven of the poorer senior pitches to meet the two matches per week standard or better;
- ❑ investigate the possible transfer of senior pitches to meet part of the shortfall in junior pitches;
- ❑ explore the feasibility of identifying sites to provide additional junior pitches as required; and
- ❑ support a programme to provide and refurbish changing accommodation to County FA standards, such as at Birkenhead Park, Borough Road, Green Lane, Higher Bebington Recreation Ground, and King's Lane.

Rugby Union

Two existing rugby union clubs within the A41 Corridor are currently seeking additional pitches to assist with further club development. WMBC should seek to:

- ❑ support Birkenhead Park RUFC to identify additional pitches to provide facilities for training, junior, women's and youth teams; and
- ❑ support Old Anselmians RUFC to identify additional land to provide facilities for mini-rugby.

Cricket

A number of cricket clubs within the A41 Corridor are seeking improved facilities and access to second pitches. WMBC should seek to:

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- ❑ support Birkenhead St Mary's CC to identify a suitable site for a second pitch;
- ❑ support Old Parkonians CC to provide a second pitch on vacant land adjacent to their existing club facilities at Holm Lane;
- ❑ support Tranmere Victoria CC to provide improvements to the playing surface and the changing facilities at Victoria Park;
- ❑ support Eastham Bromborough CC to provide improved facilities at Torr Park; and
- ❑ support initiatives to improve the facilities at the Leverhulme Playing Fields.

General

The Council should not permit the loss of any existing playing field in the A41 Corridor to development unless the sports pitches and ancillary facilities will be replaced, on a one-for-one basis, at another site within the catchment area.

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15. Heswall: Assessment of current situation

Summary of available pitches and teams

Sport	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior men	Senior women	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini
Football	5	6	-	6	-	18	-	6
Cricket	2	-	-	4	-	3	-	-
Hockey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rugby Union	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Summary of identified latent/future demand

Club	Site	Level of latent demand	Pitch requirement
Longcroft FC	Puddy Dale	Could run an additional senior team if more pitches were available.	0.5 senior football
Heswall AFC	Gayton Park	Could produce one U16 team, one ladies team and a veteran team if further improvements were made to changing and more pitches were developed.	1 senior football
Irby JFC	Irby Recreation Ground	Has outgrown current facilities. Teams on the increase and could expand further if more pitches were available. The Club believes that at least two junior pitches are required in the near future. An additional junior pitch to accommodate more girls' teams is also required.	3 junior football
Total			3 junior football 1.5 senior football

Summary of identified inadequate pitch sites

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Site	Inadequacies/comment	No. of pitches
Chester Road PF	No changing facility on site. Poor drainage, although pitch levels are good.	1 junior football
Gayton Park PF	Site in poor condition according to council staff. No changing provision.	1 junior football
Puddy Dale	No changing facility on site	1 senior football
Ridgewood Park	Two pitches have poor drainage. Changing facility cannot accommodate all teams especially junior players. Parking area over-marked with basketball court causes conflict, and shared with local play area and community hall.	1 senior football 1 junior football
Whitfield Common	Poor quality changing facility with no toilets and a lack of lighting means pitch is not used to capacity at peak times.	1 senior football
Total		3 junior football 3 senior football

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Supply and Demand

The principal supply and demand issues in Heswall relate to football. There is no provision for hockey or rugby union within the area.

There is a shortfall in both the quality and quantity of sports pitch provision within this catchment area. The main issues relate to the lack of suitable changing accommodation and to the need to identify additional sites to meet latent demand.

Football teams

While 24 teams have their origins within Heswall, 26 teams play their home fixtures within the catchment area.

Three senior teams, one junior team and one ladies team from outside the catchment area play home fixtures at sites within Heswall.

Minimum levels of provision

The minimum provision needed to meet the local pattern of demand for senior pitches within Heswall would be:

- ❑ Three pitches at the two matches per week standard; and
- ❑ One pitch at the three matches per week standard.

This would provide the equivalent of 18 half shares. All four pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

The minimum provision necessary to meet the current pattern of use within Heswall would be:

- ❑ Three pitches at the three matches per week standard.

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This would provide the equivalent of 18 half shares. All three pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

Expressed latent demand from senior clubs would suggest the need for up to two additional senior pitches.

Heswall needs only four junior pitches to accommodate peak demand for teams within the u11 to u13 age groups. Expressed latent demand from junior clubs would suggest the need for up to three additional junior pitches.

Current Levels of Provision

The current level of provision of senior pitches in Heswall is:

- ❑ One pitch at the one match per week standard; and
- ❑ Three pitches at the two matches per week standard;

Another senior pitch is provided at a private site. Two senior pitches do not have access to changing rooms and two are overplayed against their current match capacity grading.

Three junior pitches do not have changing rooms and the others only have access to poor quality facilities.

Operational access

In the Heswall area there are five senior and six junior football pitches available for community use. Three senior pitches and two junior pitches are regularly played on despite being of an “unsatisfactory” standard.

Analysis of demand indicates a total of 10 senior and youth football teams playing home fixtures within the area. Seven teams play matches at recognised ‘peak demand’ times: four on Saturday afternoon and three on

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Sunday morning. 13 junior teams and one women's team play on Sunday afternoon.

There are potentially 10 match booking periods available on Saturday afternoons and 10 on Sunday mornings. If all the pitches were provided to an appropriate quality, up to 20 senior or youth teams could be accommodated within this area. However, in practice only seven booking periods are currently taken up at these times.

Saturday morning usage

On Saturday mornings only one pitch at Puddy Dale, is fully booked. There is, therefore, theoretical capacity at all other sites to accommodate Saturday morning matches.

Saturday afternoon usage

One pitch at Ridgewood Park and the private site at Gayton Park are fully booked on Saturday afternoon. There is theoretical spare capacity at Puddy Dale, Whitfield Common and at the second senior pitch at Ridgewood Park.

Sunday morning usage

On Sunday morning Ridgewood Park and the private site at Gayton Park are used. Ridgewood Park could accommodate another senior team.

Sunday afternoon usage

Most sites are fully booked on Sunday afternoon. Only the senior pitches at Gayton Park and Ridgewood Park are not used for junior matches.

Three junior teams, at u13 and below, are currently playing on senior size pitches in Heswall.

Recommended Action for Heswall

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Football

The number of senior and junior football pitches already available within Heswall should be adequate to meet locally derived demand. The main issues in this catchment area relate to the lack of suitable changing accommodation and the need to identify additional sites to meet latent demand.

Based on this assessment, WMBC should seek to:

- ❑ maintain and improve the existing provision of pitches to meet local demand within the catchment area;
- ❑ support the improvement of at least one of the poorer senior pitches to meet the three matches per week standard;
- ❑ explore the feasibility of providing an additional senior pitch within the area;
- ❑ explore the feasibility of providing an additional junior pitch within the area; and
- ❑ support the provision of changing accommodation to County FA standards at sites without the relevant facilities, such as Puddy Dale, Whitfield Common, Irby Recreation Ground and Gayton Park/Chester High Road.

General

The Council should not permit the loss of any existing playing field in Heswall to development unless the sports pitches and ancillary facilities will be replaced, on a one-to-one basis, at another site within the catchment area.

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16. Hoylake: Assessment of current situation

Summary of available pitches and teams

Sport	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior men	Senior women	Junior boys	Junior Girls	Mini
Football	2	4	-	4	-	5	-	2
Cricket	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hockey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rugby Union	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	7

Summary of identified latent/future demand

No latent demand has been identified in this catchment area.

Summary of identified inadequate pitch sites

Site	Inadequacies/comment	No. of pitches
Acres Road	Pitches have deteriorated over the last few years. Current state of changing facility is unacceptable, although work is being carried out by one team – this may limit site use by other teams.	2 junior football
Elm Grove (Ship Inn)	Liable to flooding and cancellations and has only temporary changing provision following a fire.	1 senior football
Sandringham Avenue	Site prone to flooding. Poor drainage on both pitches. Senior pitch has not been hired due to its poor quality. No changing rooms and limited parking.	1 junior football 1 senior football
Total		3 junior football 2 senior football

Supply and Demand

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The principal supply and demand issues in Hoylake relate to football. There is no provision for cricket or hockey within the area.

Analysis of football pitches in the Hoylake area shows no overall shortfall in provision. The main issues relate to the very poor quality of the existing facilities. The quality of facilities in Hoylake is expected to have suppressed local demand for both senior and junior play.

Football teams

While nine teams have their origins within Hoylake, only six teams play their home fixtures within the catchment area.

Two senior teams and one youth team from Hoylake play their home fixtures outside the catchment area because of the poor condition of the existing facilities. One junior team from West Kirby plays home fixtures within Hoylake.

Minimum levels of provision

The minimum provision needed to meet the local pattern of demand for senior pitches within Hoylake would be:

- ❑ One pitch at the two matches per week standard; and
- ❑ One pitch at the three matches per week standard.

This would provide the equivalent of 10 half shares. Both pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

The minimum provision necessary to meet the current pattern of use within Hoylake would be:

- ❑ One pitch at the two matches per week standard.

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This would provide the equivalent of four half shares. This pitch would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

Hoylelake needs only two junior pitches to accommodate peak demand for teams within the u11 to u13 age groups.

Current Levels of Provision

The current level of provision of senior pitches in Hoylelake is:

- Two pitches at the one match per week standard.

One senior pitch has no changing rooms and the other has only temporary changing accommodation.

One junior pitch is provided at a local primary school. Of the other junior pitches, one has no changing rooms and the other only has access to poor quality facilities.

Operational access

In the Hoylelake area two senior and four junior football pitches are available for community use. Both senior pitches are regularly played on despite being of an 'unsatisfactory' standard. Only one junior pitch at a school site is of adequate quality for regular play.

The analysis of demand indicates only one senior and five junior football teams playing home fixtures within the area. The only senior team plays its match at a recognised 'peak demand' time on a Saturday afternoon. The five junior teams play on Sunday afternoon.

In the Hoylelake catchment there are potentially four match-booking periods available on Saturday afternoons and four on Sunday mornings. Up to eight

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senior or youth teams could play in Hoylake on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning if the facilities could be provided to an appropriate standard. In practice, only one booking period is currently taken up at these times.

Saturday morning usage

On Saturday morning no pitches are used. There is, therefore, theoretical capacity at all sites to accommodate Saturday morning matches.

Saturday afternoon usage

One team uses the Acres Road Playing Field on Saturday afternoon.

Sunday morning usage

One team uses Elm Grove on Sunday mornings. Match cancellations occur regularly due to waterlogging.

Sunday afternoon usage

Acres Road Playing Field is fully let on Sunday afternoon. One team from West Kirby uses Sandringham Avenue as a pitch of last resort.

Recommended Action for Hoylake

Football

The number of senior and junior pitches already available within Hoylake should be adequate to meet locally derived demand. The main issues in this catchment area relate to a lack of adequate changing accommodation and to very poor drainage at the majority of the available sites.

Based on this assessment, WMBC should seek to:

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- ❑ maintain and improve the existing provision of pitches to meet local demand within the catchment area;
- ❑ investigate the technical feasibility of providing adequate drainage to the low lying land at Sandringham Avenue/Elm Grove and Acres Road;
cont...
- ❑ support a package of improvements to provide the equivalent of one senior pitch at the three matches per week standard, one senior pitch at the two matches per week standard and two junior pitches within the catchment area; and
- ❑ support the provision of changing accommodation to County FA standards at sites without the relevant facilities, including Elm Grove.

General

The Council should not permit the loss of any existing playing field in Hoylake to development until the necessary improvements to meet this Strategy have been secured within the catchment area.

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17. Leasowe: Assessment of current situation

Summary of available pitches and teams

Sport	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior men	Senior women	Junior Boys	Junior girls	Mini
Football	2	5	5	2	-	7	-	6
Cricket	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hockey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rugby Union	3	1	-	4	1	1	-	-

Summary of identified latent/future demand.

Club	Site	Level of latent demand	Pitch requirement
Olympic FC	Leasowe Road Rec.	Could run two more junior teams (U14/ U16) if more pitches were available.	1 junior football
Total			1 junior football

Summary of identified inadequate pitch sites

Site	Inadequacies/comment	Type & no. of pitches
Leasowe Road Rec.	FC Phoenix could run U12 and U13 teams if pitch quality was improved on the junior pitches. Worn goalmouths. No changing rooms or car park.	1 senior football 2 junior football
Total		2 junior football 1 senior football

Supply and Demand

The principal supply and demand issues in Leasowe relate to football. There is no provision for cricket or hockey within the area.

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There is a shortfall in the quantity and quality of existing provision within the catchment area, exacerbated by demand derived from outside the catchment area.

Football teams

While only nine teams have their origins within Leasowe, sixteen teams play their home fixtures within the catchment area.

Two senior teams play their home fixtures outside the catchment area to find suitable senior facilities. Twelve junior teams from outside the catchment area play home fixtures at sites within Leasowe.

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Minimum levels of provision

The minimum provision needed to meet the local pattern of demand for senior pitches within Leasowe would be:

- Two pitches at the two matches per week standard.

This would provide the equivalent of eight half shares. Both pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

The minimum provision necessary to meet the current pattern of use within Leasowe would be:

- Four pitches at the two matches per week standard.

This would provide the equivalent of 16 half shares. All four pitches would also need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

Leasowe needs only two junior pitches to accommodate locally derived peak demand for teams within the u11 to u13 age groups. Four junior pitches will be required if the current pattern of demand for these age groups is to continue to be accommodated within this catchment area.

Expressed latent demand would suggest the need for at least one additional junior pitch.

Current Levels of Provision

The current level of provision of senior pitches in Leasowe is:

- One pitch at the two matches per week standard

Another senior pitch is provided at a local high school. One senior pitch does not have access to changing rooms.

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Three junior pitches are provided at local school sites. Two junior pitches do not have access to changing rooms.

Operational access

Two senior and five junior football pitches are available for community use. The pitches at Leasowe Road are regularly played on despite being of an 'unsatisfactory' standard.

Analysis of demand identifies one youth football team playing home fixtures within the area. The youth team plays its match at a recognised 'peak demand' time on Sunday morning. 15 junior teams play on Sunday afternoon.

There are potentially four match booking periods available on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday morning. If the facilities were provided to an acceptable standard, eight senior or youth teams could be accommodated during these periods.

Saturday morning usage

On Saturday morning no pitches are used. There is, thus, capacity at all sites to accommodate Saturday morning matches.

Saturday afternoon usage

No pitches are used on Saturday afternoon. There is capacity at both senior pitches to accommodate Saturday afternoon matches.

Sunday morning usage

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One youth team uses the senior pitch at Wallasey School on Sunday morning. There is capacity at both pitches to accommodate Sunday morning matches.

Sunday afternoon usage

The four junior pitches at Leasowe Road and Wallasey School are all double played by junior teams on Sunday afternoon.

Recommended Action for Leasowe

Football

The existing number of senior and junior pitches should be adequate to meet locally derived demand. The main issues in this catchment are the quality of the playing surfaces, the lack of appropriate changing provision and the additional need to accommodate "overspill" demand, particularly from junior teams from Wallasey.

Based on this assessment, WMBC should seek to:

- ❑ maintain and improve the existing provision of pitches to meet local demand within the catchment area;
- ❑ support the provision of changing facilities for the senior and junior pitches at Leasowe Road; and
- ❑ in the event that additional pitch capacity cannot be provided within Wallasey, investigate the feasibility of providing extended facilities based around the existing site at Leasowe Road.

General

The Council should not permit the loss of any existing playing field in Leasowe to development until the necessary improvements to meet this Strategy have been secured within the catchment area.

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18. Mid Wirral: Assessment of current situation

Summary of available pitches and teams

Sport	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior Men	Senior women	Junior Boys	Junior girls	Mini
Football	25	7	-	20	-	31	-	6
Cricket	2	-	-	8	-	5	-	-
Hockey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rugby Union	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Summary of identified latent/future demand

Club	Site	Level of latent demand	Pitch requirement
Saughall FC	Coronation Park	Could run two more senior teams if more pitches were available.	1 senior football
Millhouse AFC	Millcroft Sports Ground	Could produce a small number of junior teams if more pitches were available at the home ground.	1 junior football
Total			1 senior football 1 junior football

Summary of identified inadequate pitch sites:

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Site	Inadequacies/comment	No. of pitches
Arrowe Park	Site not utilised to capacity due to poor quality of a number of pitches. All users report the whole site to be unacceptable in terms of pitch quality. Limited off-road parking available.	12 senior football 4 junior football
Coronation Park	Poor quality drainage on all pitches reported by Council officers and some users.	3 senior football
Lingham Park	Whole site suffers from poor drainage. Teams have moved from the site due to its poor quality. No off-road parking is available.	4 senior football
Woodchurch Leisure Centre	Poor drainage on all pitches. Fender FC had half of its matches cancelled last season.	3 senior football
Total		22 senior football 4 junior football

Supply and Demand

The principal supply and demand issues in Mid Wirral relate to football. Analysis of football pitches in Mid Wirral does not show an overall shortfall in provision. The main issues relate to the quality of the existing facilities and to a shortfall in the number of pitches available for junior play.

Football teams

While 51 teams have their origins within the Mid Wirral settlements, 73 teams play their home fixtures within the catchment area. This is mainly accounted for by the availability of the pitches at Arrowe Park and by overspill demand from youth teams and from senior teams seeking pitches during the Sunday morning peak.

Four senior teams play their home fixtures outside the catchment area to find facilities of a suitable quality. Seventeen senior teams, eight youth teams including one from Ellesmere Port & Neston, and seven junior teams

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from outside the catchment area play home fixtures at sites within Mid Wirral.

Minimum levels of provision

The minimum provision needed to meet the local pattern of demand for senior pitches within Mid Wirral would be:

- ❑ eight pitches at the two matches per week standard; and
- ❑ one pitch at the three matches per week standard.

This would provide the equivalent of 38 half shares. All nine pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

The minimum provision necessary to meet the current pattern of use within Mid Wirral would be:

- ❑ 18 pitches at the two matches per week standard.

This would provide the equivalent of 72 half shares. All 18 pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

Expressed latent demand would suggest the need for up to one additional senior pitch.

Mid Wirral needs at least nine junior pitches to accommodate peak demand for teams within the u11 to u13 age groups. Expressed latent demand would suggest the need for up to one additional junior pitch.

Current Levels of Provision

The current level of provision of senior pitches in Mid-Wirral is:

- ❑ 22 pitches at the one match per week standard; and

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- Two pitches at the two matches per week standard.

Another senior pitch is provided at a private site. Twelve senior pitches only have access to substandard changing facilities and eleven are overplayed against their current match capacity grading.

Two junior pitches are provided at local primary schools. One junior pitch has no changing rooms and four only have access to poor quality facilities.

Operational access

In the Mid-Wirral area 25 senior and seven junior football pitches are available for community use. Of these, 22 senior pitches and four junior pitches are regularly played on despite being of an 'unsatisfactory' standard, in some cases further eroding their quality.

Analysis of demand indicates a total of 33 senior and nine youth football teams playing home fixtures within the area. All play matches at recognised 'peak demand' times: six on Saturday afternoon and 36 on Sunday morning. 31 junior teams play on Sunday afternoon.

There are potentially 50 match booking periods available on Saturday afternoon and 50 on Sunday morning. This suggests that up to 100 senior and youth teams could be accommodated within the area, if facilities of an appropriate standard could be provided. In practice, as a consequence of poor playing surface conditions, only 42 booking periods are currently taken up.

Saturday morning usage

On Saturday morning no pitches are used. There is, therefore, theoretical capacity at all sites to accommodate Saturday morning matches.

Saturday afternoon usage

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While the private site at Millcroft Sports Ground is fully booked, there is spare capacity at each of the other sites. No bookings are taken up at Arroe Park or Coronation Park on Saturday afternoon.

Sunday morning usage

The senior pitches at Coronation Park, Lingham Park and Woodchurch Leisure Centre are close to fully booked on Sunday morning and only two booking periods remain unused. Arroe Park records its highest level of bookings during this period, and 17 teams use the site for home fixtures.

Sunday afternoon usage

All the sites within the area accommodate junior teams on Sunday afternoon. The senior pitches at Lingham Park are close to fully booked and the pitch at Hayfield School is double played. Eleven teams play at Arroe Park.

Thirteen junior teams, at u13 and below, are currently playing on senior size pitches in Mid Wirral.

Recommended Action for Mid Wirral

Football

The existing number of pitches should be more than adequate to meet locally derived demand. The main issues in Mid Wirral relate to the poor quality of playing surfaces, a lack of appropriate changing provision, the need to accommodate "overspill" demand from other neighbouring catchment areas, and a shortfall in the number of suitable junior pitches.

Based on this assessment, WMBC should seek to:

- ❑ maintain the existing provision of playing fields to allow the necessary improvements to be secured to meet local demand within the catchment area;

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- ❑ support the improvement of a minimum of nine of the poorer quality senior pitches at Arrowe Park, Coronation Park, Lingham Park and Woodchurch Leisure Centre to meet the two matches per week standard or better;
- ❑ rationalise the provision of senior pitches to provide at least three additional junior pitches across the catchment area;
- ❑ in the event that demand from adjacent catchment areas cannot be accommodated, support the improvement of an additional number of poorer quality senior pitches to meet the two matches per week standard, as required; and
- ❑ support the refurbishment of changing accommodation to County FA standards, especially at Arrowe Park.

General

The Council should not permit the loss of any existing playing field in Mid Wirral to development until the necessary improvements to meet this Strategy have been secured at other sites within the catchment area.

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19. Rural Areas: Assessment of current situation

Summary of available pitches and teams

Sport	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior men	Senior women	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini
Football	3	3	-	1	-	6	-	1
Cricket	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hockey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rugby Union	3	-	2	5	-	4	-	6

Summary of identified latent/future demand

No latent demand was identified in the Rural Areas.

Summary of identified inadequate pitch sites

Site	Inadequacies/comment	No. of pitches
Wirral Sports Club	Wirral RUFC has a number of pitches at the site. Pitches located on the Crossroads are out of commission due to waterlogging. Lack of parking has meant that use for football has had to be scaled down on the Foxes site.	1 senior rugby 2 mini rugby
Total		1 senior rugby 2 mini rugby

Supply and Demand

There are supply and demand issues for football and rugby in the Rural Areas but the main issues relate to football. Analysis of football pitches does not show an overall shortfall in provision. The main issues relate to the quality and the availability of the existing facilities.

Football teams

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Two senior teams, from the A41 Corridor and Ellesmere Port and Neston, and one junior team from Heswall play home fixtures at sites within the Rural Areas.

Minimum levels of provision

The minimum provision needed to meet the local pattern of demand for senior pitches within the Rural Areas would be:

- ❑ One pitch at the two matches per week standard.

This would provide the equivalent of four half shares. This pitch would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

The minimum provision necessary to meet the current pattern of use within the Rural Areas would be:

- ❑ Two pitches at the two matches per week standard.

This would provide the equivalent of eight half shares. Both pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

The Rural Areas need only two junior pitches to accommodate peak demand for teams within the u11 to u13 age groups.

Current Levels of Provision

The current level of provision of senior pitches in the Rural Areas is:

- ❑ One pitch at the one match per week standard.

Another two senior pitches are provided at a private site. Three junior pitches are also provided at the same private site. The number of pitches

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at this site is likely to be reduced following complaints with regard to roadside parking.

Operational access

Thornton Hough Recreation Ground and the private site at Wirral Sports Club are the only facilities available for community use within the Rural Areas. Both are regularly played despite being of an 'unsatisfactory' standard. Pitches in the area effectively act as an 'over-spill' for teams from Heswall and Bebington.

An analysis of demand indicates three senior football teams and one youth team playing home fixtures within the area. All play matches at recognised 'peak demand' times: two on Saturday afternoon and two on Sunday morning. Six junior teams play on Sunday afternoon.

There are potentially six match booking periods available on Saturday afternoons and six on Sunday mornings. In practice, senior and youth teams have taken up only four booking periods.

Saturday morning usage

No pitches are used on Saturday morning. There is, thus, capacity at all sites to accommodate Saturday morning matches.

Saturday afternoon usage

Both sites accommodate a single senior team on Saturday afternoons. There is theoretical spare capacity at this time at both sites.

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Sunday morning usage

Both sites also accommodate a single team on Sunday mornings. There is theoretical spare capacity at this time at both sites for additional teams and matches.

Sunday afternoon usage

Only one senior pitch, at the Wirral Club, is not booked to a junior team on Sunday afternoon. The level of use at the Wirral Club may need to be curtailed in response to complaints from local residents and problems with on-street parking.

Recommended Action for the Rural Areas

Football

There is currently spare capacity for football in the catchment area. Much of this capacity is expected to be lost in the near future.

Based on this assessment, WMBC should seek to:

- ❑ maintain and improve the existing provision of playing fields within the area to satisfy local demand;
- ❑ support improvements to the pitch at Thornton Hough Recreation Ground to meet the two matches per week standard;
- ❑ monitor any short-term changes in the number of pitches at the Wirral Club and seek to make good any losses, if necessary within adjacent catchment areas.

Rugby Union

WMBC should seek to support Wirral RUFC in providing improvements to the playing fields at Thornton Common Road.

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20. Wallasey: Assessment of current situation

Summary of available pitches and teams

Sport	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior men	Senior women	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini
Football	16	5	6	43	-	49	-	21
Cricket	4	-	-	13	-	13	-	-
Hockey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rugby Union	4	-	-	7	-	6	-	9
US football	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

Summary of identified latent/future demand

Club	Site	Level of latent demand	Pitch requirement
Delta Colts JFC	Wallacre	Could run three more junior teams if more junior pitches available at the site.	1.5 junior
Vanser FC	Wallacre	Could run one open age reserves team if high standard, fenced pitches were available in the Wallasey area.	0.5 senior football
Rose and Crown FC	Central Park	Could run one more senior team if additional pitches provided at this site.	0.5 senior football
New Brighton AFC	Harrison Park	Believes it could run at least 4 – 6 more junior teams if more land was available to develop pitches.	3 junior football
Total			1 senior football 4.5 junior football

Summary of identified inadequate pitch sites

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Site	Inadequacies/comment	No. of pitches
Belvidere Rec. Ground	Although Council staff rate this site as adequate. Users report waterlogging and high number of match cancellations.	1 senior football
Central Park	Users suggest that two of the three football pitches are unacceptable to play on and report small pitch sizes.	2 senior football
Oxton Road	No changing facility available on site. No parking.	2 mini soccer
School Lane Rec. Ground	No changing facility on site. No specific car park. Teams playing here report this as directly affecting the number of teams they can produce.	3 senior football 2 mini soccer
Wallacre Rec. Ground	Council staff report poor drainage and overuse. Users report unacceptable quality. Limited parking available.	3 senior football
Total		9 senior football 4 mini soccer

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Supply and Demand

The principal supply and demand issues in Wallasey relate to football, cricket and hockey. There is a shortfall in both the quality and quantity of existing sports pitch provision within this catchment area, and no provision for hockey.

Football Teams

While 92 teams have their origins within Wallasey, only 68 teams play their home fixtures within the catchment area.

Twelve senior teams and fifteen junior teams play their home fixtures outside the catchment area to find suitable facilities. Two senior teams and three junior teams from Leasowe play home fixtures at sites within Wallasey.

Minimum levels of provision

The minimum provision needed to meet the local pattern of demand for senior pitches within Wallasey would be:

- ❑ 12 pitches at the two matches per week standard; and
- ❑ four pitches at the three matches per week standard.

This would provide the equivalent of 72 half shares. All 16 pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

The minimum provision necessary to meet the current pattern of use within Wallasey would be:

- ❑ seven pitches at the two matches per week standard; and
- ❑ four pitches at the three matches per week standard.

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This would provide the equivalent of 52 half shares. All 11 pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

Expressed latent demand would suggest the need for at least one additional senior pitch.

Wallasey would need at least 12 junior pitches to accommodate locally derived peak demand for teams within the u11 to u13 age groups. Expressed latent demand would suggest the need for at least five additional junior pitches.

Current Levels of Provision

The current level of provision of senior pitches in Wallasey is:

- ❑ six pitches at the one match per week standard;
- ❑ five pitches at the two matches per week standard; and
- ❑ three pitches at the three matches per week standard.

Another two senior pitches are provided at private sites.

Three senior pitches do not have access to changing rooms and five only have access to substandard facilities. Seven senior pitches are overplayed against their current match capacity grading.

Two junior pitches are provided at local primary schools. One junior pitch is overplayed against its current match capacity grading.

Operational access

In Wallasey 16 senior football pitches and five junior pitches are available for community use. Nine senior pitches and all the junior pitches are regularly played on despite being of an 'unsatisfactory' standard, further eroding their quality.

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Analysis of demand indicates 33 senior and three youth football teams playing home fixtures within the area. Of these, 35 teams play matches at recognised 'peak demand' times: 14 teams play on Saturday afternoon and 21 on Sunday morning. 31 junior teams and one women's team play on Sunday afternoon.

In Wallasey 32 match booking periods are potentially available on Saturday afternoon and 32 on Sunday morning. This suggests that up to 64 senior and youth teams could be accommodated during these periods, if the facilities could be provided to an acceptable standard. In practice, only 35 booking periods are currently taken up within this geographic area.

Saturday morning usage

On Saturday morning, only one senior pitch at School Lane is used. All sites thus have the theoretical capacity to accommodate Saturday morning matches.

Saturday afternoon usage

Only Rycroft Road and School Lane Recreation Ground are not used on Saturday afternoon but only Belvidere, and the private sites at Ashville FC and Poulton Victoria FC are used to capacity at this peak time period.

Sunday morning usage

Only the private sites at Ashville AFC and Poulton Victoria AFC are not in use for senior play on Sunday morning. Two of the sites, Belvidere Recreation Ground and Wallacre Recreation Ground, are used to capacity. The other four sites all have some theoretical spare capacity at this time. Ashville FC and Poulton FC are not used on Sunday mornings to preserve the quality of Saturday play.

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Sunday afternoon usage

Only Belvidere and the private site at Ashville AFC are not used for junior play on Sunday afternoon. This is necessary to preserve the quality of senior play. The junior pitches at the Delph Recreation Ground and at Tower Grounds are double played on Sunday afternoon.

Wallasey currently relies on a limited number of school pitches and pitches outside the catchment area to meet locally derived demand for junior play. Eight junior teams, at u13 and below, are currently playing on senior size pitches in Wallasey.

Recommended Action for Wallasey

Football

The number of senior pitches at existing sites within the catchment area can barely accommodate locally derived demand from senior and youth teams. The existing pitch stock cannot accommodate additional latent demand for senior play. There is also a significant shortage of junior pitches.

The main issues for Wallasey are related to the need to improve the quality of playing surfaces to increase local capacity, to improve the provision and standard of changing facilities and to identify additional sites to accommodate the local demand for both senior and junior play.

Based on this assessment, WMBC should seek to:

- ❑ maintain and improve the existing provision of playing fields to meet local demand within the catchment area;
- ❑ support the improvement of the poorer quality senior pitches at Central Park and Wallacre Playing Fields to meet the two matches per week standard or better;

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- ❑ investigate the feasibility of providing changing accommodation for the senior pitches at School Lane Recreation Ground;
- ❑ support the improvement of at least one senior pitch to meet the three matches per week standard;
- ❑ explore the feasibility of providing one or two additional senior pitches within the area;
- ❑ explore the feasibility of providing additional junior pitches within the area;
- ❑ support a programme to provide and refurbish changing accommodation to County FA standards, especially at Rycroft Road and Wallacre Playing Fields; and
- ❑ in the event that local demand cannot be accommodated within Wallasey, support the provision of additional facilities in nearby Leasowe.

Cricket

The Sports Development Officer for cricket has identified a general lack of suitable cricket facilities in Wallasey. This is confirmed by the need for local clubs to secure second pitches at sites outside the catchment area. In light of this, WMBC should seek to:

- ❑ prevent the loss of existing cricket facilities in Wallasey to development unless the pitches and ancillary facilities will be replaced, on a one-for-one basis, at another site within the catchment area;
cont...
- ❑ support initiatives to promote and improve the facilities provided at Central Park; and
- ❑ support initiatives that will lead to an increase in available cricket facilities across Wallasey as a whole.

Hockey

The Active Sports hockey co-ordinator has identified a shortfall in the provision of hockey facilities in Wallasey and has identified the potential to develop a new club within this area of the Borough. In pursuit of this

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objective, WMBC should seek to support the provision of at least one publicly accessible ATP facility within the Wallasey catchment area.

General

The Council should not permit the loss of any playing field in Wallasey to development unless the sports pitches and ancillary facilities will be replaced, on a one-to-one basis, at another site within the catchment area.

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21. West Kirby: Assessment of current situation

Summary of available pitches and teams

Sport	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior men	Senior women	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini
Football	4	3	1	4	-	9	2	5
Cricket	2	-	-	5	-	5	-	-
Hockey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rugby Union	3	-	-	4	-	4	-	7

Summary of identified latent/future demand

Club	Site	Level of latent demand	Pitch requirement
West Kirby Wasps (Pre League)	Anglesey Road	Could increase all age groups to two teams each (4 teams currently) if more land was available to mark out mini soccer pitches.	2 mini soccer
Total			2 mini soccer

Summary of identified inadequate pitch sites

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Site	Inadequacies/comment	No. of pitches
Anglesey Road	No changing facility located on this site. Users are offered changing at the adjacent site but report that this is unacceptable and do not use it. No off-road parking.	1 senior football 1 junior football 1 mini soccer
Devonshire Road	No changing facility available on site or off-road parking.	1 junior football
Greenbank Road	Council staff report poor drainage. Old waste tip site. Vandalism is a major issue here.	1 senior football
Newton Park	No changing facility available on site. Limited parking shared with the adjacent park.	1 senior football 1 junior football
Total		3 senior football 3 junior football 1 mini soccer

Supply and Demand

The principal supply and demand issues in West Kirby relate to football.

Analysis of football pitches in the area does not show an overall shortfall in provision. The main issues relate to the quality of the existing facilities.

Football Teams

Thirteen teams have their origins within West Kirby and thirteen teams play home fixtures within the catchment area.

One youth team and two junior teams play their home fixtures outside the catchment area. Two senior teams and one women's team from outside the catchment area play home fixtures at sites within West Kirby.

Minimum levels of provision

The minimum provision needed to meet the local pattern of demand for senior pitches within West Kirby would be:

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- ❑ Two pitches at the two matches per week standard; and
- ❑ One pitch at the three matches per week standard.

This would provide the equivalent of 14 half shares. All three pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

The minimum provision necessary to meet the current pattern of use within West Kirby would be:

- ❑ Three pitches at the two matches per week standard.

This would provide the equivalent of 12 half shares. All three pitches would need to have access to County FA standard changing facilities.

West Kirby needs only two junior pitches to accommodate peak demand for teams within the u11 to u13 age groups.

Current Levels of Provision

The current level of provision of senior pitches in West Kirby is:

- ❑ Two pitches at the one match per week standard; and
- ❑ One pitch at the two matches per week standard.

Another senior pitch is provided at a private site. Two of the senior pitches and none of the junior pitches have changing rooms. One senior pitch is overplayed against its current match capacity grading.

Operational access

In West Kirby four senior and three junior football pitches are available for community use. Only one senior football pitch is provided to an adequate standard.

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Analysis of demand indicates six senior football teams playing home fixtures within the area. All six play matches at recognised 'peak demand' times: two on Saturday afternoons and four on Sunday mornings. Six junior teams and one women's team play on Sunday afternoon.

In West Kirby there are potentially eight match-booking periods available on Saturday afternoon and eight on Sunday morning. This suggests that up to 16 senior and youth teams could be accommodated within this area, if the facilities were provided to an acceptable standard.

In practice, only six booking periods are currently taken up in this geographic area.

Saturday morning usage

On Saturday morning none of the senior football pitches are used. There is, therefore, capacity to accommodate more Saturday morning matches.

Saturday afternoon usage

Only the private site at West Kirby FC is used to capacity on Saturday afternoon. One team uses Greenbank Road.

Sunday morning usage

The senior pitches at Newton Park, Greenbank Road and Anglesey Road are each used by only one team on Sunday mornings.

Sunday afternoon usage

Only the senior pitch at Greenbank Road is not used on Sunday afternoon. There is, however, still a theoretical capacity for further junior play.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

Only one junior team, at u13 and below, is currently playing on a senior size pitch.

Recommended Action for West Kirby

Football

The existing number of pitches available within the catchment area should be able to meet locally derived demand. The main issues relate to the quality of playing surfaces and the availability of suitable changing accommodation.

Based on this assessment, WMBC should seek to:

- ❑ maintain and improve existing provision to satisfy local demand within the catchment area;
- ❑ support the improvement of two of the poorer quality pitches to provide two senior pitches at the two matches per week standard;
- ❑ support a programme to provide changing accommodation to County FA standards at sites without the necessary facilities, including Anglesey Road and Newton Park.

General

The Council should not permit the loss of any existing playing field in West Kirby to development unless the sports pitches and ancillary facilities will be replaced, on a one-for-one basis, at another site within the catchment area.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

22. Pricing comparisons

The table below illustrates charges for hiring playing pitch facilities, on a seasonal basis, within a number of authorities and on different sites within Wirral. It is difficult in certain instances to make direct comparisons. However, it provides some comparative information to enable the Council to consider a revision of charging levels.

		Wirral	Ellesmere Port ⁱ	St. Helens	Warrington	Bolton
Football	Adult pitch & change A	£220	£247.10	£300	£310	£345
	B	£175				
	C	£135				
	Pitch only		£19.60	£150	£200	£175
	D	£80	(per match)			
	Junior pitch & change A	£115	£123.05	£130	£155	£167.50
B	£88					
C	£67					
Junior pitch only		£9.80	£65	£100	£85	
D	£41	(per match)				
Mini-soccer & change	£41	-	-	£105	-	
Mini-soccer only	£41	-	-	£70	-	

Charges shown per season unless otherwise indicated

As can be seen from the table, WMBC charges the lowest rates for senior football use. Ellesmere Port MBC charges a low rate for hire of pitch only, without changing, due to the fact that the majority of leagues must have a changing facility. Many of these sites are thus only used on a casual basis.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

As part of the Best Value process the Council should link facility hire costs to the quality and adequacy of provision. Based upon the information contained in this Strategy the Council should develop a framework for revised charges at the improved pitch sites that result from Strategy implementation.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

23. Policy and management issues

Where the strategy has recommended greater use of school facilities it is likely that this would cause increased revenue costs for schools (in terms of caretaker time and maintenance costs). Provision is needed to cover these costs without forcing fees up to the point that will discourage wider use by the community. WMBC needs to sustain its initial investment on sites where capital improvements have been implemented. Ongoing resource allocation should include improved maintenance and management regimes. The Council may need to increase the maintenance budgets for these sites.

WMBC should introduce management policies to support sports development objectives targeted at encouraging a closer partnership between users and WMBC/pitch owners. This should allow more effective use of facilities and more sensitive allocation of resources linked to corporate objectives. It should also seek to create incentives for good practice and allow/encourage Best Value in service delivery. Initiatives may include:

Through WMBC owned sites

- ❑ Ensure revenue maintenance on WMBC sites through hypothecation of pitch hire revenues, capital receipts and appropriate budget allocation.
- ❑ Identification of pitch rotation capacity in concert with football leagues. 'New pitches' should be introduced to the stock where overplay and/or fixture congestion is problematic.
- ❑ Pricing structure linked to pitch (and overall facility) quality. Pitches should be accurately graded and where appropriate fees increased to reflect increased quality).
- ❑ Ensure consistent match cancellation policy through user and referee forums.
- ❑ Improve communication and user group ownership by establishing user group forums constituted to address pricing, maintenance and sports development issues

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT

On and through voluntary sector ownership/ management

- ❑ Implement /develop ownership/lease agreements with key clubs
- ❑ Implement developmental discretionary rate relief (DRR) policy.
- ❑ Implement developmental lease agreements with key clubs based on a football development plan
- ❑ Identify club support budget to provide land use/maintenance including equipment loan
- ❑ Linked to National Governing Body club development programmes, provide training for clubs on pitch and ground maintenance.

Hire/lease/DRR conditions

- ❑ Work in partnership with clubs to develop integrated sports development practice.
 - ❑ Work in partnership with clubs to develop integrated funding policies.
 - ❑ Implement safe child friendly and equitable criteria within all pitch use agreements (short term hires or leases) and within DRR criteria
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